

FACT SHEET

Sacred Site Registration



What the law says

All sacred sites in the Northern Territory are protected by the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*, whether they are known to the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) or not.

Registered vs recorded sacred sites

The AAPA holds different levels of information about different sacred sites on its Register of Sacred Sites. There are many sites that the AAPA lists as 'Recorded Sacred Sites', and there may be limited or extensive knowledge about these sites. Although such sites are known to the AAPA, they have not gone through the formal process of being registered with the AAPA.

'Registered Sacred Sites' are those which have been entered into the AAPA's Register of Sacred Sites in accordance with section 29 of the *Sacred Sites Act*. This means that custodians have asked for a site to be registered and that the AAPA has gathered all of the required information about that site, notified land owners of the proposed registration of the site and considered any possible detriment issues that they may have. Once this process has been completed, the AAPA Board has to give its approval before a site can be formally registered.

Why register a sacred site?

The overall goal of the site registration process is to enhance the protection of sacred sites. Registering a sacred site establishes its status with the full suite of information required by law, and makes it easier to prosecute any offences committed in relation to that site. It establishes clear boundaries for sites and details the features that make up the site, the traditions that make the site sacred and identifies the Aboriginal custodians of the site. Secret and sensitive material about the site is protected and not made available to the public.

For custodians, the site registration process offers greater protection for sacred sites. Any member of the public viewing the Register of Sacred Sites will see the location and boundary of registered sacred sites, and the comprehensive level of information held by the AAPA on such sites results in more effective conditions within Authority Certificates.

Custodians can request that their sites be registered by downloading the **Site Registration application form** from the AAPA website (www.aapant.org.au).

To find out how to inspect the AAPA's Register of Sacred Sites, download the **Request for Information Fact Sheet**. To find out about Authority Certificates, see the **Authority Certificates Fact Sheet**.



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