A VISION FOR AN INTEGRATED DARWIN HARBOUR REPORT CARD

The Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee (DHAC) is working towards producing a collaborative, transparent and cross-sectoral vision for Darwin Harbour in the Northern Territory of Australia.

This effort is designed to support Australian and Territory authorities, communities and businesses by working to make their efforts more integrated and effective, and seeks to leverage the creativity that emanates from diversity rather than being hampered by opposing viewpoints.

Report cards provide a mechanism and process to develop such a vision and their success has been demonstrated around the world. DHAC, together with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) and the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), are working together to support the development of an integrated report card for Darwin Harbour.

This vision of an integrated report card will augment and build upon the existing series of water quality focused report cards that have been prepared by the Northern Territory Government since 2009.

UMCES and AIMS will work with DHAC and a broad suite of local stakeholders to assess and report the environmental, cultural, social and economic health of Darwin Harbour. The process of developing an integrated report card fosters intense community engagement, creating opportunities for increased awareness of ecosystem condition, function, and services, as well as information on the decision-making process that affects the region.

DARWIN HARBOUR REPORT CARD

A Darwin Harbour Report Card would compare ecological, social and economic information about Darwin Harbour against predefined goals or objectives chosen by local stakeholders. Similar to a school report card, a Darwin Harbour Report Card would provide performance-driven numeric grades that reflect the health of the harbour on a regular basis. A Darwin Harbour Report Card would join the ranks of other successful report cards such as for the Mississippi River, Great Barrier Reef, South-east Queensland, and Chesapeake Bay.
Existing data and monitoring efforts undertaken by a range of stakeholders and NT Government in the region presents an ideal opportunity for integration. Bringing this together and developing consistent protocols with stakeholders will help support integrated reporting. This approach will also unlock opportunities for sharing data and build efficiencies in monitoring effort in the region. Most importantly distilling this data in a format that is available to the community and showcases industry, government and community stewardship is strongly supported by local stakeholders.

A foundation of robust science and shared monitoring in the region is required to underpin integrated reporting. The newly revitalised Darwin Harbour Integrated Monitoring and Research Program Coordination Committee is ideally placed to work collaboratively with the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee (DHAC) and provide this valuable scientific and technical guidance. Additional stakeholder advice and expertise for the development of appropriate cultural, social, economic and other indicators would be sought via the broad representative base of DHAC. The move towards an integrated report card will be iterative and develop over time as data availability permits. The report card will place Darwin Harbour amongst some of the more progressive and holistic reporting systems nationally and internationally, reflecting community values and the desire to protect the highly revered tropical ecosystems, culture and lifestyle.

Funding for the Darwin Harbour Integrated Reporting working group start-up will be sought over coming months from key industry stakeholders, government and research agencies. Governance models and a key stakeholder list will be developed to ensure integrated reporting delivers for managers and informs decision making in the longer term.

**Project timeline**

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<tr>
<td>WORKSHOP PREPARATION</td>
<td>STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP I</td>
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**Towards integrated reporting – Interaction of key groups**

- **Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee (DHAC)**
  - Community-based stakeholder committee appointed by the Minister for Environment & Natural Resources

- **Darwin Harbour Integrated Monitoring & Research Program Coordination Committee (CC)**
  - Technical/scientific committee represented by key stakeholders undertaking monitoring & research in the region

- **Darwin Harbour Integrated Reporting working group (DHIR)**
  - Established to develop integrated reporting framework