



Media Release:

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Proposed Heritage Listing of Overland Telegraph Line Relics

The Heritage Advisory Council is seeking public comment on the proposed heritage listing of the Fergusson River Overland Telegraph Line Pylons and Oppenheimer Telegraph Poles, located approximately 42kms north of Katherine.

Chairperson of the Heritage Advisory Council Dr Brian Reid said the Overland Telegraph Line opened up much of the Territory and helped to accelerate the growth of the pastoral and mining industries and localised settlements.

"These pylons, constructed in 1899, are a significant remnant of the telegraph line linking Port Darwin to Adelaide which in turn was part of an international telegraph line that linked Australia to London," Dr Reid said.

"The pylon stone cairns, telescopic Oppenheimer poles, insulators and remaining telegraph wires display a style of technology no longer widely used and are a symbol of human ingenuity in solving the problem of overcoming the obstacles of large inland river systems.

Dr Reid said the remnants are also an important tribute to the local builder, miner and stonemason, Alexander Crerar, who constructed the Fergusson and Katherine River pylons during an upgrade of the telegraph line to a duplex system in 1898 - 1899.

"Alexander Crerar also helped with the construction of the Darwin Cenotaph, then located opposite Government House, and the Ross Smith Memorial in Parap," Dr Reid said.

"He later served on the Darwin City Council before taking up farming peanuts and tobacco with his wife Isabella at Copperfield Creek.

"It's important we preserve as much of our history as possible so that future generations can enjoy and learn about the Territory's past."

The Heritage Advisory Council invites written comments on the proposed recommendations by COB Friday 8 July 2011. To view a copy of the proposed recommendations contact the Heritage Branch on 8999 5039.

For further information on heritage listed sites in the Northern Territory go to www.nt.gov.au/heritage

Ends

Media – For more information / interviews contact Dr Brian Reid on 0429 389 840

Image – Fergusson River Overland Telegraph Line Pylon

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