

Media Release:

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Macroinvertebrate Sampling Training Course Held in Darwin

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA) Aquatic Health Unit has run the Northern Territory's first macroinvertebrate sampling training course.

NRETA aquatic ecologist Dr Gisela Lamche said the course was held in recognition of more and more organisations wanting to undertake macroinvertebrate sampling.

Dr Lamche said macroinvertebrate sampling was becoming increasingly popular as a means of environmental assessment.

"Macroinvertebrates are small organisms such as shrimps, insect larva and mussels that live in water and are used to determine how healthy that waterway is," Dr Lamche said.

"An increasing number of organisations want to assess stream health and to comply with monitoring requirements of wastewater discharge licences.

"Macroinvertebrates are sensitive to changes in water quality and therefore a good indicator of water health, as well as being a good food source for fish."

Dr Lamche said participants at the course included people representing government and non-government agencies as well as private enterprise.

She said the two day course, held in late August, had a theory and practical component.

"The theory provided participants with knowledge of how to gather and analyse data using the Australian Rivers Assessment System AUSRIVAS and other data analysis methods," Dr Lamche said.

"Our guest lecturer included Dr Chris Humphrey from the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (eriss) and he was excellent at explaining the data analysis processes step by step.

"And as part of the practical component we went to the Howard River because it is still flowing and it provided the opportunity to practise the sampling of different macroinvertebrate habitats."

Dr Lamche said the course was oversubscribed and plans will soon be underway to schedule another course in 2008.

Ends

Media Note – For more information contact Dr Gisela Lamche on 8999 3629

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