



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



**HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP
MEETING NO. 7
2 OCTOBER 2013**

AFMA CONFERENCE ROOM, THURSDAY ISLAND

MINUTES

CHAIR: ANDY BODSWORTH

These are **DRAFT** minutes and should not be considered as final until they are ratified by all members of the HCWG out of session.



Queensland
Government



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

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTIBLES WORKING GROUP (HCWG) MEETING #7
2 October 2013
AFMA Conference Room, Pearls Building, Thursday Island

MEETING START TIMES: 9:00am – 5:00pm

Morning Tea: 10:30-10:45; Lunch 12:00-13:00; Afternoon Tea 15:00 – 15:15

AGENDA

1. Preliminaries

- 1.1. Apologies/ Adoption of agenda
- 1.2. Conflict of interest declarations
- 1.3. Ratification of HCWG #6 Minutes
- 1.4. Action items from HCWG #6
- 1.5. Native Title Update (TSRA – For Noting)
- 1.6. Correspondence (AFMA – For Noting)

2. 2013 Fishery update

- 2.1. Trochus (AFMA – For Noting)
- 2.2. Pearl shell (AFMA – For Noting)
- 2.3. Beche-De-Mer (AFMA – For Noting)

3. Future Management Options/ Considerations

- 3.1. Review of Developmental Hookah permits (AFMA – For Discussion)
- 3.2. Pearl Boat Replacement Policy (AFMA – For Discussion)
- 3.3. Pearl Shell size limit (AFMA – For Discussion)

4. Research

- 4.1. Sea Cucumber Species Guide (CSIRO – For Discussion)
- 4.2. East Coast MSE Beche de mer studies (CSIRO – For Noting)
- 4.3. Research priorities for the BDM Fishery and collaborative opportunities with PNG (AFMA – For Discussion)

5. Compliance

- 5.1. Foreign compliance update (AFMA – For Noting)
- 5.2. Domestic compliance update (QLD – For Noting)

6. Reports

- 6.1. Strategic Assessment (AFMA – For Noting)
- 6.2. Fisheries and Important Habitats in Torres Strait (CSIRO – For Noting)

7. Other Business

- 7.1. Date of next meeting

Individuals wishing to attend the meeting as an observer are required to contact HCWG Executive Officer – Kylie Tonon (kylie.tonon@afma.gov.au).



ATTENDANCE

Table 1 outlines the members and observers in attendance at Torres Strait Hand Collectables Working Group No 7 and any conflict of interest declarations.

Table 1: Attendance at the HCWG No 7 and declared interests.

Members

Name	Role/ Organisation	Declared Interest
Andy Bodsworth	Chairperson (temporary)	Put in proposal for TPF profitability and flow of benefits into Torres Strait Island Communities.
Kylie Tonon	Executive Officer/AFMA	No direct interest
Shane Fava	AFMA Representative/AFMA	No direct interest
Mr John Adams	TSRA Representative/TSRA	No direct interest
Mr Jeremy Smith	TSRA Representative/TSRA	No direct interest
Mr Kiwat Lui	Cluster Representative/TSRA	TSRA Board Member for St Pauls, Moa Island
Mr Michael Passi	Cluster Representative/TSRA	TIB operator (?)
Mr Wrench Larry	Cluster Representative/TSRA	TIB operator (?)
Mr Will Bowman	TVH Industry Representative/Tasmanian Seafoods	Willing to learn about how to best utilise their licenses in the fishery.
Mr Nyall Ledger	TVH Industry Representative/Licence Holder	TVH operator for Beche de mer and buyer
Mr Tom Roberts	Queensland Fisheries Representative/QDAFF (via phone)	No direct interest
Mr Tim Skewes	Scientist/CSIRO	Research provider and instigator for BDM ID guide project

Observers

Name	Role	Declared Interest
Mr John Jones	AFMA Foreign Compliance	No direct interest
Mr Maluwap Nona	Cluster Representative/TSRA	Interest in creating new license for traditional owners
Mr Steve Hall	TSRA Representative/TSRA	No direct interest
Mr Neville Nakata	TSRA Representative/TSRA	No direct interest
Mr Ian Jacobsen	Queensland Fisheries Representative/QDAFF (via phone)	No direct interest
Mr Rusty Tully	TVH Industry Representative/Licence Holder	Pearl shell farmer that is interested in buying pearl shell
Ms Vanessa Drotini	TVH Industry Representative/Licence Holder	Vanessa and her husband own licenses in the pearl fishery.
Mr Shawn McAtamney	Processor/ Independent Seafood Producers	Processor/buyer for ISP seafoods including BDM product
Ms Floriana Bierro	TIB representative	TIB representative from Stephens Island and TSRA board member
Mr Harry Nona	TIB representative	TIB operator, interested in bringing in a boat to fish for sea cucumber
Mr Kura Stephen	TIB representative	TIB operator, fishes for finfish and sea cucumber



Apologies

Name	Role
Mr Ian Liviko	PNG National Fisheries Authority
Mr Kenny Bedford	TSRA Fisheries Portfolio Member

DECISION RECORD – HCWG NO. 7

The Hand Collectables Working Group (HCWG):

- 1) AGREED to ratify the minutes from HCWG No. 6 out of session;
- 2) AGREED that AFMA will work with QLD Fisheries to document key management issues and criteria for permitting hookah to collect White Teatfish. TSRA will then advise if they will take the lead on this issue; and
- 3) AGREED that if no one agency wants to lead the issue of the use of Hookah for White Teatfish, then the HCWG will recommend that the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) fund a BDM MSE focused on hookah use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The HCWG recommended:

- 4) To the Torres Strait Fishery Management Advisory Committee (TSFMAC) that the Pearl Shell Fishery Boat Replacement Policy is made consistent with the Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery Boat Replacement Policy.
- 5) That the PZJA investigate the feasibility for basing an AFMA Foreign Compliance officer at Yam Island and that AFMA raise the suggestion at the next Maritime Agencies Liaison Committee (MALC) meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

Action items from the HCWG No 7 are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Action items from HCWG No 7

#	Action Item	Agenda	Champion	Due Date
1)	HCWG to ratify the HCWG No 6 minutes out of session.	1.3	AFMA	30 October 2013
2)	TSRA to consult with communities regarding removing the 7m boat restriction for the Beche de Mer TIB sector.	HCWG 5 (amended at HCWG 7)	TSRA	Next TSRA community visits



3)	<p>a) AFMA to work with QLD Fisheries to document key management issues and criteria for permitting hookah use for collecting White Teatfish.</p> <p>b) TSRA to advise if they will take the lead on this issue.</p> <p>c) If no one agency wants to lead this, then the HCWG will recommend a research priority to fund a BDM MSE focused on hookah use.</p>	3.1	AFMA/QLD/TSRA	February 2014 (prior to next HCWG)
4)	AFMA to draft a graduate proposal to do a desktop study/literature review on <i>P. Maxima</i> size limits and the potential catch that can be taken from the Torres Strait at a 100mm size.	3.3	AFMA	December 2013
5)	<p>a) HCWG members to provide comment on research priorities for 2014-15 and AFMA to incorporate these into the next Annual Operational Plan.</p> <p>b) The Chair to write to the TSSAC identifying research priorities for the Hand Collectables Fishery.</p>	4.3	AFMA	March 2014
6)	The Chair to include the option for basing AFMA Foreign Compliance officers out at Yam Island in the Chairs Summary and that AFMA raise this suggestion at the next MALC meeting.	5.1	AFMA	Next MALC meeting (TBA)
7)	QLD Fisheries to follow up on a request from Mr Tully about catch limits for <i>P. Maxima</i> in QDAFF booklets.	5.2	QLD Fisheries	ASAP
8)	QLD to clarify the policy and legislative arrangements regarding TIB sector buying boats with funds from TVH operators. QLD to investigate pros and cons of this policy and if it is something that needs to change.	5.2	QLD Fisheries	ASAP
9)	AFMA to circulate the 2013 Strategic Assessment Report for the Beche de mer Fishery when completed.	6.1	AFMA	December 2013



Agenda Item 1: Preliminaries

Mr Andy Bodsworth opened the meeting around 9am after a prayer from Mr Kiwat Lui. Mr Bodsworth introduced himself as the temporary chair and provided a short introduction about himself and the desired outcomes for the meeting.

1.1 Apologies and adoption of the Agenda

1.2 Conflict of interest Declarations

The agenda was adopted with the addition of a Native Title update from TSRA and correspondence received. Apologies were noted from Kenny Bedford and a representative from Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority. Attendees, apologies and Conflict of Interest declarations are provided in Table 1.

1.3 Ratification of HCWG No 6 Minutes

Some Traditional Inhabitant members suggested that this was the first time they had seen the HCWG No 6 minutes and have not had sufficient time to review them. The group agreed to ratify the minutes from HCWG No 6 out of session.

ACTION ITEM 1: AFMA to circulate HCWG No 6 minutes to HCWG members. The HCWG members are to provide comment ASAP in order to ratify the minutes.

1.4 Action Items from HCWG No 6

AFMA explained that the majority of outstanding action items will be addressed through discussion at the HCWG No 7 meeting. TSRA requested that the reference to IFAC in the action items be changed to TSRA. A copy of the Action items from HCWG No 7 can be found in Table 2.

1.5 Native Title Update

TSRA acknowledged that the native title decision was handed down on 7 September 2013 that found that native title rights exist and relate to all users. Traditionally this includes the right to fish and that it be recognized under the native title act. The TSRA recommended that the HCWG keep this in mind throughout discussions.

Mr M Nona expressed that in the future, Traditional Owners will instruct agencies of the way forward in regards to fisheries management in the Torres Strait.

1.6 Correspondence

AFMA highlighted that correspondence had been received from Ms Drotini in relation to the Pearl Shell Boat Replacement Policy which will form part of discussions at Agenda Item 3.2.



Agenda Item 2: 2013 Fishery update

2.1 Trochus

There were no documented catch reports of any Trochus harvest for the 2013 season. Mr Passi explained that the lack of effort is due to a lack of interest in Trochus from buyers and low price. He recommended that the PZJA should invite Trochus buyers to the HCWG meeting so that participants can get a better understanding of the market drivers and business. Mr Jacobson suggested that HCWG should recommend to the TSSAC that a research priority in this fishery is to research global Trochus stocks and market trends. This suggestion was well received by the group and would be considered for research priorities under Agenda Item 4.3.

2.2 Pearl shell

The HCWG noted that there were insignificant amounts of pearl shell harvest reported in 2013 and that the HCWG would discuss items aimed to re-invigorate the Torres Strait Pearl Shell Fishery at Agenda Items 3.2 and 3.3.

2.3 Beche-de-mer

In 2013 there was continued interest in the collection of various sea cucumber species. The catches for 2013 (to 19 September) are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Torres Strait sea cucumber catch for 2013 (source: Processor docket book records).

Species	TAC (WWG kg)	Catch (WWG kg)	Available (WWG kg)
White Teatfish	15,000	3,202	11,798
Prickly Redfish	20,000	4,432	15,568
Blackfish	80,000	576	75,604
Redfish		3,776	
Golden Sandfish		44	

Mr M Nona mentioned that it is important for the TIB sector to know where catches come from for both business and sustainability reasons. AFMA and CSIRO explained that the docket books have space to record the areas where catches are taken, however this is not always recorded. In addition the areas are not specific to an island, but rather a region based on biogeography of the region and to maintain confidentiality.

It was recommended that AFMA monitor catch reporting through processor's docket books as opposed to focusing on the individual operator catches. However Mr Jacobson explained that the onus on individual fishers should not be removed as there needs to be checks and balances for compliance.

The Chair suggested that the HCWG recommend to the TSSAC to review the data collection and reporting system in the Torres Strait as a priority to underpin business development for Communities. The review should consider advancements in technology and look at the appropriateness of the current bio geographical zones for each fishery.



Ms Tonon mentioned that the black teatfish opening was still with the PZJA for decision and that AFMA will continue to keep operators informed of the progress. Ms Tonon and Mr Jacobson also highlighted that compulsory reporting is part of the trial and that this was closely linked with the PZJA decision to re-open this species to fishing in the future.

Ms Tonon explained that an outstanding action item on TACs for Blackfish and Deepwater Redfish will be progressed through the PZJA. AFMA also highlighted that some Beche de mer (BDM) species, including Black Teatfish, were recently classified as “Endangered” on the IUCN Red list. This will mean that it will be looked at more closely by e-NGOs and the Environment Department but there are no practical implications at this stage.

Mr McAtamney raised the point that high value exotic trade items such as BDM are under increasing pressure from Chinese consumers and e-NGOs to ensure they are from sustainable fisheries. He encouraged participants to consider the benefits of having the Torres Strait BDM fishery independently certified (e.g. Marine Stewardship Council certification) which will offer some level of protection against the change in the market and a competitive advantage for Torres Strait product.

Agenda Item 3: Future Management Options

3.1 Review of developmental hookah permits

Mr Fava explained that QLD Fisheries issued a number of developmental permits over two years to use hookah diving equipment in the White Teatfish fishery to inform management arrangements. An options paper was developed outlining ways to either implement or not implement hookah in the White Teatfish fishery. AFMA are waiting to see how successful the mandatory recording of the catch data is in the Black Teatfish opening trial using data sheets.

Mr Jacobson stated that QLD Fisheries would not be supportive of allowing White Teatfish to be taken with hookah before the PZJA gain information from the Black Teatfish trial.

Mr McAtamney questioned why the take of White Teatfish (which can only be fished with the use of hookah) is contingent on the Black Teatfish trial when management have set a 15 tonne sustainable limit. Mr Jacobson explained that the PZJA do not currently have a clear framework for implementing hookah use for everyone. He mentioned that the 15 tonnes was taken in approximately two months with the use of hookah and cannot justify opening hookah when the PZJA don't have the mandatory reporting requirements in place to ensure the PZJA can collect accurate and timely catch data and enforce closures.

Mr Jacobson also mentioned that the PZJA should not implement any measures that would affect the current export approval for the fishery. If White Teatfish arrangements are not sufficient to meet SEWPAC's requirements, there is a risk that the export approval could be removed for the whole BDM Fishery.

Mr Skewes explained that the 15 tonne white teatfish TAC is conservative and if the catch in one year was double the TAC it would not have a great impact on the stock as long as there



was no fishing the following year. Mr Skewes highlighted that the TAC is conservative and based on limited survey data but with three years of good quality catch and effort information, the TAC could be revised and possibly increased.

Mr Tully suggested that the PZJA should also consider any risk of a black market being established if hookah is permitted. This suggestion was rejected by Ms Berro who mentioned that her people are honest and would not participate in black market.

Mr Adams mentioned that the PZJA need to ensure that the social aspects including equity amongst communities that fish for White Teatfish and between TIB and TVH sectors. Mr Adams also suggested that compliance may be easier if hookah was allowed for the full Beche de mer fishery however. The TIB representatives preferred that hookah was only to be used for White Teatfish and therefore only White Teatfish should be landed if the processor sees that hookah is on board.

Mr McAtamney also suggested opening the White Teatfish for only a few weeks like as is done in the prawn fisheries. Mr Jacobson suggested that this could be a very short period if going from past experience.

The Chair suggested that to move this issue forward, a refined framework be developed as to the risks and management of the flow of benefits for implementing hookah use in the fishery. For the proposal to go through the TSFMAC and the PZJA, the framework will need to be further developed with minimum management requirements and tests that it will need to pass.

Mr Skewes explained that co-management harvest strategies have been discussed for some time and should be a high priority project for the fishery in relation to the use of hookah for White Teatfish. Mr M Nona agreed that this should be a high priority project and flagged at the TSSAC.

The Chair explained that two options exist for progressing this issue:

- a) develop a framework for implementing hookah for White Teatfish in smaller working group and put this through the TSFMAC or
- b) conduct a research project to look at this issue as part of a Management Strategy Evaluation Project.

Mr Fava explained that AFMA have explored the benefits and risks of this issue and presented various options for the last few years. He mentioned that AFMA do not currently have the capacity to drive this issue but AFMA could set up MOU with the processors to ensure that they report catch and only buy White Teatfish when hookah is on board.

Mr M Nona suggested that it is the responsibility of either TSRA or the Land and Sea Council to lead this issue. Mr Adams suggested this issue should be the responsibility of AFMA to lead.

The Chair suggested that if no agency is willing to lead the development of a framework then the issue should be put to an independent researcher to run a MSE for the use of hookah in the White Teatfish fishery. This was accepted by the group.



ACTION ITEM:

- d) AFMA to work with QLD Fisheries to document key management issues and criteria for permitting hookah use for collecting White Teatfish.
- e) TSRA to advise if they will take the lead on the assessment of implementing hookah for White Teatfish.
- f) If no one agency wants to lead the issue, then the HCWG will recommend a research priority to fund a BDM MSE focused on hookah use.

3.2 Pearl Boat Replacement Policy

Ms Tonon explained that the maximum size in the pearl shell boat replacement policy is six meters, unless approval is given to replace a boat larger than six meters with a boat of the same size or less. This becomes an issue for dual endorsed operators to replace their boat with a boat larger than 6m if the boat meets the replacement policy for the Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) fishery of 14m but not for the pearl shell fishery. In these instances, licence holders cannot fish their PL endorsement with the larger boat.

Mrs Drotini explained that there is demand for pearl from the Torres Strait and her and her husband plan to expand their current business to branch out to pearl farming to guarantee her pearl supply. This year they upgraded their vessel from the Catchalot (10.97m) to the Venture III (13.7m) to enable them to handle live lobster. There was no problem transferring the licence for the TRL fishery as vessels over 10m can upgrade to 14m, but as there is no upgrade allowed in the pearl fishery, they are not permitted to use their pearl endorsement on the Venture III. As a traditional inhabitant, she can obtain a TIB licence and would like to retain their PL endorsement and use it on their current boat.

Mr Tully explained that his pearl farm operation is looking to buy up to 3,000 pearl shell per year from Torres Strait communities at the rate of \$20 per shell. Mr Skewes explained that the Pearl Shell stock is surveyed when conducting the lobster surveys each year. He suggested that stocks have been variable over time, and are currently on the downward trend, but are likely to recover as it is a boom and bust type fishery. Tim suggested that there is still plenty of shell available and taking a few thousand shell is unlikely to affect the stocks.

The Chair proposed to the group that the policy be amended. QLD Fisheries agreed that it was worthwhile aligning the policies and there were no objections to this proposal from the group.

RECOMMENDATION

HCWG recommend to the TSFMAC that the pearl shell fishery boat replacement policy be made consistent with the TRL boat replacement policy.

3.3 Pearl Shell Size Limit



Ms Tonon explained that the current size limits for the gold-lipped pearl oyster, *Pinctata maxima*, is 130mm to 230mm, and there is a proposal to decrease the minimum size limit to 100mm which will allow the smaller, faster growing oysters to be harvested to provide maximum seeding potential from the shell.

Ms Tonon also explained that the Western Australian Pearl Shell Industry are currently allowed to take up to 15% of their P. Maxima quota at sizes between 100mm and 120mm. The trial is in its final year and the results have not yet been released.

Mr Tully explained that if he seed a shell today, he will harvest the first pearl in three years and harvest the next pearl a further two years after it is re-seeded. Mr Tully explained that he would not seed shells that were 100mm but rather grow them out to seedable size on longlines with the aim to increase the production of shell when they spawn.

Mr Tully also highlighted that although the size of the shell is important, he would not buy any shell that had a hinge size exceeding 15mm because any shell above this size is considered to be too old for beginning the breeding cycle at the farm.

The group discussed possible management arrangements that would apply if a 100mm size limit was introduced, such as limiting the amount of shell taken at 100mm. Mr Skewes indicated that assessing the risk of reducing the size limit would be difficult given that pearlshell were protandrous hermaphrodites (change from male to female), and suggested that there would need to be further information gained about how this change could affect stocks. Mr Fava suggested that AFMA could develop a proposal for a graduate to do a desktop study of pearl shell in the Torres Strait to better inform the HCWG on whether to recommend decreasing the minimum shell size. The study should also include evaluation of the results of the WA 100mm trial. This was supported by the group.

Ms Drotini mentioned that an AFMA graduate had previously collated pearl shell data from the Torres Strait and East Coast. This included information about how x-raying can affect the growth of the Pearl shell. AFMA will follow up on this as part of graduate proposal.

ACTION ITEM:

AFMA to draft a graduate proposal to do a desktop study/literature review on P. Maxima size limits and the potential catch that can be taken from the Torres Strait at a 100mm size.

Agenda item 4: Research

4.1 Sea cucumber species ID Guide

Mr Skewes gave a presentation highlighting the differences in various sea cucumber species and why an identification guide is important as there are numerous species that look similar.

Mr Fava mentioned that AFMA have developed a questionnaire to help identify features that would be useful in the ID guide and the proposed format. There was a suggestion that for



factories, individual species posters work well and that an identification sticker for dinghies with measurements for the size limits would also be useful.

Mr Skewes suggested that mockups will be done by early next year. The TSRA indicated that the communities should provide feedback on the guides before a final is developed and that they will be able to get feedback from communities as part of their upcoming community visits.

4.2 East Coast Management Strategy Evaluation

The members of the HCWG noted a presentation by Mr Skewes on the East Coast Management Strategy Evaluation for Beche de mer.

4.3 Research Priorities for the BDM Fishery

Mr Fava explained that it is important to ensure the research needs for the fishery as up to date as possible as the TSSAC evaluate project pre-proposals for funding against the priorities for the individual fishery. The Chair suggested that it would be good to identify what the knowledge gaps and risks are in the fishery.

Mr Smith highlighted that the research items that had been raised in discussion earlier in the meeting include the data collection management system and considering a Management Strategy Evaluation looking at the use of hookah in for White Teatfish.

Mr Fava emphasised that the data collection system is also being discussed in other Torres Strait Fisheries. He suggested it would be good to prioritise the development of a system that would work across different fisheries. Mr Smith also highlighted that any data collection system needs to meet current legislative arrangements.

Mr Fava explained that there are also a few pre-proposals looking at the compliance and social aspects of Torres Strait fisheries including a project from Dr Busilacchi that proposes to be done with collaboration with PNG. Mr Fava mentioned that it is important to get PNG on board and should keep them in the back of the mind.

Mr McAtamny explained that Stephen Island are restricted in what they can catch (i.e. they only catch four species of sea cucumber or finfish) and therefore have a contained geographic footprint to test MSE in regards to a rotational catch policy to minimise the risk of localised depletion.

Mr Smith also highlighted an earlier research priority that was identified to look at stocks of pearl shell and any effects of reducing the size limit to 100mm.

Mr Fava suggested that as the Annual Operational Plan does not need to be updated until the end of the 2013-14 financial year, that AFMA chase members for input to the research priorities closer to the time. This was supported by the group.



ACTION ITEM

- 1) AFMA to chase up HCWG members for comment on research priorities for 2014-15 and incorporate these into the next Annual Operational Plan.
- 2) The Chair to write to the TSSAC identifying research priorities for the Hand Collectables Fishery.

Agenda Item 5: Compliance

5.1 Foreign Compliance

Mr John Jones joined the meeting to discuss foreign compliance.

Mr M Nona mentioned that four PNG dories had been seen at Tudu Island fishing illegally for sandfish recently. Mr Jones explained that he understood the issue had been investigated however by the time the response boat got to Tudu Island, the dories had left. He explained that Coastwatch surveillance flights still occur every day but the ability to respond is limited with limited assets and response boats often tied up with asylum seekers and large boats are hard to navigate in shallow waters. Mr Jones mentioned that the issue of illegal fishing in the Australian jurisdiction will be discussed with PNG Authorities at the bilateral fisheries treaty meetings and that the compliance strategy is now based on building relationships with PNG. Australia is running an exchange training program for PNG compliance officers, and the placement of PNG officers on Australian boats to allow “hot pursuits” to continue in PNG waters.

Mr McAtamney and Mr M Nona suggested that it may be more cost effective to have a fully equipped AFMA foreign compliance officer and a smaller, quicker response boat based on Yam Island that can quickly respond to incursions. Mr McAtamney suggested this would be a deterrent to PNG fishers coming to fish illegally and would be justifiable through a cost-benefit analysis of the cost of Australian fishers are missing out fishing due to fish being removed from the zone, slower fishery recovery rates and the cost for responding with the large patrol boat.

Mr Fava suggested that to get action on this issue it was best to be raised in the Chair’s report and at the newly formed joint agency Maritime Agency Liaison Committee (MALC).

Mr Hall suggested that it should be noted that Communities should be encouraged to report any illegal activity to AFMA because this helps not only with the ability to respond and prosecute, but also with gaining resources to respond. Mr McAtamney suggested that a toll-free number to report should also be widely advertised.

ACTION ITEM

Mr Bodsworth to include the option for basing AFMA Foreign Compliance officers out at Yam Island in the Chairs Summary and AFMA to raise this at the next MALC meeting.

5.1 Domestic Compliance



Mr Roberts explained that there had been no known significant domestic compliance issues relevant to the HCWG, reflecting the minimal activity in the fishery. The Chair recognised that resourcing is always a challenge and best resources are the networks in the Communities.

Mr Tully highlighted that in 2009 and 2010 QDAFF provided hand books that specified that *P. Maxima* had no catch limit. Mr Tully's concern was that there are numerous processes to go through if he wants to collect shell commercially, but it seems as though any member of the public can catch unlimited quantities of Pearl Shell. Mr Hall recalled that there was a Fisheries Management Notice that was in place at one stage that allowed the take of *P. Maxima*, but would need to follow up on the details. Mr Roberts agreed to follow up on this issue.

ACTION ITEM

QLD Fisheries to follow up on request from Mr Tully about catch limits for *P. Maxima* in QDAFF booklets.

Mr Lui also mentioned that AFMA and QLD Fisheries should re-visit the forms used to obtain a TIB licence to allow the TSRA Board Member to formally recognise an individual as a traditional inhabitant. Mr Fava explained that in the Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984, the Councillor is able to recognise that the person is a traditional inhabitant. Previously the Councillor was the TSRA Board member but this requirement has recently changed. This clause in the Act would need to be amended in order to change the forms and AFMA do not feel that this is necessary.

Mr McAtamney also requested the PZJA to clarify the policy arrangements regarding the ability for the TVH sector to fund TIB sector boats as a way to enter the fishery. He explained that he received previous advice that any TIB boat needed to be funded by the TIB sector, but other advice has suggested that this is permitted. He suggested that there is a dangerous precedent being set.

Mr Smith stated that having TIB boats funded through non-indigenous sources is not inconsistent with current legislation as long as it is registered under the name of the TIB operator. Mr M Nona explained that when TIB operators have been supported with funding for a fishing boat, it has created employment and activity in the fishery and that this is an opportunity to build capacity in the sector.

Mr McAtamney mentioned that he supports capacity building but is aware that it could put a lot of pressure on the fisheries in the long term. The Chair suggested that there needed to be clarity about the risks for this proposal.

ACTION ITEM:

QLD to clarify the policy and legislative arrangements regarding TIB sector buying boats with funds from TVH operators. QLD to investigate pros and cons of the current policy and if it needs to be amended.



Agenda Item 6: Reports

6.1 Strategic Assessment

Ms Tonon explained that the BDM Fishery is accredited under Part 13 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and the Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) Accreditation (that allows product to be exported) under Part 13 A and expires on 20 June 2014. Similarly, the Trochus Fishery is accredited under Part 13 and the WTO under Part 13A of the EPBC Act expires on 16 October 2015.

Ms Tonon explained that the export approvals are subject to a set of conditions and recommendations. The conditions are that the fisheries must be managed in accordance with the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*, that the PZJA must inform the Environment Department if there is a change in management arrangements and submit annual status reports to Environment Department. Ms Tonon explained that the draft status report for the BDM Fishery for 2013 would be circulated to the group for information when it is ready to be submitted.

Ms Tonon highlighted that the WTO for the BDM Fishery has extra recommendations that we need to meet and listed these. Mr Skewes explained that the MSE for the BDM fishery will assist the PZJA to meet the WTO recommendations.

ACTION ITEM

AFMA to circulate the 2013 Strategic Assessment Report for the Beche de mer Fishery when completed.

6.2 Fisheries and important habitats in the Torres Strait

Mr Skewes presented the CSIRO report, Fisheries and important habitats in Torres Strait, that was completed with the assistance of CSIRO Indigenous cadet, Mibu Fischer. The booklet summarises CSIRO's research of Fisheries and important habitats in the Torres Strait including Tropical Rock Lobster, Sea Cucumber, Trochus, Seagrass and Coral. The HCWG noted the report.

Agenda Item 7: Other Business

7.1 Date of next meeting

Mr Bodsworth explained that the next HCWG meeting will be held after the Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (TSFMAC) Meeting which will be held when there are tangible outcomes from the Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery to discuss.

