



*Save the Nature of the Kimberley*

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### **Seagrass Monitoring in Roebuck Bay about to kick-off**

The Roebuck Bay community seagrass monitoring project is about to commence in Broome for the first time. Environs Kimberley (EK) and the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) are joint managers of the Coastwest funded project.

Ms Danielle Bain is the project's Coordinator. "It is critical that we obtain some baseline data on the seagrass beds of Roebuck Bay to gain an understanding of the sensitive ecosystem," she said.

"Dugongs and green turtles rely on seagrass for food and other animals such as fish and prawns rely on it for habitat, and we don't even know if the system is healthy or not."

Seagrasses are marine flowering plants that grow as vast meadows over the mudflats. They absorb nutrients from coastal run-off and stabilise sediment, helping to keep the water clear. They are considered to be important indicators of environmental health.

"We are asking the community to get involved. They will be trained to use Seagrass-Watch methods to record information about the seagrass," Ms Bain said.

Seagrass-Watch is a world-leading organisation in community seagrass monitoring, based in Queensland.

"It will be the first time a Seagrass-Watch project has been implemented in Western Australia," Ms Bain said.

Recent *Lyngbya* (blue-green algae) blooms had raised concerns about the health of the seagrass beds and the ecosystem as a whole.

"When volunteers go out at low tide to record seagrass data they will also record basic information about the algae. This will help us to understand the changes in seagrass and algae over time. The data collected will assist scientists and managers to find out why these blooms have been occurring." Ms Bain said.

If you would like to be involved in the project or find out a bit more, please come to an Information Session on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 3pm, at Broome Lotteries House, Cable Beach Road.

Or contact Danielle Bain on 9192 7741 or 0414 841 519 or email: [dans\\_al@westnet.com.au](mailto:dans_al@westnet.com.au)

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