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MEDIA RELEASE

No plans to fund fighting on indigenous inter-tidal zone land rights

Northern Territory Seafood Council denies claims in the media this week that it has been using Government funding in a fight against Aboriginal land claims.

'Accusations have been made that the Northern Territory Seafood Council has been using Government funds to pay lawyers to fight Aboriginal land claims,' said Northern Territory Seafood Council, Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Katherine Winchester.

'Northern Land Council wrongly condemned use of Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) funds being given to Northern Territory Seafood Council to get legal advice about how we would be adversely impacted by Aboriginal land claim.

'We want to work with the Northern Land Council, not fight them.

'Outcomes of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and the 2008 Blue Mud Bay High Court decision has resulted in recognition of Traditional Owners' ability to control access to intertidal waters overlying Aboriginal land.

'We recognise we no longer have a right to access fishing grounds impacted by the decision and we have to work closely with Traditional Owners.

'The Northern Territory Seafood Council's application for funding from the IAS has been to deliver a step forward that brings fishers and traditional owners together to aid seafood industry development.

'As the terms of the approved funding for the Northern Territory Seafood Council are yet to be finalised, we are inviting the Northern Land Council to help us shape the final outcomes for delivery.

'There is opportunity to increase both the economic returns and value of the NT seafood industry to all Territorians, and we want to achieve this by working together.

'We want to work in partnership with the Land Councils and Traditional Owners to achieve long-term access solutions, increased participation in the industry and better involvement in management decisions,' Mrs Winchester stated.

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