

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources

Aboriginal economic development

1. Why has funding for projects for Aboriginal development opportunities in fisheries been reduced from \$8 million to \$4 million?

NT Fisheries invested \$2.1 million (M) in 2016/17 to support Aboriginal business development in the seafood industry, not including Blue Mud Bay access agreement payments. This funding was delivered through targeted support programs including the Aboriginal Fishing Mentor Program, Aboriginal Community Marine Ranger Program, Aboriginal Marine Training Program and Aquaculture Development projects. This level of funding has been consistent over the past three financial years.

The reference to a reduction from 8 to 4 is not related to money but refers to a consolidation of some Aboriginal community economic development support projects and the completion of a mentoring project sponsored by the World Wildlife Fund.

2. Please advise how many remote Aboriginal owned businesses have received funding under projects that facilitate Aboriginal economic development opportunities in fisheries.

NT Fisheries delivers programs that provide research, mentoring and training to support Aboriginal participation in the seafood industry. There are currently 23 Aboriginal Coastal Licence holders in the NT. The Aboriginal Fishing Mentor program provides mentoring and training to assist licence holders establish small-scale fishing businesses. NT Fisheries has supported the establishment of Garngirr Fishing Aboriginal Corporation in Nhulunbuy through the provision of governance and strategic planning support.

NT Fisheries is supporting Management Committees established through Blue Mud Bay access agreements. These committees are involved in assessing and prioritising seafood industry economic opportunities in their regions.

The Department of Trade, Business and Innovation delivers a number of grant programs that Aboriginal businesses can access to support business planning and provide capital to purchase equipment.

The Northern Territory Recreational Fishing Grants Scheme is funded from the NT Government's \$50-million RecFishing Futures Program and administered by the Fisheries Division of the Department of Primary Industry and Resources. Recognising the social and economic value of recreational fishing, the scheme will offer grant funding for community projects that grow and support recreational fishing in the Territory. Aboriginal organisations interested in participating in the tourism opportunities that recreational fishing provides are encouraged to apply.

3. In what regions?

NT Fisheries Aboriginal development programs are delivered in coastal communities across the NT, from Wadeye to Borroloola.

4. Are they now operational or only part way established?

Aboriginal Coastal Licence holders range from those in the early planning phase to regularly supplying fresh fish to their local communities. NT Fisheries is working closely with licence holders to improve catch rates and facilitating engagement with complementary government support programs.

NT Fisheries also works closely with the Aboriginal Marine Ranger programs across the NT. The recent appointment of the first six Aboriginal Fisheries Inspectors demonstrates the partnership approach between NT Fisheries and Water Police that's providing further employment opportunities for rangers.