

Inquiry into the changing economic environment in the Indian Ocean Territories

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Department of House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

email: jscncet@aph.gov.au

Additional Submission by Nyall Ledger – October 7, 2009

I wish to provide the attached letter from Fisheries WA as an additional submission.

On July 30, 2004, applications closed for requests made by the Western Australian Department of Fisheries for expressions of interest relating to exploring commercial fishing opportunities in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

The attached letter was received in September 2009 from Fisheries WA. More than 6 years after I commenced this project, despite my best attempts, I cannot get a conclusive answer from the Australian Government's Attorney General's Department.

Regards

Nyall Ledger



Government of Western Australia
Department of Fisheries

Our Ref: 10T005/05-02



Fish for the future

Mr Nyall ledger

Dear Nyall

DEVELOPING FISHERIES APPLICATION UPDATE – COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS

Thank you for your letter dated 14 August 2009 and the copy of a previous letter dated 14 July 2009, regarding your pending application to commercially harvest sea cucumber at the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. In relation to the copy of the letter addressed to the Department and dated 14 July 2009, a search of the Department of Fisheries' records has failed to locate this correspondence however I have considered both of your recent letters in this reply.

Please note that the Chief Executive Officer has considered your letter dated 11 December 2008, in making his final decision relating to your application.

I note that Rachel Green, from the Department of Fisheries, emailed you on 12 May 2009, providing you with an update on your application. This advice stated that the Department's Chief Executive Officer had considered the independent report prepared by Dr Tim Skewes, and that the Department was awaiting acknowledgment from the Attorney General's Department of the Department's intended decision in relation to your application. The Department of Fisheries continues to pursue this acknowledgement from the Attorney General's Department.

I note your comments relating to a recent publication from Parks Australia and the fact that these results were primarily based on outcomes from the reef-check program and your own observations. However, the sea cucumber surveys undertaken by the Department of Fisheries' Research Division provide robust survey results of the sea cucumber stocks at the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Additionally, the results from Jaime Seymour's survey and the recommendations from Dr Tim Skewes' independent review have also been considered by the Chief Executive Officer.

The Department will continue to pursue acknowledgement of the Chief Executive Officer's intended decision relating to your application from the Attorney General's Department, in order to provide you with a final decision on the outcome from your application as soon as possible.

Regards

Nyall Ledger