

NT GUIDED FISHING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION INC

Dear FTO,

You should by now have received from the Executive Director of Fisheries a copy of an Issues Paper which discusses future management and development options for the NT Guided Fishing Industry. If you have not, you will find a copy of the document posted on the NTGFIA website: www.ntgfia.com.au.

Most of the issues listed in the paper were raised by the NTGFIA during the course of ongoing discussions with Government over the past three years. The object of those discussions was the creation of an administrative and regulatory environment for the FTO Fishery, which would maximize business opportunities and profitably while ensuring the long term sustainability of the resource.

The Association is committed to the view that the best way to achieve these objectives and to promote resource stewardship and best practice skills is the implementation of a mutually acceptable Management Plan.

Your opinion on the various issues raised in the paper is an important part of this process. Accordingly I urge you complete the questionnaire and return it to the Fisheries Division either by mail or email by the due date. Note that there is also an online completion option.

To assist you in answering each question the Association has developed a position paper which is attached hereto. In most cases a simple yes or no answer is all that is required. However if you wish to elaborate on an issue or express a different opinion to that adopted by the Association you are entirely at liberty to do so.

Once again I urge you to complete the questionnaire and forward it to Fisheries by the due date. The level of industry support for a new and improved management regime will be judged by the number of FTO responses received.

Graeme Williams
Chairman
NTGFIA

14 August 2009

NTGFIA SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO FTO QUESTIONNAIRE

Question 1

Should all FTOs who operate a vessel possess a vessel operator's qualification?

YES

If so do you think an Inshore Coxswain's Certificate of Competency is an appropriate minimum standard or some other qualification?

YES

Question 2

Should all FTO vessels be required to meet prescribed standards?

YES

Do you think hire and drive dingy standards are appropriate for unsurveyed vessels less than five metres?

YES. BUT THE NEW STANDARDS SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION WITH THE NTGFIA PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION. THERE SHOULD ALSO BE A PHASE IN PERIOD FOR FTOs WHO DO NOT CURRENTLY COMPLY.

Question 3

Should the current \$5million minimum FTO insurance be increased to \$10 million?

YES

Question 4

Should Broadform insurance policies be introduced as a minimum standard FTO licence condition?

YES

Question 5

Should all FTO vessels be made readily identifiable while on commercial tours?

YES

Question 6

If you answered yes to Question 5 above what method of vessel marking do you consider most appropriate?

THE MARKING SHOULD BE IN THE FORM OF A STICKER - THE DESIGN AND DIMENSIONS OF WHICH SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATION WITH THE NTGFIA

Question 7

Should all FTOs be subject to background checks to assess their suitability to conduct commercial tours?

NO

Question 8

Should there be clear legislative powers to refuse the issue or renewal of FTO licences if the applicant has breached the Fisheries Act?

YES. BUT FOR SERIOUS BREACHES OF THE ACT ONLY. THE DEFINITION OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A SERIOUS BREACH NEEDS TO

BE NEGOTIATED WITH THE NTGFIA AND OTHER CONCERNED PARTIES.

Question 9

Should compliance with the NTGFIA's Code of Conduct be a consideration when deciding the issue or renewal of FTO licences?

YES

Question 10

Should FTO client catch limits be different from those that apply to general recreational fishers?

YES, PROVIDED THE DIFFERENCES ARE PROMULGATED UNDER A FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Question 11

Should a tiered FTO trip limit based on trip duration be considered for clients – for example a possession limit for a 2-3 day trip and a possession limit for trips of a week or more?

YES

Question 12

Should a fillet kilogram weight possession limit be considered as an alternative to a number of fish?

NO.

Question 13

Should FTOs be required to complete client/catch records before any of their clients disembark their vessels or fishing platforms to improve the accuracy of the details provided?

NO

Question 14

Should the grid squares used for daily log recording be reduced to represent smaller areas of 10 to 15 nautical miles to enhance reporting accuracy of fishing areas?

YES

Question 15 (For FTOs only)

Would you be prepared to voluntarily record lengths of significant species in addition to your normal log reporting responsibilities?

YES ON THE PROVISIO THAT IT REMAINS VOLUNTARY.

Question 16

Do you see benefit in establishing a training/apprenticeship program to foster entry and help people to pursue careers in the guided fishing industry?

YES

Question 17

Should a business based FTO licence framework be introduced that allows a principal licence holder to employ multiple operators under his/her licence, and what would be the advantages or disadvantages of such a scheme?

YES. THE MAIN ADVANTAGE OF SUCH A SCHEME WOULD BE TO MINIMISE RED TAPE AND ENHANCE OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY FOR THE LARGER FTO

OPERATIONS AND FOR THOSE WISHING TO EXPAND THEIR CURRENT OPERATIONS.

Question 18

If you answered yes to Question 17 above, how many operators should be allowed to conduct tours under each licence?

FOUR

Question 19

Do you think FTO licences issued in the NT should be limited and why?

YES. LICENCE LIMITATION IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS HAS ENHANCED BUSINESS PROFITABILITY AND PROMOTED STEWARDSHIP OF THE RESOURCE.

Question 20

Should FTO numbers be limited in specific areas? If so, in which areas?

YES. IN DARWIN AND BYNOE HARBOURS AND IN THE MARY AND DALY RIVERS.

Question 21

Should all licensed FTOs be required to pay a levy to help fund the NTGFIA's business costs?

YES