



Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee

Meeting #58

Teleconference, 22 June 2012

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

Chair: Mr Ian Cartwright

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

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The 58th meeting of the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) was held via teleconference on 22 June 2012.

Major outcomes

The TSSAC:

- agreed to finalise the Strategic Research Plan 2012-2014 for Torres Strait fisheries;
- agreed to finalise the 2012 Operational Plan for Torres Strait fisheries;
- agreed to finalise a table to be used by all Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees to update research priorities;
- agreed to recommend that AFMA provide funding to update the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Ecological Risk Assessment;
- 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)*'
- reaffirmed their agreement to recommend that AFMA fund an independent review of Turtle and Dugong research in the Torres Strait; and
- agreed on a process for calling for research pre-proposals for funding in the 2013/2014 financial year.

TSSAC processes

Strategic Research Plan mid-term review

The Committee noted the amendments made to the Plan and agreed to finalise the Strategic Research Plan 2012-2014 for Torres Strait fisheries.

2012 Annual Operational Plan

Members provided comments on the draft 2012 Operational Plan for Torres Strait fisheries. The Committee agreed that the initial comments should be incorporated and the Operational Plan will be tabled at the next meeting for face-to-face discussion.

Research priorities updating table

Members agreed to finalise the research priorities updating table but noted that it will be further refined in the future as needed. 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.

TSSAC Research

Current project update

The Committee noted that all research projects currently funded by AFMA and supported by the TSSAC are progressing and generally on schedule.

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

The Committee noted the progress report for the first stage of this project and the achievements of the Principal Investigator in meeting with PNG treaty communities and establishing networks to be able to undertake monitoring activities. The Committee agreed to recommend that AFMA fund a second year of research in 2012/13.

Independent review of Turtle and Dugong Research

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 has been completed in three years time. The TSRA indicated that they would not take part in any review before this time.

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 be involved. If Professor Marsh indicated 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. 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.

Desktop study on the effects of Prawn trawling/Ecological Risk Assessment for Prawn Fishery

The Committee agreed to recommend that AFMA fund a project to update the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Ecological Risk Assessment. 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. This will be discussed further at the next TSSAC meeting.

Tropical Rock Lobster Management Strategy Evaluation project – final report

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 provided comments to AFMA and agreed that the project met the objectives and milestones of the research proposal.

The Committee had a general discussion on how final reports should be evaluated and whether it was necessary for an independent peer review to be conducted. It was agreed that AFMA should provide a paper on this issue to be discussed at the next meeting of the TSSAC.

Call for pre-proposals for the 2013/14 financial year

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. The pre-proposals will be discussed at the October TSSAC meeting.

Update from AFMA working groups and committees

The Committee was provided with an update and noted the major outcomes from the Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee and the Torres Strait Finfish Working Group.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Cartwright', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mr Ian Cartwright
TSSAC Chair

In attendance at TSSAC 58 were:

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
Dr Ian Jacobsen	Fisheries Queensland Representative	Fisheries Queensland Fisheries Manager
Mr Steve Hall	TSRA representative	Fisheries Policy Officer
Ms Suzanne Stratton	TSRA, observer	Program Manager (Economic Development & Fisheries)
Ms Rebecca Williams	AFMA, observer	Senior Management Officer, Canberra
Ms Alicia Sabatino	AFMA, observer	Administrative Officer, AFMA, Thursday Island
Mr Damien Miley	Land and Sea Management Unit, TSRA, observer	Program Manager (Environmental Management)

Apologies

Name	Role	Declaration of Interest
Mr Tony Vass	Industry Representative	Ex Mackerel Licence Holder
Mr Gavin Mosby	Traditional Inhabitant representative	Indigenous Fisheries Advisory Committee member
Mr Vic McGrath	Land and Sea Management Unit, TSRA observer	Senior Community Liaison Officer
Mr Ludwig Kumoru	PNG Representative	PNG National Fisheries Authority