

# TOWARDS INTEGRATED REPORTING FOR DARWIN HARBOUR

DARWIN HARBOUR REPORT CARD  
STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP SUMMARY 17 – 20 MARCH 2020

Darwin Harbour supports the Northern Territory of Australia's largest concentration of commerce and industry. It's home to most of the Northern Territory's residents, and is the country of Traditional Owners, specifically the Larrakia people.

Darwin Harbour's diverse ecosystems, including relatively intact mangrove systems, coral reefs, mudflats and seagrass beds, support high biodiversity and provide habitat for nesting turtles, dolphins, dugong, migratory shorebirds, and fish.

The Harbour provides many recreational opportunities, and its fisheries support a large recreational fishing sector. Darwin Harbour is a strategically important working Harbour, and it is the only deep water port between Cairns in Queensland and Broome in Western Australia.

Ongoing development of the Harbour supports its continued role in the economy of the Northern Territory, but the environmental, cultural, and recreational values cannot be underestimated.

This newsletter summarizes outputs from the initial stakeholder workshop to develop an integrated assessment for Darwin Harbour. The workshop took place on the week of 16 March 2020 in Darwin, Australia. Stakeholders from government, industry, academia, indigenous communities, and NGO's gathered in Darwin to identify values. The workshop included meeting with members of the indigenous community, held outdoors at Wagait Beach.



View of Darwin Harbour with Cullen Bay in the foreground and Darwin City in the background. Source: Northern Territory Government.

## DARWIN HARBOUR REPORT CARD

The Darwin Harbour Report Card will report on the ecological, social, indigenous cultural, and economic health of Darwin Harbour. Similar to a school report card, the Darwin Harbour Report Card will provide performance-driven numeric grades that reflect the health of the harbour on a regular basis.

The Darwin Harbour Report Card will join the ranks of other successful report cards such as for the Mississippi River, Great Barrier Reef, and Chesapeake Bay.



## DEVELOPING AN ECOSYSTEM HEALTH REPORT CARD

The Darwin Harbour Report Card will be a high level, multidimensional and multi-sectoral assessment of a complex environment. It will provide a timely, transparent synthesis of information that is communicated to a broad audience. The process of creating this report card is stakeholder-driven, relying on local knowledge and expertise.

The series of workshops held in March 2020 was the first step in the report card journey, capturing the diversity of values that stakeholders that live, work and recreate within the Darwin Harbour region identify as most important. Discussions were focussed on the environmental, indigenous cultural, social and economic themes within Darwin Harbour.

Stakeholders were then tasked with choosing indicators and thresholds that have potential to measure the health of these values.



Nicholas Gouldhurst



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Workshop participants discussing values and potential indicators to measure the health of Darwin Harbour.

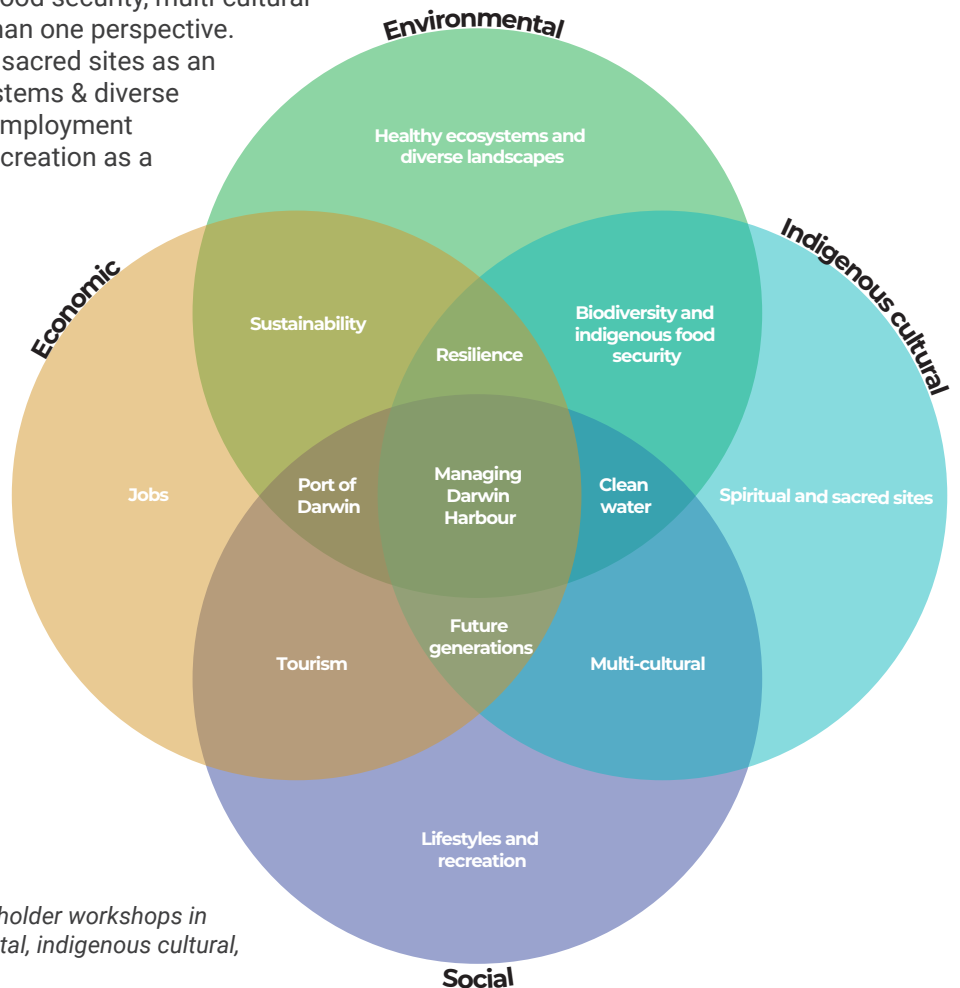
## VALUES OF ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

Evident from both workshops was that in viewing Darwin Harbour through any of the various lenses—environmental, indigenous cultural, social or economic – resulted in considerable agreement and overlap of values. The importance of managing Darwin Harbour, including the Port of Darwin and the natural environment, to enhance water quality to help build resilience and preserve the Harbour for future generations was evident from many perspectives.

The values of biodiversity & indigenous food security, multi-cultural participation and tourism served more than one perspective. In addition, the importance of spiritual & sacred sites as an indigenous cultural value, healthy ecosystems & diverse landscapes as an environmental value, employment as an economic value, and lifestyles & recreation as a social value were also established.

Report cards evaluate the health of a system based on a set of scientifically derived indicators and thresholds. Three indicators per value were chosen for further investigation as to their suitability for representing respective values and for inclusion in the report card.

Indicator suitability is determined based on data availability, data quantity and quality, associated thresholds, and geographic coverage of the study area. Indicators short-listed during the stakeholder workshops are shown on the following page.



Darwin Harbour values identified during stakeholder workshops in March, 2020 within the themes of environmental, indigenous cultural, social and economic.

# PROPOSED INDICATORS OF DARWIN HARBOUR HEALTH

Darwin Harbour values identified	Indicator
<b>BIODIVERSITY AND INDIGENOUS FOOD SECURITY</b> 	Catchment disturbance index
<b>CLEAN WATER</b> 	Index of fauna
<b>FUTURE GENERATIONS</b> 	Index of flora
<b>HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND DIVERSE LANDSCAPES</b> 	Water quality index
<b>JOBS</b> 	Rubbish/Litter
<b>LIFESTYLES AND RECREATION</b> 	Toxicants
<b>MANAGEMENT</b> 	Education
<b>MULTI-CULTURAL</b> 	Employability
<b>PORT OF DARWIN</b> 	Two-way consultation
<b>RESILIENCE</b> 	Sub-tidal habitat
<b>SPIRITUAL AND SACRED SITES</b> 	Mangrove habitat
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b> 	Terrestrial habitat
<b>TOURISM</b> 	Jobs in catchment
	Jobs on water
	Jobs in environmental management
	Recreational fishers using harbour
	People using coastal reserves
	Coastline accessibility
	Development and implementation of plans
	Collaborative partnerships
	Public awareness
	Sharing of culture
	Variety of cuisine
	Cultural profile of population
	Number/Size of vessels in/out
	Value of import/export through port facilities
	Development / Investment by business
	Pressure monitoring index
	Healthy habitat index
	Level of monitoring undertaken
	Identification
	Protection
	Respect of country
	This value, representing the overlap between economy and environment, was not uniquely identified during the workshop but represents an important aspect to consider for the health of Darwin Harbour. Indicators such as energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction technologies and strategies will be investigated for this value
	Tourism boats
	Cruise ships/passengers
	Nature/eco-tourism operators

## MOVING THE REPORT CARD FORWARD

The development and production of the Darwin Harbour report card is estimated to take eighteen months, with a release planned for mid 2021. Following the initial stakeholder workshop in March 2020, the next eight months will entail collection and analysis of data for identified indicators. At the end of the data collection and analysis phase, another stakeholder workshop will occur to present preliminary findings and recommendations. Then a process of consolidating comments, final revisions, final sign-off from stakeholders, and developing the communication strategy will be undertaken prior to public release of the report card.



Proposed timeline of project activities though to release of the report card

## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

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Participants of the first Darwin Harbour report card workshops held in March 2020.

## SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

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This project is an initiative of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee. It is supported by the Ian Potter Foundation and the Northern Territory Government, with a diversity of partners contributing to the report card process (Charles Darwin University, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Larrakia Development Corporation, Darwin Port, ConocoPhillips Australia, City of Darwin, and International WaterCentre).