

**TORRES STRAIT PRAWN WORKING GROUP MEETING**

**23 OCTOBER 2003**

**CAIRNS RSL**

**Draft Minutes**

*23 OCTOBER 2003*

**PRAWN WORKING GROUP MEETING**

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## **PRAWN WORKING GROUP MEETING**

### **Attendance**

The Following people attended the meeting (others who's names do no appear may have attended parts of the meeting)

David Die	Uni of Miami	Trysh Stone	AFMA
Barry Wilson	TSPEHA	Jim Prescott	AFMA
Bruce Rose	TSPEHA	Ryan Murphy	AFMA
Barry Ehrke	QSIA	John Marrington	AFMA
Dr CK Chen	Schulz Fisheries	John Kung	QFS
Nick Schulz	Schulz Fisheries	Christian Mcdonald	DAFF
Rosemary Millward	TSPEHA	Clive Turnbull	QDPI
Mark Millward	TSPEHA	Michael O'Neille	QDPI
Rod Giddins	TSPEHA	Dan Sweeney	QBFP
Jan Paulsen	TSPEHA	Lota Warria	TSRA
Greg Anderson	TSPEHA	Ken Bedford	TSRA
Peter Lee	Lee Fishing Co	Raina Martin	TSRA
Jack Billy	TSRA	Barre Kare	NFA
Peter Yorkston	TSRA	Sue Fraser	Mundi Number 1
Donald Mosby	TSRA		

Chair: Mr Jim Gillespie (QFS)

### ***OPENING***

1. The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and asked for cooperation in discussing the important issues at this meeting. The Chair suggested that we spend the morning looking at the issue of implementing the outcome from the independent review of the stock assessment. The Chair further asked that Industry, Islander, and Government put forward their suggestion as to how to progress this issue. Outcome from this discussion is highlighted below.

### ***APOLOGIES***

2. The following members were unable to attend the meeting and sent their apologies: Mr Bob Robbins and Mr Samuel Tamu.

### ***AGENDA***

3. The agenda was adopted with the addition of an item looking at fin-fish catch limits.

### **Confirmation of the Record of the previous meeting ( 25-26 March 2003)**

4. The record of the March 2003 meeting was confirmed. Mr Millward asked that the minutes be amended to correct wording relating to increased units on boats. **Action Item 1** change wording in previous minutes re hull units.

### **Business arising from the previous meeting**

5. The group noted an update on the status of the action items from the previous meeting. Attachment 1 details progress on Action items from the previous meeting.
6. Industry queried the consultative process in relation to the retention of pearl shell by the Prawn fishery and their perception that this decision of the PZJA had by-passed the PWG and was contrary to the recommendation of the TSFMAC.
7. Industry requested that the pearl shell discussion paper should be provided to the TSFMAC for comment.

### **Correspondence relevant to the Prawn Working Group since last meeting**

8. The group noted the correspondence since the last meeting.
9. Industry raised concern that they were getting their meeting papers late. With regard to the independent Chair for the TSFMAC, Industry also voiced their opinion that all industry use the independent Chair and therefore all sectors of industry should contribute to this cost.

### **AGENDA ITEM 4: PZJA DECISIONS**

10. The meeting noted the decision of the June 2003 PZJA.
11. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) representative advised the meeting that the record of the June 2003 PZJA meeting has been approved and finalised. Copies of the record have been sent to relevant stakeholders.
12. Mr Millward queried a number of the recommendations of the June 2003 PZJA and raised the point that the outcome from these recommendations has serious implications to the operators and a lot of the decisions have not been discussed at the working group, or TSFMAC. Mr Millward's concern related to the PZJA decision regarding the allocation of days in three categories to each licence.
13. Industry questioned the origin of the briefing material to the PZJA that had led to this important decision relating to the prawn fishery. Industry was of the opinion that these issues should go through the normal consultative process. Management advised that briefs are a product of the four agencies and that the final decision on these matters is for the PZJA.
14. Industry members made the point that they do not agree with the proposal to have a base allocation of nights to each licence. They do not agree that nights should be reduced progressively as the need arises for from PNG.

### **AGENDA ITEM 5: Finalisation of Effort Reduction Discussion paper and Timetable of comment period**

15. In response to Chair's request to put forward their assessment of the independent reviewers presentation of the stock assessment and where to from here, Industry read from a prepared statement outlining their position with regard to any reductions in effort in the fishery. A copy of this statement is attached (Attachment 2).
16. Industry requested that Management put its proposal on the table. Management did not have a proposal since they had only heard the presentation of the stock assessment and the review of that assessment the previous day.
17. Industry requested that when finalised that management's proposal be incorporated into the discussion paper prior to distribution to all stakeholders for comment (**Action Item 3**, AFMA to include its proposal into discussion paper). A copy of the draft discussion paper including the proposal from management is attached, Attachment 3.

18. There was general discussion relating to the implications of catch in the PNG area of jurisdiction and how the catch sharing provisions are determined and the implications of the stock assessment and how all these issues combined to determine how many days can be fished. It was highlighted that to estimate how much extra surplus production was possible from the PNG area that the area would have to be fished more extensively or an independent survey would be required. It was noted that because the prawns on both sides of the jurisdiction line are assumed to belong to a single stock that it was unlikely that the extra surplus production would be large.
19. Mr Ehrke expressed his concern that until we know how many prawns there are in the PNG area of jurisdiction we should not have any catch sharing. It was highlighted that this is a Government to Government agreement and is a requirement of the Treaty and therefore could not be put on hold.
20. With reference to the discussion paper, Industry expressed their concern that they are getting less than a month to comment on this paper and that this is not enough time. Management highlighted that we are working to the timetable that the PZJA has set and that this is constrained by relevant elections. Industry suggested that the PZJA could change their meeting date or consider this important issue out of session.
21. The issue of adjustment was raised at this point with industry querying if sources of funding had been assessed and why the idea of adjustment had been removed from the title of the agenda item. In line with this query an action item was put forward that adjustment be added to the title of the agenda item. (**Action Item 6**). However, management noted that adjustment had not been removed from the title of the draft discussion paper – the title remained unchanged from August 2002.
22. The DAFF representative advised the committee that the PZJA would be considering this issue at its meeting in December 2003. The representative wanted to make it clear that the PZJA can make a decision on this issue and through the discussion paper Management is trying to make sure that this issue is properly consulted and all stakeholders are involved in this discussion paper.
23. There was further discussion at this point regarding how the issues and decision were made at the last PZJA meeting with industry suggesting that issues discussed at the PZJA were different to those discussed at the PWG. It was suggested that some recommendations relating to the base allocation of day's etc came from out of the blue without consultation with Industry. The committee was advised that a review would be conducted of the meeting records to see how these decisions came to be at the PZJA meeting. Mr Millward gave an undertaking to supply a list of actions to be queried. (**Action items 4 and 5**).
24. In general discussion relating to the need for more research and questions regarding the validity of the data and stock assessment, Ms Stone asked the reviewer if the assessment was good science – good enough to base a decision on. The reviewer responded that this was world class science and was sound to make decisions regarding the future management of the resource. Question from Barry Ehrke, who selected the models and are they the best. The reviewer highlighted that they are recognised as the most sophisticated models for prawn assessment around the world. Ms Stone further outlined that the NPF uses this model and they have also been independently reviewed and found to be the best model for this type of fishery.
25. Industry requested that due to the lack of the information on the prawn stocks and in line with the straddling stock requirements of the international agreements that an assessment of the stocks in the PNG area of jurisdiction be conducted. (**Action item 6**). Management noted that it was not clear if the UNFSA agreement applied in this particular situation and that they would investigate this.

26. It was suggested that this work be undertaken with PNG if possible and that the PWG make a recommendation to the TSFSAC that any research in this area be given a high priority.
27. Industry requested that a full socio-economic assessment of the impact of the restructure be prepared. The PWG agreed that this recommendation should go to the SAC and recommended that this kind of research be given a high priority in the research plan.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 6: Bilateral Fisheries Meeting**

28. The prawn working group noted the report on the bilateral fisheries meeting in Port Moresby.
29. Industry made the point that they were happy to help on the introduction of the TEDs but they do not believe they should have to pay to attend the workshop nor to pay for gear transport etc.
30. The DAFF representative highlighted that they are investigating options to facilitate the exchange of information between the two industries.
31. Industry raised some comments regarding when the PNG cross endorsements would be issued and why it was from 1 January rather than the start of the season. It was outlined that this was for administrative purposes and that they would be bounded by the same fishing season as the Australian operators.
32. The group noted:
  - that PNG agreed to the reviewed catch sharing calculations, which excluded catches from the Australian outside by near area and that under these arrangements Australia agreed to endorse up to 7 PNG prawn trawlers to operate in the Australian area of jurisdiction for a full season (275 nights).
  - PNG agreed to a permanent trawling closure in its area west of Warrior Reef adjacent to Australia's closed area, and to a seasonal closure for the whole area of PNG jurisdiction from 1 December to 1 March (which mirrors the Australian closure). Fisheries Management Notice 68 was provided with the draft record of the meeting so that PNG could reference specific closure times.
  - The NFA board is still undecided on the proposal to ban trawling activities in PNG's area of jurisdiction west of the "top hat" and has requested bathymetric data to assess the trawling potential of the area.

#### **Agenda Item 7 Budget**

33. The group noted the update on the budget. It was agreed that any comments on the paper be submitted to Ms Justine Johnston (AFMA) out of session. {note that Ms Johnston forwarded an updated budget paper with corrected figures on 28 October 2003. }.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 8: VMS IMPLEMENTATION**

34. The Prawn Working Group noted the progress of the implementation of VMS into the Torres Prawn Fishery.
35. Industry requested that it be noted that they would only accept VMS as a regulation, in the form of a fisheries management notice rather than as a licence condition. This is due to the perception from industry that it is too easy to chop and change licence conditions. Management provided advice that it may not legally be appropriate to have VMS conditions held within Management notices and that this would have to be clarified. Industry asked that if conditions were to be implemented by licence condition that they are advised as to how easy it is to change these licence conditions. [Action Item 17]

- 36.** Industry highlighted that they did not want to lose days while they were involved in search and rescue situations.
- 37.** Management informed the WG that the definition of a fishing day, ie. 1800hrs to 0600hrs, will allow boats to move about the fishery outside of those hours and minimise the need for boats to obtain prior approval (official exemption) before moving about inside the fishery.
- 38.** Industry raised the concern of having to obtain an official exemption for a boat that is required to move as a result of an emergency. Management advised that in the cases of emergencies, they would be considered on a case by case basis.
- 39.** There was discussion relating to PNG vessels and the need for VMS and the suggestion that the VMS unit on the PNG vessel should be able to be monitored by Australian compliance officers. Management agreed to investigate the requirement for VMS access. **Action item 9** (AFMA to clarify the requirements for PNG to have VMS access to Australian compliance).

### **Agenda Item 9 BRDs**

- 40.** The group discussed the introduction of BRDs to the fishery and recommend to the TSFMAC that:
- the process for testing and evaluating new BRD in the fisheries be adopted; (Comment from industry was that the cost of this testing was too high);
  - the following BRDs (square mesh codend, square mesh panel, fisheye, bigeye, and radial escape section) be implemented as approved BRDs commencing 1 March 2004 (subject to subsequent review given any new information); and
  - for the Vflap BRD it is agreed that it will be approved for use in the 2004 season, subject to review by the PWG following receipt of information from the east coast trials of the V Flap; and
  - the continued use of these BRDs and their respective specifications be revisited at the end of the 2004 season once pertinent research information is available.
- 41.** Ms Stone highlighted that Management is in the preliminary stages of organising a BRD workshop in combination with the NPF and including experts from the USA. If anyone is interested in attending we would like them to let us know. Industry indicated that yes they would be interested in this and would be happy to be involved at this stage.

### **AGENDA ITEM 10: UPDATE ON LOGBOOK REDESIGN**

- 42.** The PWG noted:
- AFMA is aiming to implement the new logbook into the NPF at the start of the next season (1 April 2004), development is due to start in November. The new logbook will be phased in to the TSPF as the old logbooks run out next year.
  - The recording of prawn grade information will be encouraged but will remain voluntary in the TSPF.
  - The TSPF will not bear any of the costs associated with redesigning the logbook except printing costs that would need to be met to replenish stocks regardless of whether the logbook was being redesigned.

- As the TSPF is not contributing to the costs of the redesign AFMA will not be seeking suggestions for changes to the design of the NP13 from the PWG (**Action item 16**).

It was recommended that Mr Turnbull should consult with Ms C Dichtmont (NPFAG Chair) regarding the redesign of the NP13 in particular the gear sheet design.

#### **Agenda item 11: ERA presentation**

- 42.** The Prawn Working Group noted that there will not be a presentation to the working group and it will be considered at a following meeting.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 12 . PROPOSED TORRES STRAIT PRAWN FISHERY OBSERVER PROGRAM**

- 43.** The working group considered the proposal and the outcome from the observer workshop and requested that AFMA put together a single A4 sheet that outlines the CMO versus scientific observer costs and distribute it to all holders. It was agreed that this would be supplied to the TSPEHA Mr Greg Anderson for distribution (**Action Item 11**).

- 44.** Industry queried if the observer program could be levied. Management advised that yes it was able to levy the observer program. It was highlighted that the fishery is covered by the Commonwealth costs recovery policy and this is a recoverable cost.

- 45.** Islanders expressed an interest to be actively involved in this an observer programme. Representatives gave an undertaking to develop proposal for involvement and to seek funding.

- 46.** The group agreed to the additional recommendations of this item, namely:

- that the results of the CRC benthic mapping project & risk assessment are utilised to identify “high” risk species and target the monitoring and research appropriately;
- that identification of the species composition of squid and cuttlefish by-product in the TPF be incorporated into the CRC project;
- that “tally sheets” be submitted to the CRC prawn project every three months on a voluntary basis to validate prawn catch weight reported in logbooks; and
- that the working group should look for sources of funding (for example Farmbis) for training of CMOs which would reduce the cost of this program.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 13: CRC funded prawn research – new aspects in relation to validation of data**

- 42.** See recommendation in agenda item 12.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 14: UPDATE ON STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT REPORT AND BYCATCH ACTION PLAN**

- 43.** The Prawn Working Group noted the progress of the Strategic Assessment Report (SAR) and Bycatch Action Plan (BAP) for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.

- 44.** Management highlighted that the draft reports are due to go out for public comment within the next few weeks. It was highlighted that with the effort discussion paper also out for public comment that it would be preferable if the SAR and BAP document were sent out for public comment later. The group agreed with this approach.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 15: US CERTIFICATION OF TEDs**

- 45.** The prawn working group noted progress on the US certification of the TEDs used in the Torres Strait fishery to allow prawns captured in the TS to be exported to the USA and that the US will be invited to inspect the fishery. It was suggested that we invite the Americans out to do the assessment. It was also suggested that the US team could also perhaps go to PNG to develop their use of TEDS.



46. It was discussed that Industry would need to advise management of an appropriate time for the USA people to inspect the fishery. It was suggested that this process be linked with BRD workshop proposal.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 16: COMPLIANCE**

##### **AGENDA ITEM 16.1: UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SEASON OPENING AND CLOSING (FISHERIES MANAGEMENT NOTICE NO. 68)**

47. The Prawn Working Group noted progress of the implementation of Fisheries Management Notice (FMN) No. 68 (FMN No. 68 amends FMN No. 40 which specifies what and how fishing gear can be carried during the seasonal closure). Management stressed that operators should continue to observe the requirements of FMN No. 40 until they are advised that FMN No 68 has been gazetted, ie do not assume it has been gazetted.

##### **AGENDA ITEM 16.2 Compliance priorities for 2004**

48. The Working group noted compliance priorities for 2004.

##### **AGENDA ITEM 16.3 Net measurements – rewording of FMN 59**

49. The group noted that there have been problems with the size of try gear used in the fishery. It was agreed that Mr Anderson would liase with Mr Sweeney regarding appropriate approach to this issue. [Action item 18]

##### **16.4 PNG trawlers anchoring at Stephens island**

47. The group noted that this issue is currently being assessed. Industry was thanked for bringing the matter to Management's attention.

48. Industry reported that PNG boats have been seen fishing without TEDs. Compliance advised that there are currently investigations underway regarding this issue.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 17: OTHER BUSINESS**

49.

##### **AGENDA ITEM 17.1: INTERIM CHAIR OF THE PWG**

50. It was agreed that Mr Jim Gillespie would remain as an interim Chair of the PWG and that this arrangement will be reviewed in 12 months. Moved by Mr Millward seconded by Mr Ehrke.

##### **AGENDA ITEM 17.2 Update on 3 Islander licences**

51. The meeting was advised that the criteria under which the three islander permits could be utilised were being assessed and that the TSRA board would consider the matter at its next meeting.

##### **AGENDA ITEM 17.FRDC: quarantining of research funds**

52. The group noted advice from FRDC regarding quarantining of research funds. Industry were still concerned at the returns that they would receive from FRDC. It was agreed that a representative of FRDC should attend or provide advice on this issue to the next meeting. [Action Item 19 Invite FRDC to PWG]

##### **AGENDA ITEM 17.4: Prohibition on trawling in the territorial seas surrounding Deliverance Island, Kerr Islet and Turu Cay.**

53. The prawn working group discussed the proposal to prohibit trawling in the Australian territorial seas surrounding Deliverance Island, Kerr Islet and Turu Cay to protect this area and provide further incentive for PNG to also prohibit trawling in its waters in the surrounding area of jurisdiction.

54. Management and Islander representatives have indicated that they support this proposal. Industry representatives advised that they do not support the proposal. It was agreed that this would be reflected in the advice to the TSFMAC.
55. Industry were asked to give it further consideration to this between now and the MAC.

**Additional agenda item. Finfish assessment**

56. It was noted that the amount of finfish that trawlers can have on board is being assessed by the finfish working group. Mr Ehrke requested that this information be considered by the PWG as well. **Action Item 12** AFMA will provide a copy of the outcome (If impacting on the prawn fishery) of the finfish discussion to the PWG prior to submitting to the MAC.

**Area of Australia territorial  
seas discussed**



**AGENDA ITEM 18: Recommendations to December 2003 TSFMAC meeting**

**AGENDA ITEM 18: Recommendations to December 2003 TSFMAC meeting**

**The working group made the following recommendations to the December 2003 TSFMAC meeting:**

1. Regarding BRDs the PWG recommend:
  - That the process for testing and evaluating new BRD in the fisheries be adopted; (Comment from industry that the cost of this testing was too high);
  - That the following BRDs (square mesh codend, square mesh panel, fisheye, bigeye, and radial escape section, as per Queensland specifications) be implemented as approved BRDs commencing 1 March 2004 (subject to subsequent review given any new information);
  - That for the V flap BRD it is agreed that it will be approved for use in the 2004 season, subject to review by the PWG following receipt of information from the east coast trials of the V Flap; and
  - That the continued use of these BRDs and their respective specifications be revisited at the end of the 2004 season once pertinent research information is available.
2. For the redesign of the NP13 log book the PWG recommend that:
  - noting the NPF move to compulsory recording of grade information in the NP13 logbook that the recording of prawn grade information will be encouraged but will remain voluntary in the TSPF; and
  - that the TSPF will not bear any of the costs associated with redesigning the logbook, except printing costs that would need to be met to replenish stocks regardless of whether the logbook was being redesigned.
3. That the results of the CRC benthic mapping project & risk assessment are utilised to identify “high” risk species and target the monitoring and research appropriately.
4. That identification of the species composition of squid and cuttlefish by-product in the TSPF be incorporated into the CRC project.
5. That tally sheets be submitted to the CRC project (Clive Turnbull) and that they be submitted every three months. If the response is not sufficient than we look to legislating this requirement.
6. That as a short- to medium-term arrangement for the chairmanship of the working group, Mr Gillespie (QFS) Chair the PWG in the interim (interim meaning that this will be reviewed in 12 months).
7. That both management and Islander representatives support the proposal that that trawling in the territorial seas surrounding Deliverance Island, Kerr Islet, and Turu Cay be prohibited. Industry has indicated that they do not support this proposal.
8. That Mr Bob Robbins be changed from an industry to processor representative on the PWG.
9. That Ms Trysh Stone replace Mr Kim Parkinson on the PWG.
10. That Mr Dan Sweeney be added as compliance member on the PWG.

11. That Mr Ken Bedford replace Mr Joey Saylor on the PWG.

12. That Mr Clive Turnbull be added as a research member of the PWG.

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**TORRES STRAIT  
PRAWN WORKING GROUP MEETING  
(1/03)  
25-26 March 2003  
Pearls Building  
Thursday Island  
  
DRAFT RECORD**

*Table of Action Items arising from this meeting.*

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Para</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Action Agency</b>
1	4	QBFP to provide details of gear measurement to AFMA out of session.  If there is a concern with the current Fisheries Management Notice (FMN #59), then the notice will be amended and all licensees notified	QBFP <b>To be discussed under action item 16</b>  AFMA/QFS
2	6	AFMA to provide further breakdown of costs ex-Cairns for budgeting for a PWG meeting on Masig.	AFMA <b>No requirement for meeting at Masig yet</b>
3	10	Jim Prescott to provide summary of PNG prawn data	Jim Prescott <b>Unable to do as yet</b>
4	11	provide PNG industry with TSPEHA contact details (to provide PNG industry assistance with gear technology)	AFMA <b>Done</b>
5	24	Industry request that on any agenda paper to the TSFMAC and the PZJA proposing VMS, they be provided with the opportunity to provide their rationale for objection	Industry <b>Done</b>
6	25	Industry and Islanders to provide e-copy (tracked changes) of amendments to the prawn SAR by 4 April 2003	Greg Anderson/Mark Millward/Peter Yorkston <b>done</b>
7	26	Information package be provided to Dr David Die to allow him to start preliminary work	AFMA <b>done</b>
8	27	Comments on Bycatch Action Plan (BAP) by Industry and Islanders to be forwarded to Jim Prescott by next fortnight. Specific comment should be made on Strategy 2 with reference to restricting expansion of area of fishing (page 19 of BAP)	Greg Anderson/Mark Millward/Peter Yorkston <b>done</b>

9	29	TSRA to provide a list of changes to the developmental policy for the three Islander prawn licences for approval by the TSFMAC and PZJA	TSRA <b>progressing</b>
10	34	AFMA/QFS to discuss length measurements with a naval architect with respect to definition for measurement of vessel length	AFMA/QFS <b>Not yet done</b>
11	35	AFMA and QFS to discuss Boat Replacement Policy with respect to delegated decisions	AFMA/QFS <b>not yet done low priority</b>
12	42	AFMA to seek confirmation from FRDC whether contributions to FRDC by the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF) will benefit the TSPF directly and not go to other Torres Strait fisheries	AFMA <b>done</b>
13	48	Industry requested that the appointment of an independent chair be put on hold while they consult their members on the desirability and affordability of an independent chair for the PWG	TSPEHA/Q SIA <b>done</b>
14	48	Islander representatives undertook to consult with TSRA executives on whether Islanders would contribute to the appointment of an independent chair for the PWG	TSRA <b>unable to contribute due to financial constraints</b>
15	64	TSRA to prepare an agenda paper on the issue of harvesting leader prawns for broodstock and the proposals for recommendation	TSRA <b>In progress</b>
16	67	Management to prepare an agenda paper on zero retention of pearl shell on prawn trawlers	AFMA/QFS <b>Zero retention agreed at PZJA</b>
17	69	Provide copy of FMNs 54 and 55 to industry	AFMA <b>done</b>
18	70	QBFP to discuss with management the issue of gear stowage at season opening and closure.	QBFP <b>done</b>
19	71	TSRA to consult community fishers on a reconsideration for whether one of the PWG meetings per year should be held in Cairns	TSRA <b>ongoing</b>

## The Torres Strait Prawn Entitlement Holders Association

The TSPEHA oppose Government's decisions to take allocated fishing days away from existing Torres Strait Prawn Fishery licensees, but, if you force this decision on us:

- ◆ We will participate in the Stock Assessment Review Presentation and Prawn Working Group of 22 and 23 October 2003 but:
  - any transfer of allocated fishing days from existing Torres Strait Prawn Fishery licensees (Australian Fishers) to PNG prawn fishers or Torres Strait Islander Prawn Fishers who have yet to receive days would be unlawful and we oppose it.

We dispute the levels proposed to be set for Emsy for the Australian Torres Strait Prawn Fishery and believe that they are grossly unfair and inequitable. We believe that there is too much uncertainty in the levels proposed and the assessment is based on incomplete and unvalidated data, despite the fact that Industry requested, in writing, to Government more than twelve months ago that these matters be dealt with prior to any Independent Stock Assessment Review. We will be listing the details of these concerns later.

The effect on our people in Industry of the proposed Emsy level, alone, is socially and economically devastating. With the decision to take more days to give to other users, added on top of the loss of days for this proposed Emsy level, the Industry, individual businesses and families will be destroyed.

We are extremely concerned that people with large financial commitments in this fishery, when faced with this catastrophic combination of decisions (that result in a drop of up to 75% in their business capacity overnight) will fail to cope with life.

More time is needed to determine a more accurate and fair Emsy. We therefore request that:

- Government make no reduction for the 2004 year to allow time for the uncertainties and unvalidated data in the stock assessment models to be dealt with; and
- Undertake wide consultation with industry on the outcomes once this work is done, as the implications of the outcomes of the stock assessment and Emsy are far reaching and can't be dealt with in a few weeks. The impact is potentially so great that each licensee should have the time to consider the consequences and have a chance to input into the consultation process that will determine their future survival or demise! We are currently told that a few weeks is all the time that is available because Government are pushed for time to have PZJA decisions in place for the 2004 licensing year.
- No decision be taken on any allocation to Torres Strait or PNG fishers until an agreement is reached on an adjustment package dealing with both ESD and re-distribution of effort.

We also require that both economic and social assessments be done for these matters before any further decisions are taken by Government.

Mark Millward, President  
For and on behalf of members of the TSPEHA 23/10/03

**TORRES STRAIT  
PRAWN WORKING GROUP MEETING  
(2/03)  
23/10/2003  
Cairns RSL**

**DRAFT ACTION ITEMS**

*Draft Table of Action Items arising from this meeting.*

<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Para</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Action Agency</i>
1		March 2003 PWG minutes to be amended to take account wording change regarding hull units.	AFMA
2		AFMA to reply to industry request regarding equal allocation of cost for payment of independent Chair.	AFMA/QFS
3		AFMA to put 10,000 day proposal into the draft discussion paper and release discussion paper as soon as possible.	AFMA
4		Industry to supply list of issues to AFMA regarding further clarification of decision making process for June PZJA meeting	Industry
5		Following receipt of Action item 4, AFMA to review various meeting records to determine decision process on issues raised at June PZJA.	AFMA
5		That agenda item 5 be amended to include the word adjustment.	AFMA
6		Industry proposal that in line with UNFSA that a stock assessment be conducted for prawn on the PNG side of the line. Noting that management representatives endorse the approach to do more research but note that the international agreement may not apply in this particular situation. Management will investigate the relevance of UNFSA.	All/AFMA
7		Industry to supply management with a copy of the industry proposal.	Industry Done
8		That research assessing the socio economic implications of the stock assessment be given a high priority.	All
9		AFMA to clarify compliance requirements for PNG endorsed vessels.	AFMA
10		AFMA to clarify the cost recovery policy and its application to the observer program in the Torres Strait prawn fishery.	AFMA
11		AFMA to put together a single A4 sheet outlining the CMO versus scientific and associated costs and distribute it to all	AFMA

		holders. Islander reps to supply details of proposal for islanders to act as observers. This needs to be emailed to Greg Anderson by 29 October to meet AGM mail out deadline.	
12		AFMA will provide a copy of the outcome (If impacting on the prawn fishery) of the finfish Working Group discussion on finfish catch to the PWG prior to submitting to the MAC.	<b>AFMA</b>
13		Check to see the status of Clive Turnbull as a full member of the working group?	<b>AFMA</b>
14		Check member status of Don Mosby on PWG	
15		Industry to provide comment out of session on budget programme for next year	<b>Industry</b>
16		Clive Turnbull to talk with Cathy Dichmont re content of vessel gear sheet in NP13 and suggest amendment if necessary.	<b>QDPI</b>
17		Clarification of VMS as licence condition	<b>QFS</b>
18		Clarification of try gear management notice	<b>QBFP/Industry</b>
19		Invite FRDC to PWG	<b>AFMA</b>