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Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC)

**MINUTES
TSPMAC 13
13 DECEMBER 2012**

NORTHERN FISHERIES CENTRE

CHAIR: Mr. Stuart Richey



Queensland
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**TORRES STRAIT PRAWN
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING No. 13
13 December 2012: Commencing at 8:30 am
Venue: Northern Fisheries Centre - 38-40 Tingira Street, Portsmith, Cairns**

AGENDA

1 Preliminaries

- 1.1 Chairs Opening Remarks
- 1.2 Apologies
- 1.3 Adoption of Agenda
- 1.4 Declaration of Interests

2 Meeting Administration

- 2.1 Ratification of Out of Session items
- 2.2 Ratification of TSPMAC No. 12 meeting record
- 2.3 Actions and/or business arising from previous TSPMAC meetings

3 Reports

- 3.1 Industry update – 2012 season to date (verbal)
- 3.2 Management update
- 3.3 Compliance report - Season update on activities
- 3.4 Environment report
- 3.5 Data report – final 2011 and 2012 season to date catch and effort trends
- 3.6 Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee
- 3.7 TSPF sustainability assessment

4 Management

- 4.1 Update on the Torres Strait prawn perceptions consultation
- 4.2 Update on Turtle Excluder Devices from US TED Accreditation visits

5 Other business

- 5.1 Catchlog e-log systems
- 5.2 Fishery finances
- 5.3 Dates and location for next meeting

TSPMAC 13 Decision Record

2.1.1 The TSPMAC AGREED to adopt the decision record from the TSPMAC out-of-session (OOS) budget meeting held on 23 May 2012.

2.1.2 The TSPMAC AGREED to adopt the decision record from the TSPMAC OOS paper distributed on 28 August 2012.

2.2.1 The TSPMAC AGREED to adopt the minutes from the TSPMAC 12 meeting held on 1-2 June 2011.

2.3.1 The TSPMAC NOTED progress on actions arising from previous TSPMAC meetings.

3.1.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the industry update.

3.2.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the information updates on the management of the TSPF.

3.3.1 The TSPMAC NOTED:

- a) A report on Domestic Compliance for the period July 2011 to June 2012.
- b) Concerns of the TSRA over the potential reduction of compliance effort in the Torres Strait region resulting from the restructure of QBFP.
- c) That the level of compliance in the Torres Strait has remained at 60 days since 2010 and that the QBFP currently have no compliance concerns related to the TSPF.
- d) The TSRA's concern that compliance breaches may be occurring even though QB & FP have not detected any.

3.3.2 The TSPMAC AGREED that because the recorded compliance concerns are largely with other Torres Strait fisheries the matter should be discussed at the TSFMAC and/ or the PZJA Standing Committee rather than at TSPMAC.

3.4.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the environment update provided at Attachment 3.4A detailing the environment-related issues the fishery will need to focus on over the coming months.

3.5.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the final catch statistics for the 2011 fishing season; and the preliminary information presented on the monthly trends in the 2012 catch and effort data compared with earlier years.

3.6.1 The TSPMAC NOTED outcomes of the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting (TSSAC) on 19 and 20 November 2012:

- a) The TSPMAC DISCUSSED research priorities currently listed in the TSSAC Annual Operational Plan for 2012 and provide feedback to the TSSAC on the suitability of research priorities outlined in the Annual Operational Plan.
- b) The TSPMAC NOTED the TSRA's concerns regarding a trial of larger boats and gear in the TSPF and that alternative arrangements were put forward including consultation before a trial would be considered.
- c) The TSPMAC AGREED that Objective 3b will be reviewed to include further information regarding harmonising of management arrangements for adjacent fisheries.

3.7.1 The TSPMAC NOTED an update on the commencement of the CSIRO project "*Sustainability assessment for trawl bycatch in the TSPF*".

- a) The TSPMAC DISCUSSED the proposed outputs of the project.

4.1.1 That TSPMAC NOTED an update on the research project - *Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the Torres Strait; gaining an understanding of Indigenous communities' perceptions regarding boat and gear length in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.*

- a) The TSPMAC AGREED that given the restrictive timeframes, the series of delays to date, and the risk of further delaying the project, the consultation should take place in February as planned, and the TSRA board can be briefed following the consultation.
- b) The TSPMAC also AGREED that the TSRA Board should be provided a copy of the consultant's presentation for information before the consultation occurs, which will hopefully assist Board members in encouraging attendance of the meetings with the consultant.

4.2.1 That the TSPMAC NOTED an update in relation to the TSPF Turtle Excluder Device (TED) United States Accreditation.

5.2.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the ongoing economic pressure on the TSPF and agreed to advise the PZJA Standing Committee in a paper when summarising the outcomes of TSPMAC 13.

Attendance

The following members and observers were in attendance at TSPMAC 13.

Members

Chair – Stuart Richey
EO – Lisa Cocking
Industry – Edwin Morrison
Industry – James (Jim) Newman
Industry – Marshall Betzel
Industry – Ron Earle
TSRA – Suzanne Stratton
IFAC – Ned Larry
IFAC – Gavin Mosby
AFMA – Fiona Hill
AFMA – Steve Bolton
QDAFF – Ian Jacobsen
Scientific member – Clive Turnbull
QBFP – Bob Russell
IFAC/ TSRA board member – Kenny Bedford

Observers

Industry – Mike O'Brien
TSRA – Neville
TSRA – John Adams
TSRA board member – Jerry Stephens
CSIRO – Roland Pitcher
Consultant – Anthony de Fries

Permanent Observer

PNG – Ian Liviko
PNG – Ludwig Kumoru
ABARES – Matt Flood

MEETING RECORD FROM THE TSPMAC 13

PRELIMINARIES

Item 1.1 Chairman's Opening Remarks

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

Item 1.2 Apologies

The Chair announced apologies from the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (QDAFF) member Mr Eddie Jebreen and noted that Ian Jacobsen was attending as his proxy.

Item 1.3 Adoption of Agenda

The TSPMAC adopted the agenda, noting that agenda item 5.1 would be moved forward so Mr Bohm (observer) was free to leave the meeting following the item. Mr Earle also requested a discussion about the fisheries management costs under *Other Business*.

Item 1.4 Declaration of Interest

The Chairman drew attention to a renewed focus on 'conflict of interest' declarations at MACs and RAGs. This is to ensure that declarations of interest are recorded in a consistent approach across Commonwealth-managed fisheries. Mr Richey advised that being an expertise-based committee; it is likely that members have conflicts of some kind, however it is important to recognise when a conflict of interest would assist or hinder any one member more than another member, or stakeholder in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF). It was noted that the conflict of interest provisions apply to all members, not just industry MAC members. In accordance with section 55 of the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991*, members declared the following interests in the fishery:

Participant Interest declared

Stuart Richey	Chair of NORMAC. No other interests in northern Australian fisheries.
Lisa Cocking	Australian Fisheries Management Authority employee
Edwin Morrison	TSPF Licence Holder and operator
Mike O'Brien	Fleet manager with Tropic Ocean (TSPF, Queensland East Coast and Northern Prawn Fishery licences).
James (Jim) Newman	TSPF fleet manager
Marshall Betzel	President of QLD seafood marketers association and fleet manager for Torres Strait boats.
Ron Earle	TSPF Licence Holder and operator. Also holds Northern Prawn Fishery and Queensland East Coast licences and is a member on NORMAC and NPRAG.
Neville Nakata	Torres Strait Regional Authority employee
Suzanne Stratton	Torres Strait Regional Authority employee
John Adams	Torres Strait Regional Authority employee
Ned Larry	Traditional fisher, IFAC representative, Yam Community representative
Gavin Mosby	Traditional fisher, IFAC representative, member on several other Torres Strait Committees.
Fiona Hill	Australian Fisheries Management Authority employee
Steve Bolton	Australian Fisheries Management Authority employee
Ian Jacobsen	Queensland Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry employee, TSSAC member, the TSSAC has funded the projects under agenda item 3.77 and 4.1.
Clive Turnbull	No current conflict of interest. AFMA consultant.
Bob Russell	Queensland Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry employee
Jerry Stephens	TSRA Board member (Stephens Island)
Ludwig Kumoru	Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority employee
Ian Liviko	Papua New Guinea National Fisheries Authority employee
Roland Pitcher	CSIRO employee. PI for project at Agenda Item 3.7.
Matt Flood	Australian Bureau of Agriculture, Resource Economics and Sciences employee
Kenny Bedford	TSRA Board member, land owner Erub Island. Traditional Inhabitant Boat licence holder, TRL licence holder, member of PZJA committees as TSRA fisheries portfolio member.
Anthony de Fries	AFMA consultant, PI on project at agenda item 4.1.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

Agenda Item 2.1 Ratification of out of sessions TSPMAC meetings

The TSPMAC agreed to adopt the minutes from the two out of session budget meetings held on 23 May 2012 and 28 August 2012.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1.1 The TSPMAC AGREED to adopt the decision record from the TSPMAC OOS budget meeting held on 23 May 2012.

2.1.2 The TSPMAC AGREED to adopt the decision record from the TSPMAC OOS paper distributed on 28 August 2012.

Agenda Item 2.2 Ratification of TSPMAC 12 meeting

The TSPMAC agreed to adopt the minutes from the TSPMAC 12 meeting held on 1-2 June 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2.2.1 The TSPMAC AGREED to adopt the minutes from the TSPMAC 12 meeting held on 1-2 June 2011.

Agenda Item 2.3 Actions and business arising from past TSPMAC meetings

TSPMAC discussed the actions arising, noting that a number of items had been finalized since the last meeting and several were for discussion at this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

2.3.1 The TSPMAC NOTED progress on actions arising from previous TSPMAC meetings.

REPORTS

Agenda Item 3.1 Industry update

The TSPMAC industry members provided an update on the 2012 fishing season.

Effort and Catch Rates

The TSPMAC were informed that although overall catches are still very low compared to historic levels, Tiger prawn catches were better than last year, likely a result of increased effort and catch rates. They were also informed that catches were quieter in September, picking back up with more recruits at the end of the season. Skippers are confident that there will be another good season next year.

The number of boats operating seems similar to last year.

Other interests

Marshall Betzel advised that the Sea Swift mother shipping company has changed ownership and they are reviewing their operations. He explained that despite previous advice that the mother shipping service may cease if effort in the TSPF did not increase, Sea Swift will be operating in the Torres Strait during the 2013 season. This is very positive as the service the company provides is very important to the fishery.

Economics

TSPMAC industry members explained that the prices they have been receiving for tiger prawns during 2012 have generally increased, however the continual high fuel prices mean the overall economics of the fishery are largely the same. The TSPMAC

also acknowledged that there has been minimal licence trading, however some trading of fishing units/days has occurred. The export market for prawn also continues to be poor.

Mr Morrisson explained that his company was profitable during 2012 so will be putting a third boat into the fishery in 2013.

The TSPMAC acknowledged the ongoing concern that some licence holders are unlikely to keep paying their licensing fees given they are not fishing. A few licence holders nearly surrendered their endorsements this season, with one licence holder selling at the last minute. This concern needs to be acknowledged despite the slight increase in effort in the fishery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1.1. The TSPMAC NOTED the industry update.

Item 3.2 Management Update

TSPF Levy regulation amendments and invoices

Ms Fiona Hill explained that the TSPF levy regulation amendments had been determined and that the levy invoices were being generated for distribution the week of the MAC meeting.

Investment warning

The TSPMAC noted that the process for lifting the TSPF investment warnings has been complex due to the series of warnings in place across all Torres Strait fisheries. A PZJA Standing Committee paper has been drafted and will be distributed in early 2013. The paper seeks all investment warnings to be lifted, and the warnings for all fisheries excluding the TSPF to be reissued. The investment warnings in other fisheries will be discussed at the Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee meeting in 2013.

Fee for service

AFMA is currently developing a fee for service policy for Commonwealth-managed fisheries. This policy includes fee for service for a number of administrative functions of AFMA, including the paper logbook system. For example, under this system, licence holders would pay a fee per page of paper logbook submitted to account for data entry costs, which is expected to increase the use of e-logbooks which would have no data entry fee.

The draft policy does not apply to Torres Strait fisheries; however PZJA agencies will discuss the suitability of applying components of the policy to the TSPF separately. The TSPMAC will be consulted during this process. The TSPMAC noted that the e-logbook system can be used by licence holders at any time, despite any progress of a fee for service policy.

Observers

The TSPMAC noted the observer report for the 2012 fishing season. The MAC agreed that information on species caught from the indigenous species of interest list should be provided to the TSPMAC in this report at future meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

3.2.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the information updates on the management of the TSPF.

ACTION: Provide information on the number of species caught from the species of interest list at the next TSPMAC meeting.

Item 3.3 Compliance report

Mr Bob Russell presented the compliance report for the TSPF. He explained that compliance operations for Torres Strait had recently changed, with compliance with officers now based in Cairns and undertaking surveillance remotely, with fly in/fly out at-sea inspections occurring. The MAC noted that despite this change, the same at-sea compliance days were being targeted for the 2013 season. The MAC also noted the excellent compliance rates in the TSPF, which continue to be high, with only minor breaches detected relating to carrying the proper paperwork on board. No Fisheries Infringement Notices were issued for the TSPF during 2012.

Mr Mosby explained that the traditional inhabitants for all Torres Strait fisheries are questioning how effective compliance can be when the platform is being shared with the police, as police matters take precedent. In particular there is concern about home pack monitoring in all Torres Strait Fisheries..

Mr Russell explained that they are doing the best job they can under the current economic conditions and given the current restructure of the Queensland Government departments. In this context, the TSPMAC were advised that the QB & FP, as with all government organisations, are required to work within a specified budget. It was noted though that the QB & FP objectives would remain the same for the foreseeable future and that these objectives were agreed to by all PZJA agencies.

Representatives from TSRA and the indigenous sector raised concerns with respect to the level of compliance and the broader implications with respect to the day-to-day management of non-compliance. After some discussion the TSPMAC acknowledged that many of these concerns were with the other commercial Torres Strait fisheries as the minor compliance breaches in the TSPF related to missing paper work rather than illegal fishing. The TSRA asked that it be noted that although there were no detected illegal fishing breaches in the TSPF this didn't mean that there were no compliance concerns for the fishery. Because most of the detected compliance concerns were with other Torres Strait fisheries, the TSPMAC agreed that these matters should be discussed at the broader Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (TSFMAC). Mr Jacobsen noted that this could be done and that Fisheries Queensland / QB & FP would be willing to discuss this matter at the TSFMAC. However, Mr Jacobsen noted that QB & FP was a) primarily funded Fisheries Queensland and b) the TSPF was the only cost-recovered fishery. As such there is a need to manage expectations with respect to any recommendations to emerge from management committees and the ability of QB & FP to increase compliance within the current budgets.

The TSRA questioned whether this issue could be taken to the PZJA Standing Committee. Mr Jacobsen noted that TSRA, as with all PZJA agencies, are able to raise matters with the PZJA Standing Committee and while noting the concerns of the TSRA, it was agreed that the TSPMAC was not the most appropriate avenue for recommending this to the Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 The TSPMAC NOTED:

a) A report on Domestic Compliance for the period July 2011 to June 2012.

- b) Concerns of the TSRA over the potential reduction of compliance effort in the Torres Strait region resulting from the restructure of QBFP.
 - c) That the level of compliance in the Torres Strait has remained at 60 days since 2010 and the QBFP currently have no compliance concerns related to the TSPF.
 - d) The TSRA's concern that compliance breaches may be occurring even though QB & FP have not detected any.
- 3.3.2 The TSPMAC AGREED that because the observed compliance concerns are largely with other Torres Strait fisheries the matter should be discussed at the TSFMAC and/ or the PZJA Standing Committee rather than at TSPMAC

Item 3.4 Environment update

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.4.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the environment update provided at Attachment 3.4A detailing the environment-related issues the fishery will focus on over the coming fishing season.

Item 3.5 Data report

Mr Clive Turnbull provided an update on the 2011 and 2012 catch and effort data for the TSPF. The 2011 fishing season had the lowest effort and catches on record. Effort and catches increased in 2012, especially for tiger prawns due to an increase in catch per unit of effort (CPUE) rates for March to July.

The high tiger prawn CPUE & low harvest suggests that the tiger prawn stock is well above the sustainability reference point (B_{MSY}). Similarly the very low harvest of endeavour prawn in recent years suggests that fishing is having minimal impact on the stock size.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.5.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the final catch statistics for the 2011 fishing season; and the preliminary information presented on the monthly trends in the 2012 catch and effort data compared with earlier years.

Item 3.6 Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee

Mr Jacobsen provided an update from the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC). He explained that the TSSAC annually seeks comment from all MACs on the Torres Strait research priorities before they are finalised. Researchers use these priorities to develop TSSAC project proposals. The TSSAC also use the priorities as a reference point when deciding which projects should be funded. In the past, the TSPMAC hasn't always provided advice to the TSSAC on the priorities, which may limit research opportunities for the fishery. Mr Jacobsen explained that it is important for the TSPMAC to provide comments on the research priorities early so the TSSAC is able to consider all options when allocating funding to projects.

The TSPMAC discussed the current research priorities and noted that priority 3b "*developing economic efficiency - Assess the overall economic environment of the fishery to inform marketing strategies*" could be amended to include a broader efficiency aspect in an aim to allow adjacent fisheries to integrate into the TSPF more easily, through complimentary arrangements.

Ms Suzanne Stratton from the TSRA raised the ongoing concerns from the Torres Strait Regional Authority regarding a trial of larger boats and gear in the fishery, which related to priority 3a "*Developing Economic Efficiency - Assess the impact of increasing vessel and gear size on the economic efficiency of the fishery*". While acknowledging these concerns, the TSSAC noted that the premise of this agenda item was to highlight research priorities and that it was the responsibility of the TSSAC to assess the applicability and appropriateness of the applications.

The TSPMAC agreed that the research priorities should be distributed Out of Session (OOS) for comment by members and should become a standing agenda item for all future meetings.

ACTION: Add standing agenda item to future TSPMAC meetings to discuss the TSPF research priorities.

The TSPMAC went on to discuss a possible project about shared stock management in the TSPF. PNG have indicated interest in re-establishing their prawn fishery, which shares a stock with the Australian TSPF. Although the jurisdictions are not obliged to have share management arrangements, the Treaty sets out provisions for this to occur aiming to allow for effective fisheries management. Both jurisdictions would need to agree if this were to occur. The TSSAC recommended that further investigations be made to determine whether a project looking at possible complimentary management arrangements could be co-funded by PNG and the TSSAC.

The PNG representatives explained that they are trying to determine the prawn abundance in the PNG fishery, and whether it will be economic to fish. They are also considering having a smaller number of licences operating larger boats. Mr Turnbull explained that the Torres Strait Prawn Spatial Management Research Project 2007-09 collected species distribution and catch data for the PNG area of waters, which could be used for this project. Funding could be best used undertaking a desktop study using the current data.

The TSPMAC went on to discuss the cost effectiveness of this research. Mr Earle raised concerns with spending money on research given the current economic climate of the fishery. Ms Hill explained that the research is completely Government funded, so would allow more information to be collected with no cost to industry. The TSPMAC questioned whether similar studies in neighbouring fisheries such as the NPF could be used, however it was agreed that fisheries are individual, with different legislation and objectives. They agreed that research would need to be carried out specific to this fishery.

The TSPMAC also noted that data could be shared between the two jurisdictions if either the Australian or PNG fisheries were to trial larger boats at any point

ACTION: Send TSSAC research priorities to TSPMAC out-of-session for comment.

ACTION: TSPMAC chair to write letter to TSSAC Chair noting the priorities and the TSPMAC recommendations.

ACTION: Arrange for Tony Vass, the TSSAC industry representative to speak to TSPMAC industry members about TSPF-related research projects before TSSAC meetings.

ACTION: provide TSPMAC industry member contact details for Tony Vass.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.6.1 The TSPMAC NOTED outcomes of the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting (TSSAC) on 19 and 20 November 2012

3.6.2 The TSPMAC DISCUSSED research priorities currently listed in the TSSAC Annual Operational Plan for 2012 and will provide feedback to the TSSAC on the suitability of research priorities outlined in the Annual Operational Plan.

3.6.3 The TSPMAC NOTED the TSRAs concerns with a trial of larger boats and gear in the TSPF and that other arrangements were put forward including consultation before a trial would be considered.

3.6.4 The TSPMAC AGREED that Objective 3b will be reviewed to include further information regarding harmonising of management arrangements for adjacent fisheries.

3.7 TSPF sustainability assessment

Dr Roland Pitcher provided an update on the TSPF sustainability assessment, a project looking at the susceptibility and potential risk trawling poses to species encountered in the TSPF. This project will be completed during early 2013 and will provide an update of the 2005 project.

Mr Pitcher explained that the update will also look at the traditional inhabitant species of interest list.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.7.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the update on the commencement of the CSIRO project "*Sustainability assessment for trawl bycatch in the TSPF*".

3.7.2 The TSPMAC DISCUSSED the proposed outputs of the project.

MANAGEMENT

Item 4.1 Anthony de Fries consultation

Mr de Fries provided information on the project "*Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the Torres Strait; gaining an understanding of Indigenous communities' perceptions regarding boat and gear length in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery*", Mr De Fries again noted his financial interest in this project as a consultant and the primary project investigator. The MAC also noted Mr Betzel's (industry member) interest as co-investigator in the project.

Mr de Fries explained that the consultation was originally scheduled for October 2012, however various events had delayed the project. The project is now set to be undertaken in January 2013.

Mr de Fries acknowledged the sensitivities around the project, including the different view points of different TSPMAC members. He explained that he and Mr Betzel were committed to providing accurate and independent consultation for the communities to voice their opinions through this project.

The TSPMAC discussed the project timing. MAC members heard that the TSRA Board had invited the AFMA CEO, Dr James Findlay, and Mr de Fries to brief the

TSRA board at its 1 March meeting, with a preference that this occurs before the consultation. Mr de Fries noted that although this approach would be helpful, due to commitments of the consultants involved the consultation could not be pushed back to March (after the TSRA Board meeting) without causing further delay to the project. The MAC noted the TSPF opens on 1 March, meaning the project co-investigator, Mr Betzel, would be unavailable and the project would be delayed by 6-8 weeks until April or May. Mr de Fries welcomed the opportunity to meet with the TSRA Board following the consultation.

Mr Jerry Stephens explained that going through the proper consultation channels will allow the TSRA to provide better assistance where possible. Ms Stratton added that although the past TSRA Board didn't want to be a part of the consultation, there is a new Board now and it is beneficial to give the new Board the opportunity to be informed about the project.

Mr Jacobsen advised that this project as with all TSSAC proposals had been progressed through the appropriate channels and that TSRA were given a number of opportunities to provide input into the development of this project and/or aid in the establishment of a communication timeframe. In response, TSRA had advised that they were unwilling to participate in the consultation process but would not stand in the way of it proceeding. Given this and the concerns from the TSSAC and other PZJA agencies regarding the delays, Mr Jacobsen informed the TSPMAC that the project should proceed as soon as practicable. It was noted though that while Fisheries Queensland did not support the project being delayed further, there were no objections with the TSRA Board providing feedback or comment as part of the processes.

After much discussion, Mr Kenny Bedford, the TSRA Board fisheries portfolio member commented that it would be just as beneficial taking the results of the consultation to the Board as meeting with them beforehand, which was supported by other MAC members. It was noted though that the TSSAC raised concerns with respect to the surveys integrity and the involvement of PZJA agencies. This in itself was the principal reason why an independent consultant was appointed as the primary investigator. This in itself should be taken into consideration with respect to any feedback and / or comments that are forwarded through to the principal investigator on behalf of any PZJA agency.

ACTION: TSRA to provide the cultural handbook to Anthony de Fries.

ACTION: Anthony de Fries to provide a copy of the presentation he has prepared to the TSRA for distribution to the TSRA Board prior to the consultation being undertaken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1.2 That TSPMAC NOTED an update on the research project - *Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the Torres Strait; gaining an understanding of Indigenous communities' perceptions regarding boat and gear length in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.*

4.1.3 The TSPMAC AGREED that given the restrictive timeframes and risks of further delaying the project, the TSRA Board will be briefed following the consultation, and the Board will be sent a copy of the presentation for information before the consultation occurs.

Item 4.2 – update on Turtle Excluder Devices

Mr Jacobsen provided an update on the Turtle Excluder Device (TED) United States accreditation process for the TSPF. He explained that during the visit from US officers of state, there were a few compliance issues but generally speaking the TEDs were compliant. The US accreditation was approved until April 2013.

The TSPMAC acknowledged that the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) have a new document providing information on TED configurations, and the Queensland East Coast Otter Trawl Fishery may run some education programs about TEDs for licence holders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 That the TSPMAC NOTED an update in relation to the TSPF Turtle Excluder Device (TED) United States Accreditation.

ACTION: Mike O'Brien to distribute the NPF Turtle Excluder Device brochure to the TSPMAC.

OTHER BUSINESS

Agenda Item 5.1 Catch e-log system

Mr Danny Bohm provided a presentation on the CatchLog system. The system can be used instead of the paper logbook system, speeding up the reporting processes. The e-log system can also provide other functions including fleet manager. For more information, Danny can be contacted at the catch-log office.

Mr Mike O'Brien spoke highly of the system and indicated that it has made the management of their fleet much simpler.

Item 5.2 (new item) - Management costs

Mr Earle raised concerns with the high management costs for the fishery given the continuing low level of effort. Mr Earle is concerned that unless there can be serious reductions in management costs, there may be no TSPF to manage. He wanted to ensure that this item was still on the table, as even though effort has marginally increased, it is still a critical issue.

AFMA commented that they are continually working to decrease costs for the fishery, including reductions in observer and salary costs in the 2011/12 budget, however there is a minimum cost to managing any fishery.

The TSPMAC acknowledged that if one licence is surrendered the fishery costs are divided between fewer licence holders, increasing the risk of further surrenders and the future of the fishery.

Mr Jacobsen commented that the most difficult thing is that there isn't much progress being made, which is no fault of the committee. Administrative delays to improving fishery profitability are making progress on this issue difficult. He added that we have tried to keep the licence holders afloat this year, but next year may be more difficult.

ACTION: AFMA to raise the matter about ongoing economic pressure in the TSPF at the next PZJA Standing Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

5.2.1 The TSPMAC NOTED the ongoing economic pressure on the TSPF and the AFMA member agreed to raise the matter at the next PZJA Standing Committee meeting.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Richey', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Stuart Richey
TSPMAC Chair
7 Feb 2013

Actions or business arising from other TSPMAC meetings

Action reference number	Action	Responsibility	Status
TSPMAC 13.1	Provide information on the number of species caught from the species of interest list at the next TSPMAC meeting.	AFMA	
TSPMAC 13.2	Add standing agenda item to future TSPMAC meetings to discuss the TSPF research priorities.	Executive Officer	
TSPMAC 13.3	Send TSSAC research priorities to TSPMAC out-of-session for comment. Review of priority 3b should be undertaken through this process.	Executive Officer	
TSPMAC 13.4	TSPMAC chair to write letter to TSSAC chair noting the priorities and the TSPMAC recommendations.	Executive Officer and Chair	
TSPMAC 13.5	Arrange for Tony Vass, the TSSAC industry representative to speak to one of the TSPMAC industry members before TSSAC meetings.	AFMA	
TSPMAC 13.6	Provide TSPMAC industry member contact details to Tony Vass.	AFMA	
TSPMAC 13.7	TSRA to provide the cultural handbook to Anthony de Fries.	TSRA	
TSPMAC 13.8	Anthony de Fries to provide a copy of the Islander Consultation presentation to the TSRA for distribution to the TSRA Board.	Anthony de Fries	
TSPMAC 13.9	Mike O'Brien to distribute the Turtle Excluder Device brochure to the TSPMAC.	Mike O'Brien	
TSPMAC	Raise the matter about ongoing economic pressure in	AFMA	

13.10	the TSPF at the next PZJA Standing Committee meeting.		
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.	QDAFF	Ongoing: results unable to be released until final report made publically available.
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.	QDAFF	Ongoing. This item has not been progressed as we are awaiting the results of the islander consultation / further direction from the PZJA.
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.	AFMA and QDAFF	Ongoing. This item has not been progressed as we are awaiting the results of the islander consultation / further direction from the PZJA.
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 QDAFF	Ongoing. This item has not been progressed as we are awaiting the results of the islander consultation / further direction from the PZJA.
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.	AFMA and QDAFF	Ongoing. This item has not been progressed as we are awaiting the results of the islander consultation / further direction from the PZJA.
TSPMAC 12.10	Determine whether developmental permits are appealable.	QDAFF	Ongoing. Further advice will be sought from AFMA / QDAFF legal departments when and if

			the trial proceeds.
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. This issue will be progressed following the finalisation of court hearings. The outcome will depend on the court ruling.
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.	QDAFF	Ongoing. The report is still awaiting finalisation before it can be presented to the TSPMAC.
TSPMAC 8.16	AFMA to determine whether an investment warning is still required for the fishery and the methods of lifting it.	AFMA	Complete. The PZJA Standing Committee will be provided with a paper seeking the investment warning to be lifted.