

NT GUIDED FISHING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION INC

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

10 November 2010

Night cliff Sports Club

7.30pm

Prior to the AGM, Rob opened the meeting by extending a welcome to NTGFIA members and Government Fisheries representatives.

Rob then called on Ms Roz Volcano, from Fisheries, to address the meeting on progress to date made by the FTO Strategic Management Plan Steering Committee.

Roz Volcano said that her job was to develop new management initiatives for the FTO Fishery, based on the public response to the Industry White Paper. After a number of formal and informal meetings with stakeholders, she had prepared a Draft Options Paper; this would shortly be sent to all licensed FTO's for comment. On the basis of the comments received, the options paper would be revised where appropriate and would then be put out to public comment.

Roz said the proposed new licensing system would be based on a restricted and transferable Charter License, and a non-restricted and non-transferable Guide Licence. The efficient working of the new system would require an amendment to the Nomination provisions of the present Fisheries Act.

The Steering Committee was also looking at a number of different ways to control the amount of FTO fishing effort, these included controls on passenger capacity, possession limits, and zoning restrictions.

Jim Bancroft expressed his concern that restrictions on boat sizes and carrying capacity could be detrimental to the economics of the charter industry by restricting businesses growth.

Graeme Williams expressed his concern that Boat Hire-Drive business operators were attracting a significant number of recreational fishers; he emphasized the technical sophistication, which is growing in that industry.

Hire-Drive boats are now equipped with GPSs, echo sounders and a copy of the NT Fish Finder magazine, proprietors usually supply clients with the GPS co-ordinates of the best fishing spots.

Graeme said if the Government is going to reduce FTO fishing effort it would also need to closely monitor the Boat Hire-Drive industry as well.

Graeme also questioned the need to go to public comment prior to the release of the Recreational Fishing Survey the results of which he believed would be available in the next few months.

Graeme also raised the question of what steps were being taken by the other stakeholders –i.e Coastal Line Commercial Fishers, Recreational Fishers.

Steve Matthews said that restrictions had been discussed at the CLFCMAC and that the industry had agreed to cap catch at 2008 (annual) levels. – 180 tons for jewfish and 5 ton for golden snapper.

In the event of the catch approaching critical levels the Minister would close the inshore fishery. Coastal Line Licensees would have to operate outside 150 n. miles.

Lloyd Browne asked how the total jewfish catch would be monitored; whether this would be at the point of sale. Steve said that for the first year this would be on the basis of the normal catch returns.

Lloyd asked about the latent effort associated with traps under Coastal Line licenses and Steve said they could not be used within 15 nm of the shore.

Kane Dysart presented statistical evidence of potential problems in the FTO fishery in the form of a graph, which showed that overall catch was not increasing in line with effort.

Graeme Williams asked Caine to Clarify the Graph, depiction of the total as catch only did not include the catch and release factor, Cain agreed it was catch and release.

Graeme pointed out that FTO returns for years has consistently been in excess of 75% release of all species and to consider the Graph with that in mind.

Caine pointed out that the problem they were encountering was “Barotrauma”, when releasing in deeper water.

Graeme asked Steve Mathews to outline what evidence and research has led to this conclusion, especially in relation to Jewfish and Golden Snapper, Steve’s answer is unclear and needs to be explored.

Marine Branch Representative

Shri Shrinivas spoke of the need to upgrade FTO vessels; this is to meet the new marine safety survey and manning standards, which it is aiming to enforce from 1 July 2011. All boats would eventually be subject to the new requirements. New boats surveyed after that date would have to meet the new requirements; boats under 5m, which were currently in use, would be given a sunset clause in which to upgrade.

Roz Volcano says she wishes to provide all FTO’s a document for comment prior to it being released publicly.

Rob Marchant thanked the Government representatives for the briefings and said they had given the industry a lot to consider.

AGM MINUTES 2010

Meeting opened 8.30pm

PRESENT: Graeme Williams, Rob Marchant, Steve Compain, Greg Murdock, Lloyd Browne, Dennis Sten, Russell Kenny, John Dagen, Vicki Coleman, Bryan Spick, Viv Thistle Waite, Mark Sedman, Jim Bancroft, Geoff Corry, Chris Jones, Dean Jackson, Alan Beale, Jason Litjins, Travis Bancroft, Ben Currell, Micky Quaiser, Andrew Bannage, Steve Raines, Mark Parkinson, Andrew Darby, Steve Goodhew, Karl Skyring.

APOLOGYS

Greg Trouchet, Dwayne Trouchet, Rocque Chong Wee, Michael Mannix, Shane Hearn, Darren Nickalls, Len Sibio, Alex Julius, Karl Kleimeyer, Chris Hurt, Kurt Oswald, Mike Jones.

1. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING ADDRESS

Rob said that it was important to realize that the FTO Industry was a major contributor to the NT economy, as part of the NTGFIA agenda, a request for the value of the industry to be undertaken has been made, and the association expects this information to be released soon. Rob said that he was pleased that steps were actively being undertaken to modernize the FTO industry by examining the need for more flexible and commercially oriented management practices.

2. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Graeme Williams outlined the financial situation of the Association which was as follows: Income for 2009/10 was \$60,904 made up of \$40,000 Government grant to cover Executive Officer Salary and Corporate insurances; a special grant of \$20,000 for Blue Mud Bay negotiations with coastal Aboriginal Communities; and \$900 in membership fees plus \$4 Bank Interest.

Balance Carried forward from last year was \$1055, making total funds \$61,959.

Expenditure for the current year was \$37,490 made up of Executive officer Salary \$33,000. Insurance \$2651 plus sundry operating expenses – telephone, website etc \$1839.

Total bank balance at 30 June 2010 was \$24,469.

Moved Jim Bancroft, Seconded Dennis Sten that the financial report be accepted. Passed unanimously.

3. ELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE

Rob advised that nominations had been received for 4 of the 5 positions on the Committee within the timeframe required by the Constitution. Darren Nickolls had advised he would not be standing again so Rob called for nominations from the floor for his position. Dennis Sten accepted the Executives nomination for committee member.

Rob declared the following members duly elected to the Committee

Chairman:	Rob Marchant
Vice Chairman:	Greg Trouchet
Secretary:	Greg Murdoch
Treasurer:	Steve Compain
General Member	Dennis Sten.

It was noted that Shawn Uden had expressed interest in serving on the Committee as well

4. MINUTES OF THE 2009 AGM

There were no matters arising from the minutes

Moved Mike Jones Seconded Greg Murdoch that the minutes be accepted. Motion carried unanimously

5. COMMITTEE REPORT

Graeme said that during the year the NTGFIA was represented on following Fishery Management Advisory Committees: Barramundi, Mackerel, Timor Reef, Crab, and Coastal Line. It was also represented on the Blue Mud Bay Consultative Committee.

Chairman and Executive Officer activity in 2009/2010 was mainly centered on the Fishing Tour Operators Steering Committee, Blue Mud Bay Consultative and the Coastal Line Committee. Matters still requiring resolution by these Committees are:

6. Blue Mud Bay:

Closure of the intertidal zone (ITZ) around the Tiwi Islands.

The NTGFIA has continued to press the Government for specifics as to where the ITZ begins and ends – i.e where FTO's and Rec Fishers can legally operate without first obtaining Tiwi permission. To date the Government's only response has been that it basically does not know, Government is still hoping for a resolution of the issue which will see free and unrestricted access to all NT Waters but has been unable to state when this

might be forthcoming. Greg Murdoch said that he was in the process of obtaining a legal opinion from a contact that had been involved in the BMB case on behalf of the Government. Waters subject to the BMB decision depended on the terms of the original grant of land to the Aboriginal entity. The boundaries of these grants in relation to rivers and creeks varied from case to case. Greg said he was confident such information could be obtained but that it might be several months before the situation could be clarified.

7.Coastal Line Fishery

Graeme referred to Steve Matthews' briefing on the Coastal Line Fishery and said that a reduction of the 30 or so latent licences, which currently exist in the fishery, was necessary. While welcoming the measures outlined by Steve, Graeme said he did not believe they were sufficient to ensure sustainability of the stocks and that more needs to be done by the commercial sector. Graeme also queried the effectiveness of the catch monitoring processes, which for the first year of implementation will rely solely on catch returns. Graeme said that the Association had (unsuccessfully) urged the Government to implement a point of sale monitoring system.

8. ZONING

Graeme said that the main issue facing FTO's was that of possible Zoning mentioned by Roz Vulcano. Licence limitation was tied to zoning and in his opinion was being used as an incentive to get the industry to agree to the proposed new management measures. Graeme also pointed out that he and Rob have never considered, one without the other,

Rob made the point, that licenses are currently issued for all NT waters and that some FTO's could lose this entitlement if zoning was introduced. Graeme said that using history, as a basis to getting an access sticker would exclude many long-term participants.

Graeme Williams stressed the point that he personally does not support the loss of any FTO entitlements; the members were advised to carefully consider how they responded to the paper.

Graeme said there were a number of other ways to reduce FTO effort, placing this question before the public and prior to all relevant information was available. Considering this mechanism is based on a Resource sustainability issue, it would be premature to surrender entitlements before the results of the Recreational Fishing survey were known, additionally what controls will be placed on all other stake holders such as the Hire/Drive industry. Graeme also referred to the fact that there were approximately 20 latent FTO licenses and that holders of these licenses should be instructed to use them. Or show cause as to why they should stay current.

It is possible some licenses are held by multiple operators, who might intend to use them.

Graeme suggested that the Executive form a working group to draft an NTGFIA response to the paper, which would then be posted on the Association's website as a guide for members.

Rob urged all FTO's to respond to the draft paper, and to consult the committees opinion on the website.

9.The Electronic Return Trial.

Participants found this as a very acceptable change to lodging returns, creating less work and an electronic database of personal business, we are awaiting the government response as to its success or otherwise, this has now been over 6 months.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Chris Jones spoke about the need to improve communication with all FTO's and suggested an email database be compiled. Graeme responded that he was in the process of compiling such a database.

The issue about the lack of official action on reports of illegal activity was raised from the floor. Graeme said that it was an ongoing problem and that Fisheries at one stage had agreed to address it, one by a letter to the Shooters Association.,Graeme also raised the issue with the MEU and is unaware what has happened since

Alan Beale spoke of the necessity to speed up criminal history checks and requested the Association to draft a letter to that effect to the minister responsible.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members for their attendance and input.

Meeting closed at 2130 hrs