

# FACT SHEET

## Request for Information from Records



### Sacred Sites Records

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) maintains Records of all sacred sites that it has identified in the Northern Territory. However, this is not a complete record of all sacred sites in the NT. Sites become known to the AAPA through the Authority Certificate process, or when custodians of sacred sites ask the AAPA to investigate sacred site issues on their country. This often occurs when sacred sites are at risk from development or other activities such as pastoralism or tourism. There are strict secrecy provisions in the NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act and Aboriginal cultural traditions covering these sites.

The sites that are listed in the Records fall into two main categories:

- Registered sites – these are sacred sites that Aboriginal custodians have asked the AAPA to protect and that have been comprehensively documented and evaluated by the AAPA. Registered sites include information on locations and boundaries. These make up the **Register of Sacred Sites**
- Recorded sites – these are sacred sites that have been made known to the AAPA from a variety of sources. In many cases the AAPA has not been able to assess the accuracy of its information regarding recorded sites, nor have these sites been fully mapped.

**NB:** It is important to emphasise that requesting Information from Records is not a definitive way of determining the location of all sacred sites in a given area, particularly where use of land or sea may result in disturbance of features. There is a risk that a sacred site previously unknown to the AAPA may be identified after the commencement of works, leaving no option but to cease works under the provisions of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act. This is because the Act applies to all sacred sites in the NT, not just sites registered or recorded by the AAPA.

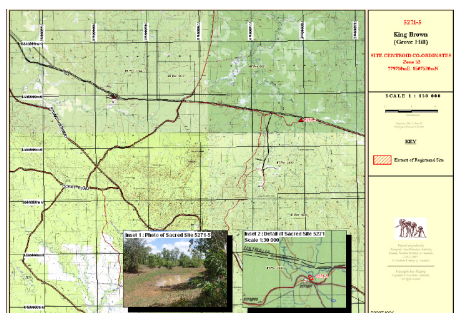
The AAPA also maintains a **Register of Authority Certificates** which have been issued or refused.

### Information from Records

Information from Records is available for inspection by anyone with a **bone fide interest** in specific areas of land or sea in the Northern Territory.

#### Abstract of Records:

This is a written abstract and a map of all the known sites including both Recorded and or Registered Sites. The abstract may also contain any Restricted Works Area (RWA's) that have been created as part of the Authority Certificate process. A project area is required (normally a lot number, but it can also include a Mining Title or Pastoral Lease or other area of interest).



### **Register of Sacred Sites:**

The AAPA will provide access to information on the location and extent of registered sites within a clearly specified project area identified by a Lot number.

### **Register of Authority Certificates:**

The AAPA will provide access to information on Authority Certificates subject to commercial and secrecy exclusions. The information available includes a list of Authority Certificates granted or refused for a specified area, including the conditions for any works that may have been proposed for that area.

### **How do I get information from AAPA Records?**

To obtain information from AAPA records, please submit either an application form "Request for Information from Records", or a written request indicating the type of information of your interest. This must be sent to the Darwin office or by e-mail to [enquiries.aapa@nt.gov.au](mailto:enquiries.aapa@nt.gov.au).

### **Can I walk into the office and receive instant access to AAPA Records?**

The public are welcome to come in, fill out an application form and to find out about the Request for Information from Records process but instant access to records is not possible.

### **What do I receive when my application has been processed?**

A Request for An Abstract of Records is the most popular form of Request for Information. You may receive a summary letter and a map (where required) of your request area with polygons and points representing AAPA records. You are not required to come in to the office to either lodge the application form or to receive the results. AAPA normally aims to complete this process within two weeks.

Requesting to view the Register of Sites or Authority Certificates requires the Registrar to retrieve the specific hard copy records and organise a suitable meeting time/room with you.

This process may take a week or two to complete before an appointment time and date can be confirmed. You will be required to attend in person at either the Darwin or Alice Springs office, once you have an appointment confirmed by the Registrar.

### **Can I choose an appointment time to view the hardcopy records?**

Please indicate in the Comment section of the application form, your preferred time, day and location. The Registrar will work with you determine the appointment time and date.

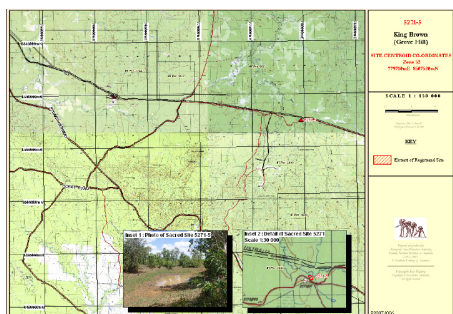
You must allow at least two weeks for the Registrar to make contact with you to confirm.

### **Contact**

For any questions about the process, please contact the Registrar or Assistant Registrar via email on [enquiries.aapa@nt.gov.au](mailto:enquiries.aapa@nt.gov.au) or by phone on 8999 4359 and 8999 4356.

### **Cost and processing time**

There is currently a 23 Revenue Unit (no GST) (\$26) for each application for an abstract or to inspect either Register. Applications can usually be processed in less than two weeks.



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