

**Media Release:**

**06.11.08**

## **Archaeological Dig Uncovers Historical Artefacts**

An archaeological dig taking place in the vacant lot behind the heritage listed Sue Wah Chin building in Darwin's CBD has uncovered many historical artefacts including a Chinese coin that's likely to originate from the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) Heritage Officer Patricia Bourke said the dig, which began on 22 September 2008, aimed to unearth any evidence of past occupation on the site.

"In addition to the Chinese coin we have also discovered an Australian Penny (1921), four Chinese medicine vials (pre 1870s), various buttons and beads, a pearl shell and metal pieces that may be part of a WWII soldiers buckles and casing for bomb storage," Dr Bourke said.

"Other material includes shells, bone, coloured glass, ceramic and metal pieces, nails, charcoal and porcellanite stone.

"One of the most exciting finds so far has been a well that was located with help from the Chin family, who were owners of the building for many years.

"The well is a reminder of a time when there was no reticulated water in Darwin and residents relied on wells for drinking water.

"We excavated the well down to a depth of about four metres, bringing up many artefacts, including whole bottles and we're still sorting through the spoil."

NRETAS' Heritage Branch is undertaking this investigation prior to the vacant lot being redeveloped.

Dr Bourke said the archaeological investigation will enhance our understanding of Darwin's past occupation and early development.

"The information will be used to add to interpretations of the history of the original Darwin CBD and the Sue Wah Chin Building, making the new building a continuation of the history of this place," Dr Bourke said.

The fieldwork is expected to be finalised by the end of November, with off-site analysis to continue following the fieldwork.

Ends

**Media Note – A photo opportunity is available with Dr Patricia Bourke at the Sue Wah Chin site, cnr Spain Place and Austin Lane, Darwin at 11am today.**

**For more information contact Patricia Bourke on 8999 5050**

**Image – 1. Chinese coin and Australian Penny.  
2. WWII bomb storage casing**

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