

**TORRES STRAIT TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER  
WORKING GROUP (TRLWG) MEETING No.2**

**07<sup>th</sup> – 08<sup>th</sup> August, 2013**

**AFMA Pearls Building, Victoria Parade, Thursday Island**

**MEETING TIMES: Wednesday 11:30am – 5:00pm; Thursday 8:30am – 5:00pm**

## **AGENDA**

1. Preliminaries
  - 1.1. Preliminaries – Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Chairs Opening Remarks/Meeting attendance/Declaration of Interests/Apologies
  - 1.2. Review and Adoption of Agenda
  - 1.3. Correspondence (AFMA)
  - 1.4. Ratification of TRLWG Meeting No.1
  - 1.5. Action Items from TRLWG Meeting No.1
2. Updates
  - 2.1. PZJA Forums:
    - Stakeholder Forum (TSRA)
    - TSSAC (AFMA)
    - TSPMAC (AFMA)
  - 2.2. Communication Strategy/Community Consultation (TSRA)
3. The Management Plan
  - 3.1. Updated Timeframe/Steps for Management Plan Development (AFMA)
  - 3.2. Summation - Qld TRL Fishery Policy and Licencing (QDAFF)
  - 3.3. Unresolved Issues from the Draft Management Plan (AFMA)
  - 3.4. Fisheries Management Provisions outside of the Management Plan (AFMA)
4. Other business
  - 4.1. TIB Primary vessel tenders (AFMA)
  - 4.2. TIB Primary ownership (AFMA)
  - 4.3. 2013 TRL Catch and Effort Update (AFMA)
  - 4.4. TRL Interim Management Arrangements (TSRA)
  - 4.5. TRL Research Priorities (AFMA)
5. Next Meeting

Individuals wishing to attend the meeting as an observer are required to contact the Chair, Anne Clarke: c/o TRLWG Executive Officer – Brendan Rayner ([Brendan.rayner@afma.gov.au](mailto:Brendan.rayner@afma.gov.au)).

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
<b>Actions arising from previous Working Group</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 1.5 FOR NOTING</b>

## PURPOSE

That the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) NOTE the actions items from the previous working group meeting on 10-11 April 2013.

## BACKGROUND

The April meeting of the TRLWG was the first since May 2007. Prior to that the group had maintained a regular schedule of progress against actions items, inline with the development of the Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Management Plan.

## DISCUSSION

Below are the action items from the last TRLWG meeting. They have been provided to the current working group to provide some history of the issues and progress issues that are still relevant.

Pending action items from the April 2013 meeting:

#	Action Item	Agenda	Champion	Progress	Due Date
1)	AFMA to follow up on the previous research conducted on tail marking of lobster and to provide any report/s along with information on current legislation to the TRLWG out of session.	1.5	AFMA	Initiated	June 2013
2)	Consult with communities and return to the next Working Group with proposed areas where traditional inhabitants would seek to have any form of commercial fishing prohibited (i.e. areas provided for traditional fishing only).	1.5	TSRA	Initiated	June 2013
3)	What are the arrangements for managing the number and operation of charter boats in the Torres Strait.	1.5	QDAFF		June 2013
4)	QDAFF to provide the TRLWG out of session with contacts/ information on the process for TIBs accessing East Coast quota.	2.2	QDAFF		June 2013
5)	QDAFF to provide the TRLWG out of session with detailed information on the process for TIB and TVH fishers seeking cross-endorsement to fish in Papua New Guinea (PNG) waters.	2.2	AFMA		June 2013
6)	TSRA to provide the TRLWG with an update on work conducted by the Fisheries and Economic development program.	4.2	TSRA		June 2013
7)	Scientific member to present results on recent MSE at the next TRLWG and to circulate any background information out of session	4.2	CSIRO	Initiated	June 2013

8)	QDAFF to provide information on the provisions for mariculture and aquaculture of TRL in the Torres Strait	5.1	QDAFF		June 2013
9)	To investigate whether a register of TIB Master Fishermen's License holders has been kept in order to facilitate traditional inhabitant employment in the TVH sector.	5.2	AFMA/ Chair		December 2013
10)	AFMA to provide out of session FMN 47 (Restrictions on size of boats) to the TRLWG.	5.2	AFMA	Complete	June 2013
11)	TSRA as the lead agency for facilitating consultation with Torres Strait Communities to prepare an information package with assistance from AFMA and QDAFF regarding consultation on the development of the TRL Management Plan.	5.2	PZJA	Initiated	TBC
12)	AFMA to circulate CSIRO Hookah Diving Research Report from 1994	6.1	AFMA	Complete	June 2013

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
<b>Updates PZJA Forums - TSPMAC</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 2.1 FOR NOTING</b>

## **PURPOSE**

That the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) note the outcomes of the recent Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC) meeting.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the TSPMAC was held on 17-18 July 2013 in Cairns. The main items discussed were the outcomes of the 2013 Sustainability Assessment for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF), the preliminary results of the community consultation regarding boat and gear size and the proposed changes to season date.

## **DISCUSSION**

The key outcomes of TSPMAC 14 are summarised below. Minutes will be posted on the PZJA website when finalised.

### **Sustainability Assessment for trawl bycatch in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery**

Dr Roland Pitcher presented the results of the 2013 sustainability assessment for trawl bycatch in the TSPF. The 2013 study was an update of the 2005 sustainability assessment project, "*Seabed mapping and characterisation project*". The 2013 assessment found that the sustainability risks to non-target species have been greatly reduced from those detected in 2005, which can largely be attributed to the reduced trawl footprint and low effort currently occurring in the fishery.

The MAC noted how positive these results were, and agreed that it is important to continue to monitor the sustainability of trawl bycatch, particularly if effort continues to increase. The report also found that many common bycatch species have a fast growth rate and high fecundity, which means the sustainability risk to these species is often quite low, even if caught in high numbers. Dr Pitcher also explained that the methods used in this project are conservative in nature, which means the results are likely to be an overestimate and risks to species less than that reported. A full copy of the report is available on the [PZJA website](#).

### **Trial Perceptions**

The MAC noted the preliminary outcomes from the indigenous community consultation undertaken in the Torres Strait during May 2013. The project aimed to document indigenous community views on a proposed trial of larger boats and gear in the TSPF. Principle investigator Anthony de Fries explained that the communities' comments and subsequent report were still being finalised.

Mr de Fries advised the TSPMAC that the major concerns highlighted by the communities he visited related to:

- The lack of benefits flowing from the prawn fishery to the local communities.

- The risk to the environment, e.g. from vessels sinking.
- The impact of the bigger boats and gear on traditional fisheries, particularly Tropical Rock Lobster.

The MAC heard that the communities suggested some options for creating benefits to communities, including a cadet program, employing indigenous crew and the use of facilities on the local islands.

The MAC discussed the steps already in place to ensure sustainability of the fishery and recommended that this information be better communicated to local communities, via regular posters or newsletters. The MAC also supported further exploration of options to improve the flow of benefits back to communities from this fishery.

Once a draft final report from the consultation is available, it will be presented to the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee for comment before being finalised and made available on the PZJA website.

### **Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Season Dates**

The MAC discussed a proposal from industry members around future TSPF season dates, and the possibility of opening the season earlier to provide licence holders more time to market prawns for the Easter period, which is typically a peak period for prawn purchasing.

The MAC noted that the season start date was originally set for 1 March to complement the NPF season and heard from the scientific member that there were historically good catches in February, and there would be no sustainability concerns to open the fishery earlier. The MAC also heard that the closure provided a social benefit as it is a period of time where there are no trawlers in the Torres Strait Protected Zone. As such, the MAC agreed that Torres Strait communities would need to be further consulted before a decision on trialling an earlier season date is made.

The TSPMAC agreed that an extension to the season should be trialled for one year, dependant on the outcomes of consultation with indigenous communities.

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
<b>Updates PZJA Forums - TSSAC</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 2.1.2 FOR NOTING</b>

## **PURPOSE**

That the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) note the outcomes of the recent Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) meeting.

## **BACKGROUND**

The TSSAC met on 19 June 2013 to finalise reports for the 2012/13 research year and endorse funding for projects for the 2013/14 research year.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Finished Projects from the 2012/13 Research Year**

#### **Empowering Torres Strait Islanders to Have Greater Engagement in the Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Process**

Principal Investigator Chris Calogeras reviewed what opportunities there are for Torres Strait Islanders (TSIs) to be involved in RD&E in the Torres Strait. During the undertaking of this project, there were significant development of the TSRA Land and Sea Management Unit Ranger program and in turn what limited opportunities there were for TSIs in RD&E are now nearly all completed by trained Rangers.

#### **Sustainability Assessment for Trawl Bycatch in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery**

Principal Investigator Roland Pitcher undertook a desktop study in early 2013, updating the 2005 sustainability assessment for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery titled "*seabed mapping and characterization project*". This project found that the sustainability risks to non-target species in the 2005 assessment were greatly reduced in the current assessment. This was mainly a result of the low level of effort currently occurring in the TSPF. The project noted that if effort were to increase in the fishery, another assessment could be undertaken to monitor sustainability. The report also found that many common bycatch species have a fast growth rate and high fecundity, which means the sustainability risk to these species is often quite low, even if caught in high numbers.

#### **Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the TS: gaining an understanding of Indigenous communities' perceptions regarding boat & gear length in the TSPF**

Principal Investigator Anthony De Fries undertook consultation with four Torres Strait Island communities in May 2013. The purpose of the project was to gain an understanding of community views on having larger boats and gear in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF). The draft report is currently being finalized at which time it will be presented to the TSSAC for consideration.

## **Torres Strait Research Repository**

Principal Investigator Tonya van der Velde updated a searchable research repository database with TSSAC funded projects from 2006 to the present. This CSIRO managed database will allow future Principal Investigators to search the database for gaps in research for future investigation and ensure research is not repeated over time.

## **Vulnerability of Torres Strait Fisheries and Supporting habitats to Climate Change**

Principal Investigator David Welch undertook a desktop study investigating the vulnerability of the Torres Strait to the impacts of climate change. This looked at the susceptibility of key commercial species and habitats. The outcomes of this project will be presented at a seminar held during the week of 13<sup>th</sup> August for anyone with interest. An advert will be placed in the Torres News closer to the date.

## **Turtle and Dugong Research Desktop Review**

Principal Investigator Nicolas Pilcher investigated Turtle and Dugong research that has taken place in the Torres Strait to determine whether current conclusions of abundance and sustainability are substantiated. It was determined that Dugong research is robust enough, however Turtle research may need further review. The final amendments to the report are currently being made.

## **Survey, Stock Assessment and MSE for the Torres Strait Rock Lobster fishery**

Principal Investigators Eva Plaganyi and Darren Dennis undertook a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) of the TRL fishery assessing the impacts on the fishery and incomes of Torres Strait Islanders under several conditions such as the removal of CDEP payments and the increasing of the scope and size of traditional Inhabitant fishers. Further, CSIRO researchers undertook the annual TRL survey and stock assessment, providing both the preliminary TAC for 2012 and the forecasted TAC for 2013.

## **Projects continuing in the 2013/14 Research Year**

### **Characterization of Traditional Subsistence Fisheries in the TS/PNG Treaty Communities**

Principal Investigator Sara Busilacchi undertook three trips to Daru during the 2012/13 research year to undertake creel surveys. This project has been approved for the final year of funding for the 2013/14 research year.

### **Smart phone technology for remote data collection in Torres Strait Traditional Inhabitant Finfish Fisheries**

Principal Investigators Klaas Hartmann and Dan French are investigating the use of Smartphone technology in the form of an application to monitor catch data, whereby fishermen enter daily catch records which is stored and sent to AFMA when phone signal is active. The PIs travelled to Erub Island in May 2013 and gained significant understanding of the requirements of the fishermen and contacts to drive the project. This project is funded for 2013/14.

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
<b>The Management Plan Timeframe for Management Plan Development</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 3.1 FOR DISCUSSION</b>

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this discussion paper is to update the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) on the steps required to implement a Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Management Plan in time for the start of the 2015 fishing season.

## **BACKGROUND**

The importance of implementing a TRL Management Plan in a timely manner has been highlighted by the traditional inhabitant sector and is acknowledged by all fishery stakeholders. It was agreed by the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) that following the completion of a structural adjustment in 2012 and removal of the interim management arrangements from the TRL fishery in 2013 that implementation of a Management Plan would be progressed as a priority.

This commitment was reaffirmed by the PZJA Standing Committee during its March 2013 meeting and by the Chair of the PZJA, the Hon Joe Ludwig at the 12 June TRL stakeholder forum. The PZJA is now working toward the implementation of a quota based plan for the 2015 TRL fishing season.

To date there has been one meeting of the TRLWG on 10-11 April at which the group was provided an overview of the previous decisions and commitments underpinning the progression toward an output controlled fishery (copies of the PZJA history of decisions from TRLWG #1 are available on request).

## **DISCUSSION**

The following draft schedule details the upcoming meetings and consultations required to prior the Draft TRL Management Plan being provided to the PZJA for consideration and endorsement before commencing the public comment period:

- TRLWG #2 (7-8 August)
- TRL Community Consultation (commences 20 August on Hammond Is.)
- TRL Resource Assessment Group (3-4 September)
- TRL Community Consultation (finalised 7 November on NPA)
- TRLWG #3 (Late November)
- Meeting with drafter
- Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (early December)

- Final Draft Management Plan to PZJA for consideration/endorsement for public comment (late December)

Also provided is a longer term schedule (Attachment 1) that details meetings and consultations that are required for the implementation of the TRL Management Plan prior to the start of the 2015 fishing season.

# Tropical Rock Lobster Management Plan

Timeline for Management Plan Implementation

## 2013



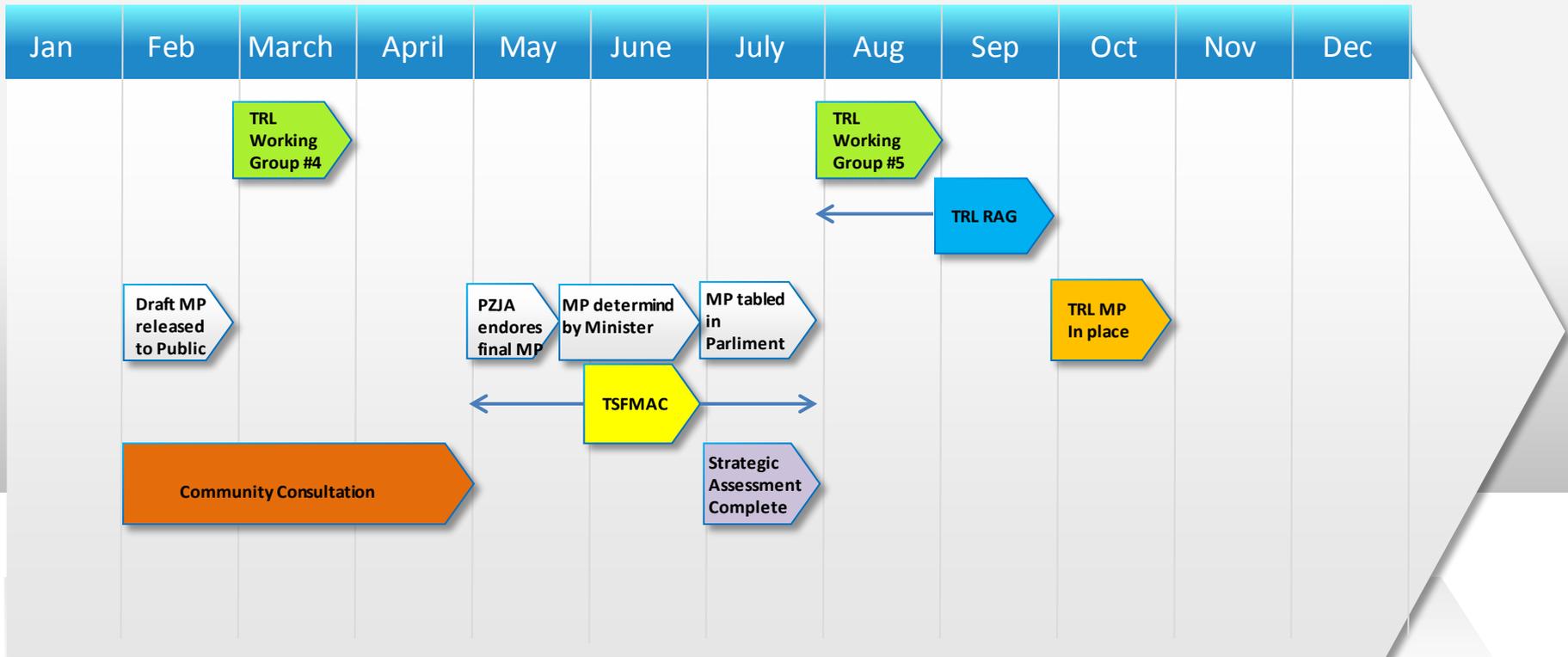
### Dependencies

- Agreement from TRL WGs
- Holding a TSFMAC
- Successful stakeholder consultation

# Tropical Rock Lobster Management Plan

Timeline for Management Plan Implementation

## 2014



### Dependencies

- Relavent Public comment
- PZJA acceptance of public comments
- Straegic Assessment approval

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
Summation - Qld TRL Fishery Policy and Licencing	<b>Agenda Item No. 3.2 FOR QDAFF</b>

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group with an updated overview of the Queensland Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery including management and operational arrangements.

## **BACKGROUND**

The following notes are extracts from the presentation provided during the meeting.

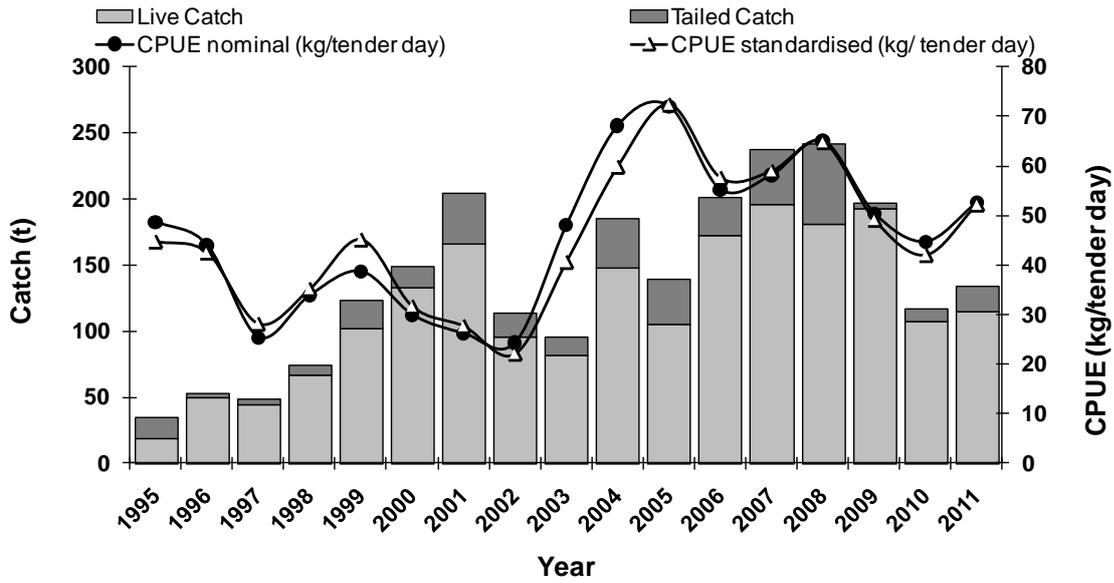
### **Queensland Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery**

#### **“Fishery update and overview of management and operational arrangements”**

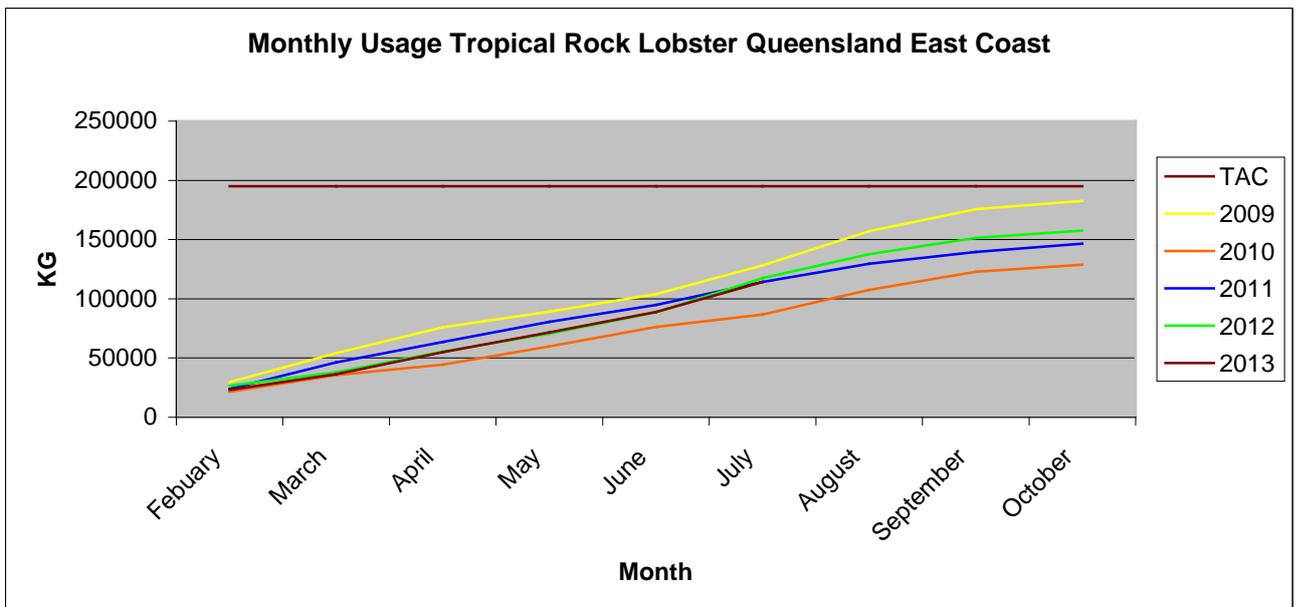
#### **Fishery description**

- Dive-based, hand collection fishery Targeting the tropical rocklobster *Panulirus ornatus*.
- All tidal waters east of longitude 142° 31' 49", south of latitude 10° 41' south and north of latitude 14° south (GFP extension to 16° south).
- Fishing season 1 February to 30 September.
- The TRLF is a limited entry fishery with restrictions placed on new primary boat and tender boat licences since 1996.
- Total number of commercial licences = 28 primary licences.
- Commercial licences accessing the fishery in 2012 = 8.
- Total number of tenders = 93. (Maximum tenders to a license = 7).
- Commercial TACC = 195 t (+5t/ yr indigenous fishing permits).

## Catch statistics



	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Total catch (t)</b>	244	183	129	147
<b>Total effort (days)</b>	1162	1007	584	511
<b>Licences (active)</b>	11	11	10	7
<b>GVP (\$A million)</b>	9.3	7.6	4.5	5.1



## **Regulation**

- Licensing, apparatus, regulated waters, closed seasons, Total Allowable Catch (annual specified as units), Quota Unit conversion to weight, tender rules, recreational fishing restrictions.

## **Policy**

- Guide to the administration of licence conditions including, initial allocation, reporting requirements, transshipment requirements, documentation requirements for whole of distribution chain tracking.

## **Licence condition**

- Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) allocation (permanent holdings recorded as Quota Units), operational specifics eg. unloading specifics and details of information required in various reports. Some repetition of Regulations such as closed season dates.

## **Operationally**

- Licensed fisher catches TRL, makes a logbook record of catch and effort, provides a prior report (if unloading at port), or a transshipment notice (if unloading to a plane or transport vessel), an unload notice and a catch disposal record. Buyers must retain record of purchase (for 5 years).
- Quota can be temporarily traded “online” all trades of permanent quota holdings are done on paper and require manually updating licence conditions.
- TAC (and consequently ITQ) is adjusted by updating the Quota Unit weight conversion in the Regulation.

## **Catch reporting in detail**

- Daily catch and effort log book submitted monthly.
- a prior notice required if unloading to land notifying their intent to unload TRL at a specified time and place – made prior to landing;
- amendment prior notice required if anything in the prior notice changes.
- a transshipment notice if unloading TRL to a transport vessel (boat or plane other than a commercial fishing boat operating under a licence held by the quota holder);
- an unload notice given at the point of unloading, declaring the amount of TRL taken which is subsequently deducted from the fishers quota balance.
- a separate catch disposal record (CDR) for each consignment of lobsters sold to a buyer or put into storage.

## **Compliance**

- Unload notice is used to debit ITQ account.
- Unload notice and prior notice are cross referenced with Catch Disposal Records for verification that unload weights and numbers are correct.
- Prior notices allow compliance officers advance warning of intended landings where, time and amount of TRL on board to facilitate inspections.

- Those who buy and sell TRL in Queensland (other than for sale to an end user) including restaurants, hotels and fish shops, will be required to keep a record of wholesale sales for five years. The record will include details such as the origin, name and authority number or address, transaction date, TRL quantities and their processed form.

## **Discussion**

The Queensland and Torres Strait TRL fisheries are in adjacent waters and several fishers operate in both fisheries, QDAFF is also responsible for licensing and compliance in both fisheries.

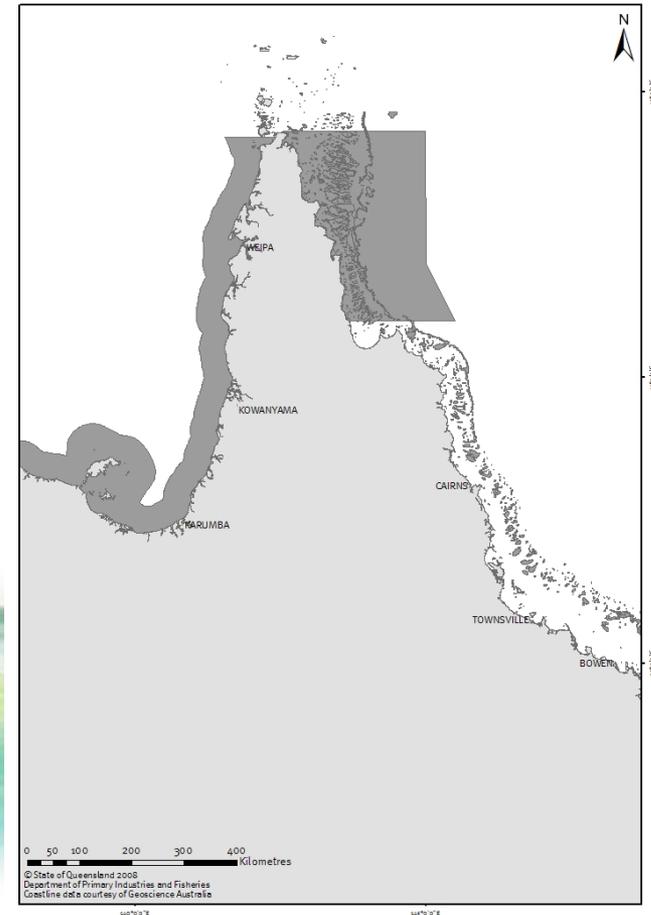
In planning for the transition to revised management arrangements in the Torres Strait TRL fishery, including a transition to quota management, it is worthwhile exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the current Queensland TRL management arrangements to develop an effective management system for the Torres Strait TRL fishery.

# Queensland Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery

“Fishery update and overview of management and operational arrangements”

# Fishery description

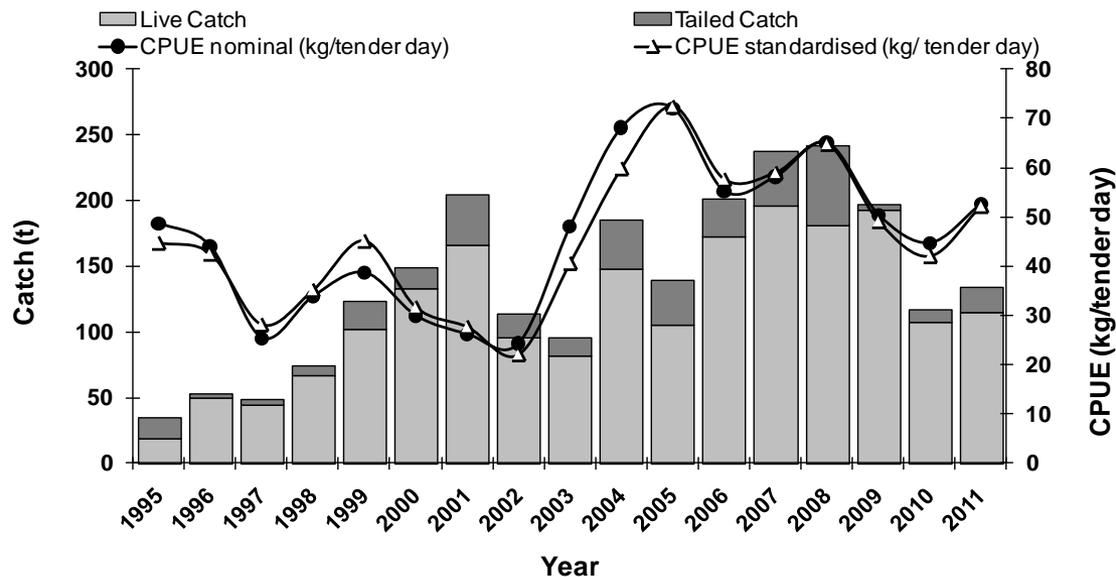
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## Fishery description cont.

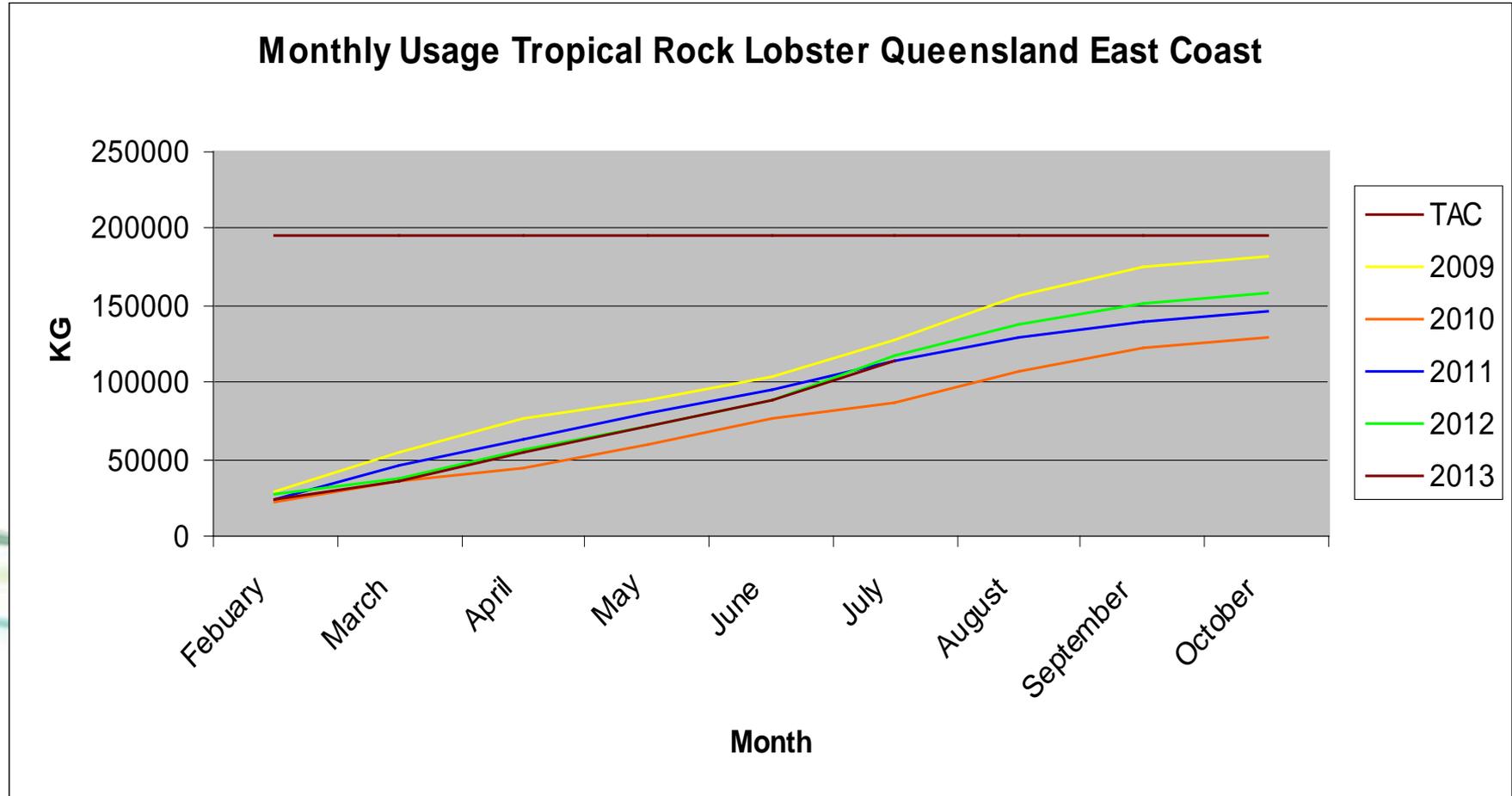
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<b>Licences (active)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>GVP (\$A million)</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.1</b>

# Monthly Quota Usage



# Regulation

## Regulation

- Licensing, apparatus, regulated waters, closed seasons, Total Allowable Catch (annual specified as units), Quota Unit conversion to weight, tender rules, recreational fishing restrictions.

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- Guide to the administration of licence conditions including, initial allocation, reporting requirements, transshipment requirements, documentation requirements for whole of distribution chain tracking.

## Licence condition

- Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) allocation (permanent holdings recorded as Quota Units), operational specifics eg. unloading specifics and details of information required in various reports. Some repetition of Regulations such as closed season dates.

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- Licensed fisher catches TRL, makes a logbook record of catch and effort, provides a prior report (if unloading at port), or a transshipment notice (if unloading to a plane or transport vessel), an unload notice and a catch disposal record. Buyers must retain record of purchase (for 5 years).
- Quota can be temporarily traded “online” all trades of permanent quota holdings are done on paper and require manually updating licence conditions.
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# Catch reporting in detail

- Daily catch and effort log book submitted monthly.
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# Compliance

- Unload notice is used to debit ITQ account.
- Unload notice and prior notices are cross referenced with CDR for verification of both the prior notice and unload notice.
- Prior notices allow compliance officers advance warning of intended landings where, time and amount of TRL on board to facilitate inspections.
- Those who buy and sell TRL in Queensland (other than for sale to an end user) including restaurants, hotels and fish shops, will be required to keep a record of wholesale sales for five years. The record will include details such as the origin, name and authority number or address, transaction date, TRL quantities and their processed form.

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
<b>The Management Plan Unresolved issues from the Draft Management Plan</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 3.3 FOR DISCUSSION</b>

## **PURPOSE**

To seek the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group's (TRLWG) consideration and recommendations regarding the current unresolved issues in the Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Draft Management Plan, including (but not limited to):

- a) Master Fisherman Licences (MFL);
- b) Boat Replacement Policies;
- c) Season Opening for the TRL fishery; and
- d) Landing and unloading places for TVH operators (can be included in discussions regarding catch monitoring).

## **BACKGROUND**

The previous TRLWG was unable to make recommendations on a number of management issues for the TRL Management Plan. Historically opposing views have been expressed by both sectors of the fishery on some of these issues. The progression of the Draft TRL Management Plan to the PZJA was delayed pending the resolution of these issues. In addition some recommendations from the previous TRLWG meeting in May 2007, such as the season opening and landing places, were overturned at the TSFMAC meeting on July 2007.

## **DISCUSSION**

A paper covering these outstanding issues was presented at the TRLWG #1 and there was a brief discussion on potential resolutions to progress the Draft TRL Management Plan. Following this discussion it was decided that members would consider each of the issues and where possible discuss with their broader stakeholder networks prior to engaging in more detailed discussions at TRLWG #2.

Attachment 3.3A contains details of the unresolved issues contained within the draft TRL Management Plan and the history of discussion behind them. The TRLWG should consider these details and their relevance to the current TRL fishing environment.

## 1) Master Fisherman Licence (Importance: High)

### Options:

- 1) Retain the current MFL policy;
- 2) To introduce competency based Master Fisherman's Licence for all licensed fishers;
- 3) Discontinue all Master Fisherman Licences;
- 4) MFLs be competency based, issued to both sectors (TIB and TVH) with a register of all MFL licence holders (traditional and non-traditional) created giving preference to traditional inhabitants when there is a vacancy but not making it compulsory.

### Background

A policy decision to cease the issue of new MFLs to the non-traditional inhabitant sector was taken in 1989 by the PZJA with the purpose of allowing the expansion of traditional inhabitant involvement in the tropical rock lobster fishery and containing the expansion of the non-traditional inhabitant sector.

While this type of licence is issued to traditional inhabitants, it is only required for those persons who are in charge of non-community (TVH) boats. This has had limited positive effects in opening employment opportunities for traditional inhabitants.

The effect of the MFL system on non-traditional inhabitant fishers is a point of much discussion, potential solutions have included the surrender of a tender for the grant of an extra non-traditional inhabitant MFL, and the creation of a register of available MFL holders.

There has been opposing views on this policy for some years with the traditional inhabitant sector reluctant to discard the current MFL policy and the non-traditional inhabitant sector keen to discontinue the MFL all together, particularly given the onset of an output controlled fishery. It was noted at both the WG and TSFMAC meetings respectively, that the granting of these licences, currently numbering 121, was an administratively complex and resource intensive process.

The following table outlines the major concerns expressed by both the TVH and TIB sectors in previous meetings.

TVH (non-traditional inhabitant) Concerns	TIB (traditional inhabitant) Concerns
<p>Difficulty finding and retaining traditional inhabitant MFL holders for extended trips at sea.</p> <p>The introduction of a quota system implies that TVH operators should increase their efficiency to remain viable. The current policy restricts operation and will highly reduce efficiency once a quota system is introduced due to the lack of MFL holders willing to work for them.</p>	<p>If the current policy is modified or removed, traditional inhabitant MFL holders are likely to lose employment on TVH vessels.</p> <p>For the first two years of the implementation of the new management system the TIB sector will begin fishing under an Olympic quota with unlimited numbers of fishing</p>

TVH operators have difficulty finding traditional inhabitants that are both MFL holders and possess a boat driving licence.	licences. There are real concerns that traditional inhabitants holding MFL and currently work in TVH vessels will start fishing from that quota adding more pressure if they lose their jobs.
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While licensing will not be included in the management plan, failure to resolve the issue will be detrimental to the industry and will result in an uncertain operating environment.

The following table outlines the options, including both positive and negative impacts, and the associated risk involved in the option.

Option	Negative	Positive
<p><b>Retain the current MFL policy</b></p> <p><b>Risk = High</b></p>	<p>Non-community operators will be severely disadvantage with this policy restricting their operations due to the lack of MFL holders willing to work for them for several days at a time.</p> <p>Leaving the current policy will increase uncertainty in the industry and there is a high probability that TVH operators will challenge the policy.</p>	<p>There is strong support from the TIB sector to retain the current policy as this gives a source of employment to traditional inhabitants.</p>
<p><b>To introduce competency based Master Fisherman's Licence for all licensed fishers;</b></p> <p><b>Risk = High</b></p>	<p>Some traditional inhabitants that hold MFL could lose their jobs if this option is taken</p> <p>If results from the tender process are below the expectations and insufficient quota is allocated to the TIB sector there are real concerns that many of the MFL holders that end up without a job will start fishing from the TIB Olympic quota adding more fishing pressure to their quota</p> <p>There is a high risk of the TIB sector walking out from the negotiating table if results from the tender are below expectations and this decision is taken</p> <p>A competency test may worry some traditional inhabitants that know the rules but could be discouraged by a test</p>	<p>This will add some competency to the licence where the holder should know the rules of the fisheries e.g. size limits, season closures, area closures (if any), how to complete logbooks, etc</p> <p>The option will permit TVH licence holders to operate efficiently by being able to find the appropriate personnel to work for them.</p> <p>There will not be shortages of MFL licence holders.</p> <p>The licence could be used when selling product and make it easier to monitor the quota</p> <p>Competency test may benefit current MFL holders that are traditional inhabitants and already know the rules of the fishery</p>
<p><b>Discontinue all Master Fisherman Licences</b></p> <p><b>Risk = High</b></p>	<p>MFL are included in the TS Act and may not be possible to discontinue them</p> <p>Leaves it open for anyone to drive a commercial fishing vessel without making sure they have knowledge about the rules in the fisheries</p> <p>Some traditional inhabitants with MFL may lose their job</p> <p>There is a high risk of the TIB sector walking out from the negotiating table if results from the tender are below</p>	<p>The option will permit TVH licence holders to operate efficiently by being able to find the appropriate personnel to work for them</p>

	expectations and this decision is taken	
<p><b>MFLs be competency based, issued to both sectors (TIB and TVH) with a register of all MFL licence holders (traditional and non-traditional) created giving preference to traditional inhabitants when there is a vacancy but not making it compulsory</b></p> <p><b>Risk = High</b></p>	<p>Some traditional inhabitants that hold MFL could lose their jobs</p> <p>It will increase administrative work and management costs to keep a register of MFL and check their availability</p> <p>TVH operators may not employ traditional inhabitants even if they are available leading to potential conflict between the sectors</p> <p>A competency test may disadvantage some traditional inhabitants that could be discouraged by a test</p> <p>Rules to ensure that traditional inhabitants have preference could be complicated</p>	<p>It could be a good compromise to make sure not many traditional inhabitants with MFL lose their jobs</p> <p>The option will permit TVH licence holders to operate efficiently by being able to find the appropriate personnel to work for them</p> <p>This will add some competency to the licence where the holder should know the rules of the fisheries e.g. size limits, season closures, area closures (if any), how to complete logbooks, etc</p> <p>There will not be shortage of MFL licence holders</p> <p>Competency test may benefit current MFL holders that are traditional inhabitants and already know the rules of the fishery</p>

## 2) Boat Replacement Policy (Importance: High)

### Options:

- 1) Retain the current policy;
- 2) Allow the replacement of main boats to a maximum length of 20 m and tenders to be replaced to a maximum of 6 m.
- 3) A compromise position that any primary vessel less than 14 m could be replaced by a boat up to 14 m, and that any primary boat larger than 14 m could only be replaced by a boat of the same or lesser length.

### Background

The boat replacement policy, which limits the size of new boats used to replace existing boats operating in the Torres Strait TRL fishery, has been in place since 1989. This policy was implemented for the purpose of controlling effort.

In previous working group meetings there were discussions on the need to review this policy given that a Quota System and a management plan will fulfill the purpose of controlling effort in the fishery. These discussions have encountered mixed opinions with the traditional inhabitant (TIB) sector reluctant to discard this policy and the non-traditional inhabitant (TVH) sector keen to remove the policy.

The following table outlines the major concerns expressed by both the TVH and TIB sectors in recent meetings.

TVH Concerns	TIB Concerns
<p>The current policy is an obstacle to fishers that would like to carry live lobsters, as it prevents TVH operators upgrading to a bigger vessel.</p> <p>It is only restricting TVH operators because there is no cap in the number of licences issued to traditional inhabitants they can apply for a new licence for a larger vessel. Therefore, the current policy will not be able to control the number of large vessels in the TIB sector and concerns of an increase in the number of larger vessels in the fishery will not be resolved.</p> <p>It is more likely that small boats with a freezer, fish one spot for longer time than a larger boat carrying live lobsters because they will need to unload often as lobster are continuously approaching moulting.</p>	<p>Discarding the policy without putting any safeguards in place may have the potential of increasing the number of large boats.</p> <p>It gives operators with large vessels a competitive advantage over those that operate from dinghies (most of the TIB sector).</p> <p>There are concerns about large boats fishing in one spot for long periods of time that will lead to localised depletion.</p> <p>Large vessels fishing for long periods in grounds close to their communities will have an impact on traditional fishing.</p>

Several options were discussed at both TRLWG meetings but no decision was made. This issue needs to be resolved before finalizing the drafting instructions for the management plan.

The following table outlines the options, including both positive and negative impacts, and the associated risk involved in each option.

Option	Negative	Positive
<p><b>Retain the current policy</b></p> <p><b>Risk = High</b></p>	<p>TVH operators that would like to upgrade to live fishing and have a small vessel will be severely disadvantaged with this policy.</p> <p>Traditional inhabitants could have licences for large vessel with potential for the number of large vessels to increase in the TIB sector without limit regardless of the current policy.</p> <p>The potential of a substantial increase in the number of large vessels in the TIB sector may lead to localized depletion near communities</p> <p>Competition among large and small operators within the TIB sector under an Olympic quota may have serious implications</p> <p>The TVH sector could challenge the decision and delay the implementation of the management plan. There is precedent in other Commonwealth fisheries where the case of imposing a vessel size failed.</p> <p>Could delay the drafting of the management plan</p>	<p>There is strong support from the TIB sector to retain the current policy</p> <p>Limits the number of large vessels in the TVH sector, that fish more efficiently</p> <p>Reduce the risk of localized depletion caused by an increase in the number of large vessels in the TVH sector</p> <p>Limits competition for large operators giving more opportunities to small operators (most of the TIB sector operate with dinghies)</p>
<p><b>Allow the replacement of main boats to a maximum length of 20 m and tenders to be replaced to a maximum of 6 m.</b></p> <p><b>Risk = High</b></p>	<p>The number of large vessels could increase in both sectors and lead to localized depletion in certain reefs.</p> <p>Competitive disadvantage for small operators, particularly with the increase in the number of large vessels</p> <p>There is potential of a negative community backlash if there is an increase in the number of large TVH vessels fishing near their communities</p>	<p>TVH operators that currently have small vessels could upgrade and hold tanks for live fishing. This will increase their economic efficiency</p> <p>The development of infrastructure for live lobsters will also benefit the TIB sector.</p>
<p><b>Relaxation of the size limits but imposition of a “move on” policy for both sectors</b></p> <p><b>Risk = High</b></p>	<p>Will require VMS installation and usage on the primary vessel</p> <p>Rules for this policy will be very complex.</p> <p>Management cost will increase substantially.</p> <p>Very high compliance risks.</p> <p>TVH sector may not endorse it if it is too restrictive, with the risk of lowering their fishing efficiency.</p>	<p>May partially resolve some of the concerns about localised depletion.</p> <p>Will partially resolve the issue of PNG boats concentrating their effort almost exclusively on Warrior and Dungeness Reefs.</p> <p>Will help community perception of large vessels fishing near their communities since they will not be able to fish near their communities for long periods of time</p>

<p><b>A compromise position that any primary vessel less than 14 m could be replaced by a boat up to 14 m, and that any primary boat larger than 14 m could only be replaced by a boat of the same or lesser length.</b></p> <p><b>Risk = Moderate</b></p>	<p>There is potential of negative community perceptions if there is an increase in the number of larger vessels.</p> <p>Does not allow operators that currently have a 14m vessel to upgrade to a 20m vessel.</p>	<p>Will allow operators the ability to upgrade to a boat as large as 14 m to be able to hold live lobsters in tanks without compromising the safety of the vessel.</p> <p>It reaches a compromise and avoids an increase in the number of large boats in the fishery.</p>
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### 3) Season Opening (Importance: High)

#### Options:

- 1) Set season opening in February;
- 2) Set season opening in December;
- 3) Start season in February only during the years the TIB sector is under an Olympic quota and then change the season opening to December

#### Background

The TRLWG have previously discussed the length of the TRL season. It was acknowledged that taking small lobster at the beginning of the season would result in a lower yield-per-recruit and that a delay in the start of the season would therefore result in a greater economic return. They also discussed the reliance of the TIB sector to catch lobster in the lead-up to Christmas and the need to ensure that there would be sufficient TIB quota for lamp fishing at the end of the season (December and January). It was then agreed at that February 2007 meeting that the default fishing season for the TVH sector should start on the 1 February. This decision was reviewed at the TRLWG meeting in May 2007 after re-evaluating the decision and discussing the pros and cons of trying to set some TIB quota aside for the December and January lamp fishing and free diving. It was noted that they will be fishing the next year's stock during December and January and the TRLWG agreed to change the start of the season to 1<sup>st</sup> December keeping the hookah closures in place.

This last decision was discussed again at the TSFMAC in 2007 with the Community Fisher Group (CFG) representatives expressing disagreement with this starting date due to fears of not having a final TAC and allocation to start fishing in December. They stated that they would like to start the season in February and keep some quota aside for the December-January period, during the time the TIB quota is managed under an Olympic system and then start in December. This issue has generated confusion and although TVH operators will not be affected it is **essential** to make a decision for the new management system to be implemented.

The following table outlines the major concerns expressed by both the TVH and TIB sectors in recent meetings.

TVH Concerns	TIB Concerns
No concerns expressed	<p>Starting in December without a final TAC and allocation will make it difficult for them to plan how to fish and how much to take during the first 4 months of the season</p> <p>There are concerns that they may start fishing too hard at the beginning of the season and find out in April (when the final TAC is set) that they have reached their quota limit</p> <p>They will prefer to start in February (setting some quota aside for December and January) during the time they are fishing under an Olympic quota as they do not have any control</p>

	of how many people fish
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The following table outlines the options, including both positive and negative impacts, and the associated risks involved in the option.

Option	Negative	Positive
<p><b>Set season opening in February</b> Risk = N/A</p>	<p>Quota for the December and January lamp fishing will need to be set aside to make sure that there is enough for the December - January lamp fishing season</p> <p>If the TIB sector fails to catch the quota set aside during December and January the remaining quota will be lost</p> <p>Cost and administrative work will increase substantially because the TIB fishery will need to be closed twice in one season: once when they reached the first limit (yearly quota minus December –January quota) and again when they reach the second limit (December – January quota)</p> <p>Cost of enforcement and compliance will increase</p>	<p>A final TAC figure will be provided two months after the start of the season</p> <p>Will resolve concerns of the TIB sector fishing too hard in the first 4 months before they have a final allocation</p>
<p><b>Set season opening in December</b> Risk = N/A</p>	<p>Risk of the TIB sector starting early and rushing in to fish their quota before the lobsters reached the size that would yield higher economic benefits</p> <p>A higher percentage of the quota being taken as small lobsters.</p> <p>Some concerns about PNG boats being attracted to Australian side during December when there is a closure in PNG</p> <p>The TIB sector will not know their final quota allocation until April (4 months after the season opening)</p> <p>By April, TIB fishers may have fished most of their quota leaving some fishers without a job for several months</p>	<p>The TIB fishery will be closed only once</p> <p>There is no potential of quota being lost if they failed to catch it in December and January as this will be the start of the fishing season</p> <p>They will be fishing the current season's stock</p> <p>TIB concerns of not having a final figure and then fishing too hard could be solved by giving them a conservative preliminary allocation allowing them to work but prevent them from fishing too hard</p>
<p><b>Season opening in February for the time the TIB is in Olympic quota and then change it to</b></p>	<p>Quota for the December and January lamp fishing will need to be set aside to make sure that there is enough for the December - January lamp fishing season during the first two years</p> <p>During the February season opening if the TIB sector fails to catch the quota set aside for the December – January season the remaining</p>	<p>Will resolve concerns of the TIB sector fishing too hard in the first 4 months before they have a final quota allocated during the time they are working under an Olympic quota</p>

<p><b>December</b> <b>Risk = N/A</b></p>	<p>quota will be lost</p> <p>During the February season opening cost and administrative work will increase substantially because the TIB fishery will need to be closed twice in one season: once when they reached the first limit (yearly quota minus December – January quota) and again when they reach the second limit (December –January quota).</p> <p>During the February season opening cost of enforcement and compliance will increase</p> <p>The management plan will need amendment when the TIB sector stops working under an Olympic quota (~ two years) to change the start of the season to December</p> <p>There will be costs and administrative work involve in amending the management plan</p>	
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#### 4) TVH unloading to islands with freezers other than Thursday and Horn Islands (Importance: High)

##### Options:

1. Allow unloading only on Thursday and Horn Islands;
2. Allow unloading in all islands with freezers (TRL WG recommendations);
3. Consult with communities and fish receivers that own a freezer and select as approved landing places for TVH operators only those islands that are not opposed to TVH operators unloading at their location.

##### Background

A list of proposed landing places for TRL was agreed at the July 2006 meeting of the TRL Working Group. However, at that meeting there were some disagreements and issues that required further clarification. At the Working Group meeting held in May 2007 a suggested Quota Monitoring System (QMS) was discussed with several recommendations endorsed by the working group. However, the issue of TVH operators unloading at places other than Thursday and Horn Island was not discussed at this meeting and the Working Group proposed the following recommendations under the assumption that unloading by TVH operators could take place at any island that has a freezer:

*All product landed should go directly to/through a land based licensed fish receiver or sold to a buyer processor licensed boat.*

*A schedule of approved landing places will be determined primarily on the basis that there are premises to receive/purchase the landed product (noting that there are some islands where the product may be transhipped by air)*

At the TSFMAC meeting (11-12<sup>th</sup> July 2007) the issue of unloading at islands with freezers, other than Thursday and Horn Island re-emerged with some CFG representatives expressing disagreement about this recommendation. While the issue is not particularly divisive between the TVH and TIB sectors, it is restricting fish receivers (usually traditional inhabitants) that own freezers on islands other than Thursday or Horn Islands. Given the contentious nature of the issue the MAC decided not to endorse the recommendation and recommended managers seek further clarification on the intent of this provision to advise the PZJA.

The purpose of allowing TVH operators to unload only at places where there are premises to sell their product is to facilitate the monitoring of the quota. If they are not selling the product at the place they are unloading then it will be treated as transshipment and operators should follow the necessary transshipment procedures in order to track the product. A schedule of approved landing places is an important component of the Management Plan to make sure TVH operators unload only at these places and therefore facilitate inspections and compliance.

TVH Concerns	TIB Concerns	Fish Receivers
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<p>There is no particular concern from the TRL TVH operators if they are not allow to unload on islands other than Thursday and Horn Islands. However, they are opposed to any unnecessary restriction that will not benefit the industry</p>	<p>Unloading at any island with a freezer (other than Thursday and Horn Islands) will facilitate TVH operators to remain on fishing grounds near their communities for long periods of time</p> <p>Localized depletion may result from TVH operators being able to remain on fishing grounds near their communities for longer periods of time.</p>	<p>Restricting TVH to unload in Thursday and Horn Islands only, will limit the business of fish receivers from other islands since they will not be able to purchase any TVH catch</p> <p>Fish receivers with freezers on islands other than Thursday and Horn Islands could be economically affected by not being able to buy product from both TVH and TIB operators, particularly if it is TVH quota held (purchased) by communities.</p> <p>Fish receivers with freezers in islands other than Thursday and Horn Islands will be competitively disadvantaged.</p>
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While this issue may not disadvantage any TVH operators, there is strong opposition from some of the communities to allow TVH operators to unload at the freezers in their communities. They believe that allowing this will result in TVH vessels fishing nearby for longer periods of time leading to localized depletion. On the other hand, fish receivers that own freezers in those communities will be disadvantaged by not being able to buy product from TVH operators, restricting their business development.

Option	Negative	Positive
<p><b>Allow unloading only on Thursday and Horn Islands</b></p> <p><b>Risk = Moderate</b></p>	<p>Will restrict business development of fish receivers that own a freezer in other islands</p> <p>Fish receivers that own freezers in other islands are mainly traditional inhabitants. Restricting their business will be against one of the agreed objectives of the Management Plan <i>“to promote economic development in the Torres Strait area emphasising on providing the framework for commercial opportunities for traditional inhabitants...”</i></p> <p>Will give unfair advantage to freezers on Thursday and Horn Islands.</p>	<p>Will appease communities that do not want TVH operators unloading at their islands</p> <p>Will appease concerns of TVH operators fishing near their communities for longer periods of time</p> <p>Will facilitate quota monitoring and inspection carried out by compliance officers when TVH operators are unloading</p> <p>Compliance costs would be less.</p>
<p><b>Allow unloading on islands with freezers (TRL WG recommendations)</b></p> <p><b>Risk = High</b></p>	<p>There could be a negative reaction from the communities that are opposed to it</p> <p>Quota monitoring will be more complex and compliance costs will increase</p> <p>May complicate inspections carried out by compliance officers when unloading in islands other than Thursday and Horn Islands</p>	<p>Will allow fish receivers that own a freezer in other islands to buy product from the TVH sector</p> <p>Will not restrict business development of fish receivers with freezers in other islands</p> <p>Will not give any unfair advantage to freezers on Thursday and Horn Islands.</p>

	Could create conflict between communities opposing this decision and the fish receiver that is purchasing TVH product	
<p><b>Consult with communities and fish receivers that own a freezer in these islands and select as approved landing places for TVH operators only those islands that do not oppose it</b></p> <p><b>Risk = Moderate</b></p>	<p>It will be time consuming delaying the drafting of the management plan</p> <p>Will increase the cost of the development of the management plan</p> <p>There is potential disagreement between the fish receiver and the communities, making the inclusion of this community as an approved landing place controversial</p>	<p>It reaches a compromise and will consider the opinion and points of view of communities</p> <p>It will not include any community opposed to it</p> <p>It will consider the opinion and point of view of the fish receivers that could be affected by the decisions.</p>

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 7-8 August 2013</b>
<b>Management Plan Provisions outside the Management Plan</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 3.4 FOR DISCUSSION</b>

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this discussion paper is to:

1. inform the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) of the provisions (management arrangements) relating to the Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) fishery that are not contained within the Draft TRL Management Plan; and
2. consider options for maintaining some provisions outside of the TRL Management Plan including strategies for effectively monitoring TRL catch.

## **BACKGROUND**

The effective management of the Torres Strait TRL fishery relies on the delivery of management provisions currently contained within the:

- The Torres Strait Fisheries Act (1984);
- The Torres Strait Fisheries Regulations;
- Torres Strait Fisheries Management Notices;
- Licensing Policy; and
- Fishing Licence Conditions.

It should be noted that the Torres Strait Fisheries Act and Regulations, as subordinate Commonwealth Legislation and are time consuming to amend and as such contain only provisions that are rarely susceptible to change such as fishing areas and species types or provisions that should not be changed without Parliamentary oversight. Whereas provisions contained within management notices, policies and licences conditions are more easily amended following consultation with stakeholders.

## **DISCUSSION**

We have the opportunity to review the provisions within the TRL fishery and determine whether they are necessary under output controls and if so where they would be most appropriately located (i.e. in the Draft TRL Management Plan or Licence Condition).

Potential provisions (and their form of instrument) for discussion may include (but not be limited to):

Traditional fishing: allowing for protection of traditional fishing, which gives traditional fishing priority over commercial fishing e.g. defines an area such as “home reefs” for traditional fishing only.

- Places where product can be landed: Define places where lobsters can be landed, e.g. only on Horn Island or TI. It would be a good idea to propose and get agreement that catch should not be able to be landed just anywhere to promote a cost-effective quota monitoring system. There are only so many legitimate places, these should be defined.
- Holding Cages: The need to control (through a registry) live holding cages which are in widespread use throughout the fishery.
- Exemptions for traditional fishing: Need to review all the exemptions. Islanders should be given the opportunity to decide if they still think that they should be allowed to take small lobsters, lobster meat etc.
- Single purpose trips: Should traditional inhabitants undertaking commercial fishing trips be allowed to retain traditional catch as well? May need a prohibition to prevent take of turtles and dugongs while traditional inhabitants are fishing for commercial purposes (to avoid perceptions that this hunting is a commercial activity)
- Conditions on licences - Single jurisdiction trips: the movement of dual-licensed (TS and Qld) boats in and out of the fishery should be controlled – need a requirement for them to report when entering or leaving the area of the fishery, and no catch on board when entering the area of the fishery.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the TRLWG considers relevant provisions within the TRL fishery, their necessity under output controls and the type of instrument for their implementation.

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
<b>Other Business TIB Primary Vessel Tenders</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4.1 FOR DISCUSSION</b>

## **PURPOSE**

That the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) consider options for limiting tender numbers in the Traditional Inhabitant sector of the Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) fishery.

## **BACKGROUND**

In June 2011, Queensland Fisheries proposed limiting TIB primary vessel licences to three tenders, with the provisions that mandatory catch reporting being implemented. This recommendation was based on possible sustainability concerns in the TRL fishery given that TIB operator numbers are not restricted. There has been growing numbers of applications from TIB operators to operate primary vessels with large numbers of tenders (10).

In September 2011, the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) Standing Committee, based on the recommendation from Queensland Fisheries, made a decision to limit TIB tender numbers to a maximum of three per primary vessel licence. It was agreed at this time to review applications outside this policy on a case by case basis.

In May 2012, the PZJA Standing Committee met and discussed an application from a TIB operator seeking to utilise more than 3 tenders. At this time the Standing Committee did not make a decision on this application based on a lack of information to determine a suitable maximum number of tenders for this operation, and for the TIB sector in general. The Standing Committee then recommended that the TRL Resource Advisory Group (TRLRAG) were better placed to inform this decision.

In August 2012, the TRLRAG tabled this issue and noted that unlimited numbers of tenders may have sustainability concerns for the fishery, particularly as TIB licence number are uncapped. In determining a possible maximum tender number for TIB operators, the group considered that the TRLRAG was not the forum for such a decision and would recommend it to the TRLWG.

## **DISCUSSION**

The TRLWG is asked to consider and recommend a maximum tender number for TIB primary vessel operators. This consideration should note that there are currently no sustainability concerns surrounding this issue as there are only two TIB primary operations (noting the TIB sector has uncapped licences). The resolution of this issue will aim to improve participation and catch rates from such TIB operators.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the TRLWG agreed to a recommendation regarding maximum tender numbers for the TIB sector to progress to the PZJA Standing Committee.

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
<b>Other Business TIB Primary Vessel Ownership</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4.2 FOR DISCUSSION</b>

## **PURPOSE**

That the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) consider the option for Traditional Inhabitants to operate non-Traditional Inhabitant owned vessels, provided the vessel is registered in the Traditional Inhabitants name.

## **BACKGROUND**

Recently AFMA has noted concerns from Traditional Inhabitants that some Traditional Inhabitant fishers are operating non-Traditional Inhabitant 'owned' vessels, which are provided to them under a separate arrangement regarding the provision of catch. It is alleged that the vessels are given under the provision that all product is to be supplied to the true vessel owner.

Discussions with Traditional Inhabitant operators has been mixed, with some unhappy that it is providing a non-Traditional Inhabitant the opportunity to 'obtain fish' in the TRL fishery without a licence. While others see this as a source of capacity building for Traditional Inhabitant fishers and the future of the fishery.

Under Queensland Transport legislation, vessels are identified by the registration and therefore in this circumstance this vessel is identifiable to the Traditional Inhabitant which can present a compliance issue.

## **DISCUSSION**

Whether this scenario is found to be true or not, it raises the question of Traditional Inhabitant fishers operating purposely bought vessels by non-traditional Inhabitants in order to 'obtain fish' from the fishery without a licence. On the other hand, this practice provides fishing experience and a source of employment and income for Traditional Inhabitants. Under a quota system, there should not be a sustainability concern either way.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The TRLWG is asked to discuss this issue, with any suggested recommendations for provisions to prohibit this activity (or not) in the fishery to be progressed to the Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (TSFMAC).

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 07- 08 August 2013</b>
<b>Other Business 2013 Catch and Effort Update</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4.3 FOR NOTING</b>

## **PURPOSE**

To inform the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) of:

- Provisional catch records from the TRL fishery to date for 2013
- Summarised catch records against records at the same time in 2012
- Summarised catch effort against records at the same time in 2012

## **BACKGROUND**

The Preliminary Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the Torres Strait Protected Zone for the 2013 fishing season, as recommended by the TRL Resource Advisory Group (TRLRAG), was 871 tonnes.

Australia is entitled to 740 tonnes of the PZJA resource entitlement, with the TIB sector entitled 314 tonnes and the TVH sector entitled to 244 tonnes.

## **DISCUSSION**

The current TRL catch for the 2013 season remains relatively consistent, in both the TIB and TVH sectors at compared to 2012 (see Attachment 4.3A)

<b>TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP</b>	<b>Meeting 7-8 August 2013</b>
<b>Other Business Research Priorities</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4.5 FOR DISCUSSION</b>

## **PURPOSE**

To provide the Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group (TRLWG) with the opportunity to review and comment on the research priorities listed in the draft 2013 Annual Operational Plan as drafted by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC).

## **BACKGROUND**

At TSSAC meeting No.48 on 17-18 March 2009, the Committee agreed to develop an Annual Operational Plan (AOP) to provide potential researchers with specific research areas identified by the TSSAC as being of high priority. The TSSAC further agreed to review the AOP annually to ensure that research priorities remained current.

The TSSAC also agreed at meeting No.52 on 16 June 2010 to request relevant PZJA committees and working groups to review the research priorities for individual fisheries and provide feedback to the TSSAC. Feedback would guide the TSSAC on subsequent revisions to the AOP.

The 2013 AOP was discussed at TSSAC No.61 on 19 June. The 2013 AOP will be provided as part of the package distributed to researchers considering applying for funding through the TSSAC in the 2013/2014 research funding round..

## **DISCUSSION**

The TSSAC has requested that the TRLWG review the fisheries research priorities for the TRL fishery identified in the 2013 AOP as outlined in the table below (an extract from the *2013 Annual Operational Plan for Torres Strait Fisheries*) and provide comment to the TSSAC on these priorities. This will allow the TSSAC to further enhance the AOP for 2014.

	RESEARCH AREA	RESEARCH NEED	THEME <sup>1</sup>	NEED <sup>2</sup>
<b>B) Rock lobster</b>	1) Fishery assessment	1a) Optimising harvest strategies, Stock assessments, strategic assessments and ERAs.	2, 3	T
		1b) Improved monitoring of catch and effort in all sectors of the fishery.	2, 3, 6	T <sup>3</sup>
	2) Efficacy of management arrangements	2a) Alternative monitoring techniques of stock status, for example GPS tracking.	3, 6	S
		2b) Estimate of non-commercial take of rock lobsters	1, 2	S
	3) Impact of fishing behaviour under output controls on market preferences	3a) Understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. the impact of ITQs or competitive quota on the fishery;</li> <li>ii. the extent and impact of discard mortality;</li> <li>iii. the effect of fishing behaviour under output controls on changing market preference;</li> <li>iv. the extent of higher grading e.g. moving to live product, targeting different sizes.</li> </ul>	3, 6	T
		4) Connectivity between stocks in Torres Strait and neighbouring jurisdictions, including QLD and PNG, and associated management implications	4a) Understanding of migration of lobster across different jurisdictions.	2, 5
		4b) Impacts of fishing in neighbouring jurisdictions on Torres Strait fishery.	2, 5	S
		4c) Understanding of sink and source connectivity across jurisdictions and associated management implications.	2, 5	S
	5) Environmental impacts	5a) Collect relevant baseline information to assess environmental change impacts on lobster populations	2, 3	S

<sup>1</sup> These themes relate to those detailed in the Strategic Research Plan.

<sup>2</sup> S = Strategic, T = Tactical. See 'Explanatory Note' above.