

Anglers welcome buy-out

Glenn Cordingley,
Gareth McKnight and
Nicola Kalmar

Roebuck Bay in Broome is set to be transformed into an international angling haven with the State Government buying back the licences covering vast areas — meaning an end to commercial fishing.

The Department of Fisheries has purchased the only two licences, covering about 100km of coastline from Roebuck Bay south to Eighty Mile Beach from Kimberley Seafood's own-

er Todd Morris. The move de-highlighted recreational fishers, charter boat operators and traditional owners, the Yawuru.

Mr Morris said he was extremely happy with the outcome and wished anglers "all the best for a sustainable future for Roebuck Bay".

He said his netting operation employed about 10 workers in its heyday but only three people stood to lose their jobs.

Broome-based International Game Fish Association committee member Jeff Cooper estimated between 60 and 80

tonnes of barramundi, triplefin and bluenose salmon, triple-tail and mulloway normally caught each year would be left to bolster fish stocks.

"This will turn Roebuck Bay into a world-class recreational fishing destination where anglers can appreciate and enjoy the unique environment and diversity of fishing experiences," he said. "The community will benefit from international and domestic anglers spending more from their experience."

Mr Cooper, who teaches aquaculture at the Kimberley Train-

ing Institute, believed the decision would not affect local fresh fish supplies because there was diversity of other products around Broome, including farmed barramundi and sustainably caught species.

Broome Fishing Club president Wes Franks said buy back of the fishing licences permanently eliminated commercial netting in Roebuck Bay.

"The decision will have a great impact on tourism, the local charter boat industry and the recreational fishing fraternity of Broome and its sur-

rounding areas," he said. "Fish stocks will dramatically increase over the coming seasons."

Mr Franks said Broome was heading for a bright future on the fishing front, with planning well under way for the government-budgeted \$47 million boating facility in Roebuck Bay.

Recfishwest chief executive Andrew Rowland said he

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Jubilant Broome Fishing Club members Karen Crosby, her husband Andrew 'Crozz' Crosby, Eric Locke, his mother Liz Locke, Ben Little and Jeff Cooper.
Picture: Glenn Cordingley

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Commercial lock-out tipped to restore fishery

fishers, not for sustainability. Yawuru Land and Sea project officer Dean Mathews said all Yawuru people fished in and around Roebuck Bay and it would be critical to the long-term sustainable management of prized fish stocks.

“It is not about getting rid of commercial fishing, which has an important place, but rather maximising the use of a limited resource that will bring huge benefits,” Dr Rowland said.

“This announcement will mean that the fishing is only going to get better — this will turn Roebuck Bay back to one of the best fisheries for threadfin salmon in Australia.”

Fisheries said section 25 of the Fish Resources Management Act kept it from divulging each fisher's catches.

West Kimberley Fishing Tours owner Jeff Prunster said it was money well spent by the State Government.

“It has been getting harder and harder to guarantee fish

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