

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
Answer to Question Taken on Notice

Question Number: 6-4

Date: 18/06/2018

From: Mr Gary Higgins

To: Hon. Ken Vowles

Agency: Primary Industry & Resources

Portfolio: Primary Industry & Resources

Subject: Amateur Fishermen's' Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT) infrastructure grant

Question

Provide the acquittal of the \$30,000 provided to Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT) for consultation on recreation fishing infrastructure in 2017/18, and details of the budget for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Answer

18/19 Acquittal

The need for AFANT's involvement to assist with prioritisation of projects for the \$50 million RecFutures Infrastructure Fund placed an increased administrative and consultation burden on the organisation. This came at a time when the organisation was already heavily involved in consultation, negotiation and public hearings for the resolution of outstanding Beds and Banks claims being heard by the Aboriginal Land Commissioner.

In 2017/18 the grant of \$30 000 was used to pay increased consultation costs and obtain extra staff support. Specifically:

- Conducting a community survey and the presentation of a report to Government on Land-Based fishing platforms (report attached). This report was done at a quality level not previously available from AFANT;
- AFANT helped Government develop the new Recreational Fishing small-grants program and it also provided on-going assistance to grant applicants during the development of their applications;
- Consultation with King Ash Bay fishing community to discuss requirements for boat ramp improvements; and
- Consultation (which is ongoing) with Urapunga Aboriginal Land Corporation for development of Recreational Fishing Infrastructure on land near the Roper River.

19/20 Plan

The annual Industry Development Support Program (IDSP) grant that AFANT receives does not include any allocation for travel to remote communities for consultation. In 19/20 AFANT is planning to use the \$30 000 to fund travel to remote communities for direct, on-country consultation. At this stage trips are

planned for Borroloola, Nhulunbuy and Katherine, with others to be scheduled later. Directly visiting remote communities for consultation is a new direction for AFANT and one which is supported by the Department.

Other planned activities include:

- Ongoing support to the small-grants program; and
- Ongoing consultation for the development of recreational fishing infrastructure projects on Aboriginal Land.

20/21

- Continued regional consultation. Locations and schedule not developed as yet.

DARWIN LAND BASED FISHING PLATFORMS



Nov 2017

Community Consultation Report

Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT)

Darwin Land Based Fishing Platforms

AFANT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Darwin Land Based Fishing Platform community consultation report delivers results and recommendations from a community survey of recreational fishers. A sample of 338 people, 73% of which identify as active, land-based fishers, were asked about their current use, and future preferences for the development of Land Based Fishing Platforms (LBFP) in the Greater Darwin area. Among the key values identified include requirements of good access for families, water on a range of tides, the prospect of quality fishing experiences and angler safety. Priority locations for new LBFP's were identified as being East Point, Channel Island, Buffalo Creek, Cullen Bay and Middle Arm.

BACKGROUND

Developing new LBFP's in the Darwin area is one of the infrastructure initiatives of the Northern Territory Government's \$50M Recreational Fishing Infrastructure Fund and has been prioritised by the NT Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee (RFAC).

In August 2017, the Northern Territory Department Infrastructure Planning and Logistics contracted Jacobs Consulting to prepare a report that reviewed *the assessment criteria and proposed locations to be applied to a subsequent study into Land Based Fishing Platforms in the Greater Darwin region*. The Jacobs report included an assessment of three existing LBFP facilities, identification of criteria and considerations of proposed LBFP facilities, and identification of potential new LBFP sites in the Greater Darwin region.

RFAC Members, including the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT (AFANT), were asked to provide feedback on the Jacobs report, with a particular focus on the potential sites shortlisted. In order to provide informed and justified advice, AFANT undertook consultation, through a survey of members and the broader fishing community, with the aim of ascertaining views on preferred LBFP locations. The survey also sought to further understand fisher's values and aspirations for LBFP's in the Greater Darwin area. It is envisaged that this information will assist the planning and assessment of proposed LBFP's.

THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

AFANT's Darwin Land Based Fishing Platform Survey was open to AFANT' Members (including all major fishing clubs) and the broader Darwin recreational fishing community. The survey was open from October 27 to November 6. Survey invitations were sent to members, as well as being shared and promoted on social media (the reach of the two posts, which encouraged survey participation, were 7485 and 6450 people). Media promotion of the survey included the AFANT President's appearance on the ABC Radio Darwin's *Tales from the Tinny*, on Friday November 3. The chance of winning a small prize was offered as an incentive to participate in the survey. During the 11-day open period, 338 individual responses were received.

Results:

SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age & Gender

Q1 What is your age?

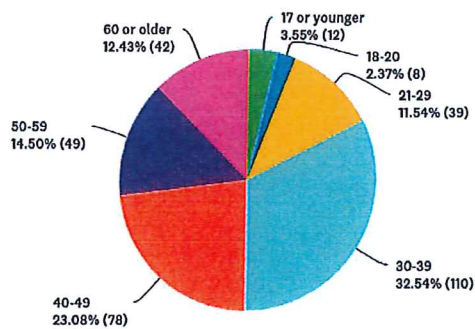


FIGURE 2: AGE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Q2 Gender

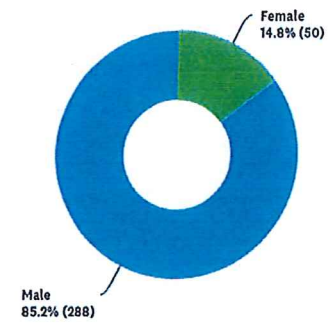


FIGURE 1: SURVEY RESPONDENT GENDER

Residence

The majority of survey respondents were NT residents (98.5%), with 85% of respondents identifying as residents of the Greater Darwin area.

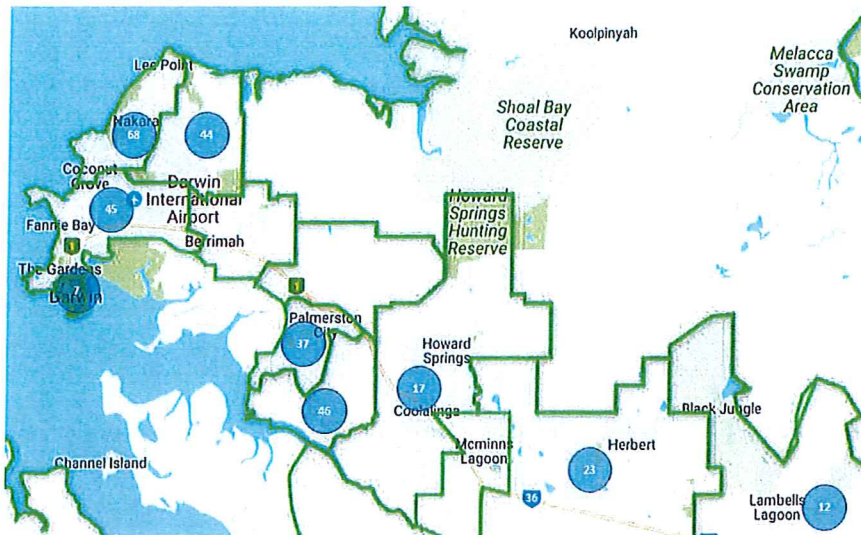


FIGURE 3: TOP 9 POSTCODES (REPRESENTING 88.5% OF RESPONDENTS)

FISHING ACTIVITY AND MOTIVATIONS

Fishing Activity

Q4 Which of the following most accurately describes how often you go fishing?

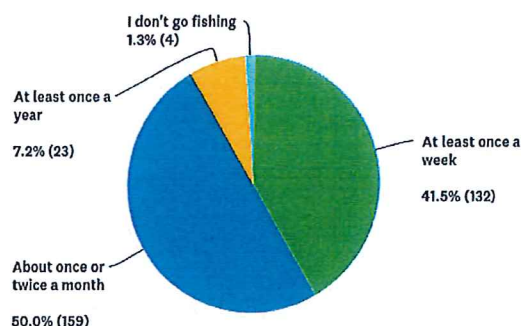


FIGURE 4: FISHING ACTIVITY OF RESPONDENTS

Answers to Q4 indicated a high level of fishing avidity among survey respondents (they go fishing considerably more frequently than the average NT resident recreational fisher). Nearly all participants identified as being active fishers (98.7%), with those who go fishing "about once or twice a month" being the most represented (50%).

Fisher Type by Platform

Q5 Which of the following types of fishing do you do?

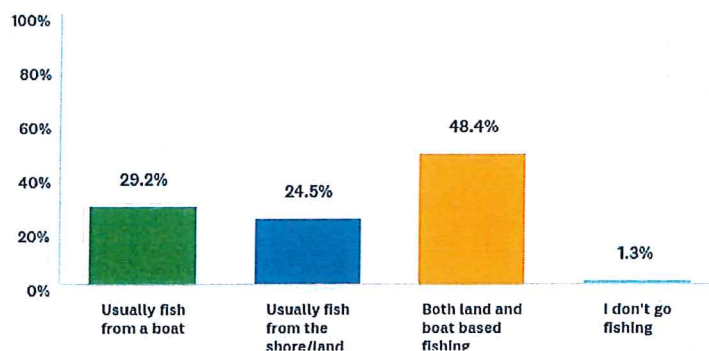


FIGURE 5: FISHER TYPE

When figures are combined, approximately 73% of respondents indicated that they do some fishing from the shore.

Existing Land Based Fishing Platform Usage

Q6 Have you ever fished from any of these fishing platforms in and around Darwin? (can choose multiple)

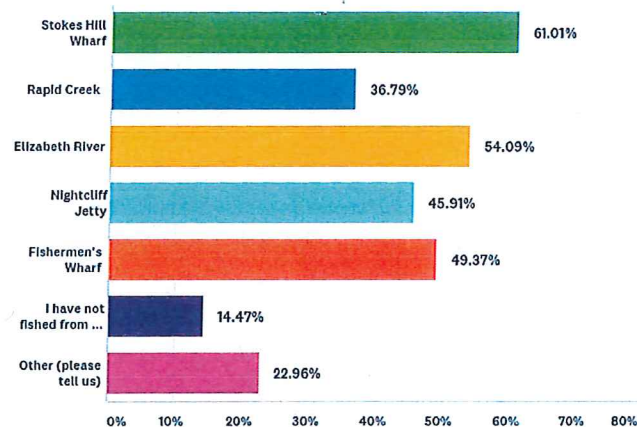


FIGURE 6: EXISTING PLATFORM USE

Stokes Hill Wharf and Elizabeth River were the platforms most used by survey participants. Nightcliff Jetty and the Fishermen's Wharf (Francis Bay) were also popular, with over 45% of respondents having used these facilities. Only 14.5% of respondents reported that they had never used any of the platforms asked about.

Almost 23% of respondents opted to provide information about other land based fishing locations they used.

The most popular "other" locations listed as current fishing spots were; Mandorah (21), East Point (15), Channel Island (11) and Buffalo Creek (7)



FIGURE 7: COMMON RESPONSES TO THE "OTHER" CATEGORY (Q6)

Reasons for using Land Based Fishing Platforms

Q7 What are the main reasons you would fish from a land based platform? (Choose up to 3)

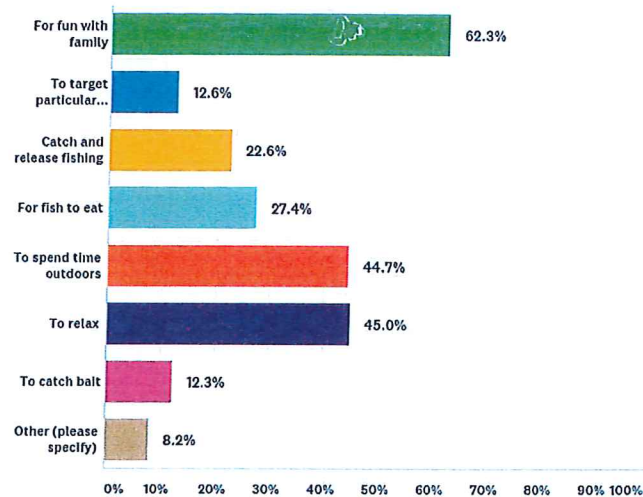


FIGURE 8: MAIN REASONS FOR USING LAND BASED FISHING PLATFORMS

The top three main reasons given for using land based fishing platforms were; fun with family (62.3%), to relax (45%) and to spend time outdoors (44.7%). Catch and Release Fishing (22.6%), to target a particular species (12.6%) and To Catch Bait (12.3%) were the three lowest ranked *main reasons* for fishing at LBFP's.

In response to the "other" option, a total of 23 comments were received. The most common reasons stated for using LBFP's were; not having access to, or choosing not to launch a boat (12). Other respondents ranked safety as a main reason for using LBFP's (4).

Demand for Land Based Fishing Platform Developments

Q8 Would you go fishing more often if more/improved fishing platforms were available?

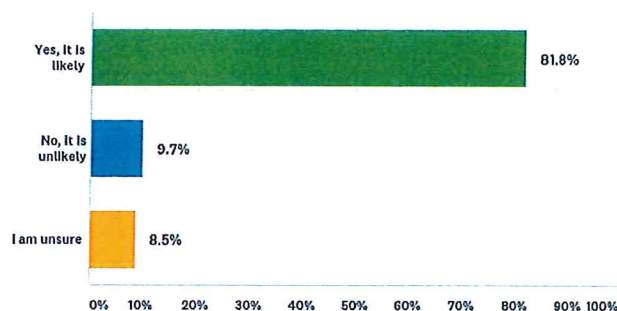


FIGURE 9: DEMAND FOR MORE/IMPROVED LBFP'S

ASSESSMENT OF SELECTED EXISTING LAND BASED FISHING PLATFORMS

Rapid Creek

Q9 Thinking about the Rapid Creek Platform, do you agree...

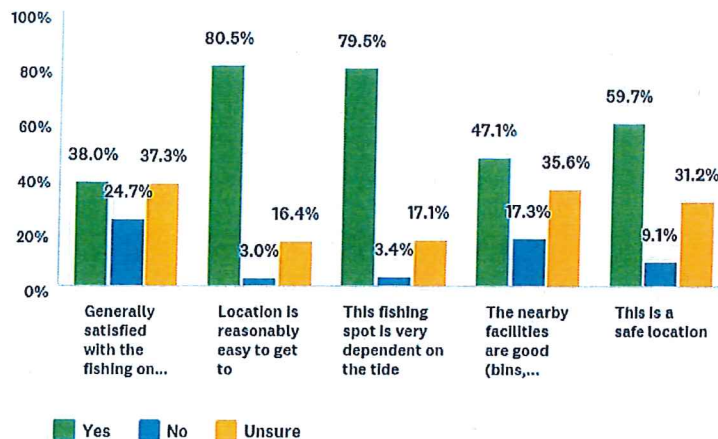


FIGURE 10: SATISFACTION WITH RAPID CREEK PLATFORM

Satisfaction with the fishing on offer at this location was the lowest of the three existing platforms asked about (38%) in the survey. Most respondents agreed that the location was easy to access (80.5%) and that location is highly dependent on the tide (79.5%). Less than half of the respondents agreed that nearby facilities were good, with a significant proportion unsure (35%). Close to 60% agreed that the location is safe, however references to antisocial behavior were the most common topic in the comments section.

Fifty written comments were received in response to Q9. Antisocial behavior was the most commonly referenced (7), followed by comments about the LBFP being a poor fishing spot (6). Pollution and poor design were also common themes (4 comments each). Five respondents advised that they had never fished here.



FIGURE 11: RAPID CREEK FISHING PLATFORM

Elizabeth River

Q10 Thinking about the Elizabeth River Jetty, do you agree...

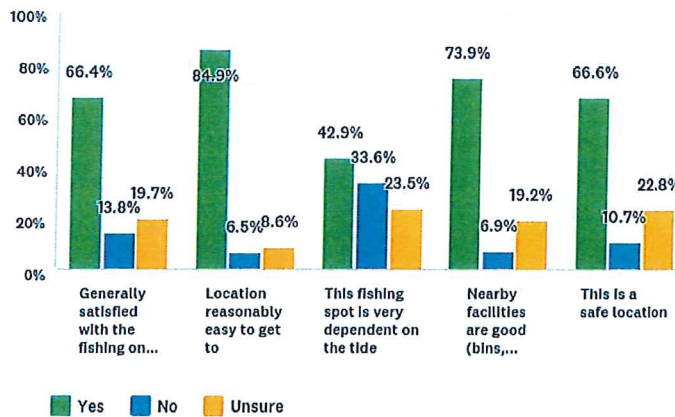


FIGURE 12: SATISFACTION WITH ELIZABETH RIVER FISHING PLATFORM



FIGURE 13: ELIZABETH RIVER LBFP

Two thirds of respondents indicated general satisfaction with the fishing on offer at the Elizabeth River LBFP. The vast majority also agreed that the location is reasonably easy to get to (84.9%).

Most respondents (73.9%) indicated satisfaction with nearby facilities (bins, toilets, etc.) as well as with safety (66.6%); however, concerns over complimentary facilities and safety, did feature prominently in the written comments received.

Forty-Five respondents provided an additional comment about Elizabeth River LBFP. The most common topic was safety/security concerns (12), including personal accounts of criminal damage/theft. The condition and placement of bins was another topic focused on by multiple respondents (5).

Stokes Hill

Q11 Thinking about the Stokes Hill Wharf Platform, do you agree...

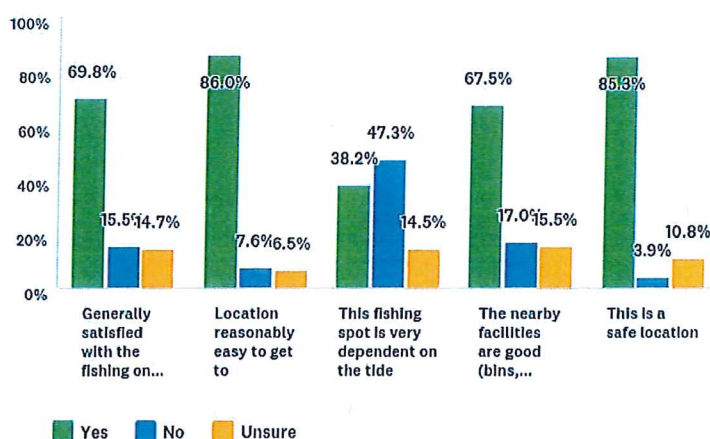


FIGURE 14: SATISFACTION WITH STOKES HILL LBFP

Of the three LBFP's that were asked about in the survey, Stokes Hill had the highest agreement ratings for general satisfaction with fishing (69.9%), ease of access (86%) and being a safe location (85.3%). It was also rated as being the least dependent on the tide (47.3%).

Thirty-five written comments were received for this location. The most common topic related to issues with parking availability (7). Other comments focused on the quality of the fishing experience, including a lack of access to reef structure or FADs (4), as well as poor access to the level of the water (4).

Some comments referenced that the specific location of the LBFP is not the preferred fishing area; this is due to fish often congregating outside of casting range.



FIGURE 15: FENCE ADJACENT TO STOKES HILL LBFP (A POPULAR SPOT FOR CONGREGATING FISH).

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LAND BASED FISHING PLATFORM DEVELOPMENTS

Importance of key considerations

Q12 How important is it that a fishing platform....

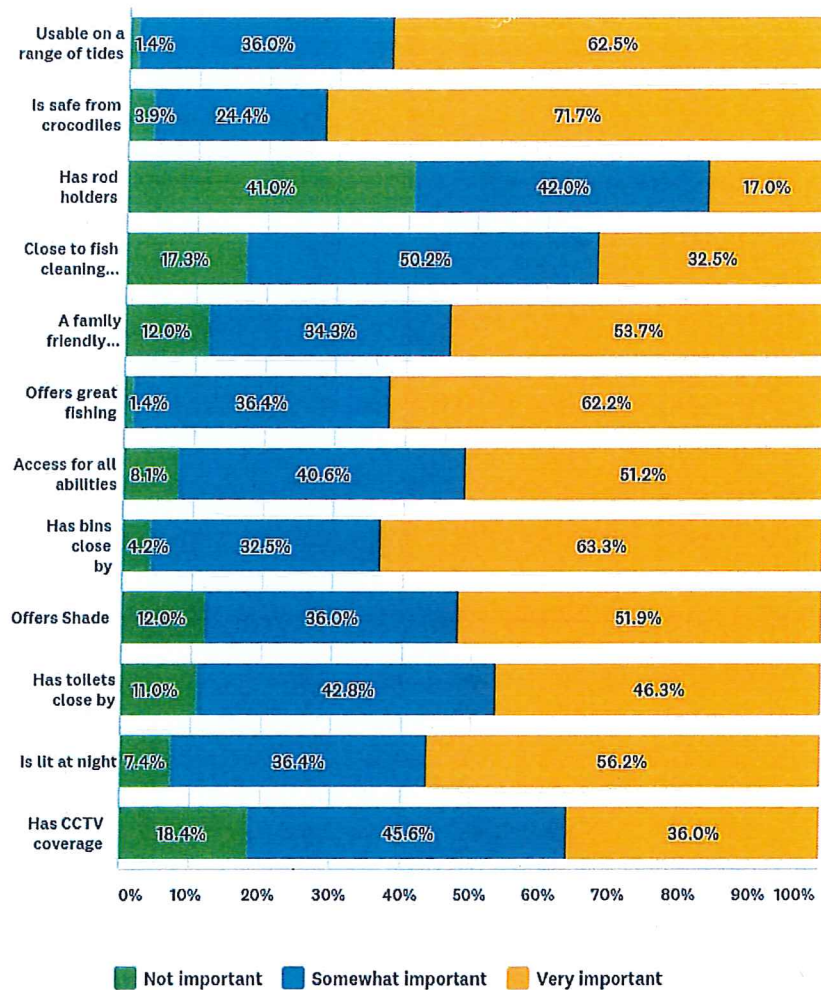


FIGURE 16: IMPORTANT LBFP CONSIDERATIONS

Eight out of the 12 considerations listed were ranked as very important by over 50% of respondents. Being useable on a range of tides, safe from crocodiles and offering great fishing were considered as, at least *somewhat important* by 96% of respondents. Rod holders ranked as the least important consideration.

Thirty-four comments on a range of topics were received. These included the need for safe parking (3), regular maintenance (2) and compliance patrols (2). Other comments reinforced views shared in the Q12 table.

Top Priorities for Land Based Fishing Platforms

Q13 If you could choose only 3, what are your top priorities for a fishing platform

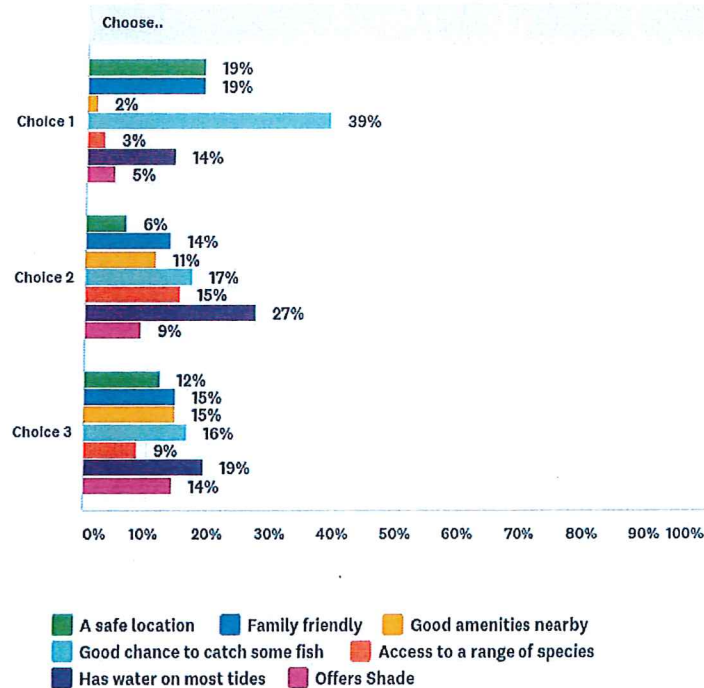


FIGURE 17: TOP 3 PRIORITIES

When respondents were asked to choose their top three priorities for LBFP's, the stand out criteria was that the platform offers a "good chance to catch some fish" (39%, 17% & 16% for choices 1, 2 & 3, respectively). Having "water on most tides" was another priority ranked highly by respondents (14%, 27% & 19%). The range of species on offer was ranked as a top priority by considerably fewer respondents (3%, 15% & 9%).

Although respondents were not specifically asked to rank priorities according to choices 1, 2 and 3, it may be significant that when combined, almost 40% of respondents put being "family friendly" and "a safe location" as their first choice.

PRIORITY LOCATIONS FOR NEW LAND BASED FISHING PLATFORMS

Preferred Listed Locations for New Land Based Fishing Platforms

Q14 Your top choices from the list of potential locations for a new fishing platform.. (must choose 3)

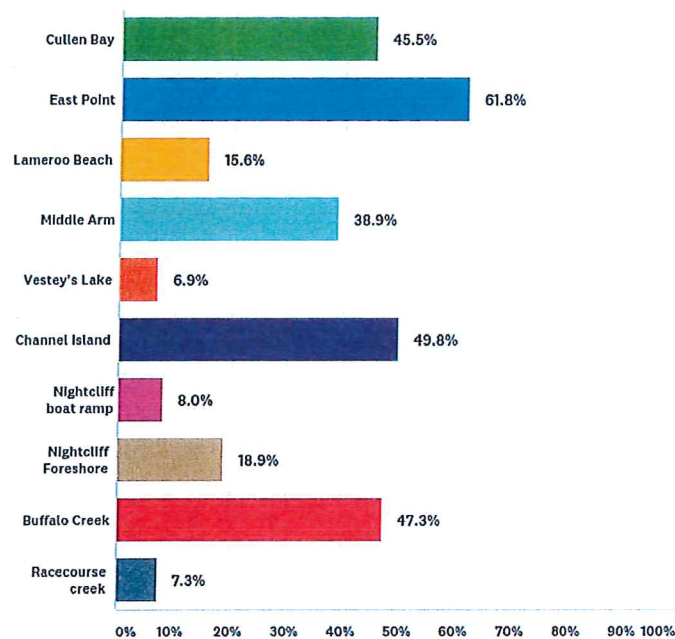


FIGURE 18: PRIORITY LOCATIONS FOR NEW LBFP'S

Respondents were asked to prioritise their top locations for new LBFP's by selecting three top choices from pre-populated lists (Locations from p.14 of the Jacobs LBFP report). East Point emerged as the most popular location (61%). Other well supported locations included Channel Island (49.8%), Buffalo Creek (47.3%), Cullen Bay (45.5%) and Middle Arm (38.9%).

Vestey's Lake (6.9%), Racecourse Creek (7.3%) and Nightcliff boat ramp (8%) were the least popular of the locations presented.

Alternative New Locations

Q15 Is there a different location that would have been in your top 3?

Respondents were asked to provide advice about alternative locations that were not specifically included in the survey (or the Jacobs Consulting shortlist); 149 written answers were provided to this question.



FIGURE 19: WORD-CLOUD; TOP ALTERNATIVE LBFP LOCATIONS IN ANSWER TO Q15

Alternative locations supported by at least two written responses included; Dundee (11), East Arm (8), Shady Camp (7), Mandorah (6), Lee Point (5), Howard River (3), Dinah Beach (3), Deckchair (3), Mindil (3), Adelaide River (2), Darwin Harbour (2), Rapid Creek (2), Fannie Bay (2), Sadgroves (2), Bayview (2).

Discussion

SURVEY SAMPLE

An invitation to participate in the survey was sent to AFANT members, including fishing clubs, via email. Links to the survey were also posted and promoted on the AFANT Facebook and Instagram accounts. This form of promotion targeted engaged members of the recreational fishing community and increased the likelihood that the respondents were avid fishers (people who reported fishing considerably more often than the NT average). Female fishers are somewhat underrepresented in the sample and this may be reflective of engagement levels of AFANT membership, social media accounts and the demographic targets set for social media promotions.

NT residents made up 98.5% of respondents and with 73% indicating that they do some fishing from the shore, it may be considered that the sample is representative of both current, and likely users of existing/new LBFP's.

USE OF LBFP'S

The level of existing LBFP usage among the survey sample was high, with more than four out of the seven LBFP's asked about, being used by at least 45% of respondents. Demand for new LBFP's appears very high, with 81.8% of respondents answering that they would likely fish more often if more/improved LBFP's were on offer.

Perhaps one of the most significant insights in this section comes from the reported "main reasons" for using LBFP's. The top three reasons selected for using LBFP's were; fun with family (62.3%), to relax (45%) and to spend time outdoors (44.7%). These reasons relate to the associated and collateral social benefits of recreational fishing activity. These social benefits ranked considerably and consistently higher than those reasons relating specifically to fishing activities (catch and release, targeting a particular species or bait collection). It may be argued that, for current users of LBFP's, the main aim is simply to avail themselves of accessible, family-friendly fishing opportunities. It should however, not be entirely discounted that given this question related to existing use, the statistics may reflect the reality that mostly average fishing (quality) is on offer at the current LBFP options.

It is also interesting to note that despite social reasons being primary factors in current use of LBFP's, in response to questions 12 & 13, respondents ranked "a good chance to catch some fish"/"great fishing" and "water on most tides" as being high priorities for LBFP's. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that while LBFP's may serve the primary function of enabling access to fishing opportunities, the fishing community has aspirations that those opportunities are convenient and offer the best possible fishing experiences. The key principles of access, opportunity, and quality experiences, should guide the development of new LBFP's for the Greater Darwin Area.

PRIORITY LOCATIONS FOR NEW LBFP'S

East Point was the highest ranked potential new LPFP location; it was ranked in the top three by 61.8% of survey respondents. This location was also the second highest "other" location listed as a currently used land based fishing spot (in answer to Question 6). It is suggested that East Point has been identified as a top priority due to the quality fishing on offer and the proximity to suburban Darwin. Specific site identification should, in

so far as is possible, also include the following considerations; being useable on a range of tides, being safe from crocodiles and offering great fishing (these factors were considered at least somewhat important by 96% of respondents in Q12).

Other popular locations for LBFP developments included Channel Island, Buffalo Creek and Cullen Bay. Of these, the Buffalo Creek and Cullen Bay sites may offer greater convenience of access, whereas a LBFP at Channel Island would create something of a destination facility. Consideration should be given to the overall mix of convenience vs destination making in the context of being family friendly, providing opportunity of access, and offering the best quality fishing experiences.



FIGURE 20: A POPULAR ROCK FISHING LOCATION AT EAST POINT

Locations outside of Darwin, in particular Dundee and Shady Camp ranked highly in comments about alternative locations. Although technically outside the concern of this particular report, this appetite should be noted for future planning.

Recommendations

GUIDING POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS

The ratings of importance presented in answer to question 12, and the reasons-for-use in answer to Q7, should be used as a reference of community values, as well as to guide the development of new LBFP's in the Greater Darwin area. This information has been provided by a significant sample of active, NT resident, LBFP users, and therefore provides a valuable opportunity to assess proposed infrastructure projects against the values and aspirations of the core user group.

Q7 What are the main reasons you would fish from a land based platform? (Choose up to 3)

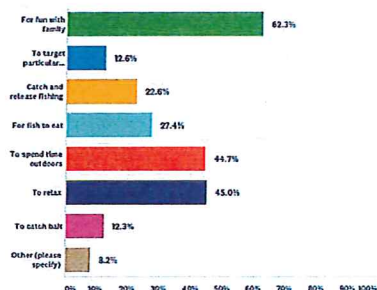


FIGURE 22: TABLE FROM Q7 (SEE PAGE 5)

Q12 How important is it that a fishing platform....

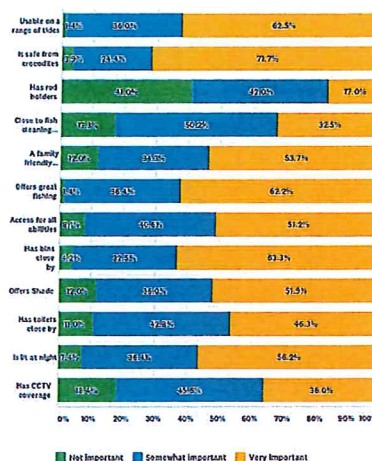


FIGURE 21: TABLE FROM Q12 (SEE PAGE 9)

NEW LOCATIONS

In order of preference, the locations for new LBFP's favored by respondents included:

1. East Point
2. Channel Island
3. Buffalo Creek
4. Cullen Bay
5. Middle Arm

The survey sample is highly representative of active fishers who participate in land based fishing, and who report usage and strong demand for existing/new LBFP's. As such, the selection of new sites in for LBPF's in the Greater Darwin area would be ideally informed through the preferences expressed by these respondents. It may also be appropriate to consider other types of advice from the fishing community, including from the RFAC.

As with most infrastructure projects, the design, as well as, broad and fine scale site selection for LBFP's will be guided by physical and cost constraints. The key principles of enabling access, providing opportunity, and offering quality fishing experiences, however, must also be taken into consideration. With this in mind, developments at the identified priority locations, should not be pursued "at all costs"; especially if a suitable site/design, access on a range of tides, the reasonable prospect of quality fishing, safety, or access to valued amenities cannot be offered.

Further consultation with the fishing community (especially expert representatives) about fine scale site selection and specific infrastructure design should inform individual projects. This will help to ensure that new LBFP's are fit for purpose, in line with community expectations/aspirations, and therefore deliver good value for money and end-user outcomes.



FIGURE 23: DARWIN ANGLERS WITH A MILK FISH FROM STOKES HILL WHARF

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