



**Aboriginal Areas
Protection Authority**
protecting sacred sites across the territory

Ref: 202601419

Mr Randle Walker
Chairperson
Heritage Council

Via email: heritagecouncil@nt.gov.au

Dear Randle,

RE: PROPOSED HERITAGE DECLARATION – ST MARY’S, ALICE SPRINGS

Thank you for your letter dated 19 February 2026, inviting the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (the Authority) to make a submission on the heritage significance of St Mary’s, Alice Springs and whether it should be permanently declared a Heritage Place under the *Heritage Act 2011*.

The Authority’s Submission is provided at Attachment A.

If you have any queries or require further information, please contact Secretariat.AAPA@aapant.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Pocock
Chief Executive Officer
19 March 2026

DARWIN

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ABORIGINAL AREAS PROTECTION AUTHORITY SUBMISSION

St Mary's, Lot 11119(A) Town of Alice Springs

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (the Authority) is an independent statutory authority established under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* (the Act). The Authority is responsible for the identification, registration and protection of Aboriginal sacred sites across Northern Territory land and waters. Protection of sacred sites is a fundamental element of preserving Aboriginal cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Authority's statutory functions include providing authoritative information about the location and extent of sacred sites and issuing Authority Certificates to enable land use or development to proceed in a manner that avoids or minimises damage to sacred sites. In performing these functions, the Authority seeks to balance the protection of sacred sites with responsible land use and development.

The St Mary's lot is wholly within the boundary of a sacred site, the key features of which are mature native tree species. These include Ironwoods, Ghost Gums, Bloodwoods, River Red Gums, Corkwoods and Coolabahs.

The Authority has previously issued Authority Certificates over the whole of the lot.

During consultations for a recent Authority Certificate over the lot, Custodians requested that the Authority convey the broader historical significance of St Mary's, particularly its importance to the many members of the stolen generation who were housed there, and that efforts should be made to commemorate this history if the site is redeveloped.