Workers’ Camp That Inspired Change Among Heritage Sites

A former Central Australian workers’ camp that housed Aboriginal employees and their families protesting for equal rights and pay has been recognised as a site of historical significance under the Heritage Protection Act.

Union Camp at Newcastle Waters, between Katherine and Tennant Creek, is seen as pivotal in the push for equality by Aboriginal workers in the Northern Territory.

Heritage Minister Alison Anderson said the camp, established in 1966, is significant for its function as living quarters for Aboriginal workers and their families. They walked off site during a strike over working conditions at Newcastle Waters Station.

The strike focused national attention on the entitlements of workers on pastoral properties across the Northern Territory.

“This strike, and other strikes across Australia, helped build momentum and public awareness of issues such as equal wages, housing, education and land rights,” Ms Anderson said.

“This site is therefore an important catalyst for changes to Aboriginal policy around Australia.”

The Barrow Creek Hotel has been breaking the journey for thirsty Stuart highway travellers since the early 1930s, and is another Central Australian landmark recognised under the Act.

The pub was the first hotel built between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, and has been declared because of its historical and architectural value.

Ms Anderson said the hotel still retains many of its original features, including its cellar, patterned concrete blockwork and pressed tin ceilings.

“This hotel was built by the Kilgariff family, well known for their long term association with Central Australia, and was intended to service the growing number of travellers passing through the area during the mineral boom of the era, and the development of the Tennant Creek and Granites goldfields,” she said.

For details on other heritage sites, please go to www.nt.gov.au/heritage

Contact: Shannon McRae 0419 340 735