



NORTHERN  
LAND COUNCIL

# MEDIA RELEASE

*Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life*

## **Northern Land Council extends waiver over intertidal zone**

15 November 2017

The Northern Land Council has agreed to extend for one year a waiver under the Aboriginal Land Act which will allow unrestricted access by fishers to the intertidal zone around the Northern Territory.

The waiver gives certainty for another year to the commercial sector to be able to continue fishing in the intertidal zone under their existing licences.

The High Court in 2008 decided that the intertidal zone is Aboriginal land.

All fishers already have unrestricted access to seven “high value” recreational fishing areas where agreements between Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Government have been negotiated.

Without a continuing waiver over the rest of the intertidal zone, recreational fishers would need to obtain permits, and commercial operators would need to secure agreements under the Land Rights act to be able to operate legally.

Beyond those areas where agreements have been made, the NLC has this year conducted extensive consultations with Traditional Owners to ascertain their views about access to the intertidal zone and management of their sea country.

The NLC’s Full Council, meeting in Tennant Creek this week, was told that all Traditional Owners consulted wanted to control access to their intertidal areas, and some communities were opposed to extending a permit waiver.

The Full Council accepted that the NLC would not be able to have a strong permit and licensing system in place by the end of this year, when the current waiver is due to expire.

The new waiver will allow the NLC time to build an effective permit system and to commence negotiations with commercial fishers for them to continue operating in the intertidal zone.

NLC CEO Joe Morrison said Traditional Owners delivered a strong message during consultations this year that they wanted a real role in managing the Northern Territory fisheries for all Territorians. They wanted local management plans to be developed and for the NLC to negotiate with the NT Government on legislative and policy changes.

“The NLC will continue to work cooperatively with the Northern Territory Seafood Council, the Amateur Fishermen’s Association of the Northern Territory and the NT Guided Fishing Industry Association,” Mr Morrison said.

ENDS

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