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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

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Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Helping to re-build East Coast rock lobster stocks

The Tasmanian Liberal Government continues to seek the right balance between providing appropriate levels access for today's fishers while ensuring healthy fish stocks for future generations.

The East Coast Rock Lobster Stock Rebuilding Plan commenced in 2014 with the target of rebuilding severely depleted stocks to greater than 20 per cent of an unfished biomass by 2023 in the zone from Eddystone Point to Bruny Island.

The Government has received advice from IMAS that the stock levels on the East Coast remain poor, with unfished biomass estimates in stock assessment area 2 (mid-East Coast) sitting at only 10 per cent.

The Government has already committed to accelerating the development of the next East Coast Rock Lobster Stock Rebuilding Plan, with the current one to end in 2023.

The Government will now be commencing consultation with the community on this Plan as a matter of priority, including through a Discussion Paper to be released in March.

There will be consultation on all options for sharing the resource between fishers and what additional management controls and tools are needed to rebuild stocks.

This consultation will incorporate the development of a harvest strategy with biological performance measures, as identified in the Government's 10-year Recreational Sea Fishing Strategy.

It has also been necessary to reduce the commercial catch of rock lobster in the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone by 10 tonnes to a maximum of 94 tonnes for the 2022-23 quota year starting on 1 March.

The state-wide Total Allowable Catch for the commercial rock lobster fishery will remain unchanged at 1,050.70 tonnes, providing opportunities for those commercial fishers wanting to fill their quota

from other areas.

To further accelerate the re-build of East Coast rock lobster populations, the Government will work with the commercial fishers on a plan to increase translocations of lobster to the East Coast Stock Rebuilding Zone. This will be over and above the Government's election commitment, already funded, to extend the East Coast Translocation Program by \$75,000 a year over the next two years.

For recreational rock lobster fishers, there will be no change to the daily bag limit of two lobsters, which will continue to be enforced this season. And recreational rock lobster fishers are encouraged to log their catches and fishing trips as part of a trial of the Rock Lobster Catch Monitoring Trial App.

Rebuilding the rock lobster population on the East Coast is a complex issue and the Government is committed to listening to all stakeholders.