

Chair's Meeting Summary

COASTAL LINE ADVISORY GROUP (CLAG)

Chairs summary of the CLAG meeting held on 12 December 2025

Independent Chair: Will Zacharin

Participating members: Rob Fish, David Ciaravolo, Jon Hay, Rhys Mulholland, Jordan Waters (proxy for Blane Simmons)

Observers: Jamie Damaso, Tim Burrows

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries staff: Matt Osborne, Phillipa Hunter, Jake Maynard, Blake Taylor, Lou-Anne Duncan, Michael Usher, Shannon Burchert, Dannie O'Brien

Apologies: Blane Simmons

Preliminary Business

The Chair welcomed the members to the CLAG and provided background on his experience and role in chairing the new group. The Senior Executive Director of Fisheries spoke about the recently released stock assessments for Black Jewfish and Golden Snapper and the role of the CLAG in the development of a Recovery Plan and operation of the Coastal Line Fishery Harvest Strategy.

General Business

Terms of Reference

Draft Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the CLAG were tabled and some amendments proposed and accepted. Amended ToRs to be circulated out-of-session for signing by all members and permanent observers.

Members were also requested to populate the Register of Interests.

Scope of a Draft Recovery Plan

There was considerable debate about the scope of the Recovery Plan. All members were clear that the management objectives and future management actions required for Black Jewfish were very different to the serious management intervention required for Golden Snapper, as this latter stock was in a depleted condition around the Greater Darwin Region.

The CLAG agreed that there is an ongoing need for a targeted monitoring program and early review of the Recovery Plan to ensure it operates effectively. Previous efforts to decrease fishing mortality on Golden Snapper have not been effective and the CLAG discussed that further immediate intervention may be required prior to the completion of the Recovery Plan if monitoring does not demonstrate recovery. NT Fisheries is to assess possible additional actions during the development of the Recovery Plan over the next six months.

An effective communication strategy and education program will be required to inform all stakeholders of the Recovery Plan and the importance of catch reporting.

The Recovery Plan will be completed by June 2026 for implementation in July 2026. The CLAG has structured meetings in February and May 2026, either side of a public consultation process, to provide its advice on the Recovery Plan to meet this deadline.

Recovery Plan Objectives and Targets

A preliminary discussion was conducted on objectives and targets, with the focus on Golden Snapper as Black Jewfish is currently under the active management of the harvest strategy. Target biomass levels for maintaining a sustainable stock of Golden Snapper in the Greater Darwin Region may require some further analysis before agreement can be reached. Transfer of fishing effort within the Greater Darwin Region to other areas and species was also discussed. The Recovery Plan must be realistic, and prevent effort transfer that may cause sustainability problems elsewhere. The CLAG discussed incorporating milestones in the plan based on scientific data to track stock recovery. This will require improved data collection from all active fishers.

Monitoring Framework

The CLAG recognises the importance of monitoring stock recovery from the management interventions of the Recovery Plan. The design of the monitoring framework must address the need for improved catch reporting to strengthen the scientific data that feeds into stock assessments. Fishery independent monitoring may also be required, particularly where areas are closed or fishing effort is reduced. Future stock assessments must be scheduled at a timescale that supports the Recovery Plan. The role of stocking and enhancement programs in assisting with stock recovery should be evaluated and reported.

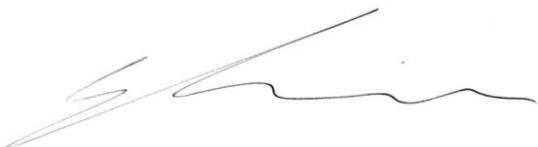
Communication Strategy

It will be important to have an effective communication strategy tailored to the various sectors to increase awareness of the Recovery Plan and its implementation. The CLAG wants to ensure expectations and responsibilities of fishers are clear and that all sectors assist in improving data, so stock recovery can be accurately tracked and reported.

Community understanding of the state of the Black Jewfish and Golden Snapper stocks is essential to build support for the Recovery Plan.

Concluding Remarks

The Chair thanked all members and observers for their valuable input. The timeframes for developing and finalising the Recovery Plan are challenging, but with out-of-session review and discussion on the draft Recovery Plan, meeting the June 2026 deadline was achievable. Two days have been set aside for the February 2026 meeting to have a robust discussion on a draft Recovery Plan.



Will Zacharin
Independent Chair

Date: 12/01/26