

45th Protected Zone Joint Authority Meeting

Meeting Outcomes

Tuesday 25 February 2025

Teleconference

Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, TSRA Chair George Nona, opened the 45th meeting of the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) at 4:30pm AEST with an Acknowledgment of Country and an opening prayer. An attendance list is at **Attachment A**.

Members noted the apologies from Minister Collins and Minister Perrett.

The Chair passed to the AFMA CEO to step through the agenda.

1. Total Allowable Catch for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster 2024-25 Fishing season and an approach for revising the empirical Harvest Control Rule

The PZJA:

- 1.1 **NOTED** that the Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group (TRLRAG) and the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) considered two different Harvest Control Rules (HCRs) to guide the total allowable catch (TAC) of TRL for the 2024-25 season and into the future.
- 1.2 **NOTED** that Traditional Inhabitant (known as the TIB sector) and non-Traditional Inhabitant (known as the TVH sector) representatives hold substantial differences of view as to the most appropriate HCR.
- 1.3 **AGREED** to set the 2024-25 global TAC at 688 tonnes, noting this is a “middle ground” between the catch outcomes derived from the two HCRs.
- 1.4 **REQUESTED** PZJA officials to work with relevant stakeholders and consultative forums throughout 2025 to give further consideration to a long-term HCR solution.

2. Total Allowable Catch under catch carryover provision for black teatfish

The PZJA:

- 2.1 **RECALLED** that AFMA was working with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) in respect of a total allowable catch (TAC) under catch carryover provision for black teatfish. In December 2024, DCCEEW indicated support for the provision.
- 2.2 **AGREED** to amend the Torres Strait Beche-de-mer Fishery Harvest Strategy (the Strategy) (specifically, decision rule 2.11.1.1) to give effect to the TAC under catch carryover provision for black teatfish. If implemented for 2025, 2 tonnes of under catch from 2024 will be carried over to the 2025 fishing season (to be added to the previously agreed 20 tonnes TAC).
- 2.3 **NOTED** that AFMA, as the PZJA licensing delegate, will undertake the relevant administrative processes to implement the TAC under catch carryover provision for black teatfish for the 2025 fishing season.

3. Total Allowable Catch for Spanish mackerel and coral trout for the 2025-26 Fishing Season, Torres Strait Finfish Fishery

The PZJA:

- 3.1 **NOTED** that the PZJA Finfish Resource Assessment Group (FFRAG) and the Finfish Working Group (FFWG) have provided consensus advice on recommended Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACC) for Spanish mackerel and coral trout for the 2025-26 fishing season of the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery.
- 3.2 **AGREED** that in accordance with this advice, for the 2025-26 fishing season of the Fishery, the TACC for Spanish mackerel and coral trout will be 77 tonnes and 123 tonnes respectively.
- 3.3 **NOTED** that AFMA, as the PZJA licensing delegate, will complete relevant administrative processes to implement the TACCs for the Fishery for the 2025-26 fishing season.

4. Other business

The Chair thanked the PZJA Standing Committee and Fishery Working Groups for their hard work to deliver clear advice and recommendations. The PZJA Secretariat agreed to circulate the final outcomes of the meeting (with all signatures) to members.

Members noted that the next face-to-face PZJA meeting will be organised after the Federal election, with a preference to hold the meeting on Thursday Island.

Close

The Chair delivered a closing prayer. The Chair thanked members and closed the meeting at 5:47pm AEST.



Attachment A

Meeting attendance

25 February 2025

Chair

- George Nona, Chair, Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA)

Members

- Wez Norris, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (Deputy to the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry)
- Pauline Jacob, Deputy Director-General, Fisheries and Forestry (Deputy to the Queensland Minister for Primary Industries)

Government Delegations

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

- Anna Willock, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
- Tod Spencer, Acting Torres Strait Fisheries Senior Manager
- Sarah Kirkcaldie, PZJA Secretariat

Torres Strait Regional Authority

- Charlie Kaddy, Chief Executive Officer

Department of Primary Industries (QLD)

- Dallas D'Silva, Executive Director, Fisheries Queensland
- John Kung, Acting Director, Fisheries Management, Fisheries Queensland

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Commonwealth)

- Jo Elphinstone, Director, Fisheries Branch

Office of the Queensland Minister for Primary Industries

- Lachlan Brennan, Senior Policy Advisor, Queensland Minister for Primary Industries

Apologies

- The Hon. Julie Collins MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- The Hon. Tony Perrett, Queensland Minister for Primary Industries