



15 November 2023

Dear Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery licence holder

Management Arrangements for the 2023-24 Fishing Season

The 2023-24 fishing season for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery (TRL Fishery) will commence on 1 December 2023. This letter details some key management arrangements that will apply this season.

Total Allowable Catch

On 10 November 2023, Senator the Hon. Murray Watt, Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry determined a total allowable catch (TAC) of 200,000 kilograms of tropical rock lobster (TRL) in the Australian waters of the TRL Fishery for the 2023-24 fishing season to apply for the fishing season commencing on 1 December 2023. It is expected that the TAC will be increased once the outcomes of the scientific assessment processes and the catch sharing arrangements under the Torres Strait Treaty between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) have been considered. Any increase in the TAC is expected to be determined by the end of February 2024.

Under this TAC, the value of each quota unit and available catch for each TRL Fishery sector is outlined in the table below. 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 per sector (kilograms)
Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence holders	200,000	662,016*	0.200000	132,403.597
Transferrable Vessel Holder (TVH) licence holders		337,981		67,596.403

* Held by the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)

A further explanation of how TACs are determined for the TRL Fishery, how catch is shared between Australia and PNG, and how each sector’s catches will be managed for the 2023-24 fishing season, is provided in the enclosed TRL Management Arrangements Booklet 2023-24 (**Enclosure A**).

Papua New Guinea Cross Endorsement Applications

The Papua New Guinea Fisheries Minister has written to the Minister Watt applying for cross endorsement licenses under the Torres Strait Treaty for PNG vessels to fish in Australian waters. AFMA is processing those applications, including through Native Title notification.

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 Canberra ACT 2610
 P 02 6225 5555
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Darwin
 PO Box 131
 Darwin NT 0801
 P 08 8943 0333
 F 08 8942 2897

Thursday Island
 PO Box 376
 Thursday Island QLD 4875
 P 07 4069 1990
 F 07 4069 1277

Lakes Entrance
 PO Box 408
 Lakes Entrance VIC 3909
 P:0447 019 916



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Moontide Hookah Closures

For the purpose of subsection 13(2) of the *Torres Strait Fisheries (Tropical Rock Lobster) Management Instrument 2018*, I provide notice that the use, possession or control, on a boat, of hookah gear to take, process or carry TRL will not be permitted during the 2023-24 fishing season during the moontide hookah closure periods shown in the calendar provided in **Enclosure B** to this letter. The first scheduled moontide hookah closure period starts on 7 February 2024.

These moontide hookah closures are in addition to the hookah closure period from 1 December and 31 January each fishing season. Free-diving, lamp fishing and traditional fishing are permitted during all hookah closure periods.

Should you have any questions concerning 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wez Norris'.

Wez Norris
Chief Executive Officer

Enclosures

- A TRL Fishery Management Arrangements Booklet 2023-24
- B TRL Fishery moontide hookah closure calendar for the 2023-24 fishing season