

28 June 2017

Environment Policy
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
GPO Box 3675
Darwin NT 0801

Via email: environment.policy@nt.gov.au

RE: Response to Stage 1 – Environmental Regulatory Reform

The Northern Territory Seafood Council is the peak representative body for the wild catch, aquaculture and trader/processors in the NT. We proudly represent 135 individuals who collectively operate over 220 businesses in the seafood industry.

We welcome the opportunity for input and wish to remain engaged throughout the stages of the environmental regulatory reform process.

NT Seafood Council supports initiatives to improve environmental regulation in that it reduces regulatory burden, removes duplication and most importantly has clear and efficient processes and resources in place to support timely decisions. The principles underpinning the review of certainty, efficiency, outcome and risk focussed, responsive, accountable and public participation are supported.

It is noted that the Department is currently undertaking work on the Territory Environmental Objectives (TEOs). Stakeholder participation in the identification and development of objectives is critical as the TEOs underpin the entire assessment process.

A risk based approach is supported. Defining “significant” with respect to triggering the assessment process is a critical element. Our NT Fisheries are already managed and assessed by both NT Fisheries, and for export approved fisheries under the Commonwealth’s EPBC Act. Duplication of existing decision making processes must be avoided.

As important as it is to articulate what triggers assessment, it is equally important to have transparency on what processes are excluded from the assessment process (i.e. industry activities that are assessed and managed by other authorities/Departments).

Clear communication tools that can aid understanding of processes such as consultation and assessment are important. Simple flow charts that can be followed to understand processes used by NOPSEMA¹ are an example of useful communication tools.

Utilising online mechanisms that can approve awareness of applications open for comment or assessment rather than relying on people to check websites or look for notices in the newspaper would also be beneficial. An example of a system that works this way can be

¹Brochure – Offshore Petroleum environmental approvals, available online at nopsema.gov.au/assets/Publications/A76564.pdf

found online at the NOPSEMA website², where it allows people to register themselves for information on specific projects or areas of interest.

With respect to knowing whether a development has been approved or is in breach of its approval. Utilising the eyes and ears in remote Northern Territory is critical, however it must be done in a way that is practical and adds to the efficiency of government process/resources. Communication around what businesses and activities this applies and does not apply to is critical.

Should you require further information please do not hesitate to us on 08 8981 5194.

Kind Regards

Daniel Kimberley
Chairman

² <https://www.nopsema.gov.au/environmental-management/activity-status-and-summaries/>