



Mrs Mary Ward with children outside Banka Banka School, 1967

Old homestead building listed

The old mud brick homestead at Banka Banka, about 100km north of Tennant Creek, has been declared a heritage place.

Banka Banka Station was established in the late nineteenth century. It is believed the existing mud brick homestead building may have been built as early as the 1920s, but the date of construction is uncertain.

In 1941, Banka Banka Station was purchased by Phillip Ward. Up until that time, little in the way of improvements had been made at the Station, but the new owner wasted no time in improving buildings and fencing. The mud brick homestead was modified at this time.

1941 also saw the establishment of a military staging camp at Banka Banka, with army personnel being supplied with beef from the Station.

The Ward family owned the Station for more than 30 years. Mrs Mary Ward, was a well-known figure referred to as the 'Missus of Banka Banka'. She was renowned for her hospitality as well as her work with Aboriginal families and children, particularly in the area of education. In 1968, she was awarded an MBE in recognition of her work.

Between them, the Wards are considered to have made a substantial contribution to the development of the NT in the mining and pastoral sectors through their ownership and development of the Blue Moon mine and Banka Banka station.

Heritage 'on the ground'

The NT Government continues to lead by example in the conservation of the Territory's heritage. This year another one million dollars has been allocated to the repair and maintenance of Government-owned heritage places, including:

- Fannie Bay Gaol
- Vestey's Tank, Darwin
- Adelaide River Railway Bridge
- Daly Waters Aviation Complex
- Bonney Well Windmill
- Tennant Creek Telegraph Station
- Barrow Creek Telegraph Station
- Old Stone Hut, Alice Springs
- The Residency, Alice Springs
- Old Court House, Alice Springs

The work at Tennant Creek Telegraph Station is the second stage of a program of major conservation work, much of which is directed at reducing rising damp in the stone buildings and repairing previous damage. Repairs have also been undertaken on the verandahs, and the buildings are being repainted.

The Government continues to make available \$200,000 every year to private owners of heritage places.



The cellar at Tennant Creek telegraph station before and after recent conservation work.