Celebrating and Safeguarding Our Rich History

Territory Parliament today passed a Bill replacing the Territory’s Heritage Conservation Act with a modernised Heritage Act.

Heritage Minister Karl Hampton said the new Heritage Act follows a review into the existing legislation that highlighted several shortcomings that are addressed in the new legislation.

“This new Act is a step in the right direction as it will deliver improved outcomes through better protections so that our rich history is celebrated by future generations,” Mr Hampton said.

“The new Heritage Act also helps meet the Territory 2030 target of ensuring Territorians continue to have access to a wide range of facilities and activities that enhance the great Territory lifestyle.

“I believe this legislation represents a real step forward in terms of improving the framework within which the Territory Government - working with the community - manages the unique and diverse heritage of the Territory.”

The key features of the new Heritage Act are:

- Interim protection of sites once a site is nominated and the Heritage Council considers the site significant and seeks public comment;
- A new process for heritage listing that introduces timelines at all stages of the listing process;
- Improved processes for carrying out work, including the ability for the Heritage Council to make decisions about minor work;
- An expanded Heritage Council, which includes representation from local government and property owners, and which requires the Minister, as far as practicable, to ensure Aboriginal representation;
- The capacity to list classes of places, thus extending the protection of places that are considered to be important aspects of our heritage but are difficult to list individually;
- Increased penalties and improved provision for on-the-ground enforcement; and
- Expanded rights of review.

The new Heritage Act is expected to commence early in 2012.