Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting 76

DRAFT Meeting Record

09 July 2020

Teleconference

Note all meeting papers and records are available on the PZJA webpage: <u>www.pzja.gov.au</u>



Australian Government Australian Fisheries Management Authority

1 Meeting Administration

1.1 Preliminaries - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/ Chair's Opening Remarks/ Apologies

- 1 The meeting was opened with an acknowledgement of country at 11am AEST Thursday 9 July.
- 2 Apologies were received from the Queensland member Ms Michelle Winning, and Traditional Inhabitant member Mr Gavin Mosby.

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Name	Position	Declaration of interest
Mr lan Cartwright	Chair	Fisheries consultant. Member of QLD sustainable fisheries expert panel. No conflict considered against current agenda.
Ms Steve Bolton (in lieu of Selina Stoute)	AFMA Representative	Senior Manager, Northern Fisheries, AFMA. No conflict considered against current agenda.
Ms. Lisa Cocking	Executive Officer (AFMA)	Senior Management Officer AFMA. EO of TSPMAC. No conflict considered against current agenda.
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. No conflict considered against current agenda.
Dr Dirk Welsford	Scientific Member	Research scientist at Australian Antarctic Division. Sub-Antarctic resource assessment group. No conflict considered against current agenda.
Dr Steve Newman	Scientific Member	Fisheries Scientist at Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (WA). No conflict considered against current agenda.

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
A/Prof Natasha Stacey	Scientific Member	Researcher at Charles Darwin University. Past (early 2020) FRDC NT Research Advisory Committee member. Not involved in any Torres Strait related projects. No conflict considered against current agenda.
Ms Allison Runck	TSRA Member	The TSRA hold in trust, on behalf of the traditional sector, sunset licences for a number of the Finfish Fishery and hold licences in the TRL and BDM Fisheries. No conflict considered against current agenda.
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. TSRA member for Ugar. No conflict considered against current agenda.
Mr Maluwap Nona	Traditional Inhabitant Industry member	Chair of Malu Lamar, TIB licence holder (all entries), member of steering committee with the TSRA, HCWG member. No conflict considered against current agenda.
Mr Patrick Mills	Traditional Inhabitant Industry member	Member of the Torres Strait Fishers Association. TIB fisher. TRL Working Group industry member. No conflict considered against current agenda.

1.3 Correspondence since last meeting

3 The TSSAC noted the correspondence to the TSSAC since the last meeting on 7 March 2020.

ACTION 76.1: TSRA to send a hard copies of minutes to TIB members once finalised.

1.4 Action Items from past meetings

- 4 The committee noted the ratified TSSAC 75 minutes, which were sent to members on 25 June, as an accurate account of the meeting.
- 5 A request was made to receive a hard copy of TSSAC papers before the meeting. AFMA and TSRA agreed to send papers via hard copy where possible, with by AFMA distributing papers two weeks before meetings. TSRA also agreed to send a hard copy of the minutes to traditional inhabitant members once they are ratified.

ACTION 76.2: AFMA to try to release papers 2 weeks before meetings so TSRA can send a hard copies of papers to TIB members who request them.

6 The actions from past meetings were discussed. Detailed discussion occurred on the following action items:

Action number	Action item	Responsible person	progress
73.4	Include a requirement in the procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait for researchers to inform communities how any traditional knowledge will be 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 should handle the traditional knowledge, including examples of the incorrect use of the data.	TSSAC EO/ AFMA	Ongoing . The procedural framework is currently being reviewed. COVID-19 has delayed the update of the Indigenous research guidelines produced by AIATSIS, so this item will be progressed further once these are released.

7 The committee noted the delay in the release of the updated guidelines and agreed that the link to the draft AIATSIS code should be provided to the committee with the minutes.

ACTION 76.3: TSSAC Executive Officer to send a copy of the draft AIATSIS code to TSSAC with the minutes.

Action number	Action item	Responsible person	progress
73.5	AFMA to explore the option of making videos of final research project presentations, or summary	AFMA	Complete. The option was explored. With current staffing levels

- 8 The committee discussed the outcome of action 73.5, which was to explore ways to create summary videos following research project completion, as a mechanism for explaining research outcomes in a way that may be more accessible to communities. AFMA explained that they do not have resourcing at present to undertake this work. The committee also noted the option of building a video summary, or similar method of communicating research results, into the research proposal. This would see funding for additional research extension included in the project budget, which would address the resourcing issue. The TSRA noted that improved extension and engagement on project results is important to stakeholders in the region and would be willing to consider opportunities for supporting this with resourcing when possible.
- 9 Mr Nona raised potential sensitivities in relation to video projects, including the issues of copyright of the footage, acknowledgement and payment to Traditional Owners. Permission before shooting video footage should be obtained.
- 10 The committee noted that TSRA would work to provide further advice to TSSAC on the views of stakeholders on possible extension and engagement activities. Whatever methods TSRA settle on as most suitable for disseminating information for research (and other work) should be added into the procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait, which includes a section on the dissemination of results post research.

2 Research project updates

11 The TSSAC noted the updates against the existing TSSAC research projects.

Research project	Project completed/ extended or ongoing (multi-year)	Current progress
Fishery independent survey, stock assessment, Harvest Strategy and Recommended Biological Catch calculation for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery.	ongoing	This ongoing project is on track. The project is currently in its first year of a three-year cycle. No amendments have been made to milestones.
Spanish mackerel stock assessment	Ongoing	This project is on track for completion in 2021. No changes have been made to milestones.
Enhancing biological data inputs to Torres Strait Spanish mackerel stock assessment (original project)	Complete	This project has been completed. A copy of the draft final report can be found at Attachment 2.1a.
Torres Strait Sea Cucumber Stock Status Survey.	ongoing	This project is on track to be completed in 2020-21. There was one major change to this project.
		A survey of Warrior Reef (for sandfish) was initially included in the project, however, concerns from some Traditional Owners were unable to be resolved and prevented this part of the survey from proceeding.
		The funding from this component of the project was redirected to East Torres Strait, with further deep water surveys undertaken. Additional activities include targeting of surf redfish, extra BDM sampling sites and to also map the habitat

		surrounding Ugar Island. provide information to the the BDM re-seeding prop developed by Mr Rocky S researcher Dr Leo Dutra. as a number of costs incl for changing flights and a would have limited the sa redirected.	e community bosal current Stephens and This decisic luding charte additional gea avings if the v	for support of ly being d CSIRO on was made rs and costs ar storage work wasn't
Measuring non- commercial fishing (indigenous subsistence fishing and recreational fishing) in the Torres Strait in order to	Extended into 2020/21	This project has been sig COVID-19 preventing the committee from occurring milestone dates for this p extended into 2020-21 fir	e face to face g. Below is t project, which	e steering he updated
improve fisheries		Action/Milestone	Timing	Milestone
management and promote sustainable		Project initiation	January 2020	M1 delivered (\$8K)
		Literature review final draft	22 nd May 2020	M2 delivered (\$20K)
		Steering committee mtg 1 (online) – concept intro, presentation of lit review and approach evaluation for feedback and discussion	31 st July	na
		Steering committee mtg 2 – inclusion of SC views into monitoring approach evaluation	14 th August	na

		Draft final report (including Lit review, Stakeholder consultation, draft monitoring approach evaluation etc, following SC feedback)	31 st Aug	M3 (\$12K)
		Final report following client feedback	30 th Sep*	M4 (\$0)
Climate variability and change relevant to key fisheries resources in the Torres Strait — a scoping study	Extended into 2020/21	This project will be financially acquitted, however		in early 2021. ability to They will be e or via video he use of tion and hange eement in case hs extend 0 - Draft final ade 0 - Presentation searchers, entified data ed to address scenarios for tement
		feedback session may in technology. No payment Milestone 5 on or before no payment.		

MSE for the TSPF harvest strategy (direct source)	Extended into 2020/21	This project has also been granted an extension. The project was paid out on receipt of the draft report with the commitment that the final report would be provided and the project finalised in July 2020.
BDM ERA	Moved to 2020-21 financial year	This project has been moved to the 2020-21 financial year. No further funding is required to complete this work in 2021/22.

- 12 The committee noted that the final report of the project *"Enhancing biological data inputs to Torres Strait Spanish mackerel stock assessment"* has been submitted.
- 13 A Traditional inhabitant raised the issue of the complexity and length of the final report and asked for plain English summaries to ensure they are understandable for communities. TSSAC also discussed other possible delivery methods such as visuals, and infographics.
- 14 The committee noted that these summaries were a suggestion to come out of the "procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait", which was originally developed by Professor Martin Nakata. This project is the first to be completed in the 2019-20 round of research, which is the first round that has occurred since this new requirement for plain English summaries has been in place.
- 15 AFMA will be monitoring this process as a plain English summary for each 2019-20 project is completed and is committed to continuing to refine the procedural framework requirements as we assess how the plain English summaries are received by communities.
- 16 The TSRA, who are co-investigators on the project, confirmed that the project team have completed the plain English summary and are working with the TSRA on the best methods for disseminating this information to communities. The committee noted that infographics may be a useful mechanisms for presenting results, which would explain the sampling, and what it means for fisheries management.
- 17 The committee went on to discuss the final project report. The research members noted that the project report had fully delivered on the scientific objectives of the project.
- 18 The committee agreed however that the report lacked a critical assessment of the success of the engagement / voluntary sampling/ incentive approach the researchers used. Knowing the success of this method, including how many people attended the workshops and participated in the data collection, will be important when designing the collection methods in the second round of the project (agenda item 3).
- 19 The committee went on to discuss the progress against the project "Measuring noncommercial fishing (indigenous subsistence fishing and recreational fishing) in the Torres Strait in order to improve fisheries management and promote sustainable fishing".

20 AFMA noted the extensive and useful comments provided by A/Prof Stacey relating to the literature review. The committee agreed it would be useful to set up a meeting between AFMA, TSRA and the project team to discuss the comments, which may be able to be integrated into the final version of the literature review.

ACTION 76.4: AFMA to coordinate a meeting regarding the project "Measuring noncommercial fishing (indigenous subsistence fishing and recreational fishing) in the Torres Strait in order to improve fisheries management and promote sustainable fishing" between Natasha Stacey, the Project team, AFMA and the TSRA.

21 The committee also agreed that it would be beneficial to explore engagement approaches used in the two projects discussed above (biological sampling and the non-commercial fishing project). Outcomes from the non-commercial project could be useful when assessing the best engagement methods for the second round of the biological sampling project being assessed in the next agenda item. The non-commercial project may also draw on information regarding sampling used in the biological project, for their literature review and final report. This initiative could just be a discussion between the two project investigators.

ACTION 76.5: TSRA to facilitate a discussion between the two project primary investigators on the sampling methods used in the biological sampling project, and any lessons that can be shared between the projects.

3 Full proposals

- 22 The TSSAC noted that one project full proposal had been submitted as part of the 2020-21 funding cycle "*Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Spanish Mackerel Biological Sampling*".
- 23 The second full proposal that was invited ("*Determining weight conversion ratios for curryfish species Stichopus herrmani and S. vastus*") had to be postponed, due to CSIRO resourcing/procedural changes due to COVID-19 making it impossible to undertake this project over the next six months.
- 24 AFMA explained the major changes to the full proposal (*Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Spanish Mackerel Biological Sampling*), resulting from the TSSAC recommendations from TSSAC 75:

Requ	ested update to the full proposal	How the project team addressed this comment
1.	Include a draft progress report part way through the project as a project milestone.	Milestone progress reports are being provided for milestones 2 and 3, in addition to the final report.
2.	A more detailed budget breakdown (including between travel, operating and capital).	A more detailed budget breakdown has been provided in section 5 of the full proposal.

 Further information about target sampling size for both species. 	This has been added into the methods section of the full proposal:
	 Target sample sizes of coral trout frames in 2020-21 will be 400-500 whole fish frames. Target sample sizes of 1500 lengths from 50 representative (unbiased and ungraded) catches were sampling targets in 2019-20 with a spread across fishery areas, the fishing season and individual fishers. Target sample size of 500 otoliths was in place.

25 The committee assessed the project against the ranking assessment criteria and provided comments where relevant:

Attractiveness		Does not meet	meets exceeds		Comments (is there anything that needs changing to address this criteria better in the proposal/ project?	
I.	Is there a priority need for the research (does it align with the Torres Strait Strategic Research Plan and Annual Research plan)?		Yes			
١١.	Is/are the end-user/s identified?		Yes		End users were not explicitly identified by use of the term "end user" however the stakeholders are clearly identified, and these are considered the end users.	
111.	Do the outcomes have relevance and are they appropriate to the end-users?		Yes		This project is a very positive step for communities, as currently, one year of bad data could result in the fishery being closed. This data will help reduce that hard management line.	
IV.	Should the outputs contribute towards outcomes and are they measureable?		Yes		This project should have a flow on effect the stock assessment and ability to manage the fishery more effectively. It reduces uncertainty in mortality estimates.	
V.	Cost benefit analysis. Research projects are to be prioritised and funded in accordance with the need, risk, cost and expected benefits of the research to the fishery, ecosystem, industry and broader community.		Yes		This is essential fishery work, well worth the investment.	
VI.	Does the proposal actively engage Traditional Inhabitants and Torres Strait Islanders in the research?		Yes		Members of a number of Torres Strait communities are engaged in the research, through providing the fish frames (data). While they are not employed as such, the are paid a small fee to cover their costs and some of their time. AFMA should work with the Principle investigator to ensure the collection and engagement methods are the best possible, and refined from learnings in the 2019-20 project.	
VII.	Are there employment opportunities for Traditional Inhabitants and Torres Strait Islanders?		Yes		No directly employment, see VI above.	
VIII.	Does the research contribute to the knowledge that underpins ecosystem based fisheries management (EBFM) to improve the quality of decisions made?		Yes			
IX.	Does the project involve capacity development for Communities? If so, TSSAC to discuss if there funding from other agencies such as the IRG or TSRA that could support this project.		Yes		Torres Strait Islanders are learning new skills through learning how to measure fish and in some cases sample otoliths.	
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х.	Does the applicant and their team / resources have the capacity to produce the outputs?	Yes	
XI.	Is the budget appropriate to meet the outputs and outcomes?	Yes	
XII.	Does the proposal outline a coherent strategy surrounding data collection, analysis, and storage?	Yes	Yes. The committee noted the need to ensure TEK is properly managed.
XIII.	Does the proposal include appropriate plans (for example, adoption, communication and/or commercialisation plans) to ensure that the full potential of the research is realised through adoption of research outputs by end-users?	Yes	
XIV.	Are the methods scientifically sound, well described and consistent with the projects objectives?	Yes	
XV.	Research will be most effective when there is effective engagement with fishery stakeholders, particularly Traditional Inhabitants of the Torres Strait, and where the research has widespread stakeholder support (refer to procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait and the TSSAC research application). Does the project identify the key stakeholders and how they will be consulted regarding the project in a culturally appropriate way?	Yes	This project has had extensive engagement with Torres Strait Islanders during, during the development of this application specifically, and also through the past project undertaken in 2019-20, when relationships were built with communities, and fishers collecting data.
XVI.	Consistent with the legislative responsibilities of the PZJA, the TSSAC will not deal with aquaculture research except for where there would be potential aquaculture/wild-stock interactions.	Yes	

- 26 The TSSAC supported the project for funding, with the following issues to be addressed through changes to the final version of the full proposal:
 - a. Clarify the traditional knowledge that is being collected in this project, or if it isn't being collected, remove reference in the proposal, noting the large data storage and ownership issues that come with managing Traditional Ecological Knowledge collected during research.
 - b. Primary Investigator to speak with the project team for the noncommercial take project, to see if there are any lessons learnt regarding community engagement and data collection, which can be used in community engagement for this project.
 - c. Update the Communication and engagement strategy document so it is relevant for both species.

ACTION 76.6: TSSAC EO to write letter to project team asking for minor updates to the full proposal and stakeholder engagement plan and inform them the project has been supported for funding.

- 27 During the review of the research assessment criteria, the TSSAC discussed the current terms used by PZJA agencies, and during PZJA business including PZJA forums. Mr Nona explained that Malu Lamar are writing a letter to the Prime Minister, and the Premier of Queensland, regarding the use of the word "traditional inhabitant", which is the term as defined in the Torres Strait Treaty and currently used by the PZJA. In his view this is inappropriate as it is a generic term, rather than a specific one which would refer to the specific nations relevant to each individual issue. In regard to TSSAC, it's important to respect that research will occurring in native title areas, and different nations are in these different areas. The different nations have different values and principles for looking after their natural resources.
- 28 Mr Nona requested the TSSAC stop using the wording "traditional inhabitant". The Chair asked the wording in the comments of assessment criteria number 6 to be amended to refer to the area in which the project will take place.
- 29 AFMA also noted that they will work to address this request more broadly across all PZJA business.

ACTION 76.7: TSSAC EO to reference the correct area (community) that the finfish project will be occurring within, under the comments section of criteria 6 of the project assessment.

ACTION 76.8: AFMA to explore ways to use more specific terminology (specific nations) in their work rather than use the term Traditional Inhabitant or Torres Strait Islander. This should also be considered to ensure the right nation is being consulted or engaged around management issues.

- 30 The committee discussed possible risks to the project given COVID-19, including how the consultation trips will be conducted. They noted that the consultation and education sessions may not be able to go forward if COVID-19 restrictions remain in place. The TSRA, who are co-investigators on the project, noted that the key is to ensure we engage fishers to get them to submit the fish samples. There are ways of engaging and encouraging this without the workshops if required, through phone calls to active fishers, and talking to the centres where freezers are operating.
- 31 The committee also noted that there won't be any impact to the TSSAC budget if these consultation workshops don't go ahead, as TSRA is funding these workshops as part of its in-kind contribution.
- 32 Mr Stephen, who was a big part of the initial project, explained that communities will want to see the results of last year's project, if they are going to support this next round. The TSSAC noted the need to include final project outcomes in the next community workshops in clear language and graphs.
- 33 The TSRA confirmed that the final report has been submitted and a plain English summary is being developed. It is also considering placing some visual results data on the TVs in the supermarkets on Islands, and hopefully be able to deliver face to face workshops to provide a presentation of results.
- 34 Mr Stephen acknowledged that the Traditional Inhabitant TSSAC members should be a part of the consultation with communities from the start of the project, until completion. This ensures that the need and benefits of the project are communicated to communities in a way they understand.
- 35 Mr Nona spoke on behalf of Malu Lamar, and supported this view from Mr Stephen, including the need to consult with right/ affected communities about the projects specifically and provide project results and engagement during projects where possible.
- 36 Mr Stephens also agreed to provide feedback to the project team, around his suggestions and learnings.
- 37 The committee discussed the issue of traditional ecological knowledge and noted the request from Traditional Inhabitant members to ensure that the copyright of any traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) used in projects is managed accordingly.
- 38 The committee agreed for the EO to work with the project team to clarify the type of data they are collecting from Traditional Inhabitants, so we will know if it is considered TEK or not, and thus ensure the appropriate methods of dealing with this information are used. From the information in the submission it is likely the term has been incorrectly attributed. If they are only collecting the length information, this isn't an issue in respect of TEK, which will only be a consideration if the project is collecting TEK from communities.

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39 The committee also noted the desire to start to build a repository of key learnings from each research project, which can be provided to future researchers.

4 Other Business

4.1 Next meeting

40 The TSSAC noted that the next meeting would be held in October or November and discuss the research priorities for the 2021-22 financial year and beyond.

4.2 meeting close

The meeting closed at 1315 with a closing prayer.

Action number	Action item	Responsible person	progress
76.1	TSRA to send a hard copies of minutes to TIB members once finalised.	TSRA	
76.2	AFMA to try to release papers 2 weeks before meetings so TSRA can send a hard copies of papers to TIB members who request them.	AFMA and TSRA	
76.3	TSSAC Executive Officer to send a copy of the draft AIATSIS code to TSSAC with the minutes.	TSSAC EO	
76.4	AFMA to coordinate a meeting regarding 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 fishing" between Natasha Stacey, the Project team, AFMA and the TSRA	AFMA	
76.5	TSRA to facilitate a discussion between the two project primary investigators on the sampling	TSRA	

Actions arising from TSSAC 76

	methods used in the biological sampling project, and any lessons that can be shared between the projects		
76.6	TSSAC EO to write letter to project team asking for minor updates to the full proposal and stakeholder engagement plan and inform them the project has been supported for funding	TSSAC EO	
76.7	TSSAC EO to reference the correct area (community) that the finfish project will be occurring within, under the comments section of criteria 6 of the project assessment.	TSSAC EO	
76.8	AFMA to explore ways to use more specific terminology (specific nations) in their work rather than use the term Traditional Inhabitant or Torres Strait Islander. This should also be considered to ensure the right nation is being consulted or engaged around management issues	AFMA	
	Actions from past	meetings	
75.1	AFMA to explore a possible method for undertaking research relating to historic finfish dive surveys and habitat mapping to improve a future stock assessment, noting there may be some additional funding from AFMA and the TSRA.	AFMA	Ongoing. AFMA worked with RAG members to obtain the dive survey data, including an unpublished summary report for the data. This is now housed in AFMA ready for future stock assessments or projects. There has been no progress on obtaining habitat mapping data. The

			FFRAG and FFWG can consider the possibility of future research related to this data when updating their 5 year rolling research plan this year for the finfish fishery.
73.4	Include a requirement in the procedural framework for undertaking research in the Torres Strait for researchers to inform communities how any traditional knowledge will be 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 should handle the traditional knowledge, including examples of the incorrect use of the data.	TSSAC EO/ AFMA	Ongoing . The procedural framework is currently being reviewed. COVID-19 has delayed the update of the Indigenous research guidelines produced by AIATSIS, so this item will be progressed further once these are released.
73.6	Consider options for presenting information on research to a TSIRC meeting, giving a bigger picture view of research for communities.	AFMA	Ongoing . This hasn't been progressed to date. AFMA are still considering the best way of presenting information on research to TSIRC. That said, AFMA are in liaison with TSIRC Councilors, regarding Torres Strait research, and are continuing to provide information about the research program, to educate councilors about research in the Torres Strait and their involvement.
73.8	TSSAC EO to speak to Cass Hunter about getting a copy of template for communicating	TSSAC EO	Ongoing. We are still waiting for a final copy of the report. It

	research results to communities once her project is finalised.		will be sent to TSSAC when received.
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 . This item will be considered during the scoping meeting in November 2020.