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Legislative Scrutiny Committee  
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Via email: [LA.Committees@nt.gov.au](mailto:LA.Committees@nt.gov.au)

Dear Committee,

**Northern Territory Heritage Council submission – Legislative Scrutiny Committee –  
Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (serial 23)**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* (the Bill).

The Northern Territory Heritage Council (the Council) is established under the *Heritage Act 2011*, legislation which also sets out the Council's advisory and decision-making role.

The *Heritage Act* and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* work side by side to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage in the Northern Territory.

While the Council will not make a submission about specific amendments being proposed in the Bill, it writes to draw the Committee's attention to two important points.

The first is the need to acknowledge that the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*, and the work of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA), is recognised by heritage experts and jurisdictions across Australia as setting a high standard in best practice Aboriginal heritage management. Therefore, it is important that any changes to this legislation be considered carefully.

The second matter relates to *Dhawura Ngilan*, a vision for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage in Australia. *Dhawura Ngilan* has been widely endorsed and accepted as practice guidelines not only by the Council and the AAPA Board, but also by agencies, organisations, and heritage councils across Australia, including the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand.

*Dhawura Ngilan* provides advice for cultural heritage decision makers on a range of matters, including appreciating the living connection between Aboriginal peoples today, their ancestors, their lands and their waters. The Council recommends that over the course of your work, and in developing your recommendations, you consider the guidance provided in *Dhawura Ngilan*.

Yours sincerely



Randle Walker  
Chairperson

4 April 2025