

NORTHERN TERRITORY SEAFOOD COUNCIL



2010 YEAR IN REVIEW

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



The Northern Territory seafood industry has emerged this year as a real leader in creating local sustainable fisheries that will last well into the future.

Hard work behind the scenes has elevated the reputation of the Northern Territory Seafood Council as a driving force for its members and as advocates for choice when buying seafood.

The promotion of a national take-up of Country of Origin Labelling laws and ongoing work on the Support NT Caught campaign has generated good news stories for the local industry and elevated the Northern Territory Seafood Council's profile to a national level.

The Seafood Council's professional reputation has seen more valuable partnerships formed with the Northern Territory Government and Fisheries Unit of the Department of Resources.

A concerted effort to lay a solid foundation of good governance, strong policy positions and improved management of fisheries has put the Seafood Council ahead of the game in many key areas.

Progress this year has included developing management advisory committees for different fisheries including Mud Crab, Coastal Line, Barramundi and Spanish Mackerel. The Demersal Fishery took the first step towards setting up an advisory

group to develop a new fisheries management arrangement.

The Barramundi Fishery has already seen the benefits of setting up their own management advisory committee with the Northern Territory Government agreeing to develop an evidenced based resource sharing framework. The fishery will benefit from a revised Environmental Management System looking at reducing bycatch and minimising interaction with wildlife and other users.

The Timor Reef Fishery is set to be the first to introduce a new quota system in 2011 after successfully reviewing the management of the fishery.

A big step in this process has been the change in direction of managing fisheries away from simply restricting operations to management that promotes efficiency, greatly improving the economic viability for fishers.

We need an industry to have well defined access rights so they can become more efficient and cost effective. Instead of people "racing for the next fish" they can make better business decisions to fish more effectively and better market the fish they catch.

The Seafood Council is at the forefront of lobbying for national seafood labelling laws and has led policy work with the National Seafood Industry Alliance on bio-regional marine planning to establish marine parks.

The Seafood Council's policy on seafood labelling was adopted by seafood councils in every state of Australia with a strong push from barramundi fishers in Queensland and inshore fishers in Western Australia.

As a result you could not find a fisherman anywhere in Australia

who doesn't know we have seafood labelling in the Northern Territory.

We have seen great public support and increased demand for local seafood in response to the seafood labelling law and proved our critics wrong, with the impact of the laws and Support NT Caught initiative accelerating each year.

The Seafood Council's Board saw several changes in 2010 and I would like to thank Mike Fraser for his work as Deputy Chair before Horst Fischer took up the position later in the year. The Seafood Council welcomed Tony Thiel to the Board as Chair of the Pearling Licensee Committee and Will Bowman as Chair of the Trepang Licensee Committee.

I would like to congratulate Carmel McCaskill Ball, who is on the Board as the Chair of the Seafood Trader/Processor Licensee Committee, for winning the Northern Territory's Rural Women's Award.

It is a great credit to Carmel and her award acknowledges the important role the seafood industry has played in the Northern Territory's history.

I would like to acknowledge the work done by the Department of Resources and investment by the Northern Territory Government who have allocated greater resources and infrastructure, including extra staff and a database, to help move the Northern Territory fisheries into the future.

It has been a mammoth year for the local seafood industry and the Seafood Council has achieved an enormous amount, considering our limited resources, with council staff working beyond capacity during 2010.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Fish'.

Rob Fish
CHAIRMAN

CEO'S MESSAGE



Hard work, grit and determination has propelled the Northern Territory Seafood Council through a year of impressive successes achieved with limited staff resources.

As we catch our breath and look at the significant achievements of 2010 we can be proud of the work done by the Seafood Council staff, Board and members.

All hands have been on deck to support our members and advance the local seafood industry with the Seafood Council winning \$321 000 worth of funding applications for several projects spanning the next few years.

Our successes show the Seafood Council is performing extremely well and has put up well thought out and practical projects that will improve the local seafood industry.

The Seafood Council welcomed a new addition to our team with local marketing consultant Suzanne Morgan employed to examine the impact of the seafood labelling laws and capitalise on local marketing opportunities to continue our award-winning Support NT Caught campaign.

Sadly we had to farewell John 'Mac' MacCartie, who has spent the past 19 years working for fisheries and who was on secondment to the Seafood Council as a well-respected fisheries technician and industry liaison officer. The Seafood Council wishes Mac all the best for his future endeavours interstate.

Over the year the Seafood Council's role has ranged from educating Territorians about choosing local seafood to lobbying state and federal politicians to help all Australians make informed decisions when ordering their seafood.

No stone has been left unturned in sending out this message from the streets of Darwin to the hallowed halls of Federal Parliament.

The Chair and I have travelled around the country to lobby for Country of Origin Labelling laws to be rolled out to the restaurant and dining sector nationally.

Presentations on NT seafood labelling laws were given across Australia in 2010 including at the:

- Seafood Service Australia Network Meetings in Melbourne, Darwin and Brisbane
- Queensland Seafood Industry Association Annual Conference in Townsville
- Australian Women in Agriculture Annual Conference in Darwin
- Nuffield Australia 2010 Autumn Tour in Darwin
- 2010 Seafood Directions Conference in Melbourne.

The Seafood Council's valuable relationship and membership of the National Seafood Industry Alliance continued and the Northern Territory's policies on seafood labelling and establishing marine parks were strongly supported by the Alliance.

The Seafood Council continues to support the National Seafood Industry Alliance and being a part of the Alliance helps the Seafood Council keep abreast of important national issues.

With direction from the Board, the Seafood Council has written its first three-year promotional and marketing plan. The Board continues to focus the Seafood Council's progress on achieving the objectives of our strategic plan complemented by a 12-month business plan enabling the Council to be more proactive.

The Seafood Council welcomed the appointment of the new Executive Director Fisheries, Ian Curnow, and newly appointed Director Aquatic Resources Bryan McDonald, and look forward to a continued partnership on issues of seafood labelling and fisheries management.

Armed with the right plans, policies and procedures, the Seafood Council is increasing its capacity as it continues to fight for the interests of its members, consumers and a sustainable seafood industry.

Katherine Sarneckis
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE



Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words in the Northern Territory Seafood Council's annual Year in Review publication.

Seafood labelling continues to be a key issue for industry and a priority for myself as Fisheries Minister.

We have some of the best seafood in the world, so we should take every opportunity to highlight that fact.

Our fisheries, which come from pristine waters, are independently accredited – that is to say they have the green tick of approval when it comes to the way in which we manage them.

The Northern Territory's aquaculture sector is also recognised as a valuable part of our industry and its value certainly speaks for itself.

This is why the Northern Territory Government made the tough decision to introduce seafood labelling in the Territory.

In highlighting the fact with Danny Yuen, owner of Tasty House restaurant, I had the best salt and pepper mud crab while promoting the Seafood Council's consumer survey late in 2010!

Anyone who was around just before Christmas would have also seen the NT Government and seafood industry actively highlighting the "buy local" message because it helps us all.

2010 also saw changes to the Mud Crab Fishery to give greater flexibility to operators.

The changes allow operators to transfer parts of a licence and choose how many crab pots they want to use.

Changes were also made to finalising a raft of new arrangements for the Timor Reef Fishery. Industry and the NT Government have worked over a long time in formulating arrangements for quota to be introduced. Next on the list is the offshore snapper fisheries.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with the Northern Territory Seafood Council to ensure Territory seafood continues to be recognised as a high quality product taken from ecologically sustainable fisheries.

Kon Vatskalis
MINISTER FOR PRIMARY
INDUSTRY, FISHERIES AND
RESOURCES

GOLD AWARD FOR BUY LOCAL INITIATIVE



A buy local initiative to educate Territorians on the origin of seafood and improve the image of the industry won a prestigious award and national praise in October.

The Northern Territory Seafood Council's Support NT Caught campaign was given national recognition with a Gold Target Award from the Northern Territory branch of the Public Relations Institute of Australia.

The highly acclaimed campaign received a commendation against tough national competition in the national Public Relations of Australia Gold Target Awards at the 2010 conference in Darwin in October.

Seafood Council Chief Executive Officer Katherine Sarneckis said she was thrilled at the recognition of the Support NT Caught initiative, which was created by Michels Warren Munday, Boab Design's Brett Jacobs and photographer Peter Eve, to showcase the quality and people of the local seafood industry.

The campaign was consolidated with a three-year promotional and marketing plan developed by the Board and newly appointed marketing consultant Suzanne Morgan who has been actively promoting and undertaking campaign activities.

The initiative is being taken to the next level locally with a media strategy to promote local seafood and industry to consumers, retailers and restaurants.

With more "legs on the ground" the Seafood Council has identified more local networking and marketing opportunities including regular articles in the local *Darwin Life* magazine, becoming a member of the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) and taking part in the AHA industry conference at the Darwin Turf Club in June.

Media coverage was positive this year, including newspaper articles on local restaurants championing local seafood, such as Tasty House, La Beach and Saffron Indian restaurant in Parap, which



features the Support NT Caught logo on their menus.

The remaining five original Northern Territory Seafood Council tasty recipe cards were reproduced to include the Support NT Caught branding.

A Facebook site was created to generate interest and conversation about the local seafood industry and its products to a wider, younger and technology savvy audience.

"The Support NT Caught campaign continues to bring the local seafood industry to life and the eye-catching logo has increased in profile as a mechanism to recognise and prompt people to look for local seafood," Katherine says.

LABELLING LAW HITS NATIONAL STAGE

The Northern Territory Seafood Council spearheaded a national push to introduce Country of Origin Labelling schemes to promote the sale and purchase of local seafood across Australia.

As the first jurisdiction to introduce Country of Origin Labelling laws in Northern Territory cafes, restaurants and retailers, the Seafood Council urged other states to get behind a national scheme.

The Seafood Council used its own success story to lobby the federal government to introduce a national scheme to provide consumers with Country of Origin Labelling to allow them to make informed choices over what seafood products they want to eat as not all seafood is produced under the same strict environmental and health guidelines as Australian seafood.



A presentation was given on the initial successes of the Northern Territory Seafood Council's seafood labelling laws at the Seafood Directions conference in April, reaching a wide audience of national seafood councils, seafood industry, fisheries departments, suppliers and state and federal government representatives.

The presentation explained why compulsory labelling was better than a voluntary scheme, highlighting the assumptions that consumers make when seafood at restaurants is not labelled with any details about its origin.

Seafood councils Australia-wide joined the national push to alert consumers to imported seafood, generating wide media interest and lobbying state and federal politicians to introduce laws for Country of Origin Labelling.

The National Seafood Industry Alliance (NSIA) and Seafood Council both submitted compelling submissions on a national food labelling review with the final report recognising the need for better labelling.

The Seafood Council's convincing submission and strong labelling policy saw it adopted as the NSIA's official policy position on Country of Origin Labelling along with three other key issues to the industry including resource access, federal cost imposts and research, development and extension.

The Seafood Council's strong stance on promoting local seafood attracted Australian Government attention with the then Fisheries Minister Tony Burke visiting Darwin to discuss the local success of the seafood labelling scheme.

The Minister was impressed with the positive outcomes already felt by the local seafood industry with an increase in demand, higher prices and positive reactions from consumers.

Northern Territory Senator Trish Crossin showed invaluable support for the Country of Origin Labelling scheme by giving a heartfelt speech on the issue in the Senate in November and called on the Australian and state governments to follow the Northern Territory's lead.

LOCAL SEAFOOD QUEST HITS THE STREETS

A rise in local seafood prices, customers asking for local seafood and restaurants exclusively stocking it are just some of the initial successes following the introduction of the Country of Labelling Laws in the Northern Territory in 2008.

The Northern Territory Seafood Council secured a funding grant from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to research the impact of the NT seafood labelling laws and find out what difference the laws are making to the sale and purchase of local seafood.

The Seafood Council has contracted local marketing consultant Suzanne Morgan to conduct surveys of cafes, restaurants and retailers as well as consumers to assess the impact of the seafood labelling scheme.

Suzanne took to the streets to ask consumers in Darwin's Smith Street Mall how they chose their seafood and what led to their decision.



Territorians are already voting with their stomachs and giving local seafood the thumbs up.

Initial results from the consumer surveys show people in restaurants or cafes want to know where their seafood comes from, with the origin of seafood listed as the second most important attribute after freshness.

Price was considered the fourth most important aspect when buying seafood.

Trends revealed so far in the surveys show consumers will pay a premium price for seafood labelled 'local' and 'wild-caught'. Consumers also indicated they will pay more for seafood clearly labelled Australian than seafood with no label.

Of the consumers surveyed, four in ten said if seafood was not labelled they assumed it was sourced from overseas.

Three out of five surveys have been completed with the final results due in June 2011.

FAST FACTS

- Over the past decade Australia has become a net importer of fish products
- In 2007-08, the gross value of Australian fisheries production (GVP) was \$2.19 billion.
- Thailand (28.7%), is the biggest import supplier to Australia followed by New Zealand (16.3%), Vietnam (13%), China (11.9%) and Malaysia (5.1%)
- In 2006, around 16 000 people were employed in the Australian commercial fishing industry, comprising aquaculture, fishing, fish processing and wholesaling

CARMEL WINS RURAL AWARD FOR WOMEN

Carmel Ball is a beacon of light in a sea of men in the local seafood industry. Her passion and dedication were recognised after she won a prestigious industry award this year.

Carmel, who is on the Northern Territory Seafood Council's Board as Chair of the Seafood Trader/Processor Licensee Committee, won the 2010 Rural Industry Research Development Corporation's Northern Territory Rural Women's Award in 2010.

Netting herself a \$10 000 bursary to help her personal development and pursue her passion of creating a Northern Territory seafood cookbook, Carmel flew to Canberra to vie for the national award, meet her peers and complete a week long

training course on leadership and development.

The dynamic award winner will complete the company directors' course in Adelaide in 2011 and is keen to share her new-found knowledge by mentoring other women in the business community.

"These women are so passionate and motivated towards improving rural sector sustainability and enhancing rural life," Carmel says. "Women are the quiet achievers so it was great to get recognition for me and for the seafood industry."

Carmel, who has been featured in the *Australian Women's Weekly* and *Northern Territory News* as a result of the award, plans to put some of her award money



Alana Landsberry/ACPMagazines.com.au

towards developing a local seafood cookbook.

Seafood Council Chief Executive Officer Katherine Sarneckis congratulated Carmel on her award and said it was the first time a representative from the local seafood industry had won a rural women's award in the Northern Territory.

MARINE PROTECTED AREAS

Progress on marine bio-regional planning proceeded slowly in 2010 as the Northern Territory Seafood Council took steps to reduce the impact on the local seafood industry.

In 2009 the map showing Areas of Further Assessment for the North Marine Region was released to show where the Australian Government is proposing marine parks.

The Seafood Council's Chair Rob Fish and Chief Executive Officer Katherine Sarneckis met with representatives of the then Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (now

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) in July to highlight the serious concerns held by the local seafood industry on the marine park process.

The federal Government has taken the Seafood Council's feedback on board and is working closely with industry through the National Seafood Industry Alliance to make sure it is appropriately consulted and engaged to minimise the impact on industry.

The National Seafood Industry Alliance commissioned a report on adjustment schemes to look at compensation payment options

for displaced businesses in the seafood industry, modelled on a previous example created for the forestry industry and seafood industry involved with the Great Barrier Reef.

An Australian Government Displacement Policy is expected to be released in April 2011.

Draft plans for the North Marine Region, which encompasses Northern Territory waters from Joseph Bonaparte Gulf to West Cape York, are expected to be released by the federal government in July 2011.

TEAMWORK SAVES LIVES

The lives of three commercial crab fishermen were saved after a joint effort to improve the buoyancy of fishing vessels in the Northern Territory.

The life-saving project was an initiative of the Water Police and Marine Safety Branch and conducted in conjunction with the Northern Territory Seafood Council.

The three lucky crab fishermen had recently modified their boats after an easy way to calculate the buoyancy of a vessel was developed to ensure vessels met marine safety requirements.

The men had set out from Borroloola and were heading for the Roper River when they were struck by severe weather created by Cyclone Paul.

One boat experienced engine difficulty and two of the three vessels took on a huge amount



of water and only their recent compliance with buoyancy standards saved the boats from sinking.

The new buoyancy calculation and recent trials gives local fishers renewed confidence in the safety of their vessels and emphasises the importance of safety guidelines.

The incident showcases how the Water Police, Marine Safety Branch and industry can work well together to achieve a common goal.

BLUE MUD BAY

Negotiations continued with the land councils and Northern Territory Government over the Blue Mud Bay land rights decision.

The Northern Land Council has extended the interim access arrangements for commercial fishers to allow them to continue fishing until 30 June 2011.

The Anindilyakwa Land Council has extended the interim arrangements until its next full council meeting in early 2011. At this meeting it is expected they will make a decision on the length of time to extend the interim arrangements.

The Tiwi Land Council has not extended the interim arrangements with commercial operators who are now required to enter into negotiated agreements with the Tiwi Land Council before entering Tiwi waters.

The Northern Territory Seafood Council met with Chief Minister Paul Henderson in October to discuss the negotiations.

The Seafood Council continues to meet with the Northern Territory Government and land councils to ensure negotiations are continuing in a cooperative manner.

FAST FACTS

- The Northern Territory Seafood Council represents 270 licence holders who have invested more than \$1.4 billion in the industry
- More than 650 businesses are directly involved in the Northern Territory's professional seafood industry
- The Northern Territory seafood industry produces about \$60 million of product each year, excluding prawns
- Most Territorians rely on the Northern Territory's professional seafood industry for their local seafood supplies
- Licence holders fish in about 500 000 square kilometres of water from the coastline to 200 nautical miles, the limit of the Australian Fishing Zone, which is twice the size of Victoria
- There are 14 committees under the Seafood Council representing the different fisheries and sections of the local seafood industry
- The three highest value wild catch harvest fisheries for the Northern Territory seafood industry in 2009 were mud crab (\$11.2 million), the offshore snapper fisheries (\$13.4 million) and barramundi (\$4.9 million).
- The highest production aquaculture activities in 2009 in the NT were pearling (\$24.7 million) and barramundi (\$4.9 million) – 2009 Fishery Status Report

NT SEANET UPDATE

Commercial and amateur fishers working alongside environmentalists, politicians, school children and Indigenous groups was a dream come true for the Northern Territory seafood industry.

That is exactly what happened during the inaugural Darwin Harbour Clean Up – an initiative of SeaNet Northern Territory and its host, the Northern Territory Seafood Council, and employer OceanWatch Australia. The event was funded through the Natural Resource Management Board NT's Coastcare program.

As the first SeaNet Extension Officer for the Northern Territory, Lyn Lambeth is already making headway in forging new relationships and networks between the local seafood industry, community and other ocean users.

The Darwin Harbour Clean Up was a highlight of the year in which Lyn continued to spread the message of environmental sustainability and promote the efforts of commercial fishers who work to preserve fisheries, improve fishing practices and look after the environment.

On 13 July a dedicated group of 93 people from more than 20 organisations and businesses collected two and a half tonnes of rubbish from the coastline and waterways of Darwin Harbour.

The successful day saw rubbish picked up at eight land-based sites while eight boats combed the harbour.

Members of the Wagait Beach and Belyuen Communities and

the Two Fella Creek Conservation Group on Cox Peninsula got involved while local industry including INPEX, NT Water Policy, Fisheries, local school children, Conservation Volunteers and Darwin Port Corporation joined in.

The initiative is set to become a yearly event and will provide a benchmark of data to detect any ongoing problems with debris and rubbish in Darwin Harbour.

A review of the Barramundi Fishery Environmental Management System was completed and rolled out to industry.

The project looked at environmental risks to fishing ecosystems and ways to reduce bycatch as well as better interaction with other users and wildlife in the fishery.

The "Faces of Fishing" series of videos is now up and running on the SeaNet NT YouTube site as a way of showcasing the people and aspects of fishing and life aboard boats in the different fisheries of the Top End including the Aquarium Fishery and Spanish Mackerel Fishery.

The videos are popular with more than 7000 views. Other videos now on the site include the ghost net removed by Spanish Mackerel boat *Wildcard* north of Croker Island and a bycatch exclusion device in operation.

SeaNet NT has had many opportunities to increase community awareness of the sustainability of fisheries by providing information and resources at a Natural Resource



Management Fair in Darwin and setting up a stall at the Fred's Pass Rural Show.

Lyn spoke to several hundred people about the local fishing industry during the two-day show with videos, posters, marine pest information and examples of a Turtle Excluder Device on display.

A SeaNet NT stall was set up at the Darwin Careers Expo and Lyn spent the day talking with students about careers and opportunities in the local seafood industry with about 2000 students, teachers and parents visiting the Expo held at Fannie Bay Racecourse.

SeaNet NT has set up a Northern Territory Marine Resource Management Network to keep people interested in the local seafood industry up-to-date with general SeaNet and marine resource news.

Ghost nets loomed as a big issue for the local seafood industry this year and Lyn travelled to Karumba in Queensland for the Carpentaria Ghost Net Summit to provide information on the main net fisheries around the world and the gear they use.

LYN LEADS WITH CONFIDENCE

Creating leaders in the seafood industry is vital to increasing professionalism and develop valuable networks.

NT SeaNet Extension Officer Lyn Lambeth, who is employed by OceanWatch Australia and hosted by the Northern Territory Seafood Council, was given the chance to do just that when she took part in the National Seafood Industry Leadership Program in 2010.

Lyn's role is to advance sustainability in the Northern Territory seafood industry and promote the work done by commercial fishers to improve fishing practices, care for the environment and preserve fisheries.



In recognition of Lyn's valuable work, the Seafood Council sponsored her to complete the six-month program which involved three-day courses in Sydney, Hobart and Canberra and culminated in a graduation dinner at Parliament House in Canberra.

"It was great for my professional and personal development and I learnt how to operate in high level

meetings, networking as well as meeting mentors like Western Australian Greens Senator Rachel Siewert," Lyn says.

Seafood Council Chief Executive Officer Katherine Sarneckis says she can already see the boost of confidence the leadership program has given to Lyn and the networks she has created as a result of the course.

DARWIN HARBOUR CLEAN UP 2010

Items collected included:

- ▶ half a tonne of truck tyres pulled from around Fisherman's Wharf
- ▶ 300 kilograms of lost bundled floats and ropes at East Arm
- ▶ 17 shopping trolleys removed from the water at Fishermen's Wharf and the coast of Coconut Grove
- ▶ 1800 plastic drink bottles
- ▶ 7600 aluminum cans, of which 5880 were collected from mangroves behind the Mandorah Hotel
- ▶ one stolen crocodile skin handbag which was returned to its relieved owner.



STRATEGIC PLAN, GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2010 the Northern Territory Seafood Council developed its Strategic Plan for 2010–13 and continues to maintain the vision of achieving a profitable, sustainable seafood industry supporting the economic growth of the Northern Territory.

Below, we report on our achievements towards the goals of the strategic plan in 2010.

Strategic plan goals	Achievements in 2010
INDUSTRY SECURITY AND INVESTMENT	
<p>To secure greater natural resource certainty for the seafood industry including legislative access and rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Liaison with Northern Territory Government about developing the <i>Northern Territory Fisheries Strategy Paper</i> ➤ Negotiations with oil and gas exploration companies operating in the Timor Sea to reduce impacts of drilling and seismic surveys ➤ Continued to build relationships with Indigenous communities and organisations ➤ NTSC CEO appointed to Fisheries Research Development Corporation working group on Resource Access and Resource Allocation ➤ Took part in fishery Management Advisory Committees (Mud Crab, Barramundi, Spanish Mackerel and Coastal Line fishery) ➤ Strong input to National Marine Bio-regional Planning working group.
PEAK INDUSTRY VOICE AND KEY POLICY INFLUENCER	
<p>To have greater impact on government policy and implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participation in and support for the National Seafood Industry Alliance ➤ Drafting of <i>Northern Territory Seafood Council Policy No. 9 Fisheries Administration Principles</i> ➤ Drafting of <i>Northern Territory Seafood Council Policy No. 8 Resource Sharing</i> ➤ Food Labelling Review submissions ➤ Liaison with the Fisheries unit of the Department of Resources over <i>Fisheries Act</i> amendments ➤ Attended Department of Resources meetings ➤ Regular meetings with Executive Director of Fisheries ➤ The Seafood Council sits on a number of national and Northern Territory forums and government committees.
PROFESSIONAL EXPANDED AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES	
<p>Encourage innovation and best principles of wild harvest fishing and aquaculture farming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Secured funds under Caring for our Country program to review Environmental Management Systems or Codes of Practice for five Northern Territory fisheries ➤ Took part in Seafood Directions Conference, Melbourne 2010 ➤ Hosting and continued support of NT SeaNet Officer position.



Strategic plan goals	Achievements in 2010
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MAXIMISE INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION, HIGH PUBLIC PROFILE AND SUPPORT




<p>To improve the support and recognition of the Seafood Council among members and stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Developed three-year strategy for Support NT Caught ➤ Engaged consultant Suzanne Morgan to coordinate Support NT Caught activities ➤ Quarterly <i>Seafood Council Newsletter</i> distributed ➤ Monthly editorial in <i>Darwin Life</i> magazine ➤ Annual advertising in <i>This Week in Darwin</i> magazine ➤ Oral presentations at two national and one industry conference on Country of Origin Labelling ➤ Strong input from all licensee committees ➤ Undertook a survey of Northern Territory Seafood Council members ➤ A member of the Northern Territory Business Council ➤ Associate member of Australian Hotels Association ➤ Attended quarterly Seafood Services Australia Network meetings.
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EFFICIENT INNOVATIVE AND FINANCIALLY SECURE INDUSTRY COUNCIL




<p>Strengthen and document Seafood Council policy and administrative systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review of Northern Territory Seafood Council constitution ➤ Adopted financial procedures and reporting system ➤ Membership of HR Advance, Australian Business Pty Ltd.
<p>Broaden and increase resource funding base of the Seafood Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Grants totalling \$321 000 secured in 2010 for new industry projects ➤ Offshore Exploration Environmental Research Fund.
<p>Professionalise the governance and operation of the Seafood Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Developing 2010-2013 Strategic Plan ➤ Developed 2010-2013 Promotional/Marketing Plan ➤ Developed 2011 Business Plan ➤ Mediation training for Chief Executive Officer and Northern Territory Seafood Council Chair ➤ CEO graduated from Australian Institute of Company Directors, Company Directors Course ➤ Governance training grant for Northern Territory Seafood Council Board secured ➤ Sponsorship for NT SeaNet Officer to complete National Seafood Industry Leadership Program.




COMMITTEE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Northern Territory Seafood Council is made up of 14 different committees that each represent a fishery. These are their highlights for 2010.




Committee	Achievements in 2010
 <p>AQUACULTURE LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Adam Body</p>	<p>The aquaculture sector was buoyed to some extent this year by the “buy local” Support NT Caught campaign in the Northern Territory and Darwin in particular. It is clear the campaign is having a positive impact.</p> <p>On the other hand, prices interstate have remained static and costs continue to increase. Buyers hold the price of imported barramundi as their key card in negotiations, and this means that any attempt to increase selling prices to match increased costs will not happen.</p> <p>One way forward is to keep trying to change seafood labelling regulations in other states and bring them into line with us in the Northern Territory.</p> <p>Opening farming and fishing up to competitors that operate under totally different circumstances to us in Australia, could mean that much of the primary industry in this country will have to close down.</p> <p>Passive misleading labelling, such as selling “barramundi” without reference to its source, while knowing almost all consumers at a restaurant will assume that it must be Australian, is wrong and is wrecking good, honest businesses.</p>
 <p>AQUARIUM COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Brian Koennecke</p>	<p>A total of 11 transferable licences now make up the Northern Territory Aquarium fishery.</p> <p>Since the licence conditions and transferability were finalised the fishery has seen three licences change hands and has welcomed new blood into the industry.</p> <p>The ability to buy and sell licences gives the industry an asset they can be confident of investing money towards and enables the fishery to move forward with new players.</p> <p>Two licences have been leased in 2010 which again reinforces the value of the licences as an asset and allows flexibility in utilising them.</p> <p>Unfortunately, while export demand is high for the aquarium fishery, the high Australian dollar and changes to logistics has seen a down turn in activity for the industry.</p> <p>The loss of connecting flights from Darwin to Singapore has increased costs and effort to get the exports out of Australia, while barge costs have also risen.</p> <p>The reef off the North coast is benefiting from re-recruitment of coral species after several severe weather events and is looking to be in good health.</p>
 <p>NT DEMERSAL FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION</p> <p>Chair: Bill Passey <i>(NTSC Treasure)</i></p>	<p>The new quota management arrangements for the Northern Territory Demersal Fishery are taking longer than hoped but are expected to be implemented by mid 2011.</p> <p>This will result in stability for the fishery as the current arrangements are unworkable and dangerous to the sustainability of the fishery.</p> <p>To explain this further, about 10 per cent of the licences are currently fished and they are taking about 100 per cent of the proposed quota for Gold Band Snapper. We can all see where this may lead.</p> <p>The proposed marine parks are still the large black cloud hanging over the fishery, creating uncertainty and destabilising business.</p> <p>The Demersal fish stocks are as strong and stable as ever, it is just the uncertainty of government decisions that is creating instability in an otherwise very healthy fishery.</p>





Committee	Achievements in 2010
 <p>NT CRAB LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Doug Neville</p>	<p>The total catch for 2010 is expected to come in at about 350 tonnes, which is significantly down on 2009. This is a yield similar to 2007 and is well below the industry’s expectation at the start of 2010.</p> <p>There can be no doubt the drop is due largely to the effects of Cyclone Paul, which caused a late start to the season in most areas as well as reducing the abundance of mud crabs for the whole year.</p> <p>The changes to the management plan came into effect mid-year and have been generally well-received by the industry. The more significant changes have allowed the unitisation of the 60 pot licence into two 30 pot units and have increased the penalties for non-compliance with pot number restrictions.</p> <p>As an adjunct to these changes the Northern Territory Seafood Council has formally requested a further change to the plan which will allow the unitisation of the Bait Net Entitlement to complement the pot unitisation initiative.</p> <p>At the start of the 2010 season, fishers were encouraged to ensure all fishing dinghies complied with the safety requirements for their use.</p> <p>In particular, the installation of floatation material caused some concern, but to their absolute credit the fishermen responded to the challenge. As a result fishing operations are much safer now than at any time previously.</p> <p>Research work is continuing into the development of escape vents for crab pots with the intention of allowing crabs below the minimum size limit to escape before the pot is lifted. If successful, this will be useful in enhancing sustainability of the fishery if it is applied across all sectors.</p>
 <p>FINFISH TRAWL LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Bill Passey <i>(NTSC Treasurer)</i></p>	<p>The world’s first successful finfish trawl Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD), that was invented by Northern Territory finfish trawl fishery operators, has completed another year of operation.</p> <p>More fine-tuning has been done by the Skipper of the <i>FV Territory Leader</i> with good results. The fishery has now managed to reduce the take of medium to large sharks and stingrays by a whopping 100 per cent.</p> <p>T90 mesh has been added to the nets between the BRD and the cod end. The T90 mesh is diamond shaped but is pulled sideways to keep it open. This allows the small fish to escape through the mesh as it is forced open.</p> <p>Annual catches for the fishery are still very strong and stable with no change to the average size of Snappers.</p> <p>Marketing arrangements are similar to last year with a small increase in exports and extra countries added to the seafood’s destinations. The strong Australian dollar has not favoured exports but demand is strong and the correction has not had to be carried solely by the fishery.</p>
 <p>PEARLING LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Tony Thiel</p>	<p>The pearling industry continued to endure tough times in 2010 in the wake of the global financial crisis.</p> <p>The market appears to have leveled out although prices remain low and it is expected that a recovery will take some time for the industry.</p> <p>Companies involved in the pearling industry continue to consolidate and cope with the rise in costs.</p> <p>One company took about eight tonnes of mother of pearl from the western grounds of the fishery this year.</p> <p>Shells for pearl culture continue to be sourced through hatcheries.</p>

Committee	Achievements in 2010
 <p>COASTAL NET LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Phillip Greet</p>	<p>The Coastal Net Licensee Committee is working with the Northern Land Council to develop training courses on the fishery to encourage Indigenous involvement.</p> <p>The five remaining licence holders continue to be frustrated by the lack of certainty in the industry with no commitment from the Northern Territory Government on its future.</p> <p>The committee continues to lobby the Northern Territory Government to allow fishers to use tunnel nets, which allows incidental catch to be released unharmed.</p> <p>The Committee is keen to have a stock analysis of the fishery undertaken for the key species caught in the fishery, including Mullet, Blue Salmon, Shark, Whiting and Brim.</p>
 <p>OFFSHORE AND NET LINE FISHERY</p> <p>Chair: Rob Lowden</p>	<p>The average conditions for marketing of catches for the Offshore Net Line Fishery continued in 2010, making it a difficult year.</p> <p>With a very strong Australian dollar, competition with imported fish put downward pressure on domestic Mackerel and shark prices. The export components of the fishery were also hit by the high Australian dollar.</p> <p>Overall catches in the fishery were good with steady numbers throughout the year, despite it being a La Nina year. South-East winds were much stronger and lasted until late in the season, making work offshore challenging at times.</p> <p>The fishery averaged four boats working full-time with another two vessels working part of the year.</p> <p>Increasing numbers of amateur vessels anchoring at night without displaying the appropriate lights has produced an additional hazard to fishers in the fishery, with some instances of fishing gear and vessels interacting.</p> <p>We would like to see the International Marine Collision Regulations adhered to by all users of the sea, particularly in high traffic areas.</p> <p>Currently the Offshore Net Line Fishery is being assessed by the Australian Government's Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. We have been advised that the Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) has been extended until June to allow both the Queensland fishery and the Northern Territory fishery to be assessed at the same time.</p>
 <p>TIMOR REEF LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Horst Fischer <i>(NTSC Vice Chair)</i></p>	<p>Catches and prices for Gold Band Snapper – the key species in the fishery – have remained strong.</p> <p>Unfortunately at the end of 2010 the Timor Reef Fishery had still not seen quotas introduced despite several years of work. The implementation of quotas has been delayed by complications in drafting regulations for the first fishery in the Northern Territory to operate under a quota management system.</p> <p>Draft regulations were finalised mid-way through the year but unfortunately the federal election has further delayed the implementation of Individual Transfer of Quotas (ITQ). An ITQ system is needed to ensure the fishery develops in an economically rational manner.</p> <p>The fishery has experienced further problems following seismic survey activity in the area. Research in Norway has confirmed that seismic survey vessels do affect fish behaviour and catchability. We are working with the government to ensure the fishery is not negatively impacted by any further seismic survey activity.</p> <p>This time next year the fishery should have been under ITQs for nearly a year. It's been a long road but well worth the effort.</p>



Committee	Achievements in 2010
 <p>TREPANG LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Will Bowman</p>	<p>This year has been spent preparing for the first trials of introducing juvenile Trepang into the wild fishery.</p> <p>Tasmanian Seafoods Pty Ltd had great success in propagating and growing the juveniles and the project is at a stage where the hatchlings will be released into the existing fishery in a trial off Groote Eylandt.</p> <p>The Northern Territory's Beche-de-mer (Trepang) industry is being helped on the project by the Northern Territory Government's Fisheries Division.</p> <p>The first release of 20 000 juveniles is due to happen in April 2011 off Groote Eylandt. The growth of the hatchlings, which are stained so they can be recognised, will be monitored over the following 12 months during regular stock surveys. Results on the first trial are expected to be available next year.</p> <p>The fishery has established an agreement with the community of Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt to look at any recruitment and development opportunities for local people of the area.</p>
 <p>BARRAMUNDI LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Peter Manning</p>	<p>The Barramundi Licensee Committee released its revised environmental management system looking at reducing bycatch as well as interaction with other users and wildlife.</p> <p>The revised system was voluntary and driven by our fishery to reduce environmental risks.</p> <p>The Committee held its first management advisory committee meeting in December where it pushed for a resource sharing arrangement to be in place before any closures or changes are made to the fishery.</p> <p>The arrangement would look at resource sharing between commercial fishers, amateur fishers, fishing tour operators and Indigenous users as well as developing conflict resolution strategies.</p> <p>The Department of Resources gave an overview of the fishery and has confirmed stocks across the Northern Territory are extremely healthy.</p> <p>The fishery achieved more positive results from the NT seafood labelling laws and the Support NT Caught initiative with higher demand for local barramundi. The higher demand was felt later in the season where barramundi prices went from \$15 to \$16 per kilogram to a high of \$19 per kilogram.</p> <p>The fishery is looking at ways to capitalise on niche markets created by the demand for local seafood with similar packaging or branding for Northern Territory barramundi.</p>
 <p>NT SEAFOOD TRADER/ PROCESSOR LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Carmel McCaskill Ball</p>	<p>There has been a significant change to the purchasing powers of local consumers following the introduction of the Country of Origin Labelling laws.</p> <p>There has been a higher demand for local seafood and consumers seem to appreciate knowing if the seafood they are buying is labelled correctly as local or imported.</p> <p>The Support NT Caught initiative is working well and the committee is looking to add value to the campaign and help raise the profile of the local seafood industry by creating a cookbook.</p> <p>Money raised through the recent gala balls held by the Northern Territory Seafood Council will go towards funding the cookbook to educate Territorians about what local seafood is available and how to cook it.</p> <p>The cookbook will also explain a bit about the fisheries in which the seafood is caught. Work on the seafood cookbook will start in early 2011.</p>

Committee	Achievements in 2010
 <p>NT COASTAL LINE FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION</p> <p>Chair: Adam Collins</p>	<p>The fishery continues to feel like it is in “limbo” as it waits for the Northern Territory Government to provide options for managing the fishery.</p> <p>There are still 54 licences available in the fishery, of which 37 are unrestricted, 17 are restricted and around 25 in total are active. There are about eight licences that are used full-time.</p> <p>The committee is looking at its own management strategy for the fishery and will meet in early 2011 to discuss the long term options available to manage the fishery with regard to effort.</p> <p>The Northern Territory Government recently imposed a short term cap of 185 tonne limit for Black Jewfish and five tonne limit on Golden Snapper to ensure commercial catch within the Darwin Zone remain capped at this level.</p> <p>There has been increased pressure on the fishery by amateur fishers and fishing tour operators within the Darwin Zone. Both sectors are looking at how they can reduce their impacts on the fishery.</p>
 <p>NT SPANISH MACKEREL LICENSEE COMMITTEE</p> <p>Chair: Peter Manning</p>	<p>The NT Spanish Mackerel Licensee Management Advisory Committee is still researching the introduction of a quota system to add value to the fishery and is waiting for input from the Department of Resources on the benefits.</p> <p>The number of licences dropped to 16 in 2010, so there are now five restricted licences and 11 unrestricted licences (transferable) operational.</p> <p>Three to four people continue to catch most of the fish in the industry as the prices are not high enough for more people to fish viably. The cost of fuel makes it more expensive to catch the product.</p> <p>The fishery remains relatively unchanged in 2010, with only a small number of active operators fishing in the fishery and licence holders remained focused on the long term management arrangements to ensure a viable, profitable industry for the future.</p>

GRANTS AND PROJECTS

IMPACT OF NT SEAFOOD LABELLING LAWS

Project Number: 2009/216

Funded by: Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)

Amount: \$75 000

Summary: The NT introduced new seafood labelling laws in 2008 requiring all people selling seafood to state if the product is imported. This project aims to understand whether the seafood labelling laws have led to changes in purchasing behaviour and the impacts on businesses and consumers.

Project due to be completed by June 2011.

SADDLETAIL SNAPPER RESEARCH (PART 1)

Project Number: 2008/208

Funded by: Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)

Amount: \$126 000

Summary: The first part of a two part project to investigate quality improvement of Saddletail Snapper. This research indicated that handling practices did not appear to cause 'tough fish' syndrome (TFS). Key issues which were identified to be beneficial to research further were the age and seasonality of fish.

Project completed in July 2010.

SADDLETAIL SNAPPER RESEARCH (PART 2)

Project Number: 2010/207

Funded by: Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)

Amount: \$178 106

Summary: Data from previous research (FRDC Project 2008/208) indicated that the development of 'tough fish' syndrome (TFS) may not be due to onboard handling practices. This project will obtain additional seasonal data which

will aid in understanding the causes of the TFS and develop recommendations and strategies to minimise the impacts of TFS on industry.

Project due to be completed by April 2012.

DARWIN HARBOUR MARINE CLEAN UP

Funded by: NT Natural Resource Management

Amount: \$20 000

Summary: Several professional fishers had raised the issue of marine debris around the harbour and other popular fishing spots. A clean-up activity was organised jointly by Northern Territory Seafood Council and NT SeaNet to gain a better understanding of what the fishers were anecdotally reporting and to gauge the extent of the problem.

Project completed July 2010.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Project Number: GMX-OC11-00372

Funded by: Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Amount: \$108 000

Summary: Conduct a review of the Environmental Management Systems or Codes of Practice of five fisheries in the Northern Territory. The project will look at environmental risks to fishing ecosystems and promote bycatch reduction strategies. The project will also address the potential lack of environmental awareness and responsibility among all members of the industry, including crew and licence lessees.

Project due to be completed February 2013.

GOVERNANCE SCHOLARSHIP

Project Number: 2008/318.12

Funded by: Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC)

Amount: up to \$15 000

Summary: NTSC Chief Executive Officer Katherine Sarneckis was awarded the scholarship which gave her the opportunity to undertake the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Company Directors' Course and to attend a meeting of the FRDC Board of Directors to further develop her skills and knowledge for effective governance.

Katherine was admitted as a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors in November 2010.

JUVENILE MUD CRAB RESEARCH

Funded by: Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Amount: \$114 800

Summary: The aim of the project was to investigate potential links between the abundance of juvenile mud crabs and the subsequent commercial harvest of the adults. Data collected by commercial fishers and Indigenous Sea Rangers from around the Northern Territory was collated and analysed by the Fisheries division of the Department of Resources.

The success of the project represents the biggest leap forward in our ability to capture and document the distribution and abundance of juvenile mud crabs in the past 20 years. Variations in the fishery from year to year means that ongoing data collection is required if commercial fishers wish to develop a recruitment/catch forecasting model.



Supported by:  Northern Territory Government

Northern Territory Seafood Council
Telephone: **08 8981 5194**
www.ntsc.com.au | ntsc@ntsc.com.au
GPO Box 618 Darwin NT 0801