



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING NO. 68

MEETING RECORD

8 APRIL 2016

CHAIR: MR IAN CARTWRIGHT

RATIFIED

ATTENDANCE – TSSAC 68 (8 April 2016)

Name	Membership Status	Declaration of Interest
Mr. Ian Cartwright	Chair	Independent Consultant
Ms. Selina Stoute	AFMA Representative	None declared
Ms. Claire Wallis	Executive Officer (AFMA)	None declared
Dr Dirk Welsford	Scientific Member	To Be Advised (TBA)
Dr Natasha Stacey	Scientific Member	TBA
Dr Stephen Newman	Scientific Member	Fisheries Scientist, Department of Fisheries, Western Australia
Ms. Mariana Nahas	TSRA Representative	Fisheries Project Manager, TSRA
Dr Roland Pitcher	Scientific Member	Fisheries Scientist, CSIRO
Mr Maluwap Nona	Traditional Inhabitant Industry member (Maluialgal)	TBA
Mr Paul Kabai	Traditional Inhabitant Industry member (Gudumalulgal)	TBA
Mr Ned Larry	Traditional Inhabitant Industry member (Kulkalgal)	TBA
Mr Patrick Sachs	AFMA, observer	Nil
Mr John Ramsay	TSRA, observer	Nil

Other attendees:

Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Tom Roberts (Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, member), Mr Daniel Takai (Industry member), Mr Phillip Ketchell (Traditional Inhabitant Industry representative for Kaiwalagal, member), Mr Jerry Stephen (Traditional Inhabitant representative for Kemer Kemer Miriam, member), Mr Kenny Bedford (TSRA Fisheries Portfolio representative, observer), and Mr Ian Liviko (Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority, observer).



Action Items – TSSAC #68

No.	Action Item	By who
1	AFMA to draft a thank you letter to Sevaly Sen and Michael O'Neill on behalf of the Chair	AFMA
2	AFMA to circulate declaration of interests table prior to next face to face meeting	AFMA
3	AFMA to revise the pre-proposal assessment template to provide a descriptive sentence for each criterion, and to consider the re-addition of an N/A column	AFMA

Recommendations – TSSAC #68

1	In relation to the pre-proposal " <i>Torres Strait rock lobster (TRL) fishery surveys, stock assessment, harvest control rules and Recommended Biological Catch</i> " that the applicant be invited to submit a full proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) focused on Option 3 as outlined in the pre-proposal; b) with greater detail regarding the development of a harvest strategy; and c) inclusive of a detailed data management plan. 	AFMA
2	All pre-proposal applicants be invited to submit a revised full proposal addressing the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Harvest Strategy research priority and having regard for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) priority should be given to first reviewing all available data and possible harvest strategy options. A formal evaluation of harvest strategy options should only commence once it is clear there is sufficient data available to support such an approach; b) full proposals should ensure stakeholder engagement is clearly described; and c) where possible, the applicants are encouraged to collaborate 	AFMA
3	In relation to the pre-proposal, " <i>Development of opportunities for the Traditional Inhabitant (TIB) sector in the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery</i> ", that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the project not be supported for funding at this time noting other research priorities; and b) the applicant be encouraged to liaise further with industry and TSRA to develop future proposals that build on previous studies, garner industry support and take into account relevant initiatives being funded by TSRA. 	AFMA
4	In relation to the pre-proposal, " <i>Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Beche-de-Mer Fishery</i> " that the project be supported in principle, subject the applicant providing the following for review out-of-session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) more detailed methodology; and b) clarification of the communication materials to be produced for community dissemination. 	AFMA



Meeting Administration

Agenda Item 1 - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Chair's Opening Remarks/Meeting attendance/Declaration of Interests/Apologies

2. The Chair welcomed the TSSAC members and observers, and acknowledged the traditional owners. Declarations of interest were taken as standing, noting that no interests were declared by new members, and that the register would be brought up to date at the next face to face meeting.
3. The Committee welcomed the new members Dr Dirk Welsford and Dr Natasha Stacey, and acknowledged the valuable addition of their professional expertise to the TSSAC, noting the extensive professional experiences of the new members.
4. The Committee NOTED the contributions of the outgoing members, Ms Sevaly Sen and Dr Michael O'Neill.

Action Item 1 – AFMA to draft a thank you letter to Sevaly Sen and Michael O'Neill on behalf of the Chair

Action Item 2 – AFMA to circulate declaration of interests table prior to next face to face meeting

Agenda Item 2 - Review and Adoption of Agenda

5. The Committee adopted the agenda, and agreed to consider the Bêche de mer Harvest strategy proposal under Item 9.

Agenda Item 3 - Correspondence

6. The Committee NOTED the incoming and outgoing correspondence since Meeting 67, held on 26 November 2015.

Agenda Item 4 - Ratification of TSSAC 67 Minutes

7. The Committee ratified the minutes of TSSAC 67 as a true and accurate record, and NOTED that future meeting records will be finalised out of session.

Agenda Item 5 - Action Items from TSSAC 67

8. The Committee NOTED the progress against actions arising from TSSAC Meeting 67, held on 26 November 2015.

Management Updates

Agenda Item 6 – Budget

9. The Committee NOTED the status of AFMA's Torres Strait research funding budget, including advice from AFMA that the overall project budget for 2016/17 financial year is expected to remain around \$410,000, though this will not be confirmed until AFMA's budget is finalised.



Agenda Item 7 – Assessment of “Torres Strait rock lobster (TRL) fishery surveys, stock assessment, harvest control rules and Recommended Biological Catch” pre-proposal (CSIRO)

10. The Committee NOTED that the pre-proposal sought to address the two Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Fishery research scopes identified in the 2016/17 call for research, being development of a Harvest Strategy and the continuation of stock assessment and Recommended Biological Catch (RBC) advice.
11. The Committee NOTED that the multiple assessment options detailed in the pre-proposal reflect options developed by the TRL Resource Assessment Group and Working Group.
12. The Committee NOTED that the TRLRAG and Working Group had considered the pre-proposal and advised that:
 - a) both the stock assessment and harvest strategy remain high priorities for the fishery, due to their direct link to management decision making;
 - b) conducting a pre-season survey is the highest priority for the fishery to support TAC decision making;
 - c) work related to finalising the harvest strategy should be clearly detailed throughout the proposal;
 - d) further explanation be provided on: i) the costs variances between running an annual stock assessment compared with a stock assessment conducted every three years; and ii) travel costs.
13. The Committee further NOTED that the TRLRAG has commenced work to develop a harvest strategy based on Option 3 (pre-season survey, empirical harvest control rule and three yearly stock assessments using the integrated stock assessment model). Noting that industry may invest in research in the future, the TRLRAG aim to develop a tiered harvest strategy inclusive of both mid-year and pre-season survey information.
14. The Committee NOTED the limitations of breaking the mid-season time series but that current AFMA funding levels were insufficient to support both surveys and research priorities in other Torres Strait fisheries. The Committee further NOTED that it had previously considered this issue (March 2015) and recommended funding just the pre-season survey.
15. The Committee **RECOMMENDED** in relation to the pre-proposal “Torres Strait rock lobster (TRL) fishery surveys, stock assessment, harvest control rules and Recommended Biological Catch” that the applicant be invited to submit a full proposal:
 - a) focused on Option 3 as outlined in the pre-proposal;
 - b) with greater detail regarding the development of a harvest strategy; and
 - c) inclusive of a detailed data management plan.

Agenda Item 8 – Assessment of Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Harvest Strategy pre-proposals

16. The Committee NOTED the three pre-proposals sought to address the Finfish Fishery harvest strategy research scope identified in the 2016/17 call for research.
17. The Committee NOTED an update by the AFMA member on concerns raised by Mr Jerry Stephen (TSSAC and Finfish Working Group (FFWG) member) that due PZJA processes had not been followed in relation to consultation on the finfish research priorities and pre-proposals. The AFMA member advised that the pre-proposals had been circulated out-of-session to the FFWG for comment and full proposals will be tabled with the FFWG at its next meeting tentatively being scheduled for June.



18. The Committee NOTED that the pre-proposals varied in approach which may reflect the researchers' differing understanding of AFMA's expectations of a harvest strategy. The Committee NOTED advice from the AFMA member that Harvest Strategies are to be developed in accordance with the Commonwealth harvest strategy policy and would necessarily vary according to the species and available data.
19. The Committee NOTED the recommendation of the Traditional Inhabitant Industry Members that applicants should be strongly encouraged to adhere to the guidelines provided in Nakata's "*A guide for fisheries researchers working in Torres Strait.*"
20. The Committee DISCUSSED the availability of data to support complex quantitative analyses and evaluation of candidate harvest strategy options and AGREED that a staged approach should be taken comprising: data review, option development, and formal evaluation of one to two preferred candidate options.
21. The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that all applicants be invited to submit a revised full proposal addressing the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Harvest Strategy research priority and having regard for the following:
 - d) priority should be given to first reviewing all available data and possible harvest strategy options. A formal evaluation of harvest strategy options should only commence once it is clear there is sufficient data available to support such an approach;
 - e) full proposals should ensure stakeholder engagement is clearly described; and
 - f) where possible, the applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate.

Agenda Item 9 – Assessment of other pre-proposals

22. The Committee NOTED the pre-proposal submitted by Dr Eva Plaganyi titled: "*Development of opportunities for the Traditional Inhabitant (TIB) sector in the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery*"
23. The Committee NOTED that the TSSAC has previously reviewed a pre-proposal and full proposal for the project, and had advised the PI that the project was received favourably pending availability of funding from industry and the TSRA. The Committee NOTED that AFMA contacted industry in relation to funding the project in November 2015.
24. The Committee NOTED the TRLRAG and Working Group had considered the pre-proposal and advised that:
 - a) a more targeted approach, informed by previous work and developed in partnership with industry and aligned with relevant TSRA programs would be preferable;
 - b) industry members' support for grow-out R&D were mixed, with some considering it not cost effective, while others considered there to be higher priorities in the fishery, such as assisting fishers to move from 'tailed' product to live trade; and
 - c) proposals to develop value adding initiatives such as 'grow-out' procedures should ideally be supported with an industry partner.
25. The Committee **RECOMMENDED** in relation to the pre-proposal, "*Development of opportunities for the Traditional Inhabitant (TIB) sector in the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery*", that:
 - c) the project not be supported for funding at this time noting other research priorities;
 - d) the applicant be encouraged to liaise further with industry and TSRA to develop future proposals that build on previous studies, garner industry support and take into account relevant initiatives being funded by TSRA.



Assessment of Full Proposal for project “Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Bêche-de-Mer Fishery”

26. The Committee NOTED the full proposal submitted by Dr Tim Skewes titled “*Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Bêche-de-Mer (BDM) Fishery*”. The Committee further NOTED that it had considered the pre-proposal in late 2015 and advice from the AFMA member that developing a BDM Harvest Strategy remains a high priority for the fishery.
27. The Committee NOTED advice from the Traditional Inhabitant Industry members of the importance of supporting projects allowing the sustainable expansion of Traditional Inhabitant owned fisheries, in light of improving employment and education opportunities for Torres Strait Islanders.
28. The Committee **RECOMMENDED** in relation to the pre-proposal, “*Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Beche-de-Mer Fishery*” that the project be supported in principle, subject the applicant providing the following for review out-of-session:
 - a) more detailed methodology; and
 - b) clarification of the communication materials to be produced for community dissemination.

Agenda Item 10 - Confirmation of TSSAC meeting 69.

29. The Committee NOTED that Meeting 69 is likely to be held in May 2016, and that the proposed dates will be circulated shortly.

Other Business

Teleconferences

30. The Committee NOTED advice from the Traditional Inhabitant Industry members that teleconferences may not be a wholly suitable format for discussions and conducive for Traditional Inhabitant Industry members to ask questions. The Committee NOTED that while Traditional Inhabitant industry members were convened at the AFMA office and provided a pre-meeting briefing, further support may be required to assist with teleconference based meetings.

Evaluation template

31. The Committee NOTED that the pre-proposal scoring template may be unclear to new members and AGREED for AFMA to provide a descriptive sentence for each criterion, and to consider the re-addition of an N/A column.

Action Item 3 – AFMA to revise the pre-proposal assessment template to provide a descriptive sentence for each criterion, and to consider the re-addition of an N/A column.

