After more than a year of extensive research and public consultation, the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management has been tabled in the Legislative Assembly and released to the public.

Lands and Planning Minister, Kon Vatskalis, today thanked the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee, and its Chair, Mr John Bailey, for producing such a comprehensive report.

"In just over 12-months, this community-based committee has presented a detailed plan for the future health and sustainable development of our Harbour and its catchment areas," he said.

"The development of such a plan was a key election commitment of this Government, and one I’m very proud to deliver."

Mr Vatskalis said work on the plan began in August 2002 when he appointed the Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee.

The community-based reference group spending the next 12-months researching and collating data, and engaging the community through written submissions, public forums, hearings and workshops.

"Importantly, the committee has acknowledged our Harbour is a working port, essential to the economic development of our region," said Mr Vatskalis.

"But it is crucial we strike the right balance between economic development and social development. We know we must protect the biologically values of the Harbour and its catchment, ensuring the future protection of wildlife habitats and recreational activities.

Key recommendations include:

- The development of a framework for integrating and coordinating research and monitoring in the Darwin Harbour region;
- Development of a stormwater management strategy and implementation plan;
- Annual updating of the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management;

"The Plan will now be released for community consideration, while the Government also looks at all recommendations over coming months before formally advising on the adoption of the Plan in 2004."

Mr Vatskalis said the public can access the Darwin Harbour Regional Plan of Management via the internet at www.ipe.nt.gov.au/divisions/dhac or CD versions are also available on 89994467.