

# CASTAWAY EXPLORATION

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30<sup>th</sup> October 2020

The Chairman  
Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority,  
GPO Box 3675,  
Darwin NT 0801

Re: Draft Review of Seabed Mining in the Northern Territory –  
Environmental Impacts and Management

Dear Sir

We provide comment on the above as requested in your media release of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

For many years we have been part of a succession of surveys, discussion groups, one on one meetings, and a variety of engagements at all levels of the community and government providing feedback about Darwin Harbour.

We are on record that we have been, and remain, supporters of looking after this unique region. We do however believe that there needs to be open and frank discussion about the potential for future sand mining in the harbour.

At present the NT Government has a blanket ban on all mining, however there is often random dredging to waste around Cullen Bay and other shipping channels in the Port and Blaydin Point areas. Little monitoring of impacts has been carried out, nor has been expected by overseeing bodies, after this frequent dredging.

This is not only a waste of what is a worldwide scarce resource, but potentially far more damaging to the environment than removal of this sand sediment transported within and across the harbour by the strong tidal movements, or terrestrial mining.

In 2004 we had two applications to mine sand deposits in the Harbour rejected based on the blanket ban introduced, not on our merit. The history of our long-term commitment to this proposal is well documented within the Department. As is our business reputation.

The Darwin Harbour Strategy 2019 – 2024 stated a purpose to “Advocate a consistent, coordinated approach to stewardship and decision making related to resource use in the region..” and a guiding principle of “Policy settings and regulation must be supportive of the Harbours beneficial uses in a manner that achieves mutual and balanced recognition of economic, social cultural and environmental considerations..” and has a goal “to protect and enhance the economic value of Darwin Harbour in accordance with ecologically sustainable development principles. “

Now this EPA draft report on Seabed Mining in the Northern Territory acknowledges that "The coastal waters of the NT contain mineral resources..." and that "It is possible that manageable impacts from small scale seabed mining activities in relatively data rich locations and/or resilient ecosystems could be effectively assessed and regulated." And further that "Potentially significant impacts may be effectively managed under current environmental impact assessment and regulatory arrangements resulting in acceptable proposals."

Darwin harbour has a vast collection of historical and baseline data already on record and has also already had significant undersea disturbance, particularly in our area of interest around the two sand deposits.

Your sincerely

**CASTAWAY EXPLORATION**

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'SW', written in a cursive style.

**SHARON WILSON**