MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

BLUE MUD BAY DEAL DONE

14 April 2013

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, Willem Westra van Holthe, has announced today that an in principle agreement has been reached with Traditional Owners to allow fishing access to inter-tidal waters in the Minimini / Murganella region between Garig Gunak Barlu (Cobourg) and Kakadu National Park.

Mr Westra van Holthe has welcomed the news, saying that it is an example of the Government and Traditional Owners working together for the benefit of all Territorians.

“This is a good outcome for everyone involved – Traditional Owners, fishing tour operators, anglers and commercial fishermen” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“The in principle agreement includes funding for marine ranger patrols, enhancing marine ranger powers, developing a fishing code of conduct and establishing an Aboriginal Regional Fisheries Committee.”

“This will give Traditional Owners a real say in the management of their sea country, while also allowing access for recreational and commercial fishers (including fishing tour operators) to tidal waters.”

The in principle agreement has an initial three year trial period, with the intention of extending it out to twenty years. The in principle agreement is expected to be ratified at the Northern Land Council’s full council meeting in May.

“Constructive negotiations are continuing between the Territory Government, Land Councils and Traditional Owners to reach similar agreements for other regions of the Territory affected by the Blue Mud Bay High Court decision,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

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