



MEDIA RELEASE

Updated Interim Management Plan for the Wreck of the *Booya*

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA) has released an updated Interim Management Plan for the wreck of the *Booya*.

The *Booya* was a ship lost during Cyclone Tracy in 1974 and is significant for its natural and cultural values.

A marine ecosystem of exceptional diversity and richness has developed around the wreck site in Darwin Harbour and the fact this ecosystem has been unaffected by human activity, despite lying so close to a major city is rare.

It was an historic vessel built in 1917 and served in the allied war effort during World War II.

The site is also symbolic as a place where several people lost their lives in tragic circumstances, with the *Booya*'s location unknown until its discovery in Darwin Harbour on 22 October 2003.

The *Booya* shipwreck was declared a heritage place under the *Heritage Conservation Act* on 15 June 2005 with a 150m exclusion zone existing around the site declared under the *Darwin Port Corporation Act*.

NRETA heritage officer David Steinberg said the Plan allows for increased public access to the *Booya* in the form of controlled and non-destructive recreational diving.

"The purpose of this Plan is to provide a framework for managing the wreck site until a long-term management Plan can be prepared," Mr Steinberg said.

"The Plan allows access to the *Booya* for the purpose of recreational diving through a special exemption of the Harbourmaster's exclusion zone.

"Territory-based businesses and incorporated associations will be eligible to apply for the exemption with each exemption reviewed individually at the end of each year.

"This access program is a trial and will be assessed after the first year.

"Only a small number of exemptions will be issued comprising a series of conditions with exemptions retracted should conditions not be met.

"Fishing on the *Booya* will remain prohibited because of the impact this would have on the natural and cultural values of the site."

Mr Steinberg said an underwater sign such as a plinth would be installed at the wreck site in the future with the text focusing on the fact the site is the last resting place of five people and therefore should be suitably respected.

People can have their say on the updated interim management plan by visiting www.nt.gov.au/consult, emailing david.steinberg@nt.gov.au or calling 8924 4141.

The closing date for submissions is Monday, 30 July 2007.

Ends

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

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