



**Kon Vatskalis**

MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

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## **INDIGENOUS MARINE RANGERS ON THE WATCHOUT FOR ILLEGAL FISHERS**

The NT Government is stepping up its fight against foreign illegal fishing, announcing today that Indigenous marine rangers from six remote communities around the Territory have joined the battle in detecting illegal fishing.

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Kon Vatskalis last week also met with Indonesian Fisheries Minister His Excellency Fredd Numberi, and earlier this month Federal Fisheries Minister Senator Ian Macdonald to discuss the threat of illegal foreign fishing incursions.

“Illegal fishing is of great concern to the NT Government. Illegal and unregulated incursions pose a serious threat to local fish stocks and to the bio-security of the Territory.

“The Federal Government has put in place a range of quarantine controls and unregulated incursions by foreign fishing boats put these at risk.”

“Given the seriousness of this issue I am looking to work with Federal and Indonesian authorities to find solutions – it’s just too important.”

Mr Vatskalis said the rangers are working as part of the Northern Territory Government’s Marine Ranger Program, which has been developed in collaboration with coastal communities, the Northern Land Council’s Caring for Country Unit, and the Tiwi Land Council.

More than 30 marine rangers will work on six marine programs - the Tiwi Island Marine Rangers, Gumurr Marthakal Marine Rangers, Djelk Marine Rangers, the Lianthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Unit, Thamarrurr Marine Rangers and Mardbalk Marine Rangers.

Mr Vatskalis said the program was established to meet a need for joint participation in the care and management of marine resources and coastal habitats.

“The great thing about this program is that the rangers have great local knowledge of the coastline. They obviously receive a cultural and traditional motivation and of course they know the area extremely well. “Recreational fishers regularly report any suspicious or illegal activity and now we have marine rangers helping patrol the coastline – I think we’ll see some great results,” said Mr Vatskalis.

Mr Vatskalis said the Territory is leading the way in tackling the problem of illegal fishing.

“We are employing people who are on the ground and who live and work in areas that are affected by illegal fishing activities.”