



Marion Scrymgour
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

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Howard Springs Nature Park

The NT Government's commitment to Howard Springs Nature Park has been intensified with the employment of Indigenous rangers and a long-term planning team.

The planning team will examine long-term options for the popular Top End Waterhole, and release a Plan of Management for public comment next year.

The waterhole was closed earlier this year due to low water flows, which led to bacteria becoming too high to allow safe swimming. Last year the Top End experienced the ninth driest wet season over the last 45 years, which caused water flows to the swimming hole from the spring to dry up naturally.

"Howard Springs is an iconic Top End recreation park – generations of families have enjoyed the ambience of the park and I am committed to ensuring many more generations have the same luxury," Ms Scrymgour said.

"Parks and Wildlife and Larrakia Nation rangers have been charged with undertaking extensive works at the park, which initially included the installation of an aeration device to sustain aquatic life in the waterhole.

"However in the past two months there has been a lot more work carried out at the Reserve – and I am happy to say that water is flowing through at higher levels than it was earlier this year.

"The natural water flow has been supplemented with water piped from the park's existing bore.

"Other works include the clearing of weeds in the pool and the use of biodegradable bacteria to help break down organic matter.

"Fencing has also been installed to encourage swimmers to access the pool at certain points, and there has been trimming of undergrowth and pruning trees near the pool perimeter."

Importantly, Ms Scrymgour added that the waterhole's icon barramundi and turtles were doing very well.

"Recent water testing indicates good water quality for aquatic life and it would appear we are steadily moving closer to allowing people to swim there soon."

Ms Scrymgour said a planning team had also been assigned to assess the long term options for maintaining water quality in the pool.

“In the meantime, the community will have the chance to discuss the long-term management and maintenance of water quality in the waterhole during the preparation of the Plan of Management.

“The public consultation phase for the plan’s preparation will begin next year.”

Contact: Maria Billias 0401 119 746