



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Queensland
Government



Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC)

MINUTES
TSPMAC 12
1-2 June 2011

Northern Fisheries Centre

CHAIR: Mr. Jim Gillespie



Queensland
Government



**TORRES STRAIT PRAWN
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING No. 12**
1 - 2 June 2011: Commencing at 9:30 am
Venue: Northern Fisheries Centre - 38-40 Tingira Street, Portsmith, Cairns

Preliminaries – Chairs opening remarks/ Adoption of Agenda/Disclosure of Interests/ Apologies

AGENDA

1 Meeting Administration

- 1.1 Ratification of TSPMAC No. 11 meeting record (AFMA)
- 1.2 Actions and/or business arising from previous TSPMAC meetings (AFMA)
- 1.3 TSPMAC self assessment results (TSPMAC EO)

2 Reports

- 2.1 Industry update – 2011 to date (verbal) (Industry)
- 2.2 Management update (including observers) (AFMA)
- 2.3 Compliance report - Season update on activities (QB&FP)
- 2.4 Environment report (AFMA)
- 2.5 Data report – final 2010 and preliminary 2011 catch and effort data trends (QPIF research)

3 Management

- 3.1 20m boat limit and gear trials – project proposal (AFMA)
- 3.2 Investment warning (AFMA)

4 Finances

- 4.1 Future processes for setting levies in the TSPF (AFMA)

5 Other business

- 5.1 Dates and location for next meeting

Individuals wishing to attend the meeting as an observer are required to contact the Chair (Mr. Jim Gillespie: care of Lisa Cocking, TSPMAC Executive Officer; lisa.cocking@afma.gov.au) notifying him of your desire to attend.

TSPMAC 12 DECISION RECORD

1.1.1 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to adopt the minutes from the TSPMAC 11 meeting held on 24 November 2010.

1.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** progress on actions arising from previous TSPMAC meetings.

1.3.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

a) the outcomes of the TSPMAC self assessment process at Attachment 1.3A and discussed ways of improving the functionality of the TSPMAC

b) that the outcomes of the self assessment at Attachment A will be provided to the PZJA Standing Committee for information.

2.1.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the Industry report provided verbally in respect of the 2010 Torres Strait Prawn Fishery season and the 2011 season to date.

2.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the information updates on the management of the TSPF.

2.3.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the Domestic Compliance Report for the period November 2010 to June 2011

2.4.1 That TSPMAC **NOTED**:

a) The environment update provided at Attachment 2.4A detailing the environment related issues the fishery will need to focus on over the coming months;

b) the recommendations of the strategic assessment report;

c) the protected species interactions reported in logbooks for 2010;

d) information about Marine Bioregional Planning (MBP) in the regions adjacent to the TSPF noting the MBPs are not applicable to Torres Strait Fisheries; and

e) other information on projects conduct by AFMA's Environment Section.

2.5.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the final catch statistics for the 2010 fishing season; and the preliminary information presented on the monthly trends in the 2011 catch and effort data compared with earlier years.

3.1.1 The TSPMAC **AGREED**:

a) that a trial of larger boats and gear should be conducted in the TSPF through the use of developmental permits attached to an Australian TSPF boat licence. The permits will provide an exemption to the gear and or boat limits for the duration of the permit (1 fishing season).

b) A maximum of five development permits will be issued to licence holders to use boats up to 28.3 metres in length (corresponding to the current maximum boat length in the NPF) to operate in TSPF, with the option of using gear larger than the current 88 metre combined head rope / bottom rope length restrictions;

- c) All TSPF licence holders will be given the option of applying for a permit to trial using gear larger than the current 88 metre combined head rope / bottom rope restrictions;
- d) All boats applying for a trial will be restricted to a maximum combined head rope / bottom rope length of 184 metres (which corresponds to the gear restrictions in the deepwater sector of the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery (ECOTF));
- e) Boats using nets with a combined head rope / bottom rope length greater than the combined 88 metres will be required to have a minimum holding of units for the entire season which cannot be fished or transferred for the duration of the permit;
- f) The minimum holding will be based on a sliding scale associated with the total head / bottom rope length in excess of the current 88 metre restriction. This will be calculated based on the percentage increase in efficiency multiplied by the number of days in half a TSPF season, which is 133 days (appendix A);
- g) Licence holders using gear exceeding the 88 metres combined headrope / bottom rope under a permit will be required to have their nets measured and tagged. While this will be administered by AFMA, the cost will be covered from the holder of the permit;
- h) In the event that more than five applications to use boats larger than 20 metres are received, preference will be given to operators with
 - i) fishing history in the TSPF;
 - j) the largest number of days proposed to fish during the trial; and
 - k) licence holders intending to use gear above the current maximum.
- l) Vessels currently in the Queensland ECOTF and TSPF under grandfather clauses permitting the use of a vessel exceeding 20 metres will not lose this entitlement if they participate in the trial.
- m) New licence holders entering the fishery will be required to undertake an induction training program where they will be provided with information on the fishery, including cultural, spatial (navigational hazards) and environmental matters (codes of practice etc.).
- n) Boats cross endorsed in the Queensland ECOTF and TSPF will be permitted to transit in Queensland waters with nets exceeding the maximum net length in Queensland if the gear is stored and secured appropriately.
- o) An information package about the TSPF fishery and NPF boats will be produced and presented to both industry through pre season briefings, and traditional inhabitants.

3.1.2 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to present one option to the PJZA Standing Committee (SC) regarding boat exceeding 20 metres, with an upper limit of 28.3 metres. Noting that Mr Nakata believed two options should be presented to the PJZA SC regarding maximum boat size.

3.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the draft PJZA Standing Committee paper seeking the removal of the TSPF investment warnings and the associated media releases (Attachment 3.2A and B).

4.2.1 That the TSPMAC **NOTED** the deviation of levy calculations in the past from the formula agreed to by the TSPMAC and PZJA in July 1997.

4.2.2 The TSPMAC **AGREED** that the data management costs should be added into the administration/ licensing and other component of the levy base as per Table 1.

4.3.3 The TSPMAC **RECOMMENDED** that the PZJA approve the formula in Table 1 for calculation of all future levies, until such time that the PZJA make another decision regarding the levy formula.

The following members and observers were in attendance at TSPMAC 12:

Members

Chair – Mr Jim Gillespie
EO – Ms Lisa Cocking
DEEDI – Mr Eddie Jebreen
DEEDI – Mr Ian Jacobsen
AFMA – Ms Fiona Hill
AFMA – Ms Melissa Brown
Scientific member – Dr Clive
Turnbull DEEDI
QBFP – Mr Bob Russell
Industry – Mr Marshall Betzel
Industry – Mr Ron Earle
IFAC – Mr Gavin Mosby

TSRA – Mr Neville Nakata

TSRA – Mr Shane Fava

Observers

EO of Australian Council of Prawn
Fishers - Karen Hollenby
QBFP - regional manager Northern
Fisheries QLD – Mr Ian Fricke
Industry (not in TSPF) – Ed
Morrison

Permanent Observer

PNG - Phillip Polon

MEETING RECORD FROM THE TSPMAC 11

PRELIMINARIES

The Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC) Chair Mr Jim Gillespie welcomed participants to the meeting.

The Chair announced apologies from TSPMAC industry members Ms Kylie Paulsen and Mr Chris Bourke.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

Agenda Item 1.1 Ratification of TSPMAC 11 minutes

The TSPMAC agreed to adopt the minutes from the TSPMAC 11 meeting held on 24 November 2010.

Agenda Item 1.2 Actions and business arising from past TSPMAC meetings

The TSPMAC discussed the action items from previous meetings and noted the following progress on specific items.

Action reference number	Action	Update on status
TSPMAC 10.1	PZJA agencies to further consider how information regarding trawling can be shown to Torres Strait Island communities or if it should be removed as an action item.	Mr Jacobsen explained that DEEDI are currently putting footage together showing the effectiveness of BRDs, and this may be better footage to present, and easier as CSIRO footage may be more difficult to get. It was agreed that the DEEDI BRD footage should be presented to the traditional sector, and PZJA officers should speak to CSIRO about the processes for using some of the CSIRO footage.
TSPMAC 10.2	TSPMAC to review the GBRMPA report on the effects of trawling when it is released.	Mr Jebreen explained that the report would be finalised in the next 6 months and published. DEEDI agreed to present a paper at the next meeting. They also agreed to do a presentation on the TED updates which will be determined during the US TED visit being undertake by Mr Jebreen in the coming weeks.
TSPMAC 10.16	Look into Queensland legislation regarding exclusion zones around aquaculture infrastructure and report back to the Executive Officer.	Mr Jacobsen explained that exclusion zones around the sponge farm would need to change legislation and would affect all boating traffic in that area and thus would be difficult to implement. He explained that as there haven't been any incidents of late, if the TSPMAC agrees, it would be best to keep managing potential incidents with the sponge farm through educating license holders. Mr Mosby agreed with this option, which could be amended if incidents increased again.

TSPMAC 6.15	DAFF to determine whether PNG caught product will need to be clearly marked with the jurisdiction in which it was caught.	Mr Fava suggested trying to get information from DAFF regarding the methods used in the TRL fishery to allow cross jurisdictional transport of product.
------------------------	---	---

Table 1. Progress on significant actions arising from past Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee meetings.

Action item 1. *Queensland to present an agenda item on the preliminary findings of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) report at TSPMAC 13. The presentation will also include information on the findings from the Queensland ERA process.*

Agenda Item 1.3 TSPMAC self assessment process

Ms Cocking presented the results of the TSPMAC self assessment process. She explained that in general, the rankings were good, however there were minimal comments attached to rankings, making it difficult to determine ways to improve the functionality of the TSPMAC. Ms Cocking and the Chair encouraged people to expand on the results of the assessment and recommend options of improving the outcomes of the TSPMAC.

Mr Earle explained that the low ranking for PZJA members was more relating to the processes that we need to go through to approve things which is very time consuming, not a reflection on the PZJA agency members themselves. He explained that it is difficult to progress things when there are so many approval processes that need to be gone through.

Mr Jacobsen explained that the low rank regarding providing recommendations to the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) on research priorities was relating to the minimal advice the TSPMAC has ever provided about prawn research priorities. He explained that the TSSAC would like information on the harvest strategy when it is implemented and future stock assessments. It is possible there will be funding for some components of the Harvest Strategy if it is requested. Mr Jacobsen also suggested presenting information about the boat and gear trials again.

Action item 2. *Present paper to the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee informing them of the draft TSPF Harvest Strategy. The paper should include a request for funding to assist in monitoring the triggers within the TSPF harvest strategy.*

Action item 3. *Distribute Scientific Advisory Committee Annual Operational Plan to TSPMAC members.*

REPORTS

Agenda Item 2.1 Industry Report - 2011 season summary to date

Mr Betzel spoke to this item and explained that there has been no export market for prawn with the Australian dollar being so strong. He added that there is still concern regarding motherships, as these vital infrastructure companies have again voiced their concern of the low effort and possible need to scale back their business further, or remove from the Torres Straits completely. The companies have ensured that they will not pull out in the middle of a season. A choice to stop servicing the area would occur during the break between fishing seasons.

Mr Betzel explained that some operators are only fishing until July or August then coming home to tie up. Further, a lot of licence holders are looking to leave the fishery and sell their licence, making it hard as there is little demand for licences at the moment.

Mr Earle went on to discuss catch rates. He explained that catch has been good during the dark moon cycle and are poorer during the full moon cycle, effecting profitability. In general, the catch is mediocre considering the low level of effort. He added that the prawn size this year is smaller, with on 5 percent of catches being in the U10 size.

Mr Jacobsen questioned why the new licence holders have purchased licences and are choosing not to fish. Mr Betzel explained that some are fishing the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery (ECOTF). Further, some people selling Queensland ECOTF licences do so on the condition that they take the TSPF licence as a package as well.

Mr Turnbull explained that the lower catch rates may be a result of the low level of effort as stocks would be close to virgin biomass, and at this level stocks are not the most productive. Endeavour prawns in particular are more productive when there is some fishing effort than when there is none.

Mr Jacobsen explained that there has also been an increase in the number of licence holders paying their fishing levies later or entering into payment plans.

Agenda Item 2.2 Management Update

Mrs Brown began this agenda item by explaining the staffing changes to the AFMA TSPF section. She explained that she has gained a promotion to the senior manager of Northern and Torres Strait Fisheries, and Ms Fiona Hill is the new manager of the TSPF, NPF and Western Deepwater Trawl Fishery.

Ms Hill went on to present the management update for the fishery. She explained that the fisheries management instruments which support the functions of the management plan have been submitted to the Federal Executive Council and will be coming into effect by the end of the week. She added that a PZJA paper was also being finalised for submission to the PZJA seeking consideration of a formal licence leasing system in the TSPF.

Ms Cocking went onto discuss the observer program functions for the 2010/2011 financial year. She explained that only one trip had been undertaken to date, and that a second trip had just commenced on a boat that hasn't been a part of the observer program before, which was positive. The TSPMAC again acknowledged the positive steps that have been taken over the past few years to reduce levies through changing the level of observer coverage to reflect the actual achieved effort in the fishery.

Agenda Item 2.3 Compliance Report

Mr Russell, presented the compliance report for the period of November 2010 to date. Mr Russell explained that there have been no major compliance concerns over this period, with some of the same issues coming up as in previous reports, including of production of documentation and the nil take of TRL. These issues will continue to be monitored and educated.

Mr Mosby voiced concerns from some islands that there is not as much compliance presence as there used to be. He explained that there is still some concern about the

number of home packs that are being taken by skippers and crew. Mr Jacobsen explained that they are doing the same number of compliance days, however are not spending as much time on the Islands, which makes it appear as though there is less presence.

Agenda Item 2.4 Environment Update

Ms Cocking presented the AFMA environment update. She explained that in April 2011, AFMA submitted the 6 monthly report against the recommendations of the strategic assessment report for the TSPF. She added that a full reassessment of the fishery is due in February 2012 in line with the expiry of the Wildlife Trade Operation. A reassessment report will be produced in late 2011.

Ms Cocking went onto present the results of the protected species interactions for the period and again reiterated the legislative requirements to report any interactions with protected species. Mr Nakata discussed the data provided in the report and commented that the turtle catches were very low and he was concerned industry are under reporting. Mr Jebreen explained that TEDs are very effective and that is why the turtle interactions are low. There are often no interactions with turtles in trawl fisheries today due to the very effective nature and mandatory use of TEDs. When turtles are rarely caught, it is often the small ones that get stuck between the bars instead of shooting out through the escape flap. Again, these occurrences are rare.

Agenda Item 2.5 Trends in catch and effort data for 2010 and 2011 to date

Mr Clive Turnbull presented an update on the 2010 season catch and effort data, and a summary of the 2011 effort to date. He explained that the data in table two was slightly incorrect and has been updated (Table 2).

Table 2. Catch of prawns in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery for 1991 to 2010.

Species	Average catch 1991-2003 (t)	MSY (t)	2009 catch (t)	2010 catch (t)
Tiger prawn	668	676	348	340
Endeavour prawn	1044	1105	178	108
King prawn	70	NA	17	9

Mr Turnbull explained that due to the low number of boats currently fishing the data is quite noisy and should be treated cautiously.

To follow is a summary of the catch and effort data for the 2010 season:

- Catches were well below historic levels and below the estimate of MSY for all three prawn species.
- Tiger prawn catch rates were the highest on record and this combined with low harvest suggests that tiger prawn stock is well above the sustainability reference point (Bmsy)
- Endeavour prawn catch rates were below average, which is likely due to fishers largely targeting tiger prawn, and the nature of the endeavour prawn stock being more productive with some fishing effort.
- Due to fishers not currently targeting endeavour prawn, recent CPUE is NOT a good index of stock size.

Mr Nakata questioned whether it will be bad to have increased fishing at the commencement of the fishing season as he thought this would reduce catch rates later on. Mr Turnbull explained that we actually need more fishing to stimulate the stock, as many prawn stocks are more productive when they are being fished a

certain amount. Mr Jebreen added that under the draft harvest strategy, the TAE will be more conservative from a sustainability point of view so there is no concern with increased effort, as it will be within these constraints. Further, we will be monitoring potential decreases in catch rates through the triggers in the harvest strategy.

MANAGEMENT

Agenda Item 3.1 20 metre boat limit and gear trials

Mr Jacobsen presented the paper on the proposal for the 20 metre boat and larger gear trials for the TSPF. He explained that the trials would be undertaken through the use of a developmental permit that must be attached to a TSPF Boat licence (i.e. TSPF Treaty endorsement holders are not eligible unless they also obtain a TSPF boat licence). The developmental permit will provide for exemptions from the current legislation relating to boat size limits (20m) and/ or gear restrictions (88 metres combined head rope and bottom rope length across all nets).

The TSPMAC acknowledged that for boats greater than 20 metres taking part in the trial, following the end of a fishing season, the "T" would remain attached to the boat greater than 20 metres, however they would not be eligible to fish unless another permit is granted, or the legislation changed to allow boats over 20 metres into the fishery.

Mr Betzel raised the need to ensure that the administrative processes would allow licence holders currently operating a boat greater than 20 metres currently operating under a grandfather clause in either the TSPF or the ECOTF, to maintain this boat on the licence following the trials. Mr Jebreen ensured that this would be taken care of.

Action item 4. *DEEDI to determine the process for ensuring boats greater than 20 metres operating under the grandfather clause will be able to maintain operation following the trials.*

Mr Jacobsen explained that the trials need to put in place restrictions regarding boat and gear size so that the fishery is regulated during the trials, however have them set at a level that allows operators to use the gear that provides the most economically efficient operation, as this is part of the reasoning for the trial.

The MAC discussed the suggested limit to gear of 184 metres of combined head rope and bottom rope length across all nets, which corresponds to the net sizes allowed in the Queensland ECOTF Deepwater Fishery. It was noted that this amount of gear was not permitted in the northern sector of the Queensland ECOTF, which may pose difficulties for cross endorsed boats. Mr Earle questioned whether these boats would be given permission to carry stowed and secured nets when fishing in the east coast. Mr Jebreen commented that this will be permitted and DEEDI would look into the way this can be provided for. He explained that there may already be provision in place for this in the current legislation.

Action item 5. *DEEDI to confirm the best method for allowing boats to carry stowed and secured gear through the ECOTF.*

Action item 6. *The letter of invitation to apply for developmental permits under the trial should include information that Queensland ECOTF boats will be permitted to carry stowed and secured nets larger than the current restrictions in the ECOTF.*

Mr Jacobsen went on to discuss the methods for regulating increases in efficiencies associated with using larger gear. He explained that the proposal is to regulate

increased efficiencies through having a minimum unit holding, which must remain “in the bank”/ must not be used or transferred during a fishing season. This minimum unit holding is related to the length of net which is over and above the 88 metres permitted under current legislation. For every fathom increase in combined head rope/ bottom rope length, Mr Turnbull has calculated an approximate 5 percent increase in fishing efficiency. Mr Jacobsen explained that the calculation at present involved multiplying this percentage efficiency increase by the maximum number of days that can be fished in a season (265). This method is effectively “removing” effort from the fishery, counteracting increased gear efficiencies. This ensures that there is no sustainability risk and also provides incentive for operators undertaking the trial to fish for as much of the season as possible. The more of the season that is fished, the less “cost” the banked days will have, as regardless of the number of days an operator plans to fish, they must bank the equivalent efficiencies for the entire season.

Mr Earle commented that calculating the banked days based on an entire season is likely to be too costly for many operators, as many will only be able to fish a limited number of days, meaning the costs will outweigh the benefits. He explained that he doesn't think that NPF boats will want to fish any more than 25 days before the start of the NPF season.

Mr Jebreen explained that it is a balance between making it appealing to as many operators as possible, however also having preference for boats to come in who will fish the entire season, or as much as possible rather than just 25 days before the NPF season commences. The TSPMAC discussed the possibility of basing the calculations on a half season of 133 days. Ms Cocking commented that considering we are only undertaking the trial for one season, there is minimal risk of too many boats taking up the trial and fishing more than the 133 days. Mr Fava added that PNG days are also held in trust which is providing an additional buffer of days to ensure that effective effort does not go over the current 9,200 day sustainable effort limit.

Mr Betzel showed an example calculation of possible economic benefits for a vessel proposing to fish 70 days and increasing their fishing efficiency by 20% (box 1).

As shown in Box 1, under the proposal which calculated banked days based on a 133 day season, there would be good incentive to undertake the trial. Under the 265 day proposal, it still provides benefit however not as much.

Mr Earle reiterated that we also need to take into account additional costs and effects on the ability of operators undertaking the trial to make a profit. The above example is for a vessel that already holds a TSPF boat licence. Vessels over 20 metres looking to lease a licence will have this additional expense. Further, there are also environmental effects such as the phase of the moon. Catches are generally high for the dark moon cycle and lower during the full moon cycle. If this lower catch period falls over the commencement of the TSPF season, it will reduce the potential profits of NPF operators who are looking to only fish the first 25 days of the season.

The TSPMAC acknowledged this information, and Ms Hill commented that we are only speculating until we actually undertake the trial. The trial is designed to find out this information and allow us to make a decision regarding going forward on a more permanent basis.

Mr Betzel raised the previously discussed concept of requiring boats larger than 20 metres to hold two TSPF boat licences to help reduce the number of licences in

the fishery. Mr Jacobsen commented that this was something more being considered for a permanent change in management arrangements. Ms Brown went on to explain that AFMA wouldn't support a two for one licence requirement as it wouldn't fit in with

Box 1. Example of potential increases in efficiency of boats using larger gear.

VESSEL AAA (already holding a TSPF boat license)

Currently uses 4 x 5 fathom nets and fishes 70 days

Wants to use 4 x 6 fathom nets (20% increase in efficiency as per table 1)

20% of 133 days = 27 "banked days"/ days that cannot be used

Leasing units (~days) is currently at \$90/unit

27 x \$90 = \$2430

\$2430/ 70 days (days fished in a season) = \$34.70 per day

ADDITIONAL INCOME

If currently catching 300kgs/ day

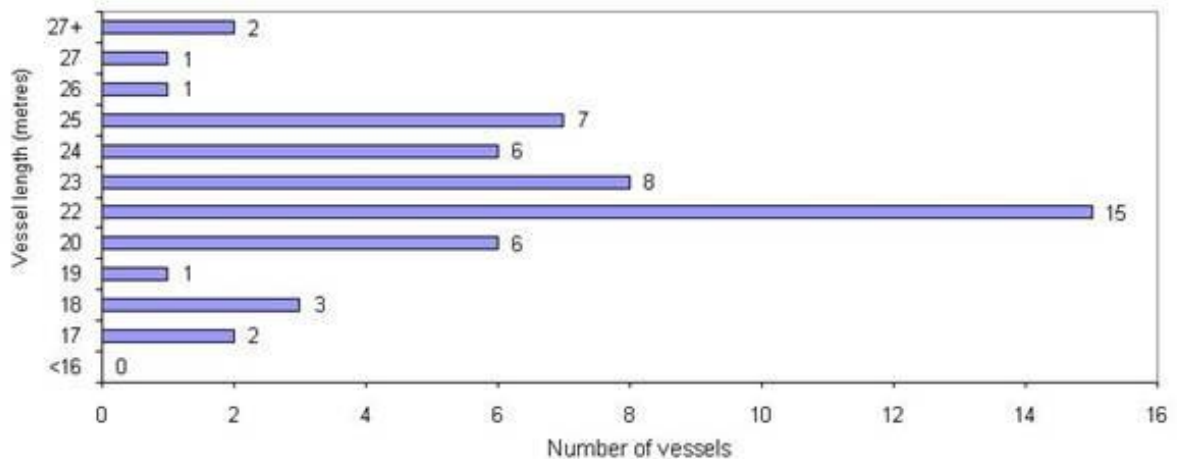
Say an extra 20% efficiency would result in an increased 15% in catch = 45kg/ day

45kg x \$9/kg = \$405/ day additional profit.

our objectives and isn't a fair way of doing it. Mr Jebreen added that the purpose of all of these ideas was to ensure that fishing power was properly controlled and accounted for. We are doing this with the banked days method agreed to so there is no longer a need to use a two for one licence option.

The TSPMAC went on to discuss the maximum boat size of 28 metres suggested in the paper, which corresponds to the maximum sized boat currently endorsed in the NPF (28.3 metres). They noted that although it is good to ensure the trial allows as many potential operators in as possible, it is unlikely that the four boats of 26 metres and above (Figure 1) would come and fish in the TSPF, as these boats are very successful Banana prawn fishers operating from Darwin.

Figure 1. Size frequency chart for NPF vessels.



Mr Nakata commented that he was unsure as to whether 28 metre boats would be supported by the TSRA, as the concerns of the traditional sector may be too high. The TSPMAC discussed the option of capping the boat size at a lower limit of 25 or 26 metres, which would then encompass most of the NPF fleet.

Ms Cocking commented that it may not be the best option to make a decision based on the possibility of 28 metre boats being knocked back. She explained that if the TSPMAC thinks 28 metre boats are the best option, then this should be presented to the PZJA Standing Committee as this is the role of the TSPMAC. If the PZJA SC disagree, then we can organise a TSPMAC teleconference within a few weeks and make a new proposal with small boats to the PZJA SC. This will only add a few weeks into the process and will ensure that the option considered best by the TSPMAC is presented to the PZJA SC. The TSPMAC also agreed that a proposal based on 28.3 metres has a strong justification as it encompasses the entire NPF fleet, whereas dropping to 25 or 26 metres is simply choosing a number we think would be more palatable, rather than more appropriate.

The TSPMAC went on to discuss the possibility of presenting two options to the PZJA SC. It was agreed that this may raise unnecessary doubt amongst PZJA SC members and so one option should be presented at first, and amended at a later time if it isn't accepted by the PZJA SC. Mr Jebreen added that if being honest, the risk of boats sinking is more related to effort increasing back to allowable levels in the fishery, not the vessel size. By taking the data from these trials back to the traditional sector, hopefully we can provide positive data and clarification around concerns and whether they are realised during the trials or not.

The TSPMAC **AGREED** to present one option to the PJZA SC with boats with an upper limit of 28.3 metres, noting that Mr Nakata alone believed two options should still be presented.

My Mosby questioned whether additional permit conditions could be added to licences of larger boats, to ensure they take full responsibility for salvaging sunken vessels and taking care of any potential environmental hazards which may occur. This would make the traditional sector more partial to the proposal.

Mr Russel explained that maritime legislation already places obligations on a vessel owner (or insurance companies) if vessels sink or run aground. However we can never guarantee that a vessel will be salvaged, as there are some circumstances that

it simply isn't possible due to the depth of the water or area. The risk of salvaging the vessel can be greater than the risk of leaving it. Mr Jacobsen added that having a condition that a vessel will definitely be salvaged places the PZJA at risk as it is something that cannot be promised for the reasons discussed above.

Mr Jebreen noted that we are putting additional permit conditions in place already for these trials, as all operating vessels will be required to complete gear sheets specifying the gear being used and other specifics of the vessels. He added that the way we will be managing the risk of these larger boats is through limiting their number. The TSPMAC also agreed that larger nets used during the trials would require net tags. Net tags are issued by the operator measuring the nets in the presence of an AFMA compliance officer that will then attach the net tag. The net tags will be monitored/ check by DEEDI compliance.

Action item 7. *AFMA to determine the costs of tagging nets which will be recovered by the developmental permit holder.*

Mr Earle suggested putting together a basic brochure on the NPF and TSPF to help lessen concerns about larger boats and help to educate the traditional sector about the safety and operating standards of these vessels. The TSPMAC also agreed that new operators should undertake an induction to the fishery which would provide information on the cultural, environmental and fishery issues. This could be undertaken through pre season briefings similar to those used in the NPF.

The TSPMAC AGREED that an information package about the TSPF and NPF boats should be produced and presented to both industry, possibly through pre season briefings, and to traditional inhabitants to help ease concerns about the trial.

Action item 8. *PZJA agencies to determine an appropriate method for educating/ inducting new operators in the TSPF.*

The TSPMAC went on to discuss the number of boats over 20 metres that should be allowed to undertake the trial. Mr Jebreen explained that five boats were suggested to be used, and that we cannot be certain of the number we need in order to have a successful trial, nor how many boats will apply, as it will not be economically viable to some. Some operators will choose to operate larger boats at a loss, because operating at a loss will result in less loss than if the boats were not being used at all. Mr Nakata questioned why the number of boats went from two to three in the original proposal to five. Ms Cocking explained that the original proposal was for two trials with two to three each. Now there is only 1 trial, the number has been increased to five. This number will also provide more data and allow more feedback on the results from these boats.

Mr Mosby explained that he has already spoken to the community and been reassuring them that only 2-3 larger boats would be in the area, so this should be considered when deciding on the number. That said, he commented that he was comfortable with five boats if we think this is required. Mr Nakata also supported this number. The TSPMAC agreed that a limit of five boats was a suitable number for the trial.

The TSPMAC discussed the need to determine the process for deciding on the boats that will take part in the study if more than five apply. They discussed the options of a first in best dressed method and random ballot. Ms Brown explained that in the

Heard Island and MacDonal Island fisheries, operators were required to submit a detailed fishing plan and had to meet a number of criteria to be successful.

The TSPMAC agreed that the following criteria should be used for the TSPF, and operators meeting these criteria will be given preference:

1. operators with history in the TSPF;
2. the largest number of days proposed to fish (these days we need to be proven to be held by the licence holding following their acceptance into the trial, prior to the issuing of the permit); and
3. licence holders intending to use gear above the current maximum, however allowing them to maximise their efficiency (i.e. vessels applying for the larger amount of gear will not necessarily be given preference. An explanation of the reasoning for the amount of gear should be provided to ensure vessels are able to operate with their most efficient gear);

These criteria will maximise the objectives of the trial, which are to increase the uptake of latent effort in the fishery and allow clarification of fishing power conversions for larger gear. It will also give preference to operators who know the fishery, which will likely increase the safety of the vessel.

The MAC agreed that all individual applications will be treated separately, even if several are provided from the same licence holder as this will allow the best boats to be placed in the trial. Mr Jebreen explained that we will need to ensure there are at least 30 days after levy invoices are issued to allow licences and units to change hands before the developmental permits would be issued, as levies must be paid before leasing of licences and units can occur.

Action item 9. *Ensure wording around preferences for larger gear will specify that we want people to use larger gear, however the most efficient gear for their vessel, so PZJA agencies won't specifically give preference to vessels that want the most gear, as this may not be the most efficient.*

The TSPMAC questioned whether there will be room for people to appeal if they are not happy with the allocation of the developmental permits. Mr Jacobsen commented that he didn't think so, however would look into it.

Action item 10. *Queensland to determine whether developmental permits are appealable.*

The TSPMAC went on to discuss the new gear sheets for the fishery. The MAC agreed that these gear sheets should be mandatory for all TSPF licence holders to complete from now on, which will be provided for through licence conditions. Mr Turnbull explained that the gear sheets were a combination of the NPF and Queensland ECOTF gear sheets.

Mr Earle commented that the collection of fuel data may be somewhat difficult and inaccurate. The MAC also questioned whether some of the information would be easily offered by operators for privacy reasons. Ms Brown explained that individual boat details will be kept confidential, as the data is inputted into the database and a summary of the combined data provided to PZJA agencies for consideration. The TSPMAC agreed to the content of the gear sheets, however suggested that they are amended to include both metric and imperial specifications

Action item 11. *Clive to change gear sheet to include both metric and imperial specifications to make it easy for license holders.*

Mr Jebreen commented that the gear sheet should specify the need to complete it for the current gear being used, not for the gear they generally use (i.e. gear in the trial). Mr Turnbull explained that the gear sheets need to be completed at the commencement of each season, and every time changes to the gear are made. If a vessel isn't going to operate during a season, they must still return their gear sheet by the required date simply specifying that vessel X is not operational.

Action item 12. *DEEDI to add a new license condition stating that gear sheets must be completed by all TSPF license holders prior to 1 March each year, and upon any changes to details on the gear sheet.*

The TSPMAC **AGREED** that a licence condition should be created enforcing mandatory completion of gear sheet at the commencement of a season and at any point that any detail on the sheet is changed.

The TSPMAC **AGREED**:

- a) that a trial should be conducted in the TSPF through the use of developmental permits attached to an Australian TSPF boat licence. The permits will provide an exemption to the gear and or boat limits in force for the duration of the permit.
- b) A maximum of five permits will be issued to licence holders with boats up to 28.3 metres (corresponding to the current maximum boat length in the Northern Prawn Fishery) to access the TSPF with the option of using gear larger than the current 88 metre head rope /bottom rope length restrictions;
- c) All current TSPF licence holders will be given the option of applying for a permit to use gear larger than the current 88 metre head rope/bottom rope restrictions;
- d) All boats applying for a trial will be restricted to a maximum combined head rope / bottom rope length of 184 metres (which corresponds to the gear restrictions in the Queensland east coasts otter trawl deepwater fishery);
- e) Boats using nets with a combined head rope / bottom rope length greater than 88 metres will be required to have a minimum holding of units for the entire season which cannot be fished or transferred;
- f) The minimum holding will be based on a sliding scale dependent on total head/bottom rope length in excess of the current 88 metre restriction, calculated based on the percentage increase in efficiency multiplied by a half season of 133 days (appendix A);
- g) Licence holders using gear larger than 88 metres under a permit will need to have their nets tagged. While this will be administered by AFMA, the cost will be covered by the holder of the permit;
- h) In the event more than five applications to use boats larger than 20 metres are received, preference will be given to operators with a) fishing history in the TSPF, b) the largest number of days proposed to fish during the trial and c) licence holders intending to use gear above the current maximum;
- i) Vessels currently in the Queensland ECOTF and TSPF under grandfather clauses won't lose this entitlement if they take part in the trial;

- j) New boats entering the fishery will be required to undertake an induction training program providing information on the fishery, including cultural, spatial (navigational hazards) and environmental matters (codes of practice); and
- k) Boats cross endorsed in the Queensland ECOTF and TSPF will be permitted to carry stored and secured gear above current restrictions through the Queensland ECOTF.

Agenda Item 3.2 Investment warning

Mr Jacobsen explained that this paper is simply providing an update on the status of the removal of the investment warning for the TSPF. The removal of the investment warning for the fishery had been delayed due to the all Torres Strait fisheries warning that is in place. PZJA agencies have agreed that the best way forward with these investment warnings is to remove the TSPF investment and all Torres Strait investment warning and issue a new investment warning for all Torres Strait fisheries excluding the TSPF.

The TSPMAC **NOTED** the draft PZJA Standing Committee paper seeking the removal of the TSPF investment warnings and media releases (Attachment 3.2A and B).

FINANCE

Agenda Item 4.1 Seeking PZJA approval of the TSPF levy formula

Ms Cocking presented this item regarding the processes for setting levies in the TSPF. She explained that in July 1997, the then TSPF Working Group agreed on the formula for which budget expenses in the fishery should be split between the licence and day/ unit component of the levy. No decision was made regarding the placement of data management costs for the fishery. These are the costs associated with oversight of data entry, costs associated with data requests for data updates for the TSPMAC and TSPF handbook and other reporting requirements and broad strategic data programs. The TSPMAC agreed that the data management costs should simply be added into the administration/ licensing and other component of the levy base.

The TSPMAC **AGREED** that the data management costs should be added into the administration/ licensing and other component of the levy base as per table 3.

Ms Cocking went on to explain that in order to speed up the procedures for the levy calculations and approval each year, they are seeking approval of the formula in table 1 by the PZJA. The PZJA paper seeking approval of the formula will also propose a new procedure for levy approvals, which will involve the final levies going to the PZJA for noting only. There is no specific requirement for levies and budgets to be approved by the PZJA prior to their implementation.

The TSPMAC **RECOMMENDED** that the PZJA approve the formula in Table 3 for calculation of all future levies, until which time that the PZJA make another decision regarding the levy formula.

Table 3. Allocation of budget costs between the fixed and variable component of the levies.

	Percentage licence component	Percentage day/ unit component
Logbook data entry	0	100
QBFP surveillance	50	50
Administration/ licensing and data management	60	40

Table 4. Actions arising from TSPMAC 13 and previous TSPMAC meetings.

Action reference number	Action	Responsibility	Progress of Action Item
TSPMAC 12.1	Present an agenda item on preliminary findings of the GBRMP ERA report at TSPMAC 13. The presentation will also include information on the findings from the Queensland ERA process.	DEEDI	
TSPMAC 12.2	Present paper to the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee informing them of the draft TSPF Harvest Strategy. Including a request for funding to assist in monitoring the triggers within the TSPF harvest strategy.	Ian Jacobsen (SAC representative)	
TSPMAC 12.3	Distribute SAC AOP to MAC members	TSPMAC EO	
TSPMAC 12.4	Determine process for ensuring boats greater than 20m operating under the grandfather clause will be able to maintain operation following the trials.	DEEDI	
TSPMAC 12.5	Confirm the best method for allowing boats taking part in the boat and gear trials to carry stowed and secured gear through the ECOTF.	DEEDI	

TSPMAC 12.6	The letter of invitation to apply for developmental permits under the trial should include information that Queensland ECOTF boats will be permitted to carry stowed and secured nets larger than the current restrictions in the ECOTF.	DEEDI	
TSPMAC 12.7	Determine the costs that will be associated with tagging nets of permit holders taking part in the boat and gear trials (cost to be recovered from permit holders).	AFMA	
TSPMAC 12.8	PZJA agencies to determine an appropriate method for educating/ inducting new operators in the TSPF such as through pre season briefings.	AFMA and DEEDI	
TSPMAC 12.9	Ensure the wording specifying preferences for boats using larger gear in the experimental trials for larger gear specifies that we want people to use larger gear, however the most efficient gear for their vessel. i.e. we wont specifically give preference to vessels that want the most gear, as this may not be the most efficient.	DEEDI	
TSPMAC 12.10	determine whether developmental permits are appealable.	DEEDI	
TSPMAC 12.11	Change new gear sheet to include both metric and imperial specifications to make it easy for license holders.	DEEDI research (Clive Turnbull)	

TSPMAC 12.12	license conditions to state that gear sheets must be completed by all TSPF license holders prior to 1 March each year, and upon any changes to details on the sheet.	DEEDI	
TSPMAC 11.1	TSPMAC industry members to include a reminder to record all interactions with sygnathids in their TSPMAC industry report	Industry	Complete.
TSPMAC 11.2	AFMA to move the information regarding the sponge fishery further forward in the TSPF Handbook	AFMA	Complete.
TSPMAC 11.3	TSPMAC industry members to include information on the new National Safety Commercial Vessel Standards in the MAC industry letter	Industry	Complete.
TSPMAC 11.4	AFMA to determine whether changes to the 20m boat rule and gear restrictions will have an effect on the native title claim for the region.	AFMA	Incomplete.
TSPMAC 11.5	AFMA and DEEDI develop the experimental protocol and processes that will be used to undertake option 3 of the 20 metre boat trial proposal presented at TSPMAC 11.	AFMA and DEEDI	Complete. A project proposal will be presented at Agenda Item 3.1.
TSPMAC 11.6	AFMA and DEEDI to determine fishing power conversions and the process required to change the gear restrictions for the fishery	AFMA and DEEDI	Complete. Fishing power conversions have been estimated and will be used to undertake the 20 metre boat trials.

TSPMAC 11.7	TSPMAC members to complete the self assessment documents and return them to the TSPMAC Executive Officer by 1 December.	TSPMAC	Complete. Results are presented at agenda item 1.3.
TSPMAC 10.1	PZJA agencies to further consider how information regarding trawling can be shown to Torres Strait Island communities or if it should be removed as an action item.	AFMA	Ongoing. Mr Jacobsen explained that DEEDI are currently putting footage together showing the effectiveness of BRDs, and this may be better footage to present, and easier as CSIRO footage may be more difficult to get. It was agreed that the DEEDI BRD footage should be presented to the traditional sector, and PZJA officers should speak to CSIRO about the processes for using some of the CSIRO footage.
TSPMAC 10.2	TSPMAC to review the GBRMPA report on the effects of trawling when it is released.	DEEDI	Ongoing. Mr Jebreen explained that the report would be finalised in the next 6 months and published. DEEDI agreed to present a paper at the next meeting. They also agreed to do a presentation on the TED updates which will be determined during the US TED visit being undertaken by Mr Jebreen in the coming weeks.
TSPMAC 10.13	Develop discussion paper for PZJA Standing Committee and the PZJA regarding the 20 m boat rule asking them to consider the issue and whether consultation should occur or something else.	AFMA	Ongoing. This paper will be drafted following TSPMAC 12.
TSPMAC 10.16	Look into Queensland legislation regarding exclusion zones around aquaculture infrastructure and report back to the Executive Officer.	DEEDI	Complete. Exclusion zones are not a practical option at this time. The TSPMAC agreed that they should continue to educate people as the primary method for avoiding collisions with the sponge farm.
TSPMAC 10.17	QBFP to facilitate a community talk regarding safety for divers on the sponge farm in the Torres Strait.	QBFP	Complete. QBFP undertook diver safety discussions in the communities during the last few months.

TSPMAC 10.25	TSPMAC Industry members to liaise with AFMA regarding the application of the cost recovery impact statement and the attribution of costs that relate to the PNG portion of the fishery.	TSPMAC industry members	Incomplete.
TSPMAC 10.26	Print the code of practice and distributed to licence holders with the 2011 season handbook. Also place on the PZJA website.	AFMA	Complete. The code was distributed with the 2011 handbook. Copies can be obtained from AFMA when new operators enter the fishery.
TSPMAC 9.2	AFMA to determine whether there are any CMOs from the NPF fishing in the TSPF that can collect additional data	AFMA	Remove as an action item. Given the current low level of effort and minimal cross endorsed vessels between the NPF and TSPF, AFMA recommend removing this as an action item until effort increases.
TSPMAC 8.16	AFMA to determine whether an investment warning is still required for the fishery and the methods of lifting it.	AFMA	Ongoing. PZJA agencies have determined the process for lifting the investment warning. However as a whole of TS investment warning was in place, we need to ensure warnings stay in place for the fisheries they are required for.
TSPMAC 6.15	DAFF to determine whether PNG caught product will need to be clearly marked with the jurisdiction in which it was caught.	DAFF	Incomplete. Remove as an action item. This issue can be raised at a later date if required.
TSPMAC 6.29	AFMA to apply a 3 tiered approach to the TED, BRD and try net survey, which includes; 1. sending out surveys to all licenses holders and wait two weeks for a response; 2. following up surveys with a phone call offering phone surveys; 3. QB&FP and AFMA observers to conduct surveys whilst in the field.	AFMA	Remove as an action item. Gear surveys will be undertaken as a part of the 20m boat trials. As such, AFMA suggest removing this as an action item.