



18 March 2019

Dear Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery Licence Holder

### Revised Total Allowable Catch for the 2018-19 Fishing Season

I am writing to inform you that on 15 March 2019, the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) agreed to a revised total allowable catch (TAC) of 408.6375 tonnes for Australian boats in the Australian waters of the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery (TRL Fishery) for the 2018-19 fishing season<sup>1</sup>.

#### TAC Share for TIB Licence Holders

The TAC share for the Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) sector, under a revised TAC of 408.6375 tonnes, will be 270.395 tonnes (66.17 per cent share of the TAC). The TAC for the TIB sector is exclusively available to all TIB licence holders.

#### TAC Share for TVH Licence Holders

The TAC share for the Transferable Vessel Holder (TVH) sector, under a revised TAC of 408.6375 tonnes, will be 138.242 tonnes (33.83 per cent share of the TAC). The TAC for the TVH sector will be individually apportioned to TVH licence holders, through revised licence conditions, in accordance with individual provisional allocation notices of October 2007.

#### Final Australian TAC

Depending on cross-endorsement arrangements being agreed with Papua New Guinea (PNG) under the Torres Strait Treaty (the Treaty), AFMA may implement a final Australian TAC. A final Australian TAC will only be implemented by AFMA if the TAC available to Australian boats in the Australian waters increases due to the cross-endorsement agreement with PNG.

#### Other TRL management arrangements

Licence holders are also reminded that moon-tide hookah closures and a range of other management measures will continue to apply this season. Licence holders should familiarise themselves with all management arrangements that apply in the TRL Fishery prior to fishing. Further information can be found on the PZJA website at [www.pzja.gov.au](http://www.pzja.gov.au) or by contacting AFMA.

<sup>1</sup> The fishing season generally runs from 1 December each year through to 30 September the following year.

I have enclosed further relevant background information on the process for recommending and deciding on the TRL Fishery TAC and catch shares for the 2018-19 fishing season.

Should you have any further questions on the matters covered in this letter, please contact the AFMA Thursday Island office on 07 4069 1990 or [FisheriesTI@afma.gov.au](mailto:FisheriesTI@afma.gov.au). If you would also like to receive future management updates by email or SMS please contact the AFMA Thursday Island office to update your contact details.

Yours sincerely



Anna Willock  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

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## Relevant background information

At the start of each year, the TRL Working Group (TRLWG) recommends a TAC to the PZJA. This recommendation takes into account advice of the TRL Resource Assessment Group (TRLRAG). At their most recent meeting on 19 February 2019, the TRLWG recommended a global TAC of 641 tonnes for the TRL Fishery for the 2018-19 fishing season. The global TAC applies to the area of the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ) and is shared between Australia and PNG. The Australian TAC is Australia's catch share of the global TAC as determined by the terms of the Treaty. Australia and PNG have yet to agree on final catch sharing arrangements, in particular those relating to cross-endorsement. Until this agreement is reached, as advised above, the Australian TAC will be 408.6375 tonnes. I will advise of the final Australian TAC once agreement with PNG has been reached.

As advised in my letter dated 28 November 2018, on 26 November 2018 the PZJA agreed to the implementation of separate TAC shares for the Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) and Transferable Vessel Holder (TVH) sectors for the 2018-19 fishing season. The TIB sector will be able to take a 66.17 per cent share of the TAC, to be fished exclusively by TIB licence holders. The remaining 33.83 per cent of the TAC will be individually apportioned to TVH licence holders, via licence conditions, in accordance with individual provisional allocation notices of October 2007.

Noting the PZJA decisions outlined above, and pending agreement with PNG on cross-endorsement arrangements, further details on TAC arrangements for each sector are provided as follows.

## TAC arrangements for the TIB sector

The TAC for the TIB sector (TIB TAC) for the TRL Fishery 2018-19 fishing season will be administered as follows:

- a. The TIB TAC is 270.395 tonnes (66.17 per cent share of the TAC).
- b. The TAC for the TIB sector is exclusively available to all TIB licence holders.
- c. Catch disposal records (TDB02) will be used to account for catches against the TIB TAC. All TRL licence holders are reminded that, under the mandatory Fish Receiver System, it is a condition of your licence that all TRL taken and retained under your licence must be unloaded directly to a holder of a Fish Receiver Licence.
- d. If the TIB TAC is taken by TIB licence holders before the end of the fishing season, I will issue a notice under section 7 of the *Torres Strait Fisheries (Tropical Rock Lobster) Management Instrument 2018* (the Instrument) requiring commercial fishing by the TIB sector to cease. This will only happen if the reported TIB catch is likely to exceed 270.395 tonnes. As of 18 March 2019, the reported TIB catch is 63.007 tonnes.
- e. AFMA will monitor TIB sector catches against the TIB TAC, and provide regular catch reports to TIB licence holders on the remaining catch that is available to be taken. These reports will be made available on the PZJA website at [www.pzja.gov.au](http://www.pzja.gov.au) and also sent to TIB licence holders by email or SMS where licence holders have these details registered with AFMA. Licence holders can also contact the AFMA Thursday Island office, through the contacts provided at the end of this letter, to seek an update on catches.

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## TAC arrangements for the TVH sector

The TAC for the TVH sector for the TRL Fishery 2018-19 fishing season will be administered as follows:

- a. The TAC for the TVH sector will be individually apportioned to TVH licence holders, through revised licence conditions, in accordance with individual provisional allocation notices of October 2007. The TAC for the TVH sector is 138.242 tonnes (33.83 per cent share of the TAC). Each TVH licence holder will receive a letter outlining the licence condition setting their portion of the TAC. This portion may not reflect the allocation of quota under the *Torres Strait Fisheries (Quotas for Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar)) Management Plan 2018*, which is subject to a catch verification and appeals process.
- b. TVH licence holders will be able to trade their provisional quota within the sector. AFMA will facilitate this through variations to TVH licence conditions.
- c. Once TVH licence holders have exhausted their individual portion, including any leased quota, they are required to cease fishing. As of 18 March 2019, the reported TVH catch is 34.434 tonnes.
- d. Catch disposal records (TDB02) will be used to account for catches against the TVH licence holders' individual portions. All TRL licence holders are reminded that, under the mandatory Fish Receiver System, it is a condition of your licence that all TRL taken and retained under your licence must be unloaded directly to a holder of a Fish Receiver Licence.
- e. It is the responsibility of each TVH licence holder to monitor catches against the individual portion specified on each licence.
- f. AFMA will provide regular catch reports detailing the total catch by the TVH sector. Individual catches will not be reported on. These reports will be made available on the PZJA website at [www.pzja.gov.au](http://www.pzja.gov.au) and also sent to TVH licence holders by email or SMS where licence holders have these details registered with AFMA. Licence holders can also contact the AFMA Thursday Island office, through the contacts provided at the end of this letter, to seek an update on catches.

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