

Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting 73

Meeting Record

28-29 May 2019

Thursday Island

Note all meeting papers and record available on
the PZJA webpage: www.pzja.gov.au



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Meeting participants

Members

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
Mr Ian Cartwright	Chair	Fisheries consultant. Member of QLD expert panel.
Ms Selina Stoute	AFMA Representative	No conflict declared.
Ms. Lisa Cocking	Executive Officer (AFMA)	No conflict declared.
Dr Roland Pitcher	Scientific Member	Fisheries Scientist, CSIRO. No current conflicts of interest as no Torres Strait related projects. Some CSIRO projects are held by researchers in same office. Assisting with the BDM stock survey in some capacity but is not a PI or CI.
Dr Dirk Welsford	Scientific Member	Research scientist at AAD in Department of Environment. Sub-Antarctic resource assessment group. No conflict declared.
Dr Steve Newman	Scientific Member	Fisheries Scientist at Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA). Science and Resource Assessment Group. No conflict declared.
Ms Allison Runck	TSRA Member	Project manager fisheries. Co-investigator of Spanish mackerel biologicals project. TSRA hold licences for the traditional sector.
Mr Rocky Stephen	Traditional Inhabitant Industry member	Kemer Kemer Meriam member. TSIRC Councillor for Ugar. President of Kos and Abob Ugar fishers association. Finfish working group member and Finfish RAG member. Partnership in fisheries business.
Mr Frank Loban	Traditional Inhabitant Industry member	Finfish and Hand Collectable WG member. TIB Fisher. Maluiligal member.
Mr Gavin Mosby	Traditional Inhabitant Industry member	TSPMAC member. TIB fisher. Yorke Island fishers association member.

Observers

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
Nick Boucher (day 1 only)	TSRA observer	No declarations declared.
Liz McCrudden (day 2 only)	TSRA Observer	No declarations declared.

Apologies

Name	Position
Mr Jerry Stephen	TSRA fisheries portfolio member – permanent observer
Mr Ian Liviko	PNG Fisheries Permanent observer
Ms Natasha Stacey	Scientific member
Ms Samantha Miller	QDAF member

TSSAC meeting 73 decision record

Recommendation 73.1 - The TSSAC **NOTED** the value of annual community visits to discuss TSSAC research, along with other relevant fisheries matters, and recommend that AFMA prioritise funding for these trips if possible.

Recommendation 73.2 - the TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the TRL project for funding by the TSSAC.

Recommendation 73.3 the TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the Finfish stock assessment project for funding by the TSSAC, noting some suggested changes to the full proposal.

Recommendation 73.4 - the TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the Spanish mackerel biologicals project for funding by the TSSAC, with a few minor changes to the full proposal.

Recommendation 73.5 the TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the climate change project for funding, and request that the project investigators try to include Turtle and Dugong in the project.

Recommendation 73.6 - the TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the sea cucumber stock survey project for funding by the TSSAC, with not changes required to the full proposal.

Recommendation 73.7 - the TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the management strategy evaluation for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery for TSSAC funding with no changes.

Recommendation 73.8 - the TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend changes to the full proposal of the project “Measuring non-commercial fishing (indigenous subsistence fishing and

recreational fishing) in the Torres Strait in order to improve fisheries management and promote sustainable livelihoods” which will be considered out of session by the TSSAC.

Recommendation 73.9 - The TSSAC **NOTED** the large contribution made by TSRA this year towards Torres Strait research.

1 Meeting Administration

1.1 *Preliminaries - acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Chair’s opening remarks/meeting attendance/declaration of interests/apologies*

The Chair opened the meeting at 910am Australian Eastern Standard Time and welcomed the TSSAC members and observers to the meeting.

The committee discussed declarations of interest from members. The chair went through the declarations of interest reported from past meetings and members updated their potential conflicts where need.

There were a few potential conflicts of interested associated with the research projects being discussed.

1. The TSRA member is a co-investigator (CI) on the finfish biologicals project.
2. Roland Pitcher will be assisting with some of the data in the BDM project, however he is not a Project Investigator (PI) or CI.

The TSRA member, Allison Runck and TSRA observer left the room while the committee discussed the potential conflict. The committee agreed that the TSRA member should remain in the meeting for the discussions and would not be a part of the final decision on whether the project is supported or not given they are a CI.

Mr Pitcher left the room as the committee discussed the potential conflict. Noting Mr Pitcher is not a PI or CI on the project, but is merely helping with some data analysis, they agreed there was no conflict and he could remain in all discussions and recommendations.

The chair then facilitated groups of members leaving the room, including Government members, traditional inhabitant members and scientific members. The committee discussed each group as they were outside of the room and whether there were any issues with recorded perceived conflicts of interest relating to the agenda. No concerns were recorded.

Mr Stephen, TIB member recorded his familial relationship to the finfish biologicals project, as he is likely to be supporting his brother who has volunteered to help with collecting finfish data for the project. The committee noted this wasn’t considered a conflict of interest to them.

1.2 Review and adoption of agenda

The committee agreed to adopt the agenda as it stands. The Chair acknowledged the complexity of discussing research projects, and encouraged members to ask if they needed anything repeated, or the discussions to slow down, to ensure members are able to contribute. He also thanked the executive officer for their work in pulling together all of the materials for the meeting, which is a considerable.

1.3 Correspondence since last meeting

The TSSAC executive officer discussed the TSSAC correspondence since the last meeting, and asked members to get in touch if they wanted a copy of any of the correspondence.

1.4 Action Items from past meetings

The TSSAC discussed the action items from past meetings. A number were discussed in more detail, included below.

Action item 71.1 – Dave Brewer to talk to Shaun Sloan about the Australia wide traditional take project funded by FRDC and potential links to the work in the Torres Strait.

The committee noted the update in the actions paper regarding the indigenous fishing data project, and noted that two of the project investigators attended the traditional inhabitant forum members training meeting last week, to discuss the project and meet some of the traditional inhabitants. The project investigators asked the group whether they had any concerns about providing data for the project, as well as looking for two representatives to attend the stakeholder meeting in Adelaide the following week.

Action item 71.16 - Develop a table which maps the SRP themes against the projects funded by any agency, so we know how many projects are already addressing the same issues. Including project title, funding body and researcher.

The TSSAC executive officer has started a historic search of Torres Strait related research, which was proving to be a larger job than anticipated as there are a large number of agencies/ organisations and institutions that have been/ are involved in Torres Strait fisheries research. The executive officer spoke to Crispian Ashby at FRDC regarding the possibility of funding a project that would collate and build a platform for a Torres Strait Fisheries research database (or fisheries research more broadly). This had been done in the past, however the database was no longer being maintained. The roadblocks have always been around who is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of such a database, rather than the original building and compilation. FRDC suggested seeing if the research provider network had an interest in such a project, and if so, FRDC may consider it.

Mr Pitcher discussed a number of past projects which collated research including:

- A project which pulled together CRC research when the CRC was closing in 2007.
- An AFMA metadata project in the late 90s which collated historic research and stored it in the CSIRO datacentre.
- Torres Strait e-atlas project which tried to pull together environmental research and still exists.

Mr Pitcher noted that data could still be stored in the CSIRO datacentre, or placed on another website. The committee suggested putting links to these databases on the PZJA website.

The AFMA member acknowledged that if this database is a priority, then funding the work through a project is the best bet, as the current AFMA workload is high and staff are unlikely to be able to complete this work quickly. The committee agreed that the key focus was collating a database of TSSAC managed projects, rather than external ones to begin with. It should also capture Turtle and Dugong data and other Torres Strait projects funded by NESP. Mr Pitcher agreed to write a short scope for this project which would be stored for use in future years when more funding becomes available.

Mr Loban, and Traditional Inhabitant member of the committee requested the database to go back to when the TSSAC started, as he felt the historic data is important, so communities can understand the history of Torres Strait research. The committee noted that the data before 2007 is available in the CSIRO datacentre.

ACTION: AFMA to provide a link for the CSIRO datacentre on the PZJA website, as well as links to the TS e-atlas.

Mr Newman explained that in 2013, Tonya Van der Velde from the CSIRO completed a project which collated all reports, data and metadata for Torres Strait research. The committee agreed to find and send this report to members for consideration regarding a future data project which could be discussed at another meeting.

ACTION: TSSAC executive officer to find final report from the 2013 data project undertaken by CSIRO (Tonya Van der Velde) and distribute to members for discussion at another meeting.

Agenda Item 71.17 - Add agenda item for next face to face meeting to workshop ideas to improve data collection in Torres Strait fisheries.

The TSSAC agreed to remove this action item from the list, noting that a lot of work has been done, and continues to be done to improve data collection methods for Torres Strait fisheries. They also acknowledged that RAGs play a large part in this work.

ACTION: remove action item 71.17 but maintain a standing agenda item for AFMA and the other PZJA forums to provide an update on how we are progressing with data collection.

Action item 72.2 – AFMA to provide a summary paper on the prospects for, and progress with, cost recovery for appropriate Torres Strait fisheries.

AFMA explained that this paper can still be put together if the TSSAC would like it to, however they did not have time before this meeting. However in short, cost recovery is legislation and a levy Act would need to be developed to allow cost recovery through levies in Torres Strait fisheries. The PZJA in the past has made policy / Ministerial decision not to recover levy in Torres Strait Fisheries (aside from the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery) due to the treaty and nature of objectives in the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act (1984)*, which differ from the Commonwealth Fisheries Management Act.

The Chair questioned whether the committee did still want a paper to be developed, noting cost recovery is beyond the scope of the TSSAC, instead the committee can continue to provide advice to AFMA as to the TSSACs view that it could be a helpful option to increase research funding in the Torres Strait. Then the policy maker can choose to act on this advice or not.

The committee agreed to remove this as an action item.

The committee went on to discuss Traditional Knowledge (TK), and how it is used. Traditional Inhabitant member, Mr Mosby, explained that generally, traditional inhabitants don't want TK to be used for someone else's benefit, without acknowledgement of where the knowledge came from. The misuse of this data in the past has effected relationships and it will take years to build that trust again. Some communities will not allow their families to give information out due to the lack of trust with how it will be used. Mr Mosby also explained that traditional inhabitants want to see the outcomes from a project if they give information, so they know why it was used. For example, when communities started to see the CDR data, they understood how it would help the fisheries and help them as a community.

ACTION: Review the procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait to include a request for researchers to inform communities how any traditional knowledge was used during a project (i.e. for catch data for stock assessments, for improving survey design for research). The section should also explain how researchers can properly handle the traditional knowledge, and what would be examples of a wrong use of the data.

The TSSAC also acknowledged the need for researchers to consider the best method of communicating results to communities, including community notices, through forums, sms etc. They also acknowledged the possibility of recording presentations given to community or at PZJA forums, by the researcher, or by an

AFMA staff member, and provide access to these through the website. This may be a more effective way of getting research results out.

ACTION: AFMA to explore the option of making videos of final research project presentations, or summary videos (by AFMA) for inclusion on the PZJA website, or distribution to communities as another mechanism for getting out research project results in an accessible way.

2 Torres Strait Research Administration

2.1 Procedural Framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait

The committee noted that this full proposal process was the pilot of using the new procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait. AFMA have already collated a number of thoughts about the process, what went well, what didn't, and how we could improve next time. AFMA also suggested undertaking a feedback process with project investigators.

Some of the ideas TSSAC discussed for improving the pre-consultation process included:

- Providing researchers with a document template to be completed for the stakeholder engagement package, which includes an example answer to demonstrate simple English language. Filling in boxes/ sections under headings may simplify and clarify the process for them and improve the quality of these engagement documents.
- Consider who the best contacts are for communities. The procedural framework currently requires researchers to contact PBCs, councillors and fishers associations. It may be better to send a package to these groups, then encourage them to speak to their PZJA forum representative to discuss in more detail, as they are the trusted elected representatives for communities.
- Clarify whether we are informing communities of research, or seeking specific feedback. Be mindful of giving people the big picture when providing information/requesting feedback.
- For TSSAC to identify any expected or known sensitivities around a specific project. AFMA or researchers can then be more targeted about those issues to inform/ seek feedback. Long term projects like the TRL surveys are unlikely to change based on the feedback as it's a well established ongoing project. We don't want to set unrealistic expectations with communities, but do genuinely want to engage them better regarding research.

- Consider providing updates on research through the TSIRC meetings. Giving a bigger picture view and understanding of research and the benefits to communities.

ACTION: consider options for presenting information on research to a TSIRC meeting, giving a bigger picture view of research for communities.

ACTION: review the procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait, including undertaking a feedback process with researchers and communities.

2.2 TSSAC budget

The TSSAC Executive Officer provided an update on the 2019-20 budget against the project full proposals:

- AFMA have \$411 000 available for Torres Strait research in 2019-20 and likely beyond.
- TSRA have also discussed the possibilities of providing funding towards projects such as the BDM stock surveys.
- With all projects presented as they are in the full proposals, and some possible funding from TSRA, there is a shortfall of at least \$50,325 to fund all projects.
- The TSRA are able to providing funding towards the BDM stock survey project, however other funding will be considered on a basis of further TSSAC discussion.
- The committee discussed options for accessing more funding in the 2019-20 financial year, including seeking additional external funding from a body like FRDC, or moving some money between years (ie to a later year) for a multi-year project such as TRL.
- The committee discussed the high workload associated with successfully managing 7 projects to achieve their outcomes, and noted that fisheries managers will be responsible for helping to keep projects on track and achieving the intended results. This won't be solely the role of the executive officer, who is more responsible for assisting with contract management, payments and general admin.

The committee also questioned whether it would be useful to ask project investigators to put together simple English summaries of project milestones that could be provided to communities. They noted that Cass Hunter at CSIRO is looking to develop templates for communicating research reports and other info to communities. She is using case study projects and we could look at using these in the future once her project is finalised.

ACTION: TSSAC EO to speak to Cass Hunter about getting a copy of template for communicating research results to communities once her project is finalised.

3 2019-20 research full-proposals

3.1 Tropical Rock Lobster surveys

The TSSAC considered the full proposal for the TRL survey project and noted the importance of the ongoing TRL stock assessment work, and that this project is a high priority for funding.

The committee noted that the project investigator had adequately addressed the questions and requests from the TSSAC from the pre-proposal phase, including:

- Providing further budget breakdowns particularly regarding diver costs.
- Clarifying that the budget reduction which reduced staff time would not jeopardise the outcomes of the project within the timeline. It does mean that any additional unexpected work required by the team may require additional funding. This can be negotiated when and if required.

The committee discussed the consultation component of the project, and whether additional consultation is required for this project to keep communities informed of results, outside of RAGs, WGs and community notices. They committee supported the idea of having an annual community visit, like the ones carried out this year for fish receivers and BDM harvest strategy, which would talk more broadly about fisheries, research and any other current issues. The committee recommended that AFMA prioritise funding for these trips if possible, acknowledging the high cost financially and through staff time, and competing budget priorities that would need to be considered. They agreed that this combined with regular RAG and WG consultation is enough face to face consultation, and continuing with community notices and letters would be sufficient consultation.

The TSSAC NOTED the value of annual community visits to discuss TSSAC research, along with other relevant fisheries matters, and recommend that AFMA prioritise funding for these trips if possible.

The TSSAC AGREED to recommend the TRL project for funding by the TSSAC.

3.2 Spanish mackerel stock assessment

The TSSAC considered the full proposal for the Spanish mackerel stock assessment project. They noted that the full-proposal budget has increased by \$12 000, reflecting the second assessment they have introduced which will include the new biologicals data. However the travel budget is likely to be reduced as a result of cross overs between project investigators and RAG and WG members. We won't know this until

we complete the PZJA forum recruitment round so the money needs to stay in the budget.

The committee noted the biggest difficulty in the fishery right now is the very large drop in TAC over 3 years from 187t to 82t due to reduced catch rates. There are questions around whether the catch rates are going down due to a biomass issue or something else, such as bad signals due to limited CPUE data (from only 1-2 TVH boats) for the assessment. There are also questions around the national trends of declining Spanish mackerel in the north, other trends across Torres Strait, possible effects of predation, and the expectation that catch rates should be going up given the number of boats fishing has reduced. The PZJA are trying to understand the fishery more, and there are questions whether another stock assessment will answer / consider these other questions and possible effects. The traditional sector have concerns with re-running assessments when there is such a limited amount of data. They also noted the importance of continuing to educate TIB fishers around completing logbooks, to increase the data available for assessments. CDRs are now compulsory, however logbooks are voluntary.

The committee discussed the benefits and risks of undertaking an assessment now before more biologicals data is available, versus waiting for the biologicals data project to be completed:

Concerns:

- There isn't enough new data to warrant rerunning the assessment, as we are likely to find the same results given the very limited dataset with only a few boats.
- Can we wait for another year of CDR data to come in before rerunning the assessment?
- The very limited dataset (1 boat) may be providing bad signals regarding catch rates, and may be providing a skewed output that isn't a realistic reflection of what is actually happening with the stock. This is leading to a drop in TACs.
- Whether the available data will be sufficient to detect environmental trends for a species like Spanish mackerel.
- Rerunning with limit data will continue to send a bad signal, so new data is really needed. Then we will know if reducing the TAC is warranted, or a result of bad signals from too little data.

Benefits to doing an assessment now:

- There are 2 more years of both TVH and TIB data for the assessment. They will also be adding in biophysical data (such as rainfall, temperature etc).
- Monitoring the stock is important given the decline that is indicated by catches. The RAG advice is to update the stock assessment with new data as we can, so we can keep a close eye on the stock even if it is only one more year in the time series with limited boats.

- The biologicals data collection project can run simultaneously, so this new data can hopefully be fed into the second assessment.

The committee drew up the current assessment inputs, and what would go into the next two assessments proposed in the full proposal (Table 1).

Table 1. Current and future Spanish mackerel stock assessment inputs

2018/19 assessment inputs	2019/20 assessment inputs	2020/21 assessment inputs
TIB CDR data TVH CPUE (2017-18) Wind Lunar phase	TIB CDR data (2018 and 2019) TVH CPUE (2018/19) Wind Lunar phase SST primary productivity Rain Current ENSo BIOLOGICALS PROJECT OCCURS CONCURRENTLY	All data from 2019/20 assessment Improved TIB data Biologicals data: Length frequency data Aging data sex

The committee noted that the TIB data from CDRs, and previously docket-books, is used in the time trendline (total catch history over time), but not CPUE calculations. They agreed to recommend the project proceed with the new data (table 1), then only undertake the second assessment once the biologicals data is available from the other project.

The committee went on to discuss the national trending decline in Spanish mackerel around Australia. Key points discussed included:

- There are three discrete genetic stocks of Spanish Mackerel in the North; Torres Strait (likely links to PNG), QLD East Coast and the Gulf through to WA.
- All these stocks have had declining catch rates, indicating there may be an environmental driver.
- In WA they have looked at logbook data for catch rates of individual fish per hour to see if fishing behaviour has changed (which it hasn't)
- There was a heat wave in 2011 which the stock may not have recovered from in the Pilbara.
- In 2016, there was a major northern heat wave event that caused bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef. This occurred at the same time as Spanish Mackerel spawning, which could have resulted in large scale recruitment failure. They

previously thought Spanish Mackerel would be a climate changer survivor as they are very adaptable due to life history traits.

- The new aging data being collected through the biologicals data project will indicate whether we have a missing age class, relevant to this prediction.

The committee discussed the possibility of broadening this project to include a national perspective, which would probably including funding from someone like FRDC. They concluded that this project should progress as is, as it is important that this work occurs now, and a national project could hold it up.

The TSSAC AGREED to recommend the Finfish stock assessment project for funding by the TSSAC, noting some suggested changes to the full proposal.

The committee agreed to support the stock assessment project, and made the following recommendations for feedback to the project team:

- The TSSAC requested that the project occur in two stages:
 - **Stage 1.** A stock assessment re-run during 2019-20 with the additional data available from TIB and TVH fishers, including from licenced fish receivers. This re-run will also include the new updated environmental indicators data.
 - **Stage 2.** (stop/go decision point to proceed with second assessment) Another stock assessment to only be run in 2020-21 following completion of the separate finfish biologicals data project, so the age and length data can be included into the second assessment. If this data is not available, the second assessment will not be carried out (i.e. the relevant milestones will not be required / paid).
- The TSSAC considered the inclusion of more TIB data in the assessment to be very important, in order to widen the dataset beyond the limited available data. Please ensure that as much new TIB data as possible is included.
- There are some sensitivities with this project regarding the data being limited to the small number of sunset licenced vessels (i.e. very limited TIB data), and the effect this may have on the robustness of the CPUE data. This should be taken into account during the project, particularly when working/ liaising with traditional inhabitants.
- The PI should provide more information on how they will incorporate the environmental indicators (e.g. currents, temperature) into the new assessment, noting these indicators are difficult to incorporate into assessments. The TSSAC would like detail of how each indicator would be included in an updated full proposal, and why these specific environmental indicators are considered important for this fishery.
- Undertake a bridging analysis to determine the impact of the new dataset, and environmental indicators compared to the old dataset.

- Update the project milestones to separate out the second assessment costs, in case this element of the project is not carried out (if the biologicals data is not available in time).

3.3 Enhancing biological data inputs to Torres Strait Spanish mackerel stock assessment

The committee discussed the project enhancing biological data inputs to the Torres Strait Spanish Mackerel stock assessment, noting that some matters related to this project have already been discussed during the Spanish mackerel stock assessment project. The committee agreed to recommend the project for funding, and to provide the following feedback to the PI, including some minor changes to the full proposal:

- The committee noted the benefits of having AFMA and TSRA as co-investigators on the project, to assist with stakeholder engagement and community outreach.
- The committee noted that TSRA are contributing to the project in-kind by funding stakeholder workshops for this project.
- The committee noted the presence of Mick O'Neill as a co-investigator on both this and the Spanish mackerel stock assessment project will assist with ensuring the projects stay as closely linked as possible, given they are very closely related and dependant on each other.
- The committee agreed that the full budget would need to be moved into the first year (2019-20) to allow outcomes of this project to be added to the second stock assessment in the other project.
- The committee noted the outcomes of the pre-consultation, including support from a number of communities to assist with the project. There was no negative feedback regarding this project.
- The committee agreed to ask the PI to consider also collecting otolith morphometric data. This can assist with streamlining future sampling regimes, as otolith length, breadth and height can be used to predict age so the otolith doesn't have to be sectioned. This was raised by the FRAG.
- The committee reiterated the need to carry out this project alongside the other, and that the second assessment in the stock assessment project will only go ahead if this new biologicals data is available to include.

The TSSAC AGREED to recommend the Spanish mackerel biologicals project for funding by the TSSAC, with a few minor changes to the full proposal.

3.4 Climate change

The committee briefly discussed the background of the climate change project for the benefit of new members. They noted that the big picture for the project is to allow

all stock assessments in the Torres Strait to include climate predictions, to help to see possible effects of climate change on these stocks/ fisheries. There are several steps before this, including:

- Collecting a list of the climate inputs (oceanographic, physical, atmospheric) that would need to go into these assessments.
- Determining what sort of data framework we need to be able to assess climate change effects using this data.

This project aims to do the first step; identifying the data we would need to collect, which will involve talking to the stock assessment scientists, as well as the oceanographic and atmospheric experts about how to get the appropriate data.

The committee noted the large reduction in scope and budget for the project as requested by the TSSAC. A large cost saving was removing the extensive consultation they had budgeted, which wouldn't be needed until the possible future project building the fishery specific models.

The committee noted that if a future project is undertaken, it will require external funding. This project will identify the future project requirements for use in future proposals.

The committee discussed the proposed workshop, which hasn't been budgeted, as it will be carried out locally to most of the key proponents, so will not cost TSSAC money. They also noted that it would be helpful for AFMA and TSRA to attend this workshop if possible (i.e within budget and available staff at the time). TSRA also suggested Turtle and Dugong being considered in the project as well if possible.

The TSSAC AGREED to recommend the climate change project for funding, and request that the project investigators try to include Turtle and Dugong in the project.

3.5 Torres Strait Sea Cucumber Stock Status Survey

The TSSAC discussed the sea cucumber stock survey, noting there has been a very minor budget decrease overall, and an increase in the first year budget and decrease in the second year, to ensure fieldwork is covered in the first year budget.

The committee acknowledged that all TSSAC questions on the pre-proposal had been adequately addressed, including providing further detail on the budget breakdowns, and willingness to review the existing the CSIRO seabed data for use in the project if possible.

The committee noted that the White Teatfish deepwater survey work is primarily exploratory. Outcomes of the deeper water survey would need to be considered further on the basis of the information obtained using the ROV.

The TSSAC AGREED to recommend the sea cucumber stock survey project for funding by the TSSAC, with no changes required to the full proposal.

3.6 Management Strategy Evaluation for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery

The TSSAC AGREED to recommend the management strategy evaluation for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery for TSSAC funding with no changes. They noted the low cost of this project and importance of the assessment of season dates.

The TSSAC AGREED to recommend the management strategy evaluation for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery for TSSAC funding with no changes.

3.7 Measuring non-commercial fishing (indigenous subsistence fishing and recreational fishing) in the Torres Strait in order to improve fisheries management and promote sustainable livelihoods (15 minutes)

The TSSAC noted the project teams' responses to the TSSAC's questions relating to the pre-proposal. All questions were adequately addressed, including moving the dates for commencing phase 2 to allow adequate time for the TSSAC consider phase 1 outcomes.

After noting the project full proposal, the committee had extensive discussion regarding this project, the risks associated with it, and whether the project should actually go ahead at this time or not. They acknowledged, that for this project to work it needs to be a community led project. At the moment the project is more driven by a scientific and management priority..

One of the major concerns of the committee was whether the introduction of another data collection program through this project could impact the successful collection and improvement of commercial catch data from the traditional inhabitant sector through the new CDR program. There . TIB members voiced a strong view that collecting commercial data needs to remain the priority, and we shouldn't introduce anything that could put this at risk. CDRs have been a big step for communities, and agencies have put a lot of work into educating communities on the benefits of, and how to complete CDRs to support its uptake. It may be the wrong time, and create confusion, to ask for new and different data to be collected. Postponing the project may increase the likelihood of its success in the future, once the new CDR system is settled in.

The committee agreed that the project is still a priority, but phase 2, collecting data from communities, shouldn't be undertaken until communities have a good understanding of the new commercial catch data collection system through CDRs, to minimise confusion with introducing more collection methods. Instead they agreed

to a scoping study which largely resembles phase 1 of the current proposal. If phase 1 is successful, phase 2 will likely be a larger project than first scoped by TSSAC, and require additional external funding (such as from FRDC). The scoping study would leave us with a strong proposal for FRDC or other funding bodies if the TSSAC consider it important to go ahead with phase 2 of the project in future years. Phase 1 will also hopefully better understand community needs for information to help inform a future data collection program. It could also assist to build relationships with communities, and trust around how the data will be used. This would be important for the success of phase 2 in the future.

The committee went on to discuss the management need behind the project, which is two-fold:

- to gather more information on non-commercial take of commercial species, for including in assessments etc; and
- also to collect broader information on the importance of seafood to Torres Strait Islanders, in order to guide future management of important species to communities, including how they may be effected by climate change.

The committee noted that the second objective, collecting a list of important species to communities (e.g. cultural, rites of passage and subsistence) could guide the PZJA and other Government agencies in protecting these species for the future livelihood and culture of communities. This could include monitoring and predict climate changes effects on these species, which are currently not monitored, given they are not commercial species. It also helps with monitoring incidental take of these important species in other fisheries such as the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.

The committee acknowledged that given the history and some mistrust from communities around providing fishing data, and how it will be used, there is likely to be some hesitancy from communities to provide data on other species of interest at this point. However some TIB members still see this additional information as useful. The committee also agreed that the project should first and foremost look at the traditional take of commercial species, but if there is time, and communities are genuinely interested, the project team could also scope the collection of preliminary information regarding the species of most interest to the different communities. It would be important to explain how this data can help communities to increase buy on.

The committee acknowledged the benefit of doing the scoping study now, given it will be collating information from past, similar projects, including the other non-commercial take project which was not completed. If the project is delayed too long, there is risk of losing this information. The scoping project needs to fully consider past approaches to help inform the best approach for data collection over the longer term.

Although the TSSAC supported this project, TSRA had some concerns that there would be too much resource support required from TSRA and AFMA, which may not

be able to be provided due to workloads, putting the project at risk. AFMA noted the ability to mitigate the risks of resourcing by making clear to the project team that they need to organise all meetings and budget for this, rather than relying on AFMA or TSRA to do this administrative work.

ACTION: ensure the project team include all administration of meetings etc in their updated full proposal, noting AFMA and TSRA may be unable to assist with organising these meetings due to resourcing.

TIB members all supported this project going forward at this time, so we are still moving forward on this issue. Focusing on key commercial species now will likely gather some momentum, and the other species can be looked at in a bigger project going forward.

The committee agreed that we should go back to the initial project team, rather than doing another open call for this project, given a lot of their original proposal is the framework for the new scope.

The TSSAC recommended the following points be included in the letter to the PI providing background regarding the suggested changes to the scope of the project:

- TSSAC had extensive discussions regarding this project, coming to the conclusion that achieving the objectives of the research will require a larger project than the committee originally anticipated.
- The TSSAC recommends the project go forward with a scoping phase, which would largely mirror phase 1 of the project full proposal you presented, with some changes. If this first phase is successful, the TSSAC may recommend that funding be sought for a larger project going forward to implement the appropriate sampling design and methodology determined from phase 1.

The TSSAC agreed the following should be included in the updated full proposal for the reduced scoping study:

- Information already available from past projects and what links are there to current projects.
- Lessons learned from the past projects so as to not repeat the same mistakes.
- Ways to rebuild confidence with communities around sharing data, given past issues where communities felt their fishing data was improperly used.
- The data needed to collect in a full project (i.e. non-commercial take of commercial species only, OR do communities want us to also have a framework that can collect data on non-commercial species).
- The methods to use to collect this data. Including a literature review of other methods used in similar fisheries and why they would or wouldn't work in the Torres Strait.

The TSSAC AGREED to recommend changes to the full proposal of the project *Measuring non-commercial fishing (indigenous subsistence fishing and recreational*

fishing) in the Torres Strait in order to improve fisheries management and promote sustainable livelihoods, which will be considered out of session by the TSSAC.

4 Other projects budget

The committee discussed the TSSAC budget, noting we need to find more funding in order to support all 7 projects as suggested by the TSSAC. AFMA and TSRA agreed to look for more funding to contribute.. It was acknowledged that TSRA were already committing \$289,000 for the BDM survey and also providing in-kind funding towards workshops for the Spanish mackerel biologicals project separately.

The TSSAC NOTED the large contribution made by TSRA this year towards Torres Strait research.

The committee also noted that projects such as TRL may be able to move some funding from year 1 to year 2 and 3, to free up funding for other projects in 2019-20.

TIB members asked if we could use some of the finfish quota funds for this research, however TSRA confirmed that requires a decision from the Board for use of funds.

The TSSAC discussed prioritising the projects, so if we cannot get adequate funding, we know which project will be dropped. Scientific members of TSSAC advised against prioritising, as every project is considered important, and they want to send a message about this, and the limited research funding available, to AFMA/ the PZJA. They agreed that AFMA would need to decide which project to drop if there was inadequate funding to support all projects. The committee noted that when the budget reduction happened years ago, there were less good quality projects coming through. They also noted alternative funding sources such as TRL fishers contributing to funding, given the huge revenue they raise each year.

ACTION: AFMA and TSRA to seek additional funding to cover the \$50 000 funding shortfall, including consulting with the TRL project team about moving some money between years for their multi-year project.

5 Other Business

5.1 Strategic research plan

The committee discussed the strategic research plan (SRP), and the need to continuously review the SRP themes against the funded research projects to see if we are all themes within the plan. Also that it would be desirable to feed information back to WGs and RAGs to consider in future fishery specific research plans.

ACTION: add a standing agenda item which reviews projects against the SRP themes to keep track of which themes we are covering. The review should also consider whether multi-fishery projects are being considered, which are often missed in fishery specific plans.

5.2 TSSAC membership

The committee discussed TSSAC membership terms and training. They acknowledge that it is useful to have members for at least two terms, given the time it takes to get members up to speed with content. They also acknowledged that a better induction process could be provided for new members to get them up to speed on fisheries, research and anything relevant to their role. TSRA have undertaken workshops for new TIB members (not committee specific).

5.3 PNG contributions to research

The committee discussed the relationship between Australia and PNG relating to research. They noted that PNG generally attend TSSAC as an observer, and we also discuss research at the annual bilateral meetings with PNG. The management of shared stocks relies heavily on Australia's research. PNG try to put in complementary arrangements in their waters to mirror Australia when feasible and have also tried to do their own TRL surveys, and have provided large amounts of funding towards TSSAC research in the past for shared stocks.

6 Other Business

Actions arising from TSSAC 73

Action number	Action item	Responsible person
73.1	AFMA to provide a link for the CSIRO datacentre on the PZJA website, as well as links to the TS e-atlas.	AFMA
73.2	TSSAC executive officer to find final report from the 2013 data project undertaken by CSIRO (Tonya Van der Velde) and distribute to members for discussion at another meeting.	TSSAC EO
73.3	remove action item 71.17 but maintain a standing agenda item for AFMA and the other PZJA forums to provide an update on	TSSAC EO

	how we are progressing with data collection.	
73.4	Review the procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait to include a request for researchers to inform communities how any traditional knowledge was used during a project (i.e. for catch data for stock assessments, for improving survey design for research). The section should also explain how researchers can properly handle the traditional knowledge, and what would be examples of a wrong use of the data.	TSSAC EO/ AFMA
73.5	AFMA to explore the option of making videos of final research project presentations, or summary videos (by AFMA) for inclusion on the PZJA website, or distribution to communities as another mechanism for getting out research project results in an accessible way.	AFMA
73.6	Consider options for presenting information on research to a TSIRC meeting, giving a bigger picture view of research for communities.	AFMA
73.7	Review the procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait, including undertaking a feedback process with researchers and communities.	AFMA
73.8	TSSAC EO to speak to Cass Hunter about getting a copy of template for communicating research results to communities once her project is finalised.	TSSAC EO
73.9	Ensure the project team include all administration of meetings etc in their updated full proposal, noting AFMA and TSRA may be unable to assist with organising these meetings due to resourcing.	TSSAC EO

	ACTION: AFMA and TSRA to seek additional funding to cover the \$50 000 funding shortfall, including consulting with the TRL project team about moving some money between years for their multi-year project.	
73.10	Add a standing agenda item which reviews projects against the SRP themes to keep track of which themes we are covering. The review should also consider whether multi-fishery projects are being considered, which are often missed in fishery specific plans.	TSSAC EO

Ongoing actions from past TSSAC meetings

Action number	Action item	Responsible person	Progress against action item
71.1	Create standing agenda item for the November research priority TSSAC meeting, to gather a list of current research priorities and projects related to Torres Strait fisheries from other funding bodies. This should be considered when setting TSSAC research priorities and sent to members before the meeting for consideration with papers.	TSSAC EO	Ongoing. The TSSAC EO has begun to compile this list across research providers, which is a complex process. Contact has also been made with FRDC and the Research Providers Network to discuss the benefits of pursuing development of a fisheries research database which would be accessible publically. This will assist with collating and maintaining fisheries research across Australia.
71.3	TSSAC Chair/ AFMA to send a letter of appreciation to the TRL project team for all hard work with the extra TRL surveys.	AFMA	Incomplete. AFMA are currently drafting this letter.

71.15	TSSAC EO to place TSSAC research reports on the PZJA website with a list of historic projects.	AFMA	Ongoing. AFMA have started putting final reports for past projects on the PZJA website for easy access.
71.16	Develop a table which maps the SRP themes against the projects funded by any agency, so we know how many projects are already addressing the same issues. Including project title, funding body and researcher.	AFMA	Ongoing. This action item is being followed up by reviewing past projects related to this theme. Information will be provided out of session or at the next meeting.
72.1	TSSAC Executive Officer and Chair to ensure scopes are as clear and specific as possible in future rounds, and that applicants be strongly encouraged to work with the TSSAC EO, AFMA fisheries managers or TSSAC scientific members when formulating proposals.	TSSAC EO and Chair	Ongoing.
72.3	AFMA to consider whether industry may be able to provide in kind supply of boats for the surveys.	AFMA	Ongoing. AFMA will continue to explore a range of measures to reduce survey cost overtime. At present the provision of in-kind vessel charter cost relies on the, willingness of individuals, availability of suitable vessels and the development of administrative arrangements to mitigate any risk to the integrity, perceived or otherwise, of the survey undertaken through an in-kind industry supplied vessel charter.

72.4	AFMA to consider whether industry-led surveys or traditional fisher data could be used to compliment the fishery independent surveys.	AFMA	Ongoing. The TRLRAG and TRLRAG data subgroup are currently looking at ways to improve fishery dependent data collection, including both fishery dependent surveys and improving CDR and other data collected. The first subgroup meeting is coming up in June and further info can be provided following the meeting. This is part of routine business for the RAG.
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