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TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING NO. 63

MINUTES

20-21 MARCH 2014

CHAIR: MR IAN CARTWRIGHT

These are draft minutes for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee. If no comments are received by 20 June 2014 then these minutes will be ratified at the next meeting of the TSSAC.

Prepared by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority on behalf of the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority



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AGENDA

1. Meeting Administration

- 1.1. Preliminaries - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Chairs Opening
Remarks/Meeting attendance/Declaration of Interests/Apologies
- 1.2. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- 1.3. Correspondence
- 1.4. Ratification of TSSAC 62 Minutes
- 1.5. Action Items from TSSAC 62

2. 2013/14 Research Project Update/Presentations

- 2.1. Smart phone technology for remote data collection in the Torres Strait Traditional Inhabitant finfish fisheries (UTAS)
- 2.2. Characterization of Traditional subsistence Fisheries in PNG Treaty Communities Project (CSIRO)
- 2.3. Beche de Mer Identification Guide (CSIRO)

3. TSSAC Processes

- 3.1. 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 Budget
- 3.2. 2013 Annual Operation Plan review
- 3.3. 2012-2014 Strategic Research Plan
- 3.4. Research Proposal Evaluation
- 3.5. Full proposals assessment
 - 3.5.1. Defining the aggregating and movement behavior of Spanish mackerel to inform future fisheries allocation and sustainable fishing
 - 3.5.2. Improved TSPF profitability and pathways for a sustained flow of TSPF benefits to Torres Strait Island Communities.

4. Other business

- 4.1. Managing and Evaluating projects
- 4.2. Traditional Fisheries Scientific Advisory Group
- 4.3. Update from PZJA Forums
- 4.4. Confirmation of TSSAC No. 64

Individuals wishing to attend the meeting as an observer are required to contact the Chair, Mr Ian Cartwright: c/o TSSAC Executive Officer – Alicia Sabatino (Alicia.sabatino@afma.gov.au) to notify of your desire to attend.





ATTENDANCE – TSSAC #63 (20 & 21 March 2014)

The following members and observers were in attendance at TSSAC No. 63:

Members & Observers

Name	Role	Declaration of Interest
Mr Ian Cartwright	Chairperson	Consultant, AFMA Commissioner
Mr Shane Fava	AFMA Representative	AFMA Fisheries Manager, Torres Strait
Ms Alicia Sabatino	Executive Officer (AFMA)	AFMA Fisheries Officer, Torres Strait
Dr Michael O'Neill	Scientist	Agri Science QLD, QDAFF
Dr Roland Pitcher	Scientist	Researcher, CSIRO
Dr Stephen Newman	Scientist	Fisheries Scientist, WA Fisheries
Mr. Tom Roberts	Fisheries Queensland Representative	Senior Policy Officer, QDAFF
Miss Mariana Nahas	TSRA representative	Fisheries Program, TSRA
Mr. Kenny Bedford	TSRA, Portfolio representative for Fisheries	TSRA Board Member & PBC representative. Only on 20 March 2014.
Mr. Tony Vass	Industry Representative	Mackerel Licence Holder
Mr. Gavin Mosby	Cluster Representative	Traditional Owner Masigalgal, TIB Fisher
Mr. Kiwat Lui	Cluster Representative	TSRA Board Member & PBC Representative
Mr. Jerry Stephen	Cluster Representative	TSRA Board Member and PBC Representative. Only on 20 March 2014
Mr. Joseph Posu	Papua New Guinea (PNG), National Fisheries Authority	Papua New Guinean National Fisheries Authority
Ian Liviko	Papua New Guinea (PNG), National Fisheries Authority	PNG Fisheries
Mr. Klass Hartmann	IMAS	TSSAC Funded Researcher Only on 20 March 2014





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DECISION RECORD – TSSAC #63 (20 & 21 March 2014)

- 1.4 The committee **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC No. 62 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
- 1.5 The committee **NOTED** the completion of the Action Items from TSSAC Meeting 62.
- 3.5.1 The Committee **AGREED** to fund the *Defining the aggregating and movement behavior of Spanish mackerel to inform future fisheries allocation and sustainable fishing* project however the principal investigator (PI) will need to make minor changes to the project objectives and provide further clarification of the budget.
- 3.5.2 The Committee agreed that the *Improved TSPF profitability and pathways for a sustained flow of benefits to Torres Strait Island Communities* project would require an additional workshop component to gauge the likelihood of the proposal receiving community support before a recommendation to fund the proposal would be made (i.e. if the project is not supported at community level the Committee will not recommend to AFMA it be funded).





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Action Items – TSSAC #63 (20 & 21 March 2014)

No.	Action Item	Agenda no.	Champion	Due date
1.	AFMA to confirm if there will be a TSSAC meeting on Thursday Island	1.4	AFMA	asap
2.	Mr. Bedford asked for the last milestone report be forwarded to him. AFMA to send milestone report to Mr. Bedford	2.2	AFMA	3 April 2014
3.	AFMA to Circulate Budget update	3.1	AFMA	Before the next meeting
4	AFMA to write to the TRLWG thanking them on their input into the Research Priorities Table.	3.2	AFMA	Before the next meeting
5	AFMA to write a letter to accompany the 2014 AOP outlining the importance of numbering research priorities and also the importance of setting research Priorities.	3.2	AFMA	Before the next meeting
6	AFMA to distribute the TSSAC 2014 AOP for final changes.	3.2	AFMA	Before the next meeting
7	AFMA to circulate the Strategic Research Plan for final changes.	3.3	AFMA	Ongoing
8	AFMA to write to PI advising him on current decision and seek justification on Budget to why the project has increased by 90K.	3.4.1	AFMA	3 April 2014
9	AFMA to write to PI asking him to take a workshop approach and include this into the proposal.	3.4.1	AFMA	3 April 2014





MINUTES

Agenda Item 1.1 Preliminaries - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Chairs Opening Remarks/Meeting attendance/Declaration of Interests/Apologies

The Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) Chair welcomed members and observers and acknowledged traditional owners of the land. The Chair welcomed new attendees, advised members to sign the declaration of interest and detailed meeting process for the coming 2 days.

The Chair **NOTED** apologies by TSSAC member Sevaly Sen and advised that Tom Roberts will be attending the meeting later.

Agenda Item 1.2 Review and Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by the Committee with no changes.

Agenda Item 1.3 Correspondence

The committee **NOTED** the outgoing correspondence sent to the pre-proposal applicants and in coming correspondence from the Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC) Chair.

Agenda Item 1.4 Ratification of TSSAC 62 Minutes

The committee **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC No.62 as true and accurate record and **NOTED** that minor changes were made. Mr. Michael O'Neil asked if AFMA was still considering hosting a face-to-face meeting on Thursday Island, following a brief discussion Mr. Shane Fava detailed that this could not be confirmed until budgets for the 2014/15 financial year had been finalised.

Action Item 1, AFMA to confirm if there will be a TSSAC meeting on Thursday Island.

Agenda Item 1.5 Action Items from TSSAC 62

Miss Alicia Sabatino from AFMA provided the Committee with an update of the completed and ongoing action items from the 62nd meeting of the TSSAC.

The main discussion flowing from the action items focussed on the metadata template developed by the PI of the recently completed *Research Repository* project which was provided to the Committee for consideration. Mr Stephens and Mr Mosby raised questions regarding the confidentiality of such reports being uploaded to the Torres Strait Marine Research Repository database. The Chair explained to the Committee that if there is any confidential data contained in the reports the officer responsible for uploading to the database will retain such information. Mr Pitcher explained to the members that the purpose of the database is to store research that has been completed and so reports would not get lost over time. Mr Mosby asked who would be the main custodian, Mr Fava explained that AFMA/CSIRO would be responsible for the repository being kept up to date. Mr Mosby did not feel comfortable with this, Mr Pitcher advised Mr Mosby that this is why there are research protocols for the repository that were set up as part of the project.





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It was reiterated that the metadata form has a section specifically detailing whether the report contains sensitive and confidential information.

Agenda Item 2 2013/14 Research Project Update

Agenda Item 2.1 Smartphone technology for remote data collection in the Torres Strait Traditional Inhabitant Finfish Fishery

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation by Mr. Klass Hartmann one of the PI of the Smartphone technology project. The presentation outlined an example of the application being used by a Traditional fishers and also an indication of catch levels from the fishers involved in the project since its implemented.

It was **NOTED** that the researchers had visited Erub early this year and were able to back log data into the application from January 2014. Mr. Hartmann explained to the Committee that local fishermen were hesitant to enter specific spatial data into the smartphone and therefore he has provided alternative logbook options. Mr. Hartmann went on to say that there have been a few challenges relating to phone reception on Erub and that he has addressed this by installing Telstra modems and antennas. This has received positive feedback from Community members and the current processor on Erub.

There were a number of concerns raised by Mr Mosby and Mr Stephen regarding sensitivities with fishing times and Global Positioning System (GPS) markings. Mr. Bedford suggested that it could be best dealt with if there was start and end times. Mr. Hartmann was happy to take further comments on board relating to spatial data sensitivity that may be considered in the final application. It was also mentioned that such a valuable project would need to attract possible ongoing funding to be considered a long term success.

Tom Roberts representative from Queensland Fisheries entered the meeting at 12:32pm.

Agenda Item 2.2 Characterization of Traditional subsistence Fisheries in PNG Treaty Communities Project (CSIRO)

Ms. Sara Busilacchi provided the Committee and observers with a presentation outlining current catch surveys from all traditional stakeholders utilizing the resources of the Torres Strait Protected Zone. This included a range of catch surveys and creel surveys from communities in Papua New Guinea (PNG) Treaty Villages. Ms. Busilacchi detailed that the final report will focus on the main drivers for community fishing and the importance of the fisheries in PNG.

The Chair asked the PNG members present at the meeting what they thought would be the next steps after the project was completed. Mr. Posu said that there is room for continuation of the project.

Mr. Fava asked the difference was between the focus groups and creel surveys. Ms. Busilacchi detailed that the focus groups are more specific whereas the creel survey is general when the researchers meet with the focus groups after they have already obtained information from the creel surveys. There were questions raised by Mr Stephens regarding the take and the selling of Turtle and Dugong. There were further discussions about Warrior Reef and it was noted that compliance is an issue and it was hard to get stewardship of this resource.

There was also an opportunity to follow up with the Ms. Busilacchi regarding the pre-proposals that were submitted to the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) and supported by the TSSAC. Ms. Busilacchi detailed that the NFA was in support for the project and encouraged AFMA to be involved. The NFA are currently waiting on the outcome from the Grants Committee to confirm funding of the projects.





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Action Item 2, Mr. Bedford asked for the last milestone report to be forwarded to him. AFMA to send milestone report to Mr. Bedford.

Agenda Item 2.3 Bech de Mer Identification Guide

The Committee **NOTED** the presentation provided by Dr. Tim Skewes detailing the current progress of the guide, what the guide will look like and the guide's components. An update was also given on how species are identified and individual characteristics of the commonly caught species from Torres Strait waters. It was **NOTED** that Dr. Skewes along with AFMA officers will be undertaking community consultation in the upcoming months to discuss the guide and other matters relevant to the BDM fishery.

The Committee **NOTED** that all milestones are up to date and the TSSAC looks forward to seeing the final product. The Committee **NOTED** that the guide was highlighted as a need by the Torres Strait Hand Collectables Working group and AFMA officers.

Agenda Item 3 TSSAC Processes

Agenda Item 3.1 2013/14 and 2014/15 Budget

The Committee **NOTED** the status of the budget for both the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years primarily discussing funds currently committed to research projects and possible projects for funding.

It was **AGREED** that the *Improved TSPF profitability and pathways for a sustained flow of benefits to Torres Strait Island Communities* project be kept to a maximum budget of \$81K (including the workshop) noting that the PI is an ideal candidate for such a project because of previous involvement in the TSPF fishery.

The Committee **NOTED** that the *Defining the aggregating and movement behavior of Spanish mackerel to inform future fisheries allocation and sustainable fishing* project will need to cut \$90K from its full proposal budget to align with its pre-proposal budget (noting also a host of inconsistencies within the budget).

The Committee **AGREED** for sign on payments for the Finfish and Prawn projects of \$25K each as appropriate and a suitable means of using the remaining research funds for the current financial year.

The Committee had discussions regarding the continuation of funding for the Tropical Rock Lobster Surveys, it was **NOTED** that the project needed to be reviewed and discussion with CSIRO regarding the likelihood of quota being implemented in the fishery as this will have implications on the future of this project.

Action Item 3, AFMA to Circulate Budget update

Agenda Item 3.2 Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee 2013 Annual Operational Plan

The Committee **NOTED** the current status of the TSSAC Annual Operational Plan. Mr. Fava advised the Committee that there were changes made to the current research priorities table by PZJA forum members (i.e. working groups etc) and it was important that TSSAC members make further comments to the table. The Committee **NOTED** that the research priorities table seemed to have more high priority ratings (1 & 2) than it should and that all working groups and RAGs need to choose the research priority more carefully. The Committee agreed for AFMA to write a letter to outline the importance of selecting the priority need rating and to be realistic.





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Action Item 4, AFMA to write to the TRLWG thanking them on their input into the Research Priorities Table.

Action Item 5, AFMA to write a letter to accompany the 2014 AOP outlining the importance of numbering research priorities and also the importance of setting research Priorities.

Action Item 6, AFMA to distribute the TSSAC 2014 AOP for final changes.

Mr. Fava advised the Committee that the Annual Operational Plan needed to be finalized at the next meeting in June 2014.

Mr. Stephen raised questions regarding native title obligations for research projects, he stated that research should not proceed without full consultation and the prior approval of all native title representative bodies.

The Chair **AGREED** that consultation with communities should be an integral part of proposal development and this was assumed to have taken place as per the agreed protocol for researchers in the Torres Strait. He went on to say that it now appeared, however, that a strong view was being expressed from Traditional Owner representative on the TSSAC that this consultation had been inadequate. The Chair looked for guidance from AFMA as to whether or not this requirement for consultation equated to getting approval from the communities before researcher could submit the proposal, or the committee consider it. Support for all current project proposals from TSRA was noted. Mr. Fava expressed the view on behalf of AFMA that under current arrangements the consultation requirement does not equate to getting endorsement of the proposal by all community members;

The Committee **NOTED** the comments made by Mr. Stephen regarding his interpretation of what is NOW required under native title and its obligation for researchers. The committee **AGREED** to adhere to what the current procedures are until proof of additional consultation requirements are provided.

Mr. Stephens further demanded that additional evidence is required from researcher to prove that they have engaged with communities regarding their proposals. It was suggested that when researchers do contact communities there should be documentary evidence that this has taken place via emails or letters. Researchers will need to seek direction from the TSRA to who is the best point of contact is on communities.

Agenda Item 3.3 Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee Strategic Research Plan

Mr. Fava explained that AFMA will do an internal review of the Strategic Research Plan before having it externally reviewed. Questions were raised as to whether the plan should be in place for a longer term (there is a term of 3 years in place), Mr Fava responded by detailing that this depends on a number of factors both research and fisheries policy based. Mr. Fava informed the committee that the Strategic Research Plan has been sent to the newly developed Indigenous Reference Group for consideration. The Committee **AGREED** for the Strategic Research Plan to be reviewed every three years.

Action Item 7, AFMA to circulate the Strategic Research Plan.

Agenda Item 3.5 Full proposals assessment

The Committee assessed two full proposals applications for the 2014/2015 financial year;

3.5.1 Defining the aggregating and movement behavior of Spanish mackerel to inform future fisheries allocation and sustainable fishing





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Committee member Mr. Michael O'Neil declared a possible conflict of interest and left the room. The Committee discussed the involvement of Mr. O'Neil and how the conflict of interest should be declared and AGREED that Mr. O'Neil would not take part in evaluating the project.

Mr. Vass said that Mr. O'Neil was only include in the project team due to expertise in this area and had no involvement with development of the full proposal. Mr. Jerry Stephens advised the Committee that Traditional Owners need to be consulted and involved with projects development. Mr. Fava advised that the project was supported by the TSRA fisheries representative, the TSRA Fisheries Portfolio Member and the Traditional Owner representatives on the Committee when the pre-proposal was endorsed in October 2013. Mr. Bedford then went on to explain that the TSRA Finfish Quota Management Committee identified and supported the need for a Stock assessment in the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery and that Mr. Stephen is a member of that committee.

Mr. Stephens said that the proposal should have been submitted to the Finfish Working group. Mr Fava detailed that the Finfish Working group has not met for some time and said that he thought this is why the TSRA provide cluster representative so they can contribute informative information relating to research and communicate information back to their communities. Mr. Stephens continued to say that researchers need to keep in mind the recent native title decision. Mr. Stephen stated that the proposal detailed that Mr. Rocky Stephen a member of the Abob and Kos Fishery Group was consulted but when Mr. Jerry Stephen asked him his response was that he wasn't aware of this (it was **NOTED** the comment from Rocky Stephen was inconsistent with a number of emails regarding the project that he had sent). The Chair explained to Mr. Stephen that if the project did not go ahead and if the TSRA Finfish Quota Leasing Committee (of which Mr. Stephen is a member) continued to lease a level of quota above the Australian share of the resource allocation then the fishery would be at risk of being overfished.

Mr. Stephens explained to the Committee that he is not against the project but that native title law now states that research will not go ahead unless permission is granted. Mr. Fava expressed the view that under current arrangements the consultation requirement does not equate to getting endorsement of the proposal by all community members Mr. Fava also explained that AFMA are were examining what obligations may exist for research in the Torres Strait as a result of the recent native title decision.

Mr. Stephens's concerns were **NOTED** and that he did not want to be included in the voting process, at this point the Chair explained to him that it is not a voting process the Committee evaluates and provides scientific advice to the researchers and the AFMA. Mr. Stephens refused to evaluate project proposal on the basis that it did not align with the recent native title decision. The committee **NOTED** Mr. Stephen's confusion surrounding the objectives of the Spanish Mackerel proposal regarding the use of the terms 'stock assessment' and 'abundance/distribution survey'. The Chair expressed some concern at the apparent confusion over the project, which had apparently been initiated at the request of the Communities.

The TSSAC continued to evaluate the project and Mr. Michael O'Neil was invited to enter the room to answer questions by members relating to the budget increase.

Action Item 8, AFMA to write to Principle Investigator advising him on current decision and seek justification on Budget to why the project has increased by 90K.

3.5.2 Improved TSPF profitability and pathways for a sustained flow of TSPF benefits to Torres Strait Island Communities





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Mr. Fava provided the Committee with an update regarding AFMA's perception to the project, noting that the proposals is looking at community perceptions of the prawn fishery (and opportunities for flow of benefits) and that this project is the next step following previous work conducted by Mr Anthony DeFries in 2012.

Mr Jerry Stephens questioned why the project needed scientific consideration and why the project is not driven by the TSPMAC. The Chair raised the possibility of aligning the consultation meeting on community (Masig) with a TSPMAC meeting to enable Traditional Owners, licence holders and fisherman to attend and provide sound advice.

The Chair reiterated the Committee views on the project proposal relating to research & development more so than scientific research. Mr Bedford explained that it all comes down to value for money, he explained the previous work undertaken by Mr DeFries had some good results. Some of the members struggled to understand the deliverables, outcomes, outputs and whether or not they were tangible outcomes. It was noted that the project could build on the previous research that was undertaken by Mr DeFries. The Committee **AGREED** for AFMA to write to the PI requesting he undertake a workshop to be conducted on Masig to gauge community support for the project (and try to align this with a TSPMAC meeting).

The Committee **AGREED** for AFMA to fund the *Improved TSPF profitability and pathways for a sustained flow of TSPF benefits to Torres Strait Island Communities* project depending on the outcomes from the first meeting that will need to be included into the proposal. If the additional phase is a success and gathers a lot of interest and support then AFMA will continue to fund the original project.

Action Item 9, AFMA to write to the researcher asking him to take a workshop approach. It was noted that the results from the workshop will shape the project, the researcher will then resubmit the proposal to the TSSAC for review.

Agenda Item 4 Other Business

Agenda Item 4.1 Managing and Evaluating Projects

The Committee **AGREED** that projects over \$100,000 will be peer reviewed.

Agenda Item 4.2 Traditional Fisheries Scientific Advisory Group

AFMA and TSRA have had discussions on the establishment of a Traditional Fisheries Scientific Advisory Group (TFSAG). It was **NOTED** that there has been a level of agreement to set up the TFSAG with the Committee **NOTING** the draft Terms of Reference provided. Mr Fava mentioned that it needs some level of endorsement by the TSSAC, it was mentioned that there are some sensitivities with having an appointed Chair as the TSRA believe this over formalises the meeting. It was **NOTED** that there will be involvement from the TSRA rangers along with the ranger supervisors to assist with data management and that Mr. Fava will meet with the manger of LSMU to discuss the SAG objectives further.

Agenda Item 4.3 Update from PZJA Forums

The Committee **NOTED** the verbal update given by AFMA

Agenda Item 4.4 Confirmation of TSSAC Meeting 64

The Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting will be a teleconference in June and face to face meeting in October 2014. The October meeting maybe held on Thursday Island depending on the budget.

Action Item 10, AFMA to confirm next meeting dates in June 2014.





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