

FOREWORD:

Torres Strait environmental and marine resource knowledge has developed over thousands of years and is an interwoven component of ongoing tradition and custom. This knowledge is as vital to the lives of Torres Strait Islanders today as it ever was. The role of Torres Strait Islanders in caring for marine resources has sustained them for thousands of years.

The Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) is responsible for management of commercial and traditional fishing in the Australian area of the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ) and designated adjacent Torres Strait waters. The Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) is responsible for the day to day management of Torres Strait fisheries on behalf of the PZJA.

The Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) provides strategic advice to the PZJA with regard to research priorities for the Torres Strait region and provides AFMA with recommendations for research funding. The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) is a member of the PZJA and is responsible for representing the interests of Torres Strait Islanders in PZJA decisions in accordance with its legislative responsibilities. The TSRA also coordinates Torres Strait Islander representation on PZJA consultative groups as well as facilitating communication pathways for PZJA research information.

AFMA, the TSRA and the TSSAC recognise that Torres Strait Islander knowledge of the waterways and ecology of the marine resources is critical for the effective management of Torres Strait fisheries resources alongside Western science.

These guidelines for fisheries research in Torres Strait are based on the shared interests of Torres Strait Islanders, AFMA and the TSRA in the sustainability of the Torres Strait marine environment and its resources as well as the need to provide economic development opportunities for Torres Strait Islanders. The guidelines are based on the recommendations of Professor Martin Nakata in his report on Cultural Protocols for Torres Strait.

In publishing these guidelines we embrace a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect for both Torres Strait Islander and Western scientific environmental and marine resource knowledge and practices.

CONTACTS:

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MORE INFORMATION:

TSRA website for general Islander priorities and goals at www.tsra.gov.au/torres-strait--npa--regional-plan
PZJA website for information on PZJA fisheries at www.pzja.gov.au

Jones, A & Barnett, B 2006, Guidelines for ethical and effective communication for researchers working in Torres Strait, CRC Reef Research Centre. (www.crcorres.com/publications/technical/T5.1_Report_Final.pdf).

Nakata, M, 2010. Report on Cultural Protocols Project, 2010. www.pzja.gov.au/resources/publications)

A GUIDE FOR FISHERIES RESEARCHERS WORKING IN TORRES STRAIT



2012

Torres Strait
PZJA
Protected Zone
Joint Authority



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Australian Government


Queensland
Government



GUIDING FRAMEWORK

OUR SHARED VISION

Sustainability of the marine resources of the Torres Strait Islands

OUR SHARED PURPOSE

To achieve world-class standards for ethical practices in fisheries research and for effective communication with participants of research projects in the Torres Strait community

Our Shared Vision

Commitment to and understanding of long-term sustainability issues

GOAL

- Mutual recognition and respect for Torres Strait Islander and scientific knowledge, methods, practices, goals, and realities
- Recognition of connections between Islander marine knowledge, ongoing custom, and social, economic and political futures.

Torres Strait Knowledge and Intellectual Property

Commitment to safeguard interests of both parties

GOAL

- Researchers recognise and respect for Torres Strait Islander knowledge and customs that have developed over thousands of years
- Torres Strait Islanders recognise and respect that Western sciences and researchers have a long tradition of evidence-based knowledge practices
- Torres Strait Traditional Inhabitant interests are considered as part of the assessment of research projects

A Central Repository

Commitment to make relevant information accessible to Torres Strait Islanders and future researchers

GOAL

- Copies of all relevant research materials are deposited in a central location
- All materials deposited have clearly stated access and use conditions

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS

- Submit pre-proposals to TSSAC for in-principle approval
- Negotiate with a central contact person regarding possible sites and participants and ensure that the community is aware of the proposed research and its implications for communities
- Negotiate fieldwork arrangements with recommended contacts at your chosen site. This may include consulting with the Prescribed Body Corporate and fishermen associations for the relevant community/ies, where appropriate. Check requirements for individual communities with the TSRA.
- Submit full research proposals including relevant ethic applications to TSSAC if requested including:
 - Details of ethical practices that will be used in the study
 - Details on the treatment of Indigenous sensitivities (if applicable)
 - Clear commitment to attribute all knowledge and information gathered from Torres Strait Islanders to those Islanders
 - Clear commitment to Torres Strait communities to inform, update and publish research findings in a language that is accessible to Islanders
 - Clear statements of the opportunities for ongoing knowledge development and training for Islanders in fisheries
 - Details of schedules and fieldwork that allow for extra lead-time, longer engagements in the community and appropriate response times
 - Commitment to respect traditions and customs
- Conduct fieldwork when approval, clearances and permissions have been finalised if appropriate
- Communicate research elements in plain English, and use appropriate formats for intended audiences or tasks
- Take care with content and language of Information Sheets and Consent Forms, also with approaches to achieving prior and informed consent, and be satisfied that participants have opportunities to withdraw at any time
- Respect the Australian Privacy Act in research activities

ROLE OF THE TSSAC

The Torres Strait Scientific Committee will:

- Assess whether adopted procedures and clearances for AFMA-funded projects have been fulfilled
- Be satisfied that the ethical aspects of the proposed research meets best practice standards
- Assess the level of privacy, special measures for confidentiality, treatment of secret/sacred areas, anonymity, refusals, family and traditional commitments, independence of researcher, etc.
- Request that permissions/clearance forms be provided (if appropriate) before recommending funding
- Assess processes for attributing information and knowledge sources
- Assess funding applications for the opportunities for Islander involvement, employment, education, or training
- Assess commitments to agreed field arrangements that ensure project timelines can be met
- Assess commitments in the application to the appropriate level of dissemination of information
- Continue to monitor adherence of researchers to ethical processes during the course of the project