



Northern Territory Government

Office of Environment and Heritage

PART A

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

**Draft Guidelines for the preparation of an
Environmental Impact Statement**

**NT Red Claw
Aquaculture Development**

Lots 6051, 6052 and 6053 Wright Road

Marrakai, Northern Territory

September 2005

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1 Introduction

This section of the guidelines has been developed to assist NT Redclaw in preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the proposed aquaculture facility on Lots 6051, 6052 and 6053, Wright Road, Marrakai, in accordance with Clause 8 of the Environmental Assessment Administrative Procedures of the *Environmental Assessment Act (1982)* of the Northern Territory. These Guidelines have been prepared by the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) within the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts.

These Guidelines consist of two sections:

- Part A (this section) is the introduction and description of the project and the EIS process; and
- Part B (attached) details the type and extent of information to be included in the Draft EIS. The list includes issues and concerns that were identified before the public and Government review period for the draft Guidelines.

2 The Proposal

The proponent is Robert Cunningham, NT Red Claw.

The proposal is located at lots 6051, 6052 and 6053 (102, 112 and 122 Wright Road) Marrakai, Northern Territory (Figure 1).

The total area for the three lots under assessment is 9.0 hectares (ha), with each lot comprising of 3.0 ha.

2.1 Aquaculture facility

The proposed aquaculture facility is described as an above ground tank system, comprising of a series of above ground tanks of various sizes for the breeding and grow-out of two varieties of native crayfish, "Redclaw" (*Cherax quadricarinatus*) and "Cherubin" (*Machrobrachium* sp.). The proposal is assumed to include associated water storage systems and tanks, pipework, discharge and wastewater systems. Water will be sourced from a bore located on the property.

Wastewater from the tanks is to be collected in a discharge water tank, after which it is to be bottled for use on site as a liquid grass enhancer. The pond sludge is proposed to be collected at the bottom of the discharge water tank and developed as fertiliser. These waste products are proposed to be used on the property and/ or to be offered for sale.

2.2 Fishing Lake

The fishing lake has partly been constructed and is proposed to be used as a fly-fishing/ barramundi lake for the general public. It is proposed to stock the lake with barramundi and sleepy cod. The public will be able to fish in the lake and will be charged for the fish that are taken home.

2.3 Camping Area and Endangered Species Area

The camping area and the endangered species area are proposed to be developed in the future and no details were provided with the Notice of Intent (NOI).

3 Approvals required/ applicable legislation

This proposal was referred to the OEH by the proponent for determination of assessment requirements under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

A development application for the clearing of native vegetation was lodged in December 2004, for the development of a hotel/motel, supermarket, service station, caravan park and ornamental lake on lots 6138 (40 Wright Road, Marrakai), lot 6053 (102 Wright Road, Marrakai) and lot 5405 (62 Burnside Road, Marrakai). This application was later withdrawn.

Subsequently, on 27 February 2005 NT Red Claw submitted a Notice of Intent under the *Environmental Assessment Act* to OEH advising that it was now only seeking to develop lots 6051, 6052 and 6053. This proposed development comprises of an aquaculture facility, a fishing lake and a future camping area/ endangered species area. The construction of the fishing lake has partly been completed and native vegetation has been cleared on lots 6051 and 6052.

Other approvals which may be required are:

- A Aquaculture Licence under the *Fisheries Act*;
- A Waste Discharge Licence;
- An Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority Certificate;
- An approval under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*; and
- A Permit to Take or Interfere with Wildlife (associated with the future “Endangered Species Area”).

4 Purpose of the Draft EIS

The Draft EIS aims to provide:

- a source of information from which individuals and groups may gain an understanding of the proposal, the need for the proposal, the economic and other benefits that might arise from the proposal, the alternatives, the environment that it would affect, the impacts that may occur and the measures taken to minimise those impacts;
- a basis for public consultation and informed comment on the proposal; and
- a framework against which decision-makers can consider the environmental aspects of the proposal, set conditions for approval to ensure environmentally sound development and recommend an environmental management and monitoring program.

The object of these Guidelines is to identify those matters that should be addressed in the Draft EIS. The Guidelines are based on the initial outline of the proposal in the NOI. The Guidelines are not necessarily exhaustive. They should not be interpreted as excluding from consideration any matters which are currently unforeseen that emerge as important or significant from scientific studies or otherwise during the preparation of the Draft EIS, the public consultation process and the preparation of the Supplement to the Draft EIS (response to submissions).

The Draft EIS should be a self-contained and comprehensive document written in a clear, concise style that is easily understood by the general reader. Text should be supported where appropriate by easily interpretable maps, plans, diagrams or other descriptive material. Detailed technical information and baseline surveys should be included as appendices.

Content in the Draft EIS should include both quantitative and qualitative analysis as appropriate. Impacts should not just be treated as adverse; beneficial effects should also be identified.

The justification of the project in the manner proposed should be consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposal and alternatives should be comprehensive. For the purpose of these Guidelines, the “principles of ecologically sustainable development” are as follows:

- the precautionary principle - namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- inter- and intra-generational equity - namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations;
- conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity; and
- improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources.

5 EIS Process

The EIS process, as described by the Administrative Procedures of the *Environmental Assessment Act 1982 (EA Act)* of the Northern Territory, is displayed in Figure 2.

Overview of the Process

Once the Minister has determined that an EIS is required, the OEH prepares draft Guidelines for Preparation of an EIS, after consulting with relevant advisory bodies.

These draft Guidelines are then subject to public review for a 14-day period. At the end of this period, the OEH will finalise the draft Guidelines within 14 days for Ministerial approval. When approved, final Guidelines are forwarded to the proponent.

When the proponent has prepared a Draft EIS to a publishable standard, this document is exhibited for public review and comment for a minimum of 28 days, during which time advisory bodies also comment on the document.

Issues raised in the public comment period are addressed by the proponent in a Supplement to the Draft EIS.

The OEH then has 35 days to prepare an Environmental Assessment Report and Recommendations based on the Draft EIS and Supplement. If the Minister approves the Assessment Report and Recommendations, these are then forwarded to the responsible (consent) Minister(s) for inclusion in permit, lease or license conditions (e.g. Aquaculture Licence) and in relevant management procedures e.g. Environmental Management Plans.

The Assessment Report and Recommendations are published on the OEH website and hard copies are provided to respondents and selected public libraries and viewing sites.

6 Administration

The Project Officer is Irma Gerridzen from the Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (phone [08] 8924 4028 facsimile [08] 8924 4053, e-mail: irma.gerridzen@nt.gov.au).

Approximately 15 bound copies of the Draft EIS will be required for distribution to NT Government and advisory bodies. In addition, 8 CD ROM copies (in ADOBE*.pdf format) plus two unsecured Microsoft Word copies should be submitted (to allow placement on the Office's Internet site and to facilitate production of the Assessment Report and Recommendations).

The proponent has the responsibility of advertising the public exhibition of the Draft EIS in the NT News. The proponent is required to place the Draft EIS on public exhibition for 28 days. The Draft EIS is to be made available for public viewing at the following locations:

- Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts, Darwin Plaza, 2nd floor, Darwin Mall NT;
- Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Cavenagh House, Cavenagh Street, Darwin NT,
- Northern Territory Library, Parliament House, Cnr Bennett and Mitchell Streets, Darwin NT;
- Darwin Public Library, Civic Centre, Harry Chan Avenue, Darwin NT;
- Casuarina Public Library, Bradshaw Terrace, Casuarina, NT;
- Palmerston Public Library, Civic Plaza, Cnr University Avenue and Chung Wah Terrace, Palmerston, NT;

In accordance with clause 8(6(c)) of the Environmental Assessment Administrative Procedures, the proponent shall also provide a copy of the Draft EIS to the following organisations and persons for comment:

- The Environment Centre of the Northern Territory;
- The Department of the Environment and Heritage (Australian Government).

The proponent should also consider producing at least several copies for direct sale to the public, on request.

Figure 1 **Location of Lots 6051, 6052 and 6053**



Figure 2 The Northern Territory Environmental Assessment Process

