



The world of art loses a great Territorian

The Northern Territory arts community will mourn the loss of George Chaloupka, Artback NT Chairperson Chips Mackinolty said today.

"For 50 years George has been at the heart of world knowledge and appreciation of the Northern Territory's rich tradition of rock art," said Mr Mackinolty.

"At a time in history when areas such as Kakadu were a far cry from the tourist mecca it is today, George worked with Aboriginal people - particularly in western Arnhem Land, identifying the astonishing traditions of the region.

"In his work on more than 3,000 art sites he did far more than visit the sites for the mere sake of documentation.

"His close relationships with the Aboriginal custodians of the art made it clear to the whole world that we are looking at a living tradition that stretches back many thousands of years.

"His work was critical in land claims over Kakadu and its final recognition as a World Heritage site.

"It didn't make him popular in many circles, especially back in the 70s--but he held to his passionate views about Aboriginal land rights, and the importance of their cultural heritage.

In recognition of services to Aboriginal art and culture, George Chaloupka was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1990 and in 2001 he was awarded the Centenary medal for service to Australian society and the humanities in aboriginal art and culture.

"On behalf of the Board of Artback NT, I would like to extend our condolences to George's family and many friends."

Details regarding a State Funeral to be released shortly.