



TRADITIONAL INHABITANT IDENTIFICATION VERIFICATION

Frequently Asked Questions for Applicants

What is a Traditional Inhabitant?

As defined in the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*, the *Torres Strait Treaty* and in line with decisions of the Protected Zone Joint Authority, a traditional inhabitant, is:

- a) A Torres Strait Islander who lives in the Protected Zone or adjacent coastal area of Australia and is an Australian citizen who maintains traditional customary associations with the area in relation to subsistence or livelihood or social, cultural or religious activities;

OR

- b) An Aboriginal traditional inhabitant of the Torres Strait or the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) as defined under the *Torres Strait Treaty* and who is resident in that area;

OR

- c) A Papua New Guinea traditional inhabitant from the PNG area of jurisdiction of the Protected Zone who is now an Australian citizen and resides in the Protected Zone or adjacent coastal area of Australia and who was granted permanent residency status under the 1978/79 Immigration Taskforce Amnesty List, or is a descendent of such a person¹.

Why do I need to be verified as a Traditional Inhabitant?

Traditional inhabitants are eligible for licences granted under the Act that are not available to, or have limited availability to, people who are not traditional inhabitants. Some of these authorities may provide access in fisheries that are reserved exclusively for traditional inhabitants.

If you are seeking to apply for a Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence for the first time to commercially fish in the Australian jurisdiction of the TSPZ you must first be recognised as “traditional inhabitants”. You will need to have completed a *Traditional Inhabitant Identification Form* (ID Form). ID Forms are available from AFMA and must be signed by two identifying persons, the Councillor of the community you reside in, and the Mayor of the same Council. You can submit the completed ID Form to AFMA together with your fishing licence application by emailing licensing@afma.gov.au.

What does being a verified Traditional Inhabitant mean?

¹Following consultation with Australian traditional inhabitants, the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) determined In 1988 that for the purposes of fisheries management it would extend that definition of a traditional inhabitant to also include former PNG nationals who were granted amnesty in 1978 and their descendants, and to aboriginal people living in the adjacent coastal area (Northern Peninsula Area) who are generally the traditional owners of that area.



Being a verified traditional inhabitant means that you are eligible to apply to the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) for a Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence, and upon payment of a nominal fee, undertake commercial fishing activities with the TSPZ and outside but near areas. This access is valid so long as you hold a valid TIB licence. A TIB licence is not required to undertake traditional fishing.

TIB licences are valid for a period of 12 months. ID forms are not required upon renewal of a TIB licence, however you will be asked to re-confirm your residential address to verify that you continue to reside in the Torres Strait Protected Zone or adjacent coastal area of Australia.

Access to commercially fish in a Protected Zone commercial fishery under a TIB licence is not limited. This means that anyone who meets the eligibility criteria of a traditional inhabitant can obtain a licence.

Roles and responsibilities

Your traditional inhabitant status or identity must be verified by two people; the Councillor of the community you resides in, and the Mayor of the same Council:

What is your role as an applicant?

It is your responsibility to request verification from each relevant signatory. Should additional information be sought from the Councillor or Mayor, the onus of proof lies with you, in other words, you are responsible for providing a family tree and/or other evidence to support your traditional inhabitant eligibility.

NOTE: It is an offence under s136.1(1) of the Criminal Code Act 1995 to make a false or misleading statement or to omit any matter or thing without which the statement is misleading.

What is the role of the Councillor?

The first identifying person (the Councillor) must declare how long they have known you as the applicant and confirm which of the three criteria of eligibility applies to the you (refer to *What is a Traditional Inhabitant?* above).

If you are either (a) or (b) above, you should be prepared to:

- supply a family tree and/or evidence to support your claim that you reside in the relevant areas (being either the Protected Zone, or relevant community of the NPA, if required);
- confirm that you are an Australian citizen.

If you are described as (c) above, you should be prepared to:

- supply a letter from the Department of Home Affairs) confirming that you are a former



Traditional Inhabitant from Papua New Guinea and have satisfied the amnesty criteria and subsequently been granted permanent residency in Australia;

OR

- if you are a descendant of such person, you have attached a letter from Home Affairs for your parent and a copy of your birth certificate as evidence that you are related to the person named in the letter;
- confirm that you (or your parent) are now an Australian citizen;

What is the role of the Mayor?

The second identifying person (the Mayor), must be the Mayor of the same Council as the first identifying person. They must also either declare they have known you for a determined number of years, or have sighted any supporting documentation attached, as requested by the first identifying person.

Note: the Councillor's declaration is insufficient supporting documentation for the second identifying person to independently determine whether you meet the described criteria.

Contact Information

For more information relating to TIB licences or Traditional Inhabitant Identification please contact AFMA.

AFMA Thursday Island Office		AFMA Licensing	
Phone:	(07) 4069 1990	Phone:	1300 723 621
Fax:	(07) 4069 1277		(02) 6225 5555
Email:	fisheriesTI@afma.gov.au	Email:	licensing@afma.gov.au