

Attn Selina

K. J. MCKENZIE.

15, RIVERSIDE PARADE,
TRINITY PARK.
QLD. 4879.

To AFMA,

Submission re Torres Strait Rock lobster fishery.

① Torres Straits rock lobster fishery is a proven sustainable fishery. Because diving in strong currents and adverse conditions is the catch method fishery will always meet international ecology standards to meet export accreditation.

② The traditional inhabitants of Torres Straits want total ownership of fishery and will always be political in their endeavours to do so.

③ TVH licence holders such as myself wish to fish, hassle free, in a situation which was laid out ~~as~~ 8 years ago when a quota system was proposed.

④ Quota system for the TIB sector will be difficult to implement and police and for this reason, I think, at the start should be Olympic for ~~there~~ TIB based on TAC allocated. As quota system evolves maybe this could be changed to suit.

⑤ On the completion of the month of May ie. Season $\frac{1}{2}$ way point, TIB sector catch could be assessed and with consultation with TSRA, decision could be made for them to lease quota to TVH sector at a tender \$ rate. \$ raised from this process could be held in trust for any future buybacks or economic development. Another catch assessment could be made at the end of July and leased quota amounts adjusted to suit.

⑥ I think season should be brought back into January by 1 fortnight. ie Start date approx 16/01 To capitalize on Chinese New Year prices. Exact date to be determined annually depending on tidal conditions.

⑦ On introduction of Quota System Tidal Closures could be removed as quota catch becomes the new limitation.

⑧ To balance the fish season I think a closure be put in place for 3 weeks starting approx August 28TH, depending on tidal movement. This will allow the completion of the annual moulting process where ^{live} lobster are subject to higher mortality rates.

⑨ I think period Oct 1ST → January 16TH should still be no take to allow protection of juvenile stocks. This should particularly apply to any New Guinea vessel which may take up their entitlement due to their total disregard for size limits.

⑩ TIB Sector & TVH Sector should be allowed to night spear and free dive from December to January 16TH since only larger size lobster come to the shallows in this period. An effort should be made to police this period. i.e. No Hookah

⑪ I am in favour of Islanders having first right of refusal on TVH licence sales.

⑫ Introduction of quota will allow partial buyback of quota allocation to TSRA. i.e. if I am allocated 3% of fishery I will be able to reduce down to 1% or 2%. TSRA would have 1ST right of refusal for such a transaction.

⑬ TVH quota holders, I think, should be able to lease their allocation to any registered licence holder whether it be from TIB or TVH Sectors. This could be in the interests of FAIR PLAY.

deny me ...
same right? I don't think so, rightly or wrongly I've paid money for the right to fish lobster in the Torres Straits and wish to do so in peace and goodwill to all.

(14) Introduction of quota could allow current input controls to be relaxed. In my case the 10 metre restriction on ~~size~~ boat length has become very inefficient due to changing rules and regulations by other govt departments such as AMSA and Qld Transport.

(15) I think the TAC assessment by CSIRO should be kept. It seems to be reasonably accurate to date, and TAC can be lowered in bad years when stocks are scarce.

(16) I think CSIRO needs to do some research regards East Coast Spawning, ie whether East Coast Spawning is responsible for Torres Straits lobster recruitment. Thinking back to period 1999 → 2001 when Torres Strait stocks were described as being on a knife edge, it seems ironic that followed a period of intensive fishing, no spawning closure, and no size limits for the East Coast.

At the moment East Coast fishery begins on January 1st to capitalize on Chinese New Year prices. East Coast lobster are still with eggs until mid February in certain areas.

I think East Coast season start should be brought to mid January (same as I propose for Torres Straits) and CSIRO research could define no take zones for spawning, ie in the deeper drop off zones.

Annual Maturing season for East is Mid September so maybe season could be brought back 2 weeks to allow for the higher mortality count.

Running a fishing operation now is more costly and complicated than ever before. New AMSA compliance rules and the ever constant fear of litigation if things go wrong are deterrents for both TVH and TIB sectors. In a good season the Taxman is ever present.

Torres Strait islanders currently enjoy all the benefits of being Australian Citizens and a big % of Tax payers money provides for housing, health, infrastructure (airstrips port & mooring facilities), water supplies, welfare etc. I do not feel I should have to contribute anymore in the way of annual fees or similar, for islanders economic well being.

I feel that if I want to sell my TVH entitlement TIB sector would be given first option to buy, but if another party^{3rd party} offered more value to me, then I should be able to sell to that^{3rd} party. Also I don't think that 3rd party should have to be an existing licence holder.

On a more Sensitive Note .

Meetings I've been to over the years become political platforms. Lobster diving is competitive and participants wrongly lobby to reduce the competition rather than to increase their efforts, i.e. Their focus is on pulling people down instead of going to work and catching lobster.

The quota system was devised to reduce TVH Sector effort, and if it had of been implemented 7-8 years ago there would all ready have been a significant benefit to Torres Strait Islanders. The Political stirrers are, I think unknowingly working against their fishers best interests. I know TIB licence holders that in conversation with, have told me that they want quota to be introduced.

It should be noted that, originally, TVH licences were granted to Traditional as well as Non Traditional inhabitants. All traditional inhabitants have sold their licences to Non traditional fishers for financial gain. (Fair enough). Is it now right that the politically minded now want to deny the current TVH licence holders that same right? I don't think so, rightly or wrongly I've paid money for the right to fish lobster in the Torres Straits and wish to do so in peace and goodwill to all.

Quota allocation for TVH licences has already been ascertained. - 9 years ago. All appeal processes have been done and dusted - finished. Each TVH licence holder has known its quota entitlement for 9 years. Why complicate life by offering a lifeline for fraudulent claims to more quota. Statutory declarations by current or previous licence holders may lead to a case of 'The biggest liar wins'.

I think one unit of quota should be 1 Kg. To bring it down as fraction of 1,000,000 complicates things.

Exposure Draft Part 3 is Defensibility.

means that I can lose my quota allocation at anytime, without compensation, if legislation is changed, at anytime in the future. I'd like to see this clause removed or wording changed and clarified before I can agree to the plan. I may have to seek legal opinion.

This submission is doing my head in but I think I've managed to convey some ideas to you. I was lobster fishing for 25 years but have been otherwise disposed for the last 8 years. 2017 will see me return with son in tow. Lobster fishing ~~for me~~ provides for my family ~~welfare~~ and I wish for that to continue.

Yours Sincerely

