

# Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group Meeting 16

Meeting Record

5 June 2024

Thursday Island

Note all meeting papers and record available on  
the PZJA webpage: [www.pzja.gov.au](http://www.pzja.gov.au)



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

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## Meeting participants

### Members

Name	Position	Declaration of interests
John Glaister	Chair	Member of Parks North, Chair of Northern Prawn Management Advisory Committee (NORMAC), Chair of the Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC).
Laura Blamey	Scientific Member	Contributes to other Torres Strait research projects that receive research funding, including Torres Strait climate change and fisheries project. No other interests in the fishery.
Sevaly Sen #	Independent Fisheries Economist	<p>Nil pecuniary interests in Torres Strait fisheries. AFMA Commissioner and Director of Oceanomics Pty Ltd, a fisheries economics and management consultancy. Current contracts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economics Lead, Human Dimensions Research Coordination program of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (contracted through the University of Tasmania)</li> <li>• Sustainability Advisor to Sydney Fish Market</li> <li>• Co-investigator on Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) Project 2012-042, Impact of COVID-19 on the Australian Seafood Industry: January 2020-June 2021 and beyond</li> <li>• Contractor on FRDC Project 2022-176: ARDC: Food Security Data Challenges: Increasing food security through liberation of fishing and aquaculture data.</li> <li>• Independent economist member on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSW Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel</li> <li>• NSW Mulloway Harvest Strategy Working Group</li> <li>• NSW Ocean Trap and Line Harvest Strategy Working Group</li> <li>• NSW Total Allowable Fishing Committee</li> <li>• SA Allocation Review Committee.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Les Pitt	Traditional Inhabitant Member – Kemer Kemer Meriam	Traditional Inhabitant Member Kemer Kemer Meriam, TIB licence holder and runs an independent freezer facility on Erub Island. Board member of Zenadth Kes Fisheries.
Charles David	Traditional Inhabitant Member - Kulkalgal	Traditional Inhabitant Member Kulkalgal, TSRA Board member and TSRA Fisheries Advisory Committee member. Zenadth Kes Fisheries member.

Name	Position	Declaration of interests
Patrick Mooka (joined the meeting at 1230pm)	Traditional Inhabitant Member – Guda maluyilgal	Traditional Inhabitant Member, Guda maluyilgal. Zenadth Kes Fisheries member.
Thomas Fujii	Traditional Inhabitant Member - Kaiwalalgal	Traditional Inhabitant Member Kaiwalalgal. Queensland East Coast TRL and TIB license holder. Zenadth Kes Fisheries member.
Jermaine Rueben #	Traditional Inhabitant Member - Maluyilgal	Traditional Inhabitant Member Maluyilgal, TIB licence holder. Zenadth Kes Fisheries member.
Mark Dean	Industry Member	TVH operator
Peter Frazis	Industry Member	Employee of MG Kailis Pty Ltd. MG Kailis Pty Ltd is a holder of 5 TVH license. Seafood buyer from Torres Strait, QLD, and PNG TRL fisheries.
Wez Norris #	AFMA Member	AFMA Chief Executive Officer, Chair of the PZJA Standing Committee.
Jenny Keys#	QDAF Member	Queensland Fishery manager of tropical rock lobster fishery, sea cucumber fishery and aquarium and coral fisheries.
Damian Miley (left the meeting at 1230pm)	TSRA Member	TSRA Program Manager Fisheries. TSRA hold TRL licences on behalf of Torres Strait Islanders.
Georgia Langdon	Executive Officer	Senior Management Officer for Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery. No pecuniary interests.

# attended the meeting via MS Teams

## Observers

Name	Organisation	Declaration of interest
Bonny Koke #	PNG National Fisheries Authority	Works in the Fisheries Management Unit responsible for managing the prawn and lobster fisheries in the Western Province
Steven Harris #	AFMA	Senior Manager, Torres Strait Fisheries. No pecuniary interests.
Yen Loban	TSRA Board Member and TSRA Portfolio Member for Fisheries	Traditional Owner. TSRA Board member and TSRA Fisheries Portfolio member. Chair of Zenadth Kes Fisheries
Adam White	TSRA	Project manager. TSRA hold TRL licences on behalf of Torres Strait Islanders.
Alex Kailis	MG Kailis Lobster	Director and shareholder of MG Kailis Lobster
Harry Nona	TIB Fisher	TIB licence holder.
Richard Takai	TIB Fisher	TIB licence holder.
Daniel Takai #	Zenadth Kes Fisheries	CEO of Zenadth Kes Fisheries, not personally a TIB licence holder but ZK

Name	Organisation	Declaration of interest
		members and board of directors are TIB licence holders.
Quinten Hirakawa	TSRA	TSRA employee, TIB license holder with a TRL endorsement.
Roshni Subramaniam	CSIRO	Postdoctoral fellow at CSIRO, conducting research on the tropical rock lobster supply chain. No interest in the TRL fishery.
Torres Webb	CSIRO	CSIRO researcher.
Nathan Maxwell-McGinn # <small>(joined the meeting from 12-1pm)</small>	Three Capes Marketing/JSJ Seafood	Not declared.

# attended the meeting via MS Teams

## 1 Preliminaries

### 1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. The meeting was opened at 0845hrs on Wednesday 5 June 2024. Attendees were welcomed to the 16th meeting of the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Working Group. The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the various lands on which members were participating from and paid respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

### 1.2 Adoption of agenda

2. The draft agenda (v2) was adopted without change (**Attachment A**).

### 1.3 Declaration of interests

3. The Chair advised members and observers, that as provided in PZJA Fisheries Management Paper No. 1 (FMP1), all members of the Working Group must declare all real or potential conflicts of interest in the Torres Strait TRL Fishery at the commencement of the meeting. Where it is determined that a direct conflict of interest exists, the Working Group may allow the member to continue to participate in the discussions relating to the matter but may also determine that, having made their contribution to the discussions, the member should retire from the meeting for the remainder of the discussions on that issue.
4. Members noted any updates or changes to the record of declarations. These are detailed in the meeting participant tables at the start of this meeting record.

### 1.4 Action items from previous meetings

5. The Working Group noted the draft meeting summary for TRLWG15 held on 14 December 2023 which was circulated for member comment on 22 May 2024. Members were reminded to submit comments on the draft to the executive officer and that the draft meeting summary would be finalised out of session.
6. The Working Group noted the progress and status of actions arising from previous TRLWG meetings (refer to Agenda paper 1.4), in particular:

- a) Action Item 4 – the QDAF member advised that the Chair of the Cape York Special Fisheries Working Group of the interest from traditional inhabitant industry in participating in their meetings. Penny Hamilton, First Nations Fishery Manager is also aware of the request and will connect with a TSRA staff member to facilitate this request further.
- b) Action Item 6 – an observer from TSRA advised members that following TRLWG 15 in December 2022, the TSRA with Working Group traditional inhabitant members for Kaiwalagal and Kulkagal visited key TRL fishing communities (TSRA – please include list) and discussed the emergency measures with each community. The general outcome was that each community did not wish to proceed with the emergency measure proposal.

**ACTION ITEM** – QDAF member to connect TSRA with Penny Hamilton, the QDAF First Nations Fishery Manager regarding participation of traditional inhabitants in the Cape York Special Fisheries Working Group.

## 1.5 Out-of-session correspondence

7. The Working Group noted the out-of-session correspondence on TRLWG matters since the previous meeting. No comments were raised.

## 2 Updates from members

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### 2.1 Industry members

8. The Working Group noted verbal updates provided by traditional inhabitant and industry members and observers regarding the performance of the Torres Strait TRL Fishery during the 2023-24 fishing season, in particular:
  - a) The 2023-24 season is considered to be an abnormal season as prices remain low, fuel and freight prices are increasing and closure of the Chinese market to Australian lobster continues to negatively impact the industry. This is further exacerbated by the specific ban on tropical rock lobster species (*Panulirus ornatus*) as a protected species in China. Reasons for the protected species listing remain unclear.
  - b) The greatest challenge facing the industry is regaining access to the Chinese Market. It is possible that Australian lobster may reopen to the Chinese market in July 2024 however *P. ornatus* is likely to continue to be banned. Work is ongoing with the Australian Lobster Working Group and the Australian Government to address the issue. The AFMA member noted that an Australian Government delegation is in China discussing the matter and AFMA has contributed to a package of information to help demonstrate how well managed and sustainable the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster fishery is. Working Group members agreed that a united front across the whole industry is required to address this issue.
  - c) In lieu of a primary Chinese market, lobster wholesalers have continued to sell to alternative markets both domestic and internationally, however lobster prices have fallen globally due to cheaper farmed lobster flooding the market, and other *P. ornatus* fisheries seeking the same alternate markets. The economics member noted that the NSW Eastern rock lobster domestic prices are also falling, and industry are struggling to sell their lobsters.
  - d) Fishing effort in the eastern islands is very slow and poor weather conditions, high fuel prices (\$3.70/L) and poor beach prices have hindered fishers since the end of February 2024. Local TRL buyers have recently ceased buying from the outer islands as increased

freight prices outweigh the buying prices of live TRL. While there is scope to shift the fishery to lobster tails in the short term, the industry is based on a live lobster fishery as is the infrastructure, freight and logistics and so shifting is not a long term solution.

- e) Some TVH industry members highlighted that the impacts felt by the TIB sector (fuel and freight prices) are also affecting the TVH sector and as a result, TVH fishing effort is significantly down.
- f) Other industry members made reports of high abundance of 0+ lobsters and indications of good habitat. A traditional inhabitant member observed a difference in the extent of sand that is typically built up around islands across the region. He noted that it appears to be more spread out than usual, towards the reef edge.

## 2.2 Scientific and economic members

9. The Working Group noted a brief update from the WG scientific member, in particular:

- a) Following on from the International Lobster Conference in October 2023, TRL RAG scientific member Dr Eva Plaganyi was invited to submit a peer reviewed paper on the longer term monitoring work undertaken in the Torres Strait TRL Fishery. This paper has now been published in the *Fisheries Research* journal.
- b) A new climate change project funded by TSRA is now underway. Two data loggers/moorings have been deployed in the region and will be removed after one year.
- c) CSIRO are holding a TRL supply chain workshop after the Working Group meeting. The workshop is aimed at co-developing new methods, tools and indicators to evaluate relationships between the resilience of seafood supply chains to different types of shocks and the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

10. The Working Group economics member noted that due to ongoing social domestic issues and predictions of slowed economic growth in China, the demand for and consumption of lobster is also expected to reduce and this could have flow on effects to all lobster industries.

## 2.3 Government agencies

- 11. The AFMA member noted that many of the issues and economic threats impacting the Torres Strait are consistent with the issues facing other fisheries around the country although driven by different factors. Issues of unaffordability of input costs, fragility of market prices and operational issues such as finding crew are being experienced by all fisheries that AFMA manage.
- 12. AFMA's role is ensuring the management arrangements are appropriate, ensuring TACs are set in order to maximise catch rates and to ensure that AFMA management measures are not unnecessarily contributing to economic conditions where the fishing conditions are not optimal.
- 13. The AFMA member further noted that this season is the first time in a number of years that there has been a new sector in the Fishery with the cross-endorsed PNG boats. He added that compliance inspections have been positive and communications have been consistent with both the PNG National Fisheries Authority (NFA) and the licence holder. The AFMA member thanked community and industry for responding to the process quite positively. He noted that should arrangements for cross-endorsement be enduring, and there is increased capacity for PNG to catch their full entitlement, AFMA will need to ensure the management arrangements are robust and welcomes the opportunity for greater TIB input into development of the arrangements in future fishing seasons.

14. A significant increase in the level of illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing in the north west of Australia has resulted in a diversion of enforcement assets from the Torres Strait region. However, new funding from the most recent Government budget has provided funds for AFMA to help combat IUU fishing through increased capacity and a greater presence in the region as a deterrence.
15. A Traditional inhabitant member raised concerns regarding a lack of compliance and enforcement efforts by AFMA in recent years, particularly at Warrior Reef.
16. The Working Group noted the following updates from the QDAF Member:
  - a) The Queensland TRL Working Group is not currently in place. An expression of interest was called last year to refresh most of the Queensland WG's, including TRL however a decision was made not to continue with the TRL WG at this stage as not enough appropriate applications were received.
  - b) The most recent meeting of the Cape York Special Fisheries Working Group was held in May 2024. A link to the communique from the meetings is available here: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/fisheries/engagement/working-groups/current/cape-york>
  - c) A stock assessment has still not been completed for TRL. Other priorities such as meeting conditions of Wildlife Trade Operations Approvals for export for other fisheries has meant delayed the process and reduced the work to a low priority.
  - d) So far in the 2024 fishing season (1 January – 30 September) 17% of quota has been taken (34 000kgs of 195 000kg). This is greater than last season with only 15.4% (30,000kg) being taken.
  - e) The phase-out of gillnets on the Great Barrier Reef is continuing as well as new net free areas in the gulf of Carpentaria and rezoning of the Great Sandy Marine Park.
17. The QDAF member reiterated an overview of the Indigenous Fishing Permits as a mechanism for indigenous fishers to enter into Queensland commercial fisheries. The QDAF member noted that if fishers wish to seek greater access to Queensland fisheries other than through an IFP or purchasing existing quota units, it would require a shift of jurisdictional boundaries between Queensland and the Torres Strait. The QDAF member committed to providing further information on whether approval from Traditional Owners of the Cape York Area is required or considered as part of the IFP application process.
18. A traditional inhabitant member added that greater transparency and consultation is required in relation to disparity in conditions for access to fisheries across the Torres Strait region (i.e. PNG's entitlements under cross-endorsement versus requirements for a Queensland IFP or the leasing of TSRA licences).

<b>ACTION ITEM</b> – QDAF to follow up on whether approval from Traditional Owners is required as part of the Indigenous Fishing Permit application process.
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19. The Working Group also noted a brief update provided by the TSRA Member:
  - a) The TSRA had a delegation that travelled to Canberra to meet with the National Indigenous Australian's Agency (NIAA) Minister, AFMA and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to reiterate the consistent messages of the National Lobster Working Group and echo the voice of industry as a plea for assistance with re-opening the Chinese market to tropical rock lobster.
  - b) The TSRA board continues to support the development of ZK Fisheries and has committed that some fisheries assets that the TSRA hold in trust on behalf of traditional inhabitants become operational by ZKF. The intent is that the three TVH TRL licences held by the TSRA are temporarily leased out to ZK Fisheries on a season by season basis.



- c) In a separate process, as part of the review of TIB quota units and allocation, TSRA on behalf of the PZJA has undertaken a tender process to identify a consultant who can develop an alternate process to an Independent Advisory Allocation Panel (IAAP) for reviewing the permanent transfer of TIB quota from the TSRA. The tender process has now been finalised with a report submitted to the TSRA CEO for consideration and next steps.
  - d) Wapil 2 is ongoing, focussing on six themes including infrastructure and capacity building for TIB fishers.
20. Having the belief that the TVH licences held in trust by the TSRA were bought out to be abolished, a traditional inhabitant member queried where the quota units will come from if the three TVH licences were to be leased out. The AFMA member noted that each of those licences were allocated quota under the TRL Management Plan and that these quota units have formed part of the TIB quota pool. He added that AFMA is very keen to be part of any initiative that sees an increased usage of entitlements set aside for the TIB sector and agrees that the process for any temporary lease needs to be approached very carefully to ensure there is a high degree of transparency with regards to the leasing arrangements. This will be particularly important so that people are aware of any implications of TIB quota being used in a different way (i.e. reducing the existing 66.2% TIB quota allocation). Though it may not be impactful this season or while TIB catches are low, future seasons could be different if there is a risk that the TIB sector may reach its TAC more quickly than in recent years.
21. Another traditional inhabitant member noted that this matter needs to be further discussed with the complete ZKF board and membership with the views of non ZKF members as well as it will impact the entire TIB sector.

## 2.4 Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority

22. The Working Group noted the following update from the PNG National Fisheries Authority representative:
- a) NFA have been working diligently with AFMA to enable the cross-endorsement of two PNG boats in accordance with the cross-endorsement Guidelines.
  - b) Maru United (a PNG TRL licenced fishing company) are now in full operation.
  - c) The catch data update from 2023 recently provided to AFMA is from Aquila Ltd and two other shore based companies. It is expected that data for Maru United will be available this year. NFA is still experiencing ongoing issues with data submission from fishers.
  - d) A review of the PNG TRL Management Plan is underway.

## 2.5 Native Title

23. No updates on Native Title matters were provided as there was no Malu Lamar RNTBC representative in attendance.

# 3 Review of Management Controls

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24. The Working Group noted the AFMA members' remarks regarding a review of management controls in the TRL Fishery. When considering the objectives to be pursued under the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* (the Act) and the TRL fishery specific management objectives, there are certain management arrangements in place that could be considered as diminishing the achievement of these objectives, particularly from an economic viability, economic development and employment opportunities perspective.
25. However, making changes to management arrangements without proper consideration could also result in the fishery objectives not being achieved.

26. Noting the similar issues and struggles experienced by all sectors in recent years, it is timely that the Working Group discuss changes to management arrangements that may alleviate some of the impacts from external pressures affecting markets and profitability.
27. The Working Group noted remarks from industry member Peter Frazis on the suggested proposals as put forward by MG Kailis to try and improve the economic viability of the TRL Fishery and supply chain in the short term, and remove some fishing effort barriers with the aim to increase market prices available to both sectors during peak market periods (i.e. Chinese New Year). He added that these proposals would help improve prices whether the Chinese market was open to Australian lobster or not.
28. Noting much of the discussion in the meeting had been in relation to prices, Mr Frazis noted that the earlier hookah season date proposal is directly intended to maximise the supply of TRL when the demand and market prices are at their highest which would in turn maximise the value of the product and improve prices for the industry.
29. The second proposal to remove some moontide hookah closures (in February, April and May) is also to aid in maximising product volume when the market is at its strongest, resulting in better prices, as well as improve efficiency and remove bottle necks at unloads during peak periods. Thirdly, the suggestions to remove some restrictions on TIB fishers is to help increase their fishing effort including allowing TIB hookah diving in November and December; allowing TIB freediving year round or allowing TIB freediving and hookah diving year round.
30. Mr Frazis added that in his visits to some outer island communities there is a mix of views heard in relation to the three suggested proposals, however he was concerned that many key fishers and fish receivers were not in attendance at the TSRA consultations in December 2023/January 2024 and therefore their views were not captured.
31. To help inform the discussion and noting that the minutes are not available, the Working Group noted further detail from the outcomes of the December 2023/January 2024 consultations on the emergency measures proposed at TRLWG 15 as provided by the TSRA and Working Group members who participated:
  - a) TSRA visited 4-5 communities (TSRA – please include list) with some members of the Working Group.
  - b) There was lots of concern about change and how it might impact individual communities. Including that there was to be little benefit to the TIB sector and only benefits to the TVH sector. The general consensus was that communities did not support the proposal to open the hookah season earlier than 1 February.
  - c) Kaiwalagal consultations indicated that no change was preferred as the proposals were not deemed to make any difference to the TIB sector.
  - d) Some discussions were had in relation to a potential price differential if the proposals were to go ahead, however in lieu of confirmation of what that price would be, communities remained unsupportive of the changes.
  - e) Community at Badu were reluctant to support due to dissatisfaction that previous proposals raised by TIB to make fishing operations more viable had not been supported in the past.
  - f) Other feedback related to the proposals being too rushed with not enough time to consider them completely.
  - g) Another concern was that if hookah diving commenced earlier and the TVH sector caught a substantial tonnage more than TIB, this would impact the ability for the TIB sector to continue fishing later in the season due to the impacts of localised depletion. This was particularly relevant for communities and dinghy operators from Badu, Mabuag and lama and is more prevalent now with two PNG cross-endorsement boats on the primary fishing grounds.
32. Other traditional inhabitant members reiterated that localised depletion is a real impact and the inability to travel further to other fishing grounds without access to primary boats is a key reason as to why the TIB sector is not catching its TAC. An observer from ZK Fisheries noted that this

issue is the main reason why ZK Fisheries is intending to lease the TVH licences and provide a platform for the TIB sector to have better access to the fishery grounds.

33. Recognising the concerns and experience of localised depletion, the Working Group agreed that the broader stock abundance of TRL is healthy but that the stock is likely in other areas not accessible by the TIB sector. The AFMA member noted that AFMA does not have the tools to manage and monitor localised depletion currently, but AFMA can ensure that arrangements are not necessarily constraining the industry.
34. The AFMA member further noted that it is not desirable to have a suite of arrangements that benefits one group at the expense of another. However there may be instances where not everyone benefits but there are no costs to anyone which would contribute positively to a viable fishery overall. He added, it is important to assess these proposals through the lens of the fishery objectives which provide clear direction on how to manage the fishery to increase economic development for the region and support livelihoods and employment.
35. Acknowledging concerns with the consultation process from TRLWG 15, the Working Group discussed a strategy ensure communities and industry are adequately consulted on the proposals put forward by MG Kailis including clearly identifying the benefits of each and what the costs or risks are and assessing whether they are real and manageable. The risks of not making a change should also be considered.
36. The TSRA member offered to host a two-day industry workshop to help further develop and assess the proposals against the fishery objectives with a suggestion to have day one set aside for TIB participants only. However, the AFMA member noted the role of the Working Group is to have the diverse community views fed in to the PZJA consultative decision-making framework. It is not feasible to manage a fishery effectively where management decisions cannot be made in a timely and appropriate manner or where each management change requires substantial financial investment to capture everyone's views.
37. Due to divergent views among Working Group members on the first two proposals put forward by MG Kailis, and further questions that need to be answered on the second and third proposals, the Working Group agreed that more time is required to discuss the proposals with communities first before convening an industry workshop. The AFMA member noted that to undertake any broader consultation, the Working Group (traditional inhabitant and industry members in particular) need to be proactive in developing a clear consultation package and be consistent in the information that is presented.
38. The Working Group acknowledged that there is some lived experience from the Fishery in 2024 to provide data trends on prices versus catch throughout the season that may help in supporting discussions on quantitative basis for the proposals put forward by MG Kailis. AFMA committed to providing a brief assessment of these proposals against the objectives of the Act and the Fishery noting that any further detail that can be committed from MG Kailis would be beneficial. An observer from MG Kailis reminded members that ultimately the proposals have been put forward as suggestions to stimulate discussion with the intention of benefiting the industry as a whole by increasing prices and reducing costs across the supply chain.
39. **The Working Group agreed that the paper submitted by MG Kailis will serve as an informed source for a broader discussion paper that should include price versus catch trends from the 2023-24 fishing season and an assessment of benefits and risks/costs of each proposal against the fishery and Act objectives, for traditional inhabitant members to consult with communities.**
40. **The Working Group further agreed that having regard to community views, the TSRA will convene an industry workshop for TRL Working Group traditional inhabitant members and industry members to refine the proposals for implementation where applicable.**

**ACTION ITEM:** TSRA to provide to the Working Group, copies of the minutes from the December 2023/January 2024 consultations on emergency measures to change the start of the hookah season from 1 February to 24 January 2024 and remove the February moontide hookah closure.

**ACTION ITEM:** AFMA to undertake a preliminary assessment of benefits and risks/costs of each proposal put forward by MG Kailis against the objectives of the Act and the Fishery to be part of a broader discussion paper to be used in community consultations.

## 4 TRL Research Priorities

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41. The Working Group noted a presentation by TRL WG Scientific member, Laura Blamey on how the new TSRA-funded climate change fisheries project fits in with other CSIRO scientific research in the Torres Strait. A copy of the presentation is provided at **Attachment B**.
42. In response to a query regarding 'independent researchers, Working Group members noted that CSIRO's current contract for the main TRL fishery research project comes to an end at the end of the financial year (June 2025) after which another round will have commenced for any interested researchers to apply for that work. The AFMA member noted that the role of the TSSAC is to independently assess the applications for research and that traditional inhabitant members from across all fishery RAGs are also members on the TSSAC.
43. The AFMA member further noted that AFMA wishes to develop a national fisheries research register to better understand what research providers are available to help make more targeted attempts for research proposal submissions which will contribute to a more robust research provider selection.
44. **Noting the current stats of recently identified research needs as last reviewed by the TRL RAG and TRL WG in July 2023, no additional research or changes to the current priorities were identified by the Working Group.**

## 5 Other Business

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45. Working Group members noted that catches for the TRL Fishery as at 4 June 2024 were:
  - a) TIB sector: 51.8 tonnes (21.8%) of a 236.8 tonne TAC
  - b) TVH sector: 43.5 tonnes (36%) of a 120.9 tonne TAC

## 6 Date and venue for next meeting

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46. The Chair thanked all members and observers for their contributions to the discussions throughout the day. The 16th TRL Working Group meeting was closed in prayer at 4:37pm on Wednesday 5 June 2024.

**TROPICAL ROCK LOBSTER WORKING GROUP 16  
(TRLWG 16)**

**Wednesday 5 June 2024 | 830am – 5pm  
Upstairs Pearl’s Building, Thursday Island**

**ADOPTED AGENDA (v2)**

**1 PRELIMINARIES**

**1.1 Welcome and apologies**

The Chair will welcome members and observers to the 16th meeting of the TRL Working Group.

**1.2 Adoption of agenda**

The Working Group will be invited to adopt the draft agenda.

**1.3 Declaration of interests**

Members and observers will be invited to declare any real or potential conflicts of interest and determine whether a member may or may not be present during discussion of or decisions made on the matter which is the subject of the conflict.

**1.4 Action items from previous meetings**

The Working Group will be invited to note the status of action items arising from previous meetings.

**1.5 Out of session correspondence**

The WG will be invited to note out of session correspondence on WG matters since the previous meeting

**2 UPDATES FROM MEMBERS**

**2.1 Industry members**

Industry members and observers will be invited to provide an update on matters concerning the Torres Strait TRL Fishery, in particular, providing comment on fishing patterns, behaviours, prices, and market trends for the 2023-24 season so far.

**2.2 Scientific and Economic members**

Scientific and economic members and observers will be invited to provide an update on matters concerning the Torres Strait TRL Fishery.

**2.3 Government agencies**

The Working Group will be invited to note updates from AFMA, TSRA and QDAF on matters concerning the Torres Strait TRL Fishery.

**2.4 Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority**

The Working Group will be invited to note a verbal update from the PNG National Fisheries Authority.

**2.5 Native Title**

The Working Group will be invited to note a verbal update from Malu Lamar (Torres Strait Islander) Corporation RNTBC and other Working Group members on native title matters relevant to the TRL Fishery.

**3 CHANGES TO MANAGEMENT CONTROLS**

The Working Group will be invited to discuss a review of management controls in the TRL Fishery, noting an overview on changes and proposals to date and provide advice on future changes to be prioritised, assessed and consulted on.

**4 RESEARCH PRIORITIES**

The Working Group is invited to discuss and provide advice on future research priorities for the TRL Fishery.

CSIRO will also deliver a short presentation on how the new TSRA-funded climate change and fisheries project fits in with other CSIRO research in the Torres Strait. This was an action item from TRLWG 14 (6 July 2023).

**5 OTHER BUSINESS**

The WG will be invited to raise any other matters for consideration.

**6 DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING**

The WG will be invited to discuss a suitable date for the next Working Group meeting.

**The Chair must approve the attendance of all observers at the meeting. Individuals wishing to join the meeting as an observer must contact the Executive Officer – Georgia Langdon ([georgia.langdon@afma.gov.au](mailto:georgia.langdon@afma.gov.au))**