

TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE	Meeting 57 7-8 March 2012
MEETING ADMINISTRATION Correspondence	Agenda Item No. 1.3 FOR NOTING

PURPOSE

That the TSSAC **NOTE** the correspondence since TSSAC meeting no. 56.

BACKGROUND

Correspondence since TSSAC no. 56 includes:

- Letter from the TSSAC to the TSRA summarising discussion held at TSSAC 56 (Attachment 1.3A).
- Letter from the TSSAC to Dr Leung regarding the outcome of pre-proposal submission (Attachment 1.3B).
- Letter from the TSSAC to Mr Loban regarding the outcome of pre-proposal submission (Attachment 1.3C).
- Letter from the TSSAC to AFMA/DeFries regarding the outcome of pre-proposal submission (Attachment 1.3D).
- Letter from the TSSAC to Dr Dennis regarding the outcome of pre-proposal submission (Attachment 1.3E).
- Letter from the TSSAC to Dr Chuwen regarding the outcome of pre-proposal submission (Attachment 1.3F).
- Letter from the TSSAC to PNG NFA regarding cross-jurisdictional research project support (Attachment 1.3G).
- Reply letter from the PNG NFA to the TSSAC supporting cross-jurisdictional research (Attachment 1.3H).

RECOMMENDATION

1.3.1 That the TSSAC **NOTE** the correspondence since TSSAC meeting no. 56.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

ATTACHMENT A

Torres Strait
PZJA

Protected Zone
Joint Authority



Queensland
Government



5 December 2011

Mr Damien Miley

TSRA LSMU
PO Box 261
Thursday Island Q4875

Re. Turtle and Dugong research in the Torres Strait

Dear Mr Miley,

Thank you for taking the time to advise the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) on 6 October 2011 about the turtle and dugong research currently underway in the Torres Strait. I am writing to confirm the key points from our discussion.

The TSSAC recognise the sensitivities surrounding turtle and dugong data collected by the rangers and note that external agencies will be provided with catch trend data for their information. However, note that without a known baseline, trend data alone may not be effective in providing information on which to base appropriate management decisions.

The TSSAC is aware that aerial surveys are undertaken to assist in estimating dugong numbers and believes that these are critical to the continuing collection of data for these species. The Committee also believes that it is important for the results from the survey to be combined with catch data to provide a more complete view of stock status and sustainable management. The Committee acknowledges the work of the TSRA and rangers in collecting catch data for both turtle and dugong, and notes the challenges to be faced when analysing and standardizing the data and distinguishing trends.

The TSSAC also have a number of questions regarding the data and associated trends which we look forward to discussing further at future meetings. The TSSAC would be interested to know if there is a good estimate of the catch for which records are not being collected. The Committee would also be interested to know if there are plans to investigate the correlation of seagrass dieback and dugong natural mortality or relocation.

I note that the TSRA is holding a research workshop in the first half of 2012 for Traditional Inhabitants on current research on turtle and dugong. TSSAC members will be encouraged to suggest possible items to be included in the workshop to the TSRA. In addition, I note that at our next meeting in March next year, the TSRA will report on the outcomes of the workshop and several researchers undertaking work on turtle and dugong in the Torres Strait would present their research directly to the TSSAC. This would better inform further discussions on the need for a subsequent independent review of past and present turtle and dugong scientific research that has been proposed by the TSSAC.

I am pleased that we agreed that an independent peer review of past and present research into turtle and dugong would be a useful activity and I look forward to working with you further in this area.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Cartwright". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Mr Ian Cartwright
Chair
Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee

Torres Strait
PZJA

Protected Zone
Joint Authority

31 October 2011

Dr Luke Leung

School of Agriculture and Food Sciences
University of Queensland
GATTON
QLD 4343



Queensland
Government



Re: Building Indigenous capacity in fisheries research, monitoring and evaluation

Dear Dr Leung,

Thank you for your application submitted for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC). The Committee met on 6 October 2011 and assessed your application against various criteria focussed on feasibility, relevance, attractiveness and Torres Strait Islander engagement.

Unfortunately, your pre-proposal was unsuccessful at this time and the Committee will not be recommending you submit a full proposal for the following reasons:

- The Committee had concerns relating to the potential impact on stocks that may result from the development of a market chain for Barramundi Cod in the Torres Strait. This is based on the biological characteristics of the species, and the knowledge that some Traditional Inhabitant communities believe this species should not be harvested.
- The Committee identified the relatively low catch of Barramundi Cod in Torres Strait as a risk in that it is likely to be difficult to get the number of samples needed to complete the proposed research effectively.
- The cost of the research is high compared to the value of the fishery and the benefits that this research would generate.

Communications concerning TSSAC research applications should be addressed to the Executive Officer for the Committee:

Rebecca Williams

Box 7051,

Canberra BC,

Canberra ACT 2610.

Facsimile: (02) 6225 5550 or email to rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Williams

Executive Officer, TSSAC

ATTACHMENT C

Torres Strait
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31 October 2011

Dr Heron Loban

Lecturer, School of Law
Faculty of Law, Business and Creative Arts
James Cook University
PO Box 6811
Cairns 4870

Re: Building Indigenous capacity in fisheries research, monitoring and evaluation

Dear Dr Loban,

Thank you for your application submitted for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC). The Committee met on 6 October 2011 and assessed your application against various criteria focussed on feasibility, relevance, attractiveness and Torres Strait Islander engagement.

Unfortunately, your pre-proposal was unsuccessful at this time and the Committee will not be recommending you submit a full proposal. The Committee was unable to assess the pre-proposal for the following reasons:

- The objectives of the research were unclear
- There were no clear outcomes and deliverables
- The proposed methodology was unclear and appeared limited
- There was no evidence of consultation with communities regarding the research.

Communications concerning TSSAC research applications should be addressed to the Executive Officer for the Committee:

Rebecca Williams

Box 7051,

Canberra BC,

Canberra ACT 2610.

Facsimile: (02) 6225 5550 or email to rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Williams

Executive Officer, TSSAC

Torres Strait
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Joint Authority



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Government



14 October 2011

Melissa Brown

Australian Fisheries Management Authority
Canberra BC
Canberra
ACT 2610

Re: Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the Torres Strait: gaining an understanding of Indigenous communities perceptions regarding boat and gear length in the Torres Strait Prawn fishery

Dear Mrs Brown,

Thank you for your application for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC). The Committee met on 6 October 2011 and assessed your application on various criteria focussed on feasibility, relevance, attractiveness and Torres Strait Islander engagement.

The Committee recognise that there is a need for research to address the issue of economic viability of the Torres Strait Prawn fishery but felt that the proposed research should be an objective investigation of the perceptions of Traditional Inhabitants regarding the proposed boat and gear trials. The TSSAC therefore invites you to submit a full proposal and requests that you address the following:

- The focus of the research should be amended so that it is an objective investigation of the perceptions of Traditional Inhabitants regarding proposed boat and gear trails in the Torres Strait Prawn fishery. The research should not focus on educating communities on the boat and gear trials.
- When conducting the study, researchers should approach the Torres Strait Regional Authority board members as well as community members to gain perceptions from all levels of the communities.
- Clearly state the risks of not being able to complete the research, particularly potential low participation by communities, and include mitigation strategies for these risks.
- Develop clear and measurable budgeted milestones.

The TSSAC notes that a Torres Strait Islander will be employed as a co-investigator.

Given the extent of the project, the TSSAC is prepared to provide funding of \$60 000 if the proposal is revised in line with the above.

When submitting the full proposal for consideration, the TSSAC asks that you include a cover letter outlining how you have addressed the above requests, and in so doing refer to the relevant text in the application.

I understand that you would like to undertake the research within the 1011/12 financial year. Given this, can you please submit your full proposal to me no later than 7 November 2011. If you have any questions regarding the comments above or during further development of your application, please contact myself, the TSSAC Executive Officer: Rebecca Williams, AFMA, Box 7051, Canberra BC, Canberra ACT 2610. Ph: (02) 6225 5422 Email: rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Williams', written in a cursive style.

Rebecca Williams

Executive Officer, TSSAC



31 October 2011

Mr Darren Dennis

CMAR, Ecosciences Precinct
GPO Box 2583
Brisbane
QLD 4001

Re: Building Indigenous capacity in fisheries research, monitoring and evaluation

Dear Mr Dennis,

Thank you for your application submitted for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC). The Committee met on 6 October 2011 and assessed your application against various criteria focussed on feasibility, relevance, attractiveness and Torres Strait Islander engagement.

I am pleased to inform you that the TSSAC has endorsed your application and invites you to submit a full proposal. In developing your full proposal, the Committee requests that you revise the scope of the project so that it is split into two phases. The first phase would be based on objective 4 *'assess the influence of each abiotic and biotic variable on lobster abundance and design a protocol for future island-based seabed habitat monitoring'* and would comprise a desktop study to determine what data should be collected. This phase could include planning for the engagement of communities for phase 2.

Phase 2 would involve the training program with Traditional Inhabitants as detailed in the original proposal and would be funded in a separate process based on the outcomes from the first phase. The TSSAC would be pleased to consider a proposal for Phase 2 of the project in the future.

The Committee also requests that you address the following in your proposal:

- The project should (if possible) include other commercial fisheries species in the Torres Strait as well as Tropical Rock Lobster.
- Give thought to how analyses will be included in the Stock Assessment and Management Strategy Evaluation to ensure that they are worthwhile inclusions. It is important that the strength of the relationship between environmental status and lobster recruitment strength and stock abundance is determined before work is done to integrate them into other assessments.
- Address the issue of continuity of funding to collect environmental data once this project is complete.
- Investigate the possibility of including data from data loggers being used in the AIMS project, funded by the National Environment Research Program.

- Remove the literature review element of the proposal as the Committee feels that related projects have adequately undertaken literature reviews and another review would be of limited value and could be duplicative. Accordingly, a further literature review will not be covered in the research budget.

In addition, can you please indicate whether it would be possible to begin this project in the 2011/12 financial year, after March 2012.

The TSSAC will initially fund phase one of the project and will consider the outcomes before committing funds for the second phase. Given this, please focus on Phase 1 in your full proposal, noting that you plan to continue the research (Phase 2) and will seek further funding at that time.

When submitting the full proposal for consideration, the TSSAC asks that you include a cover letter outlining how you have addressed the above requests, and in so doing refer to the relevant text in the application.

Can you please submit your full proposal to me no later than 10 February 2012. If you have any questions regarding the comments above or during further development of your application, please contact myself, the TSSAC Executive Officer: Rebecca Williams, AFMA, Box 7051, Canberra BC, Canberra ACT 2610. Ph: (02) 6225 5422 Email: rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Williams

Executive Officer, TSSAC

ATTACHMENT F

Torres Strait
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Queensland
Government



31 October 2011

Dr Ben Chuwen

Fisheries, Aquaculture and Coasts
Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies
University of Tasmania
Private Bag 49
Hobart
TAS 7001

Re: Building Indigenous capacity in fisheries research, monitoring and evaluation

Dear Dr Chuwen,

Thank you for your application submitted for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC). The Committee met on 6 October 2011 and assessed your application against various criteria focussed on feasibility, relevance, attractiveness and Torres Strait Islander engagement.

I am pleased to inform you that the TSSAC has endorsed your application and invites you to submit a full proposal. In developing your full proposal, the Committee requests that you reduce the scope of the project to focus on objective 2 '*Implement a remote digital data collection program using a novel mobile phone application approach to enable easy and accurate data collection by commercial and traditional fisheries*'. The project should take the form of a pilot study on the use of mobile phones for data collection, focussing on one to two commercial fisheries in the Torres Strait.

The Committee also requests that you address the following in your proposal:

- Include Jeremy Lyle as a co-investigator for the research.
- Investigate and document other research on remote data collection in fisheries using mobile phones.
- Include management agencies as end-users of the research and demonstrate how data will be used by such agencies for management decisions.
- Detail the costs involved to implement the system including any ongoing costs of data collection and continuing use of mobile phones.
- Investigate how this technology would work for smaller operators in Torres Strait.
- Include clear, deliverable milestones for monitoring the progress of the project
- Allow more time for consultation with the IT specialist, Dr Klaas Hartman.

The TSSAC is able to provide funding of \$90 000 for the 2012/13 financial year and \$90 000 for the 2012/2014 financial year.

In developing your full proposal, you are strongly encouraged to work with the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), Fisheries Queensland and AFMA when developing the full proposal. The relevant contact details are as follows:

TSRA: Shane Fava, shane.fava@tsra.gov.au, (07) 4069 0700

Fisheries Queensland: Ian Jacobsen, ian.jacobsen@deedi.gov.au, (07) 3225 1851

AFMA: Annabel Jones, Annabel.jones@afma.gov.au, (07) 4069 1990

When submitting the full proposal for consideration, the TSSAC asks that you include a cover letter outlining how you have addressed the above requests, and in so doing refer to the relevant text in the application.

Can you please submit your full proposal to me no later than 10 February 2012. If you have any questions regarding the comments above or during further development of your application, please contact myself, the TSSAC Executive Officer: Rebecca Williams, AFMA, Box 7051, Canberra BC, Canberra ACT 2610. Ph: (02) 6225 5422 Email: rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Williams', written in a cursive style.

Rebecca Williams

Executive Officer, TSSAC

ATTACHMENT G

Torres Strait
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13/10/11

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

Re: Support for a Cross-Jurisdictional Subsistence Fishing Research Project

Dear Mr Pokajam,

I write to seek the consideration NFA of joint involvement in a research project with CSIRO/Dr Sara Busilacchi, concerning the characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea). The research project has recently been funded by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority and CSIRO and is strongly supported by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee. In particular the TSSAC believes the research project to be of benefit by:

- addressing the significant gaps in our knowledge of the levels of subsistence fishing in both PNG and Australia and the potential interactions between traditional and commercial fishing (except for turtle and dugong being considered by Ranger Programs on the Australian side);
- investigating options for co-management of traditional fishing in the Protected Zone; and
- is of importance to the continuing collaboration in research on fisheries stocks shared between PNG and Australia.

The research has the potential to provide the following benefits for management of fish stocks in both PNG and Australian jurisdictions of the Torres Strait Protected Zone by providing:

- more accurate fisheries assessments
- a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of both Torres Strait and PNG communities with respect to traditional fisheries
- greater knowledge of how subsistence use of shared fishery species between PNG and Australia impacts on commercial fisheries
- training and employment for Traditional Inhabitants in data collection methods and experience in scientific surveys

The TSSAC requests that you consider co-funding the research project to extend its benefits and outcomes. We believe that Dr Busilacchi has prepared a proposal for your consideration. In addition, we request that NFA provide logistic support for Dr Busilacchi wherever possible to ensure the shared benefits of this research project.

For further information please contact me via Annabel.jones@afma.gov.au or 61 7 4069 1990.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Cartwright". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr Ian Cartwright
Chair – Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee.

AFMA, PO Box 376, Thursday Island. Q4875: Email Rebecca.williams@afma.gov.au



NATIONAL FISHERIES AUTHORITY

PO Box 2016, Port Moresby, National Capital District, Papua New Guinea
Telephone: 3212643, Facsimile: 320 2061, Email: nfa@fisheries.gov.pg

OFFICE OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

28th October 2010

Ian Cartwright
Chair- Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee
Australia Fisheries Management Authority,
P.O. Box 7051,
CANBERRA,
BC 2610

Dear Mr. Ian,

Re: Support for a Cross-Jurisdictional Subsistence Fishing Research Project

In reference to your letter dated 13th October 2011, I am pleased to inform you that PNG is very mindful of the Article 23 commercial and traditional fisheries shared between both PNG and Australia. Although so much is known about the commercial aspect of these fisheries in terms of their issues and management arrangements, very little is known about the traditional subsistence use of these fisheries and their impact on the traditional way of life on both side of the TSPZ. This project will definitely provide the missing information in our knowledge, and more so better our knowledge and understanding of the use of subsistence fisheries and its socio-economic implications on the commercial fisheries for better management of the traditional fisheries.

We would however appreciate the target group in the study to include the communities in the non treaty village area as well. This is due to the fact that most of the fishing is done by the fishers from the non treaty village's area in those from various settlements in Daru.

In the spirit of the treaty, PNG has always provided financial support to any research project or works done on the PNG's side of jurisdiction. In the same manner, PNG will continue its support and collaboration with Australia in this current project. With this understanding, NFA on behalf of the PNG Government is committing a total of \$114, 844.00 towards the project. In addition, NFA will also provide the logistic support when ever needed.

Thank you and looking forward to collaborate and participate in the project.

Yours Sincerely



Sylvester B. Pokajam
Managing Director