



MEDIA RELEASE

Flood warning equipment damaged in Alice Springs

A vital piece of equipment used to predict floods in Alice Springs has been vandalised.

Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts natural systems senior director John Gilmour said it was difficult to understand why anyone would damage the Wigleys Gorge flood warning site, which is upstream and to the north of Alice Springs on the Todd River.

Mr Gilmour said the site's antenna was unscrewed and stolen last Sunday night with other important equipment such as water monitoring sensors also damaged.

He said it was quite fortunate that it had not been raining while the vandalism was taking place.

"The site records and transmits rainfall and water levels to flood forecasters in Alice Springs, Darwin and the Bureau of Meteorology every three hours," Mr Gilmour said.

"This information is used to generate flood warning reports which are sent to NT Police and emergency services who ensure the river bed is vacated and the various road crossings closed in Alice Springs if necessary.

"What alerted us to the fact there was something wrong was when we didn't receive one of the scheduled signals.

"So sometime between 6.59pm and 9.59pm on January 1, a person or persons have broken the padlock to the access road and driven their four-wheel-drive to the site.

"Then, what appears to have occurred, is these vandals have climbed a ladder and unscrewed the antenna which is a very important piece of equipment to the people of Alice Springs.

"We also have a sensor located at the bottom of the Todd River that was also found to have been pulled out.

"Vandalism such as this at the site jeopardises the ability of NRETA to predict floods that could cause major infrastructure damage to the town and possibly loss of life.

"So I urge anyone who might know about this particular incident to please contact police and let them know about it."

Mr Gilmour said that while the antenna and sensors each cost a few hundred dollars to replace, the man hours required to fix and test the equipment would mean the entire incident would cost NRETA more than \$1000.

Media Note _ For more information contact John Gilmour on 0401 118 399

Ends

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Wigleys Gorge Flood Alert Site