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To: NT Coastal and Marine Management Strategy
PO Box 496
Palmerston NT 0832
marinecoastal.strategy@nt.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

The objects and purposes of the Northern Territory Guided Fishing Association (NTGFIA) are:

- To promote, develop and maintain the Guided Fishing Industry in the Northern Territory.
- To assist the Northern Territory Government in managing the Guided Fishing Industry to ensure and enhance its economic viability and the sustainability of its target species.
- To take a pro-active role in maintaining the quality of marine and freshwater fish habitats and of the environment generally.

Members of NTGFIA are fishing tour operators who take their guests to some of the most beautiful fishing spots in the world in the Top End of the Northern Territory. Because of a relatively small population, most of it around Darwin, we are blessed with near-pristine waters and extensive fish nursery areas in seagrass meadows, mangroves, rivers and estuaries. The region is a paradise for recreational fishers and we would like it to stay that way.

To ensure the best experience for our guests, and to give them a reason for returning, we have a code of conduct that seeks to ensure the highest standards of sportfishing ethics, general conduct and safety in guided fishing tour operations. Respect for the environment and traditional culture are prominent, with 'catch and release' fishing and the use of barbless hooks, and:

- A member shall always be proactive in the preservation of marine and terrestrial environments in which he or she operates, including but not limited to:
 - preventing damage to fauna and flora
 - removing all rubbish from areas of operation to authorized rubbish disposal points
 - conduct threatening or causing death or damage to wildlife
 - leaving camp sites clean and tidy.
- A member shall always have proper respect and consideration for the wishes and requirements of land owners and for the wishes and lifestyle, culture, ceremonies, customs, traditions and sites of significance to aboriginal people, whether conducting operations on aboriginal land or otherwise.

NTGFIA members take stewardship of the environments in which they operate very seriously. Without healthy Top End coasts and seas, our industry would suffer, along with the Territory economy — guided fishing operators generate more than \$15m each year.

We do all we can to look after coastal and marine environments but there are some issues that we would like to see dealt with by the Territory Government, and the Coastal and Marine Management Strategy and its implementation plan would be a good place to start.

The dieback of mangroves along the southern coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria was a wake up call for many Territorians but there are other emerging threats of concern. These include freshwater extraction from rivers essential for barramundi, the spread of plastics and marine debris, including ghost fishing nets, coral bleaching, water pollution from legacy and operational mines, waste water from aquaculture farms, and localised commercial overfishing.

The Territory needs better management of land-based and marine based threats. We would also like to see the creation of areas that support recreational fishing values. The Garig Gunak Barlu National Park (Cobourg Marine Park), with restrictions on commercial fishing, especially trawling, has proven to be a haven for recreational fishers. Establishing some new marine parks would add to the options available to enhance the recreational fishing experience. One of these could be in Bynoe Harbour.

Bynoe Harbour has very high natural, cultural and fishing values, and is home to threatened species like dugong and turtle. Largely due to the harbour's close proximity to Darwin, it is under increasing pressure, and will require improved management and protection if it is to maintain these values. Establishing Bynoe Harbour as a marine park to support the sustainability of recreational and tour fishing, as well as natural values, should be investigated. If established, it should be accompanied by resources to effectively manage the park. This would also serve to add value to tourism operators in the area as it is increasingly known that the best fishing experiences are within marine parks, like Cobourg Marine Park.

Thank you giving the NTGFIA the opportunity to comment on the Coastal and Marine Management Strategy Discussion Paper.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Williams
Executive Officer