

# Traditional Owners to Benefit after Agreement

Tiwi Islands Inter-tidal Agreement

Information sheet

## Building trust and strong relationships

**A 20-year agreement was signed between the Tiwi Land Council and the Northern Territory Government in November 2014. A “win-win” solution was achieved with limited access negotiated for fishing in the inter-tidal zone provided the needs of the Tiwi Traditional Owners were satisfied.**

The agreement was considered multiple times by the Tiwi Land Council in the second half of 2014 before being endorsed by the Tiwi Traditional Owners and custodians. The package includes:

- protection of the Tiwi owned fishing lodges on Bathurst and Melville Islands
- a stronger more viable Aboriginal Coastal Licence
- Tiwi engagement in fisheries management in all waters around the Tiwi and Vernon Islands
- additional income opportunities from visiting fishers.

The agreement will deliver long-term benefits to the Tiwi community, and was back-dated to come into effect as of 1 July 2014.

Table: Tiwi Islands fishing arrangements, before and after

Before (Closed waters)		After (Limited access)	
<p>✓ Permit required for all non-Tiwi to access all creeks and rivers on the Tiwi Islands.</p> <p>Note: No permit required for access to the Apsley Strait or to fish waters outside the inter-tidal zone.</p>	<p>✗ Difficult to stop people from doing the wrong thing, even if they had permits.</p> <p>✗ Difficult to ‘police’ people going up creeks and rivers without permits (non-compliance).</p>	<p>✓ Voluntary code of conduct to improve communication and make sure visitors respect the rights of Traditional Owners.</p> <p>✓ Increased marine ranger powers through amendments to the Fisheries Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NT Fisheries will provide training to marine rangers to give them greater fisheries enforcement powers such as the authority to inspect vessels, fishing gear and catch, and to issue infringement notices.</li></ul> <p>✓ Water Police and NT Fisheries to work with Tiwi marine rangers.</p>	<p>✗ Southern areas and creeks off Apsley Strait opened up for permit free access.</p>



## Before (Closed waters)

## After (Limited access)

	<p>✗ No Tiwi research or engagement in fisheries management.</p>	<p>✓ Tiwi owned fishing lodges now have exclusive access to the inter-tidal waters on the north of Melville Island and the western side of Bathurst Island.</p> <p>✓ Permit required for non-Tiwi to access 'Exclusion Zones'.</p> <p>✓ Tiwi people now engaged in fisheries management processes in all waters around the Tiwi and Vernon Islands (including beyond inter-tidal waters), through a joint management committee.</p>	
<p>✓ \$10,000 income gained from fishing access permit fees each year.</p>	<p>✗ Cost greater to administer each year than income gained from fishing access permit fees.</p>	<p>✓ A one-off \$30,000 payment to build a new recreational fishing camp along the Apsley Strait.</p> <p>✓ Additional income opportunities from fishers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors will also be permitted to visit the townships of Wurrumiyanga and Pirlangimpi where they may be able to buy fuel and supplies or visit the art gallery provided 24 hours' notice is given.</li> </ul>	
<p>✓ \$60,000 Tiwi marine ranger grants from NT Fisheries.</p>	<p>✗ Tiwi marine ranger grants from NT Fisheries were not guaranteed each year.</p>	<p>✓ An increase from \$60,000 to \$135,000 a year guaranteed for 20 years (including \$75,000 to support land owning clan groups as well as \$60,000 directly to the marine ranger program) administered by the Tiwi Land Council.</p>	
<p>✓ Aboriginal Coastal Licences.</p>	<p>✗ Standard Aboriginal Coastal Licence.</p> <p>✗ No Tiwi engagement in licences due to restrictions.</p>	<p>✓ More opportunities for Tiwi people to generate income via stronger Aboriginal Coastal Licence through amendments to the Fisheries Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While not a full commercial licence, the Aboriginal Coastal Licence is only available to Aboriginal people and provides the opportunity to operate a small scale licence to develop the necessary commercial fishing, quality control and marketing skills required for a full scale commercial licence (see Aboriginal Coastal Licence information sheet).</li> </ul>	

