

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
Answer to Question Taken on Notice

Question Number: 7-1

Date: 13/07/2017

From: Mr Yingiya Mark Guyula

To: Hon. Lauren Moss

Portfolio: Environment & Natural Resources

Agency: Tourism & Culture

Subject: Pollution of Homelands by Fishermen

Answer

See attached

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Question Taken on Notice

Date: 21 June 2017

Subject: Pollution of Homelands by Fishermen

From: Mr Yingiya Mark Guyula

To: Hon Ken Vowles, Primary Industry & Resources
(accepted by) Hon. Lauren Moss, Environment & Natural Resources

Agency: Primary Industry and Resources

Number: 7.1

Question: Recently Yolgnu in homelands have found fishermen in restricted water ways and camping on the floodplains leaving rubbish and beer cans behind. We do not want visitors having unrestricted access to our water ways. We want to control our land and waters.

How is the government assisting land owners to keep water ways restricted, and how are the government assisting land owners to maintain control of land and water ways?

Answer: I fully acknowledge the role of Aboriginal people as both owners and managers of land and sea across the Territory.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Government, through Fisheries NT, is managing salt and fresh waterways by working in partnership with Aboriginal people.

With the support of the Territory Government, Aboriginal Land and Sea Rangers are patrolling country and gaining new skills and powers to better protect and manage their country.

New technology is also being adopted by the Territory to help manage when and where commercial fishing takes place.

Indigenous people routinely manage their lands and waters with assistance from the Territory Government, through the Fisheries Division. In partnership, Fisheries officers and Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger groups carry out compliance, monitoring and research activity and often engage Rangers on a 'fee-for-service' basis.

In the 2016/17 Financial Year to date, 246 days' worth of patrols were undertaken by Rangers, Fisheries staff and NT Water Police to ensure recreational and commercial compliance with the *Fisheries Act*.

The Fisheries Division has developed compliance training packages for Rangers in collaboration with CDU, the Australian Maritime and Fisheries Academy (AMFA) and the NT Water Police.

This compliance training is a key driver of Rangers abilities to manage and monitor their country. It is an outstanding outcome that since 2009, 145 male and female Rangers have completed certificate II qualifications in Fisheries Compliance, including 32 in the 2016/17 Financial Year.

In 2015, a further 15 rangers took the next step in attaining a Certificate III in Fisheries Compliance – representing the further emergence of a highly skilled and capable workforce.

The development of a 'Fisheries Inspector Policy' is also now finalised - government can appoint suitably qualified Marine Rangers to hold 'stop and search' powers if they suspect breaches of the *Fisheries Act*. Applications for Individual Rangers to become Fisheries Inspectors will open early in the 2017/18 Financial Year.

The appointment of Rangers as Fisheries inspectors is an important step in realising Aboriginal people's vision of managing their estate, and builds Governments capabilities in enforcement of the *Fisheries Act*.

In addition to its work with Land and Sea Rangers, the Territory Government is also adopting new technology to better manage commercial fishing.

A Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) was introduced into the commercial Barramundi Fishery in 2016. VMS uses satellites to provide real-time information on the location of every vessel in the commercial barramundi fishing fleet. VMS generates automatic alerts when a vessel enters an area closed to the fishery.

VMS is scheduled to be rolled-out in the commercial Mud Crab Fishery during the 2018 fishing season.