Lia Finocchiaro, Member for Drysdale

**Neighbourhood Fishing Program a reel goer!**

10 December 2015

The Country Liberals Government is fulfilling its commitment to invest $750,000 over three years to enhance recreational fishing opportunities, today announcing it will release up to 9,000 fingerlings into Palmerston Lakes.

Member for Drysdale Lia Finocchiaro said it is fantastic to see her concept of a Neighbourhood Fishing Program for Palmerston finally take-off after more than a year of planning.

“It’s no secret that fishing is one of the most popular past times in the Territory; I’m absolutely thrilled that the people of Palmerston will now be able to fish the Lakes that are right in their backyard,” Mrs Finocchiaro said.

“My Neighbourhood Fishing Program concept is based on a wildly successful program from Texas and follows overwhelming feedback from locals who told me they wanted to see Palmerston Lakes stocked with fish. I’ve been championing this project since and thank my colleague the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Willem Westra van Holthe for getting it over the line.

“The Program will bring the focus back to the outdoors for Palmerston residents and will ensure fishing is a fundamental part of living in the Territory, even if you don’t own a boat.”

“Getting the Program started has been a collaborative effort between the Country Liberals Government and the Amateur Fishermen’s Association NT (AFANT).

“I am thrilled that the City of Palmerston Council has thrown its support behind this great concept and look forward to working with them and AFANT into the future.”

The Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries will breed the Barramundi fingerlings at the Darwin Aquaculture Centre over the coming months, before they’re released towards the end of the wet season in 2016.

City of Palmerston Mayor Ian Abbott said earlier this week Council voted to grant consent for fishing to occur at Lake 5, 6 and 10 and that signage be erected at these locations.

“Fishing is a much loved past time for many Territorians, so the City of Palmerston is thrilled to be involved with this project in partnership with the Amateur Fisherman’s Association of the NT, Department of Fisheries and the Northern Territory Government,” said Mayor Ian Abbott.
“We hope this program will encourage our local community to spend more quality time outdoors and provide future recreational fishing opportunities.”

Council also voted that an estimated cost to construct recreational fishing infrastructure at lakes 5, 6 and 10 be provided for consideration prior to its inclusion in the draft 2016/17 budget.

AFANT Executive Officer Tristan Sloan welcomed the decision, saying it’s important that fisheries continue to be enhanced for future generations.

“Fishing is one of the most essential things that makes living in the Territory so unique, with around 32,000 recreational anglers taking to Territory waterways annually,” Mr Sloan said.

“From the first time Lia and I spoke about this concept I knew it would take off. It really is fantastic to see the Northern Territory fisheries being grown for future generations and I’m proud AFANT could be a part of that.”

**Media Contact:**

Casie Scott, 0432 453 225