



Marion Scrymgour

MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

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Darwin Harbour fish and crabs given all clear

The health of Darwin Harbour has again been given the all-clear with a report released today by Environment Minister Marion Scrymgour showing fish caught near the Larrakeyah Sewage Outfall are safe to eat.

Ms Scrymgour last month ordered the testing of fish around the Outfall and at other harbour sites, following public concern about consumption of seafood from the Harbour.

“It was only last year a report was released showing the water quality throughout the Harbour was in the same condition as it was 15 years ago,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“However to allay the concern by anglers and the general community regarding the discharge from the Larrakeyah outfall into Darwin Harbour over the last 40 years, I asked the EPA to conduct testing of seafood.

Ms Scrymgour said that popular recreational fish species caught in the vicinity of the outfall are safe to eat.

“No crabs were found near the Larrakeyah Outfall. This is not surprising given that the outfall is in deep water and not the habitat that we would generally expect to find mudcrabs. Sampling of mudcrabs taken from Ludmilla Creek were found to be safe to eat.

“The results showed that all samples tested were below detection levels for standard health indicators, as well as concluding that recreational contact with water in the outfall areas is microbiologically safe.

“Based on the sampling, the water has been assessed under national guidelines as being of ‘very good’ quality for recreational uses such as swimming.”

Ms Scrymgour said that despite the results, the discharge by Power Water Corporation of macerated sewage from the Larrakeyah outfall into Darwin Harbour was not ideal, and PWC had committed to closing the Larrakeyah outfall within five years. All work carried out under the strategy is estimated to cost \$50 million.

“As an added measure I have also asked for signposting to be used to better inform the public about the location of the outfall and to warn water-based recreational users of the existence of the mixing zone,” Ms Scrymgour said.

“An ongoing monitoring program, including water quality and wildcatch testing will also be undertaken as part of future discharge licence conditions for the Larrakeyah sewage outfall.

“Similar monitoring will also be conducted on other PWC sewage treatment plant discharges to the Harbour.”

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