

38th Protected Zone Joint Authority Meeting

Meeting Outcomes

Tuesday 17 August 2021

Teleconference

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair opened the 38th meeting of the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) at 10:07am AEST with an Acknowledgment of Country. An attendance list is provided at **Attachment A**.

The Chair noted that the last PZJA meeting was on 28 January 2021 to discuss the Global Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery for 2020-21 and TAC for Spanish mackerel and coral trout within the Finfish Fishery.

The Chair highlighted the opening of black teatfish fishery in May, which was a great success, with high levels of cooperation from industry as well as excellent collaboration between the PZJA agencies. The Chair thanked all staff involved in the work, which would pave the way for the future operation of the fishery and generate benefits for Torres Strait communities.

2. Policy approval for additional legislative amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* and the *Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations 1985*.

2.1. The PZJA **APPROVED** the following three amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* (the Act) to:

- a. make a technical amendment to section 42(1) (q) of the Act where currently an officer may 'sell any fish seized by him or her under this Act' to make this requirement consistent with section 84(1)(t) of the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* where an officer may 'sell or otherwise dispose of any fish seized by him or her under this Act'
- b. extending the statutory limit of prosecution for offences under the Act from 12 months to two years, in order to make this requirement consistent with section 95(7) of the *Fisheries Management Act 1991*, which enables a prosecution for an offence to be commenced within two years after the commission of the offence; and
- c. provide for the Minister to be able to declare that a person must hold a master fisherman's licence for specific fisheries.

2.2. The PZJA **APPROVED** following two amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations 1985* (the Regulations) to:

- a. update the Regulations relating to distinguishing number requirements for licensed boats to align with current licensing practice; and
- b. enable a licence fee to be paid for a Fish Receiver Licence and a licence to fish without a boat.

2.3. The Chair noted that these amendments will provide greater flexibility for AFMA in relation to certain compliance and management functions in the Torres Strait. Fishers can also benefit from AFMA having greater flexibility.

2.4. The PZJA also **REAFFIRMED** previous approvals in March 2017, 8 October 2019 and 27 August 2020 to amend the Act and the Regulations to make specific amendments as detailed in Attachment C of the paper.

2.5. The PZJA **NOTED** that, prior to any public consultation process, the PZJA will be given the opportunity to consider the proposed amendments.

3. Start of Season Total Allowable Catch for the Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery

- 3.1. The PZJA **AGREED** that consistent with advice from the PZJA Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group (TRLRAG) and TRL Working Group (TRLWG), for the Australian Torres Strait TRL Fishery (TRL Fishery) to have a start of season total allowable catch (TAC) of 200 tonnes (unprocessed weight) for the 2021-22 fishing season, commencing on 1 December 2021.
- 3.2. Setting a start of season TAC of 200 tonnes for the 2021-22 fishing season is consistent with the approach taken by the PZJA for the past fishing seasons since the TRL Management Plan was implemented.

4. Other business

Members discussed briefly the proposed PZJA face-to-face meeting in November 2021 on Thursday Island. The PZJA Secretariat is liaising with TSRA and Queensland to find an appropriate meeting date in November.

Close

The Chair closed the meeting at 10:16am AEST.

Meeting attendance

17 August 2021

PZJA members

Chair

- Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniham, Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries and Assistant Minister for Industry Development

Members

- Mr Napau Pedro Stephen AM, Chair Torres Strait Regional Authority
- The Hon. Mark Furner MP, Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities

Government Delegations

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

- Wez Norris, Chief Executive Officer
- Anna Willock, Executive Manager, Fisheries Management Branch
- Steve Bolton, Senior Manager, Northern Fisheries
- Selina Stoute, Senior Manager, Thursday Island
- Saiful Marbun, Senior Management Officer

Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

- George Day, Assistant Secretary, Fisheries Branch

Queensland Government Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

- Mr Graeme Bolton, Deputy Director-General, Fisheries and Forestry

Torres Strait Regional Authority

- Leilani Bin-Juda, Chief Executive Officer
- Mark Anderson, Manager, Fisheries Programme

Office of Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniham

- Ben Mitchell, Adviser-Fisheries