

TORRES STRAIT LOBSTER WORKING GROUP MEETING
5 – 6 October 2004
PEARLS BUILDING, THURSDAY ISLAND

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TRLWG TO THE
TSEMAC**

Number	Recommendation
	No recommendations were put forward from the TRL Working Group to the TSEMAC.

ACTION ITEMS

Number	Action Item	Action Agency
1	correspond with TRL working group members for clarification of the following sections in the draft minutes of the TRL working group held on 13-14 May 2004. These include editing and completion of – Agenda Item 7.1 (Yimin Ye – CSIRO and Jim Prescott – AFMA) Agenda Item 9.3 (Manai Nona to provide wording of resolutions from the Badu meeting) Agenda Item 9.4 (Barry Ehrke – QSIA to provide wording)	AFMA
2	Garry Christopher to provide a copy of the QRLA letter indicating his opinion on the 30% tender reduction	Industry
3	John Marrington – TRL working group chair) to draft a letter to the chair of the TSEMAC, Mr Russell Reichelt, WRT future research funding through FRDC.	AFMA
4	Industry to further consult with other members on <u>Options 1 and 2</u> and reply back to management with a decision by 21 October 2004.	Industry
5	Community fisher representatives to further consult with Island communities on ‘ <i>What might be a reasonable number of hookahs to be used by the TIB sector?</i> ’	TSRA
6	Community fisher representatives to further consult with Island communities on ‘ <i>What might be a reasonable number of freezer boats to be used by the TIB sector?</i> ’	TSRA

7	The traditional inhabitant (TIB) sector (Community Fisher Representatives) to further consult with other stakeholders on issues discussed and reply back to management with a decision by 21 October 2004.	TSRA
8	draft up proposals on the map, for further consultation between both sectors.	AFMA
9	provide wordings on the ban on night diving from last light to first light (6pm – 6am). It was agreed that wording should be along the lines of ‘...it is illegal to dive for tropical rock lobster with a light source’.	AFMA/ QB&FP
10	Jim Prescott to distribute final management objectives ‘ <i>out of session</i> ’ to TRL working group members for comments.	AFMA

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AGENDA

- A) *OPENING*
- B) *APOLOGIES*
- C) *AGENDA*
 - 1. **Confirmation of the record of the previous meeting (13-14 May 2003)**
 - 2. **Business arising from the previous meeting**
 - 3. **Research: stock assessment advice** **FOR DISCUSSION**
 - 4. **Management Arrangements**
 - 4.1 **Outcomes from open meetings in August and September** **FOR DISCUSSION**
 - 4.2 **Management arrangements for 2005** **FOR DECISION**
 - 5. **Final management objectives** **FOR DECISION**
 - 6. **Pre-recruit harvest/ lobster growout** **FOR DISCUSSION**
 - 7. **Other business**
- D) *NEXT MEETING*

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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 **20 NOVEMBER 2004 (4 weeks from posting)**, THIS WILL REMAIN A TRUE COPY OF MINUTES TAKEN AT THIS MEETING.

DAY 1

Attendance

John Marrington	(Chair - AFMA)
Jim Prescott	(AFMA)
Sascha Taylor	(AFMA)
John Kung	(QDPI&F)
Phil Gaffney	(QDPI&F)
Ray Moore	(Industry Representative)
Garry Christopher	(Industry Representative)
Peter Yorkston	(TSRA Fisheries Co-ordinator)
Lota Warria	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Yorke Island)
Yen Loban	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Muraleg)
Manai Nona	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Badu Island)
Graham Hirakawa	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Port Kennedy)
Mark David	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Yam Island)
Terrence Whap	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Mabuiag Island)
Yimin Ye	(CSIRO - Division of Marine Research)

Observers

Brett Arlidge	(Industry – Queensland Rock Lobster Association)
Phil Hughes	(Industry)
Peter Ahloy	(Industry)
Toshio Nakata	(CRC Torres Strait)
Randall Owens	(GBRMPA)
Gavin Mosby	(Gelum Tails Seafood – Yorke Island)
Ned Larry	(Fisherman – Coconut Island)

DAY 2

Attendance

John Marrington	(Chair - AFMA)
Jim Prescott	(AFMA)
Sascha Taylor	(AFMA)
John Kung	(QDPI&F)

Phil Gaffney	(QDPI&F)
Ray Moore	(Industry Representative)
Garry Christopher	(Industry Representative)
Peter Yorkston	(TSRA Fisheries Co-ordinator)
Lota Warriia	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Yorke Island)
Yen Loban	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Muraleg)
Manai Nona	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Badu Island)
Graham Hirakawa	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Port Kennedy)
Mark David	(Traditional Inhabitant Representative – Yam Island)
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Ned Larry	(Fisherman – Coconut Island)

DAY 1 – 5 October 2004

A) OPENING

The meeting was opened at 0900 by the chair, Mr John Marrington.

B) APOLOGIES

Barry Ehrke (QSIA Representative)

C) AGENDA

The preliminary agenda was adopted by the TRL working group.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the record of the previous meeting (13 – 14 May 2004)

The minutes of the last meeting of the TRL working group held on 13-14 May 2004 were **not** adopted by the working group as there are still some sections to be completed by particular working group members.

Ray Moore did express that the comment period before the ratification on the final minutes of the meeting was not long enough and more time is needed – particularly in the middle of the TRL fishing season when members are often at sea for long period.

Action Item: AFMA to correspond with TRL working group members for clarification of the following sections in the draft minutes of the TRL working group held on 13-14 May 2004. These include editing and completion of –

Agenda Item 7.1 (Yimin Ye – CSIRO and Jim Prescott – AFMA)

Agenda Item 9.3 (Manai Nona to provide wording of resolutions from the Badu meeting)

Agenda Item 9.4 (Barry Ehrke – QSIA to provide wording)

Agenda Item 2: Business arising from the previous meeting (13 – 14 May 2004)

The chair provided an update to the working group members on the list of Action Items from the last meeting of the TRL Working Group. Most of the items had been addressed or were to be further progressed in later agenda items.

Action Item 1 – **Completed**. Correspondence sent to QDPI&F and a verbal presentation made to Harvest Mac

Action Item 2 – *Work in progress*. Jim Prescott provided different scenarios to the working group to consider (see Attachment 1)

Action Item 3 – *Work in progress* (low priority).

Action Item 4 – *Work in progress*. The first meeting to discuss areas to be closed for hookah was on 3 August 2004 and the second meeting was on 30 September 2004. Proposed areas have been drawn on map from both these open forums. This action item was later discussed in greater detail in Agenda Item 4.1.

Action Item 5 – **Completed** – all bodies approve in principle with the creation of a Fisheries Assessment Group (FAG) or more recently referred to as a Resource Assessment Group (RAG) (see Attachment 2 for details).

Action Item 6 – **Completed**. The TRL working group chair, Mr John Marrington has written to AFMA seeking clarification of continued funding (\$500,000 pa) for Torres Strait however, there had been no response up to the TRL working group meetings.

Action Item 7 – *Work in progress*. Specific methods of vessel measurement as per Fisheries Management Notice 47 on the boat replacement application form are currently being incorporated into a new improved form.

Action Item 8 – **Not completed**

Action Item: Garry Christopher to provide a copy of the QRLA letter indicating his opinion on the 30% tender reduction

Action Item 9 – **Completed**. Licences granted to traditional inhabitants have generally had conditions on them effectively restricting the transfer of the licences to other traditional inhabitants. Jim Prescott - correspondence from QLD Licensing Section

Action Item 10 – **Completed**. Jim Prescott - correspondence from DAFF

Action Item 11 – **Completed**. Yimin Ye (CSIRO) provided estimates of funding required for research priorities in the Torres Strait TRL fishery.

1. To develop management strategy evaluation and reference point/decision rule identification a cost of \$180,000 is estimated. This consists of mainly of 20% of one FTE for modelling work, and 10% of one FTE for a biologist position over a two year period. It also includes some travel and reporting costs. It is expected that CSIRO might contribute 30% to these costs, leaving a net cost of \$120,000 to be funded.

The work budgeted above is not a large project but CSIRO is confident that the required outputs for future management needs of the fishery can be produced. It is considered that there is quite an urgent need for this work to be done for the Torres Strait TRL fishery.

2. Integrated stock assessment - Torres Strait, Queensland east coast, PNG: \$160,000 (10% of one FTE for modelling, and 10% FTEs for biologists in both CSIRO and Queensland and some travel costs. This project needs involvement of someone from Queensland because of the data issues. It is noted that the extra jurisdictions make this a more complicated undertaking. As above, CSIRO is expected to be able to contribute towards the cost of the project.

Action Item: AFMA (John Marrington – TRL working group chair) to draft a letter to the chair of the TSFMAC, Mr Russell Reichelt, WRT future research funding through FRDC.

Action Item 12 – *Work in progress*. Management have written to John Kung (QDPI&F) for a formal definition of “in possession”.

Action Item 13 – *Work in progress*. Ray Moore reported there has been no formal approach from the TRL sector to the prawn trawling sector, given the major issues each sectors are currently encountering.

Action Item 14 – *Work in progress*. To date no terms of appointment for members for Torres Strait consultative bodies can easily be found. A paper is being prepared by Mr Sascha Taylor for the TSFMAC on membership and terms of appointment. It is proposed that the recommendation for terms on all PZJA consultative bodies should be 2 years. It is further proposed that the accepted term commence on the date of the decision, i.e. if the PZJA agrees to two year terms then current members will commence a term of 2 years from that date.

Agenda Item 3: Research – Stock Assessment Advice

Discussion of the stock assessment advice were prefaced by a discussion about the need for the working group to base its decision making on the scientific advice it received. It was noted that this advice was often very technical and difficult to understand and that members needed to ask questions when necessary so that they had a good understanding of the information presented.

Yimin Ye (CSIRO) presented an overview of the latest research results from the “Relative abundance and Assessment of the Torres Strait Lobster Stock” (see Attachment 3.).

After the presentation, Jim Prescott focussed on the AFMA final report “Relative abundance and Assessment of the Torres Strait Lobster Stock” and read a specific paragraph from the section titled ‘*Implications for Management*’ (page 13). It reads –

“It is now necessary to ensure that the effort of the fishery is under control and that the remaining latent effort in the fishery is managed to ensure a full recovery of the stock. Some vessels have recently converted frozen tail operation to a live lobster operation, and this change should be strongly encouraged because it adds value to the fishery and

will reduce fishing capacity of the fleet due to the fact that more time is required to fish live lobsters and keep them alive.”

It was stressed that there is a serious issue with regard to managing effort that needs to be resolved - the estimated level of fishing in 2004 it considered to be much too high given the latest research report. The TRL working group members were supplied with a catch summary for the 2003/04 financial year (see Attachment 4.) – discussions focused on this.

Agenda Item 4: Management Arrangements

4.1 Outcomes from open meetings in August and September 2004

Dr Ray Moore (TRL Industry representative) read through the record of an informal meeting held at the Pearls Building on 29 September 2004 to discuss recent management developments. The record of the meeting was kindly provided by Ray Moore to be included in the minutes. Both Garry Christopher and Brett Arlidge noted that the views presented at this meeting did not necessarily reflect the views of the majority of other Industry stakeholders.

TORRES STRAIT COMMERCIAL ROCK LOBSTER FISHER MEETING

29 September 2004 - 1pm

Pearls Building, Thursday Island

An informal meeting to discuss recent management developments.

PRESENT

Jim Allison (TSMF)

Chris Rob (Bad Attitude)

Ben Schultz (Moon Mouse)

Wade Duff (Sai Narm)

Vince Kalwij (Condor)

Shaun Morrin (Centurion)

Peter Gea Gea

Peter Ahloy (Terumi J)

Theo Petrou (TSMF)

Ben Moore (Sea Otter)

Dom Drotinni (Sea Otter)

Jim Prescott (AFMA)

Chairman - Ray Moore appointed by common consent

Three documents were tabled for discussion

1. Torres Strait Commercial Rock Lobster Fishers draft management plan
2. Table of log book catches for 2005, and total tender days 1994 to 2003
3. Tender reduction plan
4. Buy Back scheme questionnaire

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE

In 2002 CSIRO said that as long as the effort stayed the same, minimum legal size was introduced and a closed season was put in place, the fishery would be sustainable. Effort has increased since 2002 and the objective for a management strategy would be to return to 2002 levels.

HOOKAH FREE AREAS

E-mail tabled by Ray Moore from J. Fogarty (Kailis) stating hookah closed areas proposed by the TS commercial Rock Lobster fishers would be acceptable, but any substantial area can't be negotiated, and must be opposed. It was unanimous that large hookah free areas would not be acceptable to commercial fishers.

BUY BACK

The preferred long term option to reduce effort is a buy back scheme. This could not have any effect for the 2005 season, so an interim effort reduction effort would have to be considered. A questionnaire looking at buyback options was tabled and members were urged to fill it in and give input. It was decided to meet in the near future to discuss the results of the buyback questionnaire and decide on further action.

DINGHY EFFORT REDUCTION

To reduce effort to 2002 levels a number of options were discussed -

1. Reduction of boats to 2 tenders, and allowing for selling and buying of tenders enabling the larger boats to buy tenders. The problem with this proposal is the initial unfairness of reducing the licenses which have 3 or more tenders. It also has the danger of more financial operators and companies creating large operations, removing the smaller operators and running the sort of monopoly the fishers in the rock lobster industry have historically tried to avoid.

After some discussion this idea was generally rejected.

2. An effort reduction based on percentage reductions on the number of tenders was looked at and effects of the various percentages discussed. Looking at the draft management plan tabled, it was considered a 40% reduction would have to be implemented to bring levels to around 2002 effort levels. The quickest way to allocate the dinghy fractions would be to appoint a fraction of the 8 month fishing season for any fraction of a tender a reduction leaves. After discussion most people at the meeting agreed that this option would be acceptable. Some members strongly objected to the idea as economically unviable.

This option was considered by most members as acceptable.

3. Allocation of tender days based on the number of tenders rather than vessel history was discussed. This was considered perhaps the best way to allocate effort as it controlled effort creep as a result of working as many days as possible in allocated months. Advice from AFMA was that it would not be able to be implemented for 2005

This option was considered as a management strategy to consider for 2006 season if necessary.

4. Allocation of primary vessel days was also considered as an option. This had the advantage of managing the number of days the larger primary vessels were fishing and reduced the perceived problem of big boats on the fishing grounds. There was no time to fully discuss this idea, but the idea had some merit for future consideration.

This option was considered as an idea for further consideration.

EFFORT CONTROL ON TIB FISHERY

Two factors were considered as important when looking at management control of the TIB sector -

1. Limit on number of boats >6metres
2. Cap on the number of hookahs

IN SUMMARY

Although there was not unanimity on all of the issues discussed the general feeling of the meeting was -

1. Extensive hookah free areas could not be agreed on (general consensus).
2. A buyback scheme would be the best way to reduce effort in the commercial sector but this was a long term solution and there would need to be an interim method of reducing effort.
3. A temporary dinghy reduction in the order of 40% would address the effort in 2005, with an allocation of tender days in 2006.

In response, Mr Peter Yorkston (TSRA Fisheries Coordinator) read through the record of resolutions put forward at the Community Fisher Group Meeting held at the TSRA Board Room on 01 October 2004 to discuss TRL management arrangement for 2005. The record of the meeting was kindly provided by Peter Yorkston to be included in the minutes.

TSRA COMMUNITY FISHER GROUP MEETING - RESOLUTIONS

01 October 2004 - 1pm

TSRA Boardroom, Thursday Island

Background

The Community Fisher Group had a pre-planning meeting on Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 September and formulated its position on TRL hookah closure areas for negotiations with non-traditional inhabitant TRL operators in the Torres Strait. These meetings are followed up from the first meeting that was held on 3 August 2004 and takes into account more community consultation by Community Fisher representatives.

Traditional inhabitants are overly concerned that with the increased effort in 2003, 2004 and in the future could place the Torres Strait TRL fishery on an unsustainable footing, which will have a huge impact on the traditional way of life and livelihood of Australian traditional inhabitants in the Torres Strait as well as TRL fishery itself.

Traditional inhabitants are prepared to introduce effective long-term measures that apply to all TRL commercial fishers licensed under Section 19 of *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984* (TSFA). Traditional inhabitants are serious to protect and conserve TRL stocks in the long-term.

The effort problems identified by the Community Fisher Group are:

- The number of large boats (freezer boats)
- Increase in large boats since 2002
- The number of hookahs
- Longer fishing trips
- Introducing new work culture
- A fair share of the catch

Traditional inhabitants have considered a range of management tools to control and contain effort and strongly support the banning of TRL hookah diving in the Australian jurisdiction of the Torres Strait Protected Zone and the Australian outside but near area for an indefinite period.

Consequently, resolutions put forward at the TSRA Community Fisher Group Meeting held at the TSRA Board Room on 01 October 2004, Community Fisher representatives support Islander representatives on the TRL working group to deliver and negotiate the following position in relation to the TRL management arrangement for 2005:

1. Extend the hookah closure to 6 months (in 2005) and the phasing in of a total hooker ban by 2008 through a 2-month increment per year
2. Maintain the exclusive closure for months of October and November to protect migratory stocks
3. 50% reduction in Freezer boat tenders
4. Closure of sensitive areas as per Map C¹, except that the Warrior Reef part-closure be replaced with a closure around the whole of Dungeness and Tudu home reef, Sassie and possibly Kirkcaldie and an extension of the hookah-free boundary, north to include Buru and adjacent fishing grounds
5. Retain the minimum tail size limit of 115 millimetres
6. Retain the current bag limit of 6 lobsters per vessel
7. Ban on night diving from last light to first light (6pm – 6am)
8. Access QLD East coast fishery down to the Green Zone (11°20' South Latitude and 145° East Longitude)
9. Implementation of recommendations to improve TIB Licensing system
10. Develop a buy-back option to remove freezer boats from the fishery

¹ Map C was one of three proposals included in the record of the first informal TRL fishery meeting held on 3rd August 2004, in the TSRA Board Room to discuss hookah closed areas. Copies of this record can be obtained from Mr Jim Prescott at the AFMA Thursday Island office.

The proposal to allow access to Torres Strait fishermen to access the QLD East coast fishery down to the Green Zone and was immediately dismissed by Randall Owens (GBRMPA) and Phil Gaffney (QFS) and there was no need to consider this further.

Both proposals were discussed in detail among the TRL working group. Strong views were expressed from the Industry sector that they have suffered two reductions in tenders (30% and 22%). It was said that “QRLA members are willing to give-up, but we need cooperation from both sectors”.

Traditional inhabitants had equally strong views on the matter. And noted that given the catch statistics that suggested a roughly 60:40 split in catches that it was not their sector responsible for all the effort even though there were a large number of TIB licences.

With both views presented as a basis for negotiation, the working group proceeded to discuss management arrangements for 2005. Jim Prescott reminded working group members of the recommendations from the latest CSIRO report and the need to consider these to obtain Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) to ensure sustainability of the fishery for future years to come. Jim Prescott also stressed that management, in order to maintain continuing export approval, needed to demonstrate to the Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) that it is managing effort in the fishery in both sectors – islander and non-islander.

The meeting was closed at 1720 by the chair on Day 1.

DAY 2 – 6 October 2004

4.2 Management Arrangements for 2005

The meeting was opened on Day 2 at 0845.

Jim Prescott provided a brief overview on Day 1 proceedings. Jim stressed the areas where he thought that some members from both sectors had taken unreasonable positions. He also reminded members of the 60:40 split in catches (non-islander:islander) and noted that he found that difficult to reconcile with the thrust of the “Fair share of the catch” report and thought that as long as this situation persisted that there would be problems with the two sectors reconciling their different positions.

Jim also said that the islanders strong position for a complete hookah ban was difficult to reconcile with the information that Yimin Ye had presented which suggested that there needed to be a reduction of effort to achieve a fishing mortality consistent with MSY, but not such a drastic reduction that would be the expected result of a hookah ban. Jim pointed out that the proposal would diminish the value of the fishery to all participants and would probably unnecessarily bankrupt some fishery participants.

Management also provided members of the working group a copy of the Investment warning published in the *Torres News* on the 15–21 February, 2002 and this was discussed in detail in relation to who should suffer any further cuts in effort as it was a stand of some members that those who invested in the industry after the investment warning should be the ones to be reduced (through any form of effort reduction).

Mr Garry Christopher (Industry representative) stated that at the last meeting of the PZJA in December 2003, Commonwealth Fisheries Minister Ian MacDonal acknowledged both the

TIB and Industry sectors of their abilities to “*move forward*” in order to reduce effort in the TRL fishery. He further stated that the cap on TIB licences with a Cray endorsement didn’t work and consequently we (Industry) have seen an increase in effort within this sector. He further believes that management are not fixing the overall problem.

Management pointed out that the increased effort among traditional inhabitants in 2004 (which is unquantified) was not a failure of the cap. No new licences were issued. It was also stated that the cap did not achieve what was desired but that it had been a valuable learning experience as it drew to the surface many important issues with regard to the TIB licensing system and management of that sector.

During the meeting several representatives from the traditional inhabitant sector suggested that a total hookah ban in the Torres Strait Protected Zone was the only way to solve the sustainability and effort issue. Their argument is that TRL stocks are critically endangered and must be protected for future years. In addition, there were many emotional comments suggesting that traditional inhabitant fishermen are struggling to survive and can barely make enough to feed their families.

Both Jim Prescott and Yimin Ye responded and suggested that a total hookah ban is probably not the best measure in terms of good fisheries management and they further advised that -

- Worldwide, fisheries management best practice begins with establishing a conservative target mortality/maximum sustainable yield. Then fishing effort is managed so that annual catch is as close to this level as possible. Resource is sustainable over the long term, and at the same time it is utilized as much as possible. This will provide maximum economic benefit to the community. They strongly suggested that a free-dive only fishery yield would fall far below this level.
- Effort should be spread across the whole fishery, that is, in both deeper and shallower waters, utilizing both hookah and free-dive methods, to avoid concentration of effort and possible conflict on a few reef tops as would be expected in a free-dive fishery only.
- In the event of a total hookah ban a live fishery would decline markedly. A live fishery should be encouraged and developed for two main reasons:
 1. It probably reduces fishing mortality because fishers miss some lobsters and take more time off to return live lobsters to port more frequently; and
 2. Maximises commercial value and optimum utilization of the catch (a live lobster is worth almost twice as much as a tail alone).

There were also comments put forward encouraging a constructive, positive attitude from all parties and the need for compromise on both sides. It was made clear that the non-TIB sector of Industry would find it very difficult to agree to further restrictions if the TIB sector continued to refuse management measures applied to this sector (accepting of course that this sector had proposed a very major effective effort reducing mechanism through the proposal to ban hookah completely).

In another initiative to try to resolve differences among sectors, Ray Moore provided the working group with some other options for TRL management for 2005. This is detailed in the following -

LOBSTER MANAGEMENT - SOME OTHER OPTIONS

- During free dive months licenses can use all of their tenders (December/ January ONLY).
- Licenses be given the option of being free dive only boats and can then use all of their tenders for the full season.
- Licenses are given a hookah endorsement (All sectors).

For example, a 5 tender license with a 40% reduction would be reduced to 3 in the hookah diving months. Its license package would be:

FXYJ-T1**H** *During Hookah Season*
 FXYJ-T2**H** *During Hookah Season*
 FXYJ-T3**H** *During Hookah Season*
 FXYJ-T4
 FXYJ-T5

If the licensee decided to be free diving only no **H** endorsement would be issued for that season and all five tenders could be used for the full season. If the licensee opted for hookah diving licenses 4 and 5 could only be operated in December and January.

The **H** endorsement would also be used in the TIB sector. This would allow control over the expansion of hookah diving in this sector.

- Comparison of 30% reduction/6 month season 40% reduction 8 month season

No.Tenders	30% (6 month season)			40% (8 month season)		
	Whole tenders	Months part tender		Whole tenders	Months part tender	
7	>4.9	4	5	>4.2	4	2
6	>4.2	4	1	>3.6	3	5
5	>3.5	3	3	>3.0	3	0
4	>2.8	2	5	>2.4	2	3
3	>2.1	2	1	>1.8	1	6
2	>1.4	1	2	>1.2	1	2
1	>1	1		>1	1	

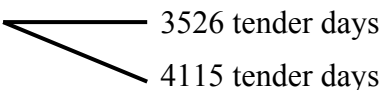
Jim Prescott then calculated the actual effect of these measures in the following table (Table 1). After latent effort vessels have been taken out, and average number of tender days for the eight-month season in 2004 has been used for the calculation.

Table 1. Effort reduction examples for the Torres Strait Tropical rock lobster fishery.

	No. tenders	2004 days		Active tenders		
		30%	40%	5300	51	
BOAT		6 Mos	78	8 Mos	104	
Easy	1	1	78	1	104	1
COBIA	1	1	78	1	104	2
DIVEMASTER II	1	1	78	1	104	3
Condor	1	1	78	1	104	4
Idlehour	1	1	78	1	104	5
Boojong	1	1	78	1	104	6
Jeskeemer	2	1.4	109	1.2	125	7
Tommy Arrow	2	1.4	109	1.2	125	8
Jodee	2	1.4	109	1.2	125	9
BARRA STAR	2	1.4	109	1.2	125	10
Lesley Ann	2	1.4	109	1.2	125	11
Sea Otter	3	2.1	164	1.8	187	12
Moon Mouse	3	2.1	164	1.8	187	13
Norlaus	3	2.1	164	1.8	187	14
Teisan Y	3	2.1	164	1.8	187	15
LADY JANE II	3	2.1	164	1.8	187	16
Audrey M	3	2.1	164	1.8	187	17
Centurion	4	2.8	218	2.4	249	18
PEGASUS	4	2.8	218	2.4	249	19
SaiNarm	4	2.8	218	2.4	249	20
Reality III	4	2.8	218	2.4	249	21
Terumi	5	3.5	273	3	312	22
Shogun	7	4.9	382	4.2	436	23
	62	total days	3523		4115	
	51		2898		3385	

Tender reduction	Length of hookah season						
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20%	1320	1980	2640	3300	3959	4619	5279
25%	1247	1871	2494	3118	3741	4365	4988
30%	1174	1761	2349	2936	3523	4110	4697
35%	1102	1652	2203	2754	3305	3855	4406
40%	1029	1543	2058	2572	3086	3601	4115
45%	956	1434	1912	2390	2868	3346	3824
50%	883	1325	1767	2208	2650	3092	3533
55%	811	1216	1621	2026	2432	2837	3242
60%	738	1107	1476	1845	2214	2582	2951

Therefore, the **two options** for Industry open for discussion for the 2005 were as follows –

1. 6 month closure and a 30% reduction for 2005 
 - 3526 tender days
 - 4115 tender days
2. 8 month closure and a 40% reduction for 2005

From a fisheries management point of view the 6 month closure and the 30% reduction is the better option, equating to total tender days around 3500 assuming fishers did not fish harder in the time available to them to make up for the reductions (some of this would almost certainly happen). The 3500 days comes close to bringing effort back to the 3055 days fished during the 2002 season when CSIRO stated that with the increase in size limit, closed season, and extended hookah ban the stock would recover from its then low abundance **provided effort did not increase**. The other alternative equates to 4115 tender days. However, Industry expressed that the 30% 6 month season option disadvantages the four licenses that only have Torres Strait endorsements. Industry representatives had already advised the meeting that they would have to consult all other stakeholders before making any decisions.

Action Item: Industry to further consult with other members on Options 1 and 2 and reply back to management with a decision by 21 October 2004.

Discussion in the meeting turned to control of effort within the traditional inhabitant (TIB) sector. **Three issues** were considered -

1. Implementing a cap on TIB licenses. (A report on the TIB Amnesty conducted in mid-2005 was to be presented late in the afternoon by Ken Bedford under other business).
2. Implementing a cap on TIB hookahs. At present it is thought that there are 50–60 hookahs utilized within the TIB sector. This was thought by management to be consistent with the general view among islanders that hookah diving was having the greatest impact on the stock. It would not limit the activities of those who currently used a hookah but would prevent the wholesale use of hookahs by all TIB licences.

Action Item: TSRA Community fisher representatives to further consult with Island communities on ‘*What might be a reasonable number of hookahs to be used by the TIB sector?*’.

3. Implementing a cap on the number of TIB Freezer Boats. At present there are 4, with another application being considered. It was noted that the cap could be the current number of large boats or another number that would allow for some growth in freezer boat operations in the TIB sector. It was again noted that this suggestion was consistent with the general feeling that the operations of the freezer boats and tenders were more efficient and put more stress on the stock.

Action Item: TSRA Community fisher representatives to further consult with Island communities on ‘*What might be a reasonable number of freezer boats to be used by the TIB sector?*’.

Action Item: The traditional inhabitant (TIB) sector (TSRA Community Fisher Representatives) to further consult with other stakeholders on issues discussed and reply back to management with a decision by 21 October 2004.

The meeting turned to discuss the issue of closing “*sensitive areas*” to be closed to hookah diving and negotiations proved difficult between the two sectors. Initial discussions began

with Map C² with some specific areas been seemingly acceptable to both sectors. Whilst the chair, John Marrington tried to finalise agreement on a particular area and put forward a recommendation to the TSFMAC – discussions often turned to concerns surrounding the ‘*fairness and equity*’ of treatment to all Island communities within the given area, which made finding consensus on areas extremely difficult.

Mr Manai Nona became annoyed and suggested that whilst both sectors couldn’t agree on particular areas to be closed hookahs, we (the whole TRL fishery) should revert to introducing a total hookah ban. He further stated that this would solve these problems. Jim Prescott responded strongly saying that a total hookah ban in the Torres Strait is not a good management option stressing again the economic consequences it was likely to have for the industry as a whole and particularly for some individuals who might be bankrupted by it. He stated that if the working group kept going back over the same old ground, the meeting will make no progress made on management arrangements for next 2005 fishing season, and no major issues will be resolved. It was stressed that putting the PZJA in a position where it is forced to decide between two extremely different set of alternatives was not a good outcome.

The chair closed any further discussions on this issue and it was agreed that AFMA would draft up proposals on the map, for further consultation between both sectors. The areas proposed in which further consultation is necessary are illustrated in Attachment 5.

<p>Action Item: AFMA to draft up proposals on the map, for further consultation between both sectors.</p>
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The meeting then revisited the resolutions from the TSRA Community Fisher Group Meeting held at the TSRA Board Room on 01 October 2004 – Resolution #7. Ban on night diving from last light to first light (6pm – 6am).

Management was not opposed to this proposal however Jim Prescott pointed out that enforcing it would be difficult because it is an activity taking place at night. It would be difficult because coastwatch is not as active at night and it would be hard to discriminate between legal night spearing and night diving.

Industry noted that it would limit the opportunity to catch live lobsters which, if divers couldn’t hookah dive, would be hard to obtain.

Randall Owens from GBRMPA noted that there is existing legislation on the Queensland coast that prohibits night diving by making it illegal to take fish by diving using a light source.

<p>Action Item: AFMA/ QB&FP) to provide wordings on the ban on night diving from last light to first light (6pm – 6am). It was agreed that wording should be along the lines of ‘<i>....it is illegal to dive for tropical rock lobster with a light source</i>’.</p>
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<p>Agenda Item 5: Final Management Objectives</p>
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² Map C was one of three proposals included in the record of the first informal TRL fishery meeting held on 3rd August 2004, in the TSRA Board Room to discuss hookah closed areas. Copies of this record can be obtained from Mr Jim Prescott at the AFMA Thursday Island office.

John Kung presented this Agenda Item.

This Agenda Item had only just commenced when Mr Peter Yorkston (TSRA Supporting) announced that as “*there was nothing else that the traditional inhabitant sector could contribute in regards to management arrangements for 2005*”. He further stated “*we (the TSRA Community Fisher Representatives and observers) would now be leaving the room*”, stood up and did so.

The rest of the TRL working group remained, however the meeting was effectively closed at 1530.

<p>Action Item: AFMA (Jim Prescott) to distribute final management objectives ‘<i>out of session</i>’ to TRL working group members for comments.</p>

<p>Agenda Item 6: Pre-recruit Harvest and Lobster Growout</p>
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Matt Kenway (Australian Institute of Marine Sciences – AIMS) provided a presentation of ‘*The potential of rock lobster aquaculture in Torres Strait*’ to the members of the TRL working group who remained. Copies of the presentation are available for interested persons from AFMA Thursday Island office, please contact Mr Sascha Taylor.

<p>Agenda Item 7: Other Business</p>

Mr Ken Bedford provided the remaining members of the TRL working group a report on the recent TIB Amnesty. A copy of the report can be found in Attachment 6.

D) *NEXT MEETING*

Not discussed.
