



**TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NO. 58**

MINUTES

22 JUNE 2012

CHAIR: MR IAN CARTWRIGHT

These are draft minutes for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee. If no comments are received by 12 September 2012 these minutes will be ratified at the next meeting of the TSSAC .

Prepared by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority on behalf of the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority



Final Agenda

1. Meeting Administration

- 1.1. Preliminaries - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Chairs Opening
Remarks/Meeting attendance/Declaration of Interests/Apologies
- 1.2. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- 1.3. Correspondence (AFMA- for noting)
- 1.4. Ratification of TSSAC 57 Minutes (AFMA - for decision)
- 1.5. Action Items from TSSAC 57 (AFMA – for noting)

2. TSSAC Procedures

- 2.1. Strategic Research Plan mid-term review (AFMA-for decision)
- 2.2. 2012 Annual Operational Plan (AFMA- for decision)
- 2.3. Research priorities updating table (Mick O’Neil/AFMA- for decision)

3. Research

- 3.1. Current project update (AFMA – for noting)
- 3.2. 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 Budget (AFMA – for noting)
- 3.3. Planned Projects for funding 12/13 FY (AFMA – for decision)
 - 3.3.1. Characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea)
 - 3.3.2. Independent review of Turtle of Dugong research
 - 3.3.3. Desktop Study on the effects of Prawn trawling/ERA for Prawn fishery
 - 3.3.4. Data catalogue for Torres Strait research
- 3.4. Call for pre-proposals for the 2013/14 financial year (AFMA- for decision)
- 3.5. Tropical Rock Lobster Management Strategy Evaluation project – final report (AFMA- for decision)

4. Update from Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees

- 4.1. TSFMAC (AFMA – for noting)
- 4.2. TSFFWG (AFMA- for noting)

5. Other Business

- 5.1 Confirmation of TSSAC no. 59



ATTENDANCE

The following members and observers were in attendance at TSSAC No. 58:

Members

Name	Role	Declaration of Interest
Mr Ian Cartwright	Chairperson	Consultant, AFMA Commissioner
Dr Annabel Jones	AFMA Representative	Manager, Thursday Island
Ms Sarah Kirkcaldie	Executive Officer (AFMA)	Senior Management Officer, Canberra
Dr Michael O'Neill	Scientist	Agri Science QLD, QDAFF
Dr Roland Pitcher	Scientist	CSIRO researcher
Dr Stephen Newman	Scientist	WA fisheries scientist
Ms Sevaly Sen	Social/Economics Member	Consultant
Mr Steve Hall	TSRA representative	Fisheries Policy Officer
Ms Suzanne Stratton	TSRA representative	Economic Development and Fisheries Program Manager
Dr Ian Jacobsen	Fisheries Queensland Representative	Fisheries Queensland Fisheries Manager
Ms Rebecca Williams	AFMA, observer	Senior Management Officer, Canberra
Ms Alicia Sabatino	AFMA, observer	Administration Officer, Thursday Island
Mr Damien Miley	TSRA observer	Program Manager, Land and Sea Management Unit (LSMU)

Apologies

Name	Role	Declaration of Interest
Mr Vic McGrath	LSMU, TSRA, observer	TSRA Land and Sea Management
Mr Gavin Mosby	Traditional Inhabitant Representative	IFAC, TIB Fisher (Masig), Traditional Owner
Mr Tony Vass	Industry Representative	Ex Mackerel Licence Holder
Mr Ludwig Kumoru	PNG Representative	PNG National Fisheries Authority



DECISION RECORD – TSSAC #58 (22nd June 2012)

- 1.4.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC No. 57 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
- 2.1.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to finalise the Strategic Research Plan 2012-2014 for Torres Strait fisheries;
- 2.2.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to finalise the 2012 Operational Plan for Torres Strait fisheries;
- 2.3.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to finalise a table to be used by all Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees to update research priorities, noting that it is a living document and will be adapted as improvements are found;
- 3.3.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend that AFMA fund a further year of research in 2012/13 for the project '*Characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea)*;
- 3.3.2 The TSSAC **REAFFIRMED** their agreement to recommend that AFMA fund an independent review of Turtle and Dugong research in the Torres Strait;
- 3.3.3 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend that AFMA provide funding to update the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Ecological Risk Assessment;
- 3.4.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** on a process for calling for research pre-proposals for funding in the 2013/2014 financial year; and
- 3.5.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to the approve the report for the research project ' An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster *Panulirus ornatus* fishery

ACTION ITEMS

#	Action Item	Item No.	Champion	Due Date
1.	Circulate the report from the national Dugong Taskforce to TSSAC members when available.	1.5 (55.1.5)	When available	AFMA
2.	Dr Pitcher to discuss how James Butler's project on climate change could be value added by specifically looking at Torres Strait fisheries. To be discussed under the Climate Change agenda item at TSSAC 59.	1.5 (56.5.5)	Dr Pitcher	TSSAC 59
3.	The Committee to discuss a possible desktop study on the effects of prawn trawling on reefs in Torres Strait at TSSAC 59.	1.5 (54.5.6)	AFMA	TSSAC 59
4.	Finalise the Strategic Research Plan 2012-2014 for Torres Strait fisheries.	2.1	AFMA	20 July 2012
5.	Finalise the 2012 Annual Operational Plan for Torres Strait fisheries.	2.2	AFMA	20 July 2012
6.	The TSSAC to further discuss the 2012 Annual Operational Plan at TSSAC 59.	2.2	AFMA	TSSAC 59



7.	The research priorities table to be discussed at Torres Strait fishery Working Group and Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group meetings. These groups will be asked to provide input into the development of Resource Assessment Classes (RAC) for the table. Dr O'Neil will also assist with developing the RAC.	2.3	AFMA and Dr O'Neil	TSSAC 59
8.	The research priorities table in the Annual Operational Plan to be linked with the research priorities updating table. A footnote will be added to each table ensuring the connection is made.	2.3	AFMA	13 July 2012
9.	AFMA to write a paper for discussion at TSSAC 59 on how research projects are assessed during the research and on completion of a project.	3.1	AFMA	TSSAC 59
10.	AFMA to circulate the final report from CSIRO on the Sandfish experimental catch surveys on Warrior Reef and the Committee to evaluate this out of session.	3.1	AFMA and TSSAC members	30 June 2012
11.	AFMA to contact CSIRO regarding the draft final report for the Reef Gardens project.	3.1	AFMA	6 July 2012
12.	Discuss the methodology for Dr Busilacchi's project ' <i>Characterisations of Traditional Subsistence fisheries in the treaty villages in Papua New Guinea</i> ', with the researcher.	3.3.1	Ms Sen	10 October 2012
13.	AFMA to contact Dr Helene Marsh to determine if she would co-operate with an independent review of Turtle and Dugong research.	3.3.2	AFMA	14 August 2012
14.	If Dr Marsh would co-operate with an independent review of Turtle and Dugong research, a preliminary review of the information and data available for a full peer review of Turtle and Dugong research to be conducted out-of-session. TSSAC members to suggest potential researchers for this task and AFMA to contract the research to occur before TSSAC 59.	3.3.2	AFMA	7 September 2012
15.	If the preliminary study indicates that there is enough information and data access to undertake a full review of Turtle and Dugong research, then the TSSAC will develop an Expression of Interest (EOI), targeting a group of peer reviewers, out-of-session. Applications will be discussed at TSSAC 59.	3.3.2	AFMA	28 September 2012
16.	The Traditional Inhabitant representative to present a paper detailing this sector's concerns regarding the amount of debris on the sea floor resulting from trawling in the Torres Strait.	3.3.3	Traditional Inhabitant representative	TSSAC 59
17.	A paper outlining the background of the issue of Prawn trawler rubbish and the specific research question to be answered will be submitted for discussion at the next TSSAC meeting.	3.3.3	AFMA	TSSAC 59



18.	AFMA will discuss the updating of the ERA with the Torres Strait Prawn manager and provide information to TSSAC members out-of-session.	3.3.3	AFMA	14 September 2012
19.	A data catalogue for Torres Strait research to be discussed at TSSAC 59.	3.3.4	AFMA	TSSAC 59
20.	A call for research pre-proposals will be conducted in late July 2012 and will highlight areas of high priority for Torres Strait fisheries.	3.4	AFMA	July 31 2012
21.	The TSSAC comments on the draft final report ' <i>An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster fishery</i> ' will be provided to the researcher to incorporate into the final report.	3.5	AFMA	29 June 2012
22.	AFMA to circulate the final report ' <i>an Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation for the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster fishery</i> ' to TSSAC members when available.	3.5	AFMA	When available
23.	The proforma for assessing projects will be updated to remove 'outcomes' (as it is difficult to assess a project on how the inputs have been implemented) and to include a reference to the cultural protocols document.	3.5	AFMA	31 July 2012



MINUTES

Agenda Item 1.2 Review and adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted as above.

Agenda Item 1.3 Correspondence

The Committee **NOTED** the correspondence listed in the meeting papers:

- Letter from TSSAC to the Dr Ben Chuwen regarding the outcome of his proposal submission;
- Letter from TSSAC to Mr Darren Dennis requesting a full proposal;
- Letter from TSSAC to Mr Antony De Fries regarding the outcome of his proposal submission;
- Letter from the TSSAC to Dr Mark Hamann thanking him for his presentation on Turtles in the Torres Strait and East Coast of Australia; and
- Letter from TSSAC to Professor Helene Marsh thanking her for the video presentation on the status of Dugong in the Torres Strait

Agenda Item 1.4 Ratification of TSSAC 57 Minutes

1.4.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC meeting No.57 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Agenda Item 1.5 Action Items from Previous Meeting TSSAC 57

The TSSAC **NOTED** progress of the action items from TSSAC No.57. Action items were complete with the following exceptions:

Action item 2, to circulate the report from the national taskforce for dugong to TSSAC members when available, is ongoing as the report has not yet been released (**Action item 1**);

Action item 3, for Dr Pitcher to discuss how James Butler's project on climate change could be value added by specifically looking at Torres Strait fisheries, will be discussed under the Climate Change agenda item at TSSAC 58 (**Action item 2**);

Action item 4, for the Committee to discuss a possible desktop study on the effects of prawn trawling on reefs in Torres Strait, will be carried over the TSSC 58 (**Action item 3**);

Action item 13, for the Committee to review changes made to the Strategic Research Plan as part of the mid-term review, was completed under agenda item 2.1;

Action item 14, for the research priorities updating table to be further refined, was addressed under agenda item 2.3; and

Action item 15, for the Committee to discuss the process for undertaking an independent review of Turtle and Dugong research in the Torres Strait, was discussed under agenda item 3.3.2.

Agenda Item 2 TSSAC Procedures

Agenda Item 2.1 Strategic Research Plan mid-term review

2.1.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to finalise the Strategic Research Plan 2012 -2014, subject to a few minor amendments.



The Committee requested that the date on the front of the Plan reflect the years to which it refers, being 2012-2014. References to the Cultural Protocols document developed by the TSSAC, and the final report commissioned by the TSSAC, will also be included in the Plan (**Action item 4**).

Agenda Item 2.2 2012 Annual Operational Plan

The Committee noted that since the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) was developed, the Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee and the Hand Collectables Working Group had provided feedback on the research priorities listed in the AOP. Members provided further comments on the draft 2012 AOP which will be incorporated in the document (**Action item 5**). The document will then be finalised and made available to researchers wishing to submit research pre-proposals for the 2013/14 financial year.

The main changes to the research priorities table were for the Torres Strait Prawn fishery. The need will be changed to Tactical given the poor economic position the fishery is in. Description of effort in the fishery will be changed to indicate that 20000 days have been used instead of 40000 days being allocated, to emphasise the low level of effort in the fishery.

The Committee will also discuss the 2012 AOP further at TSSAC 59 (**Action item 6**).

2.2.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to finalise the 2012 Operational Plan for Torres Strait fisheries

Agenda Item 2.3 Research Priorities table

Members agreed to finalise the research priorities updating table but noted that it will be further refined in the future as needed. The TSSAC noted the priorities table is a living document and as priorities shift the table will be adapted accordingly. Given that the updating table is to be used by Torres Strait fisheries working groups and committees to keep research priorities up to date, members highlighted a need for consistency between the updating table and the research priorities listed in the Annual Operational Plan. The Committee will liaise with Torres Strait fishery working groups and the Tropical Rock Lobster resource assessment group out of session to develop the resource assessment classes featured in the table (**Action item 7**). Dr O'Neill also offered to further assist with the development of the table.

The Committee also highlighted the importance of linking the table with the research priorities listed in the Annual Operational Plan, and a footnote will be added to the table to ensure this connection is made (**Action item 8**).

2.3.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to finalise a table to be used by all Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees to update research priorities, noting that it is a living document and will be adapted as improvements are found;

Agenda Item 3 - Research

3.1 Current Project Update

The Committee discussed how final reports should be evaluated and whether it was necessary for an independent peer review to be conducted for every research project. Whilst the Committee agreed that it is important to get adequate review on projects prior to sign off, requirements for reports may differ between projects and peer review may not be appropriate in every case. There is also a cost involved with Peer review. The Fisheries Research and Development Committee (FRDC) uses peer review and along with a beneficiary report which allows the end-users of the project to communicate its benefits to the project sponsors, This method could potentially be used by the TSSAC as part of the assessment process.

The Committee agreed that there is a need for clear guidance for Principal Investigators on what is required for final reports and perhaps a clearer understanding that milestone



payments may be withheld if key outcomes are not addressed to the satisfaction of the Committee.

The TSSAC requested that AFMA write a paper for the next meeting which covers the following points (**Action item 9**):

- Levels of criteria for final approval of projects prior to final approval (eg. technical merit)
- Suggested template for final reports
- Potential use of the FRDC beneficiary letter and assessment process to determine the beneficiary outputs and outcomes
- Ability to adapt the assessment process based on the nature of each project
- Ability to have flexibility within the assessment process so that it can be adapted to a project whilst it is in progress

Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) Stock Assessment and TAC Setting (CSIRO)

The TSSAC noted the ongoing progress of the project with a final field survey report due to AFMA by 30 June 2012. The project is on time and on budget.

Torres Strait Islander involvement in Research, Development and Education (Calogeras)

The Principal Investigator (PI) has experienced delays in travelling to the Torres Strait due to increased sensitivity on the topic of Turtle and Dugong after a 7:30 report (ABC) news item negatively portrayed the treatment of Turtles and Dugongs in the area. The PI is scheduled to travel to the Torres Strait in late June.

Characterising Traditional fisheries in PNG (CSIRO/Busilacchi)

The Committee noted the final report provided on the first year of this research and discussed further funding for the project under agenda item 3.3.1. The PI was scheduled to travel to Daru but this trip was cancelled due to food shortages on the Island. They will now conduct this trip in August. The PI is having more success in travelling to villages and getting some preliminary data, and has received support from the Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority (PNGNFA).

Sandfish experimental catch surveys on Warrior Reef (CSIRO)

The Committee noted that the final report was due on 30 June and would be sent out-of-session for evaluation (**Action item 10**).

Reef Gardens (CSIRO)

Members noted that this project remains behind schedule due to unavoidable delays. The AFMA is expecting a draft final report as soon as possible and will contact the CSIRO about this (**Action item 11**).

Lobster Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) (CSIRO)

The Committee discussed and evaluated the final report '*An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster *Panulirus ornatus* fishery*' under agenda item 3.5.

Agenda Item 3.2 - 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 Budget (AFMA – for noting)

The TSSAC noted that the 2011/12 research budget will be fully spent if the contract for the new Survey, Stock Assessment and MSE for the Torres Strait Rock Lobster (TRL) Fishery is



signed before the end of the financial year. Members agreed to commit a further \$70,000 in 2012/13 to the project '*Characterising Traditional fisheries in PNG*'.

Agenda Item 3.3 - Planned Project for funding

Agenda Item 3.3.1 - Characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea)

The TSSAC discussed the progress report submitted by the PI for this project. There were some concerns about the methodology used and the socio-economics member on the TSSAC will discuss this with the PI and provide some guidance (**Action item 12**). The Committee noted that despite the difficulty in collecting data from PNG, the PI is becoming more successful in visiting Treaty villages and the PNGNFA is providing more support for the project.

3.3.1.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend that AFMA fund a further year of research in 2012/13 for the project '*Characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea)*;

Agenda item 3.3.2 - Independent review of Turtle and Dugong

The Committee further discussed the need for an independent review of Turtle and Dugong research. The majority of the Committee support an independent review and believe it would objectively look at whether current research is able to adequately inform the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) of the effectiveness of current management arrangements for the Turtle and Dugong fisheries.

The TSRA reiterated that it does not support the review at this stage but would be prepared to discuss the need for a review after turtle and dugong research funded through the National Environment Research Program (NERP) has been completed in three years time. The TSRA indicated that they would not take part in any review before this time.

Those members of the Committee who support the review believe that it would assist and add to the next three years of research funded by NERP. The Chair re-iterated that the objective of the review is not to criticise planned work, but would provide for additional external ideas and the opportunity for specialists to value add to current and future research.

Given that the review will require the support and co-operation of current Torres Strait Turtle and Dugong researchers, members agreed that AFMA should contact Professor Helene Marsh, a key researcher in this field, to determine if she would be willing to co-operate (**Action item 13**). If Professor Marsh indicates her support for an independent review then a preliminary study will be conducted to determine if enough data would be available and accessible in order to conduct a full review. The review would be undertaken by a single researcher with a budget of \$10 000. TSSAC members are to suggest potential researchers for this out-of-session, so that the study can be completed before the next TSSAC meeting (**Action item 14**). If the preliminary study indicates that there is enough information and data access to undertake a full review of Turtle and Dugong research, then the TSSAC will develop an Expression of Interest (EOI), targeting a group of peer reviewers, out-of-session (**Action item 15**). At the TSSAC October meeting, the Committee will consider applicants and secure a contract with the review being conducted within the first six months of 2012/2013. The EOI needs to be clear on what information the reviewer would have access to and include a Terms of Reference.



If Professor Marsh is not willing to be involved, the TSSAC will not request funding for any work at this time and the need for an independent review of Turtle and Dugong research will be discussed at the next PZJA Standing Committee meeting.

3.3.2.1 The TSSAC **REAFFIRMED** their agreement to recommend that AFMA fund an independent review of Turtle and Dugong research in the Torres Strait;

Agenda Item 3.3.3 – Desktop Study on the effects of Prawn trawling/ ERA for Prawn Fishery

The TSSAC discussed a previously earmarked project regarding an Ecological Risk Assessment for the Torres Strait Prawn fishery and a desktop study on the effect of Prawn trawling on reefs. The TSRA passed on comments from the Traditional Inhabitant member on the TSSAC who was unable to attend the meeting. Traditional Inhabitants in the Torres Strait view trawling as extremely detrimental to the environment and results in large amounts of rubbish on the sea floor. The TSSAC requested that the Traditional Inhabitant representative present at paper at the next meeting with a clear explanation regarding these concerns (**Action item 16**).

The Committee agreed to recommend that AFMA fund a \$20,000 project to update the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA). Members noted that Traditional Inhabitants remain concerned about rubbish from Prawn trawlers but agreed that there are currently no funds available for research on this issue. A paper outlining the background of this issue and the specific research question will be submitted for discussion at the next TSSAC meeting (**Action item 17**).

3.3.3.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend that AFMA provide funding to update the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Ecological Risk Assessment

AFMA will discuss the updating of the ERA with the Torres Strait Prawn manager and provide information to TSSAC members out-of-session (**Action item 18**).

Agenda Item 3.3.4 - Data Catalogue for Torres Strait research

The TSSAC noted that no further progress had been made on this project and it would be further discussed at TSSAC 59 (**Action item 19**).

Agenda Item 3.4 – Call for pre-proposals for the 2013/2014

The TSSAC noted that the process for calling for research pre-proposals in 2011 was efficient and effective and agreed to adopt the same process for the call for pre-proposals for the 2013/2014 financial year. A call for research pre-proposals will be conducted in late July 2012 and will highlight areas of high priority for Torres Strait fisheries (**Action item 20**). The pre-proposals will be discussed at the October TSSAC meeting.

Agenda Item 3.5 – Tropical Rock Lobster Management Strategy Evaluation project

The Committee discussed and evaluated the final report “*An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster *Panulirus ornatus* fishery*”. Members agreed that the project met the objectives and milestones of the research proposal. It was delivered on time and on budget and the information from the project can be used to inform management decisions. The Committee would like to have some feedback on the project from Traditional Inhabitants as well as their understanding of the non-technical summary of the research. The Committee also requested that the cultural protocols document and guide be referred to in the final report. The researchers will be provided with the



comments from the TSSAC (**Action item 21**). The TSRA are satisfied that consultation with and extension to communities was undertaken. The final report will be submitted to AFMA and this will be circulated to TSSAC members (**Action item 22**).

The proforma for assessing projects will be updated to remove 'outcomes' (as it is difficult to assess a project on how the inputs have been implemented) and to include a reference to the cultural protocols document (**Action item 23**).

3.5.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to approve the report for the research project: *'An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster Panulirus ornatus fishery*

Agenda Item 4.1 - Update from Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee

The TSSAC noted the major outcomes from the latest Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee meeting.

Agenda Item 4.2 - Update from Torres Strait Finfish Working Group

The TSFFWG noted the update from the recent Torres Strait Finfish Working Group meeting.

Agenda Item 5.1 - Confirmation of next TSSAC

TSSAC 59 will be held on the 10th-11th October 2012 in Brisbane. The meeting will go for 1.5 days starting at 11am on Wednesday 10th October and finishing around 3pm on Thursday 11th October 2012.

The Chair, on behalf of the TSSAC, thanked Dr Annabel Jones for all her dedication, enthusiasm and hard work as the AFMA member on the Committee and also as AFMA's Manager of Torres Strait fisheries.

