

Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee Strategic Research Plan 2025–2029

For more information about TSSAC and our research in the Torres Strait, visit the PZJA website at pzja.gov.au or contact the AFMA Torres Strait Fisheries team on (07) 4069 1990 or torresstraitresearch@afma.gov.au

Who we are

The Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) is a Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) advisory committee providing advice to the PZJA on use of research funds for Torres Strait fisheries research.

TSSAC includes members from the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA), the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), Fisheries Queensland, the Torres Strait Islander industry, and scientific research advisors.

What we do

TSSAC provides advice and recommendation on research priorities and funding allocations across all Torres Strait Fisheries.



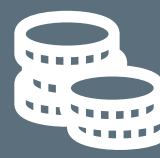





AFMA is the TSSAC secretariat and provides advice and review of funded research projects and provides project management support and oversight of funded projects.

Our shared goals

- **Identify research priorities** for Torres Strait fisheries in conjunction with PZJA resource assessment groups, management advisory committees and working groups, addressing the PZJA's management objectives.
- Review and **provide advice on individual fishery research plans** for Torres Strait fisheries.
- **Advise** the PZJA on allocation of research funds.
- **Engage and inform** representatives of Torres Strait communities about proposed annual research projects, and project outcomes.

Strategic research themes

Any research recommended by TSSAC for funding will help the PZJA achieve the objectives of the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

 <p>Undertake scientifically robust surveys, assessments and targeted scientific projects, which may include Traditional Ecological Knowledge, for risk-based management of fisheries resources, including the direct and indirect impacts of fishing on stocks and the broader ecosystem.</p>	 <p>Understand the relationship between fishing pressures and stock structures in the Torres Strait alongside other jurisdictions (such as Queensland and Papua New Guinea) and the implications for stock assessment and management.</p>	 <p>Identify and assist in developing fisheries resources and the optimal use of existing resources.</p>	 <p>Develop cost effective approaches for data capture, storage, and analysis to improve fisheries assessments.</p>	 <p>Address the effects of climate change on Torres Strait fisheries through adaptation pathways for management, for the fishing industry and communities.</p>	 <p>Understand what influences participation in commercial fishing by Traditional Inhabitants and explore ways to promote better engagement in under-utilised fisheries.</p>	 <p>Identify opportunities to increase economic, cultural, and social benefits arising from Torres Strait fisheries.</p>	 <p>Develop, review, and advance harvest strategies to streamline decision making processes, optimise economic return, and instil confidence in management practices.</p>
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Key enablers

AFMA provides secretariat support to TSSAC including organising meetings, managing research contracts and project milestones, linking research teams with Torres Strait community representatives, and supporting communication of research results and outcomes through a range of sources.

Communication of research outcomes to include summary documents on project outcomes and implications for fisheries management. Documents are published online and provided to relevant Torres Strait stakeholders.

PZJA continues to facilitate greater involvement of Torres Strait Islanders in fisheries research and management through capacity development and collaborative approaches in research projects.

Research plan objectives

Sustainable management of fisheries in the Torres Strait shares many of the environmental and socio-economic complexities in other regions in Australia, including multi-species and multi-sector fisheries, exposure to international markets and climate change impacts. However, it has many unique characteristics, including its remoteness from the main Australian populations centres, the high level of dependence of communities and Traditional Owners on marine resources for livelihoods and wellbeing including food security, health, social and cultural activities, and economic development opportunities. Consequently, all these factors are considered when prioritising and funding research under this strategy.