

Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group Meeting 8

DRAFT Meeting Record

8 November 2018

Thursday Island

Note all meeting papers and record available on
the PZJA webpage: www.pzja.gov.au



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Contents

Meeting participants	3
Members.....	3
Observers	4
1 Preliminaries	5
1.1 Meeting preliminaries	5
1.2 Adoption of agenda	5
1.3 Declaration of interests	5
1.4 Action items from previous meetings.....	5
1.5 Out of session correspondence.....	7
2 Updates from members	7
2.1 Industry, Economic & Scientific.....	7
2.2 Government Agencies	8
2.3 PNG NFA update	9
2.4 Native Title	9
3 Report from TRLRAG 24 held on 18-19 October 2018	9
4 Proposed management plan	9
5 Proposed sectoral catch shares	12
6 Better aligning the TAC setting process with the fishing season	13
7 Management arrangements for the 2018/19 fishing season	14
8 Draft Five Year Research Plan for 2019/20 to 2022/23.....	15
9 Other Business	16
10 Date and venue for next meeting	16

Meeting participants

Members

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
Alexander Morison	Chair	No pecuniary or other interest in the Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery or any other Torres Strait fisheries Fisheries Consultant. Chair of SERAG and SharkRAG. Scientific member on SEMAC. Contracted by government departments, non-government agencies and companies for a range of fishery related matters including research and MSC assessments of AFMA managed and other fisheries (by SCS Global Services)
Georgia Langdon	AFMA Executive Officer	Nil
Selina Stoute	AFMA member	Nil
Mark Anderson	TSRA member (Fisheries Programme Manager)	Nil. TSRA holds multiple TVH TRL fishing licences on behalf of Torres Strait Communities but does not benefit from them
Danielle Stewart	Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (QDAF) member	Nil. Manager of Queensland harvest fisheries.
Darren Dennis	Scientific member	Nil. Member of other RAGs and research consultant
Mark David	Industry member	Traditional Inhabitant Kulkalgal and TIB licence holder
Mark Dean	Industry member	Industry representative and TVH operator
Terrence Whap	Industry member	Nil. Traditional Inhabitant Maluialgal and Traditional Owner. Does not hold a TIB licence
Les Pitt	Industry member	Nil. Traditional Inhabitant Kemer Kemer Meriam

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
Phillip Ketchell	Industry member	Nil. Traditional Inhabitant Kaiwalagal and Traditional Owner. TIB licence holder.
Aaron Tom	Industry member	Nil. Traditional Inhabitant Maluilagal and TIB licence holder
Brett Arlidge	Industry member	General Manager MG Kailis Pty Ltd. MG Kailis Pty Ltd is a holder of TVH licences
Daniel Takai	Industry observer	Director/Manager of Island Seafoods, Tanala Seafoods and TIB licence holder of a primary vessel.

Observers

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
Jerry Stephen	TSRA Deputy Chair, TSRA Member for Ugar and TSRA Portfolio Member for Fisheries	TIB licence holder and Traditional Owner
Phil Hughes	Industry observer	TVH licence holder

1 Preliminaries

1.1 Meeting preliminaries

1. Mr Terence Whap opened the meeting in prayer at 8.30 am on Thursday 8 November 2018 at the TSRA Boardroom.
2. The Chair welcomed attendees to the 8th meeting of the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG8). The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting was held and paid respect to Elders past and present.
3. Each of the meeting participants briefly introduced themselves. Attendees at the Working Group are detailed in the meeting participant tables at the start of this meeting record.
4. Apologies were received from Sevaly Sen (Economic member) and Maluwap Nona (Malu Lamar (Torres Strait Islanders) Corporation RNTBC), and Ian Liviko (PNG National Fisheries Authority (NFA) Invited Participant).

1.2 Adoption of agenda

5. The draft agenda was adopted without change (**Attachment A**). However, to allow sufficient time to discuss the key agenda items (4,5, 6 and 7), the Working Group agreed that any agenda items for noting, were to be taken as read and only discussed at the request of members.

1.3 Declaration of interests

6. The Chair stated that as outlined in PZJA Fisheries Management Paper No. 1 (FMP1), all members of the Working Group must declare all real or potential conflicts of interest in Torres Strait TRL Fishery at the commencement of the meeting.
7. Declarations of interests were provided by each meeting participant. These are detailed in the meeting participant tables at the start of this meeting record.
8. The Working Group agreed that all meeting participants were able to be present during each agenda item discussion.
9. The Chair noted that the Working Group is a consultative forum of the PZJA that provides advice on the management of the TRL Fishery. The Working Group is not a decision making body.

1.4 Action items from previous meetings

10. The Working Group noted the report provided by the AFMA member advising of the status of actions arising from previous TRLWG meetings (see below).

#	Meeting	Action	Status
1.	TRLWG5 held on 5-6 April 2016	TRLRAG to provide advice on any findings relating to the impacts of changing the season start date to provide industry with a longer TAC notice period.	<p>Complete</p> <p>This action item was considered at TRLRAG meeting 24 held from 18-19 October 2018. Summary of advice provided for consideration under Agenda Item 4.</p>
2.	TRLWG6 held on 25-26 July 2017	Malu Lamar (RNTBC) to provide AFMA with a written proposal for any further proposed amendments to the <i>Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984</i> .	<p>Incomplete – to be removed</p> <p>The Working Group agreed to remove this action from the list as it cannot be actioned by the Working Group.</p>
3.	TRLWG6 held on 25-26 July 2017	The following be presented at the next TRLWG meeting: a) an overview of the current understanding of stock connectivity between the Queensland East Coast and the Torres Strait TRL Fisheries; and b) the basis for the Queensland east coast TAC.	<p>Ongoing – stock connectivity</p> <p>At TRLRAG 21 held from 12-13 December 2017, CSIRO presented the preliminary results of the research project titled '<i>Environmental update for the Torres Strait tropical lobster Panulirus ornatus</i>'. Some further results were presented at TRLRAG 22 held from 27-28 March 2018. CSIRO's final report, titled '<i>Environmental Drivers of variability and climate projections for Torres Strait tropical lobster Panulirus ornatus</i>', will be provided with these meeting papers for reference. This report has not been sent to members previously. This report will also be made available on the PZJA website.</p> <p>The Working Group agreed to amend this status to 'ongoing' as this work is still being continued by the RAG. A summary will be presented back to the Working Group when completed.</p> <p>Complete – QLD TAC</p> <p>The QDAF member provided further information to the RAG at its meeting on 27-28 March 2018. The QDAF <i>Policy relating to individual catch entitlement in the Queensland Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery</i> provided which summaries that the QLD TAC is based on 90% of the average MSY estimates for the stock. The latest assessment estimates MSY at between 191 tonnes and 242 tonnes.</p>

1.5 Out of session correspondence

11. The Working Group noted the summary of out of session correspondence relative to the TRLWG.

2 Updates from members

2.1 Industry, Economic & Scientific

12. The Working Group noted updates provided by Industry members and observers on the recent performance and key issues affecting the TRL Fishery:
 - a. Several industry members from both TIB and TVH sectors expressed concern about when the TAC for next season will be determined. The uncertainty leading in to the next season is making it difficult to plan businesses.
 - b. The Working Group noted advice from the AFMA member that preliminary RAG advice on a Recommended Biological Catch (RBC) is expected in mid-December following the November pre-season lobster survey. After being considered by the RAG again in early 2019, a final TAC recommendation is expected in March.
 - c. AFMA is looking to better align the TAC setting process with the season start date. This issue is expected to be discussed in detail under Agenda Item 6.
 - d. An industry member advised that early closure of the fishery, based on further calculations equated to leaving \$13 million of income in the water of which more than half would have been used in the Torres Strait. Only 43 % of fishing season was fished and if extrapolated the catch rates for the season the Fishery would have yielded 17.5 million.
 - e. An industry member reflected that group representing the TIB sector took action this year that wasn't supported. TIB fishers wanted to see the season open for longer, with continued data collection and slowing of fishing effort. It is important for the Working Group to ensure the TIB sector can maintain fishing throughout the fishing season. Free-diving is one way.
 - f. An industry member advised that TIB fishers are generally frustrated from the early closure this season, they have no capital to spend on boats and families. The member queried whether the Fishery could set aside 50 tonnes for free diving in the event the TAC is reached so that TIB fishers could continue to fish. It was later recommended by an industry observer that such an allowance could be provided given the level of uncertainty around the RBC (100 tonne estimate variation) and the conservative nature of the harvest strategy.
 - g. The AFMA member advised that measures introduced this season were intended to enable fishing to occur for a longer period by free diving. This decision however was successfully overturned by a challenge in the Federal Court by Malu Lamar. The Court found that AFMA made a procedural error but its finding did not turn on the merit of the original decision by AFMA. The AFMA member further advised that whilst a harvest strategy could provide a 'free-dive catch allowance' such an allowance would need to be taken from the RBC and not be additional. The agreed harvest strategy approach is for the RBC to be taken from the median RBC estimate. To change the approach intermittently would undermine the performance of the harvest strategy in meeting its objectives overtime. The AFMA member further noted that under the quota management system the TIB sector may work to agree on specific harvest strategies approaches to apply to the TIB catch allocation.
 - h. The Scientific Member advised the Working Group that the harvest strategy is underpinned by very good science that has been extensively reviewed. For this

season the pre and mid-year surveys corroborated each other and there was a lot of heavy fishing particularly at the start. TRL stocks naturally fluctuate, their distribution across the fishery is highly variable and catches have been less this season than in the past (e.g. 2001). The benchmark survey is about mapping habitat and not lobster distribution variability. 2+ abundance overtime is tracked well by CPUE. The member further noted that uncertainty in the available catch and RBC has always existed (for 30years), and it is no different now. This could be minimised through improved 0+ estimates. It has long been suggested that industry consider supplementing the surveys to simply give an idea of the distribution of 0+ across the fishery.

2.2 Government Agencies

13. The Working Group noted a brief overview of management updates relevant to the TRL fishery provided by the AFMA member, most notably that since the TRLRAG held on 18-19 October 2018, AFMA received notification from the Papua New Guinean National Fisheries Authority regarding the closure of the PNG TRL fishery as of 19 October 2018 through till 31 March 2019.
14. An industry member queried whether the closure applied to the entire fishery or for the use of hookah gear only.

Action 1

AFMA to clarify with PNG NFA if the PNG TRL Closure was for the entire fishery or for hookah fishing only.

15. The Working Group noted an update provided by the TSRA member regarding TSRA activities relevant to the TRL Fishery:
 - a. The TSRA Board is continuing to develop its 100 per cent ownership roadmap;
 - b. The Fisheries Regional Ownership Framework project is progressing. Phase 1 of the project is now complete, where the mandate to develop an independent fisheries entity to hold fisheries assets was agreed upon. Phase 2 is underway, with a consultant undertaking a desktop literature review of other fisheries entity models around the world, and Australia. This review will generate an options paper, for consideration by the Board, and broad community consultation on such options being undertaken in 2019. The Board is aiming to have an entity established by 2020.
 - c. TSRA convened a fisheries Summit in August 2018 with round 110 participants comprising representatives from PBCs, Fisher Associations and fishers from across all Torres Strait Communities. The summit agreed three resolutions and provided the mandate to move forward with the management plan for 2018/19 season.
16. The Working Group noted an update provided by the QDAF member regarding QDAF activities relevant to the management of the East Coast TRL Fishery:
 - a. The TRL fishery on the east coast is currently closed, at 82 per cent of the static 195 tonne Total Allowable Catch (TAC).
 - b. The season is permanently closed from 1 October till 31 December each year, recommencing on 1 January.

- c. It is a limited entry fishery (18 licences), however, there is an option for regional communities, outside of the fishing industry to enter the fishery with access a 5 tonne catch limit through an Indigenous Fishing Permit for up to three years.
 - d. The policy relating to IFPs and the process for applying is currently under review, as part of the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy.
17. An industry member commented that the review process should consider allowing current TIB licence holders to also fish in the East Coast TRL fishery by cross jurisdiction endorsement.
18. The TSRA member noted that under the TSRA Economic Development Program, there is assistance for TIB fishers in developing a business plan to obtain an Indigenous Fishing Permit for the East Coast Fishery, or to support any fisheries business proposal in the Torres Strait. The support is not provided by a TSRA officer but rather a business mentor consultant.

2.3 PNG NFA update

19. An update from PNG NFA was not available as the Invited Participant was not in attendance.

2.4 Native Title

20. An update on Native Title matters was not provided as the Malu Lamar representative was not in attendance.

3 Report from TRLRAG 24 held on 18-19 October 2018

21. The Working Group noted a brief summary of the key outcomes of TRLRAG 24 held on 18-19 October 2018, provided by the AFMA member acknowledging that the meeting record of the RAG is not yet finalised.
- a. The RAG agreed to proceed with the 2018 pre-season survey, with an additional 6 sites from the mid-year survey.
 - b. The RAG recommended an independent review be conducted of the TRL survey design. A draft terms of reference is to be developed by the Chair for consideration at the first RAG meeting in 2019.
 - c. The RAG recommended a sub-group of the RAG be established to examine and recommend improvements to be made to the collection and analysis of catch and effort data for the TRL Fishery.

4 Proposed management plan

22. The Working Group was asked to discuss and provide advice on the proposed drafting changes to the *Torres Strait Fishery (Quotas for Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar)) Management Plan 2018* (the draft Plan).
23. At the commencement of the discussion, the latest revision of the Plan was not available. The Working Group noted that members would be better placed to provide advice on the proposed revision if members could review the final draft plan with the revisions included. With AFMA's support the Working Group agreed to consider the proposed revisions as detailed in the papers at the meeting and for members to provide any further

comment out of session by close of business, Monday 19 November noting advice from AFMA that the revised draft plan would be available later in the day.

24. Copies of the Plan were made available to the Working Group in hard copy and electronic form at the end of the discussion.

Process update and outline of the quota management framework

25. The Working Group noted an overview from the AFMA member on the management plan process and broad elements of the proposed revised draft:

- a. The Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) agreed to reaffirm its previous decision to determine a *Torres Strait Fishery (Quotas for Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar)) Management Plan* by 1 December 2018.
- b. AFMA has been working with the Office of Parliamentary Council to finalise a draft Plan for PZJA's consideration.
- c. The PZJA is tentatively scheduled to meet on 26 November 2018 and will consider all submissions on the draft Plan, the proposed revisions and any advice from the Working Group.
- d. A range of revisions are being proposed to the draft Plan to improve the clarity and effectiveness of provisions of the draft Plan. Some of these revisions address comments received during the 2016 public consultation.
- e. The draft Plan will principally provide for the following:
 - Creation and allocation of TRL quota units to Transferrable Vessel Holder (TVH) licence holders (as individual transferable quotas (ITQs));
 - Setting a TAC prior to the start of each fishing season;
 - Trading of quota units (permanent and seasonal);
 - Cancellation or suspension of quota units in relation to a serious breach of the law; and
 - Establishment and maintenance of a quota unit register.
- f. Once the plan is determined and registered the plan is in force however the quota system is not operational. The quota unit allocation process must first be completed which may take 291 days or longer subject to appeals (as detailed in 4p of the Agenda Item, page 257). During this time the transitional provisions of the plan allow for the Fishery to be managed under existing arrangements (not the management plan). The quota system will commence at the start of first fishing season following the allocation of quota units.
- g. The AFMA member confirmed in response to questions raised that:
 - Quota units will not be attached to specific fishing licences rather they are held by a person or entity. A person may hold quota or a fishing licence separately. To fish in the Fishery however the person must either hold both quota and fishing licence or, if the person is a traditional inhabitant, they must hold a TIB licence and TSRA must have uncaught quota;
 - Quota may be 'subleased'. Meaning a person who holds quota because of a temporary transfer, may temporarily transfer that quota;
 - A person may not temporarily transfer caught quota units;

- Foreign ownership of quota units is permissible. Having regard for Australia's Foreign Investment Policy, significant consultation with a number of government agencies would be required to depart from this approach. Industry members raised general concern with foreign ownership from potentially reducing beach prices to being an impediment to achieving 100 percent Traditional Inhabitant ownership of access rights. Other industry members didn't want to limit foreign ownership opportunities as a means to generate investment;
- There are no prior-reporting conditions planned. AFMA moved away from prior reporting with the introduction of VMS and other monitoring techniques;
- Quota decrementation will not be automatic through electronic reporting however this may occur in the future in line with e-reporting initiatives in the Commonwealth. AFMA is undertaking an internal IT review which may guide future e-reporting programs in the Torres Strait; and
- All landed product must be recorded by a fish receiver regardless of whether or not the product is subsequently discarded. Fish Receiver CDRs will be used for quota decrementation noting an accurate weight is recorded rather than an at-sea estimate.

26. The Working Group noted the importance of understanding discard rates at sea for the purposes of the stock assessment and monitoring overall fishing mortality against the TAC. The Working Group **recommended** that discard reporting and estimation be considered by the RAG (possibly by the RAG data subgroup).

27. Industry members (TIB and TVH) confirmed their strong support for maintaining limited entry on TVH licences. Some industry members also reiterated the importance of input controls in managing on-water competition between TVH and TIB operators when TIB dinghy based fishers are restricted in the areas they are able to access within the Fishery.

28. In response to a questions raised on the likely market value of quota compared to the current market value of TVH licences (e.g. would it triple), one industry member advised that they did not expect the prices to surge in the same way as other fisheries such as the Western Australian Rock Lobster Fishery which is based on pot fishing. The Torres Strait fishery is more labour intensive and prices will be regulated by the commercial reality of the operating costs (the price to catch a fish). The industry member thought values for quota used in the Moana report were too high.

Proposed revisions to the 2016 exposure draft plan

29. The Working Group noted the explanation given by the AFMA member of each proposed revision to the 2016 exposure draft plan as outlined in Agenda Item 4, Attachment 4a, Table 1.

30. In relation to first right of refusal, the AFMA member advised that AFMA was proposing to include a check box in the TVH licence permanent transfer form indicating whether or not the transferor has informed the TSRA of the proposed transfer. The AFMA member further advised that this is designed to serve the same purpose as a first right of refusal provision. That being to raise market awareness that TSRA may be a position to purchase further TVH licences and quota.

Note: all discussion related to the proposed sectoral catch shares is reported under Agenda Item 5.

5 Proposed sectoral catch shares

31. The Working Group noted an overview of the proposed sectoral catch shares provided by the AFMA member:
- Amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries (Tropical Rock Lobster) Management Instrument 2018* are required to enable the implementation of sectoral catch shares between the TIB and TVH sectors of the TRL fishery for the 2018/19 fishing season.
 - The Plan will not give immediate effect to the sectoral allocation during the 2018/19 fishing season as the allocation process involves several administrative steps and is dependent on any appeals.
 - Enforcing the sectoral catch share in the 2018/19 fishing season will provide greater fishing access certainty for both the TIB and TVH sectors whilst the allocation process for TVH licences progresses.
 - The Instrument provides the ability to close each sector once each respective TAC has been reached. It also provides some flexibility for the TSRA, if another TVH licence is purchased during the year, the sectoral catch shares can be adjusted accordingly.
 - The Instrument will not apply after the 2018/19 season.
32. TVH industry members queried why the quota allocation process needs to take so long under the management plan and seemingly repeat the allocation process already completed in 2007. TVH industry members advised that licence holders already had an opportunity to contest their 2007 allocation and licences have since traded based on those allocations. Preferably the allocations could be completed much more expediently (e.g. by March 2019) so that the intended quota system under the management plan can be delivered rather than going through the proposed sectoral split arrangement.
33. AFMA advised that while the allocation process proposed under the plan may be lengthy, it is intended to afford TVH licence holders with natural justice. The process is consistent with the advice outlined to TVH licence holders on their provisional allocations in 2007.
34. TVH industry members expressed strong concern that a competitive TAC for the TVH sector will encourage a race to fish (therefore potentially undermining returns), is unfair, inconsistent with the arrangements expected under the management plan and inconsistent with the objectives of the Act (ie the object to manage for optimum utilisation).

35. Whilst the TVH members supported the sectoral split they advised that the transitional arrangements should mirror the expected quota system as far as possible. Their strong preference therefore was for the 2007 provisional allocations to be applied for the 2018/19 fishing season with the ability to transfer catch between licences, rather than the current proposal to apply the sectoral split and a competitive TAC within each sector. The TVH industry members would be able to accept this arrangement for a season while the quota allocation process is undertaken.
36. TVH industry members further reiterated that a lack of certainty around the next seasons' TAC and the TVH allocation process has significant implications for employment, crewing, business operations and profitability.
37. TVH industry members questioned if there was an alternative process, such as signing a waiver, to support the 2007 provisional allocations. The Chair suggested the TVH sector could informally implement their provisional allocations within the sector.
38. One industry member expressed concern that with a sectoral split in place, but without individual catch allocations for the TVH, there will still be local commercial pressure on the TIB sector, with regards to access to TRL in certain areas, particularly when hookah is permitted.
39. The TSRA member advised the Working Group that during each of the community consultations to date since the Fisheries Summit, there has been overwhelming support for a sectoral split, and an orderly transition as possible to maximise opportunities for both sectors. The member added that it has always been the view that the TIB sector will not impose any control on how the TVH sector share their catch allocation.
40. The AFMA member noted that the sectoral catch shares are a step towards greater certainty for industry compared with status quo management arrangements, particularly if faced with another low RBC. The AFMA member noted that the proposal to implement sectoral catch shares is subject to public consultation and that TVH licence holders are encouraged to make a submission outlining their proposal. The AFMA member further noted that the PZJA would likely want to understand whether the position was unanimous across all TVH licence holders.
41. The Working Group unanimously **supported** the implementation of sectoral catch shares as a temporary measure for the next fishing season. All TVH members and observers, and most TIB industry members and observers were supportive of the TVH sector having provisional quota allocations in the 2018/19 fishing season.
42. One TIB industry member preferred that the both sectors be managed under a single competitive TAC while the quota allocation process takes place under the plan.

6 Better aligning the TAC setting process with the fishing season

43. The Working Group noted the timing of the pre-season TRL survey and stock assessment and decision making process means a TAC based on the latest survey results cannot be determined before the current season start date (1 December). Under

the proposed management plan a TAC must be determined before the season commences.

44. The Working Group considered and **supported** the approach recommended by the RAG for a:
- a. start of season catch limit of 200 tonnes be determined prior to 1 December each year covering the period 1 December through to the end of February, at which point a final TAC will be able to be determined; and
 - b. provision for the start of the season catch limit to be overridden and reduced in seasons where the TRL stock abundance is exceptionally low and the final RBC is likely to fall below the start of season catch limit or be overridden by the Harvest Strategy decision rules. In such cases, the use of the start of season catch limit should not be used in subsequent seasons until reviewed by the RAG.
45. One industry member advised that it was very important that the TIB sector is able to fish in December to support families and communities during that period (Christmas, children are returning from boarding school). For this reason the season start date should remain unchanged to ensure the season will be open at the time.
46. The Working Group noted that the 200 tonnes would be allocated between sectors proportionately as determined by the sectoral catch shares (TIB 66.17% and TVH 33.83%).
47. An industry member queried who would get prosecuted if an Olympic TAC was overcaught. The Working Group noted the AFMA member advice that once fishers had been advised that the TAC had been reached or that fishing was to cease on a certain date, individual fishers would be in breach of their licence conditions if they continued to fish after that notice was issued. The industry member considered that this scenario provides more support to the pursuit of TVH provisional allocation in the 2018/19 season to avoid the risk of overcatching the TAC.

7 Management arrangements for the 2018/19 fishing season

48. The Working Group was asked to provide advice on whether any changes should be made to existing management arrangements for the TRL fishery for the 2018/19 fishing season including the proposed moon-tide hookah closures provided in Attachment 7a.
49. The AFMA member recommended that management arrangements remain unchanged for the coming season and only be reconsidered if:
- the PZJA does not determine the Plan by 1 December and sectoral catch shares are not implemented; and
 - the preliminary RBC is at a low level similar to the RBC for this season.
50. The Working Group noted that under the above scenario it would reconvene early next year to revisit management arrangements for the 2018/19 season.

51. The Working Group further noted that under quota management existing input controls are to remain in place but be reviewed periodically.
52. The Working Group noted the proposal by some in industry for moon-tide closures to coincide with the new moon and lobster moult cycles to reduce mortality rates and the volume of damaged and tailed lobsters. The Working Group however agreed to maintain the current methodology for determining the moon-tide hookah closures at this time (as set out in the Agenda paper - based on the biggest difference high and low water tides).
53. An industry observer expressed frustration over the 2017/18 fishing season, stating that free-diving and lamp fishing should have been permitted to continue. The AFMA member noted that the prohibition put in place on the use of hookah this season was intended to extend the fishing season however the decision was successfully challenged by Malu Lamar in the Federal court and decision was over turned.
54. A Traditional Inhabitant industry member expressed support for two moon-tide closures per month, however this was not supported by other Working Group members.
55. The Working Group **recommended** that management arrangements for the 2018/19 season remain as status quo, including the moon-tide closures detailed 7a and **noted** that arrangements would be periodically reviewed following the implementation of quota management.

8 Draft Five Year Research Plan for 2019/20 to 2022/23

56. The AFMA member provided a brief overview of the intent of the Rolling Five Year TRL Fishery Research Plan for 2019/20 – 2022/23 to inform the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee's (TSSAC) annual call for research funding proposals.
57. The Working Group noted that:
 - a. TRLRAG considered the draft research plan at their meeting held on 18-19 October 2018 and identified seven research priorities, five essential items, three of which are ranked with high (1) priority and two as secondary priorities, and two desirable items ranked 2 and 3 in priority (**see Agenda Item 8, Attachment 8a**).
 - b. All research priorities have been identified under the TSSAC Strategic Research Plan Theme 1; Strategy 1a.
58. The Chair queried whether the Improvements to Data Collection and Understanding connectivity, environmental drivers and adaptation strategies projects are essential compared to the first four projects. The Chair also noted that the Working Group may consider broader research priorities compared with the focus of the RAG.
59. One industry member expressed support for the research project number 6 Understanding connectivity, environmental drivers and adaptation strategies, stating that it will be important to understand the effects of climate change on low RBCs in the fishery.

60. The TSRA member queried if research project number 8 on understanding fisher behaviour should be commenced during the 2018/19 fishing season and elevated in priority, rather than waiting for the Plan to be implemented. The Scientific member advised that the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) undertaken by CSIRO for the Fishery already provides good baseline data. One industry member advised that it may take up to five years for behaviour to adapt to quota management. It was noted by the Working Group such research is likely to inform monitoring, the evaluation of existing managements arrangement such as input controls, as well as social and economic indicators.
61. The Scientific member advised that better understanding 0+ lobster abundance is useful for stock assessments. Simple data points such as GPS positions and number of 0+ lobsters present would assist in understanding the distribution of 0+. The Working Group **recommended** that the TRLRAG considering the merit and options for improving the index of 0+ lobster abundance, through logbooks or other means. The Working Group noted that this would may be relevant to the RAG data sub-committee.
62. The Working Group **agreed to support** the RAG advice on proposed research projects and priority rankings, noting that as an annual process, the list can be reviewed next year. The Working Group noted that more time may be available next year to consider strategic research needs.

9 Other Business

63. No other business was discussed.

10 Date and venue for next meeting

64. The Working Group agreed to tentatively schedule the next TRLWG meeting in early 2019 during the moon-tide closure 17-23 February, to be confirmed.
65. The Chair thanked the meeting participants for their contributions throughout the day. The meeting was closed in prayer by Mr Terence Whap at 3.30pm.

Attachment A

8th MEETING OF THE PZJA TORRES STRAIT TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP (TRLWG8)

TSRA Boardroom, Thursday Island (Level 1 Torres Strait Haus
46 Victoria Parade)

Thursday 8 November 2018 – 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM

DRAFT AGENDA

1 PRELIMINARIES

1.1 Welcome and apologies

The Chair will welcome members and observers to the 8th meeting of the WG.

1.2 Adoption of agenda

The WG will be invited to adopt the draft agenda.

1.3 Declaration of interests

Members and observers will be invited to declare any real or potential conflicts of interest and determine whether a member may or may not be present during discussion of or decisions made on the matter which is the subject of the conflict.

1.4 Action items from previous meetings

The WG will be invited to note the status of action items arising from previous meetings.

1.5 Out-of-session correspondence

The WG will be invited to note out of session correspondence on WG matters since the previous meeting.

2 UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

2.1 Industry, economic and scientific members

Industry, economic and scientific members and observers will be invited to provide an update on matters concerning the Torres Strait TRL Fishery.

2.2 Government agencies

The WGG will be invited to note updates from AFMA, TSRA and QDAF on matters concerning the Torres Strait TRL Fishery. AFMA will provide a summary of management arrangements for the 2017/18 fishing season, including the outcomes of the Federal Court case.

2.3 PNG National Fisheries Authority

The WG will be invited to note an update from the PNG National Fisheries Authority.

2.4 Native Title

The WG will be invited to note an update from Malu Lamar (Torres Strait Islander) Corporation RNTBC.

3 REPORT FROM TRLRAG HELD ON 18-19 OCTOBER 2018

The WG will be invited to note the outcomes of the TRLRAG meeting held on 18-19 October 2018.

4 PROPOSED MANAGEMENT PLAN

The WG will be invited to consider the process for adoption of a proposed Management Plan, including the role of the WG.

5 PROPOSED SECTORAL CATCH SHARES

The WG will be invited to consider the proposed amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries (Tropical Rock Lobster) Management Instrument 2018* to enable the implementation of sectoral catch shares in the Torres Strait TRL Fishery for the 2018/19 fishing season.

6 BETTER ALIGNING THE TAC SETTING PROCESS WITH THE FISHING SEASON

The WG will be invited to consider a proposal to better align the TAC setting process with the fishing season under the proposed Management Plan.

7 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2018/19 FISHING SEASON

The WG will be invited to consider management arrangements for the 2018/19 fishing season, including proposed moon-tide hookah closures.

8 DRAFT FIVE-YEAR RESEARCH PLAN FOR 2019/20 TO 2022/23

The WG will be invited to consider the new research planning framework for Torres Strait fisheries and research priorities for the Torres Strait TRL Fishery.

9 OTHER BUSINESS

The WG will be invited to raise other business for consideration.

10 DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING

The WG will be invited to consider the date and venue for the next meeting.