



Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Senator for Tasmania

M E D I A R E L E A S E

Delivering the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery Management Plan

The Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) has considered the views of stakeholders and agreed to implement a Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Fishery Management Plan, from 1 December 2018, to coincide with the commencement of the Torres Strait Fisheries Amendment (Tropical Rock Lobster) Management Instrument 2018.

The Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, and Chair of the PZJA, Senator Richard Colbeck said the Australian Government had taken decisive action to deliver the TRL Fishery Management Plan after extensive consultation.

“Today’s historic announcement is the result of strong and decisive leadership from Torres Strait Islanders, non-traditional fishers and the Australian Government, and adds to Australia’s reputation as a world leader in fisheries management,” Minister Colbeck said.

“The Management Plan will implement a quota management system and includes an allocation process that will take a minimum of 10 months.

“The PZJA has agreed to an interim total allowable catch (TAC) of 200 tonnes from 1 December 2018, which will allow fishers to head out and free dive and lamp fish from this weekend, and hookah fishing can commence on 1 February 2019.

“The annual stock assessment undertaken by CSIRO has been completed and the PZJA expects to receive advice from the TRL Resource Assessment and Working Groups early next year, in order to determine a final TAC by late March 2019.”

The Chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), Pedro Stephen, said recent community visits included discussions with Traditional inhabitants across 16 islands and there was considerable support for the TRL Management Plan and instrument.

“Management arrangements have been made for the 2018–19 fishing season while the Management Plan gets implemented,” Mr Stephen said.

“The instrument will ensure Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) fishers are allocated 66.17 per cent of the TAC and 33.83 per cent will be allocated to the Transferrable

Vessel Holder (TVH) licence holders, according to the October 2007 provisional allocation notices.

“These new arrangements will provide certainty for the fishing community, from the fishers, to fish receivers, communities and seafood retailers, whilst the allocation process under the Management Plan is completed.

“The PZJA recognises and fully supports the aspirations of Traditional inhabitants to increase their share of TRL Fishery quota to 100 per cent and the Management Plan will pave the way.”

Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries Mark Furner said the development of the TRL Fishery Management Plan has been very thorough.

“I thank the industry and all stakeholders for their comments and submissions, which have allowed the PZJA to improve the draft Management Plan and to create a strong foundation for the TRL Fishery into the future,” Minister Furner said.

The PZJA is comprised of the Chair of the Torres Strait Regional Authority, the Commonwealth Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources and the Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries.

Further information about the TRL Management Plan and associated management measures can be found on the PZJA website at pzja.gov.au