

DEVELOPMENTS **IN THE** **NORTHERN** **TERRITORY**

No major legislative or policy changes have occurred in the Northern Territory in 1994 as the Government has been in a campaign mode. The mid-year election returned the Country Liberal Party to Government with an increased majority. The Government's Environment Policy released during the recent campaign gives a guide to future developments.

The Government reaffirmed its commitment to work towards the transfer and control of Kakadu and Uluru National Parks to the Northern Territory Government. It also pledged to consult with traditional owners and Land Councils with respect to park management models which can be applied to Aboriginal land through the Territory.

The *Water Act 1992*, which contains the major provisions relating to pollution control in the Northern Territory, has never been fully implemented. However, the Government has promised to "introduce specific Environment Protection/Pollution Control legislation in the Territory to continue to manage hazardous waste and implement National Environment Protection /Pollution Control legislation in the Territory to continue to manage hazardous waste and implement National Environment Protection measures in accordance with national agreements developed jointly with the Commonwealth and States. A Waste Management and Pollution Control Strategy which has been in the development states for well over a year will also be made available for public comment.

Procedures under the *Environmental Assessment Act 1982 (NT)* have been under scrutiny for many years. Recent criticism of the environment assessment of the McArthur River Project on the Gulf of Carpentaria has again focussed attention on the inadequacy of the

Northern Territory Procedures. The Government has been undertaking a major review of the *Environmental Assessment Act* for a number of years. In the lead up to the election the Government again promised that the Act and Procedures would be reformed. Since the election a Bill has been introduced to amend the Environmental Assessment Act to make way for the changes in the Administrative Procedures. The Bill paves the way for greater public participation in the environmental assessment process. Preliminary Environment Reports under the current Procedures, which were not generally released for public comment, will become Public Environment Reports. The Bill also anticipates that the comments, suggestions and recommendations made by the Conservation Commission in relation to Environmental Impact Statements and Public Environment Reports will be released to the public.

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DEVELOPMENTS **IN TASMANIA**

Draft State Coastal Policy Released

The first Tasmanian Sustainable Development Policy, prepared under S.6 of the State Policies and Projects Act 1993, has been released for public comment. Once finalised the State Coastal Policy will be a statutory document, legally binding on local planning schemes.

The policy pursues three basic principles: