



# National Native Title Tribunal

Welcome to the first edition of the National Native Title Tribunal's fishing bulletin for 2006.

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The Tribunal invites all subscribers to submit any relevant fishing news or useful web links to [fishing@nntt.gov.au](mailto:fishing@nntt.gov.au). We will contact you about including your submission in the next edition of the Bulletin.

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## National Indigenous Fishing Technical Working Group (NIFTWG) update

The National Indigenous Fishing Technical Working Group (NIFTWG) met in Fremantle on 25 February, ahead of the international Sharing the Fish – Allocation Issues in Fisheries Management 2006 Conference.

This meeting of Indigenous fishing stakeholders, chaired by Tribunal Member John Catlin, included representatives from various Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments, sectoral fisheries interests and Indigenous representatives from around the country.

The impact of illegal fishing on Indigenous communities and the way forward for Indigenous involvement in the commercial fishing sector emerged as the key points of discussion at the meeting.

Presentations from state and territory jurisdictions, as well as the commercial fishing industry, showed significant progress in implementing the national fishing Principles, which were endorsed by the Australian Government in August 2005.

Tribunal Member and NIFTWG co-chair John Catlin said the meeting, held at Fremantle's historic Fremantle Maritime Museum Shipwreck Galleries, encouraged an open exchange of ideas on engaging Indigenous people in the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries across Australia.

All papers and presentations from the meeting will be posted to the Tribunal's website.

Saturday's meeting brought an end to Tribunal involvement as the convener of NIFTWG, which had the objective of advancing a resolution from the 2003 Indigenous Fishing Rights conference resolution 'that local, regional, state and national structures be established to develop indigenous fishing strategies.'

However, the Tribunal will continue to distribute regular indigenous fishing bulletins.

For background information about NIFTWG and to read back-issues of the Bulletin, go to the National Native Title Tribunal's website: [http://www.nntt.gov.au/publications/fishing\\_bulletin.html](http://www.nntt.gov.au/publications/fishing_bulletin.html)

## Indigenous fishing in the news

**November 2005**

**WA: Indigenous people may act as fishing rangers, 20/11/2005.**

Federal Fisheries Minister Ian Macdonald is encouraging the Western Australian Government to go ahead with a proposal to pay residents of remote Aboriginal communities to be fishing rangers. A similar program is successfully operating in the Northern Territory.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200511/s1510725.htm>

**NT: Customs accused of slow response over illegal fishing boats, 21/11/2005.**

Aboriginal rangers in Arnhem Land have expressed frustration over Customs slow response in acting on the apprehension of illegal foreign fishing vessels. The Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation said Customs took too long to respond to a notification from rangers.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200511/s1512932.htm>

**WA: NT offers WA help to start Indigenous fishing ranger scheme, 22/11/2005.**

The Northern Territory says it is willing to help Western Australia introduce a program which pays residents in remote communities to be Aboriginal fishing rangers. The Northern Territory currently employs about 37 sea rangers.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200511/s1514196.htm>

**WA: Indigenous group gets commercial mud crabbing nod, 25/11/2005.**

Derby-based Aboriginal corporation, Emama Gnuda, has been given the go ahead to start commercial mud crabbing in King Sound in northern Western Australia. The corporation will be catching mud crabs for sale, potentially to Kimberley restaurants.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200511/s1516645.htm>

**National: Sea rangers to be paid 'real wages' under Labor strategy, 28/11/2005.**

The Federal Opposition say Aboriginal sea rangers would be paid real wages under its proposal to combat illegal fishing activity. Labor Party leader Kim Beazley says the Australian Government is being short-sighted in its refusal to give them a bigger role in surveillance.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200511/s1517932.htm>

**Qld: TSRA takes over regional land and sea management, 28/11/2005.**

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) has assumed responsibility for land and sea management from the region's natural resource group. A natural resource management strategy will be implemented as soon as funding is secured.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200511/s1517953.htm>

See the TSRA's media statement for more information:

<http://www.tsra.gov.au/www/index.cfm?pageID=523>

**NT: Indigenous rangers support fishing patrol plan, 28/11/2005.**

Aboriginal rangers in the Northern Territory have given in principle support to the Federal Labor Party's proposal to employ them as coast guard spotters to combat illegal fishing. Rangers have detected a number of boats this year and have been calling for increased support from the Federal Government.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200511/s1518215.htm>

## December 2005

### **WA: Elders to appeal against court native title decision, 01/12/2005.**

Native title holders on the Dampier Peninsula in northern Western Australia will appeal against a Federal Court decision limiting their rights over the sea and islands. The Bardi and Jawi peoples gained exclusive native title rights over part of the Peninsula, but were disappointed over the Federal Court's decision to limit their rights to the ocean.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200512/s1520625.htm>

### **NT: Maningrida locals call for illegal barra fishing to end, 02/12/2005.**

Residents at the remote community of Maningrida in north-east Arnhem Land say they are fed up with some commercial barramundi boats fishing illegally in Territory rivers. The Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation says police do not seem to be able to prevent the boats fishing inside closure lines.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200512/s1521389.htm>

### **NSW: Indigenous group may appeal abalone poaching convictions, 05/12/2005.**

A group of Aboriginal men on the NSW far south coast is considering appealing against court convictions for abalone offences. The 11 men were fined between \$500 and \$2,000 in the Narooma Local Court in a case that focused on the traditional rights of Koori people to harvest and fish in the area.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200512/s1523380.htm>

### **NT: Rangers applaud Customs cooperation in illegal boat catch, 09/12/2005.**

Aboriginal rangers say the capture of another illegal fishing boat off the Northern Territory coast shows what can be achieved if Customs gets behind Indigenous groups. Rangers spotted the boat fishing for shark, west of Maningrida, and notified Customs which took the crew into custody.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200512/s1527380.htm>

### **NT: Combined sea ranger program unrealistic says NT, 20/12/2005.**

The NT Government says it would be unrealistic to expect Queensland and Western Australia to be included in a funding request for sea rangers to patrol for illegal fishing boats. Federal Fisheries Minister Ian Macdonald said he would want to see a proposal that covered the whole northern coast.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200512/s1534940.htm>

## January 2006

### **ABC News Online: NT Govt seeks \$11m to protect waters, 5/01/2006.**

The Northern Territory Government has called on the Commonwealth to fund the employment of more than 50 Indigenous rangers to protect Australia's northern waters from illegal fishing. The Territory's Fisheries Minister has sent a proposal to the Federal Government, calling for around \$11 million.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200601/s1542040.htm>

### **WA: Government support for sea ranger program, 9/1/2006.**

The Bardi people from One Arm point near Broome may become coastguards in their battle to stop Indonesian fishermen poaching valuable trochus shells from Kimberley reefs. WA Fisheries Minister Jon Ford is backing a plan by the community to employ its people as sea rangers.

Source: Bardis' anti-poachers patrol plan supported, *The West Australian*, 9/01/2006, p. 7

### **WA: Kimberley Aboriginal community looks to boost illegal fishing fight, 10/1/2006.**

The remote community of Djarindjin on the Dampier Peninsula will join the nearby One Arm Point community in pushing for an Indigenous sea ranger program to operate along the Kimberley coast. The community has recently played a key role in the arrest of foreign poachers.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200601/s1544796.htm>

**WA: Kimberley group plan to sue Government over poaching, 10/1/2006**

The Bardi people from the remote One Arm Point community plan to sue the Federal Government for failing to protect their livelihood from Indonesian poachers. State member for the Kimberly Carol Martin said she believed the 300-strong community have a strong case.

Source: Bardi to sue over poaching, *The West Australian*, 10/01/2006, p. 5.

**WA: Law expert says Bardi people have a strong moral case against Fed Govt, 11/1/2006.**

The Bardi people have a strong moral case against the Federal Government over its failure to protect their livelihood from Indonesian poachers, according to leading constitutional law expert Greg Craven.

Source: Bardis have a strong moral case: law expert, *The West Australian*, 11/1/2006, p. 8.

**WA: Trochus shell poachers rob community of valuable income, 19/1/2006.**

The One Arm Point community in the Kimberly region says is losing 10,000 kilograms of trochus shell a year to Indonesian poachers, equating to two-thirds of the community's annual quota of trochus shells, and up to \$100,000 in lost earnings each year.

Source: Poachers hit community, *Kimberley Times*, 19/1/2006, p. 2.

**WA: WA and NT to join fight against illegal fishing, 23/1/2006.**

Western Australia and the Northern Territory have teamed up to fight fish poaching and want \$26 million in Federal cash for the plan. The alliance, which is expected to include Queensland in the future, has asked the Federal Government to put in the money over four years.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200601/s1552625.htm>

**NT: New federal fisheries minister urged to tackle illegal fishing, 25/1/2006.**

The Northern Territory Government says new federal Fisheries Minister Eric Abetz should support a plan its drawing up with Western Australia to tackle illegal fishing and will seek an urgent meeting with the new minister to discuss illegal fishing in Australia's northern waters.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200601/s1554616.htm>

**WA: Bardi and Jawi community to watch for illegal fishing, 28/01/2006.**

The Bardi Jawi Aboriginal community has been given a patrol boat to try to stop illegal fishing by Indonesian fishermen and help protect the Kimberley's fish stocks. The community will patrol local waters and alert the Department of Fisheries or Customs if they spot illegal fishing boats.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200601/s1557217.htm>]

**WA: Poaching threatens aquaculture venture, 30/1/2006.**

Illegal fishing by Indonesians will undermine plans for a \$1 million expansion of an aquaculture venture in the One Arm Point Aboriginal community along the Kimberley's remote coast, says hatchery manager Barry Sharpe. The remote community proposes to expand its hatchery to increase its trochus reseeding operations as well as breed barramundi and other fin fish for the domestic and export markets, but the project would not be viable unless poaching in the area was eliminated, according to Mr Sharpe.

Source: Poaching threat to hatchery plan, *The West Australian*, 30/1/2006, p. 5.

**February 2006**

**Qld: Indecision on nets upsetting industry, 3/2/2006.**

Queensland's Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPIF) said a court decision on whether Aboriginal and South Sea Islander people have a traditional right to fish with nets will clarify long-standing confusion in the community over the practice. Mike Broadsmith, a Yeppoon-based DPIF district officer said a court decision either way will make everyone in the community happy.

Source: Indecision on nets drives racial wedge in industry, *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), 3/2/2006, p.6.

**NT: Minister emphasises need for Indigenous rangers, 3/2/2006.**

The Northern Territory's Fisheries Minister Kon Vatskalis says the rescue of an Indonesian fishing boat is more evidence of the need for Indigenous rangers. Customs rescued six crew members from their floundering boat just off Elcho Island after a tip off from the island's rangers.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200602/s1561417.htm>

**NT: Calls for government action after boat discovery, 6/2/2006.**

Ian Munro from the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation in Arnhem Land says there should be federal funding for Indigenous sea rangers to spot illegal boats in Australia's northern rivers. Mr Munro made the calls after local people found a suspected illegal fishing boat in a creek near their community.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200602/s1563509.htm>

**Vic: Koori eel farming enterprise an Australian first, 15/2/2006.**

The Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation is closer to establishing Australia's first re-created traditional Koori eel farming enterprise with \$90,000 funding announced by the Federal Government. Winda-Mara chairman Damein Bell said studies would investigate how to best use a traditional farming system without interfering with the heritage value of the area.

Source: Koori eel farm plan, *Warrnambool Standard*, 15/2/2006, p. 13.

**SA: Public comment sought on draft Fisheries Management Bill, 17/2/2006.**

The South Australian Government has recently released a draft Fisheries Management Bill, which includes a definition of Indigenous cultural fishing and recognises the customary sector as a sector in its own right alongside the commercial and recreational fishing sector. The public has until 31 March to forward its comments regarding the draft Bill.

Source: Fishing crackdown, *Border Watch* (Mount Gambier), 17/02/2006, p. 10.

**NT: Sea ranger representatives to meet with new fisheries minister, 19/2/2006.**

Indigenous sea rangers in the Northern Territory are hoping new federal Fisheries Minister Eric Abetz will agree to pay them to search for illegal fishing boats in Australia's northern waters. Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation spokesman Ian Munro is hoping Senator Abetz will be more receptive to the idea than his predecessor Senator Ian Macdonald.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200602/s1573334.htm>

**WA: Illegal fishing costs One Arm Point community \$1m, 18/2/2006.**

The remote Aboriginal community on One Arm Point in the Kimberley says it has lost \$1 million in revenue through illegal fishing. Graham Maisey, the chief executive officer at One Arm Point, says the community has lost 50 tonnes of trochus due to a lack of border protection.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200602/s1573122.htm>

**WA: Communities warn of violent clashes with poachers, 19/2/2006.**

A Federal Opposition task force touring the Kimberley region has been told remote communities are frustrated by having their local resources decimated by illegal fishing. The One Arm Point community has been cultivating its crop of trochus shells by seeding local reefs, only to have the stock wiped out by poachers.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200602/s1573388.htm>

**NT: Federal Fisheries Minister keen to harness knowledge of sea rangers, 24/2/2006.**

Federal Fisheries Minister Eric Abetz says there can be a role for Indigenous people in the fight against illegal fishing in northern Australia. "I think they've got a lot of expertise and knowledge that we can make very good use of and I think they will be important to us," he told a meeting of the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory in Darwin.

Source: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200602/s1577412.htm>

## Issues in brief

### **Sharing the Fish: Allocation Issues in Fisheries Management 2006 Conference – Fremantle**

Presenters from across Australia and around the world have converged on the port city of Fremantle in Western Australia to discuss allocation issues in fisheries management at the 'Sharing the Fish' 2006 Conference. The event, which runs from 26 February to 2 March, is hosted by the WA Department of Fisheries in co-operation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and supported by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries.

See the conference website for more information: <http://www.fishallocation.com/>

### **Australasian Aquaculture 2006 – Adelaide**

Indigenous aquaculture will be on the agenda at the Australasian Aquaculture 'Innovation in Aquaculture' Conference which will take place at the Adelaide Convention Centre in South Australia from 27 to 30 August 2006. The event will bring together more than 1,000 delegates from across the planet to share knowledge and showcase aquaculture's best innovations.

Registration is open now: <http://www.australian-aquacultureportal.com/austaqua/aa06.html>

Meanwhile, a November 2005 consultation paper on the Australian Aquaculture Industry Action Plan has put forward a series of priorities for Indigenous aquaculture, including the establishment of an Aquaculture Industry Working Group to work with existing government departments to assist in developing national priorities for indigenous aquaculture development in Australia

The paper recommends the Working Group establish a national indigenous aquaculture communications strategy to encourage and foster interaction between indigenous advisory groups and indigenous communities, Australian State and local government agencies, aquaculture industry organizations and interested stakeholders.

For more information, see: [http://www.australian-aquacultureportal.com/action\\_agenda/pdf/ActionPlan\\_011105.pdf](http://www.australian-aquacultureportal.com/action_agenda/pdf/ActionPlan_011105.pdf)

### **Coast to Coast 2006 – Melbourne**

Online registration is now open for the Coast to Coast 2006 Conference, to be held at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre from 22 to 25 May 2006. Coast to Coast is Australia's biennial national coastal conference. It will focus debate across the full range of coastal and marine issues being considered across Australia at national, state, regional and local levels. Register before 20 March 2006 to receive the Early Bird Rate.

See the conference website for further details: <http://www.iceaustralia.com/coasttocoast2006/index.html>

### **Research-for-Coastal Management Symposium**

The Coastal CRC, in conjunction with the National Estuaries Network and the Victorian EPA, will host a Research-for-Coastal Management Symposium on the 26 of May that will complement the Coast to Coast 2006 Conference and focus on key coastal research occurring around Australia.

Participants are invited to attend this symposium and organisers welcome submissions for presentations and papers on the following themes:

- Monitoring and Assessment
- Governance and Partnerships
- Estuary Processes and Understanding
- Wetlands Understanding and Connectivity
- Integration and Synthesis of Coastal Research
- Coastal Processes and Impacts
- Institutional Change and Planning

Registrations are open up to 12 May. To register and for more information please click on the following link: [www.amlink.com.au/secure/eilite/crcsymposium.htm](http://www.amlink.com.au/secure/eilite/crcsymposium.htm)

## Useful links

### Conferences

Australasian Aquaculture 2006: <http://www.australian-aquacultureportal.com/austaqua/aa06.html>  
Coast to Coast 2006: <http://www.iceaustralia.com/coasttocoast2006/index.html>  
Sharing the Fish Conference 2006: <http://www.fishallocation.com/>

### Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority: <http://www.afma/default.php>  
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/>  
Australian Institute of Marine Science: <http://www.aims.gov.au/>  
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry: <http://www.dpie.gov.au/>  
Department of Environment and Heritage: <http://www.deh.gov.au/index.html>  
Fisheries Research and Development Corporation: <http://www.frdc.com.au/index.htm>  
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority: <http://www.gbmpa.gov.au/>  
National Native Title Tribunal: <http://www.nntt.gov.au/>  
National Oceans Office: <http://www.oceans.gov.au/home.jsp>  
Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority: <http://www.pzja.gov.au/>  
Torres Strait Regional Authority: <http://www.tsra.gov.au/www/index.cfm>  
Wet Tropics World Heritage Area: <http://wettropics.gov.au/>

### State and Territory Government

Department of Primary Industries and Resources South Australia: <http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/index.shtml>  
Department of Primary Industries Tasmania: <http://www.dpiwe.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Home/1?Open>  
Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries: <http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/home/default.html>  
Northern Territory Fisheries: <http://www.fisheries.nt.gov.au/>  
NSW Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries: <http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/>  
Victoria Department of Primary Industries: <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/index.htm>  
WA Department of Fisheries: <http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/>

### Networks

Australian Aquaculture Portal: <http://www.australian-aquacultureportal.com/>  
The Marine and Coastal Community Network: <http://www.mccn.org.au/index.php>

### Online publications

Hi ika – Indigenous fisheries magazine issued quarterly in New Zealand:  
[http://www.fish.govt.nz/customary/hi\\_ika/](http://www.fish.govt.nz/customary/hi_ika/)  
Kantri Laif (coun-try li-fe) – twice-yearly newsletter produced by NAILSMA:  
[http://savanna.ntu.edu.au/publications/kantri\\_laif.html](http://savanna.ntu.edu.au/publications/kantri_laif.html)  
CRC Reef Newsletter: <http://www.reef.crc.org.au/publications/news/>

### Education

Australian Maritime College: <http://www.amc.edu.au/>  
James Cook University Native Title Studies Centre: <http://www.jcu.edu.au/app/law/ntsc/index.cfm>  
Marine Education Society of Australia: <http://www.mesa.edu.au/>  
Reef Ed: [http://www.reefed.edu.au/explorer/traditional\\_owners/index.html](http://www.reefed.edu.au/explorer/traditional_owners/index.html)

### International

Fisheries and Oceans Canada: [http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/home-accueil\\_e.htm](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/home-accueil_e.htm)  
New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries: <http://www.fish.govt.nz/>