

Background information and Exposure Draft *Torres Strait Fisheries (Quotas for Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar)) Management Plan Amendment 2020*

Under subsection 17 of the TRL Plan, the PZJA must undertake a review of the allocation of quota units to the Traditional Inhabitant sector within two years of the TRL Plan commencement (which will be 30 November 2020).

Relevantly, at its meeting on 19 November 2019 the PZJA:

- a. agreed in principle that the review of allocation be undertaken by an Independent Allocation Advisory Panel (IAAP), in accordance with the PZJA's Fisheries Management Paper No. 2. Guidelines for the formation of allocation advisory panels for the allocation of fishing concessions in Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority Fisheries where fisheries management arrangements change significantly (FMP 2); and
- b. directed the PZJA Standing Committee to provide draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for an IAAP, including its proposed membership and process, to the PZJA by April 2020 for the PZJA to confirm its in principle decision.

The Australian and State Government response to COVID-19 risks redirected the focus of state and Commonwealth public services on preparedness and assisting impacted industries and stakeholders. It also impacted the way the government has been able to conduct business with stakeholders. For the same reasons, the Torres Strait Regional Authority *Fisheries Regional Ownership Framework* (FROF) project has also been delayed. The PZJA agreed in November 2019 to commence the allocation review following the completion of the FROF project, which was anticipated at that time to be by 30 June 2020. For these reasons an IAAP process was not able to be properly resourced or effectively conducted before the end of the review period specified in the TRL plan (30 November 2020). In particular, central to an effective IAAP process will be consultation based heavily on face-to-face meetings, which in the current environment cannot be undertaken effectively.

Having regard to the above, the review period strikes a reasonable balance between an extended timeframe for reviewing the allocation and providing reassurance to stakeholders that the PZJA's original commitment to develop quota allocation approaches for the Traditional Inhabitant sector remains.