2005 ELECTION POLICY
COUNTRY LIBERAL PARTY POLICY

COMMERCIAL SEAFOOD INDUSTRY – A SECURE FUTURE

The Country Liberal Party recognises the importance of maintaining and value-adding to the commercial fisheries of the Northern Territory in a sustainable way. This will ensure that commercial seafood industry operators enjoy a secure future and consumers continue to enjoy a variety of wild-catch seafood.

Releasing the Commercial Seafood Industry – A Secure Future policy today, Country Liberal Party Leader Denis Burke said, “The commercial seafood sector is an important component of the Territory economy. While the challenges they have faced in the past and will face in the future are real, the Country Liberal Party is determined to ensure that the commercial seafood industry has a secure future and remains economically and environmentally viable. This policy delivers that.”

The Country Liberal Party, in partnership with commercial seafood industry operators, the Seafood Council and other stakeholders will commit to a long term business plan for the commercial seafood industry that will provide security of access, enhanced facilities, increased promotion and a better operating environment for this important business sector.

A Country Liberal Party government will:

1. Work closely with the Commercial wild catch sector to develop a long term economically sustainable business strategy to protect and secure the rights of commercial fishing operators in the Northern Territory,

2. Ensure that any commercial wild catch licences that are agreed to under buy-back schemes are done so with fair compensation, allowing for market value of licences, loss of livelihood and capital equipment,

3. Provide fair compensation for loss of access in any future closures of waterways that are necessary to protect fish stocks or for resource re-allocation purposes,
4. Ensure that the business strategy articulates long-term access and security for commercial operators to Territory fisheries so operators continue to invest with confidence and thus guaranteeing high quality wild-caught product is available to market.

5. Commit to providing service facilities for commercial operators at appropriate locations around the Northern Territory coastline, in partnership with landholders, business operators and other stakeholders.

6. Provide land adjacent to the Frances Bay Fisherman’s Mooring Basin as a public-private partnership incentive for the formal development of a Darwin Commercial Seafood Industry Hub, a facility to allow enhanced servicing, marketing and tourism facilities.

7. Commit to providing capital funding in 2005/06 to build the urgently needed new service wharf in Frances Bay Fisherman’s Mooring Basin.

8. Increase financial support for the Northern Territory Seafood Festival to $50,000 in the first year to assist local producers to showcase their product at that annual event which is destined to become a premier event for Darwin.

9. Provide assistance to the seafood industry to enhance the identification, labelling and marketing of Northern Territory Seafood and encourage the use and promotion of these products at all government institutions and functions.

10. Abolish stamp duty payable by immediate family members on transfer of commercial fishing licences.

11. Maintain Seafood Council funding to ensure Territory representation at a National level.

12. Ensure that a clear and transparent process is developed for the identification, classification, management and monitoring of any new Marine Protected Areas in Northern Territory waters.

13. Commit to an early review of the NT Sacred Sites Act to ensure adequate safeguards are put in place to stop anyone using the legislation for economic gain through access to publicly owned aquatic resources in Sacred Site areas.
14. Continue to support strategic investment in aquaculture and investigate incentives that will help in attracting this investment,

15. Increase the training effort for the seafood industry, ensuring that the quality, professionalism and security of the industry is maintained into the future.

Mr Burke said, “The commercial fishing sector deserves future certainty which the Labor government has done nothing towards providing for.

“The Country Liberal Party’s strategy will allow for long-term investment into a sustainable and secure fishing industry, which will guarantee jobs, livelihoods, product availability and high quality, professional practices.”