Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee

Meeting No. 69

MEETING RECORD

28 June 2016

teleconference

A/g CHAIR: dr nick rayns

Attendance and Declarations of Interest – TSSAC 69 (28 June 2016)

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| **Name** | **Membership Status** | **Declaration of Interest** |
| Dr Nick Rayns | A/g Chair | None declared |
| Ms. Selina Stoute | AFMA Representative | None declared |
| Ms. Lisa Cocking | Executive Officer (AFMA) | None declared |
| Dr Natasha Stacey | Scientific Member | None declared |
| Dr Stephen Newman | Scientific Member | Fisheries Scientist, Department of Fisheries, Western Australia |
| Dr Roland Pitcher | Scientific Member | Fisheries Scientist, CSIRO |
| Ms. Mariana Nahas | TSRA Representative | Fisheries Project Manager, TSRA |
| Mr Tom Roberts | QDAF Representative | None declared |
| Mr Paul Kabai | Traditional Inhabitant Industry member (Gudumalulgal) | None declared |
| Mr Ned Larry | Traditional Inhabitant Industry member (Kulkalgal) | None declared |

Other attendees:

Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr Ian Cartwright (Chair), Dr Dirk Welsford (Scientific Member), Mr Maluwap Nona (Traditional Inhabitant Industry member (Maluialgal)), Mr Jerry Stephen (Traditional Inhabitant representative for Kemer Kemer Meriam, member), Mr Kenny Bedford (TSRA Fisheries Portfolio representative, observer), and Mr Ian Liviko (Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority, observer).

**Absences**

Daniel Takai and Phillip Ketchell.

**TSSAC Meeting 69 Recommendations**

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the TRL project be supported for funding, providing the CSIRO update the full proposal to provide further clarity around community engagement, and as part of the first project milestone a more detailed data management plan, including a more detailed account of how simulation data is to be curated.

The TSSAC **RECOMMENDED** theprinciple investigators of the Finfish proposal:

* Consider the requirement for a stakeholder needs analysis in light of work already completed as part of the Torres Strait Finfish Action Plan (*Development of a Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Traditional Inhabitants Commercial Finfish Fishery Action Plan*);
* Clarify how the project will build on work already completed as part of the recent Spanish mackerel stock assessment update project, noting duplication should be avoided;
* Redevelop a proposal based on a two staged approach:

1. Collation of all data sources and early consideration of harvest strategy options; and
2. taking into account all available data, develop harvest strategy options for consideration by the PZJA.

* Overall project cost should be reduced in line with the above recommendations.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Hand collectable harvest strategy project be supported for funding subject to the provision of the following:

* a more precise description of the proposed methodology. For example additional detail could be added around the proposed Management Strategy Evaluation.
* a more detailed description of the proposed community engagements strategy including how the outcomes of the project will be conveyed. Consider including this as a performance indicator for the project.
* Recognition of the flow-of-benefits to the commercial fishing sector within the proposal, which currently allocates 100% of benefits to the traditional sector.

**Meeting Administration**

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

The Chair opened the teleconference at 2.30pm and 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. A register of interests is recorded in the attendance list at the start of these minutes.

The Chair discussed the potential cross-over between a number of the projects presented by CSIRO and Dr Pitcher as a TSSAC member and CSIRO employee. Dr Pitcher left the meeting to allow discussion by other members about this potential conflict. The members agreed that he could take a part in the discussions however shouldn’t be involved in the final deliberations and recommendations regarding each project. His expertise was considered vital to discussions and he has always showed a strong ability to provide impartial advice. Dr Pitcher returned to the meeting and noted the decision.

*Agenda Item 2 - Review and Adoption of Agenda*

The Committee adopted the agenda with an update to be provided on the Professor Martin Nakata project *“Consultative and administrative processes for scientific research in the Torres Strait Islands”* during other business.

*Agenda Item 3 - Correspondence*

The Committee NOTED the incoming and outgoing correspondence since Meeting 68, held on 8 April 2016. New correspondence also included full proposal review comments from two scientific members.

*Agenda Item 4 - Action Items from past TSSAC meetings*

The committee noted several action items had been finalised, and a few would be progressed at the face to face meeting in October.

**Management Updates**

***Agenda Item 5 – Budget***

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 ($440 minus the approximate $30 000 ongoing TSSAC running costs), though this will not be finalised until mid-2016.

***Agenda Item 6 – Assessment of Full Proposals***

The TSSAC reviewed the three full proposals for funding.

*Proposal 1 - Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery: Harvest Strategy, fisher independent survey, stock assessment and RBC.*

The Committee noted the project provides for a continuation of the longstanding fishery independent survey which underpins the TRL annual stock assessment. The Committee further noted the project will prepare a final draft Harvest Strategy for consideration by the PZJA.

Members noted the following:

* as part of the first project milestone, it would be useful to provide a more detailed data management plan. For example, the data management plan should include a more detailed account of how simulation data is to be curated;
* although CSIRO has demonstrated a strong commitment to community engagement and undertaken several initiatives, including but not limited to; producing information fliers, booklets, trialling visual meeting records, undertaking science workshops in the Torres Strait and at CSIRO labs in Brisbane, the project application would benefit from improved clarity around traditional inhabitant engagement. Where applicable an evaluation of their involvement would be beneficial. It was also noted that in general researchers need clear guidance on effective levels of engagement;
* the costs of the project compared to the overall TSSAC budget means there is little scope to support other research priorities in the region. It was noted that some of the costs could be recovered from industry noting the TRL Fishery is one of the most valuable fisheries in the region. The committee noted that in the past, they had discussed the option of cost recovery, particularly if the project was to be extended. Members also noted that although there is a high cost associated with the project, the project is good value given all the outputs; and
* workplace regulations and insurance requirements have made it difficult include local participants in the research activities, such as use of community divers. It was noted however that the TRL Working Group have sought advice from CSIRO on possible arrangements to support contracting local businesses to undertake the surveys (in part or total) whilst still ensuring the integrity of data is collected. The Committee strongly supported the continued efforts to increased community participation in the research.

Dr Pitcher left the meeting while the committee made a final recommendation.

**ACTION:** AFMA to make clear in future calls for research proposals the need for applications to provide clear explanations of consultation and data management, not assuming knowledge of the TSSAC from past proposals from the researchers.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the TRL project be supported for funding, providing the CSIRO update the full proposal to provide further clarity around community engagement, and as part of the first project milestone a more detailed data management plan, including a more detailed account of how simulation data is to be curated.

*Proposal 2 - Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Harvest Strategy*

The committee noted that this project started with three separate proposals. The feedback on the pre-proposals was for the three Principal Investigators to collaborate.

Dr Pitcher left the meeting while the committee made a final recommendation.

The Committee concluded that the proposal required further revision to ensure cost effective and efficient development of a harvest strategy for the Finfish Fishery.

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| The TSSAC **RECOMMENDED** theprinciple investigators of the Finfish proposal:   * Consider the requirement for a stakeholder needs analysis in light of work already completed as part of the Torres Strait Finfish Action Plan (*Development of a Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Traditional Inhabitants Commercial Finfish Fishery Action Plan*); * Clarify how the project will build on work already completed as part of the recent Spanish mackerel stock assessment update project, noting duplication should be avoided; * Redevelop a proposal based on a two staged approach:   + Collation of all data sources and early consideration of harvest strategy options; and   + taking into account all available data, develop harvest strategy options for consideration by the PZJA. * Overall project cost should be reduced in line with the above recommendations. |

*Proposal 3 - Torres Strait Hand Collectables Fishery Harvest Strategy*

The committee noted that a full proposal was presented at the last TSSAC meeting for this project. The TSSAC asked for greater detail on the testing of Harvest Strategy options and information dissemination.

The committee noted that Dr Plaganyi has taken over as Principal Investigator of this project; however Dr Skewes will still be involved through his capacity as scientific member on the Hand Collectable Working Group. In general the committee considered the proposal as good value for money, however again to be lacking some information around data management and stakeholder engagement.

Dr Pitcher left the meeting while the committee made a final recommendation.

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| The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the Hand collectable harvest strategy project be supported for funding subject to the provision of the following:   * a more precise description of the proposed methodology. Additional details could be added around the proposed Management Strategy Evaluation. * a more detailed description of the proposed community engagements strategy including how the outcomes of the project will be conveyed. Consider including this as a performance indicator for the project. * recognition of the flow-of-benefits to the commercial fishing sector within the proposal, which currently allocates 100% of benefits to the traditional sector. |

**Other Business**

***Relevant research being undertaken by TSRA***

The Committee noted an update on other research priorities being pursued by the TSRA in line with the Finfish Action Plan. They included:

Projects to be administered by the FRDC investigating:

* the potential for developing crab, jewfish and barramundi fisheries in the top western cluster. This priority was identified by Boigui and Saibai communities;
* infrastructure needs and government requirements to allow product to be exported straight from the Torres Strait;
* options for marketing a Torres Strait brand
* A TSRA project looking at the viability of a baitfish fishery (garfish and sardines). The baitfish could be used to supply operators in the Finfish Fishery.
* A TSRA project to develop a video on catch management for the TRL industry. The video will explain best practices to maximize the quality and therefore value of catches (animal husbandry etc).

The Committee noted the need to keep abreast of research initiatives in the region as they relate to fisheries and requested that information on the current TSRA research projects and priorities to be circulated out of session.

**ACTION:** The TSRA agreed to share research projects with the TSSAC as soon as and when possible.

Professor Martin Nakata project *“Consultative and administrative processes for scientific research in the Torres Strait Islands”*

The Committee noted that it was intended for Professor Nakata to present a draft report to the SAC in May when the meeting was tentatively scheduled as a face-to-face meeting. The Committee noted that it had already supported an initial extension of the project.

The Committee agreed for AFMA to confirm that Professor Nakata can provide a draft report out-of-session and present the report at the next TSSAC meeting in October.

**ACTION**: TSSAC Executive Officer to contact Mr Nakata and ask if he can distribute a draft report out of session and attend the October TSSAC meeting.

The Chair thanked all participants and closed the teleconference at 4.20pm. Action Items – TSSAC #69

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| **No.** | **Action Item** | **Responsible Party** |
| **69-1** | AFMA to put together a cover letter explaining requirements for development of pre proposals for researchers. Including the need to provide a detailed explanation of consultation and data management, not assuming knowledge of the TSSAC from past proposals from the researchers. | AFMA |
| **69-2** | The TSRA agreed to share research projects with the TSSAC as soon as and when possible. | TSRA |
| **69-3** | TSSAC Executive Officer to contact Mr Nakata and ask if he can distribute a draft report out of session and attend the October TSSAC meeting. | TSSAC EO |

**Ongoing actions from past TSSAC meetings**

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| Action Item | **Responsible Party** | **Progress** |
| AFMA to circulate declaration of interests table prior to next face to face meeting | AFMA | **Ongoing**  FMP1 requires verbal updates by members at each meeting with declarations logged in the meeting record only |
| 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 | **Ongoing**  Draft revisions completed.  Will be tabled for full discussion at next face to face meeting. |
| Future draft correspondence from the TSSAC Chair that refers to the TSRA to be provided to the TSRA for feedback | AFMA | **Ongoing** |
| AFMA to develop a paper outlining the objectives of the Turtle and Dugong Discussion Group, and focusing on the future needs of the group, to be completed by 30 June 2016 (carried over from TSSAC 66) | AFMA | **Ongoing**  due 30 June 2016 |