

*Draft Management Program for the Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) in the Northern Territory 2024-2034. Public Consultation Summary March 2024*

Public Consultation Summary – March 2024

Document title	Draft Management Program for the Saltwater Crocodile (<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>) in the Northern Territory 2024-2034. Public Consultation Summary March 2024 Public Consultation Summary – March 2024.
Contact details	Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security
Approved by	Executive Director Flora and Fauna
Date approved	27/03/24
Document review	N/A
TRM number	LRM2022/0108

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
0.1	6 March 2024	Mike Welch	Initial draft
0.2	7 March 2024	Glenn Edwards	Internal review
1.0	27 March 2024	Alaric Fisher	Final review and approval

Executive Summary

The **Management Program for Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) in the Northern Territory** (the Program) is a legal instrument under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*. Its purpose is to ensure the “protection, conservation, sustainable use, control and management” of the Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*).

The current Management Program has been in place since 2016. In late 2023, a revised Program was drafted by the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security. This revised Program builds on previous programs dating back to the mid 1980s, with the main objective of the current review being to ensure continuity of existing successful management, combined with targeted improvement in program implementation.

On 5 February 2024, the draft revised Program was released for public consultation by the Chief Minister and Minister for The Environment, Climate Change and Water Security. The public consultation period was 5 February to 1 March 2024.

The main conduit for public comment was the NT Government ‘Have Your Say’ website. Submissions were also invited from key stakeholder groups through targeted emails and through face-to-face meetings.

A total of 110 submissions were received, including:

- 97 via the ‘Have Your Say’ website (388 downloads of the draft Program document and 1039 visitors to the page)
- 13 via direct email to the Department.

A wide variety of views were expressed by the public, with the majority (58% of submissions) agreeing that the correct approach to management has been taken to date. In general, there was support for the management objectives stipulated in the draft Program and the proposed approaches to achieve these. There were several common themes pertaining to areas where respondents believed that either a different approach or more focus is required. Of these, the greatest number of respondents stated that there needs to be greater focus on public safety (approx. 19%) and that there should be a reduction in the crocodile population (approx. 25%). Some other key views included:

- Need to incorporate potential impacts of climate change on management of crocodiles
- There is too much focus on the crocodile industry, at the expense of public safety
- More focus on:
 - public education
 - the environmental/cultural values of crocodiles
- More resources should be allocated to crocodile management
- Majority support for:
 - Consideration of increases in wild egg harvest quotas
 - Aboriginal-run tourism hunting enterprises.

Feedback received on the draft revised Program was generally in support of the stated management objectives and proposed approaches to achieve these. Based on feedback, refinements have been made in drafting the final Program. The most significant refinements relate to the management approaches that will be used to achieve the objectives of maintaining the crocodile population at accepted densities (i.e. Objective 1) and in particular, management of problem crocodiles and reduction in densities in key areas (i.e. Objective 4).

In the final Program, a greater emphasis has been placed on the management of risk to public safety (Section 3.4), by more intensely managing crocodile populations in key areas where they pose a significant risk to human safety (e.g. near popular swimming areas) by:

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- Encouraging a higher level of live harvest to maximise the numbers of crocodiles taken within the ‘sustainable’ quota (i.e. currently only about half of this is utilised)
- Reviewing the approach to crocodile removal programs, particularly in relation to the location and extent of management zones, and the reduction of crocodile populations in key areas

Under the final Program, additional resources will also be allocated to enhancing crocodile detection and surveillance programs, through the development and deployment of innovative technologies.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

There are currently more than 100,000 Saltwater Crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*) in the Northern Territory (NT). Saltwater crocodiles are an NT icon, but also dangerous top-order predators. From 1971 to 2023, there have been 23 fatalities and 58 reported incidents resulting in injuries from Saltwater Crocodile attacks in the NT. More than 3000 crocodiles have been removed from the wild since 2012.

The crocodile industry is worth at least \$25 million to the NT economy and has potential for growth. Up to 90,000 crocodile eggs are harvested from the wild each year. The NT is globally renowned for its production of high quality crocodile skins. Crocodiles are also a significant drawcard for the NT's tourism industry and are part of the appeal for tourists to holiday in Top End.

1.2. Management Program

The Management Program for Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) in the Northern Territory is a legal instrument under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 (TPWC Act). Its purpose is to ensure the “protection, conservation, sustainable use, control and management” of Saltwater Crocodiles in accordance with Part 4, subdivision 3 of the TPWC Act. Management of Saltwater Crocodiles is governed by a complex array of interconnected Territory, National and International laws, regulations and policies. The Management Program provides a unified expression of all requirements to ensure public safety along with the sustainable and legal harvest and management and of the species, and provides a transparent approach to interacting with stakeholders.

The revised Program will set a 10-year direction for the future management of Saltwater Crocodiles in the NT. The following objectives were included in the draft revised Program released for public consultation in February 2024:

- Maintain this iconic keystone predator at accepted densities across its range within the Top End of the NT;
- Enable a robust and profitable crocodile industry through sustainable harvest that facilitates its economic growth and ensures that landholders receive real benefits from their continuing support for the conservation of the Saltwater Crocodile and its habitats;
- Enhance Aboriginal livelihoods through active participation in the crocodile industry and development of new, culturally appropriate economic opportunities;
- Enhance public safety through the identification and removal of problem Saltwater Crocodiles and reduction of densities in built-up areas, within a best practice risk management framework; and
- Improve community awareness of the risks posed by Saltwater Crocodiles and appreciation of their natural and cultural values, through appropriately targeted education programs.

2. Methodology

2.1. Drafting the Revised Management Program

Consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken during the drafting process, including the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, Commonwealth Government, Top End Land Councils and Aboriginal ranger groups, Charles Darwin University, Crocodile Farmers Association NT, NT Croc Research Club and other industry representatives. This included face-to-face meetings and presentations on key proposed changes to the previous (2016-2020) Program.

2.2. Public Consultation Process

2.2.1. Formal release

On 5 February 2024, the draft revised Program was formally released for public consultation at a media event by the Chief Minister and Minister for The Environment, Climate Change and Water Security. The public consultation period was 5 February to 1 March 2024.

An accompanying media brief included the following statements:

Quotes attributable to Chief Minister Eva Lawler

“When culling stopped in the Northern Territory in the 1970s we had around 3000 crocodiles. There is now estimated to be more than 100,000 crocodiles.

“We have current programs around population management, through egg collection and targeted removal and want to hear from you on whether you feel there is room for improvement.

“What this consultation work will tell us is your thoughts on how we can go about croc management, including croc culling in a safe, sustainable way.”

Quotes attributable to Minister Kate Worden:

“The management of crocodiles is important for public safety and the continued growth of lucrative industries like croc farming and tourism.

“We have removed more than 3000 crocodiles over the past 12 years, we want to hear from you whether we should remove more.

“We will consider all submissions made during this consultation period before the final Saltwater Crocodile Management Program is released.”

2.2.2. Online Submissions

Online submissions were managed via the NT Government’s ‘Have Your Say’ website (<https://haveyoursay.nt.gov.au/>), including a link to the draft Program document and a series of targeted questions on key areas where feedback was being sought. The identities of respondents and their details were only recorded if the respondent either identified themselves in their written comments and/or had registered on the website prior to undertaking the survey. This meant that all but a few responses were registered as ‘anonymous user’. Submissions were also accepted via direct correspondence (generally email) to the Department, with this option mainly being taken up by identified formal stakeholder groups.

2.2.3. Targeted Feedback

The following stakeholder groups were contacted directly to request feedback:

- Commonwealth wildlife trade regulators
- Kakadu National Park management
- Crocodile researchers
- Special interest groups, including Environment Centre for the NT and Amateur Fisherman's Association NT
- Local government associations, including regional councils
- Aboriginal land councils and ranger groups across the Top End
- Jumping crocodile tour operators
- Crocodile Farming Association NT and other industry operators

During the consultation period, face-to-face meetings were held with representatives of several of the jumping crocodile tour operators and Kakadu National Park management, to seek feedback on specific aspects of the Program.

3. Summary of Public Feedback

3.1. Response Rate

A total of 110 submissions were received, including:

- 97 via the 'Have Your Say' website (388 downloads of the draft Program document and 1039 visitors to the page)
- 13 via direct email to the Department

Summaries of views expressed by key stakeholders are provided in Table 1 and from the general public via the Have Your Say responses in Table 2.

Table 1. Summary of views expressed by key stakeholders

Stakeholder category	Name/organisation	Summary of views
Crocodile Researchers	Charles Darwin University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program reflects conservation, industry/economic, cultural and human safety objectives • Good integration of research, monitoring and management • There may be risks associated with allowing public opinion to determine crocodile management policy • The lack of fatal crocodile attacks over recent years in the NT is an achievement, particularly given that the NT has the largest saltwater crocodile population extant range-wide • Culling is unlikely to be effective in significantly reducing the risk of attacks on people • Reinforce the value of involving First Nations ranger groups in crocodile monitoring and management over the current rates • Support a strong effort for public consultation and communication about the underlying drivers of the plan • Economic incentive for trophy hunting could outweigh other priorities
	Centre for Crocodile Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach has been good to date • Additional resources should be provided to expand the current crocodile management team to allow further removal of animals from within management zone and those animals with a potential to cause harm to humans • Areas of high potential for human-crocodile interaction (e.g. Manton Dam) should have a better risk assessments completed and resources allocated for more active management/removal • Higher take of eggs would be acceptable if the science supports it • Crocodiles can be kept as pets, as long as animal welfare standards are met and strict permit conditions are imposed • Support for Aboriginal livelihoods via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) safari hunting, although potential for animal welfare issues B) ecotourism e.g. jumping crocodiles, in appropriate areas
Industry Organisations	Crocodile Farmers Association NT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of crocodile management in the NT, including establishment of farming industry • Current Program, like all those before it, is objective, science-based, incentivises conservation, and provides a level of certainty to the industry that allows ongoing investment – this unlikely to change • Program has been widely acclaimed internationally, as a model conservation and management program for a depleted predator population. A worldwide reputation for responsible conservation and management • Crocodile attacks are infrequent in the NT, largely due to the very high level of public awareness about crocodiles. • Strategic culling was part of the management actions taken before the first management program, has occurred through all subsequent management programs, and is a management option within the current management program.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife management is a multivariate science and decisions about strategic culling (and its likely impact on local and broader population status), should be made by qualified wildlife management experts employed for this specific purpose • The only way of reducing the wild population to levels where people can swim with a low risk of attack, is to reduce the wild population, throughout its range in the NT, to the level it was in 1971 • Extensive culling would have profound political effects and impact significantly on the international trade of crocodile skins • Any new initiatives such as increased harvesting/strategic culling, should be done responsibly in accordance with national and international expectations, needs to be “science-based” and would require serious investment in research and experimental management.
	<p>Tourism NT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crocodiles contribute significantly to the Top End visitor experiences; viewing crocodiles is a vital expectation or even a “must-see” for most Top End visitors. • Need to strike an appropriate balance between public safety measures and maintaining the desirability of the Northern Territory as a travel destination. • The management approach towards Saltwater Crocodiles in the NT presents a multifaceted opportunity for tourism development. • By balancing conservation efforts, public safety, and economic considerations, the program creates a conducive environment for sustainable wildlife tourism that benefits visitors and local communities. • Restrictions that limit the ability of Aboriginal groups to manage population on their Country should be redesigned in cooperation with Aboriginal groups to support cultural management and non-commercial harvesting. • Ongoing engagement with the wider community (in addition to listed stakeholders) should be an explicit principle, as should consultation with conservation groups and scientific experts. • The legal frameworks governing crocodile management and trade at the Territory, national, and international levels directly affect crocodile-related tourism activities in the Northern Territory. By ensuring compliance with Indigenous land rights, wildlife conservation regulations, and international trade agreements, tourism operators can promote responsible and sustainable tourism practices that benefit visitors and local communities while safeguarding crocodile populations and their habitats for future generations. • Responsible management of crocodile harvesting not only safeguards natural ecosystems and wildlife populations but also enhances the appeal of crocodile-related tourism experiences, contributing to the long-term success of the tourism industry in the NT. • Consideration needs to be given to the perception around hunting; Tourism NT is promoting the NT nationally and internationally as a nature eco-based destination. This positioning may, for some, create a conflict with the notion of having shooting parties sharing the same destination. • Jumping crocodile tours on the Adelaide River are among the most popular tourist activities in the Top End, as evidenced by TripAdvisor ratings. Given the value of these experiences to the visitor economy, any review of the practice of feeding wildlife in

		its natural habitat should incorporate consultation with Tourism NT, Tourism Top End, existing jumping croc tour operators and the broader tourism industry.
Jumping Crocodile Tour Operators*	Original Adelaide River Queen Jumping Crocodile Cruises Spectacular Jumping Crocodile Cruises Top Croc Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Territory can boast a world-famous natural attraction of apex predator animals in the wild • The risks to animals/people to date have been managed with almost no incidents over many years, although some operators continue to flout the permit requirements or continue to put animals or people at risk • Concerns regarding safety of vessels being used by some tour operators (i.e. size, load capacity, adequate freeboard/flotation) and unsafe practices in some cases (e.g. hand feeding of crocodiles) • Concerned with lack of enforcement of permit conditions, including unauthorised third parties operating on permits • The Management Program is unfairly biased against Adelaide River tour operators, as feeding activities are allowed elsewhere (e.g. wildlife parks and tourism facilities) • Concerns regarding interactions with crocodiles by other tourism operators outside the Adelaide river zone, by non-permitted operators e.g. ‘cowboy antics’ • Disagreement with some statements in Program regarding negative impacts of wildlife feeding tourism and safety risks • Be Crocwise messaging is endorsed and embedded in messaging to tourists on cruises, although this program needs to be strengthened in consultation with key stakeholders to ensure consistent messaging • The current permitting system allowing all operators within same area is not tenable and should be changed i.e. restricted within defined operating zones • Some operators record interactions with crocodiles on each trip, to ensure they are not fed too frequently • Support for the development of a tour operator’s ‘code of practice’, including suggestion by one operator that all operators should compulsorily attend a group meeting with management authorities at least annually • One operator suggested installation of propeller guards on tour boats to protect crocodiles from injury, which has been observed on several occasions • Crocodile egg collection operations in the zone tours may have negative effects e.g. more shy behaviour, less hatchlings and smaller animals to observe – suggest removal of these areas from egg collection permits
Other NGOs	RSPCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ‘Purpose’ of the program should include animal welfare and ‘ethical’ and ‘humane’ should be incorporated into the Objectives • More research should be undertaken to better understand the relationship between egg harvesting and natural losses • Disagree with transfer of annual egg harvest quotas between years/operators • A review should be conducted in relation to the demonstrated direct benefits of crocodile farming in terms of protecting saltwater crocodiles • The Program should describe the nature and extent of the threat posed by landholders that would otherwise occur without a profitable crocodile industry

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing engagement should include independent conservation and animal welfare experts • Details of the fate of each captured crocodile regarding euthanasia or transfer to a commercial farm or to a zoo/sanctuary should be publicly reported annually • The program should include the requirement that wild caught crocodiles (including problem crocodiles) be managed and housed to standards which mimic their natural environment as much as possible • An animal welfare audit tool should be developed for inspectors for farmed crocodiles (including crocodiles used for breeding) activities, using the ‘Five Domains Model’ • Should implement an animal welfare audits and inspection program, both by NT Government and by a suitably qualified independent assessor, to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Practice for the Humane Treatment of Wild and Farmed Australian Crocodiles • Tourism hunting and keeping of pet crocodiles are not supported • Research should be conducted to assess impacts on crocodiles and other species in proximity of ‘jumping crocodile’ tourist activities • Ensure that the development of a code of practice by jumping crocodile operators includes consultation with ecologists and animal welfare experts
	<p>Australian Veterinary Association</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with appropriate subject matter experts from the veterinary profession should be undertaken wherever animal welfare is being considered, which would also help contribute to maintaining social licence of programs and enterprises • To ensure welfare of crocodiles they should be handled using best practice or best welfare outcomes and in accordance with AVA policies and guidelines regarding a) harvesting and culling of native fauna and b) farming of native fauna • The design and operation of farming enterprises should be regulated by an appropriate government body to ensure appropriate habitat, feeding, transportation, killing practices and humane management of animals • Permitted crocodile farms must be mandated to develop and implement a site-specific biosecurity plan • The establishment of any hunting enterprises must take animal welfare into prime consideration • Development of a “Code of Practice” for jumping crocodile tour operations must include consultation with veterinary profession expertise

* Note these are the combined feedback of several operators and only feedback specific to jumping crocodile operations are presented – views on other aspects of Program are captured elsewhere

Table 2. Summary of public submissions via Have Your Say feedback

Key views	Number of respondents	Select examples of comments
Management approach is appropriate	47	<p><i>The Northern Territory's crocodile management plan is a monumental success story and a perfect balance between conservation and safety. There has not been a fatal attack in the Northern Territory since 2018, mostly thanks to effective management. If it isn't broken, there is no need to fix it.</i></p> <p><i>We should listen to the scientific experts in the field. Random members of the public with no scientific peer-reviewed background should not get a say in critical management programs.</i></p> <p><i>I think the current approach is a well-respected blend that values science based research into ecosystem health and the importance of allowing top predators to regulate systems especially after years of culling reduced Saltwater Crocodile populations to near zero.</i></p> <p><i>The return of the crocodile population from near extension should be held in high esteem and something we should be as a nation proud of.</i></p>
Reduce population	20	<p><i>Many more crocodiles should be removed from the wild. They are a dangerous, prehistoric predator that are not intended to co-exist with humans.</i></p> <p><i>Too many crocs. Need to cull them.</i></p> <p><i>A very strict management program take out problem crocodile and limited hunting. The local swimming holes like Litchfield Park and around Howard Springs so it provide safe places for Tourism.</i></p> <p><i>More needs to be done to reduce crocodile numbers in populated areas.</i></p>
Increase focus on human safety	16	<p><i>... significant changes should be made to the safety management plan for managing crocodiles in major people use areas. Specifically Darwin should have an extended buffer zone way beyond current limits and should be managed in a far more proactive way to reduce the numbers of all large migrating animals into the Darwin Harbour area.</i></p> <p><i>The Risk Management Framework does not set an ideal population target for crocodiles, nor does it set an ideal crocodile to human population ratio, the framework also does not provide a comprehensive risk assessment of crocodile and human interaction's. Without this information it is not possible for the government to have a successful management program as KPI's cannot appropriately be set.</i></p> <p><i>Lifestyle and NT liveability has likely been directly affected by crocodile populations...</i></p> <p><i>...not enough consideration is given to the lifestyle a significant portion of the local population and tourists want to experience safely.</i></p> <p><i>Suggest that a physical barrier (fence) be placed between Darwin River Dam and Manton Dam as Manton Dam is Darwin's only relatively safe area to conduct engine powered water sports.</i></p>

<p>Increase public education</p>	<p>10</p>	<p><i>I agree more education is required for being croc wise. Everyone should understand in the Top End you enter the water; that's a risk YOU'VE decided to take.</i></p> <p><i>More public education is needed</i></p> <p><i>...not enough education is out there, for eg a school would have to request a croc wise talk before one is done, I believe it should be mandatory</i></p> <p><i>Education is the key and with it we keep ourselves and crocodiles safe.</i></p>
<p>Too much industry focus</p>	<p>10</p>	<p><i>Crocodiles should not be valued for their commercial exploitation potential. They should be valued as an integral part of our biodiversity. Promoting crocodile fashion products will encourage poaching of endangered crocodile populations in the rest of the world.</i></p> <p><i>I think that there are certain people making a lot of money out of crocodile schemes and I am not sure how ethical it is.</i></p> <p><i>The exploitation of Saltwater Crocodiles in the wild has extreme risks to human safety. No amount of money that the crocodile industry brings to the NT should be compromising its safety.</i></p> <p><i>The focus of the objectives is commercial and profiteering with the only safety point placing the onus on the public.</i></p>
<p>Need to consider effects of climate change</p>	<p>7</p>	<p><i>Aboriginal ranger groups in remote areas are already worried about the effect of rising sea levels on croc breeding habitat, and the effect of rising ambient temperature on gender ratios in clutches of eggs. If environmental change brings about a decline in overall egg production and survivorship the egg harvest will need to be revisited.</i></p> <p><i>Long term management of crocodiles must take climate change into consideration alongside the cultural connection to crocodiles and their importance to the environment</i></p> <p><i>The impacts of climate change on crocodile populations and ecology are uncertain, and an additional principle should be added to ensure the future protection of crocodile populations under climate change.</i></p>
<p>More resources</p>	<p>5</p>	<p><i>... the NT government has a dedicated team which cover and remove all crocodiles in a 50km zone as well as random hotspots. However with the volume of people going to more bush areas, there is bound to be more interaction between croc and human which would be difficult for the croc management team to deal with, with their current resources</i></p> <p><i>Allocate more funds to NTG and Aboriginal Ranger groups for employment of more specialist crocodile management staff to keep crocodiles out of designated swimming areas.</i></p>
<p>More focus on environmental/cultural values</p>	<p>4</p>	<p><i>Crocodile conservation should focus on the continuing recovery of crocodile biomass and population structure, so that NT crocodile populations can resume their important ecological roles. To this end, restrictions that limit the ability of Aboriginal groups to manage population on their Country should be redesigned in cooperation with Aboriginal groups to support cultural management and non-commercial harvesting.</i></p>

		<p><i>Any management programs undertaken need to be balanced on not to interfere with changes to biodiversity of the species and that in any environment the un-natural removal of larger animals would eventually have an impact on long term sustainability of the species.</i></p> <p><i>Crocodiles do so much for the territory, they need to be respected. More research and education on crocodiles is needed regarding the movements and habits.</i></p>
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3.2. Policy Objectives

Within the draft revised Program and via the ‘Have Your Say’ website, the following statements and questions were posed in relation to the objectives, underlying principles and overall approach of the Program:

There are diverse drivers that present a significant challenge in policy setting for the management of Saltwater Crocodiles. Do you think the correct approach has been taken to date?

Are the overarching objectives listed in the Management Program appropriate and are we missing anything? Are there any key knowledge gaps?

Do the principles underpinning the objectives of the Management Program reflect the underlying approach the NT Government should commit to for the successful implementation of the Program?

A wide variety of views were expressed in response to these questions, with the majority (58%) agreeing that the correct approach has been taken to date. There were several common themes pertaining to areas where respondents believed that either a different approach or more focus is required (Table 2). Of these, the greatest number of respondents stated that there needs to be greater focus on public safety (approx. 19%) and that there should be a reduction the crocodile population (approx. 25%). Of the views that the crocodile population should be reduced, several stated that this should be in specific areas but the majority stated that the overall population needs to be reduced.

Other key views on required improvements included:

- Need to incorporate potential impacts of climate change on management of crocodiles
- Too much focus on the crocodile industry, at the expense of public safety
- More focus on:
 - public education
 - the environmental/cultural values of crocodiles
- More resources should be allocated to crocodile management

3.3. Program Scope

3.3.1. Farming Industry

Within the draft revised Program and via the Have Your Say survey, the following statements/questions were posed in relation to crocodile farming industry:

Management of Saltwater Crocodiles under this Management Program is intended to be fully consistent with the Wildlife Trade Management Plan (WTMP) under the EPBC Act. If there are present or future conflicts in these documents related to the management of the export value chain, then the WTMP would be taken as the definitive requirements for farm operations, including those related to the wild harvest.

Management of Saltwater Crocodiles is governed by a complex array of interconnected Territory, National and International laws, regulations and policies. This Management Program aims to provide a unified expression of all requirements to ensure safe, sustainable and legal management and use of the species and transparency of approach to stakeholders.

Saltwater Crocodile populations are relatively insensitive to the egg harvest levels, up until a certain point. The current quota is set conservatively. Should a higher offtake be considered noting there are checks and balances in the system?

Although relatively few in number, the responses were diverse in relation to the first two statements regarding the need to address and achieve a balance between the various requirements in the Management Program (Table 3).

The majority (68%) of respondents to the question on egg quotas stated that a higher quota should be considered (Table 3). Although noted in both the question and draft revised Program document that reduction in nesting via egg collection has less of an impact on the overall population than removal of live animals, many respondents appeared to be of the view that this would be an appropriate management strategy to control the population. There were a wide range in reasons that respondents gave for not supporting an increase in the egg harvest quota (Table 3).

3.3.2. Aboriginal Livelihoods

A key additional objective included in the revised Program is to enhance Aboriginal livelihoods through active participation in the crocodile industry and development of new, culturally appropriate economic opportunities. Within the draft revised Program and via the Have Your Say survey, the following question was posed in relation to a potential option to help meet this objective:

If Aboriginal-run tourism hunting enterprises could be established that were within clear sustainability thresholds and delivered real benefits to Aboriginal communities, should these be explored noting that major change in policy at the Commonwealth level may be required?

The majority (63%) of respondents were supportive of this management objective and it is noted that many of the negative responses were in opposition to the concept of trophy hunting, rather than not supporting Aboriginal livelihoods.

Table 3. Summary of responses in relation to potential increase in egg harvest quotas

Key views	Number of respondents	Select examples of comments
Support increased egg harvest	47	<p><i>Based on the fact a large number of baby crocodiles don't make it to adulthood I don't see that it would make much difference.</i></p> <p><i>Egg harvesting is not only required to reduce the numbers of the species, but it could also ensure a varied genetic allocation of animals for breeding at farms.</i></p> <p><i>Egg harvesting is more appropriate than the destruction of adult animals.</i></p> <p><i>If the research to date can support higher take, then i think that will be a proactive step in supporting economic development, and also increasing the commercial value of wild crocodiles which will help in the ongoing and never-ending calls for a cull.</i></p>
Do not support increased egg harvest	22	<p><i>The egg collections only benefit a select few and it is not a viable way to manage the saltwater crocodile population.</i></p> <p><i>The science has established that the current number represents offset mortality rather than additional mortality, and that aligns with the objectives of the Management Plan</i></p> <p><i>It is too difficult to monitor quotas across remote areas and with so few wildlife rangers. It is also too difficult to monitor crocodile numbers accurately across the different systems with so few scientists monitoring.</i></p> <p><i>Higher egg harvests should not be considered. This is particularly true since crocodile breeding ecology is vulnerable to changes in climate, meaning existing data on crocodile breeding success cannot be relied upon into the future.</i></p>
Other views	n/a	<p><i>Greater oversight of farming is required.</i></p> <p><i>The code and treatment of crocodiles should be improved - current practices are cruel.</i></p> <p><i>Having such a rigid rule set bound to CITES has the potential to create future conflicts.</i></p> <p><i>As usual, Commonwealth policies fail to take into account Territory conditions and it is inappropriate to protect such dangerous creatures.</i></p> <p><i>Crocodile meat for human consumption should be more readily available.</i></p>

Table 4. Summary of responses in relation to the development of Aboriginal-run hunting tourism

Key views	Number of respondents	Select examples of comments
Support Aboriginal-run tourism hunting enterprises	51	<p><i>This could become and economic enabler for Aboriginal owned enterprise to support sustainable hunting practices and create economic prosperity and careers for community.</i></p> <p><i>Yes but this should focus on the concept that one large alpha male should be allowed to develop in each area - rather than the general concept of safari hunting which is to take out that animal for a trophy.</i></p> <p><i>Yes as long as it goes into the Communities. Education, Housing, Ranger programs, Youth Programs and affordable shopping complexes in the Communities.</i></p> <p><i>This shouldn't even be a question just because there is some lengthy work required around legislation and working with the Commonwealth.</i></p>
Do not support Aboriginal-run tourism hunting enterprises	30	<p><i>No, the suggestion is both unethical and unsustainable not to mention how disgraceful it is using First Nations People as a front for a practice frowned upon by the rest of the world.</i></p> <p><i>The allowance of trophy hunting will tarnish the NT's image and could actually decrease the number of tourists arriving to see crocodiles.</i></p> <p><i>Benefits to Aboriginal people would be outweighed by the disadvantages. Issues with sharing of benefits on this small income scale over so many landowners to provide real benefit...</i></p> <p><i>No, I don't agree with 'killing' animals for fun.</i></p>

3.3.3. Other Issues

3.3.3.1. Jumping Crocodile Tourism

The potential risks associated with jumping crocodile tourism are discussed in the draft revised Program, in particular the potential risks to human safety and welfare of the animals. Although there were no specific questions on this issue posed as part of the consultation process, a small number of respondents made comment via the 'Have Your Say' website. An equal number of respondents supported/not supported this form of tourism.

Consultation with the Adelaide River jumping crocodile tour permit holders indicated that they are generally in support of the proposed management measures outlined in the draft revised Program. As detailed in Table 1, their main concerns mostly pertain to:

- Safety of vessels being used by some tour operators and/or risky behaviours
- Negative language used in the Program in relation to negative effects of wildlife feeding
- Insufficient enforcement of permit conditions
- Allowing all operators to conduct tours within same area

3.3.3.2. Pet Crocodiles

One of the crocodile management challenges highlighted in the draft revised Program is whether to continue to permit the keeping of Saltwater Crocodiles as pets. Within the draft revised Program and via the ‘Have Your Say’ website, the following question was posed in relation to this issue:

Permits have been allowed for individuals to keep live Saltwater Crocodiles in captivity (i.e. as pets). Due to crocodiles being dangerous animals and long lived, should taking/breeding and sale of Saltwater Crocodiles to enter the pet trade continue to be allowed?

An equal number of respondents supported/not supported the keeping of Saltwater Crocodiles as pets. Some examples of the views of respondents are provided in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of responses in relation to keeping Saltwater Crocodiles as pets

Key views	Number of respondents	Select examples of comments
Support keeping crocodiles as pets	41	<p><i>There should be a size limit eg 1 metre after which they need to be handed over to a crocodile farm or similar. They should not be released into the wild.</i></p> <p><i>If regulated, with purchase of breeding stock be regulated in such a way that nest robbing does not become target for illegal breeders.</i></p> <p><i>So long as individuals obtain a permit and are able to show that they have a facilities to maintain a crocodile in captivity.</i></p>
Do not support keeping crocodiles as pets	41	<p><i>They are dangerous and should not be household pets.</i></p> <p><i>Its dangerous and causes problems for the animal and others that might have to deal with it if it is abandoned.</i></p> <p><i>This is beyond irresponsible and makes the territory sounds comical that we are allowed to do this.</i></p>

4. Policy Considerations

Feedback received on the draft revised Program was generally in support of the stated management objectives and proposed approaches to achieve these. Based on feedback, refinements have been made in drafting the final Program. The most significant refinements relate to the management approaches that will be used to achieve the objectives of maintaining the crocodile population at accepted densities (i.e. Objective 1) and in particular, management of problem crocodiles and reduction in densities in key areas (i.e. Objective 4).

In the final Program, a greater emphasis has been placed on the management of risk to public safety (Section 3.4), by more intensely managing crocodile populations in key areas where they pose a significant risk to human safety (e.g. near popular swimming areas) by:

- Encouraging a higher level of live harvest to maximise the numbers of crocodiles taken within the ‘sustainable’ quota (i.e. currently only about half of this is utilised)
- Reviewing the approach to crocodile removal programs, particularly in relation to the location and extent of management zones, and the reduction of crocodile populations in key areas

In the final Program, additional resources will also be allocated to enhancing crocodile detection and surveillance programs, through the identification and development of innovative technologies.