‘POO’LLUTION IN OUR HARBOUR

Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says the government is ignoring its own pollution of the Darwin Harbour whilst at the same time using the big stick approach on the Litchfield Shire Council regarding potential pollution at the Humpty Doo Tip.

Gerry has obtained a recent video of the Larrakeyah Sewerage Outlet showing raw sewerage, plastics (bags and condoms) and cables being pumped into the harbour.

Gerry has been informed

• That under the Australian Maritime Safety Authority that the disposal of all plastics into oceans or waterways of Australia is prohibited and fines up to $1.3 million apply.
• That when NRETA was told of the pollution they showed little interest or concern
• That PAWA were concerned but said they needed $40m to build a pipe to the treatment plant at Ludmilla
• That the sewerage outfall is not clearly shown on navigation maps
• That the sewerage outfall is not marked with a buoy
• That there is no warning to divers, paddlers and swimmers that raw sewerage is being pumped onto the sea
• That there is no warning to fishers of any potential contamination of fish in the area

Gerry says that in 2006 it is not good enough that untreated raw sewerage and litter is still being pumped into the harbour especially as the amount of ‘poollution’ will only increase with more units being built in the Darwin CBD, Larrakeyah and Cullen Bay.

He says that according to PAWA’s own figures (Wastewater Treatment, Reuse and Discharge 2004 page 38), with treated sewerage at Ludmilla, the median outflow quality in the dry season records 200CFU* per 100ml of E.Coli compared to the untreated sewerage 20million CFU per 100ml of E.Coli at the Larrakeyah Outlet. That is 100,000 times more than Ludmilla.

Gerry says that it looks like the government is hiding behind a Waste Discharge Licence that they granted to PAWA so as to postpone for as long as possible the Government’s obligation of financing a new sewer line to the Ludmilla Treatment Plant.

Considering all the noise and the heavy handed approach by the government to close down the Humpty Doo Tip based on potential pollution (but not proven) and considering all the money the government is giving to PAWA to underground electricity in the northern suburbs, one has to ask has the government got it’s priorities right. If it can afford to underground power surely it can afford to underground sewerage?
It looks like NRETA has shown it muscle against a powerless and easy target, a local government, but is too scared to do something about its own Government’s ‘poollution’.

Gerry says it’s time the government got serious about removing the poo and the plastics from our Darwin Harbour.

* CFU means *colony forming units*