



MEDIA RELEASE

Amphibious Buffalo Discovered in Darwin Harbour

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts today urged people to inform it of any wrecks they might find in Darwin Harbour.

Heritage Conservation Services heritage officer David Steinberg said today's call comes after last month's discovery of an Amphibious "Buffalo" near Darwin.

"Local tour operator Shaun Uden discovered the wreck in late April and then contacted us and I thank him for this," Mr Steinberg said.

"Upon notification I was able to dive the site with Mr Uden on 30 April and inspect the site, with the wreck sitting upright and in good condition.

"If people who find a wreck such as this one contact us then we are able to research the wreck and determine its origins and significance."

Mr Steinberg said preliminary research into the Buffalo's origins indicate it was not used here during World War II but as an intended replacement for a civilian transport vehicle during the 1960s and 1970s.

"People who used to be ferried from Darwin to Mandorah were required to board the Buffalo, which would then transport them to the beach," Mr Steinberg said.

"The vehicle normally used for this process had broken down and we believe the Buffalo found last month by Mr Uden was the replacement vehicle being towed to Mandorah, before it sank.

"It is likely these vehicles were never used in Darwin during the war but its type was involved in some important campaigns elsewhere.

"The story is wonderful in terms of the quirky use of a tank like vehicle to carry passengers.

"Its discovery illustrates the diverse and rich maritime heritage of Darwin Harbour.

"From a fisherman's point of view, the fish life on the site is poor but it maybe of interest to recreational divers, but we hope divers do not damage or remove material from the wreck.

"It is something to be appreciated and left for future generations of divers."

Mr Steinberg said the wreck of the Amphibious Buffalo would only be considered for heritage listing if it was nominated by a member of the public for consideration by the Heritage Advisory Council.

He said that if the nomination is considered worthy of investigation the matter would be referred back to Heritage Conservation Services to provide a formal assessment.

If the Heritage Advisory Council determine to recommend the site be heritage listed to the Minister, then public comment is sought before a final decision is made.

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact David Steinberg on 8924 4141

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