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TSRA WORKS TO DEVELOP A TORRES STRAIT FINFISH FISHERY

The Torres Strait Regional Authority, with support from the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, has started a project to developing the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery.

The TSRA Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, said this project comes after Torres Strait Communities gained 100 per cent ownership of the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery.

“The TSRA holds six finfish fishery sunset licences and these are leased back to non-Traditional Owner fishers for a fee,” Mr Elu said.

“The money raised from the leases is held in trust by the TSRA, and then invested in community projects to improve Traditional Owner participation in the fishery.

“The project has been established to seek ways to increase Traditional Owner participation in the fishery and increase the value of the fishery, and its benefits to Torres Strait communities.”

Mr Elu said the main purpose of the project is to collaborate with Traditional Owner fishers and their communities, previous transferrable vessel holder finfish fishers, and other stakeholders to develop a Fisheries Action Plan.

“The Action Plan will provide a logical and practical framework to build Traditional Owner participation in the fishery, and increase the value and benefits from the fishery,” Mr Elu said.

“The project will also provide guidance on the use of money raised through the leasing of finfish licences; helping with the development of sustainable finfish-related fishing businesses owned and operated by Traditional Owners.

“These businesses could relate to catching, processing and/or selling fish such as coral trout and Spanish mackerel, and the project will also consider effective marketing for the fishery to help improve the wealth and wellbeing of Torres Strait communities over time.”

Mr Elu said the TSRA finfish project team would like to consult with all communities located within the Finfish Fishery area.

“The TSRA team is proposing to visit Erub, Mer, Ugar, Masig, Iama, Poruma, Warraber, Saibai and Dauan to seek community ideas about developing the fishery to enable successful, profitable and sustainable participation,” Mr Elu said.

“The TSRA is also inviting submissions from those communities, the fishing industry, fisher organisations and other interested individuals.

“The project team wants to understand local fisher’s skills and the equipment they currently have, as well as the knowledge, skills and equipment needed to further develop existing businesses, or to help new finfish related businesses get established.”

To contact the project team, email mariana.nahas@tsra.gov.au or phone 07 4069 0700.

Alternatively, submissions can also be posted to the Fisheries Programme Manager, Torres Strait Regional Authority, PO Box 261, Thursday Island, Queensland, 4875.

Submissions close on 30 April 2015.

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