

Darwin Harbour Indigenous Marine Ranger Program Biodiversity Impact Mitigation Offsets Strategy (BIMOS)

Annual Report, October 2013

Overview

The Darwin Harbour Indigenous Marine Ranger Program (Marine Ranger Program) is a collaboration between Department of Land Resource Management (DLRM) and Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation (LNAC). Two rangers will be recruited, employed and managed as part of the LNAC ranger program. DLRM will coordinate monitoring work and on the job training and supervision for the rangers. DLRM is responsible for the development of the program and reporting.

Rangers have commenced monitoring work and the project is considered to be successful so far.

Background

The establishment and operation of a Darwin Harbour Indigenous Marine Ranger Program is required as part of the Biodiversity Impact Mitigation and Offsets Strategy (BIMOS) approved for the East Arm Wharf (EAW) expansion works. The East Arm Wharf expansion works are subject to Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Cth) (EPBC Act) Approval 2010/5304 obtained on 5 March 2012 and the Biodiversity Impact Mitigation and Offsets Strategy (BIMOS) has been approved as part of Condition 32 of the Approval.

The BIMOS requires the equivalent of two full time Indigenous rangers to be engaged, trained and supervised by the former NRETAS, now DLRM. The Rangers are to receive training and contribute to the Department of Land Resource Management's monitoring effort in the areas of water quality, sediment, dolphin, seagrass, fish and the Marine Wildwatch program and migratory bird monitoring by Charles Darwin University. Funding has been committed to continue the program for two years.

A report on the program up to 31 October each year is required by Department of Lands Planning and Environment which oversees all aspects of the EAW expansion.

Project update

In July 2013 this project commenced with an assessment to determine the most effective approach to developing the Darwin Harbour Indigenous Marine Ranger Program (Marine Ranger Program). Negotiation with the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation (LNAC) commenced soon after to establish the Marine Ranger program as a collaborative arrangement both utilising and assisting the already established Larrakia Ranger Program.

The funding agreement with LNAC was executed in mid-October 2013 (Attachment A). The agreement is for a one year term with the option to extend annually until the completion of the program. The recruitment process to employ new rangers commenced in late October 2013 and is still underway.

LNAC is responsible for recruiting and employing the marine rangers. LNAC will determine training needs of the individual marine rangers and is responsible for sending marine rangers on training courses as appropriate. LNAC will provide activity summaries, an annual report and funding acquittal to DLRM.

Department of Land Resource Management (DLRM) provides a part time Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator has been responsible for negotiations, developing and managing the program, drafting the agreement and assisting LNAC with recruitment. The Project Coordinator works closely with LNAC assisting with administrative processes and DLRM personnel who are responsible for the various monitoring programs in the harbour. DLRM provides on the job training and information sessions in each of the fields of monitoring except for migratory birds, which is provided by the Charles Darwin University PhD student. DLRM will provide annual reporting to Department of Lands Planning and Environment.

This collaborative approach assists with learning and work experience opportunities for Larrakia rangers more broadly than the individual Marine Rangers. It therefore contributes to greater capacity building for LNAC. The Larrakia Rangers also provide a "back up" service for the Marine Rangers so that work can continue if field work for different monitoring projects overlap or if the Marine Rangers need to take leave.

There will be a strong focus on rangers being trained on the job and participating in "on water" Harbour monitoring. This will also include preparatory work and follow up laboratory work, data entry and management to ensure that the rangers receive holistic training and understanding of the projects. This approach will provide a better understanding of the work, greater job satisfaction by more extensive involvement of the projects and a more realistic work experience. It is expected that this will improve future employment prospects for the rangers.

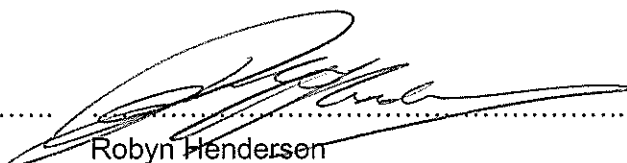
All Larrakia Rangers have been invited to educational/information sessions on migratory bird surveys and dolphin monitoring.

Field days on the harbour assisting dolphin monitoring, fish monitoring and migratory bird surveys commenced in late September by Larrakia Rangers in good faith on behalf of both parties prior to the agreement finalisation in October.

Field Work Statistics to 31 October 2013

Information sessions and field work for the Darwin Harbour Marine Ranger Program commenced late September 2013

Project/work unit	Number of Person Days
Beach water quality monitoring	
Sediment health Monitoring	
Seagrass monitoring	
Dolphin monitoring	20
Fish Monitoring	8
Marine Wildwatch program	
Migratory Birds surveys	4
In house training	2
Unscheduled monitoring or surveillance activities	
Training/Course work	
Accredited training Cert 1-3.	8

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