



MEDIA RELEASE

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New study released on Fitzroy River fishway

Two new reports have been released today examining the possible construction of a fishway at the Fitzroy River Barrage at Camballin in the Kimberley.

The technical scoping study, which was commissioned by Environs Kimberley (EK) and undertaken by professional services firm AECOM in association with Dr David Morgan (Murdoch University) and Dr Dean Thorburn (Indo Pacific Environmental Pty Ltd), takes a detailed look at the location, design, hydrological and ecological implications of a fishway.

A community consultation report undertaken by EK and the Yiriman Project is also being released.

Previous research had identified the need for a fishway to help fish, including the threatened Freshwater Sawfish, swim over the Barrage when river levels drop in the dry season.

EK's Freshwater Project Officer Dr Gary Scott said: "For the new study the AECOM-led consultancy team analysed the fish species present at the Barrage and tested a number of fishway or fish ladder designs using sophisticated engineering models. They wanted to ensure that any proposed fishway structure will provide passage for a range of fish species and cope with big floods".

"The consultants recommended that a vertical-slot fishway be constructed. Further research work will need to be undertaken to refine their fishway conceptual design".

Dr Scott said: "This new study represents a significant step forward in addressing a long-standing environmental issue affecting fish populations in the Fitzroy River. People living along the river stand to benefit from a fishway as healthy fish stocks are maintained along the entire length of the river".

"The community consultation process indicated that on the whole, there is strong local support for the fishway concept, particularly from people living upstream from the Barrage", said Dr Scott.

Rangelands NRM WA provided funding for the fishway scoping study using funds from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust. The Kimberley Land Council provided additional funding for the community consultation process.

The reports are available on the Environs Kimberley website at www.environskimberley.org.au/fresh_water.htm

MEDIA CONTACT:

Dr Gary Scott, Environs Kimberley: ph. 0439 373 386; email. ekfreshwater@westnet.com.au