



Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee

Seminar Series - A Fish Eye's View of Darwin Harbour

Territorians are being given the chance to view spectacular underwater footage of Darwin Harbour at the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT tomorrow night.

Australian Institute of Marine Science scientist Dr Mark Meekan's presentation will demonstrate how clean Darwin Harbour is, especially during the dry season, as well as focusing on the health of the harbour's aquatic life.

"Although the waters of Darwin Harbour are murky, nutrient levels during the dry season are similar to those of the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland, so that's really good news," Dr Meekan said.

"However, the water quality during the wet season tends to drop a little as it receives an influx of nutrients but remains better than that of Moreton Bay in Queensland and is similar to many waterways in north Queensland."

Dr Meekan said work undertaken by AIMS in recent years included the placement of underwater cameras that were baited to attract fish in areas throughout the harbour.

"This was the first approach of its type in any estuarine waterway in northern Australia" Dr Meekan said.

"The fish that came into view included jewfish, snapper, cod as well as Tiger Sharks.

"Another research program sampled barramundi in the harbour and found they were in relatively good health, despite the fact they are living on the city's doorstep."

Dr Meekan said coral cores dating back to the 18th century would provide further evidence to show if the water quality of Darwin Harbour was being well maintained.

"By drilling cores from the coral and using the expertise of scientists at Charles Darwin University to analyse their skeletons, we will be able to assess rainfall, water temperatures and water quality for the past 200 plus years," Dr Meekan said.

Tomorrow night's free seminar commences at 6.30pm and other topics to be discussed include the ecology of terrestrial environments by Dr Owen Price and marine mammals and reptiles of Darwin Harbour by Dr Scott Whiting.

The seminar will be the last in a series facilitated by the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee that have been held at MAGNT during the past fortnight.

Media Note _ For more information contact Dr Mark Meekan on 0429 101 812

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'Our Harbour, Our Life, Our Future'