



Petition

Registration No.	12
Title	COMMERCIAL CRABBING IN BYNOE HARBOUR
Presented on	Wednesday 13 February 2013
Presented by	Member for Daly (Mr Higgins)
Referred to	Primary Industries and Fisheries (Mr Westra van Holthe)
Date referred	13 February 2013
Response due	20 August 2013
Response received	25 July 2013
Response presented	20 August 2013

Petition

We the undersigned, amateur fishers and visitors, call on the Northern Territory Government to BAN commercial crabbing in BYNOE HARBOUR and ALL tributaries to DUNDEE BEACH

Response

Commercial mud crabbing has taken place in Bynoe Harbour and estuaries to Dundee Beach for more than 20 years. Over the last five years, the commercial harvest in this area as a proportion of the overall commercial take has remained stable at 6-10%. The commercial catch rate during this time has also been relatively constant at 360 grams per pot-lift.

Recent research by the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries has demonstrated that the catch rate of mud crabs is proportional to total rainfall during the penultimate wet season. Mud crab catches will therefore fluctuate naturally irrespective of the amount of commercial crabbing that takes place in a particular area, such as Bynoe Harbour.

Results from the 2009-2010 Recreational Fishing Survey showed that the recreational harvest rate of mud crabs in Bynoe Harbour, where commercial crabbing is permitted, was higher than that in Darwin Harbour, where commercial crabbing is prohibited. Therefore, the argument that banning commercial crabbing in Bynoe Harbour would improve recreational catch rates in this area is unlikely to hold true.

Balancing the competing demands of fishery stakeholders is a difficult task and one that this government is currently addressing through the development of a fishery resource sharing framework. This framework is being developed in collaboration with all fishery sectors, will be based on robust science and cost-benefit analyses and will ensure the optimal and equitable use of our fishery resources into the future.

Considering the above and Government's commitment to progress development of commercial fisheries, I am unable to support the request to ban commercial crabbing in Bynoe Harbour or adjacent areas.