

TORRES STRAIT FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING NO. 6 4 July 2005

Torres Strait Regional Authority Boardroom, Thursday Island

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TSFMAC

Number	Agenda	Recommendation
1	<i>2.1 Tropical Rock Lobster</i>	<p>The TSFMAC NOTED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditional Inhabitants TSFMAC members supported Option 3 (full 'islanderisation') staged in over a three year period being 2006 – 60%:40%; 2007 – 70%:30%; and 2008 – 100% islander share; 2. Non-traditional inhabitant industry TSFMAC members did not support option 3 but did support an expansion of industrial capability by indigenous people. They also recognised that in order to prevent over-fishing, this shift could only be achieved by reduction of effort in the non-Islander sector. If this shift is to occur, the industry would support a voluntary buyout scheme as mentioned in the consultation paper. Industries preferred option is status quo (option 1). 3. The following points need to be considered for the option 3 (full islanderisation); <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Voluntary buy back compared to Compulsory buy back b) Timeframes for implementation c) Clarification of 'islanderisation' (TIB Licences) d) Expansion of east coast and Coral Sea fisheries below 14° (Princess Charlotte Bay)
2	<i>2.1 Finfish</i>	<p>The TSFMAC NOTED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditional Inhabitants TSFMAC members supported Option 3 (full 'islanderisation') staged in over a three year period being 2006 – 60%:40%; 2007 – 70%:30%; and 2008 – 100% islander share; 2. Industry TSFMAC members stated that option 3 was not their preferred option, but realise the need to exit fishery as soon as possible as viability will continue to decline due to islanders aspirations, resource allocation, uncertainty of fishery becoming an article 22 fishery, and small number of operators; and 3. Industry members expressed concerns at the late inclusion of Spanish mackerel in the paper.

3	3.1 QMS for the TRL fishery	The TSFMAC NOTED ; <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the need for the most up to date data and a pre season survey to be used in setting a TAC, taking into consideration the cost involved; and2. the reservations of the traditional inhabitants for a move to quota for the TIB sector due to allocation concerns.
----------	--	---

**TORRES STRAIT FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

MEETING NO. 6 4 July 2005

Torres Strait Regional Authority Boardroom, Thursday Island

MEETING AGENDA

- A) *OPENING COMMENTS*
- B) *APOLOGIES*
- C) *ADOPTION OF AGENDA*

- 1. **Confirmation of the record of the previous
TSFMAC 5 meeting (24 – 25 May 2005)**

FOR DECISION

- 2. **Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster and
Finfish Fishery**

FOR INFORMATION/DECISION

*2.1 Resource Allocation Options for the Torres
Strait TRL Fishery and Finfish Fishery (including
Reefline and Spanish mackerel)*

- 3. **Torres Strait Rock Lobster Fishery**

FOR INFORMATION/DECISION

*3.1 Introducing a Quota Management System as
a Long Term Management Option for the Torres
Strait TRL Fishery*

- 4. **Other Business**

- D) *NEXT MEETING*
-

TORRES STRAIT FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING NO. 6 4 July 2005

Torres Strait Regional Authority Boardroom, Thursday Island

DRAFT MINUTES of MEETING

THESE ARE **DRAFT** MINUTES WHICH HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO WORKING GROUP MEMBERS AND WILL BE RATIFIED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP. IF **NO** COMMENTS ARE RECEIVED BY **30 JULY 2005**, THIS WILL REMAIN A TRUE COPY OF MINUTES TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

DAY 1

Attendance

Russell Reichelt	(Chairperson)
Jim Prescott	(AFMA)
Trysh Stone	(AFMA)
Allen Parsons	(QDPI&F)
John Kung	(QDPI&F)
Ray Moore	(TRL Industry Representative)
Carl D'Aguiar	(Finfish Industry Representative)
Shaun Hansen	(Spanish mackerel Industry Representative)
Peter Yorkston	(TSRA Fisheries Co-ordinator - Supporting)
Don Mosby	(TSRA - Torres Fisheries Committee Representative)
Ken Bedford	(TSRA – Darnley Community Fisher Representative)
Railey Gibia	(TSRA – TRAWQ Community Fisher Representative)
Jerry Babia	(TSRA – Saibai Community Fisher Representative)
Dennis Gibuma	(TSRA – Boigu Community Fisher Representative)
Phillip Bigie	(TSRA – Dauan Community Fisher Representative)
Richard Newie	(TSRA – Kubin Community Fisher Representative)
Terrence Whap	(TSRA – Mabuiag Community Fisher Representative)
Kila Odo	(TSRA – Murray Community Fisher Representative)
Charles David	(TSRA – Yam Community Fisher Representative)
Willie Wigness	(TSRA – Kaurereg Community Fisher Representative)
Lota Warria	(TSRA – Yorke Community Fisher Representative)
Samuel Tamu	(TSRA – Warraber Community Fisher Representative)
Jack Billy	(TSRA – Coconut Community Fisher Representative)
Yen Loban	(TSRA – Muralag WMN Community Fisher Representative)
Graham Hirakawa	(TSRA – Port Kennedy Community Fisher Representative)
Seriako Dorante	(TSRA – Hammond Community Fisher Representative)
Harold Townson	(TSRA – Seisia Community Fisher Representative)
Mac Blarrey	(TSRA – Injinoo Community Fisher Representative)

Observers

John Marrington	(AFMA)
Sascha Taylor	(AFMA)
Mick George	(AFMA)
Matthew Stadler	(AFMA)
Britt Maxwell	(DAFF)
Inga Davis	(DAFF)
Lyndon Peddell	(QB&FP)

Bob Grimley (QB&FP)
Miya Isherwood (TSRA)
Judith Fitzpatrick (CRC Torres Strait Consultant)
Toshio Nakata (CRC Torres Strait)
Richard Bowie (Stakeholder – Buyer/ Processor Badu Island)
Frank Loban (JCU Postgraduate student)

OPENING

The independent Chair, Mr Russell Reichelt, opened the meeting at 1345hrs. This was followed by a traditional prayer by Mr Kila Odo and introduction around the forum.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted for the following persons -
Mark & Rosemary Millward

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted by the meeting.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the record of the previous TSFMAC Meeting No. 5 (24 – 25 May 2005)

The minutes of the TSFMAC No.5 meeting held in May 2005 were ratified and adopted by the TSFMAC as a true and accurate record of the meeting with amendments from Carl D'Aguiar. Trysh Stone provided papers to members as a follow up on action item from TSFMAC 5.

Agenda Item 2: Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster and Finfish Fishery

2.1 Resource Allocation Options for the Torres Strait TRL Fishery and Finfish Fishery (including Reefline and Spanish mackerel)

Britt Maxwell presented a specialist group paper, apologising on behalf of Daryl Quinlivan for not being available to present the paper.

Industry members commented that the *Total Allowable Catch* (TAC) should be set for the fishery as a whole and not just the area of the TSPZ. This should also include PNG's share in the fisheries.

Inga Davis presented to the TSFMAC about the consultation process. The TSFMAC was informed that 233 responses were received. The responses were being processed by BRS with more detail to be provided at stakeholder forum of 5/7/05. Preliminary results were presented for both fisheries, with full islanderisation currently the first preference for each fishery. The Chair noted that more analysis of the responses would provide more detail.

Industry representatives stated their disappointed that an industry representative was not a part of specialist group.

The TSFMAC's position on the specialist groups' paper was as follows:

TRL Options section comments

The TSFMAC were informed that the Queensland Rock Lobster Association (QRLA) had discussed this, and that individuals had also put in submissions. If the mechanism for the proposed options was by voluntary buy back of non-traditional inhabitant licences then the allocation is not the issue, but the amount available in the buy back process is the important factor. If the process is not a voluntary buy back then issues will arise. Therefore industry could not agree to reallocation if the mechanism isn't known.

AFMA Management commented that a voluntary system may not achieve full results, and as such a compulsory buy back scheme may be required. Industry stated that if a voluntary buy back system was used that approximately a third of non-traditional inhabitant licence holders had indicated that they would participate. AFMA management again stated that voluntary systems do not work where extreme readjustment is required.

TSRA representatives commented that to reach 100% islanderisation a structured process would be required. The Chair noted that the Government had not indicated that funding was available for readjustment. TSRA representatives stated that the aim of the CFG & TSRA Executive is for full islanderisation staged in until 2008 (2006 – 60%, 2007 – 70%, 2008 – 100%). The Chair asked if there was sufficient capacity in the traditional inhabitant sector to take up the catch over the time frame set out. The Chair noted that a fall in GVP and the flow on effects from a fall need to be considered as part of these discussions and considerations.

An industry representative raised the question on locals who are married to traditional inhabitants, and asked if the CFG and TSRA wanted these fishers to also exit the fishery. TSRA representatives noted that discussions by the CFG and TSRA had touched on allowances for locals but more discussion is needed to consider the issue.

Industry representatives commented that there would likely be a significant economic effect if the change was too rapid and the resource was not utilised (i.e. only 50% of catch is taken). Also, lower catches may force buyers to pay lower prices to maintain viability. Northern Australian lobster tails are considered to be one of most desirable in world market, but there is a need to be able to maintain steady supply to retain reputation.

All TSFMAC members agreed that a fully voluntary system would be the best option.

100% islander – possible allowances for locals with TVH licences. Ethical issue, appeal to consider. Full “TIB access” not islanderisation, but issue of “locals” associated.

TSFMAC members raised the need to consider all effects on stock levels, the economies of the communities, fishing effort required by islanders, infrastructure (freezers etc) required and what timeframes are suitable in the adjustment process.

AFMA Management noted that there would be difficulties in implementing access for TI residents only due to discrimination issues, and that this needs to be fully considered. AFMA management also stated the need to consider the impact of timeframes on sustainability (i.e., if TVH licences cut out of fishery in 3 years then those licences will be worked to extremes and beyond with no consideration of sustainability).

The TSFMAC was informed of the outcomes of the QRLA meeting a week or so ago, with approx 40% (~8 licences) prepared to accept buyback, but significant number (~16) expressed desire to remain in fishery (especially residents of Torres Strait). The QRLA stated that voluntary adjustment might work for the first year of a staged reduction but not for following years. No one at meeting supported full islanderisation as option, but all accepted that over time this may be the end result particularly if east coast/coral sea fishery available. The starting point for industry was the status quo as preferred option.

The TSFMAC agreed that the following points need to be considered for the option of full islanderisation;

1. Voluntary V Compulsory
2. Timeframes for implementation
3. Clarification of islanderisation with regard to non Torres Strait traditional inhabitants
4. Expansion of east coast and Coral Sea fisheries below 14° (Princess Charlotte Bay) as an experimental fishery as an option to remove TVH licences from Torres Strait fisheries. This was noted as an important lobster area that needs to be explored, while taking note of potential stock issues.

Recommendations:

The TSFMAC **NOTED** that;

- 1 Traditional Inhabitants TSFMAC members supported Option 3 (full 'islanderisation') staged in over a three year period being 2006 – 60%:40%; 2007 – 70%:30%; and 2008 – 100% islander share;
- 2 Non-traditional inhabitant industry TSFMAC members did not support option 3 but did support an expansion of industrial capability by indigenous people. They also recognised that in order to prevent over-fishing, this shift could only be achieved by reduction of effort in the non-Islander sector. If this shift is to occur, the industry would support a voluntary buyout scheme as mentioned in the consultation paper. Industries preferred option is status quo (Option 1).
- 3 the following points need to be considered for the option 3 (full islanderisation);
 - a) Voluntary buy back compared to Compulsory buy back
 - b) Timeframes for implementation
 - c) Clarification of 'islanderisation' (TIB Licences)
 - d) Expansion of east coast and Coral Sea fisheries below 14° (Princess Charlotte Bay

Finfish options comment

Industry representatives on the TSFMAC raised the– concern that Spanish mackerel was a late inclusion in the process and that it was difficult to get comment from industry members but that it was achieved.

TSRA representatives stated that the aim of the CFG and TSRA Executive was for full islanderisation staged in until 2008 (2006 – 60%, 2007 – 70%, 2008 – 100%) as for the TRL fishery, with financial support for structural adjustment.

Industry representatives asked if the TSRA, as a PZJA agency, would be funding part of buyback. AFMA management stated that there is a cost sharing agreement between the Commonwealth and Queensland governments, and the Ministers would need to make a decision on any funding arrangements.

Industry representatives commented that a capability or availability to lease quota following the proposed restructure was a concern. Representatives stated their view that there would be limited opportunity due to the small size of fishery for those who want to remain in the fishery. Industry also commented there was limited future for non-traditional inhabitants in the

fishery as traditional inhabitants had made it clear that industry was not wanted, and industry had accepted this, and as such would prefer to leave fishery completely now and re-establish in other fisheries. Industry would consider a structural package to exit fishery (~7 or 8 out of 9). The representatives noted that they were speaking for majority of operators in the fishery but not everyone.

Industry representatives also commented that it was difficult to resolve resource allocation issues without knowing the management outcomes or system that would be in place (ITQ/ITE). Industry representatives stated that normal management principles break down in such a small fishery, and if a viable option for non-indigenous fishers could not be found, then compulsory buy back would be supported.

CFG representatives commented that traditional inhabitants did not want to work freezer boats, and did not want the industry operators out of the fishery but out of the island fishing grounds. The CFG representatives felt that non-commercial fisherman argue was on the basis of commercial viability, but that the traditional inhabitant argument was on lifestyle and livelihood.

The Chair reminded TSFMAC members that the TSFMAC was asked to provide advice on the issue of resource allocation and not on financial issues (buy back).

A question was posed to QDPI&F representatives on the possibility for extra quota to be accessed on east coast/ Coral Sea for commercial operators. QDPI&F management advised the TSFMAC that operators can buy quota to enter fishery.

Summary:

1. Spanish mackerel was a late inclusion in the process
2. CFG – islanderisation over 3 year schedule with financial support for structural adjustment
3. Industry – not preferred option, but realise need to exit fishery as soon as possible due to islanders aspirations, PNG interaction and uncertainty of fishery becoming an article 22 fishery, and small number of operators mean that viability will continue to decline

Recommendations:

The TSFMAC **NOTED** that:

1. Traditional Inhabitants TSFMAC members supported Option 3 (full 'islanderisation') staged in over a three year period being 2006 – 60%:40%; 2007 – 70%:30%; and 2008 – 100% islander share;
2. Industry TSFMAC members stated that option 3 was not their preferred option, but realise the need to exit fishery as soon as possible as viability will continue to decline due to islanders aspirations, resource allocation, uncertainty of fishery becoming an article 22 fishery, and small number of operators; and
3. Industry members expressed concerns at the late inclusion of Spanish mackerel in the paper.

Agenda Item 3: Torres Strait Rock Lobster Fishery

3.1 Introducing a Quota Management System as a Long Term Management Option for the Torres Strait TRL Fishery

Jim Prescott discussed the two reports commissioned to develop options for a quota management system for the TRL fishery.

Industry representatives stated that there was a need to remove non islander effort and allow islanders to expand into that area through active fishing to help economic development.

The TSFMAC was informed that the QRLA was divided on quotas, with members having a diversity of views. The general view of QRLA members was that a TAC provides some certainty, as to how the TAC is set is the critical issue. More up to date data would need to be taken into account with the setting of a TAC (most up to date data and use of pre season survey). The cost also needs to be considered, as to whether this is cost effective.

TSRA representatives stated that many traditional inhabitants disagree with a move to a quota system. The CFG support a QMS that provides ecological sustainability and enhances economic development opportunities, with their preferred approach being implementation of a QMS for the TVH sector, but not for TIB until the same methods of fishing are used (hookah, GPS etc). This is due to fears from communities that a QMS will restrict fishing for islanders, and concerns about dividing quota allocation to the TIB sector between TIB licences. The need to consider the effort by each fisher in that allocation was also raised as an important issue. As such, and until the resource allocation issue is decided and the TIB sector matches the TVH sector for catch, communities will oppose QMS.

AFMA management commented that if the fishery as a whole was not managed under the QMS, then there would be opportunities for the TVH sector to avoid quota decrement.

Recommendations:

The TSFMAC **NOTED:**

3. the need for the most up to date data and a pre season survey to be used in setting a TAC, taking into consideration the cost involved; and
4. the reservations of the traditional inhabitants for a move to quota for the TIB sector due to allocation concerns.

Agenda Item 4: Other Business

Trysh Stone informed the TSFMAC that she was moving to international fisheries as Senior Manager, and thanked all members for their support during her time in the position of Senior Manager of Northern Fisheries. The Chair thanked Trysh on behalf of the TSFMAC for her time in the Torres Strait Fisheries. Peter Yorkston also thanked Trysh on behalf of TSRA.

Meeting closed at 6.10pm with prayer by Don Whap.

NEXT MEETING

TBA (prior to next PZJA meeting).