

ENVIRONMENT NT

The Newsletter of the Environment Centre NT
PO Box 2120 Darwin NT 0801 Ph (08) 8981 1984 Fax (08) 8941 0387
Unit 3, 98 Woods St, Darwin. E-mail: ecnt@octa4.net.au

Website- <http://www.ecnt.org>

June 2001

The Territory's Changing Climate CSIRO's Climate Change Projections for the Northern Territory

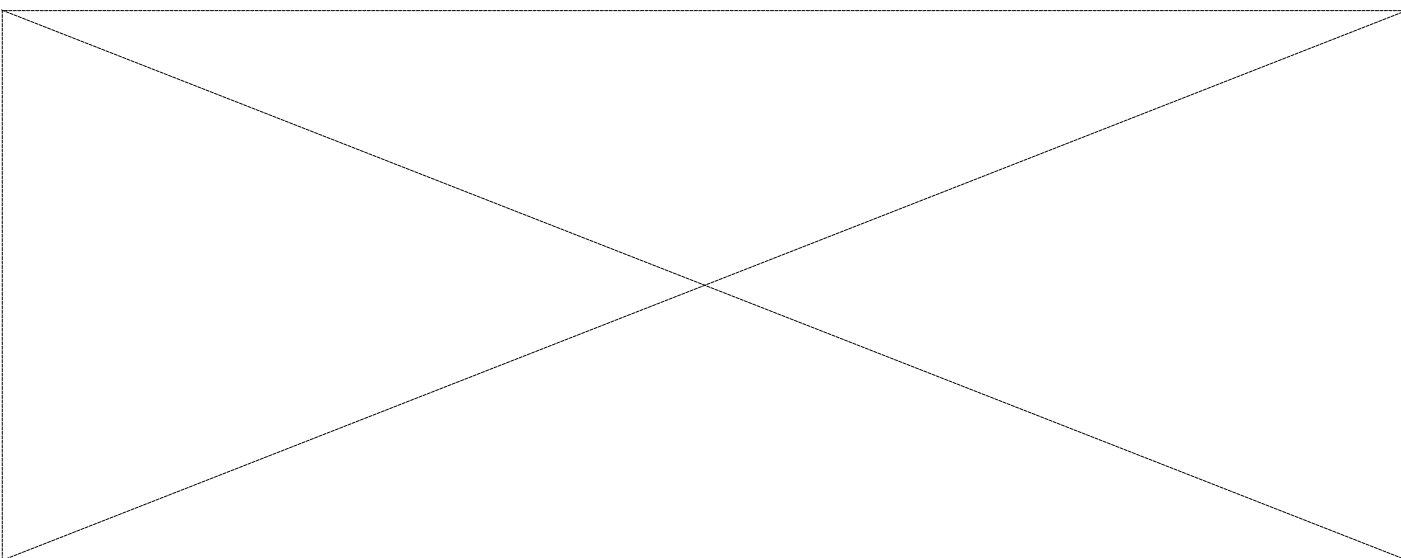
Two recently released reports, one from the CSIRO on climate change and the other from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, highlight some disturbing trends to reflect upon. The CSIRO report predicts an annual average temperature increase of 0.4 to 2°C by 2030 over most of Australia due to the build up of greenhouse gases. By 2070, annual average temperatures are expected to increase by 1 to 6°C over large areas of the continent, including the Top End, with the greatest warming to occur in the north-west in summer.

According to CSIRO, 'confidence is high for projections relating to carbon dioxide and warming, and moderate for the direction of rainfall changes'.

A previous CSIRO study back in 1998 projected that overall rainfall in the NT would be likely to decrease. However, the frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones is expected to rise with wind-speeds increasing by 5-20% by 2100. The Alice Springs region is also likely to become significantly wetter. The report also predicts that the global sea-level is likely to rise by between 0.8 to 8.0 cm per decade over the course of the cen-

the NT can be expected to increase and this will lead to an enhanced risk of bushfires.

- The freshwater floodplains of northern Australia are likely to be subject to significant saltwater inundation.
- It is anticipated that the risk of flooding will increase, with a one in five year rainfall event likely to become a one in two year event. Storm surges are expected to be significantly higher.
- The potential for mosquito-borne disease infection, such as malaria,



The wide temperature range given in the report is due to the various climate-modeling scenarios that are used. These were based on the full range of future emissions scenarios explored by the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change in its report released earlier in the year. Ac-

ture.

Some of the potential impacts of climate change foreshadowed by CSIRO in its previous 1998 report and in the current one include:

- The number of days over 35°C in

Inside:

- P2: Rapid Creek– community decision ignored**
- P3: Tiwi plantation update**
- P3: Bits & pieces**
- P4: Dates for the diary**

is also likely to increase because warmer conditions would extend the range and growth season of mosquitoes.

- **Species more able to adapt to climate change will proliferate at the expense of less adaptable ones. Particularly vulnerable ecosystems in the NT include mangroves and wetlands, woodland savannas, deserts and remnant native grasslands.**

Then only a couple of weeks ago the Australian Bureau of Statistics released a report which fingered the Northern Territory as the highest consumer of energy per capita in Australia of all the states and territories. The NT con-

sumed 386 GJ/capita in 1997-98 compared to the overall Australian figure of 254.9 GJ/capita. Like Western Australia and Queensland, the NT has experienced rapid growth in energy consumption since the mid-1970's. The ABS concluded that 'this is mainly due to the concentration of strongly growing energy intensive industries, particularly in the mining and minerals processing sectors'.

A mine like Nabalco's bauxite operation on Gove Peninsula, which has its own fuel oil and diesel generator, is an especially intensive user of energy and also a large contributor to greenhouse emissions. Excessive use of cars and road transport, landclearing methane from cattle and industrial and

household waste production also contribute unhealthy doses of greenhouse gas into the atmosphere. There is definitely no cause for complacency here. **Both reports help us to understand why the NT needs to change direction and move quickly towards a more ecologically sustainable future and why the Australian Government needs to support and ratify the Kyoto protocol.**

Further reading:
CSIRO 2001. *Climate Change – Projections for Australia. Climate Change – Impacts for Australia.*
<http://www.dar.csiro.au/res/cm/projections.htm>

-Mark Wakeham & Kirsten Blair

Rapid Creek- community decision ignored

Following an exhaustive process to establish the Rapid Creek Land Use Objectives in 1999, community members thought that they had an outcome which guaranteed the future protection of the creek. The declared land use objectives determined that a 50 metre corridor either side of the creek would be zoned for conservation purposes. Should any of the rural living blocks abutting the creek be subdivided, then any land falling within that corridor would be returned to the public to be managed for conservation by the Darwin City Council.

So far so good. Then in 2000, two of the property owners in Freshwater Road submitted development applications for subdivisions. Both applications acknowledged that an area of their property would be handed over to the Council. Then the process went haywire. Given that the development applications seemed in accordance with the Land Use Objectives none of the residents objected to the development application. However for some reason the developers objected to their own development application. Then without any public consultation the Chairman of the Development Consent Authority (the body vested with planning decisions) made variations to the applications and gave planning approvals. The variations were substantial- they essentially returned the area within the planned 100 metre conservation buffer to the developers, that is land that was supposed to form part of a public conservation reserve along Rapid Creek is still being managed (or is not being managed) by the property owners. There is no public access to the 'conservation zone'- groups like Rapid Creek Landcare cannot freely access the area to undertake rehabilitation.

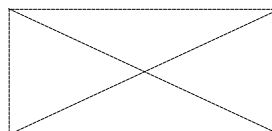
The interventions made by the Development Consent Authority (DCA) undermine the agreed outcome outlined in the Land Use Objectives. The fact that the Development Consent Authority made these decisions privately with no trans-

parent processes further exposes the flaws in the Planning Act and planning generally in the NT. With a number of other community groups the Environment Centre met with the Lands, Planning and Environment Minister, Tim Baldwin, in an attempt to express our concerns and find a solution to what is an unacceptable situation. We were very disappointed to find the Minister unsympathetic and unwilling to intervene to ensure a publicly managed conservation buffer for Rapid Creek is established. We were extremely concerned that our Environment Minister seemed not to understand that the land in the buffer zone would be better managed by one landowner, the Darwin City Council, than by a number of private landholders.

ECNT believes that the NT Government must intervene and over-rule the Development Consent Authority decision which contravenes the Land Use Objectives. A 50 metre conservation buffer either side of Rapid Creek is the absolute minimum required to safeguard the health of Rapid Creek as it comes under increased development pressures.

If you would like to express your concerns about the planning decisions made in relation to Rapid Creek, contact your local member today (for member's contact details see <http://notes.nt.gov.au/lant/members/>) and email:

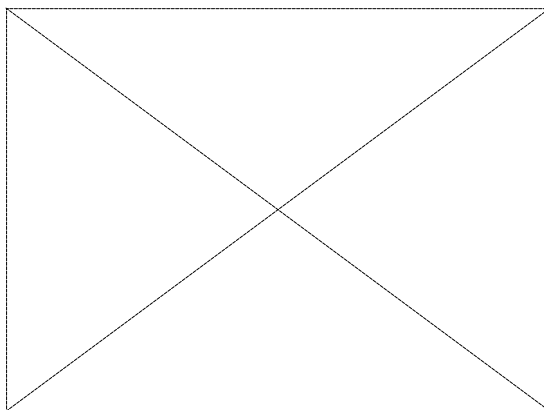
Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment,
Tim Baldwin- tim.baldwin@nt.gov.au
Chief Minister, Denis Burke, denis.burke@nt.gov.au
Leader of the Opposition,
Clare Martin, electorate@martin.nt.gov.au



-Kirsten Blair & Mark Wakeham

UPDATE: Tiwi Island plantation proposal

Senator Hill has decided that the appropriate level of assessment for the proposed 25,000 hectare *Acacia mangium* plantation on Melville Island is on **preliminary documentation**. This means that no new studies (for example an Environmental Impact Statement) are required to be prepared, as the existing documents are deemed to be sufficient for determining the impact on nationally listed threatened species.



Partridge Pigeon photo: Greg Miles

- Partridge Pigeon – *Gephaps smithii smithii*
- Red Goshawk – *Erthrotriochis radiatus*
- False Water-Rat – *Xeromys myoides*

Copies of the preliminary documents are available from the Sylvatech Ltd office - 6th Floor, NT House, 22 Mitchell Street – phone 8941 7788.

The public can make submissions before Friday 22nd June addressing them to:

Trent Zimmerman, Public Affairs Consultant, 17 Walker Ave, Edgecliff, NSW, 2027.

The nationally listed threatened species that are at risk from this proposal are:

- Bare-Rumped Sheathtailed bat – *Saccolaimus saccolaimus nadicluniatus*
- Masked Owl (Melville Island subspecies) – *Tyto novaehollandiae melvillensis*
- The rainforest plant *Burmannaia sp.*
- Butler's Dunnart – *Sminthopsis butleri*

ECNT will make its draft submission available to members to assist them with their own submissions a week before the closing date. Contact Jann (8941 7439) for further details.

Jann Crase
Northern Woodlands Campaigner

Bits and Pieces

A Busy Time For ECNT

The reduced size of this newsletter reflects the business of the Office this month. There is so much happening that we haven't had time to write articles! We hope you understand. We have included a petition for Darwin readers calling for container deposit legislation. Mike Reed said they will introduce it if people ask for it. Here is a way to do that! Please get as many signatures as you can and send (even if not full) to the address on the bottom – by mid June.

Fun Fundraising Night

We hope that you have all organised with your friends and workmates to come along to our Spaghetti Western Night on 5th June! We recommend that you bring along a fistful of Dollars so you can participate in our games and maybe pick up a Livid Lizzie T-Shirt (\$15). They are becoming collector's items. We will also have our shopping bags for sale (\$5). Tickets for film (\$9 for members, \$12 non) and meal (\$6) will be available from 6.30pm.

More Waste Matters

Members may be interested to know about communications I have had with Coles and Woolworths in the past six months about waste related matters. I first wrote to representatives at the national headquarters of each of them to ask if the company had an Environmental Policy. I also included some other questions relating to waste reduction and recycling.

I followed this initial letter with two phone calls. Coles sent me information relating to recycling in their various stores (Coles, BiLo, Target). They claim they recover 80% of cardboard packaging for recycling by AMCOR/Visy. They also collect waste plastic (10-15%) for recycling. They claim they have significantly reduced energy use in their stores (by 11%) since 1996. They continue to make improvements in energy use by use of energy efficient lighting and refrigeration. I have had no response at all from Woolworths.

-Di Koser

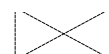
Marine Biodiversity and Conservation Strategy released for the NT.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory has released a Draft Strategy for the Conservation of Marine Biodiversity in the Northern Territory. The strategy has been compiled by a cross-departmental working group. Public submissions to the strategy have been called for and submissions must be made by a deadline of 16th June 2001.

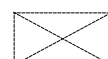
Copies of the strategy can be obtained by calling Dave Lawson at the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory on 89994561.

Harbour Surprise

For those who saw Yolgnu Boy and were surprised/sceptical about the Manta Ray in the film, I want to report that they can still be seen below the cliffs at Nightcliff. Although the one we saw was about three metres across, Patrick O'Leary informed me it was "only a baby" because they reach sizes up to nine metres across. -Di Koser

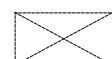








Bits and Pieces



Diary Dates for June

Sunday 3 June- World Environment Day activities @ NT Museum 1-4pm. Contact Kate Nealon 8924 4149

Tuesday 5 June- World Environment Day Spaghetti Western Films & food night @ Deck-chair Cinema from 6.30pm

Thursday 7 & 21 June- ECNT stall @ Mindil Beach markets—volunteers needed from 4pm

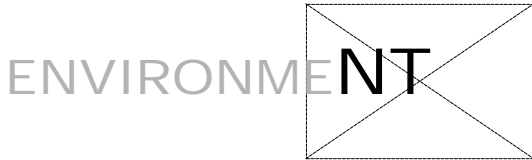
Mid June Deadline for Container Deposit legislation petitions

The views expressed in *EnvironmeNT* are not necessarily those of the Environment Centre NT management committee
Please recycle this newsletter: leave it in a waiting room or other appropriate place for someone else to read

The Newsletter of the Environment Centre NT
PO Box 2120 Darwin NT 0801 Ph (08) 8981 1984 Fax (08) 8941 0387
E-mail: ecnt@octa4.net.au

Surface Mail

Postage
Paid



Registered by Australia Post Print Post No.54539300037 If undeliverable please return to GPO Box 2120 Darwin NT

