



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

28 November 2025

Dear Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery licence holder,

Management Arrangements for the 2025-26 Fishing Season

The 2025-26 fishing season for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery (TRL Fishery) will commence on 1 December 2025. This letter details some key management arrangements that will apply this season.

Total Allowable Catch

On 19 November 2025, the Hon Julie Collins MP, 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 2025-26 fishing season to apply for the fishing season commencing on 1 December 2025. It is expected that the TAC will be increased in line with the TRL harvest strategy, 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 2026.

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)

TRL Harvest Strategy Review

Following a recommendation from the TRL Resource Assessment Group in 2021 to review the empirical Harvest Control Rule (eHCR) as a critical component of the TRL harvest strategy, the PZJA Standing Committee has recommended the PZJA agree to implement the 'Osprey Rule' as the revised eHCR. A decision by the PZJA is expected to be made by the end of the year. The Osprey Rule will be used to calculate the Recommended Biological Catch of TRL for the 2025-26 fishing season. The Osprey Rule uses data from the pre-season TRL survey and catch per unit effort data from both the TIB and TVH sectors to produce a Recommended Biological Catch each season for the Fishery. The previously agreed eHCR, which used total average catch as an additional data input was no longer considered appropriate as it was an unreliable indicator of abundance as actual catches have been constrained due to non-stock-related reasons. *Ad hoc* adjustments to the eHCR were been applied in recent years while the review process was undertaken. Licence holders will be notified of the PZJA's decision once made.



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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 2024-25 fishing season, is provided in the enclosed TRL Management Arrangements Booklet 2025-26 (**Enclosure A**).

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 2025-26 fishing season during the moontide hookah closure periods listed below and shown in the calendar provided in **Enclosure B** to this letter.

2026 Closure periods:

1. 00:01 on 1 February until 23:59 on 5 February
2. 00:01 on 1 March until 23:59 on 6 March
3. 00:01 on 14 April until 23:59 on 20 April
4. 00:01 on 14 May until 23:59 on 20 May
5. 00:01 on 12 June until 23:59 on 18 June
6. 00:01 on 11 July until 23:59 on 17 July
7. 00:01 on 10 August until 23:59 on 16 August
8. 00:01 on 8 September until 23:59 on 14 September

All closure periods are listed in AEST.

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,

Wez Norris
Chief Executive Officer

Enclosures

- A TRL Fishery Management Arrangements Booklet 2025-26
- B TRL Fishery moontide hookah closure calendar for the 2025-26 fishing season