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MEDIA RELEASE

UPDATED STORM SURGE MAPS RELEASED

Updated storm surge mapping for Darwin and Palmerston based on the potential long term impacts of sea level rise and climate change has been released.

The mapping shows that over the next 90 years 95% of properties are unlikely to be affected by storm surge and there are 20 fewer properties that may be affected than previously indicated.

The mapping has been prepared by GHD Pty Ltd based on scientific advice from nationally renowned Dr Bruce Harper, Principal Professional Environment and Risk. The analysis included the effects of projected sea level rises in and around Darwin of 0.8 metres to the year 2100 and also allowances for increased intensity and frequency of tropical cyclones. The mapping was developed using land elevations derived from newer, more advanced LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology.

If land is located in a storm surge zone it is at either a 1% (Primary Storm Surge Zone) or 0.1% (Secondary Storm Surge Zone) risk of a storm surge event in any given year. Just because a parcel of land is in a storm surge zone does not mean a flooding event will occur.

Executive Director of Strategic Planning David Malone said the updated maps take effect from today and will be used to assist government agencies, developers and property owners plan for possible storm surge events in the long term.

"The existing mapping we have had in place has stood the test of time, but particularly for land planning and emergency services management we need to contemplate the effects of climate change on our coastal suburbs over the longer term," Mr Malone said.

"The updated maps show that 95% of properties in Darwin and Palmerston are unlikely to be affected by storm surge over the next 90 years and of those that may be affected there are fewer in the 1% risk category (Primary Storm Surge Zone) and more in the 0.1% risk category (Secondary Storm Surge Zone) than previously.

"While this may sound counter-intuitive, this newer, more advanced analysis has allowed a more detailed understanding of the topography of our coastal suburbs and the effects of storm surge for the longer term."

"While the risk of inundation is relatively low, as has always been the case, landowners within the storm surge zones need to consider the storm surge levels when planning house extensions and other building works," Mr Malone added.

"The Department will write to relevant property owners advising them of the release of the new mapping and that we are available to answer any queries they may have."

The maps are available at <http://www.growingnt.nt.gov.au/>. As has always been the case, property owners looking to make changes to their land or those considering purchasing land within a storm surge zone should seek advice from an engineer, planner or building surveyor and can contact the Department at planning@nt.gov.au or on 08 8999 8963.