



TRL (Kaiar) Management Plan - exposure draft

July 2016

TSRA's Comments

The Torres Strait Regional Authority's (TSRA) vision is to empower Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people in our decision, in our culture for our future.

Torres Strait communities have provided input into the future management of the Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) fishery during Management Plan consultations in 2015, consultations on the draft Roadmap to 100% Ownership, and through Torres Strait Islander representation in the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) TRL Working Group.

Torres Strait Islanders have strongly and repeatedly held that while they are supportive of a quota system for the TRL Fishery, they do not want the Transferable Vessel Holder (TVH) sector to get bigger, either in the number of boats or the size of the quota each TVH operator may own. Communities have also consistently held that the TVH sector could do more to benefit communities and assist economic development in the region.

To address these concerns, the TSRA Chairperson, Mr Joseph Elu, ensured that in agreeing to release the Exposure Draft of the Management Plan, the PZJA noted the TSRA will seek to introduce additional elements into the plan.

These include:

- a) introducing an economic development contribution from the holders of transferable quota;
- b) the Traditional Inhabitant sector (TIB) to be given first right of refusal in the sale of TVH licences; and
- c) transfers are only to be made between existing licence holders in pursuit of 100 per cent ownership by traditional owners.



Economic Development Contribution

The TSRA is committed to economic development in the Torres Strait. It is an objective of the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*, that the PZJA has regard, in developing and implementing licensing policy, to the desirability of promoting economic development in the Torres Strait area and employment opportunities for traditional inhabitants.

To that end, the TSRA is working with AFMA to consider what policies can be implemented through the Management Plan that would promote economic development and employment opportunities. These policies could include employment targets, training opportunities or even the re-investment of any future management levies.

TIB first right of refusal

The TSRA is committed to achieving 100% ownership of commercial fishing entitlements for Torres Strait fishers. To this end, the TSRA is working with AFMA to seek that the Management Plan require the TVH sector to approach the TIB sector first when looking for additional quota to lease or when looking to sell their quota. In the first instance, they would approach the TSRA as it will hold the TIB quota on behalf of TIB fishers.

Trade only between existing licence holders

To further assist the TIB with achieving 100% ownership, the TSRA is also working with AFMA to seek that the Management Plan limits the number of licences that can be issued in this fishery to existing TVH licence holders, the TIB sector and for sunset licences (managed by the TSRA) to allow the lease out of unused TIB quota.

Other aspects of the draft Management Plan



There are a few more aspects of the draft Plan that the TSRA is working with AFMA to seek amendments. They are:

- ✚ **Powers:** as drafted, the Plan would be made by the Commonwealth Minister. This gives the Minister the power to set the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and the length of the season. The TSRA is seeking clarification as this is different from the Finfish and Prawn fisheries management plans in which the PZJA has the authority to make the Plans.
- ✚ **Cancellation of quota:** at the moment the Plan will cancel quota if a licence is cancelled. The TSRA is seeking that the quota from a cancelled licence be transferred to the TIB sector.
- ✚ **Unused PNG allocation:** the Plan is silent on the annual PNG allocation. The TSRA would like the Plan to state that any unutilised PNG allocation, should be allocated to the TIB sector.
- ✚ **Allocations under the Plan:** the TSRA is seeking it be made clearer that the current ownership of the fishery; 43.8% TVH and 56.2% TIB, are the initial allocations only.
- ✚ **Review:** following the two year review point after the allocation of quota to the TIB, the Plan presents only three options to the PZJA: the allocation of quota to individuals, allocation of quota to a non-government organisation or a combination of those two options. The TSRA believes that in the event there is no agreement from the TIB sector on a preferred quota holding model, it would be prudent to allow the PZJA the option of asking the TSRA to continue to hold the TIB quota until such time as the TIB sector has agreed on a preferred ownership model.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about the TSRA's comments on the draft Management Plan, please contact the TSRA's Fisheries Programme on 4069 0700 or by email, fisheries@tsra.gov.au.

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The Australian Government is in a caretaker role pending the outcome of the 2 July 2016 federal election. As an Australian Government body, TSRA observes the caretaker conventions and practices during this period. This paper is intended for targeted consultation with stakeholders in the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Fishery and not for wider public consultation.

The Torres Strait Regional Authority is in a caretaker role pending the outcome of the 30 July 2016 board election. The TSRA observes caretaker conventions and practices during this period. This paper is intended for targeted consultation with stakeholders in the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Fishery and not for wider public consultation.