



Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee

November 2003

UPDATE

Ministerial Hand Over– Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management

The Chairman of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee, John Bailey recently delivered the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management to the Minister for Lands and Planning, Kon Vatskalis at Parliament House.

The Advisory Committee was charged with overseeing the development of the plan in consultation with the community.

On the 26th November, 2003, the Minister tabled the document at November sittings of the Legislative Assembly and called for further comment on the plan prior to an official Government announcement in 2004. "Facilitating opportunity for further comment is essential, this will ensure the development of a truly representative and comprehensive plan for Darwin Harbour's future" said Minister Vatskalis.



Chairman of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee, Mr John Bailey hands over the plan to Minister Vatskalis.

The Road to Implementation – Key Recommendations

The following recommendations were provided within the draft Plan to support the further development of integrated management of the Darwin Harbour region and the implementation of the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management. These are further detailed in Section 4 of the Plan.

1. The actions of the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management should be progressively implemented.
2. The Northern Territory Government should inform the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee of relevant activities in the Darwin Harbour region.
3. The Northern Territory Government should duly consider the advice provided by the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee.
4. The name of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee should be changed.
5. The membership of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee should be reviewed.
6. The Northern Territory Government should provide executive support the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee.
7. The effectiveness of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee should be reviewed periodically.
8. The Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management should be updated annually
9. Framework for integrating and coordinating research and monitoring in the Darwin Harbour region should be established.
10. A Darwin Harbour Integrated Monitoring Program should be established.
11. Community engagement in planning and management of the Darwin Harbour region should be enhanced through the actions of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee.
12. The Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee should seek to enhance indigenous engagement in planning and management of the Darwin Harbour region.

Other recommendations suggest the recognition of the plan and committee under relevant legislation and the provision of reporting obligations.

Copies of the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management can be obtained by contacting 89994473. Copies are available in CD format or you can download the document from the Advisory Committee's website at
<http://www.ipe.nt.gov.au/divisions/dhac>

Consultation – What the community had to say.

The call for submissions and comment on the draft Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management took place on the 21st August 2003. In the 6-week timeframe whereby submissions were received, some 245 copies of the draft document were disseminated on request.

Website statistics showed that a large number of people downloaded the plan from the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee website. Approximately 977 visits were recorded during the consultation period with the plan being the most accessed file on the site with 631 recorded downloads.

The total number of submissions received during the consultation phase was 36. Many of these submissions were particularly extensive, providing a range of comments specific to the draft document or raising other issues. In total there were 183 individual comments relating to the draft document.

A number of comments were received on various sections of the plan with the majority of comment focussing on section 3 - 'The Management Section' of the plan. This section encompasses the strategies and actions devised to achieve the outcomes and goals of the plan. Goal 1, entitled 'To maintain a healthy environment' received the largest proportion of comments, many of these suggesting the further advancement of conservation and protection measures and appealing for stronger action.

Section 4 of the plan also received considerable commentary. The section referring to 'Recommendations for Integrated Management and Implementation' received the most interest with some 27 comments. Attention to this section of the plan exceeded all others with the majority of comments endorsing an approach for statutory support of the plan and any overseeing committee.

Generally comments on section 4 focussed on the following:

- Scope of the DHAC and Plan;
- Need for an independent representative group to oversee the plans implementation;
- Stronger statutory support for the plan and environmental protection generally;
- Need to examine terms of reference for any group which presides over the plan;
- Annual reviews and evaluation process;
- Clearer definition of the ERG and EMG roles and possible amalgamation given comparable membership; and

- Organisational structure to effect ongoing management and implementation.

Overall the majority of comments on the draft document focussed on the use of terms and either offered alternatives or raised other points to be considered. All comments were assimilated and reviewed by the DHAC.

For the consultation summary and other details see <http://www.ipe.nt.gov.au/divisions/dhac>.

Catchment Facts...



Darwin City Council maintains 230 suburban parks covering some 600 hectares, while Palmerston City Council maintains 59 hectares of parkland and 23 hectares of bushland.



The water quality of Darwin Harbour varies greatly. It fluctuates with the tide (spring versus neap), with the location (inner versus outer harbour), and with the season (wet season versus dry season). Tides have a marked affect on the clarity of the harbour with waters of neap tides being the clearest, whilst spring tides carry much of the sediment from fringing mangroves



Larrakia Country is considered 'salt water country', but it is also 'sweet water country' in that the crystal clear water from the Top End is naturally filtered through sand, clay, rocks and plants giving it a delicious 'sweet' taste.



Tourism is a key industry for the Darwin Harbour region, with visitor expenditure in the Top End accounting for some 47% of the Territory's visitor expenditure, valued at \$457 million

Comments can be sent to:

The Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee
C-/O PO Box 30
PALMERSTON NT 0831
Or

E-mail: dhac@nt.gov.au

For further information or assistance contact (08) 89994473