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KAIAR MANAGEMENT PLAN BEST WAY FORWARD

The Chairperson of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), Mr Joseph Elu, has emphasised the importance to Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people of a management plan for the Torres Strait Kaiar (Tropical Rock Lobster) Fishery.

Mr Elu said that Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal peoples' interests will be protected once a management plan is introduced.

"The Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) has been working towards a management plan for this fishery since 2005," Mr Elu said.

"After two buyouts, we now own 56 per cent of the fishery

"We need the management plan so that we can benefit from what we own."

Mr Elu said that the PZJA had agreed to the recent buyout on condition that the moon-tide hookah closures and tender reductions would be removed.

"Without this condition the buyout would not have been possible," Mr Elu said.

"Even with the closures and tender reductions the holders of transferable licence holders (TVH) could still take more than their share," Mr Elu said.

"In 2011, when the closures and tender reductions were in place, the transferable licence holders took nearly twice their share.

"Once we have the management plan the TVH licence holders who own the other 44 per cent of the fishery will be limited to only take their share," Mr Elu said.

Mr Elu cautioned people against directing criticism about the removal of the closures and tender reductions arrangements at the Indigenous Fisheries Advisory Committee.

"The PZJA agreement to remove the interim management arrangements was made before the Indigenous Fisheries Advisory Committee (IFAC) was formed.

"It's also important for people to remember that the IFAC doesn't make decisions, it provides advice to the TSRA Board. It is the TSRA Board that makes the decisions," Mr Elu said.

"The TSRA will be looking at ways to get the best value from our share of the fishery.

"The management plan will bring secure and sustainable management to the fishery," Mr Elu said.

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