



POLICY POSITION PAPER

LOVE THE TERRITORY LOVE OUR RECREATIONAL FISHING



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While work brings many people to the Territory it is the unique lifestyle that ultimately keeps people here and turns southerners into Territorians.

A large part of that Territory lifestyle revolves around recreational fishing and boating.

Territory Alliance will provide continuing improvements to new and existing fishing infrastructure, encourage recreational fishing opportunities and extend research to sustainably manage our fish populations for future generations.

Existing recreational fishing infrastructure will continue to be improved with \$40 million over 4 years invested with the following improvements prioritised:

- » **Nightcliff**
 - » Extend Nightcliff jetty to provide more land-based fishing;
 - » Pedestrianise the groyne for land based fishing;
 - » Landing platform/pontoon for recreational vessels for safer and more efficient drop off and pick up;
 - » Improve parking for cars and trailers.

- » **Dundee**
 - » Install a pontoon for safer launching and retrieval;
 - » Pedestrianise groyne for land based fishing;
 - » Improve infrastructure to mitigate sand build up on ramp.
- » Improve access to more remote fishing destinations¹ to Corroboree Billabong and Shady Camp².
- » Additional jetties or pontoons to increase opportunities for safer land-based fishing³ with a focus on Fish Friendly Marine Infrastructure design that will encourage fish habitation for sustainable fishing.
- » Improve access to and facilities at regional freshwater fishing spots such as K10 near Katherine which will receive \$400,000 to fast-track access infrastructure.

To acknowledge the best people to direct change and improvements are the people most passionate about and closest to the cause, smaller community-initiated projects will be encouraged by extending the Recreational Fishing Grants⁴ to \$1.5m/year for 4 years⁵.

This will enable funding of infrastructure, events and research in support of recreational fishing.



- 1 \$64million of NTG funding for 'Local fishing and tourist road new works and upgrades' earmarked in NTG 10 year Infrastructure Plan 2017-2027, p 81
- 2 existing plan of \$2million (NTG/CTH funding) for Corroboree Billabong access road upgrade, NTG 10-year Infrastructure Plan 2017-2027, p 84
- 3 Particularly in areas with significant crocodile populations
- 4 Current grant program is \$1million over 2/5 year (duration varies depending on source of info but 2 years stated in 2019 Estimates!!!) program requirements are listed at this link - <https://dpir.nt.gov.au/fisheries/nt-recreational-fishing-grants-scheme>. Territory schools are currently excluded and should be considered for inclusion provided the application meets an educational purpose in line with the national curriculum. It could provide a unique path for engaging children, particularly in remote and regional schools.
- 5 \$182,946 was awarded Dept Primary Industries and Natural Resources Annual Report 2018-19, p 103 and provided resources to a variety of clubs including AFANT for research, competitions etc



Grants will be open to educational⁶, community⁷ and not-for-profit groups based in the Territory. Small grants of up to \$5,000 and medium grants of up to \$15,000 will be available perpetually during the four-year program with two funding rounds for larger grants of up to \$150,000 held per year⁸. Projects that would be considered for funding must meet the aims of at least one of the following priorities:

- » Encouraging local recreational fishing opportunities;
- » Fishing days, competitions, come and try days;
- » Recreational fishing education;
- » Skills and safety workshops, kids programs⁹, education and materials on fishing rules, fish types, bag limits, catch sizes, pest species;
- » Installation of amenities at recreational fishing locations;
- » Shade structures, lighting, seating, rod racks, fish cleaning stations.

- » Improving and protecting fish habitats;
- » Habitat restoration, artificial reefs and fish friendly marine structures and research to review and inform such projects;
- » Informing fish research and monitoring programs;
- » Tagging and monitoring species, monitoring breeding grounds and habitats, capture of recreational fishing data, angler feedback.

Small nimble projects, delivered by Territorians for Territorians are going to be the essence of how the Territory recovers from the COVID19 shutdown and such investment will enable the Territory to be well positioned to welcome tourists once travel restrictions are lifted while enhancing the essence of the Territory lifestyle.

Territory Alliance will also prioritise planning and strategies to ensure the long-term recreational fishing experience is protected by efficiently and effectively managing marine threats, benefits and risks in collaboration with all stakeholders.

Areas subject to or with the potential for significant industrial development, such as Middle Arm Industrial Precinct, will have special planning frameworks applied to identify and clarify benefits and constraints through precinct specific environmental and cultural impact assessments. These assessments will pre-determine environmentally sensitive areas and

6 Education groups should include NT schools, Tertiary groups and University – an exemption should be considered on a case by case basis for University and tertiary groups based in other jurisdictions provided the raw research data and research findings are provided to the NTG and the research is informed by activities physically located in the Territory. This will expand research opportunities and utilise expertise not resident in the NT to help fill data gaps.

7 Including local government and other NTG established bodies which are currently excluded. This could provide facilities such as toilets, lighting, shade etc and carpark improvements.

8 Unused portions would be rolled over into following years.

environmental controls and inform industrial development through precinct masterplans ahead of any development

Great work has been done to manage fishing areas and fish stocks to date and the current structure of Management Advisory Committees (MACs) will continue to be supported to provide high level advice to government. However, their work is let down by insufficient resources to monitor and enforce compliance with fishing regulations, inconsistent data collection, gaps in knowledge and uncertain review structures for existing strategies.

A failure to regularly conduct surveys, and significant delays between the collection and publication of survey data diminishes the value of the resource, and significant recreational fishing sectors were not accounted for in the 2009, 2014 or 2015 surveys¹⁰. Out of date, narrow and reactive data inhibits the ability of stakeholders to develop targeted and proactive management and conservation plans which balance the concurrent needs of commercial and recreational fishing, tourism and other parties with interests impacting fishing zones. Additionally, greater commitment to conducting regular reviews is required to assess the impacts and effectiveness of existing conservation programs and strategies, inform their continued application, alteration or removal and identify emerging issues.



¹⁰ All three surveys omitted night-time fishing, land-based fishing, freshwater fishing and wet season fishing due to logistic and budgetary constraints.



Territory Alliance will commit to undertaking regular recreational fishing surveys, reviews of implemented conservation interventions at regular intervals. NT wide Surveys to capture recreational fishing data will be conducted every 5 years from 2024 with regular region-specific surveys to create deeper understanding of fishing efforts and methods, catch variables, economic demands and other region-specific recreational fishing issues.

Better understanding of more remote fishing destinations will assist the growth of economic opportunities from regional recreational fishing while being able to understand and sustainably manage fish habitat and populations where current data may be lacking.

The 2012-2022 Recreational Fishing Development Plan is due to reach its end date soon. The impacts and shortcomings of that 10-year plan will inform a new Strategic Plan to continue to nurture and develop recreational fishing across the Territory throughout the new decade. Furthermore, region specific Access Plans will be developed with stakeholders to explore and identify new access points to open up new destinations for anglers and tourists, bringing economic opportunities and easing pressures on the fish populations close to current, popular access points.

Through a clear strategy to further develop recreational fishing in the Territory based on up to date scientific data, angler habits and preferences and improved infrastructure the Territory will continue to enjoy the economic and lifestyle benefits of our amazing natural resources.