

AFANT



**AMATEUR FISHERMEN'S
ASSOCIATION OF THE NT
INC.**

AFANT STRATEGIC PLAN 2013

AFANT'S MISSION

**“To represent recreational fishing in
the NT and ensure the quality of our
sport.”**

CONTENTS

	Page No
Introduction	3
Recreational Fishing In The Northern Territory	3
AFANT Objectives	4
Previous AFANT Development Planning	4
AFANT Strategic Plan 2013	7

2013 AFANT STRATEGIC PLAN

Represent and advocate for the interests of all recreational fishers in the NT	8
Protect and enhance the quality of the fishing experiences and resource that is available to Northern Territory and visiting anglers	10
Provide representation and advice to governments and others on recreational fishing issues	12
Maintain and where possible improve access to recreational fishing opportunities	13
Promote and be an advocate for ethical, sustainable, safe and legal fishing practices	14
Participate in the management of recreational and other fisheries	15
Liaise constructively with other organisations including commercial fishing organisations on matters of mutual interest	16
Support and participate in fisheries research	17
Promote and be an advocate for the protection of the environment when it has the potential to impact on recreational fishing	18

INTRODUCTION

The Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT (AFANT) was formed in 1980 and is an incorporated association in the Northern Territory under the Associations Incorporation Act. The AFANT Committee meets at least eight times each year and the Executive meets at other times as required. AFANT has an office located in Malak with a full time Executive Officer and an Office Manager who also manages research and other projects.

AFANT is officially recognised by the NT Government as the peak body representing recreational and sport fishing in the Northern Territory. AFANT's membership consists of individuals, family members, affiliated fishing clubs, Territory fishing associations, industry, corporate and junior members.

RECREATIONAL FISHING IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Recreational fishing is recognised as an important element of the lifestyle of many Territorians. It is a major drawcard bringing tourists to the NT and a significant contributor to our economy — it is now very much a large and important industry in its own right.

There are more than 30,000 non-Aboriginal Territorians that fish. This represents effort of more than 150,000 fisher days per year by resident NT fishers.

Resident rec fishers in the NT spend an average \$1500 per year directly on fishing goods and services – the highest rate in the country. That totals \$51 million per year. Add to that the fishing expenditure of visiting fishers and the estimated \$22 million spent on guided fishing in the NT and there is direct expenditure of some \$100 million per year with significant other flow-ons.

The standard of our wild recreational fishery is second to none thanks to our largely unspoiled environment, the number of recreationally-significant fish and marine species available and their abundance in particular areas. An overriding objective of AFANT is to ensure that this world-class recreational fishery is nurtured and protected for current and future generations of Territory and visiting fishers.

Successive Territory Governments, with support from AFANT, have developed management approaches that are aimed at preserving the quality of both our commercial and recreational fisheries. AFANT will continue to work with Government to ensure that this continues and that our recreational fishery continues to be developed so it can make the best possible contribution to our lifestyle and our economy.

AFANT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of AFANT are contained in its constitution and they are:

- To represent the interests of recreational and sport fishing in the Northern Territory.
- To act as an advisory body for recreational and sport fishers in the Northern Territory.
- To further the aims, objectives and value of recreational and sport fishing in the Northern Territory.
- To promote recreational and sport fishing in the Northern Territory.
- To co-operate with all research organisations and other bodies whose aims and objectives are to further the knowledge of fish species and their environments.
- To make public scientific and recreational information that is of interest to recreational and sport fishers.
- To provide a forum for recreational and sport fishers.
- To actively participate in the drafting of rules and regulations of concern to recreational and sport fishing.
- To liaise constructively with commercial fishing organisations on matters of mutual interest.
- To liaise with other groups and bodies holding similar interests.
- To take an active interest in any environmental issues that may be raised in conjunction with recreational and sport fishing.
- To send representatives to seminars, conferences and discussion groups in relation to recreational and sport fishing.
- Maintain, and where possible, increase access to recreational and sport fishing.
- Promote recreational fishing as a sport in the NT.
- Assist in the promotion of recreational and sport fishing related tourism.
- Encourage youth participation in recreational and sport fishing.
- Encourage the Government to further develop the recreational and sport fishing industry in the Northern Territory.
- Establish and maintain communication and discussion with relevant government agencies, ministers and departments at all levels of government.
- Develop an educational program for recreational and sport fishing in NT.
- Promote legal and ethical recreational and sport fishing practices.
- Promote scientific research, conservation and management of fish, their environment and ecology.

PREVIOUS AFANT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

AFANT's vision statement and its general directions were adopted by members during a strategic planning workshop in 1998. In 2002, AFANT's first major Development Plan was formulated to cover the period 2002 to 2005 and it set out the direction and objectives of the association for that period. A review of the plan was conducted and a new plan was developed in 2005 covering the period 2006 to 2009.

The major strategic issues addressed in the 2006 to 2009 plan are set out below with brief comments on the progress achieved (the 2006- 2009 plan was used until 2013 as the framework for reporting and AFANT activities):

Represent and advocate for the interests of all recreational fishers in the NT

AFANT has proven an effective and passionate advocate for the interests of Northern Territory anglers, AFANT is recognised by government and other organisations as the peak body representing the interests of NT recreational fishers, the organisation has the ability to access government and implement positive policy change in the best interests of recreational anglers.

Ensure that the allocation of fishery resources in the NT provides for an adequate share for recreational fishers and allows for the predictable growth in recreational fishing

AFANT has worked with successive governments over a number of decades to ensure recreational anglers have quality and accessible recreational fishing. AFANT has achieved significant gains in resource allocation including the establishment of important recreational-only barramundi fishing areas which now includes the entire coastline from the southern end of Fog Bay to the Wildman River.

AFANT has been at the forefront of ensuring that decisions on resource allocation fully recognise the value to the NT economy and lifestyle of the NT's recreational fishing experiences.

Provide representation and advice to governments and others on recreational fishing issues

AFANT is recognised by the NT Government as the peak body representing recreational fishing in the Territory. AFANT is actively representing recreational angling interests on a range of committees, working parties and various boards of management which impact on the recreational and sport fishing industry in the NT.

AFANT takes a proactive approach and engages government and other policy makers on important issues affecting recreational fishing in the NT.

Promote and further the development of recreational fishing

AFANT has passionately promoted the recreational fishing opportunities in the NT, particularly the positive lifestyle benefits for the youth recreational fishing as a key part of the Territory lifestyle and way of life.

Maintain and where possible increase access to recreational fishing opportunities

A number of challenges have presented in relation to ensuring improved access to recreational angling opportunities. While AFANT has been proactive in ensuring boating infrastructure and access is improved to many areas of the NT and successfully advocating the creation of recreational only barramundi fisheries and important areas close to Darwin, a number of challenging issues like marine parks, access to Aboriginal and pastoral land, Aboriginal land and water claims and the High Court ruling on intertidal waters (Blue Mud Bay) have made this difficult.

AFANT has engaged with governments, traditional owners and other landholders to advocate the rights of anglers to have access to all of the NT waters.

Participate in the management of recreational and other fisheries and liaise constructively with commercial fishing organisations on matters of mutual interest

AFANT has retained a constructive working relationship with other fishing organisations including commercial fishing representatives although we have difference of opinion over important issues like the commercial fishing closures and buybacks in barramundi fisheries.

Promote and be an advocate for ethical, sustainable, safe and legal fishing practices

AFANT is at the forefront of promoting, advocating and ensuring recreational anglers operate in a manner that is ethical and sustainable.

AFANT, through the development and implementation of codes of practice, the 'Your Eyes on the Water' campaign, changing attitudes on catch and release and through our role in the media, have had significant developments in driving positive change.

AFANT has been actively involved in the development of regulations including lowering bag limits on key recreational species like golden snapper and black Jewfish to ensure the protection and sustainability of these fisheries.

Promote and be an advocate for the protection of the environment as it impacts on recreational fishing

This has become a major part of AFANT's role with increased development pressures including harbour dredging and development, water extraction, mining and oil and gas proposals, many which have significant potential to have an impact on the environmental health of the rivers and waters of the NT.

Another major environmental issue is the impact of legacy mines. The NT has a large number of abandoned mine sites and a number of these are a significant environmental threat that continue to pollute Territory waters.

Support and participate in fisheries research

In this key area AFANT has met the objectives through direct involvement in tagging monitoring and angler data gathering on a number of species and key areas. The data and information gathered in this research has been used by fisheries to guide management decisions.

Major activities in this area were the implementation of the tagging/monitoring program for golden snapper, the continuation of AFANT's Billy Taylor Barrawatch project and the extension of the King Ash Bay recreational fishing monitoring project.

More recently, AFANT has worked with NT Fisheries to establish a tagging and angler catch effort program for the Mary River and Chambers and Finke Bays as well as a golden snapper tagging program to assist fisheries management with providing the data necessary on stock and catch in these important recreational-only systems.

AFANT STRATEGIC PLAN 2013

The AFANT Committee has developed the 2013 strategic plan after undertaking a review of the current AFANT operations and activities, reviewing previous AFANT development plans and giving consideration to AFANT's core business; all potential threats to recreational angling in the NT. The AFANT Committee has also given careful consideration on where AFANT should be in the future.

To ensure that the organisational objectives are directed to ensure the best outcomes for recreational anglers, AFANT has also given consideration to the NT Governments Recreational Fishing Development Plan 2012-2022 to ensure that the strategic plan is generally consistent and aligned.

Whilst many of these issues recognised in previous development plans will remain as priority activity areas, the current AFANT Committee believes that the focus of the organisation in the future should be on following key strategic areas and these are reflected in the objectives and strategies of this plan:

1. Represent and advocate for the interests of all recreational fishers in the NT
2. Protect and enhance the quality of the fishing experiences and resource that is available to Northern Territory and visiting anglers
3. Provide representation and advice to governments and others on recreational fishing issues
4. Maintain and where possible improve access to recreational fishing opportunities
5. Promote and be an advocate for ethical, sustainable, safe and legal fishing practices
6. Participate in the management of recreational and other fisheries
7. Liaise constructively with other organisations including commercial fishing organisations on matters of mutual interest
8. Support and participate in fisheries research
9. Promote and be an advocate for the protection of the environment when it has the potential to impact on recreational fishing

STRATEGIC ISSUE 1.

REPRESENT AND ADVOCATE FOR THE INTERESTS OF ALL RECREATIONAL FISHERS IN THE NT

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>AFANT will continue to provide effective representation of all recreational fishers in the NT and will be responsive to the wishes and needs of these fishers.</p>	<p>Strong representation and engagement with governments and other groups on the significance of recreational fishing in the NT.</p> <p>Maintain and further develop contacts with fishing clubs, recreational anglers and fishing visitors to the NT to determine their wishes and needs.</p> <p>AFANT Executive Officer or a member of AFANT Executive meets each club once per year.</p> <p>Establish and maintain regular contact between AFANT Executive Officer and club representatives in regions outside Darwin.</p> <p>Strengthen AFANT’s “Club Representative” program by providing material for club meetings and by encouraging them to bring issues of concern from their members to AFANT.</p> <p>Review rules and fees for associate or affiliate club membership fees.</p> <p>Use the AFANT website, Facebook page and other web-based fishing forums in the Territory to encourage input from recreational fishers.</p> <p>Increase the use of the internet to engage with members and the recreational fishing community.</p> <p>Use the media to promote AFANT’s work and to encourage input from recreational fishers.</p>	<p>The continued recognition of recreational fishing and AFANT as an important part of the Territory lifestyle.</p> <p>Satisfactory feedback from club representatives and other fishers on AFANT’s representation, communication and engagement.</p> <p>All recognised and functioning fishing clubs in NT are fully affiliated with AFANT.</p> <p>Increased communication with and input from recreational fishers — ongoing.</p> <p>Continued increase in numbers of AFANT members, associate members and supporters.</p>

	<p>Maintain membership of national bodies to ensure that recreational fishing in the NT has input to national recreational fishing decisions, bodies and forums.</p> <p>Ensure that youth who are passionate about recreational fishing are encouraged, nurtured and supported into taking leadership positions.</p>	<p>AFANT’s involvement, influence and engagement on relevant national issues.</p> <p>Number of young people under 25 engaging with AFANT, taking leadership positions or involved in programs.</p>
<p>AFANT will have constructive working relationships with traditional land owners.</p>	<p>Establish a mutually beneficial working relationship with the Northern Land Council, Tiwi Land Council and the Anindilyakwa Land Council to promote access for recreational fishers to land and waters that they are responsible for.</p> <p>Work to ensure no issue of detriment for recreational fishers on pending bed and bank/intertidal waters land claims.</p>	<p>Positive working relationships established with TO’s.</p> <p>Maintain and improve agreements and access to Aboriginal land and waters.</p>

STRATEGIC ISSUE 2.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE FISHING EXPERIENCES AND RESOURCE THAT IS AVAILABLE TO NORTHERN TERRITORY AND VISITING ANGLERS

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>Ensure that the allocation of fishery resources in the NT recognises the value and importance of the recreational fishing industry including predictable growth.</p>	<p>To seek agreements with commercial fishers and other marine resource users on sharing resources that are of interest to recreational fishers or which might impact on recreational fisheries.</p> <p>Identify priority areas in order to protect and enhance the quality of recreational fishing opportunities for resource reallocation.</p> <p>Be a strong advocate for the sustainability and quality of recreational angling.</p> <p>Ensure that the NT fishing regulations, including possession limits, are sufficient to protect the resource and sustainability of the fish stocks.</p> <p>Encourage the NT Government to provide sufficient enforcement and prosecution of illegal fishing to protect the resource.</p>	<p>Fisheries management plans and resource agreements reflect the need for an adequate share for recreational fishers and allow for the predictable growth in recreational fishing — ongoing.</p> <p>Public recognition of the quality of recreational angling in the NT.</p>

<p>Recreational fishing will continue to be recognised as an important part of Territory lifestyle and an important contributor to the NT economy.</p>	<p>Further enhance boating infrastructure in key areas.</p> <p>Address where necessary resource conflicts to ensure high quality recreational angling is available.</p> <p>Ensure that proper data is collected to demonstrate the important contribution that recreational fishing makes to life in the NT.</p> <p>Work with national bodies and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to develop a methodology to determine the value of recreational fishing in Australia with data available at a state and territory level.</p> <p>Engage with media and other promotional bodies showing the benefits and importance of recreational fishing in the NT.</p> <p>Continue to make representations to governments and other groups on the significance of recreational fishing in the NT.</p>	<p>New and improved boat ramps servicing key areas.- ongoing</p> <p>Visitor and recreational fishing tourism growth. - ongoing</p> <p>NT Recreational Fishing Survey conducted by Government every five years.</p> <p>Government programs and funding demonstrate recognition of recreational fishing — ongoing.</p>
--	---	--

STRATEGIC ACTION 3.

PROVIDE REPRESENTATION AND ADVICE TO GOVERNMENTS AND OTHERS ON RECREATIONAL FISHING ISSUES

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>AFANT will be recognised by governments and other significant groups as the peak recreational fishing representative body in the NT.</p>	<p>Continue to participate on all government committees and working groups dealing with issues that can impact on recreational fishing in the NT and ensure that AFANT provides valuable input to these groups.</p> <p>Maintain working relationships with senior political, public service and industry group figures in the NT so that they are aware of AFANT’s interests and objectives.</p> <p>Provide advice on election priorities and policy for consideration by political parties and candidates.</p>	<p>AFANT membership of all important committees and feedback on value of AFANT input — ongoing.</p> <p>AFANT’s ability to influence positive outcomes on areas of interest -ongoing.</p> <p>Implementation of key AFANT election policy requests -ongoing.</p>

STRATEGIC ACTION 4.

MAINTAIN AND WHERE POSSIBLE IMPROVE ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>To maintain and improve access to recreational fishing opportunities and areas throughout the NT.</p>	<p>Encourage recreational fishers, particularly those in regions outside Darwin, to advise AFANT of access requirements and any access opportunities that may arise in their area.</p> <p>Recreational fishing access will be protected in the development of any national parks, marine parks and marine protected areas that are proposed for waters in and around the NT.</p> <p>Continue to monitor land use and other development proposals in the NT to ensure that they do not inhibit fishing access and that opportunities to enhance fishing access are taken when they arise.</p> <p>Work with governments to maintain and develop access and opportunities to all areas for recreational fishing.</p> <p>Establish and maintain relationships with traditional owners of Aboriginal land to promote and provide access for recreational fishers to their land and water.</p> <p>In all such cases, promote to recreational fishers the need to respect any designated sacred or culturally significant sites, land owner’s privacy and the need to remove rubbish and generally care for the area.</p> <p>Develop and maintain relationships with the pastoral industry to provide and improve access for recreational fishers to their land and waters.</p> <p>Support and advocate for the continued expansion of the artificial reef program.</p>	<p>The quantity of advice received from fishers outside Darwin and instances where new access is agreed — ongoing.</p> <p>Land use plans taking account the needs of recreational fishing — ongoing.</p> <p>Access agreements for specific areas — ongoing.</p> <p>Feedback from landowners that they are satisfied that recreational fishers respect their land and treat it with due care — ongoing.</p> <p>Number and quality of new artificial reefs – ongoing.</p>

STRATEGIC ACTION 5.

PROMOTE AND BE AN ADVOCATE FOR ETHICAL, SUSTAINABLE, SAFE AND LEGAL FISHING PRACTICES

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>Maintaining sustainable and quality fisheries.</p>	<p>Where appropriate AFANT will support and advocate changes to regulations to protect the resource and help ensure the sustainability and quality of our fisheries.</p> <p>Review recreational fishing regulations to ensure they provide for continued sustainable use of the fishery.</p>	<p>Improvement in sustainable recreational fishing practices demonstrated in surveys and reflected in regulations — ongoing.</p> <p>Catch and effort data provides reasonable catches of target species.</p>
<p>Recreational fishers will respect the environment and operate in an ethical, legal and humane manner.</p>	<p>AFANT will advocate Recreational Fishing Code of Practice.</p> <p>Use the media, public information material and AFANT membership and club/affiliated organisations networks to promote sustainable fishing including the safe release of fish and other bycatch.</p> <p>Use the media to outline the impact of Barotrauma and species that are not suitable for release.</p> <p>Encourage recreational fishers in the NT to effectively record and report any instances of illegal and unsafe fishing activity.</p> <p>Review AFANT’s Your Eyes on the Water project.</p> <p>Fishing competitions will be conducted in a manner that has minimal impact on fish stocks and/or the environment.</p>	<p>Survey and other feedback showing safe release of all fish and other bycatch that is not to be retained — ongoing.</p> <p>Survey and other feedback showing safe handling and release of fish when practicing catch and release — ongoing.</p> <p>Survey and other feedback to ascertain the level of understanding of Barotrauma.</p> <p>Feedback and reports of illegal activity reported and acted on by authorities- ongoing</p> <p>Fishing competitions in the NT comply with the NEATFish standards or similar – ongoing.</p>

STRATEGIC ACTION 6.

PARTICIPATE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF RECREATIONAL AND OTHER FISHERIES

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>AFANT will continue to be represented on all appropriate fisheries management advisory committees and other working groups making decisions on or providing advice on the management of the NT’s fisheries.</p>	<p>Continue to provide sound and valuable advice and input to Government and others through fishery management advisory committees and other fishery related groups.</p> <p>Lobby Government for AFANT involvement in any new groups or committees that provide advice which may impact on recreational fishing.</p> <p>Identify fisheries management needs as they emerge and advise Government of these needs.</p>	<p>AFANT representation on all relevant committees — on going.</p> <p>AFANT concerns and issues are taken into account in legislation and regulations — ongoing.</p>

STRATEGIC ACTION 7.

LIAISE CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING COMMERCIAL FISHING ORGANISATIONS ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>AFANT will continue to maintain an effective working relationship with the NT Seafood Council and other representative commercial fishing bodies.</p>	<p>Maintain good personal relations at Executive Officer and senior office bearer levels and meet regularly to discuss matters of mutual concern and benefit.</p> <p>When there is no conflict, support the NT Seafood Council (and its committees) on matters it considers important and seek its support for similar AFANT issues.</p>	<p>Regular meetings and personal contact at Executive Officer and office bearer levels — ongoing.</p> <p>Issues where joint approach has been presented — ongoing.</p>
<p>AFANT will develop and maintain an effective working relationship with the Northern Territory Guided Fishing Industry Association (NTGFIA).</p> <p>AFANT will maintain constructive working relationships with key NT organisations.</p>	<p>Maintain good personal relations at Executive Officer and Executive levels and meet regularly to discuss matters of mutual concern.</p> <p>To continue to develop relationships with the NT Cattlemen’s Association and pastoralists to provide access for recreational fishers.</p> <p>Maintain a constructive relationship with the NT Environment Centre (NTEC) on matters it considers important and seek its support for similar AFANT issues.</p>	<p>Regular meetings and personal contact at Executive Officer and office bearer levels — ongoing.</p>

STRATEGIC ISSUE 8.

SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATE IN FISHERIES RESEARCH

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>There will be continued effective research into NT fisheries to provide a sound basis for management and resource decision making.</p>	<p>To lobby the NT Government to provide adequate resources for the fisheries group to monitor and collect necessary information.</p> <p>To represent the interest of recreational fishing in decision making on fisheries research in the NT and, in particular, to continue membership of the NT Fisheries Research Advisory Board.</p> <p>Encourage Governments to conduct a regular recreational fishing survey in the Northern Territory at least every five years.</p> <p>AFANT will be involved in and support targeted tagging and angler diary programs.</p>	<p>Fishing research by the NT Fisheries Group increases and better management information is available specifically — ongoing.</p> <p>Continued membership of NTFRAB, quality of project approved for NT and relevance to recreational fishing — ongoing.</p> <p>NT recreational fishing survey data collected conducted and released on a regular basis.</p> <p>Level support and participation in tagging and catch and effort data collection. – ongoing.</p>

STRATEGIC ISSUE 9.

**PROMOTE AND BE AN ADVOCATE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT
AS IT IMPACTS ON RECREATIONAL FISHING**

Objective	Strategies	Performance Indicators and Timing
<p>Healthy waters with any development or industry having a minimal impact on the environment and quality of recreational fishing.</p>	<p>AFANT will monitor, comment on and bring perspective to planning and environmental assessment processes on all land use, mining and industrial developments that may impact on recreational fishing.</p> <p>Lobby government to ensure that AFANT is able to represent the views of recreational fishers on committees and working groups dealing with development and environmental assessment.</p> <p>Work with governments and other groups to eliminate threats to the recreational fishing environment from all development, resource allocations and land use.</p> <p>Recreational fishing in the NT will not be contributing to the introduction or spread of weeds and introduced pests.</p>	<p>Recreational fishing interests are seen to have been taken into account in major planning processes — ongoing.</p> <p>Number of relevant submissions and effectiveness of AFANT’s input in terms of minimising risk/harm to recreational fishing — ongoing.</p> <p>Effectiveness of governments’ responses to threats — ongoing.</p> <p>Feedback showing increased awareness and improved practices by recreational fishers — ongoing</p>