



Mr Ian Curnow
Executive Director Fisheries
Northern Territory Department of Primary Industry and Resources
33 Vaughan Street
Berrimah NT 0828

Dear Mr Curnow,

As you will be aware, the approvals under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) for the Northern Territory Demersal and Timor Reef fisheries expire on the 13 December 2019.

Environmental approvals for the two fisheries have been extended several times since they were last assessed. These extensions sought to provide additional time to implement new management arrangements, which I understand are now expected to be finalised and implemented in mid-2020.

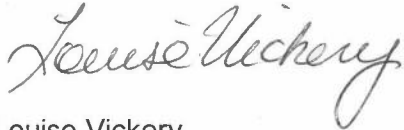
On 6 November⁶⁹, my assessment officers met with your staff to discuss concerns relating to the re-approval of these fisheries under Part 13 and 13A of the EPBC Act. Following this discussion and subsequent discussions with your staff, the Department is recommending another short term extension to allow NT DPIR to provide the following specific information:

1. NT DPIR must provide the Department with an outline, by 31 March 2020, of how they will implement, by 13 June 2020, appropriate performance indicators, reference levels and decision making framework via a harvest strategy to manage the harvest of target species secondary and tertiary species within sustainable limits, recognising the shared stocks between the Demersal Fishery and Timor Reef Fishery.
2. NT DPIR must review and update stock assessments for target species (Goldband Snapper, Saddletail Snapper and Crimson Snapper) annually, with the next stock assessments to be completed by 31 March 2020.
3. NT DPIR must implement an observer program adequate to monitor the impact of fishing on bycatch and interactions with protected species. The observer program must include electronic monitoring on all trawl vessels, human observers on at least 10% of trips and review of logbooks and electronic monitoring for at least 10% of trips. The observer program must be implemented by 31 March 2020.
4. NT DPIR must provide the Department with an analysis of current stock data. The analysis needs to explain the current Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and how these numbers demonstrate that the fishery is operating sustainably. Consideration may need to be given to whether current TACs can be justified. The stock analysis must be provided to the Department by 31 March 2020.
5. NT DPIR must provide the Department with a new application for the fisheries, recognising the shared stocks between the Demersal Fishery and Timor Reef Fishery, for assessment under Part 13A of the EPBC Act by 13 March 2020. This is to allow the next approval to be done by the 13 June 2020 under the new management arrangements.

If this information is not provided within the timeframes specified, the Department will be unable to undertake an assessment of the fisheries under the EPBC Act and the Part 13A approvals for these fisheries will not continue. This will mean that from 13 June 2020 product from these fisheries will not be permitted to be exported unless a new approval is granted.

If you have any questions or concerns we are happy to meet and discuss. Please contact Mr Nathan Sibley, Director Wildlife Trade Assessments, on 02 6274 1917 or email Nathan.Sibley@environment.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Vickery". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'L' and 'V'.

Louise Vickery
Assistant Secretary, Environment Approvals and Wildlife Trade
9 December 2019