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While the AustralAsia Railway Corporation coordinated the tender process and negotiations, the Northern Territory Government had primary responsibility for negotiating with Aboriginal Land Councils and pastoralists regarding acquisition of the corridor (with compensation payments of \$22 million), environmental and heritage issues and fencing the corridor where required.

A draft Environmental Impact Statement was released in 1983 and updated with a new Environmental Management Plan in 1997. In 1997, the project received environmental approval from the Northern Territory Government under the [Environmental Assessment Act \(NT\)](#) and the Commonwealth under the [Environmental Protection \(Impact of Proposals\) Act](#).

The Northern Territory obtained Sacred Sites avoidance certificates in accordance with the [Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act](#) for an area 200 metres either side of the railway centre line and for identified ballast sites outside the corridor. Various reports were commissioned to determine the likely impact of the railway on sites of archaeological and historical significance.

The Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority has pegged all Aboriginal sites of significance and a good working relationship between the Authority, ADrail and Aboriginal organisations is ensuring close co-operation throughout the project.

A significant milestone has recently been achieved with the completion of the cataloguing of stone artefacts collected from 27 archaeological sites within the railway corridor. A detailed database has been compiled of the collection. This data represents a significant contribution to archaeological knowledge of Aboriginal settlement patterns, subsistence economies and the prehistory of the Northern Territory.

The area of the Gouldian Finch Wet Season Feeding Habitat affected by construction of the railway has been re-established. Using plants from a nursery set up prior to construction, ADrail, with assistance from Greening Australia and the Kybrook Farm Community at Pine Creek, have completed the rehabilitation on the site at Yinberrie Hills, about 50 km north of Katherine.

The railway will not impact on the heritage values of any declared heritage site. However, certificates have been obtained where the railway passes close to three declared heritage sites on the route of the old North Australian Railway line.

[See also news item on Heritage](#)

For Further Information contact the AustralAsia Railway Corporation Telephone 89469595 www.aarc.com.au