



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

5 February 2026

Dear TRL Fishery Licence Holder,

TRL Total Allowable Catch for the 2025-26 Fishing Season is now 268,852.5 kgs

I am writing to advise that the Hon. Julie Collins 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 268.85 tonnes for the 2025-26 fishing season (*Torres Strait Fisheries Amendment (Quotas for Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiaar)) (Total Allowable Catch) Amendment Determination 2026*). 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 was recommended by the TRL Resource Assessment Group and the TRL Working Group, who met 9-11 December 2025. The TAC was calculated by applying the revised empirical harvest control rule (known as the 'Osprey Rule') under the TRL Harvest Strategy and uses information from the TRL pre-season survey and catch per unit effort data from both the traditional inhabitant (TIB) and non-traditional inhabitant (TVH) sectors. The application of the Osprey Rule was recommended by the TRLRAG and TRL Working Group in October 2025 and agreed to be implemented by the PZJA in early December 2025. A revised copy of the TRL harvest strategy is now available on the PZJA website <https://www.pzja.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-12/TRL-Harvest-Strategy-December-2025.pdf>

The TAC increase is consistent with proposed catch sharing arrangements between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG). The arrangements comprise agreement on a global TAC of 398.3 tonnes and an apportionment of catch between jurisdictions. At this stage, AFMA has not received formal nominations from PNG in relation to utilisation of PNG's catch entitlement of TRL (70 tonnes) in areas of Australian jurisdiction of the Torres Strait Protected Zone under what is referred to as 'cross-endorsement' arrangements. A further explanation of how catch is shared between Australia and PNG is provided in the Enclosures to this letter.

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. *held in trust by the TSRA

TRL Fishery Sector	TAC (kilograms)	Number of quota units	Value of each quota unit (kilograms)	Available catch (kilograms)
Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence holders	268,852.5	662,016*	0.268853	177,985.191
Transferable Vessel Holder (TVH) licence holders		337,981		90,867.309

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As always, licence holders should familiarise themselves with all management arrangements that apply in the TRL Fishery outlined in the TRL Management Arrangements booklet 2025-26 available on the PZJA website at <https://www.pzja.gov.au/management-arrangements-booklets> or by contacting AFMA.

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



Ryan Murphy

Senior Manager, Torres Strait Fisheries

Enclosure

- A Additional information regarding catch sharing arrangements with Papua New Guinea
- B Infographic of Torres Strait TRL Catch Sharing Arrangements 2025-26

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.

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 398.3 tonnes is to be apportioned within each jurisdiction equal to 85 per cent (338.55 tonnes) in Australian waters and 15 per cent in PNG waters (59.7 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 14.9 tonnes);
- c. 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.

An illustration of this agreement is at **Enclosure B**.

Table 2. Catch apportionments and provisional cross-endorsement catch entitlements for the TRL Fishery for the 2025-26 fishing season.

Jurisdiction	Total Apportionment (tonnes)	Catch entitlement to PNG vessels (tonnes)	Catch entitlement to AU vessels (tonnes)
Australia	338.55 (85%)*	69.7 [#]	268.85
PNG	59.74 (15%)*	59.74	0
Total	398.3	129.44	268.85

* 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.

TORRES STRAIT TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER CATCH SHARING AGREEMENT 2025-26



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