

## FACT SHEET:

# Traditional Inhabitant Boat licences in the Torres Strait

### What is a Traditional Inhabitant Boat licence?

- A Traditional Inhabitant Boat (TIB) licence is a commercial fishing licence to fish in Torres Strait fisheries that can only be issued to Traditional Inhabitants.
- Traditional and recreational fishing does not require a commercial fishing licence.

### Why were TIB licences introduced?

- The current TIB licensing system in the Torres Strait was implemented by the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) on 1 April 1999.
- The system moved licensing from a community-based system to individually held TIB licences.
- Individual TIB licences were introduced to improve the management of Torres Strait fisheries. Benefits include:
  - better understanding of the potential fishing effort across the Torres Strait fisheries
  - better enforcement of commercial fishing regulations
  - improved communication with individual Traditional Inhabitant fishers.

### How do I get a TIB licence?

#### ***Applicants must be traditional inhabitants of the TSPZ or adjacent coastal area of Australia.***

- Before you can apply for a TIB licence, you must provide a completed *Traditional Inhabitant Identification Form* to the PZJA, which must be signed by a relevant Councillor and relevant Council Mayor.
- Evidence of Traditional Inhabitant status and residency in the region may also be required.
- Traditional Inhabitants may then apply for a TIB licence by filling in the *TIB Licence Application Form*.
- Licence application forms are available from the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) or on the PZJA website.
- Completed forms should be submitted to AFMA, who will issue the licence to eligible applicants on behalf of the PZJA.

### What are the conditions on a TIB licence?

Because the number of TIB licences is unlimited to Traditional Inhabitants, some input controls apply to ensure that fishing effort is kept at a sustainable level.

#### ***The nominated boat on the licence must be fully owned by the applicant:***

- This condition is intended to reserve the expansion of growth in Torres Strait fisheries and the resulting benefits for Traditional Inhabitants.

#### ***Only traditional inhabitants are allowed to commercially fish from the boat:***

- This condition is intended to reserve the expansion of growth in Torres Strait fisheries and the resulting benefits for Traditional Inhabitants.
- Exceptions can be granted by the PZJA for approved training programs.

***The TIB licence is only valid for the TSPZ fisheries, including their 'outside but near areas'.***

- This is the area of management responsibility for the PZJA, established under the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

***Boats cannot exceed 20 metres in length.***

- This condition is intended as an input control to limit fishing effort.
- There are other specific boat size restrictions in some Torres Strait fisheries.

***All TIB fishing vessels used in conjunction with a carrier vessel are licensed under the same name as the primary vessel licence holder.***

- Introduced as a condition following a PZJA decision in September 2011.
- This condition is intended as an input control to prevent an uncapped increase in fishing effort and to prevent boats acting as a processor-carrier boat without restrictions. It was also hoped this would encourage 'true' primary-tender operations

***From 1 July 2017, all primary boats and licensed carrier boats are required to have an AFMA approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) unit installed.***

- This condition will apply to both TIB and TVH licences.
- This condition will not apply to tenders/dinghies.
- Vessels under 6 metres or commercial freight vessels have been given an exemption from requirement to install a VMS.
- It is being implemented to improve monitoring and compliance of primary and carrier vessels, which can in turn lead to more flexible management arrangements.
- The installation of a VMS unit by 1 July 2017 is the responsibility of the licence holder.
- To assist current Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal fishers to comply with these new requirements, the TSRA is offering to supply VMS units to eligible fishers and arrange a day for installation of all units. If you wish to seek support from the TSRA you will need to contact the TSRA Fisheries Programme.

**Contacts:**

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