



# SUBMISSION

In response to Torres Strait Fishery (Quotas for  
Tropical Rock Lobster (Kaiar)) Management Plan  
Consultation Oct 2016

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## Our Mandate

We write this response as traditional owners directly to the consulting body in the TRL Management Plan without the need for a collective to speak on our behalf as is our right as an identified Indigenous people (Goemulgal). We also note that Goemulgal aspirations projected through a broader collective can only be done so with full traditional owner *group* consultation in full transparency of agenda, and full disclosure of aims and outcomes of consultation. We consider that without the completion of the process of a Goemulgal group consultation and resolution *prior* to a major collective decision, then collectives do not have the mandate to speak on our behalf on that issue.

## Our Values

We as Indigenous peoples hold environmental stewardship value higher than monetary value. If we do not look after our reefs and marine environment as our cultural protocols dictate, then we are no longer Indigenous. If we cannot culturally enforce the boundaries of our responsibilities then we are no longer Goemulgal. If we cannot sustain and manage our marine food basket for our future generations by exercising our cultural sovereignty and environmental stewardship then we cease to exist as Indigenous people.

## Our Aspiration

We support 100% move to TIB sector and a phasing out of the TVH sector in stages to reduce economic shock to the industry and allow time for capacity building, as long as there is no cost-shifting to the TIB sector. We agree with the idea of a quota management system and capping to protect sustainability. We agree with the TSRA over the three additional elements in the plan and also support TSRA to hold quota in the interim as an entity on behalf of the TIB sector. We also aspire to have our own community management plan, not just as an input tool, but a blueprint for future Goemulgal around cultural sovereignty and environmental and economic sustainability. We propose to include in this management plan that traditional owner groups have right of submitting a Community TRL Management Plan as another form of input control in the fishery outlining local area spatial closures, localised hookah restrictions, move-on provisions and community engagement protocols, in the interest of practicing traditional sustainability through environmental cultural stewardship.

## Our concerns

Our concerns under the TRL management plan is allowing commercial fishers to focus more on catching their share at the least cost can encourage excessive hookah and tender use on home reefs which can be detrimental to the local 'dinnerplate' and local free divers, forcing them to go further afield. A community TRL Management plan would protect a community's right to practice Indigenous traditional sustainability and provide a platform for community-level decision-making ownership. Local fleet profitability is low as the community currently does not have the asset base to be able to fish competitively yet suffer the indignity of not being able to provide for our dinnerplate from our home reefs because of overfishing through use of hookah diving gear. We are a community that have mainly free-divers and for a reason. We aspire to empower our fishers to obtain the assets required to make a sustainable living of our marine resources but are also concerned over equity issues in the sectors. It is for these reasons and many others that we need to implement a Community TRL Management plan of our own. We are mindful that any sharing would be considered under the realms and restrictions of a community plan under the guidance of our principles. A move to 100% control TIB sector would need to include grass roots input and one way is through local area community management plans. We aspire to make a local TRL management plan regardless of broader discussions as we see it as our right to make our own decisions and exist as an Indigenous people.

This response document has come from a group of individual traditional owners from Mabuiag Island.

Although respondents are responding as traditional owners, they are also declaring their other community roles and responsibilities.

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