



Marion Scrymgour

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

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NT GOVERNMENT TAKES NEXT STEP TOWARDS ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY

The NT Government today took formative steps towards the establishment of the Territory's first Environment Protection Agency (EPA) by announcing the formation of the EPA Board.

The Board will oversee the development of the final model of the EPA, bringing the Territory into line with the rest of Australia and delivering on an important election promise.

Environment Minister Marion Scrymgour today also released a report into the Darwin Harbour which shows water quality in the Harbour is as good as it was 15 years ago.

"These announcements demonstrate the NT Government's commitment to protecting our unique environment," Ms Scrymgour said.

"For the first time in the NT's history we will have an independent, legislated EPA that Territorians can be proud of." Ms Scrymgour said.

Ms Scrymgour said the EPA will now take on most of the functions of the former Office of Environment and Heritage, with three Interim EPA Board members appointed to guide and advise on the structure of the final EPA model.

The members are Professor Gordon Duff, Professor Donna Craig and Ms Judith King. "The EPA board members are eminently qualified and highly respected. They bring with them significant scientific, legal and business expertise."

Ms Scrymgour said that a core function of the EPA will be to assist developers and industry understand and adhere to environmental regulations.

"The NT Government has protected the mangroves of Darwin harbour, introduced land clearing controls, and said "No" to cotton in the Territory. But it is imperative that as we enter a new phase in the Territory's development we have new environment protection arrangements in place."

Ms Scrymgour also announced the *Health of the Aquatic Environment in the Darwin Harbour Region report* shows there has been no detectable change in the water quality of Darwin Harbour since the first comprehensive study 15 years ago.

"The report shows river flows have not been significantly modified by dams or weirs, and river water quality is good with a diverse range of plants and animals," she said. "The streams are largely free of weeds and introduced fish"