MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA NT DIVISION

SUBMISSION ON COASTAL AND MARINE MANAGEMENT – NORTHERN TERRITORY: DISCUSSION PAPER (JANUARY 2018)

2 MARCH 2018

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK

COMPLETED SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR NT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DRAFT COASTAL AND MARINE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Comments and edits from the Minerals Council of Australia Northern Territory Division (MCA NT) in blue font

1. **What do you value most about our coasts and seas?**

   - From a commercial perspective, the NT minerals sector has only limited direct interaction with the coastal and marine environments, since the majority of exploration and production takes place far inland.

   - The most important aspect of this interaction, however, is for transport of product offshore and transport of supplies, personnel and materials to mine sites:

     ➢ Rio Tinto Gove – shipping of bauxite from the port at Gove/Nhulunbuy
     ➢ South32/GEMCO – shipping of manganese from the port at Alyangula
     ➢ Glencore/McArthur River Mine – barging lead-zinc-silver concentrate offshore from Bing Bong to vessels moored in deeper waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria
     ➢ Port Darwin – transport of other commodities offshore and supplies to shore, in support of the industry

   - The majority of workers in the industry are also residents who would value the full range of other benefits living at or near the coast would offer, e.g. fishing, boating and other recreation, aesthetics, and other 'lifestyle' values.

2. **Are there any other environmental, social, cultural and economic values and benefits that we need to consider when developing the Strategy?**

   - The Strategy should explicitly acknowledge the three privately leased ports and barge landings that are managed by mineral operators. Often, this infrastructure is shared by nearby remote communities, and operators can be mobilised to provide a first-response to nearby maritime emergencies and incidents (e.g. spills) . Operators routinely have oil spill simulation exercises to ensure responders can be mobilised quickly to provide the best response possible until state, territory or Commonwealth support arrives.

3. **What are the major opportunities to protect and sustainably develop our coast and seas?**

   - Continued development, endorsement and implementation of the Strategy, with an endorsed implementation or action plan, with lead agency identified for priority actions.

   - Consistent application of efficient and risk-based environmental regulation for proposed developments in the coastal and marine environments of the NT.

4. **Do the challenges identified on page 8 reflect the key issues in our coasts and seas?**

- They appear to, in recognising the following risks and management issues:

  ➢ Gaps in knowledge of how coastal ecosystems respond to stressors (e.g. climate change and coastal developments), including understanding the cause of the massive mangrove dieback in the Gulf, as such an event would be catastrophic if it happened along a longer stretch of coastline, including around the significant harbours/bays of Darwin and Bynoe, as impacts would not just be environmental/ecological but commercial, given the importance of recreational fishing in these places.

  ➢ Biosecurity risks, climate change, increasing population pressures, etc.

  ➢ Regarding impact of commercial activities,

    o the government will need to revisit the issue of the moratorium on seabed mining. At present, because of limited interest in seabed mining amongst explorers and operators in the minerals sector, the moratorium is not having a significant commercial impact.

    o equipment, materials and trained personnel at the three significant mineral sector ports and barge landing could possibly support the Territory's oil spill contingency plans for spills near these areas, through a 'first-responders agreement,' or similar.

5. **Is the goal appropriate and reflective of the NT needs?**

- Yes. It is at a high enough level to capture the full range of current values

6. **Are the management principles relevant and appropriate? Is their purpose clear?**

- All appear to be relevant and appropriate.

- The statement at (b) '... and traditional lifestyle practices sustained' requires clarification. Should the last word be 'sustainable'?

  ➢ Current wording would not be a wise management principle, for example, if populations of endangered coastal species (dugong and turtles) crashed and required a moratorium on traditional hunting of these species until populations recovered.

7. **Are these objectives appropriate and reflective of the key issues?**

- Yes, and the MCA NT strongly endorses that all government decision-making be evidence-based, on adequate science and knowledge. Where understanding is incomplete, knowledge gaps should be filled through targeted research and monitoring. A substantial amount of knowledge of the Territory's coastal and marine environments has been generated by baseline and monitoring studies associated with environmental impact

assessment and approval conditions attached to major developments, e.g. construction of the East Arm Port and LNG facilities in Darwin Harbour, i.e. the private sector.

8. **Do these outcomes reflect what you would expect to see in the Strategy?**

- Under 'Safeguard our coasts and seas,' the wording of the third point needs tweaking, as it is human activity that needs to be effectively regulated, not' impacts.' It is, however, an appropriate outcome.

- Under 'Foster sustainable industry,' within the context of this draft Strategy, the fourth point should be adjusted to indicate that growth of the coastal/marine-based tourism economy is sustainable, including from an environmental perspective.

- Under 'Maintain our unique lifestyle,' first point, is it the *choices* that should be enhanced, or the *options* ?

- Appropriate performance indicators will need to be developed to allow tracking of how effective the actions are in achieving these desired outcomes.

9. **Are there additional outcomes you think should be included in the Strategy?**

- No.

10. **What kind of partnership arrangements do you think could support the implementation of the Coastal and Marine Management Strategy?**

- Objective/outcome-based working groups and/or location or region-based working groups, with representatives from government, industry, traditional owners and other stakeholders; however, meetings and administration of these must be targeted and efficient to sustain interest and commitment by members

11. **What is the best way for the community and industry to be involved in management and decision-making of our coasts and seas?**

- To maintain the government's current processes for industry and community consultation, so that all relevant stakeholders can have their say; however, the government must maintain the final authority as decision-makers.

--- end ---