

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2006/7**

### **1. COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2006/7:**

**Chairman:** Graeme Williams, (to 1 March 2007) then Rob Marchant

**Vice Chairman:** Rob Marchant (to 1 March 2007) then Graeme Williams.

**Secretary:** Greg Trouchet

**Treasurer:** Darren Nickolls;

**General Committee Member:** Wayne Bishop

As noted above Graeme stepped down as Chairman on 1 March 2007 and was replaced by Rob Marchant.

### **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **2. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

There were no amendments to the Constitution

### **3. ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES**

#### **3.1 PERMANENT FUNDING OPTIONS FOR ASSOCIATION**

On 19 September 2006, the Minister advised that a \$400 licence fee would be introduced on 1 July 2007 with annual increments of \$100 up to a maximum of \$800. The Government was prepared to discuss the declaration of a Managed Fishery and further down the track, would be prepared to listen to the Association's case for Licence Limitation. On June 26 2007 the Association lodged a submission detailing its specific objectives for inclusion in a fishery management plan.

#### **3.2 FISHERIES ACT REVIEW**

There has been no feedback on a commencement date for the final stages of the review. It is understood that as part of due process, the Review Committee will reconvene to oversee and guide the implementation of the necessary amendments.

#### **3.3. BYNOE HARBOUR MARINE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Environment Minister Marion Scrymgour suspended the Bynoe Harbour Marine Park Advisory Committee pending the outcomes of the Marine Protected Areas Advisory Committee. MPAs had been established around the coastline of some of the States and the NT needed to work out its own criteria and guidelines for the declaration of such areas in the waters off its coastline. The Association is represented on the MPA Advisory Committee.

#### **3.4 AQUATIC USER GROUP COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION**

The NTGFIA is currently represented on

- the Barramundi Fishery Management Advisory Committee
- Marine Protected Areas Advisory Committee
- the Kakadu Tourist Advisory Committee
- the Timor Reef Fishery Advisory Committee

Reduction of commercial effort in the barra fishery is still the subject of discussion, the main obstacle being availability of funds to effect a buy back of licences in such places as Bynoe harbour.

Kakadu licence restrictions have been lifted and new operators will be able to apply at specified intervals. National Parks intend to implement training courses to enable intending operators to upgrade their qualifications to meet NP standards and pre-requisites.

The Association was also represented on the Committee revising the Fisheries Act. Public submissions have now closed. The next phase will be a reconvening of the Review Committee to consider the public input before final recommendations are made to the Minister. It is estimated that it will be at least 18 months before the first draft of the Act is complete.

Discussions on appropriate procedures for the declaration of Marine Protected Areas in waters adjacent to the NT are ongoing.

### 3.5 FISHERIES GROUP/NTGFIA INTERACTION

Relations with the Fisheries Group deteriorated somewhat in the latter part of 2006 following the Minister's decision to grant the Association a further amount of \$40,000, which had to be made available from the Recreational Fishing Section's budget. In the light of written and verbal assurances of ongoing financial support for NTGFIA day to day operations, the Fisheries Group's refusal to reimburse the NTGFIA for legitimate day to day expenditure up to the date of the funding meeting. (November 2006) was viewed by the Association Executive as a breach of faith. The failure of the Association's attempts to resolve the matter amicably and equitably, resulted in the resignation of Graeme Williams as Chairman.

### 3.6 THE FTO FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

A meeting of the Working Group on the Managed Fishery was on February 8, 2006. The tiered administrative structure proposed by Fisheries in 1996 (but never implemented) was considered the best option to meet the Association's current policy objective of a Multi-Tiered Business Licence.

Items discussed at the Working Group Meeting included

- Applicability of the Nominations Policy
- Utilization of Assistant Fishermen
- Reg 192: One Platform One Licence
- Transferability of FTO Licences

Introduction of a “Business Licence”  
Introduction of a Levy to enable the NTGFIA to obtain independent legal and professional advice.  
Disbursement of FTO Licence Fee Revenue  
Establishment of an Entry/Career path within the industry for school leavers and prospective investors/stakeholders.  
Implementation of Licensing Protocols detailing:  
    (i) insurance prerequisites  
    (ii) entry criteria for entities established under the “Business Name” legislation.  
    (iii) boat registration/identification  
    (iv) criteria for and availability of the surrogate licensee options temporary transfers, short term operators etc)  
Introduction of a Code of Conduct and the means whereby to enforce its provisions.  
Digitization of Catch Return Data  
Limitation/Restriction of FTO Licences  
Committee members were urged to attend the meeting and participate in the Group’s deliberations if at all possible.

### 3.7 DISBURSEMENT OF LICENCE FEE REVENUE

The Government appeared to be distancing itself from its previous commitment to apply the revenue from FTO licence fees specifically to the maintenance of the Association. The placing of the Association’s funding under the Grants System appeared to be a move to weaken this direct link. The Association has written to the Department’s Chief Executive who did not address the issue in his reply. Accordingly the Association has included the matter as an issue to be addressed as part of the managed fishery proposals. Current indications are that there will be approximately 120 to 130 FTO licences issued in 2007/8. Licence revenue will therefore exceed the amount of the grant by some \$12,000. The Association can never become a truly professional body until it has an independent source of funding.

### 3.8 BLUE MUD BAY

There has been no change to the position previously advised to members. No additional licences or permits are required by FTOs or their clients pending the outcome of the NT Government’s appeal to the High Court.

**L.F. S Browne**  
**Executive Officer**  
**2 August 2007**