



# The representation of Aboriginal health and wellbeing values within coastal marine and fisheries policies of the Northern Territory of Australia

Beau Cubillo<sup>1,2</sup> · Julie Brimblecombe<sup>1</sup> · Natasha Stacey<sup>3</sup>

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## Abstract

Aboriginal Peoples in the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia have customary connections to seafood for cultural practices, nourishment, livelihoods, and social connections which have been linked to health and wellbeing outcomes. Global and national entities have called for health and self-determination principles to be considered across all public policies to continue to improve health and wellbeing outcomes. Specifically, there is a growing acknowledgement that the fisheries sector plays a crucial role in enhancing and supporting Indigenous health and wellbeing. However, there is limited understanding of how this can be achieved. This study applies a content analysis of ten NT fisheries policy documents to investigate: (1) the representation of Indigenous values; (2) Indigenous health and wellbeing outcomes and (3) the positioning of self-determination within NT coastal, marine and fishery policies. Findings reveal that policy focus is primarily concerned with the conservation and management of environments and resources, fisheries, management and sustainability, and fisheries-based economic development. The consideration of health and wellbeing outcomes are not explicitly represented, including fisheries as a source of food production. This is concerning considering the contribution of seafood to Indigenous Peoples diets and food security. Despite these limitations, self-determination principles were represented within the policies by recognising Aboriginal aspirations through, for example social, cultural, and environmental outcomes.

**Keywords** Self-determination · Indigenous · Fisheries · Policy · Aboriginal · Food

## Positionality statement

This is a qualitative research study by nature and in aiming for a level of credibility it is important to acknowledge how subjectivity has shaped and been intertwined into the design, inquiry lens and the communication of the research findings (Olmos-Vega et al. 2022). To achieve this, the authors integrated reflexivity throughout to self-address, critique, appraise and evaluate their influences on the research (Olmos-Vega et al. 2022). First, the authors acknowledge their positionality. The lead author is an accepted member of the Larrakia and Wadjigan coastal Aboriginal Peoples groups from the Northern Territory (NT) of Australia. The co-authors of this study are long-standing NT citizens and non-Indigenous with experience in strength-based research with Aboriginal communities. The authors have knowledge and experience in nutrition, food security, small-scale fisheries, Indigenous fishing, and qualitative and Indigenous

✉ Beau Cubillo  
Beau.cubillo@monash.edu

Julie Brimblecombe  
Julie.brimblecombe@monash.edu

Natasha Stacey  
natasha.stacey@cdu.edu.au

- <sup>1</sup> Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food be active sleep eat (base) facility, School of Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences level 1, Monash University, 264 Ferntree gully road Notting Hill Victoria, 3168 Melbourne, Australia
- <sup>2</sup> Global Centre for Preventive Health and Nutrition, Institute for Health Transformation, Faculty of Health, Deakin University, Geelong, VIC, Australia
- <sup>3</sup> Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods, Charles Darwin University, Ellengowan Drive, 0810 Brinkin, NT, Australia

methodologies. The authors have knowledge of the political and historical contexts in the NT concerning fisheries, food security and Indigenous social and cultural values. However, we acknowledge our limited legal and policy knowledge in regards to self-determination, governance and Aboriginal land and water rights which are relevant to the political and historical contexts of the study reported herein.

## Introduction

Throughout this article, the term Indigenous People refers to the broad global community that represents culturally, socially, politically and linguistically diverse groups of people who have maintained a connection to their ancestral lands, waterways and resources for an extended period of time (Durie 2004; Martinez Cobo 1982). The term ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ is used herein to explicitly refer to Indigenous Peoples of Australia (AIATSIS 2021). It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People like other Indigenous populations continue to be impacted by colonisation and systemic policies that displace their ability to govern their interest (Dawson et al. 2021; Moreton-Robinson 2015; UN 2007). The lasting structural legacies of colonisation within Australia have been linked to health and wellbeing disparities and inequalities, which have been well documented (Dawson et al. 2021; Sherwood 2013; Wolfe 2006). To address such disparities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Peoples, the Australian Government has invested in initiatives and programs that specifically focus on measurable health, wellbeing, and social outcomes (Australian Government 2022b; Dawson et al. 2021; Lowitja Institute 2022). Most notable is the 2008 National Indigenous Reform Agreement between Governments to Close-The-Gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inequality through improvement in life expectancy, child mortality as well as social outcomes such as employment and education (Australian Government 2009). The 2020 National Agreement on Closing-The-Gap includes updated outcomes related to physical and mental health, child mortality and development, education, employment, housing, justice, safety and land and water rights (Australian Government 2020a, 2022b). Despite significant Government investment in the Close-The-Gap initiative, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have not experienced health and wellbeing equality (Australian Government 2022b; Dawson et al. 2021; Lowitja Institute 2022).

A critical perspective is the outcome measures of health and wellbeing that have contributed to informing policies and initiatives such as Close-The-Gap have been based on a deficit discourse (Fforde et al. 2013). This has traditionally focused on individual and community disadvantage rather

than structural inequities such as systemic racism and lack of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in policy decision-making (Altman 2016; Bell and Green 2016; Cox et al. 2022; Dawson et al. 2021). Deficit-focused approaches have to a degree been associated with improvements in some health and wellbeing outcomes, however, these approaches have often not aligned with collective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community values but rather with state- and national-orientated ones (Evason 2016; Howard-Wagner 2018; Howard-Wagner et al. 2018). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, health is often a collective concept that includes values beyond the biomedical model of health that focuses on the absence of disease (Anderson et al. 2016; Pulver et al. 2010; Salmon et al. 2019). These values may include connection to country and kinship, expression of social and cultural values and the interconnectedness between them (Gee et al. 2014; Verbunt et al. 2021). These values cross sectors and underpin health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The absence of these values within policies impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has been described as a basic form of assimilation (Dodson et al. 2007; Marks 2008).

Within academic and political discourses in Australia there is however a positive growing recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples values, rights and interests and the need to consider these within strategies and plans to improve health outcomes. This includes national and local investments to address the inequities through consideration of self-determination principles to position Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices at the centre of the discussion (Altman 2013; Australian Government, 2022ba; Jentoft et al. 2018). Importantly, this has been highlighted in the 2022 Lowitja Closing-The-Gap Campaign Report which states “*To improve the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, large-scale systemic reform and a paradigm shift in policy design and delivery is necessary to truly empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*” (Lowitja Institute 2022; p. 42). This is in alignment with global entities like the United Nations (UN) who have urged Governments to adopt self-determination principles and to address inequities through structural empowerment of Indigenous representation to have greater control over issues that they decide impact their lives; which Australia has to date poorly implemented (Aldred et al. 2021; Thomas et al. 2014; UN 2007).

Within Australia the national agreement on Closing-The-Gap 2022, for the first time, sets a pathway to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination. It includes representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as parties to the agreement. It has broadened the targets to include priority reform that can measure

change in how Governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and how Governments progress partnership (Australian Government 2020a, 2022b). Priority reform one in the National agreement to Closing-The-Gap, for example notes the commitment of “...all parties to building and strengthening structures that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to share decision-making authority with Governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress against Closing-The-Gap” (Australian Government 2020b; p. 5). This shift in approach is fundamental to moving away from deficit approaches to one which contributes to strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples interests. From this, it could be expected that progress towards Closing-The-Gap targets would see structures for self-determination reflected in a wide suite of Government policies and consequently an improvement in the underlying determinants of nutrition, health, wellbeing including social outcomes.

In addition to considering self-determination principles within Australian Government strategies such as Closing-The-Gap it is argued in this article that one step further is needed, which considers how sectors outside of health and service delivery can contribute to improving health disparities in Australia. Internationally it has been recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) that industry and Government sectors such as agriculture, transport, and the economy have a role in potentially improving health through broader policy initiatives beyond the typical primary healthcare service delivery and individual-level focus of health policy, herein referred to as ‘Health In-All-Policies’ (WHO 2019). Importantly Mundo et al. (2019) have identified that there is no standardised implementation or guidance structure available of how health can be considered and integrated into cross-sectoral policy within countries for improved self-determination (Davis 2013; Greer et al., 2022; Rademaker & Rowse., 2020; Guglielmin et al., 2018). In this article it is identified that an area of interest where a potential cross-sectoral and integrated policy approach could be expected with clear structures for self-determination and implementation is coastal, marine and fisheries sectors (FAO 2014; Warrior et al. 2022).

Coastal and marine habitats and resources such as seafood are fundamental to humans. They are part of Indigenous and non-Indigenous food systems and directly provide for the nourishment and food security of humans (FAO 2014, 2021; Fisher et al. 2017). In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain connections to their coastal and marine Country for their livelihoods and wellbeing which includes accessing seafood (Russell et al. 2015; Smyth et al. 2018). While it is recognised that aquatic plants and freshwater species are also essential for Indigenous Peoples nourishment and livelihoods, this study

herein refers to seafood as explicitly marine aquatic animals including shellfish, mollusc, fish, mammals, cephalopods, and crustaceans. Commercial fisheries sectors including Indigenous fisheries within Australia often operate within these coastal and marine areas in parallel to customary fisheries. All fisheries are important contributors to food security for the global and national Indigenous coastal communities and contribute positively to the quality of diets by increasing the availability and consumption of micro-nutrients, fatty acids, and protein-rich seafood (Cisneros-Montemayor et al. 2016; FAO 2014; Thilsted et al. 2016). There is rising global policy interest in the need to further strengthen Indigenous food systems with key papers such as the FAO-led White/Wiphala Paper highlighting the contribution of Indigenous Peoples food systems (FAO 2021). Despite the broad and cross-sector benefits of seafood, a key issue currently, identified by Arthur et al. (2022) and Koehn et al. (2022), is that policy framing within fisheries, particularly small-scale fisheries, has favoured commercialisation and overlooked Indigenous self-determination and other benefits such as nutrition and food security as a key contributor in the food value chain (Lepofsky & Caldwell., 2013). There is a significant opportunity to not only enhance Indigenous self-determination principles but contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes. However, to our knowledge, no research has been conducted to examine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples values related to health and wellbeing within coastal, marine and fisheries policies at Commonwealth Australian, State or Northern Territory level.

The study reported herein aimed to investigate how health and wellbeing values are conceptualised and represented in current coastal, marine and fisheries policies in Australia’s NT region from an Indigenous perspective. Policy within this study is broadly defined as “*a plan of action to influence and determine decisions, actions or other matters*” and is communicated in this study as strategies and plans (Zacharias and Ardron 2020; p. 93). This study focuses on understanding the discourse used in a suite of Government, industry, Indigenous organisation and agency policies concerning self-determination and Aboriginal community representation of values. Taking this into consideration, an Indigenous Knowledges inquiry lens was applied to the design, framing and positioning of this study to empower Aboriginal values and challenge dominant Eurocentric structures within the coastal, marine and fisheries sector while also aiming to advocate for policies that consider these broader constructs (Keikelame and Swartz 2019; Reid et al. 2021; Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021). In the following sections, we provide context to the study and describe the policies analysed. We then apply a qualitative content analysis to these policies with an Indigenous

Knowledges lens that aims to contribute to understanding the need for decolonial process needed within fisheries (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Smith, 2021; Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). This is followed by presenting the characteristics of 10 policies and eight main concepts of Aboriginal values of health and wellbeing identified through the content analysis. This analysis leads to the identification of recommendations for future policy and research that seek to strengthen Indigenous self-determination and health and wellbeing outcomes.

## Context: Aboriginal peoples in the Northern Territory

The NT is an Australian federal territory with an area of 1.42 million km<sup>2</sup> and a coastline extending for 10,953 km with coastal waters covering 72,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Northern Territory Government 2019a). According to the 2021 national census, the population of the NT is 233,000, with 26.3% or 61,000 of the population identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ABS 2022). Despite the NT having a level of self-government, it is still subjected to a degree of Australian Commonwealth legislative power, including over some but not all resources - land, marine protected areas and national parks (Australia Government, 2007). The Australian Government enacted legislation in 1976 resulting in the Aboriginal Land Rights Northern Territory Act (Australian Government, 1976). This enabled land claim processes for Aboriginal Peoples who are Traditional Owners, which in this paper refers to Aboriginal Peoples who have a long-standing pre-colonial and continuing customary connection to land with inherent rights and responsibilities (ALRC, 2014; Bock et al. 2022). Significant for this study is that a landmark reform in 2008 resulted in the Commonwealth of Australia high court decision of *Blue Mud Bay* [Northern Territory of Australia v Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust [2008] HCA 29 (30 July 2008)], which has enabled Aboriginal Peoples to have exclusive access rights to not only land but Sea Country (Altman 2013; Jentoft et al. 2018). Here, Sea Country broadly refers to the marine intertidal zone stretching from the high to the low water mark. This decision resulted in Aboriginal coastal groups having control of 85% of the NT's 10,953 km coast line or intertidal waters (Altman 2013; Helmuth 2016; Jentoft et al. 2018). This is a significant development for Aboriginal Peoples in the NT, providing increased community and Traditional Owners control over their Sea Country. In December 2022, the NT Fisheries Act [1988] was amended to recognise Aboriginal ownership of the intertidal zone (Northern Territory Government, 2022b). Other initiatives arising from the *Blue Mud Bay* decision, following the recognition of rights in the intertidal zone among Government and Aboriginal stakeholders,

include a set of agreed actions for stakeholders to support the establishment of an Aboriginal Sea Company and the development of small-scale commercial Aboriginal fisheries via new provisions for Aboriginal Coastal Licenses [Fisheries regulations 1992] (Northern Territory Government, 2021). These licenses have enabled Aboriginal Traditional Owners to establish pathways to economic development and support cultural obligations while residing on Country through the access and sales of restricted fish species within their communities. This greater recognition of opportunities for growing the Indigenous commercial fisheries sector following low levels of participation in commercially orientated fisheries (the exception is the Torres Strait Islands) has resulted in an increased need to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sectors through research and development investments (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020a; Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation 2022). The broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs/representative bodies and agencies have also contributed to developing and advocating for national, state and territory level coastal, marine fishing and land access rights, for self-determination for economic development around Australia. Commonwealth-supported entities such as the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) and The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) have specialised Indigenous reference steering committees. These entities recognise Indigenous fisheries and Sea Country as a means to economic, social, and environmental outcomes and values including self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020a; Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation 2020).

## Methods

### Positioning Indigenous knowledges within fisheries

As a settler colonial state, Australia has enacted policies at various historical stages that have oppressed, assimilated, and negatively impacted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's lives (Moreton-Robinson 2015; Wolfe 2006). This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' ability to engage and utilise traditional systems of knowledge to govern and represent their interest, including governance of coastal and marine Sea Country (Fleming et al. 2015; Lalancette and Mulrennan 2022; Reid et al. 2021). An Indigenous Knowledges lens was applied to this study to enable the researchers to position Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing at the centre of the study to unsettle dominant colonial paradigms and the validity of knowledge rooted in Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies

(Gerlach 2018; Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021). Historically these dominant theoretical positionings are particularly evident in fisheries and nutritional disciplines among others (Palermo et al. 2021; Reid et al. 2021; Wilson et al. 2020). This inquiry lens was implemented by acknowledging the Aboriginal Peoples connection to their knowledge systems and accepting that this may not align with dominant societal or theoretical views (Smith 2021; Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021). While it is generally accepted that a decolonial state will never occur this study takes the position that a space within policy needs to be carved that allows for Indigenous Knowledges expression to be considered and valued beyond a metaphor and incorporated (Tuck and Yang 2012). This process included the consideration and respect for Aboriginal self-determination and critical reflexivity by the authors to ground the research within the context of Aboriginal Northern Territory interest. The study also aligns with the need to provide positive transformative approaches towards empowering Aboriginal values in coastal, marine and fishery policies for impact on health and wellbeing outcomes and self-determination within an Indigenous lens for stronger food provisions (Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021). To challenge existing structural policies unsettling methods and theoretical inquiry lens' are needed. Indigenous Knowledge systems, and by extension the practices and customs linked to the interactions with the food system, has been often reduced through a lens that has viewed Indigenous ways as "primitive" partially due to the interconnectedness with the natural world (Nakata 2002. P. 281). Those tangible and intangible values that connect Indigenous Peoples to their Indigenous food systems has not only provided nourishment for centuries but connected Indigenous coastal people to their identity. This includes through values such as access to Country, culture, and social connections where a recent research study in the NT has explicitly linked these values to seafood and health and wellbeing outcomes (Cubillo et al. 2023). While from a Western lens these values may be separate from health and wellbeing, they are central to health, wellbeing, and social outcomes for Indigenous communities and People (Gee et al, 2014). Due to the interconnected and holistic way of how Indigenous Peoples conceptualise health and wellbeing, when considering practical implementation within coastal, marine and fisheries policies, an integrated approach is needed that considers a broad range of values linked to the context (Barber., 2010), as demonstrated within the findings of this study.

While personal reflexivity was addressed in the positionality section at the beginning of this paper, it is also imperative to understand the authors' personal influences on the methodological and contextual positioning of the research (Olmos-Vega et al. 2022). The lead author is an Aboriginal member of several coastal Aboriginal communities in

the NT with inherent connections to coastal Sea Country and seafood. These communities are among those to have been impacted by the Aboriginal land rights acts, including the Blue Mud Bay high court decision. This experience has shaped the interactions and philosophical orientations of the lead researcher; therefore, it is assumed this cannot be separated from the design, analysis, and communication, rather this has been applied as a strength of the research through contextual and political experiences (Olmos-Vega et al. 2022; Lindstrom 2022; Wilson., 2001).

### Sampling and search strategy

The policies included in this study are current Australian Government, NT Government and/or key industry or Indigenous stakeholder coastal, marine and/or fishery strategies and/or plans that impact NT coastal Aboriginal Peoples connection to Sea Country and seafood. Australian Government policies were included as Indigenous affairs are considered an Australian Government responsibility for the NT of Australia (NIAA 2022). Therefore, the National Indigenous Australians Agency is responsible for implementing Australian Government policies and programs to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's lives (NIAA 2022). In addition, as seafood is a public resource, the Australian Government manages on behalf of all Australians, recreational, commercial, and Indigenous fisheries under the Fisheries Management Act [1991] (Australian Government, 1991).

The policies were identified through Google search (Godin et al. 2015). The search was conducted in September 2022. Google's advanced search feature was used to search for policies/plans published online in 'Australia'. The terms 'Indigenous' OR 'Aboriginal' AND 'Marine', 'Fish\*', 'Seafood', 'Coastal' AND 'Strategy' OR 'Strategic' 'Plan' AND 'Northern Territory OR 'Commonwealth OR Governments' were applied to the 'any of these words' function in Google. The policies/plans identified as meeting the criteria were downloaded and policy details entered into a purpose-built Microsoft Excel table for further screening. In addition, email contact was made with six key stakeholders involved in the marine/fisheries sector in the NT and Commonwealth of Australia to enquire about additional policies that fit the criteria to ensure no policies were missed. Key stakeholders were identified through snowballing through the first and senior authors' (BC, NS) knowledge of key people and their positions within key organisations; all six responded on contact. This included contacts from the NT Government Departments of Industry, Tourism and Trade and Chief Minister and Cabinet; Fisheries Research Development Corporation: a statutory corporation under the Primary Industries Research and Development Act [1989] and

responsible to the Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; NT Seafood Council; North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance; and, Aboriginal Sea Company.

### Data analysis: Inductive coding

The first step of the content analysis method is the preparation step which involved the lead researcher (BC) simultaneously establishing a unit of analysis to assess Indigenous values of nutrition, health and wellbeing while reading and comprehending the policies (Cavanagh 1997; Elo and Kyngäs 2008). As the study aimed to investigate the latent content, the unit of analysis was a paragraph to ensure enough content was captured to reflect the context, this was followed by assigning a condensed code to relevant sections (Graneheim and Lundman 2004). The following preparation phase was to make sense of and become familiar with the identified policies (Elo and Kyngäs 2008). A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was created to assist with this familiarisation process with the following data extracted for each policy document: name, the organisation that created the policy, date, audience of the policy, Indigenous consultation, and purpose. The following content analysis step was data organisation (Elo and Kyngäs 2008). As the approach to coding was inductive, the documents were open-coded by the lead researcher (BC), and 10% of the documents were coded independently and cross-checked with the senior researcher (JB), within qualitative software program N-Vivo. This phase resulted in 47 initial codes identified. The codes were then collapsed into categories and organised under higher-order headings. The lead author completed this in discussion with the two co-authors (Elo and Kyngäs 2008). The initial 47 codes were grouped into 19 broader categories, further described in the results, and presented within 8 main concepts (see Online Resource 1: Codebook, which demonstrates the higher-level ordering of the codes, categories, and linkage to the main concepts extracted from N-Vivo). The abstraction step of this data analysis involved grouping the categories by characteristics that reflected the content (Elo et al. 2014; Elo and Kyngäs 2008). The final data analysis step involved the category groups being organised into main overarching concepts created by the lead researcher to answer the research questions. It must be noted that some categories overlap due to the lack of specific detail and often broad statements within the provided policies such as reference to culture, customary practices and economic development.

### Search results: Included and excluded

The Google search resulted in 14 policies and 22 were further identified from the six key stakeholders. Of the 36 potential policies identified, 13 were excluded as duplicates and 13 were excluded with reasons given such as local Government level policy covering one specific location, focus not on coastal, marine or fisheries impacting Indigenous Peoples, and/or not a strategy or plan. The following ten policies were selected for analysis:

- Northern Land Council: Aboriginal Sea Company Draft Strategic Plan (Aboriginal Sea Company LTD, ND).
- Australian Government, Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation: Northern Australia Regional Indigenous Land and Sea Strategy 2019–2022 (Australian Government 2019).
- Australian Government: National Fisheries Plan, Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment 2022–2030 (Australian Government 2022c).
- Fisheries Research Development Corporation: Research and Development Plan 2020–2025 (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020a).
- Fisheries Research Development Corporation: Annual Prerational Plan 2022–23 (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2022).
- Northern Territory Government: Coastal and Marine Management Strategy 2019–2029 (Northern Territory Government 2019a).
- Northern Territory Government: Department of Primary Industry and Resources Fisheries Division Strategic Plan 2019–2022 (Northern Territory Government 2019b).
- Northern Territory Government: Land and Sea Action Plan 2022–2024 (Northern Territory Government 2022a).
- Northern Territory Seafood Council: Strategic Plan 2018–2023 (Northern Territory seafood council 2018).
- Fisheries Research Development Corporation: Shaping Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020–2025 R&D Plan (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020b).

## Results

### Policy characteristics and key purpose

The coastal, marine and fisheries policies reviewed in this study reflect a wide range of priorities targeted at varying levels of Government and industry. Several similarities

and differences were identified across the documents such as economic development, self-determination, and governance of fisheries sectors with only a subset of policies explicitly focused on Indigenous values and interest and only one policy explicitly mentioning the nutritional, health, and wellbeing contributions of seafood. Of the ten policies reviewed, as shown in Table 1: Policy purpose summary, the dates cover a period from 2018 to 2029. Three of the ten policies belonged to the NT Government, two to the

Australian Government (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and ILSC), three to Australian Government Commonwealth agencies (FRDC, reporting to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) and two to industry stakeholders (Northern Land Council: Aboriginal Seafood Company and the Northern Territory Seafood Council).

One policy's purpose was to develop aquatic resources through sustainable development, utilisation and protection of aquatic resources (Northern Territory Government

**Table 1** Policy purpose summary

Policy	Purpose
Aboriginal Sea Company Draft Strategic Plan	The plan aims to establish long-term success of embedding the pillars of the Aboriginal Seafood Council and taking back control of fisheries management. A key feature indicated is that the Aboriginal Sea Company has consulted stakeholders and incorporated their aspirations and desires.
Australian Governments Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation: Northern Australia Regional Indigenous Land and Sea Strategy 2019–2022	The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ISLC) aims to assist Indigenous Australians in acquiring land and water-related rights and managing Indigenous-held land and sea. This strategy details a framework for how the ISLC wants to deliver its mandate to achieve economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits for Indigenous Peoples.
Australian Governments: National Fisheries Plan, Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment 2022–2030	The National Fisheries Plan aims to ensure the future of fishing, aquaculture, and seafood as a shared vision that aligns with the Government's strategic planning, prioritisation, and investment. The plan further aims to provide a framework and vision for the sustainable growth and development of Australia's fishing and aquaculture, and seafood community for the future.
Fisheries Research Development Corporation Research and Development Plan 2020–2025	Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC) is a national thought leader in shaping fishing and aquaculture in Australia through investment, management, research, and development. This strategy highlights the plan for capacity building, shaping culture, building relationships, and establishing shared principles and values with the community over the next five years.
Fisheries Research Development Corporation: Annual Preliminary Plan 2022–23	This plan aims to provide an annual outline and detail of how the FRDC meets Australia's vision of fishing and aquaculture by supporting the collaborative, vibrant fishing and aquaculture community and creating various benefits from aquatic resources.
Northern Territory Governments: Coastal and Marine Management Strategy 2019–2029	This 10-year strategy highlights a vision and outline of how to provide, protect and maintain healthy, productive coasts and seas. This incorporates recognition of the cultural significance of marine resources and their contribution to lifestyle and livelihoods. In addition, the strategy includes recognition of the rights and interests of Aboriginal landowners, support management, and conservation of coastal and marine areas, including the natural resources and sustainable industry for the benefit of the NT economy.
Northern Territory Governments: Department of Primary Industry and Resources Fisheries Division Strategic Plan 2019–2022	This strategy guides actions to achieve sustainable development, utilisation, and protection of aquatic resources. The intention is to provide clarity around the medium-term business focus of the Fisheries Division. In addition, the strategy identifies actions to build and retain the capacity and skills of NT fishing.
Northern Territory Land and Sea Action Plan 2022–2024	The strategy focuses on the land and sea ownership and delivery of Aboriginal Peoples economic and social aspirations in the NT.
Northern Territory Seafood Council Strategic Plan 2018–2023	The key focus of this strategy is to restore commercial rights and position the industry to regain social license to operate. This is actioned by implementing key programmes involving identifying risks and opportunities for the NT Seafood Council and inshore fisheries to secure access, sustainable fishing, and increased market value.
Fisheries Research Development Corporation: Shaping Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020–2025 R&D Plan	This strategy summarises the historical performances of commercial wild catch, aquaculture, Indigenous, recreational, and post-harvest fishery sectors using a situational analysis to inform future FRDC vision.

2019b). Similarly, an Australian Government policy focused on the sustainable growth of the fisheries, aquaculture and seafood sectors (Australian Government 2022c). The NT Government's Coastal and Marine Management strategy focused primarily on coastal land and sea management (Northern Territory Government 2019a). Two policies were focused on acquiring land and marine assets, rights and their management by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (Australian Government 2019; Northern Territory Government 2022a). One focused on developing Aboriginal fishing and aquaculture businesses, assets and enterprises through the Aboriginal Land and Sea Country (Aboriginal Sea Company LTD, ND). The NT Seafood Council policy also focused on promoting and developing the NT industry; however, it was not explicitly focused on Aboriginal interests (Northern Territory seafood council 2018). Three policies aimed to promote knowledge facilitation, collaboration, research and innovation amongst the Indigenous recreational and commercial fisheries sectors to shape Australian fisheries for the future (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020a, 2020b, 2022).

### Representation of Aboriginal values connected to health and wellbeing outcomes and the positioning of self-determination within policies

A total of Eight 'main concepts' were constructed through the process of inductive content analysis of the ten policies documents, these are as follows:

- Aboriginal Peoples and community aspirations.
- Aboriginal self-determination and governance.
- Aboriginal Knowledge.
- Conflict in fisheries, challenges for Aboriginal Peoples.
- Closing-The-Gap on Aboriginal inequity.
- Coastal Aboriginal identity.
- Economic development with Aboriginal Peoples.
- Aboriginal nutrition, health and wellbeing.

### Aboriginal peoples and community aspirations

The Aboriginal Peoples and community aspirations concept of fisheries development was created from the "social, values, aspirations" categories. It captures the discourse within the policies that considers and reflects Aboriginal aspirations and interest. Several policies explicitly refer to Aboriginal Peoples and their communities' aspirations and values. Aboriginal Sea Company highlighted the guiding principles of their key pillars, which as to build "Trust, Integrity, and Leadership" with the community and stakeholders through "Respectful relationships - listening to

other voices" (Aboriginal Sea Company LTD, ND, p. 3). Other policies aligned their visions and objectives to incorporate Aboriginal aspiration and interest, such as "the action plan vision is to ensure land and sea ownership delivers on the economic and social aspirations of Aboriginal Territorians" (Northern Territory Government 2022a; p. 4). Another policy highlighted the need to engage Aboriginal communities to reflect their aspirations: "Undertake participatory planning with Traditional Owners to identify aspirations and programs that deliver economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits" (Northern Territory Government 2019a; p. 12). Overall, Aboriginal aspirations largely particularly though social connections to their coastal and marine areas and fisheries are represented in policies through text in policy objectives and outcomes.

### Aboriginal Self-determination and governance

Aboriginal Self-determination and Governance concepts incorporate "self-determination" and "Governance" representations. Throughout the policies, self-determination is referred to in different ways that reflect different contexts, including both explicit and latent representation (underlying assumptions identified through patterns or ideas). Explicit representation of self-determination in the policy text is in reference to the decision-making processes. Latent representation includes terms such as "Engagement" and "Governance" which were defined through terms such as "rights", "land councils", "management", and "licenses", and is focused on capacity building and partnerships with communities. A reoccurring theme identified across the policies is self-determination reflected as a means to achieve financial independence through fishing enterprises and increased land and water rights and ownership. One such example of this is: "The creation of fishing and aquaculture business opportunities that align with cultural values has the potential to be a powerful promoter of Indigenous self-determination through financial independence" (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020b; p. 12). In conjunction with financial independence as a means of self-determination, the policy discourse primarily represents self-determination through a socioeconomic lens, with associated language terms such as "management", "partnership", "capacity building" and the beneficiaries described as "Traditional Owners", and "stakeholders". There is also a general focus on Aboriginal "rights", primarily concerned with land and water rights and ownership, and the association of this with self-determination. For example: "Recognising the rights and interests of Aboriginal Territorians in the management of the use and access to the coastal and marine environment, including its natural resources and the maintenance of customary practices, is essential to



achieving their economic and social aspirations” (Northern Territory Government 2019a; p. 4). The Commonwealth of Australia also describes their role “in Aboriginal land and sea ownership in the Northern Territory through its administration of the Land Rights Act and the Native Title Act” (Northern Territory Government 2022a; p. 5). These two Acts are vehicles by which Aboriginal Peoples have recognition and legal authority to exercise their different bundles of rights, and thereby, self-determination.

## Aboriginal Knowledge

The concept of Aboriginal Knowledge was constructed with categories of “Intergenerational knowledge transfer” and “traditional fisher knowledge”. This is an important concept to consider when describing Aboriginal values as the traditional knowledge systems represent Aboriginal ways of interacting with the world and, therefore, values (Butler et al. 2019; Gee et al. 2014; Martin and Mirraboopu 2003). Coastal and marine Sea Countries are described in the policies as providing a means for intergenerational knowledge transfer and connection to seafood. For example: “The sea is still an important part of the Indigenous culture; it is where families can have fun together; for a source of food and the continuation of tradition and knowledge” (Aboriginal Sea Company LTD, ND).

Aboriginal Knowledge Systems are highly contextual and have traditionally governed community fishing practices. This “traditional fisher knowledge” representation within the policies includes “Traditional fishers’ knowledge is increasingly being recognised as an invaluable resource” (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020b; p. 12) and “Fishing regulations were part of the culture and dictated when you can fish and where you can fish” (Aboriginal Sea Company LTD, ND, p. 3). The general discourse of these policies is shown to represent Aboriginal Knowledge as a means for improving or recognising the management of coastal and marine Sea Country and fishing practices for and by Aboriginal coastal Peoples. Aboriginal Knowledge is also represented in the policies as being recognised alongside Eurocentric Knowledge of marine resources and their management. These two systems are integrated within the text to improve Aboriginal connection and management to coastal, marine and fisheries.

## Conflict in fisheries, challenges for Aboriginal peoples

Aboriginal fishing and coastal and marine Sea Country access remain an important part of People’s identity through connection to culture and country. The concept of, Conflict in fisheries, challenges for Aboriginal Peoples, was created

from two categories highlighting Aboriginal People’s relationship to fisheries within coastal and marine management policies. The first category, “Challenges”, describes the challenge to progressing “economic development” in Aboriginal managed country, and the challenges to “management of the coastal zone and reduce conflict among user groups” (Northern Territory Government 2019a; p. 4). The second category, “non-commercial”, refers to fisheries for Aboriginal Peoples as customary and cultural fisheries, in addition to the conflict with the recreational and commercial fishing sectors (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020b; Northern Territory Government 2019a). The dominant policy discourse identified represents Aboriginal coastal and marine areas as a commodity for economic development which Aboriginal Peoples could benefit from through income and employment, but at times also conflicts with customary Aboriginal fishing practices and cultural obligations.

It should be noted that barriers exist to Aboriginal engagement within commercial fisheries in Australia (Jentoft et al. 2018). As described in the context of this study, the access and management arrangements to areas of coastal zones in the NT are undergoing transition following the recognition of rights to the intertidal zone (i.e., through the Blue Mud Bay High court decision) (Altman 2013; Jentoft et al. 2018) with consequential impact on commercial and recreational fisheries management and licensing. One of the policies recognises there needs to be risk management and a process with Aboriginal Peoples engaged in better and more transparent decision-making processes in the recreational and commercial sectors (Northern Territory Government 2019a; p. 4).

## Closing-the-gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inequity

Several policies refer to the Closing-The-Gap agreement explicitly, indicating that coastal, marine and fisheries sectors are committed to Closing-The-Gap targets and improving Aboriginal health and social outcomes. However, the application and representation of this commitment is sparse. Examples include: “the national capability to Close-The-Gap between health and life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians will rely on the ability to understand and address these issues” (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2022; p. 12). “The updated Action Plan is a primary initiative under the NT Government Aboriginal Affairs Strategy and links to the National Agreement on Closing-The-Gap” (Northern Territory Government 2022a; p. 4). There is no specific mention in any of the policies analysed in this study of how they specifically contribute to Closing-The-Gap, for

example, the Closing-The-Gap targets and how they may help achieve these through implementation strategies.

### Coastal Aboriginal identity

Aboriginal Peoples have maintained a connection to their customary coastal and marine Sea Country and seafood, both critical to cultural identity and Aboriginal society (AIATSIS 2018; Brimblecombe et al. 2014; Cubillo et al. 2020). Coastal Aboriginal Identity was constructed from the category's "culture" and "history". These reflect the long-standing tradition of Aboriginal Peoples continued access to their coastal marine Sea Country for customary purposes. The sub-categories of "culture" include "customary practices, the natural world, and sharing". Aboriginal Peoples and their connection to their coastal and marine Sea Country are reflected in the policies as shown by this excerpt from the Aboriginal Sea Company: Draft Strategy: "Educating Peoples on our history of managing resources and trade, what our goals and aspirations are, why this management model is more sustainable than the old management laws and to be part of our journey forward" (Aboriginal Sea Company LTD, ND, p. 6).

The cultural identity of coastal Aboriginal Peoples incorporates the connection to Sea Country and seafood through customary practices. This is also reflected in the NT Government strategy: "for the maintenance of customary practices and local Aboriginal community livelihoods, and as an integral part of our identity and lifestyle" (Northern Territory Government 2019a; p. 7). As shown with the Aboriginal self-determination and governance concept, the discourse around Coastal Aboriginal Identity is generally framed in the policies within the lens of a socioeconomic model, geared towards achieving identity aspirations through the management of coastal and marine Sea Country, as exemplified in an excerpt from the NT Government's strategy: "maintenance of customary practices is essential to achieving their economic and social aspirations" (Northern Territory Government 2019a; p. 9).

### Economic and livelihood development with Aboriginal peoples

Economic and livelihood development with Aboriginal Peoples and communities are strongly represented throughout the policies. This concept was constructed with "economic, livelihoods, opportunities and Sea Country". Subcategories for "economic" include "business, enterprises, financial, tourism", and subcategories for "Sea Country" includes "environment and Indigenous protected areas". Livelihoods is a broad term, and for the context of this study, represent assets and activities designed to provide outcomes such as

food, income and wellbeing of individuals and their families and communities (Scoones 2009; Stacey et al. 2021a). Representation of economic development and Aboriginal opportunity in fisheries in the policies is generally from the perspective that Aboriginal involvement in commercial industries has a flow-on effect in benefiting the wider community. There is a significant focus in the policy discourse on developing financial opportunities. One NT Government strategy stated that: "There are also many opportunities for further development based on our coast and seas to build and strengthen the Territory economy and pursue enterprise initiatives that support local Aboriginal livelihoods and enterprises" (Northern Territory Government 2019a; p. 9).

Several policies consider Aboriginal Sea Country as an opportunity for Aboriginal Peoples to use their resources for different forms of economic development, including fishing, as exemplified in the NT Seafood Council document: "there is an opportunity to involve Aboriginal communities in the fisheries and to deliver regionally dispersed economic benefits" (Northern Territory Seafood Council 2018; p. 7). This includes: "Reclaiming rights, capturing all aspects of the saltwater country—building a better relationship with mainstream businesses and Governments for future ecologically sustainable economic development" (Aboriginal Sea Company LTD, ND, p. 6).

### Aboriginal nutrition, health and wellbeing

Aboriginal nutrition, health and wellbeing concepts have been created from "health and wellbeing" and "nutrition and food". For example, "The sea is still an important part of the Indigenous culture; it is where families can have fun together; for a food source" (Aboriginal Sea Company LTD, ND, p. 4). Seafood while an important source of food is also represented as a commodity in demand: "escalating worldwide demand for seafood-based protein" (Australian Government 2019; p. 17). Wellbeing was referred to as a potentially significant outcome of access to seafood but one that was underdeveloped in terms of measurement, as shown in the excerpt from the Fisheries Research Development Corporation strategy: "integrate broader metrics that better describe and track environmental and human wellbeing across fishing and aquaculture" (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2020a; p. 35). No policies explicitly referred to the health and wellbeing implications of seafood consumption and access issues relevant to consumption or seafood production for Aboriginal Peoples.

## Discussion

This study applied a content analysis method to investigate how Indigenous health and wellbeing values and self-determination aspirations are conceptualised and represented in current coastal, marine and fisheries policies in Australia's NT. This study contributes to the growing international and national calls to action to address health and wellbeing disparities and inequities experienced by Indigenous Peoples, specifically through intersectoral actions such as the WHO Health In-All-Policies, Australian Government Closing-The-Gap and the implementation of UN self-determination principles (Australian Government, 2022a; UN 2007; WHO 2014). In addition, the FAO Indigenous working group have recognised the role of strengthening Indigenous Peoples food systems, including access to seafood through increased visibility of Indigenous epistemological values within policy discourses (FAO 2021; Kuhnlein and Chotiboriboon 2022). This content analysis has identified that other concepts such as self-determination, social and economic development and governance are represented and referenced throughout the coastal, marine and fisheries policies, the connection of Aboriginal values to health and wellbeing, however, has not been realised. Without this, the contribution of these policies to health and wellbeing outcomes remains unstated and yet seafood is an important part of the global Indigenous food system that provides this connection and directly provides for livelihoods and food security (Simmanee et al. 2022).

Our analysis does highlight that Australian Commonwealth and Territory Governments are invested in Closing-The-Gap as several coastal, marine and fisheries policies explicitly stated and acknowledged the strategy (Fisheries Research Development Corporation 2022; Northern Territory Government 2022a). While this is positive, there was uncertainty indicated in the policies on how fisheries could contribute to Closing-The-Gap. This suggests a reductionist framing of Closing-The-Gap targets by the policymakers where health and wellbeing are seen as individual outcomes, rather than as a broader collectivist and Indigenous view of health which sees fisheries enabling the expression and achievement of Indigenous values that underpin health and wellbeing (Butler et al. 2019; Cubillo et al. 2023; Gall et al. 2021). Indigenous values, such as connection to country, Indigenous knowledge transfer, cultural practices and identity, were represented in the policies to a degree. As such there is a missed opportunity within the analysed policies to explicitly indicate this connection and contribution to health and wellbeing in alignment with the WHO Health In-All-Policies (WHO 2014).

This study provides further evidence of the lack of consideration of seafood as a food source as only one policy explicitly made this link (FAO 2017; Koehn et al. 2022),

despite seafood being an essential contributor to coastal Indigenous Peoples diets (Cisneros-Montemayor et al. 2016). The contribution of seafood to food security was also found to be absent from the policies despite the global literature demonstrating the importance of integrating fisheries into policy to impact food security (Farmery et al. 2020; Fisher et al. 2017). This is also in addition of food security being a key target of the Closing-The-Gap strategy (Australian Government 2023, 2023b). The analysed policies did however explicitly acknowledge the cultural connections and livelihood contributions of seafood for Indigenous Peoples which are essential to strengthening connections to the Indigenous food systems and for nutrition and food security (Cubillo et al. 2020; FAO 2017, 2021; Kuhnlein et al., 2013). At first glance the eight main concepts in this study may not be seen as linked with health through a dominant understanding of health regardless of the WHO definition incorporating the mental, physical and social wellbeing aspects of health and not merely the absence of disease. However, for Indigenous Peoples and communities more broadly, these concepts reflect key areas that have been highlighted with national and global research agendas as critical and in need to be strengthened to improve the underlying determinants of nutrition, health, wellbeing, and social outcomes (Australian Government 2022b; FAO 2021).

Throughout these policies there was little consideration of the impact of this on Indigenous values and health outcomes, which could be beneficial. There is a clear need to explicitly represent the health and wellbeing benefits of seafood connected to Indigenous values within coastal, marine and fisheries policies, as to not situate the benefits purely within socioeconomic-driven agendas (Arthur et al. 2022; Elrick-Barr and Smith 2021). This has implications for Indigenous Peoples as by not explicitly linking Indigenous values to health and wellbeing outcomes, health investment strategies such as Closing-The-Gap targets and related National strategies (such as the National Strategy for Food Security in Remote First Nations Communities to be developed), may overlook this vital contribution of seafood to coastal Aboriginal People's lives in the NT (Australian Government 2023). Further it may overlook any unintended consequences that socioeconomic driven agendas may have on Indigenous values and related health and wellbeing outcomes.

While the representation of health and wellbeing values within the policies was ambiguous, self-determination and governance agency were explicitly represented. This aligns with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, highlighting the need for Indigenous Peoples to pursue their economic, social, and cultural development, control, and use of land and water resources (UN 2007; Wensing 2021). The policies analysed have incorporated some

self-determination principles, however, this vision may differ from the aspirations of Indigenous Peoples, as is notably argued by Yap and Yu (2018): “*policies aimed at improving Indigenous wellbeing and addressing inequities through purely socioeconomic outcomes alone is an extension of neoliberalism*” (Stanton et al. 2015; Yap and Yu 2018; p. 94). Public policies, including fisheries policies, have the potential to integrate self-determination principles that align with Indigenous values and Indigenous governance to improve health and wellbeing outcomes without compromising socioeconomic development. However, Indigenous Peoples need the freedom of self-determining their agendas that may differ from neoliberal agendas that have a one-eyed focus on socioeconomic development (Bell and Green 2016; Osborne et al., 2013; Poirier et al., 2022; The Lancet 2020).

Other aspects of Indigenous values connected to seafood and not fully considered in the policies include the customary contribution of seafood and fishing practices to food supply, also vital to the identity of many coastal Indigenous Peoples and their connection to the Sea Country (Cubillo et al. 2023; Menzies and Butler 2007). Within Australia, Aboriginal customary fishing knowledge incorporates custodial responsibilities and cultural obligations to manage the Sea Country and its resources, and several policies such as FRDC and Aboriginal Sea Company explicitly made this connection (Smyth 1994; Whitehouse et al. 2014). These values are fundamentally important to Indigenous Knowledge concepts within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders connection to coastal, marine and fisheries sectors and need further consideration in coastal, marine and fisheries policies (Smyth et al. 2018). Another topic that warrants further acknowledgement is that there is little representation in the policies reviewed of gendered seafood benefits and needs, with no policies recognising the distinct needs and roles of men and women in relation to access, fishing activities and use (House et al. 2023). Further gendered decision-making and recognition of the different values held by men and women and the impacts on these of any resource management regimes (Bonis-Profumo et al. 2021; for example, were not acknowledged in any policy.

### Future policy considerations

This content analysis study provides a preliminary scoping exercise from which future research agendas and policies can develop and integrate more apparent self-determination principles to better incorporate Indigenous values that impact nutrition, health, and wellbeing outcomes. Coastal, marine and fisheries policies have the opportunity to improve health and wellbeing alongside their socioeconomic contributions and should explicitly state this health

and wellbeing contribution. This could be achieved through including Indigenous values of health and wellbeing to avoid overlooking the importance of dietary contribution of seafood to Indigenous Peoples and food security (Arthur et al. 2022; Farmery et al. 2020; Marushka et al. 2021).

Further, policies also need to be gender sensitive, recognising the roles and benefits to specific social groups of different gender engagement with fisheries, seafood, and Sea Country in community contexts, such as through women’s gleaning activities (Fleming et al. 2015; House et al. 2023), and consider food access and benefits provided to other social groups including vulnerable members of communities such as infants and elders (Cubillo et al. 2020; Stacey & Govan, 2021). The continued strengthening of self-determination and governance for the rights of Indigenous Peoples to provide leadership and collaboration in policies will lead to alignment with their aspirations and values connected to seafood and Sea Country (Mazel 2016; UN 2007; Yap and Yu 2018).

### Strengths and limitations

This study has considered several important factors that strengthen the advocacy for policy change. This includes considering in great detail the context of the targeted policies and identifying why there is a need to improve Aboriginal health and wellbeing values representation within coastal, marine and fisheries policies in the NT. Another strength is the comprehensive identification of key strategies and plans impacting Aboriginal People in the NT as well as the actors of the policies and their role in shaping the future of coastal, marine and fisheries sectors in the NT. However, a limitation was the absence of how the policies are implemented and when advocating for policy change this is a crucial step that needs to be considered (Walt and Gilson 1994; Browne et al. 2019). An important aspect of this study was the inquiry lens that sought to position Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing at the centre of the research to challenge policies, entities, government, industry, and institutions to take better account of Indigenous values connected to health and wellbeing within coastal, marine and fisheries sectors. Upon reflection this is a difficult process to undertake as it is accepted that these policies have not been purposively geared to improve health and wellbeing outcomes but rather economic and social outcomes. Future research would benefit from more robust theoretical positioning especially when considering how Indigenous values can be situated within policies with purpose rather than superficially with no actionable or measurable outcomes. Future research should naturally build upon this study that focused only on documents and incorporate qualitative inquiry such as interviews

with policy actors and people impacted by the policy or an evaluation.

## Conclusion

This content analysis applied an Indigenous Knowledges lens to investigate the representation of Indigenous values, health, and wellbeing outcomes, and how self-determination is communicated within the NT's coastal, marine and fisheries policies. The findings from this study indicate that the analysed policies have attempted to align politically with national agendas to reduce social and economic disparities and health to a lesser extent for Indigenous Peoples. It is clear, however, that due to a strong socio-economic development lens, attention, consideration, acknowledgement and integration of Indigenous values and the health and wellbeing outcomes, including nutrition is needed. Without these policies are missing an opportunity to positively contribute to Closing-The-Gap on Indigenous health inequities in Northern Territory of Australia.

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