



NORTHERN TERRITORY PROFESSIONALS

Newsletter of COMMUNITY & PUBLIC SECTOR UNION
professionals in the Northern Territory public service



Issue no. 1, April 2016

This is the first edition of the NTPS Professionals Newsletter. We hope to receive contributions from members working within the NTPS in the future, but this first edition contains articles from other Websites. To contribute articles or letters to this Newsletter, please see below.

Secrets of Darwin Harbour – from sandwaves to shipwrecks

Darwin is world renowned for its rich and diverse landscapes, but as a scientific exploration party has just discovered, there is an equally diverse and until now undiscovered region of Darwin under the sea.

A marine survey tasked to map the seabed of Darwin Harbour in high resolution and collect geochemical and physical samples has found relicts of Australia's ancient geography in the form of sub-marine sand dunes, ripples and sand waves.

These features tell a story from the last ice age some 20 000 years ago when global sea levels were much lower and Darwin Harbour did not exist as we know it today.

During this time a land-bridge existed between northern Australian and New Guinea, and Darwin was potentially only a river valley until an estuary developed when rising seas drowned the area around 7000-8000 years ago.

"This crucial research significantly enhances our efforts for better estuary and coastal management of this area, while creating the best mapped tropical macro-tidal system in the world. It's also an exciting test case for scientists who hope to better understand complex environmental systems like Darwin Harbour", said Neil Smit, a scientist in the Northern Territory Government.

Geoscience Australia was asked to partner the Northern Territory Government in this research bringing over 50 years' experience in sea floor mapping which has underpinned exponential growth in building Australia's understanding of the marine environment.

They will continue to collaborate on this research for the duration of the four-year program.

The survey has also provided a new generation of accurate and detailed imagery of historic ship wrecks in Darwin Harbour.

These include the USAT Meigs (sunk during the bombing of Darwin in 1942) and the Booya (pictured) which sank during Cyclone Tracy in 1974. "These images are a great contribution to our continuous efforts to better understand our marine archaeology, and to manage these historic shipwrecks in Darwin Harbour", said David Steinberg a Senior Heritage Officer of the Northern Territory Government.

Armed with an increased understanding of the marine environment, the Northern Territory Government will be able to make the most informed decisions in terms of the ongoing management and development of the Harbour.

The survey was undertaken by the Northern Territory Government in conjunction with Geoscience Australia and the Australian Institute of Marine Science, and is supported by funding from Ichthys LNG Project

This article was first published by the Northern Territory Department of Land Resource Management - website link to the original content –
<http://www.lrm.nt.gov.au/news-room/secretsof-darwin-harbour-from-sandwaves-to-shipwrecks>



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Government's Innovation Agenda first step to repair Australian science

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and the CSIRO Staff Association have welcomed Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA) as a first step towards repairing the damage caused by cuts to essential science and innovation spending.

"This agenda is a long overdue recognition from the Government that funding for organisations like the CSIRO and investment in innovation within the public sector are among the essential building blocks of a prosperous future for Australia," CPSU National Secretary Nadine Flood said.

Damage already done?

"Unfortunately much of the damage that's been caused by thoughtless budget cuts, including so-called efficiency dividends, can only be partially repaired through these measures. Once scientists are cut, as one in five has been from the CSIRO over the past two years, that loss of knowledge and expertise can never be fully recovered."

"We're encouraged by Prime Minister Turnbull's rhetoric that he wants the Government to lead by example by becoming more innovative in delivering services, but he's ignored the reality that the private sector has invested sensibly in digital transformation while the Government has been haphazardly slashing public sector jobs and capability in a way that makes it significantly harder to turn his vision into reality," Ms Flood said.

Step in the right direction

Some of the features of the innovation statement include:

- A CSIRO innovation fund of about \$200 million to support co-investment in new companies based on intellectual property created by Australian research institutions. The fund

includes \$70 million from the government, private sector investment and new revenue from CSIRO's Wi-Fi (WLAN) program.

- \$20 million expansion to CSIRO's Accelerator programme to include other publicly funded research organisations to commercialise research.
- \$294 million for the Square Kilometre Array radio telescope project.
- \$75 million for Data61, a new entity resulting from the merger between National ICT Australia (NICTA) and CSIRO's digital productivity flagship.
- The announcement of a new Cooperative Research Centre funding round to open in February 2016.

"There's no doubt that this is a change in direction from the policies of the Abbott Government. In many respects the damage to CSIRO has already been done via drastic funding cuts, the cancellation of critical research and the loss of 1,400 jobs over a two year period," said CSIRO Staff Association Secretary Sam Popovski.

"More still needs to be done to rebuild Government laboratories. Research and development funding in Australia still lags significantly behind successful innovative competitor nations in the OECD."

This article was first published by the CSIRO Staff Association - website link to the original content

- <http://cpsu-csiro.org.au/2015/12/07/governments-innovation-agenda-first-step-to-repair-australian-science/#more-3912>

Editorial policy

Articles and letters should be sent to 'The Regional Secretary, CPSU Professional Editor, GPO Box 458 Darwin NT 0800 or emailed to kay.densley@cpsu.org Letters should be no more than 200 words in length. Articles should be a maximum length of 500 words. All submissions should be signed and those wishing to remain anonymous should indicate their name is not for publication. Articles and letters to the editor in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the views of the Union. Contributors should refrain from using inflammatory language or making a personal attack on any individual or organisation.