To correct inconsistencies in the description of the boundary between the Petermann Land and the Uluru National Park.

Background

Title to the Petermann Aboriginal Reserve was granted to the Petermann Aboriginal Land Trust under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (the Principal Act) in 1978. Schedule 1 of the Principal Act contained a description of the boundaries of the land which was bordered on the east by the Uluru (Ayers Rock-Mount Olga) National Park.

A campaign began in 1979 to have the title of the Uluru National Park transferred to its traditional Aboriginal owners. On 11 November 1983, the Prime Minister announced that the Government would transfer the title if the traditional owners agreed to a lease-back arrangement. As there was agreement, the title was transferred by the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Act 1985. Again, a detailed description of the land was included in Schedule 1 of the Principal Act. The description was based on that contained in the Proclamation of the Uluru National Park which was published in the Gazette on 24 May 1977.

It was recently discovered that the descriptions of the Petermann Land and the Uluru National Park are inconsistent and that they overlap on their common boundary. The area of overlap comprises a narrow strip of land about 9 kilometres long by 220 metres wide, i.e., an
area of approximately 2 square kilometres. This Bill will correct the inconsistency by inserting a new description of the boundary of the Petermann Land.

Main Provisions

Clause 3 substitutes a new description of the Petermann Land in Schedule 1 of the Principal Act.

The validity of the 1977 Proclamation of the Uluru National Park, which was in doubt as the area proclaimed contained Petermann land and may have been inconsistent with the Principal Act, is put beyond doubt by clause 4.

Clause 5 states that the Government will not be liable to pay compensation as a result of this Bill.

For further information, if required, contact the Education and Welfare Group.

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Bills Digest Service
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE

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