

<b>TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Meeting 56 5-6 October 2011</b>
<b>MEETING ADMINISTRATION</b> Correspondence	Agenda Item No. 1.3 <b>FOR NOTING</b>

## **PURPOSE**

That the TSSAC **NOTE** the correspondence since TSSAC meeting no. 55.

## **BACKGROUND**

Correspondence since TSSAC no. 54 includes:

- Letter from the TSSAC to the TSRA regarding turtle and dugong research for management (Attachment 1.3A)
- Letter from the TSSAC to PNG NFA regarding release of sandfish research to the TSSAC in confidence and the importance of collaboration between NFA and the TSSAC on hand collectables research (Attachment 1.3B).
- Letter from the Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee to the TSSAC regarding research priorities in the fishery (Attachment 1.3C)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**1.3.1** That the TSSAC **NOTE** the correspondence since TSSAC meeting no. 55.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

**Torres Strait**  
**PZJA**

Protected Zone  
Joint Authority



**Queensland**  
Government



8 September 2011

Mr Damian Miley  
TSRA LSMU  
PO Box 261  
Thursday Island Q4875

**Re: Turtle and dugong research for management**

Dear Mr Miley,

The Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) would like to notify the Torres Strait Regional Authority that it has called for an independent review of turtle and dugong research to inform management decisions for Torres Strait fisheries. The Committee has made this decision based on concerns regarding the current level of availability and/or knowledge of data relevant to management of turtle and dugong stocks in the Torres Strait.

The TSSAC provides scientific advice to the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) relevant to fisheries management in the Torres Strait Protected Zone. The PZJA is ultimately responsible for management of turtle and dugong as set out in the Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984 and therefore requires scientific information, along with traditional ecological knowledge, to manage the fishery effectively.

In particular, the TSSAC is concerned that the current level of knowledge of turtle and dugong populations in the Torres Strait is unavailable or inadequate for managing the stocks sustainably and that research findings from past and present projects are not readily available to management agencies.

As a result, the TSSAC has recommended that a review be undertaken to analyse all available data from past and present turtle and dugong research and to identify knowledge gaps and priority research areas within the Torres Strait Turtle and Dugong fisheries. As you are aware, the Dugong Task Force is undertaking a similar review to identify the knowledge and research gaps for dugong populations within Queensland. It is proposed that this review will therefore focus on providing the PZJA with an overview of the knowledge gaps and research needs within the Torres Strait Turtle Fishery.

As the TSRA is responsible for driving the community-based management planning process for the Torres Strait Turtle and Dugong fisheries, the TSSAC would like to extend an invitation to work collaboratively with TSRA in considering this review. I have attached a draft Project Brief including terms of reference for your comment.

The TSSAC will be discussing this at our next meeting on 5-6 October 2011 and it would be helpful if you could please provide any comments to the TSRA participant to communicate at the meeting.

## Attachment 1.3A

For further information please contact me via [Annabel.jones@afma.gov.au](mailto:Annabel.jones@afma.gov.au) or (07) 4069 1990.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Cartwright". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mr Ian Cartwright  
Chair – Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee.

AFMA, PO Box 376, Thursday Island. Q4875: Email [Rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au](mailto:Rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au)



Queensland  
Government



14 September 2011

Mr Sylvester Pokajam  
PNG NFA  
PO Box 2016  
Port Moresby,  
National Capital District, Papua New Guinea

Cc: Mr Ludwig Kumoru

Dear Sylvester,

**Re: Sandfish and other Torres Strait Fisheries Research**

The Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC), on behalf of the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA), has been funding research into shared stocks of hand collectables including Bêche de Mer species such as sandfish. In this regard, the Committee is keen to increase its collaboration with PNG on research, including options for joint funding, where appropriate. We consider that it is important and necessary to collaborate on research of depleted shared stocks, particularly sandfish, to assist with their recovery.

Cooperation between both countries in the management of the shared stock of sandfish is important in ensuring stock recovery and economic viability of the fishery and is a responsibility of both fisheries agencies in both countries under the obligations of the Torres Strait Treaty.

It is recognised that the sandfish stock on Warrior Reef is shared between both jurisdictions and that this species of Bêche de Mer has importance for PNG as well as Australia. The key to management of the stock lies in a full understanding of fishery impacts and stock recovery in both jurisdictions so that more holistic approach to management can be applied.

The TSSAC are aware that PNG NFA have been conducting research on sandfish on Warrior Reef during the fishery closure in PNG and respectfully requests that the reports on sandfish research in PNG are released to the TSSAC. These reports would be considered internally by the TSSAC in confidence for the express purposes of better understanding the status and dynamics of sandfish stocks in the PNG jurisdiction and to enable the TSSAC to better assess and consider which Bêche de Mer research proposals to recommend to AFMA for funding. The reports will not be distributed outside of the TSSAC and you can be assured that all TSSAC members will be aware of the sensitivities when handling fisheries information.

PNG is a formal member of the TSSAC and as such have been provided with information and reports on all information on Torres Strait research in the Australian jurisdiction, including that on sandfish. While it is early days, Australia has met with some success with the rebuilding sandfish

## Attachment 1.3B

stocks within its jurisdiction over the past few years and we look forward to cooperating to rebuild stocks on Warrior Reef.

I shall be facilitating the FFA Management Options Consultation in Honiara next month, which may afford an opportunity for us to catch up in person. In the meantime, I remain very impressed with the progress being made by PNG NFA.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Cartwright', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Mr Ian Cartwright  
Chair – Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee.

AFMA, PO Box7051 , Canberra BC 2610. Email [Rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au](mailto:Rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au)

Mr Ian Cartwright  
TSSAC Chairman  
C/- Rebecca Williams  
Australian Fisheries Management Authority  
PO BOX 7051  
CANBERRA BC ACT 2600

Dear Mr Cartwright

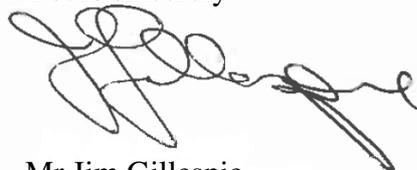
Thankyou for providing the Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC) with the opportunity to comment on research priorities outlined within the Annual Operational Plan. The TSPMAC discussed these priorities at its' 12<sup>th</sup> meeting on 1 June 2011 and is in agreement that these priorities are still relevant to the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF).

The TSPMAC would also like to bring to your attention the TSPF Harvest Strategy which was approved by the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) on 8 July 2011. The harvest strategy has a short term target of maximum sustainable yield and long term target of maximum economic yield, which will be pursued once research triggers within the harvest strategy are reached.

During the harvest strategy approval process, the PZJA were advised that this approach would only be suitable if further measures were identified to help stimulate the fishery. Accordingly, the TSPMAC is now investigating ways to improve effort uptake in the fishery and the potential economic, social and sustainability implications of proposed changes to management. As part of this process, the TSPMAC may seek further advice from the TSSAC regarding potential proposals, new research priorities and applications for funding.

Please don't hesitate to contact myself or Lisa Cocking, Senior Management Officer at AFMA on (02) 6225 5451 or [lisa.cocking@afma.gov.au](mailto:lisa.cocking@afma.gov.au) if you should require more information regarding the above matters.

Yours sincerely



Mr Jim Gillespie  
Chairman of the Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee

19 September 2011