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TSRA STATEMENT REGARDING TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) advises that any questions relating to the establishment of a Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery (TRL) Management Plan in the Torres Strait should be directed to the appropriate working groups established by the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA).

The TSRA Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, said the PZJA is responsible for the management of all fisheries in Australian waters within the Torres Strait Protected Zone. I encourage all stakeholders to raise their issues or concerns through the PZJA's working groups.

"The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) is currently conducting broad consultation on key management arrangements for a TRL management plan as requested by the PZJA," Mr Elu said.

"This includes consulting with all Torres Strait communities, including the Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBC). The consultation outcomes will be presented to the PZJA for consideration at its meeting in August. The decision whether or not to proceed with developing a management plan will be made at that time."

"If the decision is to proceed then further consultation to develop a draft plan will be required. All PBCs, including the PBC responsible for the management of Native Title over the Sea Claim Part A area, the Malu Lamar Registered Native Title Body Corporate, will be engaged in this important process. The community consultation conducted to date has been to inform communities of the importance of a management plan, to explain the key management arrangements and to emphasise the need for communities to be involved in the drafting of that plan.

The TSRA provides support for many fisheries stakeholders through consultative forums such as the PZJA working groups. The TSRA has provided financial assistance to ensure appropriate stakeholders are able to attend the consultations. The Malu Lamar PBC has been successful in obtaining some funding through the Australian Government Indigenous Advancement Strategy grants programme. They have also been provided with \$30,000 in funding by AFMA to assist them to be represented at PZJA forums and to consult with Native Title holders throughout the Sea Claim Part A area. Additionally the TSRA has covered in excess of \$90,000 in the cost of legal advice for Malu Lamar and is currently working with the PBC to provide capacity building support to enable them to represent Traditional Owners on sea related Native Title matters.

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TSRA Media Contact – Bruce Nelson telephone 0423 403 449