

Media Release:

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New East Arm Wharf Investigation Underway

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) today commenced a new investigation into the East Arm Wharf following the sighting of more red plumes in the waters around the facility.

Two more plume incidents have been reported to NRETAS in the past 24 hours by the Darwin Port Corporation (DPC), following an initial incident on Sunday 27 March 2011.

NRETAS will be investigating the systemic, engineering and hydrological issues of the Port as a result of these three incidents.

Environment Officers have attended the East Arm Wharf today as part of their inquiries.

Today's incident was reported to the Pollution Hotline by the DPC at 2.30pm, in what appears to be a small spillage during a ship loading exercise that was washed from the deck of a ship into the harbour following a rainstorm.

Yesterday's incident was also reported to the Pollution Hotline by the DPC, after a red plume, approximately 4 metres wide and 6 metres long, was cited near a stormwater drain, despite the drain being blocked with a steel plate.

The DPC installed an inflatable pipe plug inside the drain pipe, which resulted in the stormwater flows into the Darwin Harbour ceasing.

NRETAS is satisfied with the temporary plug arrangement put in place by the DPC, while works to strengthen the steel plate sealing the drain are actioned.

This incident was not from the same drain where an incident occurred last Sunday 27 March 2011.

NRETAS' extensive investigation that commenced last year into the alleged pollution incidents that occurred at East Arm Wharf is nearing finalisation.

A decision on prosecution under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* of the Darwin Port Corporation for this will be made in April 2011.

The public can report pollution matters to the Pollution Hotline on 1800 064 567

Ends

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