

TORRES STRAIT FINFISH WORKING GROUP MEETING
DRAFT RECORD OF MEETING
23rd – 24th May 2007
PEARLS BUILDING, THURSDAY ISLAND

Recommendations of the FFWG to the TSFMAC

Number	Recommendation	Agenda Item
1	That the ban on live fishing in Torres Strait be lifted by revoking the FMN No 63 on implementation of the Draft Finfish Management Plan.	5.1
2	That a 62cm maximum legal size limit for Leopard Trout (<i>Plectropomus areolatus</i>) to be included in the management plan for Torres Strait Finfish Fishery.	9.1

Action Items

No.	Action	Agenda	Agency
1.	The chairperson will write to all members of the Finfish Working Group and express the importance to the management consultative framework that all members attend meetings or nominate a proxy if they can't attend.	N/A	AFMA
2.	The term "purpose" will be used in working group papers in place of the term "recommendation"	1	AFMA/DPIF
3.	Mr Gaddes to check on use of Retained Fish Notices (reports) used in the Queensland Coral Reef Finfish Fishery.	5.4	Mr Gaddes
4.	Mr Gaddes will discuss with representatives from "Coldstores" and similar facilities in Cairns (and elsewhere if necessary) the potential for these facilities to be registered as licensed Fish Receivers and report catch weights from the Torres Strait Protected Zone to PZJA agencies via the QMS.	5.4	Mr Gaddes
5.	Mr Gaddes with Dr Jones and Dr Lara-Lopez will provide members with information about the Fish Receivers permits out of session prior to the TSFMAC.	5.4	Mr Gaddes with Dr Jones and Dr Lara-Lopez
6.	Mr Gaddes will provide information about Queensland's recreational bag limits to all TVH fishers in Torres Strait	5.5	Mr Gaddes
7.	CFG members to provide to the TSFMAC, following discussions with community members, suggested dimensions, proportions, materials and gape size for introduction of net restrictions that would not impinge on traditional fishing for mullet and similar, but would restrict use of nets for catching shark, turtle and dugong.	9.4	CFG members

**TORRES STRAIT FINFISH
WORKING GROUP MEETING**

23-24 May, 2007

PEARLS BUILDING, THURSDAY ISLAND

MEETING START TIMES: DAY 1&2 – 8.30AM

AGENDA

OPENING

APOLOGIES

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

1. Ratification of record of previous FFWG meeting (22 – 23 February 2007)
2. Actions and/or business arising from the previous FFWG meeting
3. Updated Management Plan timeline, including Tender Process
4. Update on progress of Torres Strait Act amendments
5. Draft Management Plan – Issues that need consideration
 - 5.1 Live fishery
 - 5.2 Boat replacement
 - 5.3 Western closure
 - 5.4 Overview of Quota Monitoring System
 - 5.5 In possession limits for mackerel and finfish for non-endorsed licences
 - 5.6 Management Objectives and Performance Indicators
6. Data - AFMA update on strategy to improve data management (Verbal)
7. Ecological Risk Assessment - Update on QLD process
8. By-catch Action Plan
9. Other Business
 - 9.1 Economic impacts of 62cm leopard trout limit (Verbal)
 - 9.2 Rationale for blue spot trout size limits
 - 9.3 Management Strategy Evaluation with TACC for coral trout (Verbal)
 - 9.4 Net fishing in Torres Strait
 - 9.5 Master Fisherman's Licence.
10. Dates for future meetings

**TORRES STRAIT FINFISH
WORKING GROUP MEETING
23-24th May, 2007
PEARLS BUILDING, THURSDAY ISLAND**

DRAFT RECORD OF MEETING

THESE ARE **DRAFT** MINUTES WHICH HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO MEMBERS OF THE FINFISH WORKING GROUP (FFWG) FOR COMMENT. IF **NO** COMMENTS ARE RECEIVED BY **31st August 2007** THESE MINUTES WILL BE TAKEN AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING AND WILL BE RATIFIED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP.

ATTENDANCE

Day 1

Members

Dr Jim Prescott	(Chair/AFMA)
Mr Shane Gaddes	(DPI&F)
Mr Lota Warriia	(TSRA – Yorke Community Fisher Representative)
Mr Kila Odo	(TSRA – Mer Community Fisher Representative)
Mr Francis Pearson	(TSRA – Poruma Community Fisher Representative)
Mr Carl D’Aguair	(Mackerel/Reef line Fisher)
Dr Toshi Nakata	(TSRA)
Mr Tony Vass (proxy for Neil Green, QSIA)	(Mackerel Fisher)
Mr Shaun Hanson	(Reef Line and Mackerel Fisher)
Dr Ashley Williams	(Research member – JCU)
Dr Annabel Jones	(AFMA)
Mr Don Whap (Proxy for Lyndon Peddell)	(DPI&F)

Day 2

Kenny Bedford	(TSRA – Erub Community Fisher Representative)
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Observers

Kirsten Maclean

APOLOGIES

Neil Green	
William Lui	(TSRA – Warraber Community Fisher Representative)
Mr Bert Matysek	(TSRA – Ugar Community Fisher Representative)

Lyndon Peddell

(DPI&F)

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Tony Vass	Mackerel licence in Torres Strait
Carl D'Aguiar	Licences on East Coast and Torres Strait, Mackerel and reef line
Shaun Hansen	Licences on East Coast and Torres Strait, Reef line and Spanish mackerel, licence Broker
Kila Odo	TIB licence
Francis Pearson	TIB licence
Kenny Bedford	TIB Licence

The FFWG members discussed and adopted a revised agenda.

The working group expressed concern that all members were not represented at the meeting and encouraged all members to attend meetings.

ACTION ITEM: The chairperson will write to all members of the Finfish Working Group and express the importance to the management consultative framework that all members attend meetings or nominate a proxy if they can't attend.

Agenda Item 1: Ratification of record of previous FFWG meeting (22-23 February 2007)

The draft minutes were ratified by the FFWG as a true and accurate record of the meeting with amendments to Agenda Item 6.2 as requested by Mr Vass. This amendment including addition of the words "Fishers left in the fishery wish to reserve the right to reopen discussions on this matter at a latter date" to the post-meeting note.

Mr D'Aguiar raised concern with the use of the word "recommendation" in FFWG papers and the implications that had. He felt that the need to make recommendations should be at the discretion of the working group. This had been discussed at prior FFWG meetings (in 2006). The working group agreed to adopt a policy of avoiding the term "recommendation" as a heading for working group papers and adopt the use of the word "purpose" instead.

ACTION ITEM: The term "purpose" will be used in working group papers in place of the term "recommendation"

Agenda Item 2: Actions and/or business arising from the previous FFWG meeting

Mr Gaddes and Dr Jones updated the group on the progress towards completion of the action items from the previous FFWG meeting. Most of the items had been actioned or were to be further addressed in later agenda items with exception of Action Items 3 & 7. These action items have not been addressed as AFMA and DPI&F felt they did not have the expertise to do so and needed to seek expert opinion which was not possible in the time frame available.

Re Item 1: The FFWG noted that provision of accounting advice for TVH fishers could result in a more fair and equitable tender price being tendered for TVH licences and that some fishers may be disadvantaged by lack of financial advice. It was suggested that TVH representatives follow this matter up with relevant bodies independent of the FFWG.

Re Item 2: Mr Gaddes suggested that provisions for maintaining the confidentiality of information in TIB Docket Books when kept at freezer facilities could be included in the conditions of the Fish Receivers Permit. Holders of freezer facilities could be instructed to keep logbooks in a secure

area. However, compliance officers discussed that it would be difficult to determine if information that is provided in logbooks had been passed onto other fishers from the logbooks, or by other means and, hence, prosecution related to disclosure of private information to other fishers would be difficult to achieve.

Re Item 3: The CFG's indicated they understood that in the event of 100% buyout of the TVH sector that they would be required to provide quota for coral trout to PNG if PNG exercised their right under the treaty to access this fishery in the future. The CFG representatives indicated that they would attend to this in the future when/if PNG sought access.

No.	Action	Agency	Progress
1.	The FFWG seeks clarification from DAFF with regard to the availability of government funds for fishers to obtain financial/legal advice for the tender process.	AFMA	Information provided
2.	FFWG to seek information on the responsibilities of those holding AFMA docket books at community freezer facilities to keep confidential all information recorded in the dockets.	AFMA	Information provided
3.	FFWG to seek economic advice on the relative merits and costs of both options (i.e. up-front allocation of PNG share versus a compulsory quota reduction at a later date).	AFMA/DPI &F	Not complete
4.	Compliance (Lyndon Peddell) to seek clarification on whether the current 20kg limit on reef fish is applied on a per tender or primary boat basis and advise industry accordingly prior to the start of the season.	Mr Peddell	Complete – Agenda Item 5.5
5.	TVH representatives to discuss the merits of a catch quota rather than an effort quota for the TVH sector with their industry association	Mr Green, Mr Vass and Mr D'Aguair	Complete
6.	Investigate tamper proof tags for sealing of freezer(s) on board primary vessels carrying product from the Torres Strait.	AFMA/DPI &F	Complete
7.	Assess the likely economic impacts of implementing 62cm maximum legal size limit for leopard trout (<i>P. areolatus</i>) in the reef line fishery.	DPI&F/AF MA	Deferred
8.	CFG representatives to provide a list of agreed local names for fish species to be included in the Finfish Management Plan	CFG	Complete
9.	Dr Williams to carry out Management Strategy Evaluation with TACC for coral trout set at 90t, 120t and 150t, or if four scenarios are possible, TACC set at 80t, 120t, 150t and 170t.	Dr Williams	Incomplete - To be deferred to next FFWG
10.	Mr Gaddes will provide an update on the progress of risk assessment of "other species" being carried on the Queensland Coral Reef Finfish Fishery at the next working group meeting	Mr Gaddes	Complete Agenda Item 7
11.	Australia to raise the issue of PNG's contribution to Spanish Mackerel research at the 2007 bilateral talks.	AFMA/DPI &F	2007 Bi Lat talks in Sept 2007
12.	Dr Williams will provide the database for the processing of	Dr Williams	Complete

	freezer logsheets to the Torres Strait Island Office		
13.	Shark mackerel catch will need to be removed from the TACC calculation for Spanish mackerel.	AFMA	Were not in calculation of SPM TACC
14.	Shark mackerel should be included in the management plan as by-catch in both the Spanish mackerel and reef line fisheries requiring the redefinition of Spanish mackerel and finfish.	AFMA/DPI &F	In progress
15.	An agenda item will need to be included in the next FFWG to discuss minimum and maximum legal size limits for blue spot trout	AFMA	Complete Agenda Item 9.2
16.	Dr Williams to provide an outline of the scientific basis for the size limits for blue spot trout.	Dr Williams	For discussion Agenda Item 9.2
17.	Further information including photographic or other evidence be provided to DPI&F to aid identification of potential source/s of ghost net found on reef near Poruma Island.	Mr Pearson	Could not locate photograph
18.	Agencies to investigate how responsibility for completing the dockets will be placed on both the fisher selling the product and the buyer purchasing it.	AFMA/DPI &F	For discussion – Agenda Item 5.4
19.	Mr D’Aguair (or non-community fishing members) to discuss options and issues related to fishing over quota and how this can be avoided with TVH fishers.	Mr D’Aguair	To be discussed – Agenda 5
20.	CFG members to discuss the framework for monitoring of TIB catch with fishers	CFG	To be discussed – Agenda 5
21.	AFMA/DPI&F to provide a comprehensive overview of how the proposed quota monitor system will work for both sectors by next FFWG meeting.	AFMA/DPI &F	For discussion – Agenda Item 5.4
22.	Discuss with western Torres Strait communities the option of removing prohibition on finfish fishing in western Torres Strait.	Dr Finn	To be discussed – Agenda 5.3
23.	Working group members to consider issues related to replacement vessels in the fishery for discussion at next FFWG.	All members	To be discussed – Agenda 5.2
24.	Include discussion of the ban on live fish in Torres Strait in future FFWG meetings.”	AFMA	Complete – Agenda Item 5.1
25.	All members to review the suggested management objectives and performance indicators and discuss at the next FFWG meeting.	All members	For discussion – Agenda Item 5.6

Agenda Item 3: Updated Project Plan (including Tender Process)

Mr Gaddes provided an updated project plan to the FFWG. Mr Gaddes stressed that due to ongoing negotiations with respect to 100% buyout of TVH sector fishers that the time lines given for various activities in the plan may be changed in the future.

Mr Gaddes also indicated that if the tender process did not meet minimum objective of reaching 50/50 share of TACC for TVH and TIB fishers that other options to meet the PZJA directions would need to be considered.

Mr Prescott updated the working group of the success of meetings at Badu and Masig Islands last month with the Commonwealth and State Ministers.

Agenda Item 4: Update on amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act (1984)*

Mr Gaddes provided an updated project plan to the FFWG. The amendment bill is being tabled in parliament on the 23rd May 2007 (2nd reading) and if it does not require substantial changes, it is hoped that the bill will be passed in June.

The amendments allow a number of important activities that are required in the management plan including: making reporting by Fish Receiver Permit Holders compulsory, the ability to make Fisheries Management Plans and the development of a Registry of Licences.

Every licence holder in both the TVH and TIB sectors were sent information about the proposed amendments as part of the consultation process.

Agenda Item 5: Draft Management Plan

5.1: Live Fishing

Dr Jones took the group through the previous discussions and recommendations regarding the ban on live fishing in Torres Strait at Working Groups, MAC's and PZJA meetings since 2001 when the temporary ban on holding live fish was put in place.

The TVH representatives indicated that with current live fish prices and the lack of facilities to store and transport live fish that it would be several years before live fishing would be a reality in Torres Strait if the ban was lifted. Live fish prices would need to be between \$40- 50.00 per Kg before fishing for live fish was viable for Torres Strait fishers. They also indicated that it was not likely that a move to live fishing in Torres Strait would see a substantial decrease in by-catch as Torres Strait fishers tend to fish in shallower water compared to fishers on the east coast. Mr Hansen also provided information that due to advances in tank and dory design that east coast fishers now have overcome limitations on the distance that dories can travel with live fish and that this could be adopted in Torres Strait and overcome the potential for localised depletions close to the main vessel (for TVH fishers) and/or Torres Strait communities (TIB). Mr Hansen also indicated that east coast fishers will tend to move on from a reef rather than stay in an area if catch rates drop.

The issue of higher grading (returning large or sick coral trout to the water to be replaced by higher value plate size common coral trout) was discussed in the Torres Strait context. Fishers indicated that as fishers tended to fish shallow water in Torres Strait that a majority of the coral trout in Torres Strait were <1.6 kg and therefore were of the preferred size for the live fish market.

The CFG representatives discussed the ability of TIB vessels to travel with live fish on board their vessels and the potential to deplete reefs close to communities if live fishing by TIB fishers resulted in more effort being exerted on nearby reefs. Mr Odo indicated that he tended to travel greater than 10nm currently, but for some fishers this would be difficult given the size of their vessels and the weather conditions in Torres Strait.

The fishers discussed the potential for prices for leasing quota in the future may be higher if live fishing is undertaken in Torres Strait as quota prices are generally set on a percentage of the going fish prices which would be higher if selling live fish compared to frozen or chilled product,

The working group acknowledged the potential for live fishing to impact on the fishery either through localised depletions and/ or increased pressure on common coral trout or plate sized trout. It was identified that monitoring would be important in ensuring that such problems are recognized

quickly. The monitoring program discussed at the last working group (by-catch species) would be important in this regard.

Recommendation: The Working Group **agreed** to recommend that the ban on live fishing in Torres Strait be lifted by revoking the FMN No 63 on implementation of the Finfish Management Plan.

The Working Group also recommended that members consider support that may be available to Torres Strait fishers who may need assistance in capacity building and/or capital expenditure to take advantage of live fishing in Torres Strait.

5.2: Boat Replacement Policy

Mr Gaddes addressed this item. The working group considered that a policy that allowed for replacement of vessels without restriction up to 20m would not result in a significant change in catch rates for finfish under a quota managed system and would not change the total amount of fish being taken from Torres Strait. This was due to constraints on fishers to offload product and reprovision fortnightly in line with current supply ship schedules.

Social aspects related to general moral of crew was a serious factor in needing to rendezvous with the mothership on a fortnightly basis regardless of the ability to stay at sea longer or travel further with a larger vessel, hence constraining TVH vessels to maintain these schedules.

Mr D'Aguiar expressed that the ability to replace vessels with larger vessels would increase safety especially in rough weather and provide comfortable accommodation making it easier to attract crew to Torres Strait.

Mr Hanson considered that it would be unlikely that a change in policy on replacing vessels would result in vessels staying in one area longer than they have previously. He easing the boat replacement policy may result in fishing effort being spread around a larger area of the Torres Strait as vessels could travel further a field. Currently if winds are over 15kn, TVH boats need to stay north of the Cumberlands where there are more bad weather anchorages. If vessels were allowed to be replaced without restriction up to 20m, vessels would fish south of this area until winds increased to over 20kn.

For mackerel boats, there is probably no economic incentive to replace vessels with larger vessels and is, therefore, the boat replacement policy is probably not an issue for the mackerel fishery.

There was mixed comments from the CFG representatives with respect to Torres Strait Communities feelings on a change of the boat replacement policy for the finfish fishery, mainly relevant to perceptions of larger vessels (up to 20m) allowed into Torres. Mr Odo expressed that Community members felt main boats and tenders could and would stay on one reef for more than one day. Mr D'Aguiar and Mr Hanson discussed that although a main vessel may stay on the one anchorage for several days, that the tenders were fishing on different reefs each day and would not tend to stay on a reef for more than one day to avoid (perceived) lower catch rates. Mr Pearson voiced concern that a change in policy allowing for larger vessels in Torres Strait would result in more fishers fishing in the area and resultant increase in fishing effort.

Mr D'Aguiar pointed out that with the 10nm closure that could be included in a management plan and/or leasing conditions between TVH operators and an entity that holds quota for TIB fishers that TVH vessels would fish further away from communities and, therefore, there may be less conflict between the sectors.

The TVH members supported a change to the current boat replacement policy for the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery to allow tenders to be replaced without restrictions up to 6m and main boats to be replaced without restrictions to up to 20m. The TVH members stressed that this support was provided only under the proposed output controls (ie ITQ) and would require reconsideration if a

strategy of effort controls (ie ITE). Mr Prescott and Mr Gaddes state that TIB vessels would be considered as primary vessels (not tenders) under the suggested policy amendment.

Mr Prescott stated that for TIB fishers to be able to catch their allotted quota in the future they would probably need fish further from communities. This would necessitate TIB fishers to change to larger boats requiring a change to the current policy.

Mr Odo felt that Mer community fishers would be supportive of a change in the boat replacement policy as it would mean that they would be able to fish further from Mer Island with larger vessels. This may facilitate Mer fishers to be more able to fulfil the objectives of the Mer Island Community Management plan (draft) that restricts fishing within 10nm of Mer Island by TIB fishers in poor weather only. Replacement of their current vessels to larger vessels would be more comfortable and safer for fishers and allow them to fish further a field especially in season of bad weather (September to May). A change to the current boat replacement policy was further supported by Mr Warria.

The working group as a whole was divided on boat replacement policy and was unable to reach agreement on a boat replacement policy for the finfish fishery.

5.3: Western Closure.

Dr Jones addressed this item. The Working Group members stressed the importance of understanding what is in the western area before opening it up to fishing and little is known about finfish resources in this area currently. The Mr Nakata felt that from discussions with people from western communities that they do not support lifting of this closure at this stage.

Recommendation: The Working Group **agreed** to recommend that the current ban on line fishing west of Dauan Is. (142°31'49"E) remain in place at this stage.

5.4: Quota Monitoring System (QMS)

Mr Gaddes provided a presentation on a suggested quota monitoring systems for TVH and TIB fishers.

All fishers/operations will be issued with an identification card that will include their licence number, ABN and endorsements. This will be required as identification to sell fish to a registered Fish Receiver.

For TVH Fishers:

Prior Notice

Prior Notice of unloading fish from the TSPZ will be provided over the phone at least 24 hrs prior to unloading to a mothership and 3 hrs of unloading to a defined port via an Automatic Interactive Voice Recorder (AIVR).

Mr Hanson indicated that there are situations where all fish caught on one trip may not be offloaded onto the mothership for transshipment to Cairns if the fish was not fully frozen at the time of unload or cartons that are not yet full for species caught in small numbers. Mr Gaddes suggested that these fish could be reported in a retained fish notice (as used in the east coast fishery) and would, therefore, be accounted for. Mr Gaddes also indicated that there would be an emergency offload notice system that would allow for emergency offload of product to another vessel or similar in the advent of freezer breakdowns or similar where product may be adversely effected.

ACTION ITEM: Mr Gaddes to check on use of Retained Fish Notices (reports) used in the Queensland Coral Reef Finfish Fishery.

The group discussed the need to provide prior notices from remote areas such as Bramble Cay without mobile phone coverage and hence the system would necessitate a satellite phone fitted to TVH vessels. Information on subsidies for purchasing satellite phones for primary producers working in remote areas including marine situations available from the Federal Government was provided to the group.

Transshipment Notice/Report

A Transshipment Notice will be required to be provided (AIVR) as soon as possible after the fish are transferred to the mother ship. A Transshipment Report is required to be completed to be signed by both the vessel skipper and the accepting transport company (Mothership staff) at time of unloading. Copy of this record will be retained with the fish and copy to be retained by the fisher.

The TVH fishers expressed that staff on motherships would not be able to weigh fish accurately on board as it would significantly increase the time needed to offload reef fish. This would be unacceptable to the mothership operation and may mean that the mothership company would be reluctant to transport reef fish or increase prices of transshipment. It was suggested by the group members that an accurate count of the number of cartons of each product type loaded onto the mothership may be an alternative to this. Mr Prescott suggested that consideration will be needed on the labelling of fish cartons to ensure that reporting of carton numbers meets the objective of tracking fish product from the TSPZ.

Fish Receivers

TVH members informed the group that fish product transported from Torres Strait on the mothership is first accurately weighed at the Coldstores in Cairns in most cases. There are occasions where product may be received at a limited number of other freezer facilities such as on public holidays. Currently the Coldstores is not responsible for any reporting to official reporting systems. They provide the fishers with a detailed breakdown of accurate weights all fish that are received by them and these weights are often used to sell this product to fish buyers.

Fish receivers would only be able to receive fish from appropriately licensed and endorsed fishers. A published register of licensed fishers could be accessed by buyers if skippers do not have their licence card available.

ACTION ITEM: Mr Gaddes will discuss with representatives from “Coldstores” and similar facilities in Cairns (and elsewhere if necessary) the potential for these facilities to be registered as licensed Fish Receivers and report catch weights from the Torres Strait Protected Zone to PZJA agencies via the QMS.

ACTION ITEM: Mr Gaddes with Annabel Jones and Ana Lara-Lopez will provide members with information on the QMS out of session prior to the TSMAC.

Catch Disposal Records (CDR)

Catch Disposal Records are generally filled out by the holder of a Fish Receiver Permit and signed by both the seller and the buyer. In the case of the Torres Strait Fishery, this is not possible as the fish are transported on a mothership and the Coldstores in Cairns is generally the first receipt point where the fish are weighed accurately where the seller is not present. The fish receiver is then required to send in the CDR within 24 or 48 hrs of buying/selling the fish. If the Coldstores in Cairns was issued with a Fish Receivers Permit, they would be required to complete a CDR for each load of fish received by them.

Travelling through the East Coast Fishery area.

TVH fishers expressed the desire to be able to travel to the mainland with Torres Strait product on board without the necessity to offload to a transport vessel or Fish Receiver in Torres Strait prior to leaving. This was to allow them to transport catch from the last fishing trip of the season saving on transport costs.

The argument was that currently east coast fishers could be fishing just within east coast limits and steam to Cairns and only provide prior reporting 3hrs before reaching port and it was not assumed that these fishers may be selling product elsewhere to avoid quota monitoring. There should be a similar situation for Torres Strait Fishers. In addition, with quota being allocated in both the east coast and Torres Strait, there was not opportunity to take fish from either area without it being accounted for in some quota. Locking freezers with Torres Strait product was considered to not be feasible for a number of safety and logistic reasons.

The working group discussed prior reporting required to identify a vessel leaving the Torres Strait jurisdiction with product on board that could meet monitoring and compliance objectives. Vessels would be required to notify PZJA agencies of their intention to leave the Torres Strait. They would be unable to fish in Queensland waters whilst having Torres Strait product on board (ie there would be no cross-jurisdiction trips). Dugong Island would be the last designated place for reporting notices for vessels moving out of the Torres Strait jurisdiction. Such a notice would be completed through the AIVR system.

Automatic Interactive Voice Recorder (AIVR).

The Working Group members were provided with a demonstration of the AIVR system.

For TIB fishers:

TIB fishers will be required to provide Fish Receivers with their licence cards with each fish sale they make. These cards will be used to stamp relevant information about the fisher on each record of fish sale (docket) and will overcome many of the current problems of erroneous data recorded from use of different name forms etc. The docket books will be the official Catch Disposal Record for the TIB sector and as such the importance of these records was discussed as it is this information that will be used in future allocating catch to communities when/if the TIB sector wish to move to quota allocated to individual communities.

5.5: In-possession limits for mackerel and finfish for non-endorsed licences

Mr Gaddes lead the discussion with the Working Group with regard to the need to change the current legislation on the in-possession limits of fin fish. Following the action item from the previous FFWG, Mr Gaddes has sought advice from Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol who advised that the current Fisheries Management Notice (FMN 78 & 79) indicated that only 20kg of finfish was allowed per boat, regardless if it was a carrier boat licensed vessel. However, the wording was somewhat ambiguous and a prosecution on this matter would be difficult to defend.

The Working Group agreed that changes to the current FMN's would take some time and by the time this was possible, a new management plan would probably be in place and therefore the change to the FMN would be redundant. Hence, the group agreed that they would not pursue a change to FMN 78 and 79 at this time. The new management plan will only allow fishers who have quota for coral trout and Spanish mackerel to keep these species over Queensland recreational bag limits.

ACTION ITEM: Mr Gaddes will provide information about Queensland's recreational bag limits to all TVH fishers in Torres Strait

5.6: Management objectives and Performance Indicators

Dr Jones lead the group through a discussion of suggested amendments to management objectives and performance indicators discussed previously for the Finfish fishery to better meet the objectives of the Torres Strait Fisheries Act and subordinate legislation. The following table (Table 1) records the amended Management Objectives as discussed and Performance indicators that would allow assessment against these objectives.

DRAFT

Table 1: Management objectives for draft finfish management plan for discussion

Management Object	Amended Management Object (Principle addressed)	Management Strategy/ies	Performance Indicator	Trigger Reference Point	Assessment period
1) To maintain catches at sustainable levels	<p>1a) Harvest levels are at a level where productivity (of fish populations – target species) is optimum and productivity is not compromised.</p> <p>1b) Harvest levels are at, or below levels that maintain biologically viable stocks of non-target species (Principle 1).</p>	<p>A) TACC (output control)</p> <p>B) Regulations on possession of finfish-size limits etc. (output controls).</p> <p>C) catch monitoring through quota monitoring system.</p>	<p>i) Total catch of target, by-product species and total catch (all species).</p> <p>ii) % of TACC reached per season or the % season (a year) required to reach the TACC.</p> <p>iii) $B_{current}$ is > than 40% B_0 (harvest strategy) <i>need to recognise that we don't know a lot about where that 40% really is and this may see TACC set at lower limits than otherwise.</i></p>	<p>i) Total catch of target, by-product and/or total catch does not change by X% from previous year, for more than consecutive X years.</p> <p>ii) % TACC reached per season, or % season required to reach TACC does not change by more than X% from previous year for more than consecutive X years.</p>	<p>i) yearly</p> <p>ii) yearly</p>
2) To optimise the yield from the fishery	2) To optimise economic viability of the fishery.	A) Transferability of ACE units	<p>i) numbers of ACE transfers/year/month (review)</p> <p>ii) Price of ACE units (review)</p> <p>iii) CPUE of target species</p>	<p>i) Numbers of ACE transfers/month/year do not change by greater than X% from previous month/year for more than X consecutive years.</p> <p>ii) Changes to price of ACE units remains within X% of CPI.</p> <p>iii) CPUE of target species does not change by X% from previous year, for more than X consecutive years.</p>	<p>i) yearly/monthly</p> <p>ii) yearly</p> <p>iii) yearly</p>

Table 1 Cont

<p>3) To protect the traditional way of life and livelihood of traditional inhabitants, in particular in relation to their traditional fishing for finfish</p>	<p>3) No change 4) 10nm Mile closure to non-community fishers. Community management plans?</p>		<p>1) Total catch of finfish for subsistence (Creel surveys). 2) Sara Busilacchi CRC Torres Strait project to provide other performance indicators To TSSAC project on success of Traditional fishing.</p>	<p>i) Total catch of finfish for subsistence does not change significantly (by more than X% in more than X consecutive years).</p>	<p>i) every X years</p>
	<p>4) To provide for the use and conservation of Torres Strait Finfish resources in a way that minimises impact on the marine environment (Principle 2)</p>	<p>A) Gear restrictions and methods.</p>		<p>i) Total catch of by-product and/or total catch does not change by X% from previous year, for more than consecutive X years. ii) Total catch and release of by-catch species does not change significantly (by more than X% in more than X consecutive years). iii) Number of interactions with non-fish species does not increase significantly (by more than x% from previous year for more than x consecutive years).</p>	<p>i) yearly</p>
<p>4) To provide for optimal utilisation, cooperative management, and for catch sharing to occur with PNG</p>	<p>4) no change</p>	<p>A) Catch sharing arrangements and complementarity of management arrangements as negotiated between Australia and PNG B) Shares harvested as per Article 23 of the Treaty</p>	<p>i) Failure to reach negotiated agreements at Bilateral meeting process</p>	<p>i) X% of allowable catch under catch sharing reached</p>	<p>i) yearly</p>

Table 1: CONT.

<p>5) To Promote economic development in the Torres Strait area with an emphasis on providing employment opportunities for traditional inhabitants, and to ensure that these development opportunities are socially and culturally appropriate</p>	<p>5) No change</p>	<p>A) Net transfer of quota to TIB sector B) Transfer of ACE from and between TIB endorsements, but not to TVH endorsed fishers.</p>	<p>i) numbers of TIB fishers recording catch each year ii) numbers of ACE transfers/year/month. iii) Price of ACE units</p>	<p>i) That the number of TIB fishers recording catch each year does not decrease by $x\%$ from the previous year for more than x consecutive years. ii) Numbers of ACE transfers/month/year do not change by greater than $x\%$ from previous month/year for more than x consecutive years. iii) Changes to price of ACE units remains within $x\%$ of CPI.</p>	<p>i) every x years</p>
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Further discussion on trigger reference points and assessment periods will be required at future FFWG.

Agenda Item 6: Data -AFMA update on strategy to improve data management (Verbal)

Mr Prescott addressed this item. Mr Prescott stated that the Tropical Rock Lobster WG had identified a need for better information for TIB sector. For example, docket records are often submitted without boat symbols being added, the numbers of fishers fishing, the area fished or the fishing method used. The fishers discussed the fact that fishers often were not interested in any details about their fishing except what they sell and other information was of low priority to them.

Mr Nakata stated that it is important for TIB fishers to ensure that the correct information is recorded in docket records so that in the future when/if TIB quota is allocated to communities this could be done on the correct prior history. This highlighted the importance of collecting good information now through the docket book system. Such information provided to date has already been essential in providing the TIB catch of coral trout and Spanish mackerel for determination of the TACC for these species.

TIB members stated that for Communities that do not have a freezer facility, it was difficult for them to ensure that their records were completed correctly as they are not present when the dockets are completed.

Agenda Item 7: Ecological Risk Assessment - Update on QLD process

Mr Gaddes led the group through this item. The FFWG noted the ERA process undertaken for Queensland Coral Reef Finfish Fishery. Mr Gaddes suggested that Torres Strait fisheries would probably have to go through a similar process at some stage in the future, however, Mr Prescott suggested that this would not be necessary until after the management plan is in place. The Working Group discussed a potential difficulty with such an assessment for the finfish fishery in that this assessment only included target fish and not by-catch species.

Mr Prescott stated that there is about 18 months before the Torres Strait Finfish fishery is reassessed by DEWR (for EPBC). In this second assessment there will be stricter criteria to be met than the first assessment. If this assessment is not passed export licence could be revoked.

Agenda Item 8: By-catch action Plan

Dr Jones addressed this item. The FFWG noted the current update of the progress towards meeting action items listed in the Torres Strait Finfish By-catch Action Plan. The group discussed the strength of these action items in light of the low level of discarded by-catch in the fishery.

Agenda Item 9: Other Business

9.1: Legal Size limits for Leopard Trout (*Plectropomus areolatus*)

Further to discussions at the February FFWG Dr Williams provided additional information with regard to the decrease in overall catch of leopard trout with introduction of a 62cm maximum legal size limit in conjunction with the current 38cm minimum legal size limit for this species. It was generally agreed that the impact of the suggested maximum legal size limit on the overall catch of coral trout was small and that in a quota system for coral trout that this would not be significant.

Recommendation: The Working Group **agreed** to recommend introduction of a 62cm maximum legal size limit for Leopard Trout (*Plectropomus areolatus*) to be introduced to the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery. This regulation could be included in the management plan for the fishery.

9.2: Rationale for blue spot trout size limits

Meeting Record

Dr Jones addressed this item. The FFWG noted the scientific information provided by JCU F&F research group on the biological data on blue spot coral trout and how this information identified a need for appropriate management regulations. The FFWG also noted the discussion from previous FFWG that specifically discussed these size limits for blue spot coral trout.

The FFWG went on to discuss size limits for other species of reef fish including red bass. Dr Jones provided limited information on biological research on this species and that it was a slow growing, long-lived snapper that suggested a requirement for prudent management regulations. The Working Group agreed that the current size limits for red bass were suitable.

9.3: Management Strategy Evaluation for TACC for Coral Trout.

Due to technical difficulties with the MSE Dr Williams was unable to present this agenda item. This agenda item will be discussed at the next FFWG.

9.4 Net Fishing Torres Strait

Mr Parry addressed this item. The group discussed the incidents of the use of large nets by PNG nationals in Torres Strait waters that had reportedly resulted in capture of dugong. Mr Parry discussed the need for legislation to be brought into place that would restrict nets to types that are required for traditional fishing for mullet and similar only. The Working Group agreed in principle to the need for regulations on the types of nets that would restrict use to traditional fishing for finfish. The CFG members agreed to provide the TSFMAC meeting in July with a list of recommendations for total length, gape size etc for nets for use in traditional fishing. These dimensions would form the basis on TSFMAC recommendations to the PZJA for restrictions on net types in Torres Strait that would allow traditional fishing for finfish, while discouraging fishing for larger fish such as sharks.

ACTION ITEM: CFG members to provide to the TSFMAC suggested dimensions, proportions, materials and gape size for nets used for traditional fishing for mullet and similar finfish.

9.5: Master Fisherman's Licences

This agenda item was not discussed at the meeting due to the early departure of Mr D'Aguiar.

Agenda Item 10: Dates for the next FFWG

A date for the next FFWG meeting was not discussed at the FFWG..