



4 March 2020

Dear TRL Fishery Licence Holder,

TRL Total Allowable Catch for the 2019-20 Fishing Season is now 392 917.5kgs

I am writing to advise that Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniam has determined an increase to the total allowable catch (TAC) of tropical rock lobster (TRL) in the Australian waters of the TRL Fishery from 200 tonnes to 392.917 tonnes for the 2019-20 fishing season (*Torres Strait Fisheries Tropical Rock Lobster (Total Allowable Catch) Amendment Determination (No. 1) 2020*). In line with the increased TAC please find the kilogram value of each quota unit and available catch for each TRL fishery sector outlined in the **Table 1** below.

This TAC increase is consistent with catch sharing arrangements between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) recently agreed under the Torres Strait Treaty. The arrangements comprise agreement on a global TAC of 582.1 tonnes and apportionment of catch between jurisdictions. Subject to PNG’s utilisation of its catch entitlements in Australian waters (through a process known as ‘cross endorsement’), the Minister may determine a further TAC increase. AFMA is working closely with the PNG National Fisheries Authority to finalise any cross endorsement arrangements by April 2020. A further explanation of how catch is shared between Australia and PNG is provided in an Enclosure to this letter.

The global TAC of 582.1 tonnes was recommended by the Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group (TRL RAG) and TRL Working Group (TRL WG) and agreed by the Protected Zone Joint Authority at their meeting on 20 January 2020. The global TAC was calculated by applying the results of the 2019 pre-season survey and catch and effort data to TRL Harvest Strategy. TRLRAG and TRLWG meeting records together with the TRL Harvest strategy are available on the PZJA website.

Table 1. Quota unit value and available catch for each TRL fishery sector under the increased TAC. All weights are provided in unprocessed weight in kilograms.

TRL Fishery Sector	TAC (kilograms)	Number of quota units	Value of each quota unit (kilograms)	Available catch (kilograms)
Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence holders	392,917.5	662,016*	0.393	260,118.452
Transferable Vessel Holder (TVH) licence holders		337,981		132,917.500

*held in trust by the TSRA

As always, licence holders should familiarise themselves with all management arrangements that apply in the TRL Fishery prior to the commencement of fishing. Further information can be

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found on the PZJA website at www.pzja.gov.au or by contacting AFMA. Additional information regarding how each TRL sector's catch will be monitored is provided in Enclosure to this letter.

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. 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



Selina Stoute
Senior Manager, Torres Strait Fisheries

Enclosures

- A Additional information regarding catch sharing arrangements with Papua New Guinea
- B Infographic of Torres Strait TRL Catch Sharing Arrangements 2019-20
- C Additional information regarding how each TRL sector's catch will be monitored

What are the Australia-PNG catch sharing arrangements this season?

The Torres Strait Treaty recognises the rights of both Australia and PNG to commercial fisheries in the area of the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ). The TSPZ is an area in the Torres Strait that includes both Australian and PNG waters. These rights include the right of Australia and PNG to fish in the waters of the other country. This practice is known as cross-endorsement and involves both countries nominating an agreed number of commercial fishing boats to fish an agreed share of the TAC. This share is usually 25% of the other country's TAC apportionment, unless otherwise agreed.

At their meeting held on 28 January 2020, AFMA and the PNG National Fisheries Authority (NFA) agreed the following (outlined in **Table 2**):

- a. As per Article 22(1) of the Treaty, the global TAC of 582.1 tonnes is to be apportioned within each jurisdiction equal to 85 per cent (494.785 tonnes) in Australian waters and 15 per cent in PNG waters (87.315 tonnes);
- b. Australian boats can take in Australian waters, part of the cross-endorsement catch entitlement ordinarily available to PNG boats in Australian waters, equivalent to Australia's cross-endorsement catch entitlement in PNG waters (equal to 21.829 tonnes);
- c. The remaining part of the PNG's cross-endorsement catch entitlement (101.867 tonnes) remains available for PNG boats to take in Australian waters under cross-endorsement arrangements; and
- d. In return, AFMA will not seek access to Australia's cross-endorsement catch entitlement in PNG waters and that this can instead be taken by PNG boats in PNG waters.
 - i. This is consistent with the PZJA agreement (on 19 November 2019) that subject to further consultation with stakeholders, the preferred arrangement for utilising Australia's cross-endorsement allocation within PNG's waters is to not seek cross-endorsement but rather pursue a preferential entitlement arrangement under Article 25 of the Treaty. AFMA remains committed to undertaking broader consultation with stakeholders, including licence holders, regarding the future utilisation of Australia's cross-endorsement allocation within PNG's waters.

Subject to final confirmation, PNG NFA have provisionally agreed to submit any nominations for cross-endorsement to AFMA by 31 March 2020. Pending PNG's utilisation of its catch entitlements in Australian waters the Australian TAC may be further increased. AFMA will write to all TRL Fishery licence holders if this happens.

Table 2. Catch apportionments and provisional cross-endorsement catch entitlements for the TRL Fishery for the 2019-20 fishing season.

Jurisdiction	Total Apportionment (kg)	Cross-endorsement entitlement to PNG vessels (kg)	Cross-endorsement entitlement to AU vessels (kg)
Australia	494,785 (85%)*	101,867.500 [#]	392,917.500
PNG	87,315 (15%)*	87,315	0
Total	582,100	189,182.500	392,917.500

* Based on the agreed distribution of TRL stocks in the TSPZ TRL Fishery between Australian and PNG waters.

[#] Under Article 23(4) of the Torres Strait Treaty, each Party is entitled to 25% of the catch share in the other Party's jurisdiction. This may be accessed by each Party through cross-endorsement. Under Article 25 of the Treaty, Parties can agree to transfer all or part of a given catch entitlement to the other Party.

How much can I catch?

The 2019-20 fishing season for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery (TRL Fishery) is until 30 September 2020 or until available quota units have been caught.

If you are fishing under a TIB licence

- 662,016 quota units, with a value of **260,118.452 kilograms** of TRL is available to be caught by Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence holders. Subject to PNG's utilisation of its catch entitlements in Australian waters and pending any nominations from PNG National Fisheries Authority for cross-endorsement, the TAC may be further increased. AFMA will write to all TRL Fishery licence holders if this happens.
- When this amount has been caught, TIB licence holders will no longer be permitted to fish commercially in the TRL Fishery (unless the total allowable catch (TAC) has been increased – see above).
- TIB licence holders will be provided with a notice by the Commonwealth Minister for Fisheries when this occurs.
- The mandatory Fish Receiver System (catch disposal records) will be used to account for catches by TIB licence holders against the TIB sector's quota holdings (held by the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) in trust).
- If a TRL is tailed, a weight conversion factor of 2.677 will be applied. This means that if an individual lands 1 kilogram of tailed TRL, 2.677 kilograms of TRL will be deducted from the uncaught quota amount.
- AFMA will monitor the catches of TIB licence holders against the TIB sector's quota holdings, and provide regular catch reports throughout the season to TRL Fishery licence holders on the remaining catch that is available to be taken. These reports will be made available on the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) website at www.pzja.gov.au and also sent to TRL Fishery licence holders by email and SMS where licence holders have these details registered with AFMA.
- Licence holders will also be able to check the catches of the TIB sector against the TIB sector's quota holdings at any stage by contacting the AFMA Thursday Island office on 07 4069 1990 or FisheriesTI@afma.gov.au.

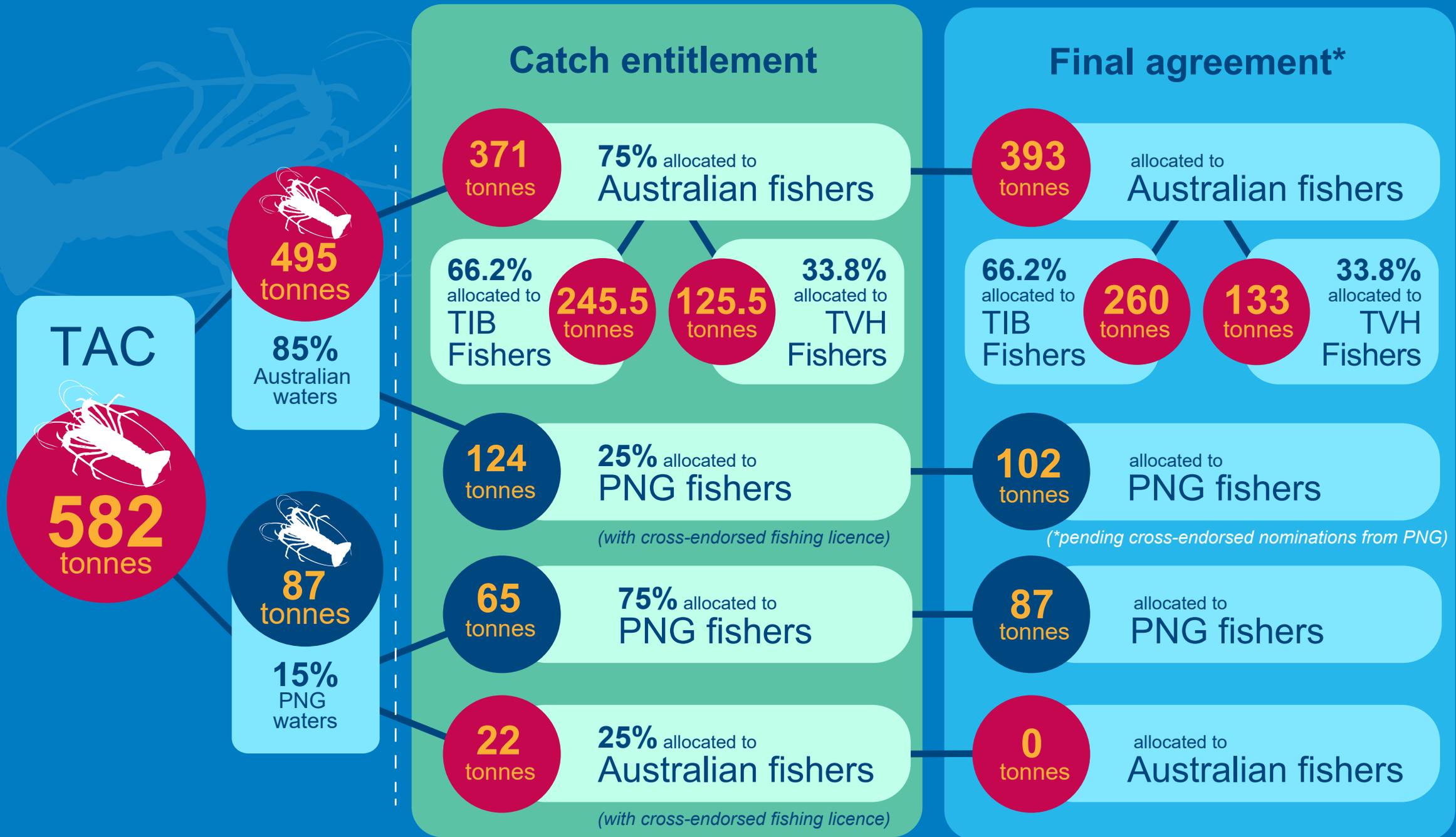
If you are fishing under a TVH licence

- 337,981 quota units, with a value of **132,917.5 kilograms** of TRL, have been allocated to individual Transferable Vessel Holder (TVH) licence holders. Subject to PNG's utilisation of its catch entitlements in Australian waters and pending any nominations from PNG National Fisheries Authority for cross-endorsement, the TAC may be further increased. AFMA will write to all TRL Fishery licence holders if this happens.
- Each TVH licence holder will receive an extract of the Register detailing the number and value of the quota units held by the individual based on this TAC increase.
- When all the quota units (including any leased units) held by a TVH licence holder have been caught, the licence holder will no longer be permitted to fish commercially in the TRL Fishery.
- It is the responsibility of each TVH licence holder to monitor their catches against the quota units that they hold.
- The Fish Receiver System (catch disposal records) will be used to account for TVH licence holders' catches against their quota unit holdings.
- If a TRL is tailed, a weight conversion factor of 2.677 will be applied. This means that if an individual lands 1 kilogram of tailed TRL, 2.677 kilograms of TRL will be deducted from the individual's uncaught quota amount.
- AFMA will provide regular catch reports detailing the total catch by the TVH sector (not individual catches). These reports will be made available on the PZJA website at www.pzja.gov.au and also sent to TRL Fishery licence holders by email and SMS where licence holders have these details registered with AFMA.
- TVH licence holders will also be able to check their quota holdings at any stage throughout the season by registering for GOFish, AFMA's e-licensing system. Licence holders can do this by contacting the AFMA Licensing team on 02 6225 5555 or licensing@afma.gov.au.

TORRES STRAIT TRL CATCH SHARING AGREEMENT 2019-20



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



TAC values have been rounded illustrative purposes only.