



MEDIA RELEASE

24 July 2016

The Top End deserves a plan for the health of the coast

The next Territory government must deliver a plan to secure the future of the coasts and seas, or risk permanent damage to the Top End marine environment and the lifestyles that depend on its health.

The Keep Top End Coasts Healthy alliance today welcomed Labor's policy commitment to the coasts and seas and urged other parties to outline their plans before the election.

Jacqui Taylor from the Australian Marine Conservation Society said the lack of a long term plan to secure the health of the coasts and seas has contributed to the loss of mangroves, allowed damage to estuaries from pollution and impacted on the enviable outdoors lifestyle that Territorians enjoy.

"Mangroves are being cleared or are dying. Tidal areas are being built on and estuaries are affected. Darwin Harbour's water quality and marine life is, sadly, in decline.

"Industry is rapidly expanding and if there's a major accident, the pollution damage could be devastating and permanent for our coasts."

Jacqui said the Bayview Development was a clear example of failure of planning policy to balance the needs to protect vital mangroves and other coastal systems.

"The next Territory government has a responsibility to put in place long term measures that secure and sustain our coasts and seas.

"Providing leadership at this critical time would reflect the wishes of the community for action that supports and enhances the Territory's enviable lifestyle."

Jacqui said Labor's commitment to developing a Coastal and Marine Management Strategy, including completion of the Limmen Bight Marine Park management arrangements, re-establishment of the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee, and measures to research and protect the Territory's mangroves, will help to create greater certainty for the health of the Top End's coasts.

"The natural environment, its beauty and the bounty it provides are central to our Territory way of life, to our economic success and to our shared futures.

Jacqui also called on all political parties to commit to genuine consultation with the community on a plan to secure and sustain the health of the Top End's coasts and way of life.

"Previous governments have failed to listen to the concerns of locals and this has led to widespread cynicism of government processes.

"However, committing to guiding Territorians toward solutions offers the next Territory government the chance to create a lasting legacy, one that generations of Territorians will appreciate and benefit from."