

**Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee, Meeting No. 2, 19 – 20
September 2006, Oasis Resort, 122 Lake Street, Cairns – Draft Record**

Attendance

The following members and observers were in attendance at the Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC) meeting:

Members

Mr Jim Gillespie (Chair)
Mr Lota Warria (CFG – Yorke Island)
Mr Ken Bedford (CFG – Darnley Island)
Mr Marcus Finn (TSRA)
Mr Barry Wilson (Industry)
Mr Mick George (AFMA)
Mr Denis Snowdon (AFMA)
Mr Clive Turnbull (QDPI&F)
Mr Shane Gaddes (QDPI&F)
Mr Augustine Mobiha (NFA)
Mr Barre Kare (NFA)
Mr Lester Baule (NFA)
Mr Phil Polon (NFA)
Mr Charles David (CFG – Yam Island) – Day two only
Mrs Rosemary Millward (Industry) – Day two only

Observers

Mr Stephen Colquitt (DAFF)
Mr Steven Auld (AFMA) – Day one only
Dr Gavin Begg (AFMA) – Day one only
Mr Tim Smith (AFMA) – Day two only
Ms Justine Johnston (AFMA) – Day two only

Opening

The chair opened the meeting at 900 hrs, welcoming all attendees.

Apologies

Ms Dorothea Huber (AFMA)
Mr Rob Giddins (Industry)
Mr Bob Robins (Industry)
Mr Mark Millward (Industry)
Mr Don Mosby (TSRA)
Mr Lyndon Peddell (QB&FP)
Mr Robert Ferguson (DEH)
Mr Charles David (CFG – Yam Island) – Day one only
Mrs Rosemary Millward (Industry) – Day one only

Adoption of meeting agenda

The agenda was adopted. Mr Colquitt advised that agenda item 3.2 had been split into two separate papers, which were then adopted as items 3.2 and 3.3. Mr George advised

that agenda item 7 would be presented on day one and that agenda item 6.3 would be presented on day two, as the presenters are only available on the respective days.

1. Ratification of record of previous TSPMAC meeting (June 2006)

Mr George spoke to this item and advised that the draft minutes of the previous meeting had been forwarded to attendees for comment on 4 July 2006. Comments received were incorporated into the finalised minutes.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted by the TSPMAC.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** the clarification of units from the June 2006 TSPMAC meeting.

2. Actions and/or business arising from the previous TSPMAC meeting

The TSPMAC noted the information provided regarding the action items from the TSPMAC meeting of June 2006.

Those action items from the TSPMAC meeting No. 1 that are incomplete or are ongoing are contained in Table two of the "Summary of Actions Arising" section of these minutes. Notes on the status of these items are provided in the "Status" column of Table two.

3.1 2007 Season arrangements – Management arrangements

Mr George spoke to this item. It is proposed that the 2006 management arrangements be rolled over for the 2007 season, while the Management Plan is being developed.

Mr Wilson advised that industry have no concerns with the 2006 management arrangements being rolled over for the 2007 season.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **agrees** that management arrangements for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery for 2006 be rolled over for the 2007 season, while the Management Plan for the fishery is being developed. Specific roll-over provisions, which will be resolved in the long term through the development of the management plan and the introduction of an effort-based unit system, include:

- (a) a total allowable effort cap of 9,200 days for the fishery;
- (b) allowing the trade in any quantity of whole days;
- (c) maintaining a minimum holding of 34 days during 2007; and
- (d) the boat replacement policy being suspended during 2007 in order to further assist the industry to restructure itself.

3.2 Outcomes of Papua New Guinea Bilateral Discussions

Mr Colquitt spoke to this item. Mr Colquitt advised that the bilateral discussions between Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) in regard to the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ) prawn fishery had resulted in the following outcomes:

- PNG was informed of the management arrangements in the Australian jurisdiction;
- PNG informed Australia that there had been no activity on either the Australian or the PNG side of the TSPZ prawn fishery by PNG vessels in the past three years;
- PNG agreed to fund further research in their area of jurisdiction, including two surveys of the prawn stocks present in PNG waters of TSPZ between Warrior Reef and Bramble Cay.

Members discussed a number of issues in relation to the bilateral discussions including the requirements to be placed on PNG boats fishing in the Australian jurisdiction, the use of TED's by PNG boats and additional survey work in the waters in the PNG jurisdiction.

Mr George advised that PNG vessels fishing in the Australian jurisdiction must comply with all Australian requirements for fishing in the TSPZ prawn fishery.

Mr Mobiha informed the TSPMAC that the PNG National Fisheries Authority (NFA) were looking at requiring PNG prawn fishers to use Turtle Exclusion Devices (TEDs) and that PNG prawn fishers that do not use TEDs would not be nominated to fish in Australian waters.

There was further discussion by members in regard to potential research survey work in the PNG jurisdiction. Mr Turnbull indicated that survey work in PNG waters could be conducted as an extension of the current survey in Australian waters that is conducted by QDPI&F. Mr Mobiha requested information on the costs of the surveys conducted by QDPI&F and indicated that this information would be used to determine if the NFA can provide further funding to increase the survey quality.

Mr Turnbull also queried whether there was a process for getting an Australian vessel approved to conduct survey work in PNG. Mr Mobiha indicated that a proposal should be put forward requesting a 3 – 6 month permit to survey in PNG waters. It was agreed by Mr Turnbull and Mr Mobiha that they would discuss the logistics of the extension of the QDPI&F, to incorporate survey work in PNG waters, out of session.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** the outcomes of the bilateral discussions with PNG in relation to the prawn fishery.

3.3 Outcomes of catch sharing and preferential entitlement discussions with Papua New Guinea

Mr Colquitt spoke to this item, discussing the outcomes of the 23 August 2006 bilateral discussions with PNG. Mr Colquitt informed the TSPMAC that Australian industry representatives had indicated to DAFF that they would prefer to have two representatives nominated as observers for the Australia / PNG bilateral fisheries working group. The TSPMAC agreed to this request and Mr Barry Wilson and Mrs Rosemary Millward were nominated and accepted as the Australian industry representatives.

The TSPMAC discussed a number of different options for the distribution of fishing nights to Australian fishers wishing to operate in PNG waters and for PNG fishers

wishing to operate in Australian waters. The following options for each scenario were discussed and accepted by the TSPMAC as its preferred position:

- Access to PNG's 25% share in Australian waters
 - PNG fishers would be required to nominate a number of days that they wish to fish in Australian waters by a set date.
 - Following this date, Australian fishers could nominate to gain access to any share that is unused by PNG fishers. This would be done by Australian fishers submitting an expression of interest to the relevant Australian Government agency and then the unused days could be distributed to interested parties on a pro rata basis.
- Access to Australia's 25% share in PNG waters
 - A reasonable number of boats (5 - 7) would be endorsed to fish in PNG waters each season.
 - These boats would be allocated between 20 and 40 days access to PNG waters each season.
 - Australian fishers interested in fishing Australia's 25% share in PNG waters would nominate to gain access. This would be done by Australian fishers submitting an expression of interest to the relevant Australian Government agency and then the days could be distributed to interested parties on a pro rata basis.

Mr Gaddes asked if DAFF could consider if the remaining 263 days held by the Australian Government could be redistributed to industry via an increase in the Total Allowable Effort. Mr Colquitt advised that it might be possible for industry to get access to the remaining 263 days on a lease arrangement. Mr Wilson advised that industry would be happy to leave the 263 days dormant and suggested that they could be used for research purposes.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** the outcomes of the catch sharing and preferential entitlement discussions with PNG.

4. TSPMAC membership and permanent observers

Mr Gaddes spoke to this item, and advised that there is an application process, whereby interested industry members can apply for inclusion as a TSPMAC member. This process involves the applicant completing an application form detailing their qualifications, which is then assessed by a three person panel, consisting of two Government officials and an independent fisher. After consideration of the application the panel then makes their recommendation.

The TSPMAC noted the process being undertaken.

The members also discussed the approval of a DAFF officer as a permanent observer to the TSPMAC. It was agreed that as DAFF are currently involved with Torres Strait Prawn issues, the foremost being bilateral discussions with PNG in regard to catch sharing and preferential entitlement, a DAFF officer should be approved as a permanent observer to the TSPMAC.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **approve** permanent observer status of a DAFF officer.

5. Management plan

Mr George spoke to this item, discussing progress that has been made in respect to the development of the Management Plan.

The members discussed a number of sections of the Management Plan that required TSPMAC decision. The outcomes relevant to each section of the Management Plan discussed are detailed below.

- Sections 5, 6 and 7: No comments were made in regard to these sections; however the chair invited members to contact him directly if they had any questions or concerns in regard to these sections.
- Section 11: The minimum holding was discussed. Mr Wilson advised that industry only want the 34 days minimum holding for the 2007 season and that industry want the minimum holding to be reconsidered under the management plan. The TSPMAC endorsed the minimum holding of 34 days.
- Section 16: There were concerns raised about the process of amending the Management Plan versus making amendments to Fisheries Management Notices (FMN's). Mr George advised that the process would be very similar to making amendments to FMN's. Mr Finn queried whether short form amendments could be used as the process for amending the Management Plan. AFMA agreed to investigate this option further.

The TSPMAC agreed that relevant FMN's be incorporated into the Management Plan.

ACTION: AFMA to investigate the potential use of short form amendments as the process for amending the Management Plan.

- Section 18: The option of five year licenses instead of one year licenses was discussed. Mr Gaddes and Mr Wilson suggested that there was no advantage in issuing five year licenses as opposed to one year licenses, as license levies are determined and paid annually. The TSPMAC agreed that one year licenses should be issued.
- Section 20: The TSPMAC agreed that FMN's for by-products should be incorporated as a 3rd schedule to the Management Plan and be referred to in section 20. Mr Wilson queried whether the FMN's include coral prawns and asked that coral prawns be added to the by-products species list.
- Section 27: The TSPMAC discussed the setting of reference points and how they should be determined. Mr Gaddes proposed that the TSSAC should provide the biological reference points for the fishery to the TSPMAC and then following approval by the TSPMAC, these biological reference points should then be approved by the PZJA. Mr Turnbull discussed the setting of biological reference points and is to provide wording for his proposal in regard to the setting of biological reference points for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF) to the TSPMAC.

Following the discussion the TSPMAC recommended that the TSSAC further develops harvest strategy reference points for the TSPF.

ACTION: Mr Turnbull to provide words on setting reference points to go into the draft management plan.

- Section 28: The determination of the Total Allowable Effort (TAE) on an annual basis as opposed to a two yearly basis was discussed. Mr Turnbull advised that from a scientific point of view there is currently no benefit in determining the TAE on an annual basis as the current effort in the fishery is below the current TAE. Mr Gaddes advised that there would be an increase in costs if the TAE was to be set annually. The chair proposed that the wording of Part 3, Section 28(1) of the Management Plan be changed to “At least every second year the PZJA will determine the total allowable effort for the upcoming fishing years.” This wording will then account for situations where catch rates are close to the maximum sustainable yield and indicators show that the catch rates for the following season may be similar. This will allow the determination of the TAE on an annual basis if the need arises. The TSPMAC approved the change in wording.

ACTION: Part 3, Section 28(1) of the Management Plan to be amended to the wording approved by the TSPMAC.

- Section 29: The amendment of TAE was added to the Management Plan to account for emergency situations such as disease outbreaks in the fishery. The TSPMAC agreed that this section should be included in the Management Plan. There was discussion as to whether two months would be a long enough period to enable the fishery to recover from an emergency situation and if this period could be extended in the event that the fishery had not recovered, as per Section 29(6). It was decided that AFMA was to discuss with the OLDP the wording of Section 29, to ensure that the period of TAE amendment can be longer than two months in the event of an emergency situation that requires a longer period of amendment.

ACTION: AFMA to discuss with the OLDP the wording of Section 29(6), to ensure that the period of TAE amendment can be longer than two months in the event of an emergency situation that requires a longer period of amendment.

- Section 31: Mr George gave an explanation of the value of units under the Management Plan. The value of each unit is equal to the TAE for the year divided by the total number of units for the fishery (9200). The industry members advised that they believe that one effort unit should initially equal one allocated fishing day.
- Section 32: The consultation process for amendments to the Management Plan was discussed. The TSPMAC agreed that when major changes are to be made to the Management Plan, such as those that require a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS), consultation will be required.
- PNG Access / Trust Units: Mr George advised the TSPMAC that it will be difficult to incorporate details of PNG access into the Management Plan until Preferential Entitlement for PNG has been determined. The TSPMAC was also advised that if

leasing within the fishery is not allowed, then a separate section for PNG access will need to be included in the Management Plan.

The members discussed leasing within the fishery. Members had conflicting information as to whether fishers were in favour of leasing within the fishery. Mr Wilson advised that the industry members he represents would be in favour of leasing in the fishery, provided that units could only be leased to other licensee's within the fishery.

It was decided that a paper and/or a newsletter be prepared discussing leasing within the TSPF and requesting feedback from industry in regard to leasing. This document would be sent to all current license holders in the TSPF. This will provide a clearer way forward and enable the TSPMAC to determine if leasing arrangements should be implemented in the TSPF.

ACTION: A discussion paper/newsletter on leasing to be prepared for distribution to all licensee's within the TSPF. AFMA and QDPI&F to complete.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **agrees** that the draft Management Plan be provided to the Office of Legislative Drafting (OLD) as drafting instructions in order to produce a draft Management Plan that can be used for wider consultation and provide the basis of a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS).

6.1 Outcomes of the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) meeting

Mr Turnbull spoke to this item and advised that at the most recent meeting of the TSSAC, it had agreed to play a role in the prawn fishery, in place of a RAG and that the TSSAC had just completed a strategic fisheries plan whilst the SAC was an advisory body for the TS CRC. Mr Turnbull added that there is a need to start developing a research plan for the AFMA fisheries funding over the next few years, but the SAC is currently in limbo. Mr Turnbull provided a list of the members and observers in the SAC off the top of his head. The SAC included the following members and observers:

TSSAC Members

Mr Bruce Wallner (Chair)
Mr Mick George (AFMA)
Mr Shane Gaddes (QDPI&F)
Mr Marcus Finn (TSRA)
Mr Clive Turnbull (Secretary)
Ms Helene Marsh (PET)
Mr Rob Coles (Environmental scientist)
Mr Bill Arthur (Socio-economic scientist)

TSSAC Observers

Mr Richard Bowie (Island community)
Mr Don Mosby (Island community)
Mrs Rosemary Millward (Prawn industry)

Mr Turnbull agreed to provide a list of all current TSSAC members and observers.

ACTION: Mr Turnbull to provide a list of all current TSSAC members and observers to the TSPMAC.

The TSPMAC noted that the TSSAC seems short of stock assessors. The TSPMAC agreed that it would support the addition of stock assessors to the TSSAC and/or a smaller group of the TSSAC calling in observers from specialized fields as required.

Mr George advised that the TSSAC would need to revise its Terms of Reference to incorporate its role in providing advice on a range of issues on the TSPF.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA:

- **Notes** the outcomes of the TSSAC meeting held 7 – 8 August 2006; and
- **Requests** that the TSSAC incorporate into its Terms of Reference, its role on providing advice on a range of issues for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery, including stock assessment advice.

6.2 Update on the development of research projects associated with Australian Government funding

Mr Colquitt spoke to this item and provided details of the research priorities for the TSPF. Mr Colquitt then presented a slide show detailing the outcomes of industry consultation in regard to the proposed spatial trawl survey project in the TSPF. Mr Colquitt presented six options for conducting research under this proposed project. The options presented to the TSPMAC were as follows:

- 1) Industry members conduct research using existing nights on licenses.
- 2) Industry members conduct research using nights leased from no-boat licenses.
- 3) Industry members conduct research using nights provided by the Australian Government that are left over from the nights held to fulfill PNG catch-sharing obligations under the Torres Strait Treaty.
- 4) Industry members conduct research using scientific research permits issued by the PZJA.
- 5) DAFF contracts trawler/trawlers to conduct research using scientific research permits. Industry would not participate in collecting research data.
- 6) A hybrid model where industry members participate using any of the first 4 options and a contracted trawler is used to fill in the gaps during problematic periods.

Mr Colquitt informed the group that DAFF's preferred option is the hybrid model (option 6) and that industry had expressed initial concerns regarding involvement in collecting scientific data for the trawl survey project. The concerns that industry expressed included:

- a) The treatment of fishing nights/days on existing licenses.
- b) The training of crew and crew's ability to conduct the required research; and

c) The financial incentives available to operators participating in the programme.

The TSPMAC was also advised that industry may not be willing to fish for research purposes at the start of the season.

Mr Colquitt advised the TSPMAC that he could provide a more detailed report of the industry consultation out of session.

ACTION: Mr Colquitt to provide a detailed report of industry consultation meeting, in regard to the proposed spatial trawl survey project in the TSPF, to TSPMAC members out of session.

There was discussion in regard to the establishment of a steering committee to oversee the research priorities. It was queried whether this steering committee would perform the same function as the TSSAC. Mr Colquitt advised that the formation of the steering committee would allow the committee some elasticity, to enable it to bring in consultants quickly, as is required by the committee. It was proposed that a member of the TSRA should be included in the steering committee. Mr Colquitt advised that DAFF would welcome participation in the steering committee by the TSRA.

The TSPMAC noted the information provided in the update provided by Mr Colquitt on the progress of the research plan development for the additional research funding provided by the Australian Government in the 2006 budget.

The TSPMAC noted the recommendations from the 9 August 2006 Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Research Group meeting, including:

- a) the overarching research objectives for the research program;
- b) the objectives for the spatial distribution trawl survey project;
- c) the objectives for the endeavour prawn stock assessment project; and
- d) the objectives for the project extending the stock surveys into PNG waters.

The TSPMAC noted that a meeting between representatives from the TSPEHA, QDPI&F and DAFF has been undertaken and identified what level of involvement industry members will have in the collection of data in the research programme.

The TSPMAC noted the proposed next steps for the development of the research project.

The TSPMAC noted that other involvement relevant to the involvement of PNG in this research programme is considered in the agenda item entitled "outcomes of Papua New Guinea Bilateral Discussions" (Agenda item 3.2).

The TSPMAC recommended that a seven person Steering Committee be established to evaluate procurement processes and to oversee the delivery of the research projects for the duration of the research programme.

The TSPMAC recommended that the Steering Committee comprise 1 representative from DAFF (Chair), 1 representative from BRS, 1 representative from AFMA, 1 representative from the QDPI&F Fisheries Resource Management Branch, 1 representative from the TSRA and 2 industry representatives.

The TSPMAC recommended that a Technical Advisory Group be established consisting of representatives (selected as necessary) from Industry, QDPI&F, CSIRO, AFMA, BRS, DAFF and TSRA, that will advise the Steering Committee on technical issues when requested.

6.3 Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery

Mr Smith spoke to this item and presented the findings of the level one assessment of the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA). There was a brief discussion on the level one assessment by members and it was agreed that the findings did not present any surprises.

Issues that were discussed in regard to the level one assessment were gear loss and recreational fishing on trawl vessels. Mr David advised that trawl nets, that may cause “ghost” fishing, are found on reefs. Mr Smith advised that the gear loss item under *Direct impact without capture* of “Scoping Document S4 Hazard identification Scoring Sheet” would be updated to reflect this.

The TSPMAC was advised that recreational fishing is allowed on vessels and it was agreed that the 2007 Prawn Handbook should be updated to inform operators that recreational fishing is permitted.

ACTION: AFMA to advise in the 2007 handbook that recreational fishing is allowed on vessels. AFMA is also to advise/clarify this with compliance officers.

Mr Smith advised that he or Mr George would distribute an abridged ERA report and level one results to the TSPMAC members. Mr Smith invited members to review the list of by-product species and forward any comments they have in regard to by-product species and any other section of the abridged report and level one results to him.

ACTION: Mr Smith and Mr George to forward the abridged ERA report and level one results to TSPMAC members.

The chair on behalf of the TSPMAC thanked Mr Turnbull for his work on the ERA.

6.4 Trends in catch and effort data

Mr Turnbull spoke to this item and advised that the preliminary trends in the catch and effort data indicate that 2006 will be the best season on record for tiger prawn catch rates, indicating a high tiger prawn stock biomass. Mr Turnbull also advised that the endeavour prawn catch rates are also higher than for recent years.

There was a discussion in regard to the higher catch rates and the factors that may have led to the higher catch rates in the 2006 season. Factors discussed included less vessels in the fishery; and a query from Mr Gaddes as to whether the increased yield from the fishery was due to fishers no longer targeting small prawns early in the season, leading to increased catch rates of larger prawns later in the season. Mr Turnbull agreed to check logbooks for grading information; however Mr Wilson advised that the scenario raised by Mr Gaddes probably wasn't occurring.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** the preliminary analysis of the trends in catch and effort for the 2006 season that indicate an above average stock biomass for tiger and to a lesser extent endeavour prawn during the 2006 season.

7.1 Observer program – 2005 Trip report

Mr Auld spoke to this item and requested members to provide comments on the 2005 report.

No members provided comment at the TSPMAC meeting in regard to the 2005 report.

Dr Begg invited the TSPMAC to provide input into the data requirements for the fishery to allow the observer program to focus its efforts in the TSPF based on the requirements of the TSPMAC. Members agreed to review the 2005 and 2006 (once released) reports to help determine the focus areas for the observer program.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** the 2005 trip report for the observer program in the fishery.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **requests** that trip reports from 2006 trips for the program are released as soon as possible to allow the TSPMAC time to review the objectives of the program prior to the commencement of the 2007 season.

7.2 Observer program – 2006 Program update

Mr Auld spoke to this item and presented a slideshow detailing the preliminary results of the 2006 observer program in the TSPF. Up until 15 September, 152 sea days and 261 shots had been observed on vessels in the TSPF by the observer program. The bycatch data for April, May and June showed that the composition of bycatch was 55% of the catch. The top ten species of bycatch by number observed were:

1. Crabs (12,059)
2. Coral prawn (10,083)
3. Pink velvet prawn (6,110)
4. Scallops (2,880)
5. Cardinalfish (2,250)
6. Brushtooth Lizardfish (1,501)
7. Threadfin bream (1,164)
8. Flathead (1,149)
9. Green striped coral bream (918)
10. Leatherjackets (666)

Mr Auld advised that 122 Tropical Rock Lobsters had been observed in the April to June period.

There was a general discussion in regard to the observer program. Mr Auld provided the following general information in regard to the program:

- There are currently 20 – 25 observers in the program that are used throughout Australia;

- The program is not limited by the number of observers it can use, however it is limited by vessels, as suitable vessels are often difficult to find.
- Observers are funded 80% by levy costs and 20% by the Australian Government.
- Approximately half of the observers are educated in marine science and have a degree from a University or the Australian Maritime College. The other observers in the program are ex-industry people.

The TSPMAC noted the activity of the observer program in the fishery for 2006 to date.

8. Turtle Exclusion Device (TED) floatation requirements

Mr George spoke to this item. He advised the TSPMAC that he had been advised by the United States (US) that the proposed amendment to the TED Fisheries Management Notice (section 4.1(d) of the notice attached to agenda item 8) would enable fishers to meet the export requirements of the US. The floatation is required for bottom shooter TED's to maintain neutral buoyancy of the TED, which keeps the TED upright whilst trawling.

There was a brief discussion in regard to the amendment and members agreed that the amendment should be made. Mr Wilson indicated that industry may request the floatation requirement to be removed from the Fisheries Management Notice if industry found it to be unworkable.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **agree** to adopt the Fisheries Management Notice to modify the specifications for Turtle Exclusion Devices (TEDs) in the fishery to comply with the United States requirements for export approval.

9.1 2005/06 Budget acquittal

Mr George spoke to this item and advised that acquittal of AFMA's component of the 2005/06 budget for the fishery has resulted in a surplus of \$52,805 and that the industry component of this surplus is \$32,980. The industry component of the surplus will be deducted from the 2006/07 budget during the levy calculation process.

Mr Gaddes advised that the QDPI&F will be reviewing how the QDPI&F component of the levies for the prawn fishery is calculated.

Mrs Millward commented that the 2006/07 budget came to the TSPMAC as a fait accompli and that industry want further consultation in regard to the budget process.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** the expenditure against the 2005/06 budget for the fishery.

9.2 Process for 2007 levies

Mr George spoke to this item and advised that the levies for the 2007 season would be calculated using the formula for the 2006 season for fixed and variable components.

Mr Wilson advised that industry feel that it is inadequate that they pay 100% of management costs when only fishing 75% of the Total Allowable Effort for 90% of the area under Australian jurisdiction.

The TSPMAC agreed that the levies for 2007 be calculated using the formula for the 2006 season.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **agrees** that the levy for the fishery in 2007 continues to be calculated using the current formula for fixed and variable components.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** that options are being considered for calculation of levies under a unit based system for 2008 and beyond.

10.1 Compliance update

Mr Gaddes spoke to this item and advised that there had been no breaches or issues arising from inspections in the TSPF.

The chair noted that it is good to see the increased level of enforcement in the TSPF.

The TSPMAC noted the verbal update of recent compliance operations.

10.2 Compliance risk assessment

Mr Gaddes spoke to this item and advised that it makes more sense to do the Compliance Risk Assessment (CRA) as a holistic approach for the three major fisheries (Prawn, Tropical Rock Lobster and Finfish) in the Torres Strait once the Management Plans for these fisheries have been finalized.

The TSPMAC agreed to the holistic approach for the CRA.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **agrees** to reschedule the completion of the compliance risk assessment for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery until after the introduction of new management arrangements for the Prawn, Tropical Rock Lobster and Finfish fisheries under fishery specific management plans.

11. Dates for future TSPMAC meetings

Mr George advised that the TSPMAC should aim to have a finalized draft of the Management Plan ready for approval at the July 2007 meeting of the PZJA. As the draft Management Plan must be forwarded to the OLDP for drafting, Mr George felt that it be wise to get an estimate of time frames for the completion of drafting from the OLDP, so that the TSPMAC may discuss the OLDP draft of the management plan.

Industry advised that the next meeting of the TSPMAC should be held prior to the start of the 2007 season.

The TSPMAC agreed to hold the next meeting in mid February 2007 and that Mr George was to get an estimated timeframe for completion of the OLDP draft of the management plan. Mr George will then provide a more definitive date for the next meeting of the TSPMAC.

ACTION: Mr George to get an estimated timeframe for completion of the OLDP draft of the management plan and then provide a more definitive date for the next meeting of the TSPMAC.

12.1 Opportunity to visit the South Australian Spencer Gulf prawn trawl fishery

Mr Colquitt spoke to this item and advised that the South Australian Director of Fisheries had extended an invitation to members of the TSPMAC and TSPF industry representatives to observe pre-season trawl surveys in the Spencer Gulf Prawn Fishery, to increase awareness of the spatial management systems used in the South Australia prawn fishery.

Mr Colquitt advised that the pre-season trawl surveys are due to occur over 21 and 22 November 2006 during the first dark moon period.

The TSPMAC discussed the invitation and the consensus was that it was a good opportunity and that two industry representatives should attend.

Mr George advised that AFMA may be able to help fund the trip. Mr Colquitt advised that he will co-ordinate the trip and provide details of costings and funding available.

ACTION: Mr Colquitt to co-ordinate trip to Spencer Gulf and provide details of costings and funding available.

Mrs Millward advised the TSPMAC that it should think about what it wants to achieve out of the trip and determine focus for the delegates attending prior to the trip.

The TSPMAC agreed that the delegates that attend will need to prepare a paper for the next TSPMAC meeting.

Mr Colquitt advised that there was a limit on the number of delegates (4) on the vessels that undertake the pre-trawl surveys, but could not see an issue with other delegates observing land based administration of the system, as was suggested by Mrs Millward. Mr Colquitt agreed to investigate this further.

ACTION: Mr Colquitt to investigate whether greater than 4 delegates may attend, and whether additional delegates could observe the land based administration of the spatial management systems in place.

The TSPMAC noted that the South Australian Director of Fisheries has extended an invitation to:

- a) observe pre-season trawl surveys being conducted in the Spencer Gulf Prawn fishery; and
- b) observe a subsequent meeting between South Australian fisheries management staff and industry members that will analyse the results of the trawl surveys and develop a fishery harvest strategy for the fishery in the 2007 season.

The TSPMAC recommended that the TSPEHA should consider the invitation to observe these processes and nominate two industry representatives who would attend the visit on behalf of the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.

12.2 Bycatch reduction workshop

Mr George spoke to this item and presented a slideshow produced by CSIRO in regard to Bycatch Reduction Workshops that are proposed for late November 2006 and March 2007. The anticipated outcomes and outputs of the workshops detailed in the slideshow were:

- Broaden knowledge of options to improve BRD performance
- Improved bycatch reduction in tropical prawn fisheries
- Industry handbook describing workshop presentations, results and recommendations
- Media release(s)

Mr George advised that AFMA will try to identify funding, where possible, to encourage Torres Strait prawn fishers to attend.

Mr Mobiha indicated that PNG representatives would be interested in attending the workshops.

The TSPMAC discussed the workshops and agreed that they are a good opportunity for scientists and fishers to discuss developments in BRD's. It was suggested that information on BRD's obtained by the observer program could be fed into these workshops.

It was also suggested that the TSPMAC may wish to amend BRD requirements to include other devices that are presented at the workshops. It was agreed, that if any new effective devices were identified through the workshops, that these devices be proposed for addition to the BRD requirements at the following TSPMAC meeting.

Mrs Millward requested a copy of the slideshow presented by Mr George. Mr George agreed to email a copy of the slideshow out of session.

ACTION: Mr George to email a copy of the Bycatch Reduction Workshop PowerPoint presentation to Mrs Millward out of session.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **requests** that the Australian Maritime College, CSIRO Marine & Atmospheric Research (Cleveland) and AFMA invite and encourage Torres Strait prawn fishers to attend the industry workshop to evaluate the potential of a range of new, innovative options to reduce bycatch scheduled for late November 2006.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **requests** agencies to identify funding opportunities to encourage attendance at the workshop by TSP industry.

12.3 Process for bringing matters before the PZJA

Mr Colquitt spoke to this item.

Mrs Millward strongly opposed this item as it excludes industry's right to lobby relevant members of parliament if it feels that an issue has not been dealt with in a fair or transparent manner. Mrs Millward advised that industry agree with the paper in principle;

however industry reserves the right to lobby Ministers if it feels that issues are not dealt with in a fair or transparent manner.

The paper was further discussed by the TSPMAC and it was acknowledged that the TSPMAC is not the appropriate group to make mass political decisions and that if an issue of political nature (as opposed to an issue of an operational or management nature) was tabled at a TSPMAC meeting, it is likely that the TSPMAC would request the organization that tabled the item to take it up with the relevant minister. The TSPMAC agreed that where possible issues in relation to the TSPF should be handled by the TSPMAC and acknowledged and supports formal consultation processes.

The TSPMAC noted the recommendation of the paper prepared for agenda item 12.3 and acknowledges the formal consultation process and agree in principle to the structure and process, but this should not exclude stakeholders pursuing other processes as necessary.

12.4 Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984 – Legislative amendments

Mr Colquitt spoke to this item and tabled the proposed bill for legislative amendment. Mr Colquitt also presented details of the consultation process that DAFF is undertaking, to enable stakeholders to provide feedback in regard to the proposed amendments.

Mrs Millward expressed concern that the wording of part (a) of the Background section of agenda item 12.4 indicated that the fishery may be moving to output controls.

Mr Colquitt advised that the legislative amendments were being made to allow both input and output controls as is required by the fishery. It was agreed that the wording of part (a) of the Background section of agenda item 12.4 should read as follows:

(a) ensure that Torres Strait fisheries can be managed sustainably under appropriate management controls, allowing for output controls as appropriate.

Mrs Millward queried whether the legislative amendments to Commonwealth legislation may make it inconsistent with relevant Queensland legislation. Mr Gaddes agreed to check whether the relevant Queensland legislation will require amendment to maintain consistency with Commonwealth legislation.

ACTION: Mr Gaddes to check whether the relevant Queensland legislation will require amendment to maintain consistency with proposed amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** that the TSPMAC has considered materials prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the Department) to facilitate consultation on proposed amendments to the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

The TSPMAC recommended that the PZJA **notes** that the Department has commenced consultation with Torres Strait prawn fishers on proposed amendments and has informed the TSPMAC on consultation mechanisms and proposed timetable.

Other business not listed as an agenda item

Ten day moon closures around Burke Island

Mr Warria queried whether there had been any progress by AFMA in regard to 10 day moon closures around Burke Island.

The TSPMAC was advised that the proposed closures are not currently on AFMA's agenda.

The TSPMAC noted that many islanders feel that the proposed closure around Burke Island is inappropriate and advised that islanders will be consulted in an open manner when the proposed closure is back on the AFMA agenda.

Vessel Monitoring System

Industry advised that vessels were losing fishing days during transit rest periods and queried whether the rule for the East Coast Prawn Fishery can be applied in the TSPF. Mr Gaddes agreed to explore whether this can be done and advise industry out of session.

ACTION: Mr Gaddes to explore whether the rule for the East Coast Prawn Fishery in regard to vessels losing fishing days during transit rest periods can be applied to the TSPF.

Summary of Actions Arising

Table 1: Summary of Actions Arising from TSPMAC meeting of 19 – 20 September, 2006

	Action	Responsibility
1	Investigate the potential use of short form amendments as the process for amending the Management Plan	Mick George
2	Mr Turnbull to provide words on setting reference points to go into the draft management plan.	Clive Turnbull
3	Part 3, Section 28(1) of the Management Plan to be amended to the wording approved by the TSPMAC.	Mick George
4	AFMA to discuss with the OLDP the wording of Section 29(6), to ensure that the period of TAE amendment can be longer than two months in the event of an emergency situation that requires a longer period of amendment.	Mick George
5	A discussion paper/newsletter on leasing is to be prepared for distribution to all licensee's within the TSPF.	AFMA and QDPI&F
6	A list of all current TSSAC members and observers to be provided to the TSPMAC.	Clive Turnbull
7	A detailed report of the industry consultation meeting, in regard to the proposed spatial trawl survey project in the TSPF, is to be provided to TSPMAC members out of session.	Stephen Colquitt
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AFMA to advise in the 2007 handbook that recreational fishing is allowed on vessels.• AFMA is to advise/clarify this with compliance officers.	AFMA
9	AFMA to forward the abridged ERA report and level one results to	Tim Smith /

	TSPMAC members.	Mick George
10	AFMA to get an estimated timeframe for completion of the OLDP draft of the management plan and then provide a more definitive date for the next meeting of the TSPMAC.	Mick George
11	DAFF to co-ordinate trip to Spencer Gulf and provide details of costings and funding available.	Stephen Colquitt
12	DAFF to investigate whether greater than 4 delegates may attend the Spencer Gulf visit, and whether additional delegates could observe the land based administration of the spatial management systems in place.	Stephen Colquitt
13	AFMA to email a copy of the Bycatch Reduction Workshop PowerPoint presentation, presented as part of agenda item 12.2, to Mrs Millward out of session.	Mick George
14	QDPI&F to check whether the relevant Queensland legislation will require amendment to maintain consistency with proposed amendments to the <i>Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984</i> .	Shane Gaddes
15	QDPI&F to explore whether the rule for the East Coast Prawn Fishery in regard to vessels losing fishing days during transit rest periods can be applied to the TSPF.	Shane Gaddes

Table 2: Summary of ongoing and incomplete actions carried forward from previous minutes

	Action	Status	Responsibility
1	Draft a summary of the historic management arrangements in the Torres Prawn fishery	Ongoing. Commenced by DAFF but not yet completed.	QDPI&F / AFMA / DAFF
2	Undertake an audit of Fishery Management Notices and PZJA decisions for consideration during the drafting of the Management Plan.	Ongoing. Commenced by DAFF but not yet completed.	DAFF / AFMA
3	That the working group formed to progress the management plan models certain scenarios for the rounding up or down of days and reports back to the MAC.	Ongoing. Commenced, but awaiting finalization of draft plan.	Shane Gaddes & Working Group
4	That the implementation of a spatial management system be considered at the next MAC meeting. Consideration will be given to the revised stock assessment with a view to increasing the Total Allowable Effort in the fishery.	Revised stock assessment not yet completed. Mr Turnbull advised that it is due for completion in November 2006.	MAC
5	Quarterly updates on the progress of the research plan are provided to the MAC.	Ongoing.	Stephen Colquitt
6	Noting that the future role of the	Ongoing. The chair advised that	Chair

	SAC is currently under review, the MAC will take on the role of a RAG. The MAC will decide whether to use a sub-group of the MAC for this purpose on a case by case basis.	the members have not yet been determined.	
7	Investigate the boats that observers use each year to determine if a representative sample of the fleet is achieved or if the same boats are being used each year	To be provided as part of agenda item 7.2 of TSPMAC meeting No.2.	Mick George
8	Send selection criteria for observer positions to Charles David	Mr George advised that he had forwarded criteria to Toshi Nakata, who was to then forward it to Mr David. Mr George to confirm with Mr David whether he received the criteria.	Mick George
9	a) Draft a code of practice for handling sharks for inclusion in the next Handbook. b) Reconsider the NPOA for sharks after the ecological risk assessment has been completed.	Not yet completed. Due for completion during the development of 2007 Prawn Handbook, which will be started in the next few months.	Shane Gaddes MAC
10	a) AFMA and DPI&F to liaise and jointly provide future budget information for comment prior to the budget being finalized. b) DPI&F managers to discuss budget issues with Industry members	Ongoing. Pending. Will precede next budget process.	AFMA / DPI&F Shane Gaddes, Dan Currey, Jim Gillespie
11	Send a notice to Torres Strait Prawn Entitlement Holders about ensuring crew members have a way home from Torres Strait when leaving vessels.	Status unknown. Mr Wilson advised that situations where crew members do not have a way home from Torres Strait are not regular occurrences.	Mark Millward