



NORTHERN
LAND COUNCIL

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Land, Our Sea, Our Life

Intertidal zone permit waiver extended for 6 months

Joint media release between the Northern Land Council, Northern Territory Government, the NT Seafood Council and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory

4 December 2018

The Northern Land Council has agreed to a 6-month extension of the permit waiver to access the Aboriginal-owned intertidal zone while negotiations can take place. The permit waiver will now expire on 28 June 2019 and the NLC will consider extending the waiver until 30 June 2020 if the Northern Territory Government, the NT Seafood Council and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory have negotiated in good faith during this time.

The NLC Executive Council and Sea Country Working Group today met with the NT Seafood Council and Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory and have agreed to work together in negotiations with the NT Government.

"We are satisfied that the Northern Territory Government has agreed to negotiate in good faith about the guiding principles set out by the NLC," said Interim Acting Chief Executive Officer, Rick Fletcher.

"The Seafood Council, AFANT and NLC will work together with NTG to negotiate a comprehensive settlement," he said.

"The Northern Territory Government have proposed a sum of \$10 million to facilitate Aboriginal involvement in the commercial fishing sector and have agreed to negotiate about a set of principles to recognise Indigenous interests in Sea Country generally."

In June, the NLC presented to the Government a wide-ranging submission which proposed ways for Aboriginal people to participate in the commercial fishing and recreational fishing industries and have a real role in management of fisheries, and for recognition of sea country as it is understood by Aboriginal people.

The Northern Territory Government has agreed to the guiding principles set out in that submission and a willingness to negotiate a comprehensive and final settlement of matters affecting the management of coastal fisheries.

On 15 November 2018, the Full Council of the Northern Land Council conditionally approved a six-month extension of the waiver of the need for permits to access the Aboriginal-owned intertidal zone. The waiver was set to expire on 31 December 2018.

The extension was dependent on the Northern Territory Government's delivering a satisfactory response by early December to the NLC submission.

The waiver gives certainty for another 6 months to the commercial sector and recreational fishers to be able to continue fishing in the intertidal zone.

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

"This is a positive step forward for the greater involvement of Aboriginal Territorians in our fisheries," Ken Vowles, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Primary Industry and Resources, said. "I look forward to working with the NLC Sea Country Working Group and other stakeholders over the coming months to further progress this work."

AFANT President Warren deWith commented: "AFANT welcomes the extension of the permit free waiver which will allow time for these important negotiations to progress."

"We look forward to continuing open and constructive dialogue with the NLC Executive Council, Sea Country Working Group and the NT Seafood Council."

NT Seafood Council's Chairman, Mr Daniel Kimberley, commented: "Today's decision brings much relief and has highlighted to all parties how much work needs to be done together in the coming months. The NT Seafood Council is committed to seeing this through to the end."

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