



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**



## **TORRES STRAIT FINFISH WORKING GROUP**

**MEETING 2010.1**

**CHAIRS SUMMARY**

31 MARCH 2010

PEARLS BUILDING, THURSDAY ISLAND

CHAIR: MR JOHN POLLOCK

Prepared by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority on behalf of the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority

## Major Outcomes

- 1) The FFWG recommended that the Draft Torres Strait Finfish Management Plan be endorsed by the PZJA and released for public comment whilst noting the possible conflicting effects resulting from the need to manage the fishery in the event of its overuse versus the impact this may have on the continued capacity of individual traditional fishers to access the commercial fishery.
- 2) The FFWG reconsidered the membership structure of the FFWG and recommended to the TSFMAC that:
  - a) The two non-Islander (TVH) positions on the FFWG be replaced by the following positions:
    - i) One member representing lessees; and
    - ii) One member with an interest in the fishery.
  - b) The QSIA membership on the FFWG be abolished.

### Agenda Item 2.1 CFG Consultation on Finfish Management Plan

The FFWG noted that three provisions included in the Finfish Management Plan outline being:

- Transfer of TIB (Traditional Inhabitant) licenses;
- Transfer of Units of Fishing Capacity; and
- Transfer of Annual Catch Entitlements;

were discussed by the Community Fisher Group on 24 February 2010 without resolution.

### Agenda Item 2.2 Amendment to Fisheries Management Notice No.78

The FFWG noted the amendments to Fisheries Management Notice No.78 including the following provisions:

1. The inclusion of new net size restrictions for traditional fishing of finfish with the maximum dimensions of 4 inch mesh, 2.5m drop and 100m total length;
2. The removal of live fishing restrictions; and
3. The introduction of the new maximum legal size limits for the leopard/square tail coral trout (*Plectropomus areolatus*) of 62cm.

### Agenda Item 3.1 Draft Management Plan content

The FFWG discussed the provisions included in each section of the draft Finfish Management Plan.

The FFWG suggested that TSRA investigate licensing and leasing arrangements that allowed lessees to hold a TPC-B or TPC-C licence so that TIB fishers could sell their product to them if they wished. This will be particularly useful in areas where there are no community freezers.

The FFWG recommended that the plan be endorsed by the PZJA and released for public comment whilst noting the possible conflicting effects resulting from the need to manage the fishery in the event of its overuse versus the impact this may have on the continued capacity of individual traditional fishers to access the commercial fishery.

The FFWG agreed on the management objectives and assessment strategies for inclusion in the Draft Finfish Management Plan.



**Agenda Item 4.1 2009 catch update**

The FFWG were provided with an update on the 2009 finfish catch noting that the data did not include catch from July-December 2009 for Mer Island.

	<b>Islander Catch (Kg)</b>	<b>Non-Islander Catch (Kg)</b>	<b>TOTAL (Kg)</b>
Coral Trout	4411	22816	27227
Barramundi Cod	216	428	644
Red Emperor	4	181	185
Mixed Reef*	1319	2487	3806
Spanish Mackerel	1661	68919	70581

\* Mixed reef include all other reef species not listed here.

The FFWG discussed the current trend in catch and it was noted that the decline in catch was due to a combination of factors including the reduction in the number of fishers in the fishery, the high cost of fishing, logistics of leasing and a drop in product price and not a reduction in stock levels.

**Agenda Item 5.1 Finfish Working Group membership**

The FFWG noted the resignations of Mr Carl D’Aguair (TVH Representative – Coral Trout) and Mr Shaun Hanson (TVH Representative – Spanish Mackerel).

The FFWG agreed to recommend to the TSFMAC that:

a) The two non-Islander (TVH) positions on the FFWG be replaced by the following positions:

- i) One member representing lessees; and
- ii) One member with an interest in the fishery.

b) The QSIA membership on the FFWG be abolished.

Signed:



**Mr John Pollock**  
**Invited Chair (FFWG 2010.1)**



The following members and observers were in attendance at the Torres Strait Finfish Working Group (FFWG) meeting:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representative Organisation</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest</b>
Mr John Pollock	Chairperson	Consultant
Dr Annabel Jones	AFMA	Manager, Thursday Island
Mr Malcolm Southwell	AFMA	Senior Manager, Northern Fisheries
Ms Samantha Emerick	AFMA	Senior Fisheries Officer
Mr Neville Nakata	TSRA	Fisheries Co-ordinator
Mr Steve Hall	TSRA	Fisheries Policy Officer
Dr Ian Jacobson	QPI&F	Senior Fisheries Management Officer
Mr Francis Pearson	CFG representative (Poruma)	TIB Licence holder
Mr Leslie Pitt	CFG representative (Erub)	TIB Licence holder
Mr Nathan Pearson	CFG representative (Warraber)	TIB Licence holder
Mr Gavin Mosby	CFG representative (Masig)	TIB Licence holder
Mr Dennis Passi	CFG representative (Mer)	TIB Licence holder

Observers:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mr Kenny Bedford	Fisheries Portfolio member (TSRA)

Apologies:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mr Shaun Hansen Mr Carl D'Auguiar	TVH Finfish Industry representatives
Mr Lyndon Peddell	Manager, QBFP
Mr William Stephen	CFG representative (Ugar)

