Three significant icons in Broken Hill have today been listed on the State Heritage Register.

Minister for Planning Tony Kelly, said the Broken Hill Mosque, the BHP Chimney Ruin and the Wesley Church and Hall meet the test of significance to the State many times over.

“Each of the sites has a fascinating story to tell and together they contribute to an amazing diversity of heritage in Broken Hill,” the Minister said.

**Mosque:**

- Was the first built in NSW and provides rare evidence of the pioneering Afghan Cameleers who were instrumental to every major inland development project in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**BHP Chimney Ruin:**

- Is the last remnant of the original office used by the mining giant.

**Wesley Church and Hall:**

- Is the juxtaposition of the arrival of early Methodism, with its strong temperance movement and Broken Hill’s heavy drinking reputation in the late nineteenth century.

The listings mean:

- Any major works for the sites would be subject to decisions or advice from the Heritage Council of NSW as well as Broken Hill City Council;
- The sites will now have increased access to State Government heritage funding; and
- The buildings will be required to be maintained to certain standards of repair.

Mr Kelly said listing these items on the State Heritage Register not only bestows the State’s highest level of heritage recognition and protection, but also ensures they will be maintained to appropriate standards.

“As a result, both residents and visitors to Broken Hill will be able to enjoy these important buildings for generations to come,” the Minister said.
Background:

**Broken Hill Mosque**, which was built in 1887, was used for worship by Afghan cameleers, who came to work in inland Australia with about 20,000 camels, during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The cameleers were known as Afghans, or Ghans, though they came from many different countries and provinces – Kashmir, Sind, Rajasthan, Egypt, Persia, Turkey, Punjab, Baluchistan, and former provinces of Afghanistan, now modern day India and Pakistan.

They built the overland telegraph from Adelaide to Darwin and they also gave their name to the famous Ghan line from Port Augusta to Alice Springs.

Broken Hill was one of the most established ‘Ghantowns’ of the outback because it was a commercial hub where important camel trails and stock driving routes met the railroad.

There were two Ghan camps in Broken Hill – west and north of the town – and each had their own mosque. It is the main north camp mosque which survives today as the Broken Hill Mosque.

The Mosque, which is constructed of corrugated iron sheets and wood painted rust red – a typical colour in Broken Hill – was used regularly up till 1940 and then less frequently, until the death of the last Mullah in the 1950s.

Broken Hill City Council acquired the land which houses the Mosque in 1967. It was rededicated by visiting Muslim officials as a place of worship on 26 September 1968, and is still used for worship today.

**The BHP Chimney**, located on the Willyama Common, marks the birthplace of BHP, a company which helped shape Australia’s mining and industrial landscape.

It is the last remnant of the hut built by Tim Phin and WB Orman, in May 1885, to house the manager of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, William Jamieson.

Jamieson had been appointed only a month earlier, by a mining syndicate, to manage the company, following the discovery of rich silver ores.

The hut was located in the busy mining area at the Line of Lode, the rocky outcrop which contained the ore body, in Broken Hill. For a short time it was the BHP works office, where all mining business was conducted.

By 1888, staff houses and an office were erected about 500 metres away, and by the 1890s, all BHP staff housing was provided at Proprietary Square.

The Chimney, made of random stone and brick, was a ruin by 1908, but it was already regarded as an historical site. BHP erected a wooden railing so it could be preserved. In 1939, BHP ceased operations at Broken Hill. Broken Hill City Council now administers the site.

The Chimney has since been re-pointed and covered by an iron roof, and interpretive signage has been added.
The Wesley Church was officially opened in December 1888, just three years after the founding of Broken Hill. The large lecture Hall opened a year later.

Designed by Frederick William Dancker of Adelaide, in a Victorian Gothic style, the Church and Hall were built in rough hewn stone with brick trim.

The slender octagonal spire and the distinctive stonework of the Church continue to provide a distinctive local landmark in Broken Hill.

The construction of the church and hall may have been associated with the large numbers of Cornish miners attracted to the town from South Australia and other nearby mining areas.

Their significance is their association with the pioneering days of Broken Hill and the arrival of Methodism with its strong temperance stance, and the contrast at the time with the town’s reputation for ‘boisterousness, heavy drinking and militant unionism’.

The hall was used by one of Broken Hill’s famous residents, Pro Hart, in 1988, for the filming of a carpet commercial.

The Uniting Church of Australia owns the church and hall. They were restored and renovated with the aid of State Government funding and they continue to function today.