

## Media Release **No. 615**

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### **Bêche de Mer Fishery 100 percent owned by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal People**

The Torres Strait Regional Authority is pleased to announce it has purchased the last non-Indigenous commercial fishing licence in the Torres Strait Bêche de Mer (BDM) fishery. The purchase is part of the TSRA's ongoing commitment to assist Torres Strait communities develop a commercially viable fishing industry which is 100 per cent owned by Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people.

The Bêche-de-mer fishery is the second fishery to be 100 percent owned by Torres Strait and Aboriginal people. The Torres Strait Finfish Fishery became 100 per cent owned in 2007. The Finfish fishery is now an important commercial asset to Torres Strait communities. The TSRA expects that over time the BDM licence will generate significant benefits to the people of the Torres Strait.

The TSRA Chairperson Mr Joseph Elu said "I have been working closely with the Minister for Indigenous Affairs Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion to secure the transfer of this licence. This important outcome will allow greater access to the fishery by Indigenous fishers in the region and provide economic benefits to Torres Strait communities."

The purchase of this licence has taken place shortly after the re-opening of the Bêche-de-mer Fishery to the take of Black teatfish in November 2014. The 15 tonne total allowable catch (TAC) of the Black teatfish was taken in only two and a half weeks. This is a demonstration of Torres Strait Communities' commitment to developing a productive commercial fishing industry in the region.

Mr Elu said "I will now work with my partners in the Protected Zone Joint Authority to develop a strategy for the future use of this licence for the benefit of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people."

**ENDS**

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