

**16th MEETING OF THE PZJA TORRES STRAIT
FINFISH FISHERY RESOURCE ASSESSMENT GROUP (FFRAG 16)**

Wednesday 19 June 2024 – 9:00am to 1:00pm

Video Conference

DRAFT AGENDA

1 PRELIMINARIES

1.1 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, Welcome and Apologies

The Chair will welcome members and observers to the 16th meeting of the FFRAG.

1.2 Adoption of Agenda

The FFRAG will be invited to adopt the draft agenda.

1.3 Declaration of Interests

Members and observers will be invited to declare any real or potential conflicts of interests and determine whether a member may or may not be present during discussion of or decisions made on the matter which is the subject of the conflict.

2 RESEARCH

2.1 Research Priorities

The FFRAG will be invited to discuss and provide advice on research priorities for the Finfish Fishery. This discussion will lead on from FFRAG 13 and FFRAG 15 and will form final advice for the 2025-26 funding year.

3 PRIORITIES FOR THE RAG

FFRAG members will be invited to discuss other future priorities for management of the Finfish Fishery.

4 OTHER BUSINESS

FFRAG members will be invited to discuss other business for consideration.

The Chair must approve the attendance of all observers at the meeting. Individuals wishing to join the meeting as an observer must contact the Executive Officer – Chris Boon (chris.boon@afma.gov.au)

Torres Strait Resource Assessment Group – Meeting 16	19 June 2024
PRELIMINARIES Welcome and Apologies	Agenda Item 1.1 For Noting

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Resource Assessment Group **NOTE**:
 - a) an acknowledgement of Traditional Owners;
 - b) the Chair’s welcome address;
 - c) apologies received from members unable to attend.

2. As of 07 June 2024, no formal apologies have been received.

Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Resource Assessment Group – FFRAG 19	19 June 2024
PRELIMINARIES Adoption of Agenda	Agenda Item 1.2 For Decision

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Resource Assessment Group consider and **ADOPT** the draft agenda.

BACKGROUND

2. The FFRAG at their meeting on 29-30 November 2023 (FFRAG 15) proposed the agenda items tabled for discussion at FFRAG 16.

Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Resource Assessment Group	Meeting 16 19 June 2024
PRELIMINARIES Declarations of Interest	Agenda Item 1.3 For DECISION

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Resource Assessment Group members:
 - a) **DECLARE** all real or potential conflicts of interest in Torres Strait finfish fisheries at the commencement of the meeting (**Table 1**).
 - b) **DETERMINE** whether the member may or may not be present during discussion of or decisions made on the matter which is the subject of the conflict;
 - c) **ABIDE** by decisions of the Resource Assessment Group regarding the management of conflicts of interest.
 - d) **NOTE** that the record of the meeting must record the fact of any disclosure, and the determination of the Resource Assessment Group as to whether the member may or may not be present during discussion of or decisions made on the matter which is the subject of the conflict.

BACKGROUND

2. Consistent with *Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) Fisheries Management Paper No. 1* (FMP1), which guides the operation and administration of PZJA consultative forums, members are asked to declare any real or potential conflicts of interest.
3. Resource Assessment Group members are asked to declare all real or potential conflicts of interest or update the standing list of declared interests (**Table 1**) if required.
4. FMP1 recognises that members are appointed to provide input based on their knowledge and expertise and as a consequence, may face potential or direct conflicts of interest. Where a member has a material personal interest in a matter being considered, including a direct or indirect financial or economic interest; the interest could conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties. Of greater concern is the specific conflict created where a member is in a position to derive direct benefit from a recommendation if it is implemented.
5. When a member recognises that a real or potential conflict of interest exists, the conflict must be disclosed as soon as possible. Where this relates to an issue on the agenda of a meeting this can normally wait until that meeting, but where the conflict relates to decisions already made, members must be informed immediately. Conflicts of interest should be dealt with at the start of each meeting. If members become aware of a potential conflict of interest during the meeting, they must immediately disclose the conflict of interest.
6. Where it is determined that a direct conflict of interest exists, the forum may allow the member to continue to participate in the discussions relating to the matter but not in any decision-making process. They may also determine that, having made their contribution to the discussions, the member should retire from the meeting for the remainder of discussions on that issue. Declarations

of interest, and subsequent decisions by the forum, must be recorded accurately in the meeting minutes.

Table 1. FFrag member and observer declarations of interest to be updated at the meeting. Interests declared by those persons at FFrag 15 meeting are shown.

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
Members		
David Brewer	Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director – Upwelling P/L (David Brewer Consulting). • Honorary Fellow - CSIRO • Chair - Torres Strait Finfish RAG • Scientific member – Torres Strait Finfish Working Group • Scientific member – Northern Prawn Fishery RAG • Current consultancies with Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation, Newcrest Mining Ltd. • Ex co-investigator on the completed Torres Strait ‘Non-commercial catch’ project. • As a fisheries consultant, may apply for funds for Torres Strait fishery research projects in the future where consistent with his role as Chair.
Rocky Stephen	TIB industry member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor for Ugar. • Chairperson of Kos and Abob Fisheries Ugar. • Works with brother in a commercial fishing business on Ugar (Brother Bear Fisheries). • Eastern cluster representative on the PZJA Finfish RAG & Working Group. • Traditional Inhabitant member - Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee. • TSRA Board member for Ugar • TSRA Finfish Quota Management Committee. • TSRA Board Fisheries Advisory Committee member. • Member of Zenadth Kes Fisheries company.
Gavin Mosby	TIB industry member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yorke Island Central Island representative • Member to Finfish Working Group, Prawn MAC
Harry Nona	TIB industry member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIB licence holder – fulltime cray fishermen • Member for Kaiwalagal
Terrence Whap	TIB industry member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the local fisherman’s association in Maluialgal • PBC Director • TSRA Board Member and Ranger
Benny Dau	TIB industry member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIB Licence holder • Member of Zenadth Kes Fisheries company.
Michael O’Neill	Scientific member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal fisheries scientist working with the Queensland Government (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Fisheries Queensland) in

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
		<p>the stock assessment program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal scientist for TSSAC three-year project for Spanish mackerel stock assessment work. Member of PZJA Finfish RAG and Working Group. Working on and supporting work on coral trout CPUE standardisation presented at previous meetings
Ashley Williams	Scientific member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSIRO Scientist Scientific member of Tropical Tuna RAG and MAC Project leader for Torres Strait Spanish mackerel Close-kin mark-recapture (CKMR) design project
Andrew Penny	Scientific member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researcher and management scientist. Is a consultant (Pisces Australia) with a general interest in tropical fisheries. Serves on six AFMA/PZJA advisory groups. Conducted research previously with the Torres Strait Prawn fishery and Tropical Rock Lobster fishery. No current Torres Strait projects. Researcher on current projects involving climate change/stock assessments.
Chris Boon	Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employed by AFMA No pecuniary interests or otherwise
Damian Miley	Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) Member - Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employed by TSRA – Program Manager (Fisheries & Infrastructure). No pecuniary or vested interests in Torres Strait fisheries as an individual. Notes that TSRA holds finfish fishing licences on behalf of Traditional Inhabitants.
Chad Lunow	QDAF Member - Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishery manager for Queensland East coast for Spanish Mackerel, Reef line, Rocky reef and charter fishing. Avid spear fisher and recreational fisher and have no pecuniary interests in either the Queensland fisheries or the Torres Strait.
Permanent Observers		
Egon Stewart	Industry Observer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sunset sector operator who participates in both the TS Spanish mackerel and Reef Line fisheries.
Casual Observers		
Yen Loban	TSRA observer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TSRA member for Ngurapai and Muralag Holds TSRA portfolio for fisheries TIB licence Traditional Owner Zenadth Kes Fishing Company
Trevor Hutton	CSIRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sits on Finfish Working Group as permanent observer Interest in finfish projects
Adam White	TSRA observer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employed by TSRA – Project Manager (Fisheries)

Name	Position	Declaration of interest
Brooke D'Alberto	ABARES observer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed by ABARES (DAFF) • Works on Torres Strait Fisheries for Fisheries Status Reports, including Finfish and Tropical Rock Lobster

Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Resource Assessment Group	Meeting 16 19 June 2024
RESEARCH Finfish Fishery Research Priorities	Agenda Item 2.1 For DISCUSSION & ADVICE

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Resource Assessment Group (RAG):
 - a) **DISCUSS AND PROVIDE ADVICE** on the Rolling 5-Year Research Plan for the finfish fishery. This included providing advice on research priorities to be considered by TSSAC regarding funding commencing 2025-26.
 - b) **NOTE** that the Finfish Working Group (FFWG), at their meeting on 5-6 December 2023, recommended to add a coral trout dive survey to the 5-year rolling research plan.

Key Issues

2. At FFRAAG 13 meeting (8 June 2023), the RAG reviewed the current 5-Year Rolling Research Plan (the Plan), noting that this document was previously updated at FFRAAG 12. The RAG amended the plan, taking into consideration the outcomes of previous projects against various research priorities. The updated Plan can be reviewed at **Attachment 2.1a**. Advice from FFRAAG 13 was considered by TSSAC when providing advice on research funding for the 2024-25 financial year.
3. The RAG categorised research priorities as follows:
 - Biological sampling remained the number one priority, noting the importance of collecting an unbroken dataset of biological data for use in current and future stock assessments.
 - A yearly stock assessment for Spanish mackerel was maintained as the number two priority, noting its utility in the RAG's current harvest strategy framework for providing yearly RBC advice. Noting the RAG's endorsement of the preliminary SS model, the RAG clarified that future assessments should formally adopt the stock synthesis approach.
 - The implementation of a full-scale Close-Kin Mark-Recapture (CKMR) study for Spanish mackerel was elevated from number five to number three priority, noting the success of the recently completed CKMR scoping/design study, the completion of the coral trout CPUE standardisation project (previous number three priority), and the RAG's advice to defer the MSE for Spanish mackerel fishery (previous number four priority which was approved for funding by TSSAC in 2023/24 however no proposals were received).
 - Coral Trout Catch Per Unit Effort Standardisation was downgraded from 3rd to 4th position, noting that this priority has been preliminarily actioned (analysis presented at FFRAAG 12) however requires ongoing development via the production of an official report (due in early 2023/24).
 - Harvest strategy development for Spanish Mackerel, addressed through a Management Strategy Evaluation remains a high priority at number five, noting that ongoing work is required to develop specific harvest control rules (HCRs) to be evaluated through a future

MSE. The RAG agreed that these HCRs could be developed through future stakeholder workshops, either preceding a future MSE project or as part of the project itself.

- The remaining priorities (classified as either '6 - essential', or '7 - desirable') were left unchanged, with the exception of a stock assessment for coral trout, which was upgraded to an essential priority. The RAG clarified that this research is now essential, given the current interest in increasing the quantum of effort in the fishery, and the fact that this would be a logical step in providing a key input into a future harvest strategy.
4. The RAG will be asked to confirm the order and content of research priorities in the *Rolling 5-Year Research Plan*.

Rolling Five Year Research Plan 2023/24 - 2027/28

Torres Strait Finfish Fishery



Compiled by AFMA with FFRAG advice

June 2023

ABOUT THIS PLAN

The Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) seeks input from each fishery advisory body (Resource Assessment Group (RAG), Management Advisory Committee (MAC) or Working Group (WG)) to identify research priorities over five year periods from 2023/24 to 2027/28. This template is to be used by the relevant advisory body to complete their five-year plan. The plans are to be developed in conjunction with the TSSAC Five-year Strategic Research Plan (SRP) with a focus on the three research themes and associated strategies within the SRP.

All fishery five-year plans will be assessed by the TSSAC using a set of criteria, and used to produce an Annual Research Statement for all Torres Strait fisheries.

The TSSAC then develop scopes for the highest ranking projects in order to publish its annual call for research proposals. There are likely to be more scopes that funding will provide for so TSSAC can consider a number of proposals before deciding where to commit funding.

The fishery five-year plans are to be reviewed and updated annually by the Torres Strait forums to add an additional year onto the end to ensure the plans maintain a five year projection for priority research. Priorities may also change during the review if needed.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Table 1. Five-year Torres Strait Finfish Fishery research plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Proposed Project	Objectives and component tasks		Year project to be carried out and indicative cost*						Evaluation	
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Priority essential / desirable	Priority ranking1-5 (1 = highest)	Theme
Biological sampling program (length freq,sexing, ageing)	Project funded for age, sex and length data for Spanish mackerel and coral trout to support stock assessment.	\$128,000 (currently funded)	\$135,000 (currently funded)	\$162,000 Funding required *Includes 20k for genetic sampling	\$169,000 Funding required *Includes 20k for genetic sampling	\$176,000 Funding required *Includes 20k for genetic sampling	\$183,000 Funding Required *Includes 20k for genetic sampling	Essential	1	1a
Spanish mackerel stock assessment - Stock Synthesis	Need for ongoing assessment of key commercialspecies.	\$59,000 (currently funded)	\$61,000 (currently funded)	>\$20k <\$60k TBC Funding required	>\$20k <\$60k TBC Funding required	>\$20k <\$60k TBC Funding required	>\$20k <\$60k TBC Funding required	Essential	2	1a
Implement a full-scale Close-Kin Mark-Recapture for Spanish mackerel	<p>Fishery-independent estimate of abundance of the Torres Strait Spanish Mackerel Fishery.</p> <p>The RAG endorsed this project as essential, as an alternate index of abundance will provide greater certainty on the stock status.</p> <p>Project would deliver the most accurate results with at least 5 years-worth of samples.</p> <p>As of 2022/23, 2 years of samples have been collected (of which, one year of samples have been processed).</p>	0	<p>In lieu of a commencing a full-scale study, there is a need to fund the collection and processing of genetic tissue samples of 1000 fish for continuity of dataset.</p> <p>Samples collected in 2022/23 also require processing. (\$17k Currently funded).</p>	<p>Funding required</p> <p>Year 1 of <4+</p> <p>\$10k For contamination analysis (2021/22 – 2024/25 samples).</p>	<p>Funding required</p> <p>Year 2 of <4+</p> <p>\$200k? TBC</p>	<p>Funding required</p> <p>Year 3 of <4+</p> <p>\$200k? TBC</p>	<p>Funding required</p> <p>Year 4 of <4+</p> <p>\$200k? TBC</p>	Essential	3	1a

Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Coral Trout Catch Per Unit Effort Standardisation	<p>A small project is required to further refine the current CPUE standardisation methods and to update the CPUE time series with new catch and effort data.</p> <p>The CPUE series is to be based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any recommended refinements of the CPUE standardisation methodology developed through the AFMA funded project: Harvest Strategy of the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery (project number: 2016/0824); and all available catch and effort data. 	<p>Approved for funding in 2022/23.</p> <p>Analysis has been actioned by QDAF. Endorsed by FFRAG/WG. Report publishing due early 2023/24 FY.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	Essential	4	1a
Harvest strategy development – Spanish Mackerel Addressed through <i>Management Strategy Evaluation of Spanish mackerel for the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery.</i>	<p>The project team will use Management Strategy Evaluation to quantitatively evaluate the performance of candidate Harvest Control Rules (HCR) to complete the elements of a fisheries harvest strategy. This includes using current HS objectives as guidance (developed during project <i>Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery</i>, and engaging with the FFRAG to refine the form of the HCRs.</p> <p>Requirement of Cwth HS Policy and Guidelines to undertake MSE prior to implementation.</p> <p>To be conducted at an appropriate later date.</p>		0	0	0	0	0	Essential	5	1a
Harvest strategy development – Coral Trout	<p>Component projects to progress Harvest Strategy development for the TSFF are being addressed through research priority 3. (CT CPUE Standardisation).</p> <p>Next steps to be progressed after the CPUE project work is completed.</p>		0	0	0	0	0	Essential	6	
Estimating catches outside the commercial fishery.	Acquiring data of catch taken from non-commercial fishers.	Phase 2 currently funded for 2023/24 – 2024/25						Essential	6	1a, 3b

Coral trout stock assessment	Need for ongoing assessment of key commercial species.	The RAG clarified that this research is now essential, given the current interest in increasing the quantum of effort in the fishery. The RAG also noted the ongoing concern of the status of the stock becoming 'uncertain'.	Essential	6	1a
Harvest Strategy and Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for coral trout	Requirement of Cwth HS Policy and Guidelines to undertake MSE prior to implementation.	Two separate projects. MSE work requires funding and HS development to be completed first.	Desirable	7	1a
Stock structure of Spanish mackerel	Define the spatial scale of management and connectivity of Torres Strait populations of SM with adjacent areas (Gulf, Qld, Coral Sea, PNG) potentially through collection of samples for genetic relatedness. Gulf, Qld, Coral Sea connectivity addressed SNPs in CKMR scoping study. The priority is to collect samples from the Gulf of Papua, to further refine the spatial scale of the Torres Strait stock.	Not funded, but listed as a priority for funding for samples to be collected.	Desirable	7	1a, 1b
Regular report on the status of climate change impact on Torres Strait Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Species specific - Region specific Will consider the yet to be funded CC project.		Desirable	7	2
Shark depredation	Study to investigate increased shark interaction with fishery operations and depredation impact on Finfish Fishery catch rates (how to capture and track over time or investigate potential mitigation options).	<p>Not designed or costed.</p> <p>The RAG recommended that this priority be reassessed as relevant research is completed in other fisheries (jurisdictions).</p>	Desirable	7	1a

Torres Strait Finfish Resource Assessment Group	Meeting 16 19 June 2024
FFRAG Priorities	Agenda Item 3 For Discussion & Advice

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Resource Assessment Group:
 - a) **DISCUSS** and **PROVIDE ADVICE** on priorities for the RAG together with a work plan for addressing recommended priorities;

KEY ISSUES

2. The FFRAG last reviewed their list of priorities at FFRAG 10 (18-19 November 2021). The RAG agreed that the immediate priorities for the RAG were to:
 - a) Provide advice as necessary on the Western Line Closure including any future fishing that may occur (western line closure area since amended, but retained on this list noting potential for further amendments);
 - b) Further develop harvest strategies for the Spanish mackerel and coral trout;
 - c) Review shark management measures (actioned in 2022); and
 - d) Undertake annual fishery assessments and provide RBC advice.
3. The FFRAG at its meeting on 29-30 November 2023 (FFRAG 15) recommended to add a priority to develop multi-year TAC setting for Spanish Mackerel.
4. At FFRAG 15, the RAG also recommended to collate all available information on the coral trout stock for use in a future stock assessment (data preparation work).
5. Finfish Fishery Working Group (FFWG) most recently considered management priorities at its meeting on 5-6 December 2023.
6. The FFWG provided the following updates:
 - **Progress the development of a harvest strategy:** Recommended to maintain this item as a high priority. Next step is consultation to communicate the details of the current harvest strategy framework, with the view to then workshop the future of the harvest strategy in line with aspirations from stakeholders. This HS workshop was pencilled in for 2025. The FFRAG are to hold a planning session for this workshop in late 2024.
 - **VMS on tenders:** The FFWG endorsed the application of VMS on tenders in principle. A workplan was proposed to progress mandating of VMS requirements to the PZJA for decision. The FFWG noted that this workplan would await formal advice from the TSRA FAC, with the view for the TSRA to prepare paper for PZJA consideration in 2024.
 - **Formalising enforceable TACs:** The FFWG recommended to maintain this item, noting the research-tender process currently underway, which seeks to advise on an allocation process for Torres Strait fisheries resources held in trust by the TSRA.

- **Western line closure:** Recommended to maintain this as a low priority. Advice was received that the current border is appropriate for communities at this point in time.
 - **WTO conditions:** Recommended to add the relevant WTO conditions to the list of as a high priority. This will ensure the FFWG can track progress against these conditions.
7. A summary of these management priorities and their current progress can be found in **Table 1**. This table forms a workplan for the FFWG to address its priorities.
 8. The RAG are invited to review this workplan and provide advice on the current priorities of the FFRAG.

BACKGROUND

9. The RAG have a standing item at its meetings to discuss assessment, data collection and research needs for the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery. This may be informed by the RAG's meeting discussions, advice from individual members of the RAG and/or advice from the Finfish Working Group (FFWG).
10. At its meeting on 18-19 November 2021, the RAG noted the proposed management and research priorities for 2022 and made recommendations on how to progress some of those priorities.
11. Where possible, the RAG aims to prioritise and set a timeline for any identified items, having regard for resourcing.
12. In considering its priorities, the RAG may also wish to note the summary of management priorities supported by the FFWG provided in **Table 1** (some of which align with the RAG's priorities) and their progress to date.
13. Having regard for the outcomes of this meeting (including the assessment and management requirements stipulated in the WTO conditions), the RAG may wish to amend the list of priorities.

Table 1. Comments relating to any progress against each management priority considered by the FFRAG on 18-19 November 2021 and the FFWG on 7-8 December 2023. Priorities are listed chronologically and not in order of importance, with notable comments from previous meeting also included.

Priority		FFRAG 4-5 Nov 2020 comments	FFWG 7-8 December 2022 comments	Progress to date and further comments
1	Progress the development of a harvest strategy	Subject to funding this will require additional workshops with members and broader industry stakeholders including the FFRAG.	This remains a high priority, to be progressed further at the proposed harvest strategy workshop scheduled for March 2023.	<p>In progress.</p> <p>FFRAG 9 noted an update from QDAF on the development of the East Coast Spanish Mackerel Fishery harvest strategy, and the current QLD Reef Line Fishery harvest strategy: 2020-2025.</p> <p>FFRAG 10: Developed a scope for an MSE project to finalise a harvest strategy for the Spanish mackerel fishery.</p> <p>FFWG Dec 2021: Remains a high priority</p> <p>FFRAG 12: RAG to identify outstanding refinements to be progressed at a harvest strategy workshop in March 2023. Refinements/HCRs to be developed through MSE project (approved for funding in 2023-24. RAG also noted the East Coast Spanish Mackerel Harvest Strategy.</p> <p>2023 update</p> <p>No proposals received for MSE project. Harvest strategy/MSE workshop postponed until the RAG reassess the most appropriate workplan to develop HCRs for testing in a future MSE project.</p>
2	Supporting possible changes to the Western Line Closure	The RAG noted a number of risks and considerations with lifting the northern part of the	The WG acknowledged the aspirations of several community members in Maluligal and Kaiwalagal Kaureg clusters to extend the recently amended 'western line' area to provide an additional fishing opportunity to these communities. The WG	Progressed: Based on a final round of advice from the FFRAG and FFWG in 2021, and community consultation, the PZJA decided in March 2022 to amend the boundary of the

Priority		FFRAG 4-5 Nov 2020 comments	FFWG 7-8 December 2022 comments	Progress to date and further comments
		<p>closure and supported a suggestion that a targeted round of consultation occurs in Gudumalulgal to discuss the three options to support opening the reef line fishery in this area:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening with data collection and monitoring 2. Survey before opening 3. Adaptive management 	<p>supports future consultation on this subject, agreeing that this remains an important matter.</p> <p>The WG agreed to list this as a low priority, noting that immediate consultation is not required. The priority to progress with formal community consultation will be guided by further advice from TIB members.</p>	<p>Western Line Closure. This decision came into effect on May 1 2022.</p> <p>As per FFRAG advice, catch records will be monitored carefully to assess the level of effort.</p>
3	Update the daily fishing logbook (TSF01) in line with recommendations from the FFRAG.	The RAG supported the logbook changes recommended by AFMA to various aspects of the TSF01 logbook to improve Sunset sector catch and effort data and support spatial reporting by the TIB sector.	Not discussed at FFWG meeting 7-8 December 2022	Ongoing. AFMA to progress an updated TSF01 logbook for the 2024/25 season.
5	Formalising total allowable catches for the Finfish fishery	N/A	The WG recalled that an enforceable TAC is a management arrangement that would formally limit the catch of the TIB sector, noting that current arrangements require catch data to be monitored against the 'Olympic' TAC. A formalised TAC would mitigate the current requirement to reactively close the fishery to ensure that the TAC isn't exceeded. A formalised TAC	FFWG 2022: Remains a medium priority

Priority		FFRAG 4-5 Nov 2020 comments	FFWG 7-8 December 2022 comments	Progress to date and further comments
			<p>would also support the aspired utilisation of the entire TAC by the TIB sector.</p> <p>The WG acknowledged the views of TIB members, who maintain strong opposition to individual quota unit allocation options. TIB members expressed a preference to maintain an Olympic TAC style system, pending further review by the TSRA. The WG noted that the TSRA continue to lead a review into the allocation of TRL resources, and that the outcomes from this process will guide future advice on the allocation of finfish catch allowances.</p> <p>The WG agreed that it is not appropriate for the WG to provide formal advice on the process of allocation while the review is being undertaken, noting that the PZJA will consider the outcomes of the review before recording a decision.</p> <p>The WG suggested that AFMA conduct a review of the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Management Plan 2013 to assess whether an amendment to this plan could provide for an enforceable TAC. The WG also suggested that future harvest strategy documents could capture the inclusion of catch triggers against the current Olympic TAC to formalise the current process to reactively close the fishery. The WG agreed that these points should be discussed further at the HS workshop scheduled for early 2023.</p> <p>The WG agreed to maintain this item as an ongoing medium priority, noting that further action is pending the review process lead by the TSRA.</p>	
7	Potential application of VMS on tenders	FFRAG provided advice on the potential scientific benefits from using VMS data to address data needs in the fishery at	<p>The WG recommended to increase this from low priority to high priority.</p> <p>The WG agreed that the application of VMS on tenders in the sunset sector would introduce several benefits to the fishery, including the collection of fishing-effort data to reduce</p>	FFWG 2022: Upgraded to high priority

Priority		FFRAG 4-5 Nov 2020 comments	FFWG 7-8 December 2022 comments	Progress to date and further comments
		meeting 6 (27-28 November 2019). AFMA will continue to prepare information, including implementation costs across all licence holders to support further consideration of this initiative.	<p>uncertainty in standardised catch rates. It would also serve as a compliance tool to monitor specific spatial and temporal closures which apply to this sector. The WG agreed that these closures were implemented for significant cultural and environmental reasons.</p> <p>The WG noted that VMS data is being utilised in adjacent jurisdictions to refine the stock assessments of several fisheries. The member for QDAF agreed to distribute to members a copy of the Vessel Tracking Post Implementation Review which is currently out for public consultation. This review contains a cost/benefit summary of the application of VMS.</p> <p>The WG noted advice from TIB members that the Traditional Inhabitant sector may wish to pursue the use of VMS on TIB vessels <6 metres in the future, noting the perceived benefits of high-quality data collection. It was discussed whether there are mechanisms for dual-licensed fishers to operate in separate fisheries with the same VMS device. This would be relevant for those wishing to fish for TRL within the finfish closure area. The AFMA member confirmed that there are established mechanisms in Commonwealth fisheries to account for such scenarios.</p>	

Table 2. Key dates for the Finfish Fishery for 2022 and 2023.

Key date	Activity
December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finfish Working Group meeting• Spanish Mackerel Total Allowable Catch Advice for the 2024-25 Season• Coral Trout Total Allowable Catch Advice for the 2024-25 Season• Torres Strait Finfish Fishery management priorities
Jan/Feb 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PZJA meeting to decide TAC for Spanish mackerel and coral trout for 2024/25 season.
01 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual WTO report due to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.
September 2024	<p>FFRAG 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the data for the Spanish mackerel stock assessment. *• Non-commercial catch estimate.• Research priorities <p>*If stock assessment project occurs in 2024</p>
November 2024	<p>FFRAG 17 – RBC meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review updated Spanish mackerel stock assessment. *• Spanish mackerel - Recommended Biological Catch for 2025-26 Season.• Coral trout - Recommended Biological Catch for 2025-26 Season.• Priorities for the RAG <p>*If stock assessment project occurs in 2024</p>
November 2024	<p>Finfish Working Group meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spanish Mackerel Total Allowable Catch Advice for the 2025-26 Season• Coral Trout Total Allowable Catch Advice for the 2025-26 Season• Torres Strait Finfish Fishery management priorities

Torres Strait Finfish Fishery Resource Assessment Group	Meeting 16 19 June 2024
OTHER BUSINESS	Agenda Item 4 For Discussion

RECOMMENDATION

1. That RAG members **NOMINATE** and **DISCUSS** any additional items of business for the meeting.