



Ref: NTN2026-02

9 June 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Comment on a proposed management action in line with section 24HA(2) of the *Native Title Act 1993*

I am writing to you on behalf of the Secretariat of the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) regarding the proposed granting of Treaty endorsements to Papua New Guinea (PNG) licenced vessels to access PNG's entitlements in Tropical Rock Lobster/Kaiar Fishery, in Australian waters of the Torres Strait Protected Zone this season (until 30 September 2026). Further details of the proposed action can be found in **Attachments A-D - Class Notification under the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993***.

Under section 24HA(7), the PZJA must give the recipient of this notice an opportunity to comment on the action within a period defined by this notice. Please provide any comments on the proposed management action by **close of business 30 June 2026**, in writing, to the addressee below:

Australian Fisheries Management Authority
Att: Georgia Bourke
PO Box 376
Thursday Island, QLD, 4875

Email: ntn@afma.gov.au

Since 2019, AFMA has been publishing the native title notifications on the [PZJA website](#). With your agreement, AFMA is also seeking to publish any comments received in response to proposed management actions. Please tell us if you are happy for AFMA to proceed with publication of your comments on the PZJA website, or alternatively let us know if you would prefer that your response was not published.

If you have any problems meeting the timeframe or if you have any additional questions regarding the proposed management action, please contact me by phone on 07 4069 1990 or email ntn@afma.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Georgia Bourke
On behalf of PZJA Secretariat
Senior Management Officer
Torres Strait Fisheries
AFMA

AttachmentsA-D - Class Notification under the *Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993*

Class Notification under the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993*

Treaty endorsements for PNG licenced boats

Date of Issue: 9 June 2026

SECTION OF NTA	Section 24HA
DEPARTMENT/AGENCY	Australian Fisheries Management Authority on behalf of the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (the 'PZJA').
CONTACT NAME	Georgia Bourke
E-MAIL	ntn@afma.gov.au
TELEPHONE NO.	07 4069 1990
REFERENCE	NTN2026-02 – Treaty endorsements for PNG licenced vessels to access entitlements under the Torres Strait Treaty in the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery.

The Protected Zone Joint Authority intends to do the following act:

TYPE OF APPROVAL	Endorse PNG licences granted to Papua New Guinea (PNG) boats to fish in Australian waters of the Protected Zone in the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar/TRL) Fishery 2025-26 season.
NUMBER OF APPROVALS	Three (3) licences.
UNDER WHAT ACT	Section 20 of the <i>Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984</i> (the Act).

The approvals, if granted, will permit the following activity to happen:

NATURE OF ACTIVITY	<p>Under s20 of the Act the Minister (or a delegate) may endorse a boat which is licensed by PNG to authorise commercial fishing in Protected Zone commercial fisheries, including the Kaiar/TRL Fishery. This process is commonly known as cross-endorsement.</p> <p>The proposed action would allow three primary boats (and their associated tenders) to fish commercially for Kaiar/TRL within the Australian jurisdiction of the Torres Strait Protected Zone. It will not impact the total allowable catch (TAC) available to Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence holders. The PNG boats will be limited to catching the amount allocated to PNG under current catch sharing arrangements agreed by Australia and PNG, in accordance with the Torres Strait Treaty. This amount is separate to that available to the TIB and Transferrable Vessel Holder (TVH) licence holders. This season, PNG are entitled to take up to 70 tonnes of TRL in Australian waters.</p> <p>Conditions will be placed upon licences to ensure they operate consistently with Australian fisheries rules and regulations, and limit entry.</p> <p>Further information on the proposed management action is provided in Attachment B.</p>
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The above activity will be located within:

LOCATION OF ACTIVITY	<p>The proposed management action would apply to areas of Australian jurisdiction of the Protected Zone, south of the Fisheries Jurisdiction line.</p> <p>The extent of the Torres Strait Protected Zone is described in Annex 9 of the <i>Treaty between Australia and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea concerning Sovereignty and Maritime Boundaries in the area between the two Countries, including the area know as Torres Strait, and Related Matters</i> (the Torres Strait Treaty).</p> <p>The Fisheries Jurisdiction line is described in annex 8 of the Treaty.</p> <p>The Torres Strait Treaty can be accessed online at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1985/4.html.</p>
MAPS/PLANS	Attachment C shows the Australian area of the Torres Strait TRL Fishery within the Protected Zone, as described in Annex 9 of the Torres Strait Treaty.
NAME OF REGISTERED NATIVE TITLE CLAIMANT GROUP/S OR NAME OF REGISTERED NATIVE TITLE BODY CORPORATE	<p>Torres Strait Regional Seas Claim Kaurareg People #1 Torres Strait Regional Sea Claim (Malu Lamar (Torres Strait Islander) Corporation RNTBC)</p>
NAME OF NATIVE TITLE REPRESENTATIVE BODY	<p>Cape York Land Council Aboriginal Corporation Gur A Baradharaw Kod Torres Strait Sea and Land Council</p>

If approved, after consideration of all comments, the management option will be implemented for following period of time:

DURATION OF APPROVAL	<p>Until the licensed vessels have caught the whole of their catch entitlement, or the Kaiar/TRL fishery season closes on 30 Septmeber 2026, whichever is earlier.</p>
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You are invited to comment upon the class of proposed future acts outlined above. Please provide any comments on the proposed management action by close of business on 30 June 2026.

Please tell us in your response if you are happy for AFMA to proceed with publication of your comments on the PZJA website, or alternatively let us know if you would prefer that your response is not published.

Any comments must be **in writing**:

By email to: ntn@afma.gov.au

Or by mail addressed to:
Australian Fisheries Management Authority
Att: Georgia Bourke
PO Box 376
Thursday Island, QLD, 4875

Cross endorsement under the Torres Strait Treaty – where and when vessels can fish

1. AFMA, on behalf of the Australian Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has received a formal application for three PNG licensed boats (and their associated tenders) to fish in the Australian waters of the Protected Zone in the 2025-26 Kaiar/TRL fishery season.
2. Under the Torres Strait Treaty, Australia has an obligation to co-operate with PNG on the issuing and endorsement of licences to authorised commercial fishing in Protected Zone Fisheries.
3. If approved, these vessels will be able to fish for kaiar/TRL in the Australia waters of the Protected Zone, south of the Fisheries Jurisdiction line (see dashed line on the map at **Attachment C**). This excludes the southern edge of the TRL fishery, in the “Outside But Near” area (see pink area on the map at **Attachment C**).
4. While fishing in Australian waters, cross endorsed boats will be required to operate consistently with Australian fisheries rules and regulations, as well as additional requirements including a prohibition on making landfall, requiring vessel monitoring systems on all tender boats, and prohibited areas around inhabited islands (see **Attachment D**). These prohibited areas seek to minimise the impact to Traditional Inhabitants and Native Title Holders. This will be enforced through licence conditions.
5. Cross endorsed vessels would be able to fish until the the catch entitlement apportioned to PNG is caught (further details below), or the season closes on 30 Septmeber 2026, whichever is earlier.
6. Cross endorsement of PNG vessels has previously occurred, most recently in 2024.

TAC Amount to be accessed

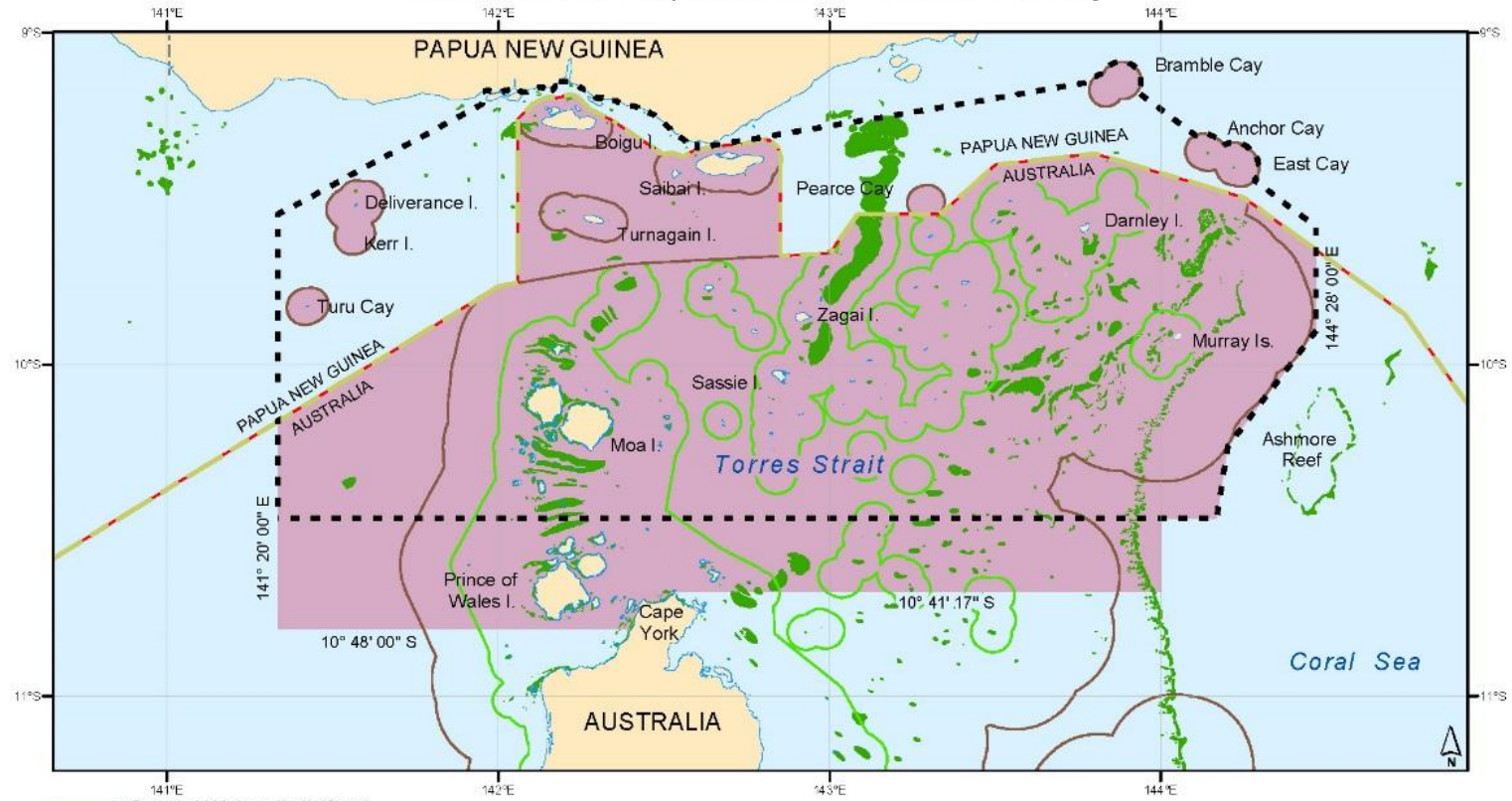
7. The TAC for the whole Kaiar/TRL fishery is informed by expert advice from the TRL Resource Assessment Group (TRLRAG) and TRL Working Group (TRLWG) each year in December. These advisory groups consist of a range of members, including TIB representative members.
8. Following these meetings, AFMA and the PNG National Fisheries Authority (NFA) negotiate catch sharing arrangements for the fishery. The amount PNG fishers are entitled to under cross endorsement arrangements is discussed and agreed every year, in accordance with provisions under the Torres Strait Treaty. This year, NFA has advised that PNG TRL industry members would like to actively access that catch entitlement.
9. This is a separate amount to that available to Australian fishers, and will not affect what is available for TIB and TVH licenced fishers.
10. The amount TRL available for PNG to catch in Australian waters of the TSPZ this season is 70 tonnes (whole weight).

Data collection and monitoring

11. AFMA and NFA have a close working relationship. Each year NFA share catch data from the PNG TRL Fishery, which is included in TRLRAG and TRLWG discussions in December each year.
12. Cross endorsed vessels will be required to complete and return an Australian Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Daily Fishing Log (the same TRL04 logbook that TVH operators complete), as well as report their weighed catch landings via the Torres Strait Catch Disposal Record (TDB02), as is required by all Australian licenced fishers.
13. NFA will provide Vessel Management System (VMS) details to AFMA to monitor the each primary boat and each tender boat when they are operating in Australian waters.

Torres Strait Fisheries

Area of the Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery



- Coastal Waters limit (3nm)
- Exclusive Economic Zone limit (200nm)
- Fisheries Jurisdiction line
- Protected Zone Boundary
- Territorial Sea limit (12nm)
- Low tide elevations and reefs
- Torres Strait Fisheries**
- Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery



Produced by Geoscience Australia
for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, August 2006
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Geographic
Datum: WGS84

- NOTES:
1. The area of the Fishery is sourced from the Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations 1985
 2. Within this fishery, arrangements exist between the Commonwealth and QLD, whereby the Coastal Waters of that State are deemed part of the AFZ
 3. The Fisheries Jurisdiction Line and Protected Zone shown on this map are established under the Treaty between Australia and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. This Treaty entered into force on 15 February 1985
 4. The maritime zone boundaries shown on this map are sourced from the 'Australian Maritime Boundaries (AMB) v2.0'

GeoCat #: 64948

