



Port Melville Finally Open For Public Comment – After Being Constructed

The Environment Centre NT and the Australian Marine Conservation Society today welcomed the announcement that the controversial Port Melville Marine Supply Base has finally been referred to Federal Environment Minister Greg Hunt for consideration under environmental legislation.

Environment Centre NT Acting Director Anna Boustead says the referral is an opportunity for scientists, Traditional Owners and community members to have their say on whether the Marine Supply Base requires environmental impact assessment.

“The company, Ezion, claim that the development does not require an assessment due to ‘comprehensive mitigation measures’, but the high conservation values of the area alone warrant an assessment.

“The port is to act as a supply base for the offshore oil and gas industry with 30 million litre petro-chemical tanks located in a sensitive cyclone prone area. These tanks are already onsite without the proper environmental assessments.

“It is unfortunate that Ezion referred the development so late into construction. Legislation needs to be amended to ensure that our environment is adequately protected against such large scale developments,” said Anna Boustead.

AMCS Northern Marine Campaigner, Jacqui Taylor, says the area is home to 38 threatened species and is a critical breeding site for Olive Ridley turtles, foraging site for dugong and several species of turtles, shorebirds and dolphins.

“This development could see a massive increase in shipping between the Tiwi Islands. The site contains a narrow channel which is highly exposed to strong tidal currents.

“We are very concerned about the risk the development poses to the marine and coastal environment, through the increase in shipping traffic, dredging of the channel, or the risk of an oil spill.

“We encourage all concerned members of the public to write a submission to the Department of the Environment before submissions close on 14 July,” she concluded.

The Department of the Environment will now consider whether the Marine Supply Port requires approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

Comments can be submitted by:

Post: *Referral Business Entry Point, Environment Assessment Branch
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
GPO Box 787, CANBERRA ACT 2601*

Email: epbc.referrals@environment.gov.au

Contact: Anna Boustead, 0406 145 953 or Jacqui Taylor, 0477 041 877