



DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND RESOURCES

# FISHERIES DIVISION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022





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# Overview

This Strategic Plan details our vision for the stewardship and development of the aquatic resources of the Northern Territory (NT) over the next four years. It will guide priorities and the actions to be undertaken to achieve sustainable development, utilisation and protection of our aquatic resources.

In developing this strategy, we have recognised the diversity of users (direct and indirect) who benefit from the Territory's aquatic resources. This includes recreational and commercial fishers, Traditional Owners, aquaculturists, conservationists, seafood consumers and the broader community who may simply appreciate the importance of our aquatic environment. All of these groups use and/or value the resources in different ways and have different expectations of how they will be used. A core part of our mission is to deliver outcomes that provide increased certainty and transparency of management decisions for all stakeholders.

Sustainability is our primary driver. As stewards of a public resource, the Fisheries Division aims to protect our aquatic resources whilst maximising social and economic benefits to the local community. This will be achieved through management actions that consider and provide opportunities and benefits for the traditional, commercial, recreational and fishing tourism sectors.

Around 82 per cent of the Northern Territory coastline is owned by Aboriginal people. The Northern Territory Government is working with Aboriginal communities to help them actively participate in the seafood industry, marine resource management, and protection of aquatic resources. As such, the Fisheries Division acknowledges the importance of sea country to Aboriginal communities and we actively support Aboriginal businesses that provide opportunities for economic growth and employment.

Our work over the next four years will focus on rights and evidence-based management of fishery stocks, Aboriginal employment, economic development of fishing, aquaculture and seafood businesses, and the effective management of ecological risks.

The Fisheries Division will also play a key role in implementing the NT Government's commitment to the recreational fishing infrastructure program. This program is investing \$50 million over five years to expand recreational fishing opportunities and develop recreational fishing infrastructure. This will improve the recreational fishing experience by creating options to diversify fishing effort and improve the quality of facilities for all. As a result, we will enhance the Territory's reputation as a place to enjoy a world-class fishing experience.

The Division also has important customer service functions through:

- the provision of licensing arrangements for commercial fisheries,
- receiving and processing fishery catch returns,
- managing a range of consultative and advisory committees, and
- developing educational materials for fishers and the general public.

This Strategic Plan is intended to provide clarity around the medium-term business focus of the Fisheries Division in a way that allows progress to be measured and reported. The plan also recognises that our people are key to our success, and identifies actions to build and retain capacity and skills.

# Importance of our aquatic resources

The Territory contains a diverse range of aquatic resources that are socially important, ecologically significant and economically valuable. Individuals, families, communities and businesses utilise these resources for sport, culture, food and to derive an income.

From a cultural perspective, fishing for food and traditional purpose is central to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities across the NT. From an economic perspective our aquatic resources support 16 commercial wild harvest fisheries which in 2016-17 had a gross value of production of \$41 million and an aquaculture sector worth an additional \$34 million. Recreational fishing injects around \$51 million into the economy with a further \$30 million generated by fishing tourism.

Fishing-based recreation is also an iconic part of the NT way of life with significant social and societal benefits. Our aquatic environment also holds important intrinsic aesthetic, cultural and knowledge values to the broader Northern Territory community.

The guiding principles of the Northern Territory Fisheries Act require that our aquatic resources be utilised sustainably and equitably to benefit all Territorians.



## Our Values

The core values of the Northern Territory Public Service (NTPS) guide how the Fisheries Division delivers services to the community:

### 1. Commitment to service

We are committed to being hardworking, effective, innovative and efficient, working collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Territory,

### 2. Ethical practice

The NTPS upholds the highest standards of practice and acts with integrity in all that it does,

### 3. Respect

We respect the rights of all people, and in particular their rights as individuals,

### 4. Accountability

We will be transparent and accountable in all our actions,

### 5. Impartiality

We are apolitical and provide the Government with advice that is objective, timely and based on the best available evidence, and

### 6. Diversity

The Department of Primary Industry and Resources values the diversity of its workforce as well as that of the residents of the Territory it serves.

## Our Vision

*Sustainable aquatic resources providing the best possible benefit to all Territorians.*

## Our Mission

*To work collaboratively with all of our partners to protect, sustainably use and access the Northern Territory's aquatic resources.*

# Goals

To ensure continued progress, five goals have been developed to drive a range of strategic actions over the short, medium, and long-term corresponding to periods of one–three, four–eight and eight+ years, respectively. The purpose of this plan is to focus on the actions and outcomes necessary to move us towards achieving our goals over the next three-five years. Mid-term review and the development of future strategic plans will help keep us on track.

**GOAL 1**

The Territory's fish and aquatic resources remain sustainable and deliver optimal economic, social, and cultural benefits

**GOAL 2**

A competitive and profitable seafood industry that makes a significant contribution to our economy

**GOAL 3**

A great recreational fishing experience

**GOAL 4**

Excellent customer service and stakeholder engagement

**GOAL 5**

Skilled, engaged and accountable staff, working safely



# Our Partners

The Fisheries Division cannot achieve its mission without working in partnership with individuals, groups and organisations, including Traditional Owners, Land Councils and industry peak bodies. However, there is clear strategic value in expanding this partnership approach by actively identifying new organisations to engage with, and by refreshing relationships where they have existed in the past.

The Fisheries Division will adopt a more relationship-oriented approach to consolidate or build 'ways of working' with the following entities (set against Our Goals):

	Goal	Key partners
1	The Territory's fish and aquatic resources remain sustainable and deliver optimal economic, social, and cultural benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and related organisations</li> <li>• Resource user peak bodies</li> <li>• Research planning and provider entities</li> <li>• Registered training organisations</li> <li>• Federal and other jurisdictional government agencies</li> <li>• Relevant Northern Territory Government agencies</li> </ul>
2	A competitive and profitable seafood industry that makes a significant contribution to our economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and related organisations</li> <li>• Industry peak bodies</li> <li>• Research entities</li> <li>• Federal and other jurisdictional government agencies</li> <li>• Relevant Northern Territory Government agencies</li> </ul>
3	A great recreational fishing experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism entities</li> <li>• Resource user peak bodies</li> <li>• Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and related organisations</li> <li>• Relevant Northern Territory Government agencies</li> </ul>
4	Excellent customer service and stakeholder engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The private sector/business community (service provider specialists)</li> <li>• Traditional Owners, Aboriginal communities and related organisations</li> <li>• Resource user peak bodies</li> <li>• Relevant Northern Territory Government agencies</li> </ul>
5	Skilled, engaged and accountable staff, working safely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The private sector/business community (service provider specialists)</li> <li>• Office of the Commissioner of Public Employment</li> <li>• Our staff</li> <li>• Partner agencies (local and interjurisdictional)</li> <li>• NT Worksafe</li> </ul>



**GOAL  
1**
**The Territory's fish and aquatic resources remain sustainable and deliver optimal economic, social, and cultural benefits**


	Strategic actions	Targeted outcome
1.1	Design and deliver integrated fisheries management frameworks that explicitly recognise and include Aboriginal culture, knowledge and resource use needs as an important part of sustainable aquatic resource management in the NT.	An improved approach to fisheries management which works progressively to embed a role for regional communities in decision making processes as well as the development and implementation of contemporary management and monitoring plans.
1.2	Apply the resource sharing policy to all managed fisheries and clearly describe access and allocation decisions in an appropriate and transparent manner (typically within fishery management plans).	Equitable resource access and sharing arrangements. Certainty of opportunity and entitlement provided to all resource user groups.
1.3	Create agreements, where appropriate, with neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure consistency of management for shared resources.	Management of fish stocks based on population structure, not state boundaries.
1.4	Develop and implement harvest strategies for managed fisheries.	Increased certainty, understanding and acceptance of management decisions by resource users and the community.
1.5	Continue to support and involve Aboriginal marine ranger groups in aquatic resource biosecurity, management, compliance and research programs.	Aboriginal communities actively involved in the management and protection of the Territory's aquatic resources.
1.6	Apply a contemporary risk assessment framework as the basis for management and research planning.	Management actions and research activities are clearly focused on critical priorities based on the scale of risk and viability of risk mitigation strategies.
1.7	Expand and improve monitoring of bycatch and ecosystem interactions across all fisheries.	Increased transparency and public confidence in the environmental performance of our fisheries.
1.8	Improve monitoring and assessment programs to better inform management decisions and maximise benefits.	Improved ability to determine ecological, social and economic objectives for management and to measure performance against specific indicators.
1.9	Monitor, evaluate and report on the status of key fisheries and fish stocks.	Improved access to, and consistency of, information regarding resource condition.
1.10	Publish an on-line library of policies in critical topic areas, including resource allocation, integrated fisheries management, fisheries development and cost sharing.	Increased clarity of management decisions and certainty for stakeholders to encourage investment and industry participation.
1.11	Apply a contemporary risk assessment framework as the basis for preventing, treating and managing aquatic biosecurity incursions.	A healthy aquatic ecosystem protected from introduced pests and diseases.

GOAL  
2

## A competitive and profitable seafood industry that makes a significant contribution to our economy



## Strategic actions

## Targeted outcome

2.1	Continue to establish and support pathways for Aboriginal communities to participate in seafood enterprises.	Improved economic opportunities for regional communities.
2.2	Support the growth of the aquaculture industry by assisting developed sectors and investigating new opportunities.	Increased productivity and growth of the aquaculture industry.
2.3	The Darwin Aquaculture Centre is used to facilitate, develop, promote and share industry best-practice initiatives.	The Darwin Aquaculture Centre continues to play a key supporting role to the growth and profitability of Territory aquaculture businesses.
2.4	Continue to review legislation and regulation to reduce regulatory burden, and increase efficiency.	Reduced red tape for commercial fishing and aquaculture industries.
2.5	Deliver risk-based compliance programs for fishing and aquaculture businesses.	An efficient and appropriate compliance system.
2.6	Use contemporary technologies to monitor and report on fishing activity in all managed fisheries.	The fishing industry is valued and trusted by the community.

GOAL  
3

## A great recreational fishing experience



## Strategic actions

## Targeted outcome

<b>3.1</b>	Deliver the government's commitment to invest \$50 million to enhance recreational fishing in the Territory.	A high quality recreational fishery that contributes to the social, cultural and economic well-being of all Territorians.
<b>3.2</b>	Work with Aboriginal communities, other landholders and NT Government agencies to develop new access options for recreational fishers.	Increased options and spread of fishing effort for recreational fishers.
<b>3.3</b>	Promote resource stewardship through education.	A high level of knowledge of the Territory's fishing rules leading to increased levels of voluntary compliance.
<b>3.4</b>	Review, update, and continue to implement, the Territory's Recreational Fishing Development Strategy.	Ensure the strategy retains its currency and is used as a guide to maintain and improve recreational fishing in the Territory.

GOAL  
4

## Excellent customer service and stakeholder engagement



## Strategic actions

## Targeted outcome

4.1	Increase the use of technology to improve our service delivery.	Our services meet government, client and community needs.
4.2	Help build the skills of our stakeholders to support their participation in fisheries management processes.	Improved, meaningful stakeholder participation in management decisions.
4.3	Support peak bodies to build and promote the value and professionalism of the seafood and fishing tourism industries.	Increased community support for these industries.
4.4	Foster a culture of open governance.	Decision making is open and transparent.
4.5	Implement, best-practice project management across the Division as a business improvement strategy.	Efficient and effective alignment of staff, financial and physical resources to better deliver government, industry and community priorities.
4.6	Clearly articulate the Division's plans, direction and objectives to government, industry, other stakeholders and staff.	Clarity of purpose for the Fisheries Division with transparent business planning and priority setting processes.
4.7	Redesign consultation and engagement methods to ensure all stakeholders are effectively involved in the management process.	Enhanced opportunities for stakeholders and communities to be involved in decision making whilst reducing the time and travel burden on participants.
4.8	Increase public awareness of the importance of fish and aquatic resources to the Territory by evaluating and publicising the state of NT fisheries resources.	High level of public acceptance of the fishing industry as sustainable and a valuable contributor the Territory economy.

GOAL  
5

## Skilled, engaged and accountable staff working safely



## Strategic actions

## Targeted outcome

- | 5.1 | Support the professional development of staff through appropriate training; encouraging rotation of roles within the Division; and by facilitating secondment with organisations engaging in best practice fisheries management, research and development. | Attract, develop and retain skills to drive excellence within the Fisheries Division. |
|-----|--|---|
| 5.2 | Promote and support flexible work practices to assist staff to achieve a work / life balance.  | High levels of staff performance within a supportive work environment.                |
| 5.3 | Ensure our people are valued and their welfare and safety is a priority.   | Reduced staff turnover and increased retention of critical corporate knowledge.       |
| 5.4 | Provide pathways and / or opportunities for career advancement based on performance.   | The Fisheries Division's corporate knowledge and functional capacity is strengthened. |

# Delivery

The Fisheries Division works closely with our stakeholders to optimise the benefits of fishing and aquaculture to the NT.

To deliver results we focus on:

- 1. Sound administrative processes** to ensure that our stakeholders are effectively engaged in the management of the NT's aquatic resources,
- 2. The principles of ecologically sustainable development** to guide the direction of our work,
- 3. The intent of integrated management** that encourages inter-agency, inter-sectoral and inter-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination,
- 4. Evidence-based decision making** that is transparent and informed by the best available science and advice,
- 5. Risk assessment and objective setting** processes that guide how we do business and where we focus our effort,
- 6. Collaborations and partnerships** that maximise efficiency and lever resources and knowledge to advantage, and
- 7. Continuous improvement** to ensure contemporary best practices are applied to all our services.

## How we will deliver our priorities

Essential to achieving our strategic actions and targeted outcomes is to ensure that adequate monitoring of progress is undertaken and corrective action implemented as required. Given that key performance indicators (KPIs) and other monitoring tools are likely to change over the life of this strategic plan, these mechanisms will be included in annual Fisheries division's Business Plans and other established accountability documents such as Annual Reports and Budget Papers.

Objectives, priority action to progress work against those objectives and the expected timelines for implementation are depicted in the tables below.

GOAL	STRATEGIC ACTIONS	■ Plan	◆ Deliver	● Review and improve	
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	
<i>Goal 1: The Territory's fish and aquatic resources remain sustainable and deliver optimal economic, social, and cultural benefits</i>	1.1	Design and deliver integrated fisheries management frameworks that explicitly recognise and include Aboriginal culture, knowledge and resource use needs as an important part of sustainable aquatic resource management in the NT.	■	◆	●
	1.2	Apply the resource sharing policy to all managed fisheries and clearly describe access and allocation decisions in an appropriate and transparent manner (typically within fishery management plans).	◆	●	●
	1.3	Create agreements, where appropriate, with neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure consistency of management for shared resources.	■	◆	●
	1.4	Develop and implement an industry-endorsed research plan that aligns with local and national priorities, encourages collaboration with research partners and informs management decisions.	■	◆	●
	1.5	Continue to support and involve Aboriginal marine ranger groups in aquatic resource biosecurity, management, compliance and research programs.	◆	●	●
	1.6	Apply a contemporary risk assessment framework as the basis for management and research planning.	◆	●	●
	1.7	Expand and improve monitoring of bycatch and ecosystem interactions across all fisheries.	◆	●	●
	1.8	Improve monitoring and assessment programs to better inform management decisions and maximise benefits.	■	◆	●
	1.9	Monitor, evaluate and report on the status of key aquatic ecosystems and fish stocks.	◆	●	●
	1.10	Publish an on-line library of policies in critical topic areas, including resource allocation, integrated fisheries management, fisheries development and cost sharing.	■	◆	●
	1.11	Apply a contemporary risk assessment framework as the basis for preventing, treating and managing aquatic biosecurity incursions.	◆	●	●

GOAL	STRATEGIC ACTIONS	■ Plan	◆ Deliver	● Review and improve	
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	
<i>Goal 2: A competitive and profitable seafood industry that makes a significant contribution to our economy</i>	2.1	Continue to establish and support pathways for Aboriginal communities to participate in seafood enterprises	■	◆	●
	2.2	Support the growth of the aquaculture industry by assisting developed sectors and investigating new opportunities	◆	●	●
	2.3	The Darwin Aquaculture Centre is used to facilitate, develop, promote and share industry best-practice initiatives	◆	●	●
	2.4	Continue to review legislation and regulation to reduce regulatory burden, and increase efficiency	●	●	●
	2.5	Deliver risk-based compliance programs for fishing and aquaculture businesses	■	◆	●
	2.6	Use contemporary technologies to monitor and report on fishing activity in all managed fisheries	■◆	●	●

GOAL	STRATEGIC ACTIONS	■ Plan	◆ Deliver	● Review and improve	
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	
<i>Goal 3: A great recreational fishing experience</i>	3.1	Deliver the government's commitment to invest \$50 million to enhance recreational fishing in the Territory.	◆	●	●
	3.2	Work with Aboriginal communities, other landholders and NT Government agencies to develop new access options for recreational fishers.	■	◆	●
	3.3	Promote resource stewardship through education.	◆	●	●
	3.4	Review, update, and continue to implement, the Territory's Recreational Fishing Development Strategy.	●	●	●

GOAL	STRATEGIC ACTIONS	■ Plan	◆ Deliver	● Review and improve	
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	
<i>Goal 4: Excellent customer service and stakeholder engagement</i>	4.1	Increase the use of technology to improve our service delivery.	◆	●	●
	4.2	Help build the skills of our stakeholders to support their participation in fisheries management processes	■	◆	●
	4.3	Support peak bodies to build and promote the value and professionalism of the seafood and tourism fishing industries	◆	●	●
	4.4	Foster a culture of open government	◆	●	●
	4.5	Implement, best-practice project management across the division as a business improvement strategy.	◆	●	●
	4.6	Clearly articulate the Division's plans, direction and objectives to government, industry, other stakeholders and staff	◆	●	●
	4.7	Redesign consultation and engagement methods to ensure all stakeholders are effectively involved in the management process	◆	●	●
	4.8	Increase public awareness of the importance of fish and aquatic resources to the Territory by evaluating and publicising the state of NT fisheries resources	◆	●	●

GOAL	STRATEGIC ACTIONS	■ Plan	◆ Deliver	● Review and improve	
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	
<i>Goal 5: Skilled, engaged and accountable staff, working safely</i>	5.1	Support the professional development of staff through appropriate training; encouraging rotation of roles within the division; and by facilitating secondment with organisations engaging in best practice fisheries management, research and development.	◆	●	●
	5.2	Promote and support flexible work practices to assist staff to achieve a work/ life balance.	◆	●	●
	5.3	Ensure our people are valued and their welfare and safety is a priority.	◆	●	●
	5.4	Provide pathways and/or opportunities for career advancement based on performance.	◆	●	●

