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Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC)

DRAFT MINUTES
TSPMAC NO. 6
10-11 JULY 2008

NORTHERN FISHERIES CENTRE, CAIRNS

CHAIR: Mr. Jim Gillespie



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**TORRES STRAIT PRAWN
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING No. 6**
July 10th/11th, 2008: Commencing at 9:00 am
Venue: Northern Fisheries Centre
Address: 38-40 Tingira Street, Portsmith, Cairns, QLD

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

AGENDA

1 Meeting Administration

- 1.1 Ratification of TSPMAC No. 5 meeting record (AFMA)
- 1.2 Actions and/or business arising from previous TSPMAC meetings (AFMA)
- 1.3 PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008) (AFMA)

2 Reports

- 2.1 PZJA 22 Outcomes – Prawn fishery (DAFF)
- 2.2 Data report – Final 2007 catch and effort data (QDPI&F)
- 2.3 Industry report – 2008 season summary/update (TSPEHA)
- 2.4 Observer program report - Preliminary summary, 2008 & review of objectives (AFMA)
- 2.5 Compliance report - Season update on activities, 2008 (QB&FP)
- 2.6 PNG Preferential entitlement allocations to Australian licences for the 2008 season (QDPI&F)
- 2.7 PNG prawn quarantine and access – Update (DAFF)

3 Research

- 3.1 Torres Strait Prawn Research Program - Progress report (QDPI&F)
- 3.2 Seabed Mapping Project and Ecological Risk Assessments (CSIRO)
- 3.3 Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee – Update (AFMA)

4 Management

- 4.1 Management Plan – Update (AFMA)
- 4.2 Long-term Harvest Strategy (AFMA/QDPI&F)
- 4.3 Ghost nets and marine debris (AFMA)
- 4.4 Strategic Assessment conditions and recommendations (AFMA/DEWHA)
- 4.5 Survey of Turtle Excluder Devices, Bycatch Reduction Devices and Try-Nets (AFMA)

5 Finance

- 5.1 Cost recovery (AFMA)
- 5.2 FY08/09 TSPF budget (AFMA/QDPI&F)

6 Other business

- 6.1 Out-of-session TSPMAC decisions (AFMA)
- 6.2 Proposed anchorage exclusion zones (CFG/TSRA)
- 6.3 TSPMAC meeting locations – Cairns vs. Brisbane (AFMA)
- 6.4 Dates 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.

The following members and observers were in attendance at TSPMAC 6.

Members	Permanent observers
Chair – Mr Jim Gillespie	NFA – Mr Lester Baule (11 July only)
QDPI&F – Mr Shane Gaddes	NFA – Mr Phillip Polon (11 July only)
QDPI&F – Ms Fiona Hill	DAFF – Brendan Nerdal
QB&FP – Bob Russell	
AFMA – Dr David Wilson	Observers
AFMA & EO – Ms Lisa Cocking	Neil Bensley – BRS
Research – Mr Clive Turnbull QDPI&F	Steve Hall – TSRA
TSRA – Toshio Nakata	Ben Exton – DAFF
CFG – Francis Pearson	Annick Thomassin – PhD Candidate McGill university
CFG – Lota Warriia	
CFG – Simeon Baluz	

DECISION RECORD - TSPMAC No. 6

PRELIMINARIES

6.0.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) the two emails received from TSPMAC industry members Mr Mark Millward and Mrs Rosemary Millward dated 10 July 2008, indicating their intention not to attend the TSPMAC No. 6 meeting; and
- (b) Mrs Millward's request for a one off meeting to be convened between Government and industry and that the Government officers that attend be at a high level of office (e.g. standing committee or above).

6.0.2 The TSPMAC **NOTED** and **RECOMMENDED** that the decision by TSPMAC industry members not to attend the TSPMAC No. 6 meeting at such late notice, is detrimental to the desired collaborative management approach for the fishery, and that TSPMAC industry members should attend future TSPMAC meetings, or reconsider their membership.

6.0.3 The TSPMAC **REQUESTED** that the PZJA Standing Committee **CONSIDER** meeting with Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF) industry representatives to discuss the concerns of industry members raised in the emails referred to in 6.0.1(a), as the TSPMAC is of the opinion that the issues of concern to industry cannot be further considered by the TSPMAC.

Disclosure of interest

6.0.4 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) the requirements for Disclosure of Interests by TSPMAC members as set out in PZJA FMP No.1 (May 2008); and
- (b) the disclosure of interests provided by each member.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

Ratification of TSPMAC No. 5 meeting record

6.1.1.1 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to adopt the minutes from the December 4, 2007 TSPMAC meeting (TSPMAC No. 5).

Actions and/or Business arising from previous TSPMAC meetings

6.1.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the information updates provided regarding the action items from previous TSPMAC meetings.

PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008)

6.1.3.1 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to abide by all policies for the operation and administration of Management Advisory Committees as described in PZJA FMP No.1 (May 2008).

REPORTS

PZJA 22 outcomes – Prawn fishery

6.2.1.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the outcomes relating to the TSPF, arising from the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) No. 22 meeting, held on May 1st, 2008.

Data report – Final 2007 catch and effort data

6.2.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the finalised information on the trends in catch and effort data for the 2007 fishing season compared with earlier seasons.

Industry report – 2008 season summary/update

6.2.3.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** that no industry report was provided due to the absence of industry members from the meeting.

Observer program report – Preliminary summary, 2008 & review of objectives

6.2.4.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) the update provided on the observer program for the 2008 season to date;
- (b) the updated observer data collection protocols;
- (c) the intention to develop a protocol to include data collection from try nets; and
- (d) the information provided on possible methods for increasing observer carriage within the fishery.

6.2.4.2 The TSPMAC **DISCUSSED** and **AGREED** to:

- (a) a strategy to improve observer carriage within the fishery being developed with the intent of being implemented in the 2009 season; and
- (b) develop a new set of objectives for the TSPF observer program in consultation with industry, that target data collection that supports other data collection activities in the fishery and is in line with the objectives of the *Torres Strait Fisheries Act 1984*.

Compliance report – season update on activities, 2008

6.2.5.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the Domestic Compliance Report provided by the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, for the period August 2007 to April 2008.

PNG preferential entitlement allocations to Australia licenses for the 2008 season

6.2.6.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** that:

- (a) for the 2008 TSPF season, Papua New Guinea (PNG) were allocated 2,104 nights of fishing effort, as agreed upon under the catch sharing arrangements in the Torres Strait Treaty;
- (b) the PNG Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources informed the Australian Government on February 4, 2008 that they would not be utilizing any of the

allocation for the 2008 fishing season, and as a result, the 2,104 nights of fishing effort were offered to the Australian sector of the TSPF on a pro rata, user pays basis;

- (c) the initial round of the preferential allocations of the unused PNG nights resulted in 934 of the nights added to TSPF licences;
- (d) in response to the decisions made at the PZJA No. 22 meeting on May 1st, 2008, a second round allocation of the remaining 1,170 nights was offered to the Australian sector on June 12, 2008, based on the nights required by fishers to operate viably for the remainder of the 2008 fishing season; and
- (e) in addition the 229 nights held in trust by the Australian Government were also offered to the Australian sector on June 12, 2008.

6.2.6.2 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) the importance of implementing fisheries policy and management decisions, including the allocation of additional nights in the fishery, in a timely fashion.
- (b) that processes such as allocating additional nights in the fishery would provide greater benefit to industry if implemented prior to or early in the season.

PNG prawn quarantine and access - Update

6.2.7.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) the process for accessing the PNG jurisdiction;
- (b) that Biosecurity Australia (BA) and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) advise that:
 - (i) prawn stocks are common in both the Australian and PNG jurisdiction of the Torres Strait Protected Zone (TSPZ) and have the same disease status;
 - (ii) fishers require an Import Permit under the *Quarantine Act 1908* to bring prawns caught in the PNG jurisdiction into the Australian jurisdiction;
 - (iii) bringing prawns into the Australia jurisdiction will not be subject to the requirements of the *Imported Foods Control Act 1992*; however
 - (iv) until the AQIS Import Conditions Database is updated, likely to be late 2008, these conditions cannot be implemented or acted upon.

RESEARCH

Torres Strait Prawn Research Program - Progress report

6.3.1.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the progress report presented for the TSPF Research Program.

Seabed Mapping Project and Ecological Risk Assessments

6.3.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the completion of the CSIRO seabed mapping project “*Mapping and characterisation of key biotic and physical attributes of the Torres Strait ecosystem*”.

6.3.2.2 The TSPMAC **DISCUSSED** the suggested uses of the outputs resulting from the CSIRO seabed mapping project and acknowledged the importance of the data as a part of the Ecological Risk Assessment process and in addressing the recommendations from the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA), arising from the 2008 assessment of the fishery.

Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee – Update

6.3.3.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the verbal update on the outcomes of the TSSAC No. 45 meeting held on Thursday Island from June 17-18, 2008.

MANAGEMENT

Management Plan - Update

6.4.1.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) the progress of the draft Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Plan; and
- (b) that the PZJA agreed at PZJA 22 (22.3.1.2) to implement the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Plan before 1 March 2009.

6.4.1.2 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to meet out-of-session to endorse the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery Management Plan if required.

Long-term Harvest Strategy

6.4.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the progress of the development of a long-term harvest strategy for the fishery.

6.4.2.2 The TSPMAC **AGREED** that a Working Group should be formed to finalise the Long-term Harvest Strategy for the fishery that would be comprised of expert members from AFMA, QDPI&F, TSRA, DAFF and industry.

Ghost nets and marine debris

6.4.3.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** on:

- (a) the draft Threat Abatement Plan: *Impacts of marine debris on vertebrate marine life*, that is currently open for public comment; and
- (b) the potential funding opportunities for dealing with marine debris, gear loss and ghost nets.

6.4.3.2 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to develop an industry code of conduct for addressing marine debris, including gear loss and marine waste within the fishery, and aligning this response where possible with the recommendations of the 2008 Threat Abatement Plan, prepared by the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

Strategic Assessment conditions and recommendations

6.4.4.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the update provided on the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* assessment status of the TSPF.

6.4.4.2 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to the draft conditions and recommendations arising from the DEWHA's reassessment of the TSPF.

Survey of Turtle Excluder Devices, Bycatch Reduction Devices and Try-Nets

6.4.5.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) that AFMA intends on reviewing all Bycatch Reduction Devices and Turtle Excluder Devices via a survey to be distributed to TSPF boat licence holders during the 2008 season; and
- (b) the review will include a survey of try net configuration and operation.

6.4.5.2 The TSPMAC **DISCUSSED** the draft Bycatch Reduction Device and Turtle Excluder Device survey and **AGREED** to consult with industry stakeholders to assist in finalising the survey.

6.4.5.3 The TSPMAC **DISCUSSED** and **AGREED** that a proposal should be developed for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee to conduct a technical review of some of the Bycatch Reduction Devices used on vessels operating in the TSPF.

FINANCE

Cost Recovery

6.5.1.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** that:

- (a) Australian operators hold approximately 75% (6,867 days) of the total allocated effort for the TSPF (9,200 days) as of March 1, 2008;
- (b) the annual budget for the fishery, provided at Item 5.2, represents 100% of the management costs for the 75% of the fishery allocated to the holders of TSPF boat licences; and
- (c) costs associated with managing any portion of the Total Allowable Effort held in trust by the Australian Government for the purposes of meeting obligations under the Treaty for catch-sharing arrangements with PNG, will only be cost recovered from the Australian sector if the effort is temporarily transferred to the holder of a TSPF boat licence, on a user pays system.

FY08/09 TSPF Budget

6.5.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) the consultation process undertaken to finalise the combined AFMA/QDPI&F 2008/2009 TSPF budget;
- (b) the Australian Fisheries Management Authority's 2008/2009 TSPF budget totalling \$421,286, representing an increase of \$902 from the 2007/2008 financial year;
- (c) the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries 2008/2009 Torres Strait Prawn Fishery budget totalling \$173,780, representing an increase of \$5,225 from the 2007/2008 financial year;
- (d) the total 2008/2009 TSPF budget totalling \$595,065, representing an increase of \$6,126 from the 2007/2008 financial year;
- (e) the draft Explanatory Statement for the 2008/2009 TSPF budget;
- (f) the costs that would be incurred by hiring an independent chair for the TSPMAC.

6.5.2.2 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the 2008/2009 cost recovered TSPF Budget totalling \$561,618.

OTHER BUSINESS

Out-of-session TSPMAC decisions

6.6.1.1 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to adopt the minutes of the 6 May 2008 teleconference.

6.6.1.2 The TSPMAC **CONFIRMED** the following out of session decisions:

6.6.1.3 The TSPMAC **NOTES**:

- (a) that the Australian Government levy relief will cease at the end of the 2008 fishing season and as a result, levies for the 2009 fishing season will increase substantially;
- (b) that PZJA agencies will endeavour to minimise management costs throughout the 2008/2009 financial year, including a review of the number and location of TSPMAC meetings held each year; and
- (c) the draft 2008/2009 AFMA budget for the TSPF, totalling \$458,745.

Proposed anchorage exclusion zones

6.6.2.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the preliminary discussion paper relating to anchorage exclusion zones presented by Community Fisher Group members and **REQUESTED** that a full proposal be presented at TSPMAC No. 7.

TSPMAC meeting locations – Cairns vs. Brisbane

6.6.3.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED**:

- (a) the cost comparison for TSPMAC meetings held in Brisbane versus Cairns; and
- (b) the potential to hold a teleconference for future meeting that have a limited agenda.

6.6.3.2 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to revisit discussions regarding meeting locations during the TSPMAC No. 7 meeting.

Dates for next meeting

6.6.4.1 The TSPMAC **AGREED** to reconvene on 3-4 December, 2008.

Election of new TSPF Industry member to replace

6.6.5.1 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the PZJA decision (PZJA 22.6.2.3) to begin a recruitment process for a new Prawn – non-traditional inhabitant (Industry) member to fill the position formerly held by Mr Bob Robbins who resigned from the Torres TSPMAC on 17th April, 2008.

6.6.5.2 The TSPMAC **AGREED**:

- (a) to a selection panel for a new TSPMAC Prawn – non-traditional inhabitant (Industry) member, consisting of the TSPMAC Chair and one member from each of the AFMA, QDPI&F and industry; and
- (b) the process should aim to be finalised before the next TSPMAC meeting.

6.6.5.3 The TSPMAC **REQUESTED** the PZJA Standing Committee **ENDORSES** the appoint of an external fishing industry representative to the TSPMAC Prawn – non-traditional inhabitant (Industry) member selection panel, noting that this is a deviation from the usual process described in PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008).

6.6.5.4 The TSPMAC **REQUESTED** the PZJA Standing Committee **NOTES**:

- (a) the appointment of an external industry representative to the TSPMAC Prawn – non-traditional inhabitant (Industry) member selection panel would provide greater independence in the selection process; and
- (b) the TSPMAC is seeking an industry processor member as a first preference for the TSPMAC Prawn – non-traditional inhabitant (Industry) member position.

PRELIMINARIES

Welcome

Mr Jim Gillespie, the TSPMAC Chair opened the meeting at 9:30am, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members and observers for being in attendance.

Apologies

The executive officer noted apologies were received from Ms Nicole Flint from DEWHA and Mr Simon Vieira from ABARE for not being in attendance at the meeting. The executive officer acknowledged that these individuals specific expertise were not required at this meeting.

Apologies were received from TSPMAC industry representatives Mr Rob Giddins the day before the meeting, and Mr Mark Millward and Mrs Rosemary Millward through email correspondence on the morning of TSPMAC 6, July 10th, 2008.

The executive officer read Mr Millward's email and acknowledged the receipt of Mrs Millward's email, which were both distributed to all TSPMAC members via email and outlined the reason that these members were not in attendance at TSPMAC 6. The emails commented that industry members thought that although the TSPMAC process itself was functioning the best it has been in many years, it was somewhat redundant, as they were of the opinion that the recommendations made by the TSPMAC are not properly considered after the TSPMAC meetings by higher level PZJA officials. Mrs Millward's email specifically requested that a one off meeting be convened between Government and industry and that the Government officers that attend be at a high level of office (e.g. standing committee or above).

The TSPMAC discussed the content of the emails and decided that issues raised by industry members in the emails could no longer be dealt with by the TSPMAC. Consequently, the TSPMAC agreed to put forward a recommendation that the PZJA Standing Committee consider meeting with industry representatives to discuss their concerns raised in the emails.

Mr Brendan Nerdal from DAFF acknowledged the need to ensure this meeting is a "one off" and not a long term change to the management environment and TSPMAC process. He also outlined the need for the TSPMAC to provide relevant background information to the Standing Committee in preparation for the meeting. The chair acknowledged that a briefing to PZJA standing committee members would need to occur, however reiterated that industry members requested the meeting in order to prevent another bureaucratic meeting process, so it is important to ensure that the process for the meeting is transparent including the briefing, and post meeting decision making processes. The Chair discussed sharing any briefing to the Standing Committee with industry members in order to increase transparency.

CFG representative Mr Francis Pearson asked for further clarification regarding industry members lack of attendance at the meeting and questioned whether their concerns would have opposing objectives to concerns of the indigenous sector. Dr David Wilson of AFMA outlined the key concern of industry, as outlined in the two emails received, was the historical effort reduction that occurred in 2005. The Chair commented that a TSRA representative would be present at the Standing Committee meeting that had been requested if it does occur.

The TSPMAC discussed the detrimental effect of industry members pulling out of the meeting at such late notice and agreed that industry members should reconsider their

membership on the TSPMAC if they are unwilling to attend meetings without reasonable notice, unless there are unforeseen circumstances.

Quorum

The chair indicated that despite the absence of the four industry members at the meeting, more than two thirds of TSPMAC members were present, and thus under PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008) the meeting had sufficient numbers for a quorum. Mr Gaddes of QDPI&F stated that the TSPMAC should be conscious that although there was a quorum, there was no industry representation at the meeting and as such, this should be taken into consideration when making TSPMAC recommendations and decisions. Dr Wilson agreed and indicated that several of the agenda items should be represented to members as TSPMAC No. 7 later this year for decision.

Disclosure of interest

The chair explained the requirement under PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008) for the TSPMAC to maintain a register of disclosures of interest, including perceived, potential and actual conflicts, for TSPMAC members and observers. He commented that these registers are general practice in all Commonwealth fisheries. The executive officer explained that under PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008), members with direct conflicts of interest that relate to specific agenda items may be allowed to join in discussions relating to that item but not necessarily be involved in the decision making process. She explained that the process is undertaken in order to provide transparency around members potential interests however in general, a member is only likely to be excluded from discussions if the matter being considered effects that member alone and not everyone involved in the fishery.

The following conflicts of interest were recorded for TSPMAC members and permanent observers in attendance at TSPMAC 6:

Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee disclosure of interests

Member or permanent observer	MAC position	Potential/actual conflicts of interest	Perceived conflicts of interest
Jim Gillespie	Chair	No commercial conflicts of interest. QLD Government employee.	
Lisa Cocking	EO, AFMA	No commercial conflicts of interest. Commonwealth Government employee.	
David Wilson	AFMA member	No commercial conflicts of interest. Commonwealth Government employee.	
Shane Gaddes	QDPI&F member	No commercial conflicts of interest. QLD Government employee.	Parents hold an ECOTF endorsement. Mr Gaddes is not a director or shareholder in this company and has no financial benefit.
Fiona Hill	QDPI&F member	No commercial conflicts of interest. QLD Government employee.	
Clive Turnbull	Research member – QDPI&F	No commercial conflicts of interest. QLD Government employee.	Project leader of DAFF funded TSPF research project
Bob Russel	QB&FP compliance member	No commercial conflicts of interest. QLD Government employee.	

Toshio Nakata	TSRA member	TSRA.	
Francis Pearson	CFG	Holder of a TIB finfish and TRL license.	
Simeon Baluz	CFG	Holder of a Crayfish license.	
Lota Warriia	CFG	Holder of a TIB finfish and TRL license.	
Brendan Nerdal	DAFF – permanent observer	No commercial conflicts of interest. Commonwealth Government employee.	
Lester Baule	PNG NFA permanent observer	No commercial conflicts of interest, PNG employee	
Phillip Polon	PNG NFA permanent observer	No commercial conflicts of interest, PNG employee	

Ratification of meeting minutes from TSPMAC 5

The executive officer advised that the draft minutes of the TSPMAC 5 meeting held on 4 December 2007 had been circulated to members on 19 December 2007. She commented that an amended version was distributed to members on 20 February 2008. The Chair asked whether there were any more comments on the minutes. No further comments were received and the TSPMAC agreed to ratify the minutes as per the 20 February 2008 version found at Attachment 1.1A of TSPMAC 6 papers.

Actions arising from previous TSPMAC meetings

The executive officer presented the actions arising from previous meetings and asked relevant TSPMAC members and observers to provide the TSPMAC with the progress on their respective action items.

Actions and/or business arising from previous TSPMAC meetings.

Action reference number	Action	Date item was added	Responsibility	Status
TSPMAC 5.1	Coordinate the drafting of a letter to the TSRA expressing the TSPMAC's concern regarding the lack of TSRA (CFG) representation at TSPMAC meetings.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. AFMA Snr. Mgr. spoke directly with the TSRA and the matter has been resolved (Miscommunication of meeting dates).
TSPMAC 5.2	Compile a PZJA decision register which includes the date of the PZJA meeting, the decision title and the gazettal notice and date. A progress report will be provided at TSPMAC 6.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	DAFF	Ongoing. DAFF will provide a verbal update at the meeting. An example of how the record will be compiled will be provided. See attachments 1.2A, B and C.
TSPMAC 5.3	Ms. Fairweather and Mr. Turnbull to discuss the wording used in the report to explain the reduced take of endeavour prawns.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	QDPI&F	Complete - the wording for the prawn handbook has been changed.
TSPMAC 5.4	The TSPMAC agreed to put forward a proposal for an	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December	QDPI&F	Complete. An interim harvest strategy

	interim harvest strategy and that at a bare minimum the PNG days should be allocated at the beginning of the season and work towards the full recommendation.	2007		was developed by PZJA agencies in consultation with industry and presented at PZJA 22. PZJA 22 decision record pending. See agenda item 2.6 and 4.2 for additional details.
TSPMAC 5.5	Determine why all industry members are not paying a portion of the cost recovery.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 5.1 for details.
TSPMAC 5.6	Draft management plan to be distributed to the TSPMAC for two weeks for public consultation.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. Draft Plan circulated from March 11-15, 2008. See agenda item 4.1 for details.
TSPMAC 5.7	MAC to submit comments on the draft management plan in writing to AFMA.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 4.1 for details.
TSPMAC 5.8	Incorporate recommendations 3.3 a, b and c from agenda item 3.3 into the management plan as per recommendation 3.3a, b and c) in TSPMAC 5 paper 3.3.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 4.1 for details.
TSPMAC 5.9	Arrange the drafting of the management plan to include a prohibition for taking carrying or processing shark in any form in the TSPF as per recommendation 3.3d) in TSPMAC 5 paper 3.3.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 4.1 for details.
TSPMAC 5.10	Arrange the drafting of the management plan to provide for the mandatory use of logbooks as per recommendation 3.3e) in TSPMAC 5 paper 3.3.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 4.1 for details.
TSPMAC 5.11	Arrange for fisheries management notices 19, 29, 56 and 61 and logbook notice 16 to be revoked upon implementation of the management plan as per recommendation 3.3f) in TSPMAC 5 paper 3.3	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 4.1 for details. FMN's will be revoked in conjunction with the introduction of the Management Plan.
TSPMAC 5.12	Discuss the NW area closures in the next industry forum such as port visits.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. At PZJA 22 the PZJA AGREED "to a permanent prohibition on the taking, processing or carrying of prawn in the Territorial Seas of Kerr Islet, Deliverance Island and Turu Cay is to be implemented". See TSPMAC 6 paper 2.1 for details.

TSPMAC 5.13	Place the harvest strategy on the agenda for the next TSPMAC meeting when more information will be known about the interim harvest strategy.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 4.2 for details.
TSPMAC 5.14	DPI and AFMA observer section to liaise regarding utilising VMS as a tool for locating vessels for observers.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 2.4 for details.
TSPMAC 5.15	Review objectives and effectiveness of the observer program at the next meeting.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	AFMA	Complete. See agenda item 2.4 for details.
TSPMAC 5.16	Mr Gaddes to provide two rounds of offers for PNG nights on a pro rate basis. One should be offered at the beginning of the season and one once it is underway. Invitations will be sent to all operators.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	QDPI&F	Complete. Two rounds of offers on PNG nights for the 2008 season were offered to TSPF operators. Letters were sent to industry members on 11 February 2008 and 12 June 2008. The second round of offers also included the days held in trust by the Australian government. See agenda item 2.6 for details.

Ongoing or incomplete action items from previous meetings

TSPMAC 4.2.	DAFF to meet with the AQIS imported foods program to determine if the testing regime for prawns from PNG waters can be reduced for vessels that have already obtained approval from AQIS to export prawns caught in Australian waters.	TSPMAC 4 – 14 June 2007	DAFF	Ongoing. DAFF will provide a verbal update at the meeting.
TSPMAC 4.10.	QDPI&F to determine what maps the QB&FP use to determine the closure areas in the TSPF.	TSPMAC 4 – 14 June 2007	QDPI&F	Complete. WGS84 datum and admiralty charts are used to determine closure areas.
TSPMAC 4.11.	QDPI&F and AFMA to further identify options for the setting of reference points in the TSPF as part of an overall harvest strategy.	TSPMAC 4 – 14 June 2007	QDPI&F/ AFMA	Ongoing. See agenda item 4.2 for details.
	Approach FRDC to see if funding is available to fund another two BRD workshops in Brisbane and Cairns in June/July 2008	TSPMAC 3 – 17 February 2007	AFMA	Complete. Funding was not identified for 2008.
	Co-ordinate a trip to Spencer Gulf in unison with port visits to minimise costs to industry	TSPMAC 2 – 19&20 September 2006	DAFF	Complete. A trip was proposed for April 2007 however cancelled due to inappropriate timing for TSPEHA

				<p>members.</p> <p>At TSPMAC 3, it was agreed that the TSPEHA would advise the TSPMAC Executive Officer out-of-session of the timing and participation of the Spencer Gulf trip.</p> <p>At TSPMAC 4, it was noted that the TSPEHA had not given information to TSPMAC about dates for the trip.</p> <p>At TSPMAC 5 industry requested clarification of how the funding for the trip was acquitted and the TSPMAC agreed to try to organise a trip with HS visits at minimal costs.</p> <p>The budget appropriate that DAFF sought to undertake the December 2005 trip has since been re-acquitted in the budgetary process.</p>
	Draft a summary of the historic management arrangements in the TSPF which includes the decision and date that PZJA decisions had been legislated.	TSPMAC 1 – 13&14 June 2006	DAFF	Complete. Refer to action item 5.2 above.
	AFMA to discuss with the OLDP the wording of Section 29(6), to ensure that the period of TAE amendment can be longer than two months in the event of an emergency situation that requires a longer period of amendment.	TSPMAC 2 – 19&20 September 2006	AFMA	Complete. See section 2.6 of the Draft TSPF Management Plan provided as an attachment to paper 4.1. The period of amendment will now be determined by the PZJA on a case by case basis.
	Undertake an audit of Fishery Management Notices and PZJA	TSPMAC 1 – 13&14 June	AFMA/ DAFF	Complete. All notices have been

	decisions for consideration during the drafting of the management plan.	2006		reviewed and incorporated into the Mgt Plan where possible.
	That the consideration of a spatial management system be considered at a future TSPMAC meeting. Consideration will be given to the revised stock assessment with a view to increasing the Total Allowable Effort in the fishery.	TSPMAC 1 – 13&14 June 2006	TSPMAC	Complete. The interim Harvest Strategy proposal has been used as a basis for the long-term Harvest Strategy and incorporates spatial management options as requested by the TSPMAC. See agenda item 4.2 for details.
	Quarterly updates on the progress of the research plan are provided to the TSPMAC.	TSPMAC 1 – 13&14 June 2006	QDPI&F/ Clive Turnbull	Ongoing. QDPI&F to provide a verbal update at the meeting.

Mr Nerdal questioned whether the draft PZJA decision register, provided at Attachments 1.2A, B and C (TSPMAC action item 5.2) meets the purpose that was intended when the decision record was requested. Dr Wilson commented that he thought that industries intention for the record was that it would include decisions relevant to FMN's as well as decisions from all PZJA meetings. Mr Nerdal discussed the difficulties with developing an accurate decision record back to PZJA 1 due to the changes to the PZJA in 1999 including licensing and the PZJA structure. He stated that for this reason this sort of project would likely take one persons resources for an entire year and may still not have all the decisions.

Dr Wilson suggested that as a first step, DAFF could go through all of the decision records from PZJA meetings (1-22) that are readily available from departmental records. As a secondary task, other PZJA decisions could be added at a later date. Mr Nerdal agreed that this may be possible.

The Chair acknowledged the importance of the decision record as a learning tool for new PZJA staff. The record will provide a background to the decisions making processes through the fisheries history, as the lack of knowledge of the fisheries history is an ongoing concern of industry members.

ACTION - DAFF and the TSPMAC Executive Officer to liaise with TSPMAC industry representatives to determine whether the current draft PZJA decision record is providing the information which was intended when industry requested the record at TSPMAC 5.

Ms Cocking from AFMA informed the TSPMAC that action item 5.12 was redundant as AFMA can use its own VMS system to pick up TSPF vessels, and thus the QLD VMS is not required. Mr Gaddes pointed out that the AFMA system should only be able to pick up vessels that are also cross endorsed with a Commonwealth Fishery, and that the QLD VMS system would need to be used to locate TSPF vessels that were not cross endorsed. The TSPMAC agreed that AFMA should determine whether their VMS system can pick up all PZJA endorsed vessels as well or just cross endorsed Commonwealth vessels.

ACTION – AFMA to confirm whether the AFMA VMS system is able to pick up TSPF vessels that are not cross endorsed Commonwealth vessels (i.e. QLD ECOTF vessels).

REPORTS

PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008)

Mr Gillespie discussed the background and purpose of PZJA Fisheries Management Paper No 1 (May 2008) and explained that this paper had recently been amended to include the purpose of the Scientific Advisory Committee, Resource Assessment Group and the Hand Collectables Working Group. The executive officer also commented on the requirements under PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008) to complete a Chairs summary, and for the TSPMAC to conduct a self assessment against PZJA indicators which are detailed in the paper. She commented that this process will be undertaken annually at the end of year TSPMAC meeting (i.e. the December meeting).

ACTION – TSPMAC to undertake an annual self assessment against PZJA indicators outlined in PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008).

The TSPMAC agreed to abide by all policies for the operation and management of TSPMACs as outlined in PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008) as outlined in recommendation 1.3.1.

Mr Gaddes again reiterated the need consider the absence of industry members at the meeting before making decisions that effect them. Dr Wilson indicated that industry members would need to be asked to agree to this at the next TSPMAC meeting.

ACTION – At TSPMAC 7, seek agreement from TSPMAC industry representatives and other TSPMAC members and permanent observers who were not present at TSPMAC 6 to abide by the PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008) policies.

2.1 PZJA 22 Outcomes

Mr Nerdal presented the outcomes of the PZJA 22 meeting that are relevant to the TSPF. He explained that although the decision record is yet to be finalised, it is unlikely that any changes will be made. He informed the meeting that the ratified decision record will be available on the PZJA website once finalised.

Mr Nerdal discussed the change of Government, the new Minister and his increased portfolio. He stated that although the TSPF is of a high priority, the TSPMAC needs to be diligent about which recommendations are presented to the PZJA for decision.

2.2 Data Report

Mr Clive Turnbull of QDPI&F Research presented the key trends in the catch and effort data for the fishery for the 2007 season.

Mr Turnbull discussed the catch and effort data presented in the figure and highlighted the decline in effort of approximately 4000 nights between 2000/2001 to 2005, and 2000 night decline between 2005 and 2006. He commented that overall, the majority of decline in effort is by the most part likely due to economic issues such as fuel and prawn prices, rather than management responses. Mr Turnbull acknowledge

that the reduced effort in the 2006 season would have been partially due to the effort reduction, and partially as result of no PNG nights being offered to Australian operators for this season under the catch sharing arrangements. The slight increase in effort in 2007 is likely due to the uptake of PNG nights under the preferential entitlement arrangements.

Mr Turnbull went on to explain that while there was a peak in the Endeavour prawn catch rates during 2006 and that similar peaks occurred in 1995 and 1999, the 2007 CPUE was back to average. Tiger prawn catches have been steadily increasing since 2000, in line with the decrease in effort.

Mr Turnbull went on to discuss the stock assessment process and explained that the endeavour prawn catch rate data that is used as input to the endeavour prawn assessment model is not a good index of the endeavour prawn biomass on the sea bed. This is probably the result of the endeavour prawns being a secondary target species. Attempts to account for this by splitting the data into tiger versus endeavour records have not been successful. Although the estimate of MSY from the model is similar to the average endeavour prawn during the 1990's the current problems with the endeavour prawn stock assessment result in it being less reliable than the tiger prawn stock assessment.

Mr Turnbull discussed that many industry members are of the opinion that there is currently no incentive to work in TSPF, as with increased fuel costs and low prawn prices, many operators do not hold enough nights to make it worth while travelling the distance and thus it is more economical to fish the Queensland east coast. The MAC discussed that the east coast are currently experiencing similar problems however things are worse in the TSPF due to the remoteness of the fishery.

2.3 Industry Report

The Chair informed the TSPMAC that due to the lack of industry representation at the meeting, there would not be an industry update for the 2008 season so far. The Chair opened the floor for other TSPMAC members to provide comment on the season so far.

The TSPMAC discussed that endeavour prawn prices were currently around \$6 per kilo.

Mr Turnbull commented that there seems to be late recruitment this season and that the month of May appeared to be showing increased catches for tiger prawns. He stated that all the feedback he has received from industry members have indicated that they are getting good catches.

The TSPMAC discussed the reduced effort this season, as approximately 42 boats have fished between 10 and 116 nights each. They acknowledged that there were several reasons for the reduced effort including;

- Issues with flights as Aerotropics was closed for an extended period which made logistics of the fishery difficult and expensive;
- Increased petrol prices of around \$1.80 to \$2.10 off the mother boat (with a 38c subsidy).

ACTION: QDPI&F Research to work with ABARE to obtain historical prawn and fuel prices for presentation at TSPMAC 7.

2.4 Update on the AFMA Observer Program

Ms Cocking from AFMA presented the paper on the observer program and explained that there were three parts to this paper, the first being an update of the 2008 observer program to date. She informed the TSPMAC that the observer program runs on a financial year calendar and that last financial year, 180 observer days were planned for the TSPF. Ms Cocking commented that as of 30 June, 176 fishing nights and 5 travel days were observed, which equates to 2.6% coverage of the TSPF. She stated that last financial years coverage was 2.55%.

Ms Cocking discussed some limitations of the observer coverage for the fishery in the past, as there is often no or limited coverage for June through to September, which means that the data collected is not representative of the fishery activity for the whole season. She commented that AFMA plans to work closely with the observer section to remedy this situation if possible, however spreading coverage across the whole season does increase costs, including flights to and from the Torres Straits.

Ms Cocking went on to discuss the objectives and protocols of the AFMA observer program and commented that at TSPMAC 5, the TSPMAC agreed to review the objectives and protocols for the observer program at the next meeting in order to better align them with TSF Act objectives and ensure value for money from the program. She informed the TSPMAC that QDPI&F, AFMA Management and AFMA Observers met by teleconference to discuss these objectives and protocols and decided to leave them as is for the 2008 season, however to add a species of interest list provided by Mr Nakata. This list includes key cultural species that are important to the TIB sector and AFMA observers have already begun collecting data on these species. Dr Pitcher informed the TSPMAC that the Torres Strait Seabed and Biodiversity project identified high-risk species that could also be added to the list of “species of interest.”

Ms Cocking discussed the intention for observers to begin collecting some data from the try nets when possible, as the Strategic Assessment process for the TSPF raised concerns about the lack of information regarding the catch in try nets. Mr Turnbull informed the meeting that from his understanding, the concern regarding the try net samples was the need to standardise the process, as some observers were collecting samples from the try net and some from the main net and there is a need to standardise the process across the observer program. He commented that to make data from the try nets more useful and appropriate, we need to refine the process to be more specific, such as recording information on TEP interactions and species of interest including TRL.

Dr Wilson informed the meeting that the overarching objective for the observer program, which is an AFMA wide objective, would stay and asked the meeting to consider if there are any fishery-specific objectives that the TSPMAC would like to include in the observer program.

Mr Gaddes commented that we should ensure effort which is not monitored by observers is monitored via VMS and logbooks.

Mr Bensley from BRS advised that there is a low coverage in the TSPF and that the current scope of the program may be too wide for the level of coverage. He commented that we may need to refine the program as this would lead to more practical and useful data. Mr Bensley also indicated that the lack of spatial and temporal representation in the observer program needs to be addressed.

Dr Wilson indicated that a review of the current 2.5% coverage is appropriate for the TSPF, and BRS should be involved in this process.

The Chair reiterated the importance of the observer program, particularly for culturally appropriate species such as TRL. He also stated that when refining the objectives they should focus on both scientific and social/cultural aspects and the program and data regarding the culturally important species should be provided to the TSRA.

Mr Nakata questioned whether Torres Strait Islanders could interact with the observers to see how they work whilst on vessels. Dr Wilson indicated that this would not be an issue in theory, however there could be logistical issues such as workplace health and safety, limited space on vessels, if the vessel is appropriately surveyed and where the boats are fishing in the fishery.

ACTION: AFMA to draft fishery specific objectives for the TSPF observer program which include scientific, cultural and social objectives and circulate these to the TSPMAC out of session for comment.

ACTION: The TSPMAC Executive Officer to ask industry representatives if they would like any other fishery specific objectives to be considered for the TSPF observer program.

Ms Cocking went on to discuss the concerns regarding observer uptake on vessels in the TSPF. She informed the meeting that at TSPMAC 5, Industry raised concerns regarding observers continuously going on the same vessels. She informed the meeting that 2 out of 53 vessels have taken observers this year, and since the inception of the observer program, 20 vessels have taken observers. Ms Cocking informed the TSPMAC that a letter was sent out by AFMA earlier in the year asking when operators would be able to take observers during the season. She commented that only responses were received from 9 license holders representing 14 vessels, and only five of these vessels were willing or able to take observers during the 2008 season.

Ms Cocking outlined some possible methods for improving observer uptake in the fishery, including;

- education possibly through workshops or port visits run in consultation with industry associations; or
- implementing harsher rules and regulations for vessels unwilling to carry observers.

The TSPMAC agreed that more education was required to emphasise the fact that observers are not compliance officers and educate industry members of the importance of the observer program, and the positive effects that this will have on the fishery. Dr Wilson and Mr Gaddes indicated, and the TSPMAC agreed that providing harsher rules and enforcement which will require all vessels to take observers is not the best option, as it is likely to provide a hostile and unpleasant environment for observers on board vessels.

Mr Gaddes suggested an incentive system such as using the 279 nights held in trust by the Australian Government to give vessels taking observers free nights. Mr Nerdal commented that this was something that could be considered, however it was more likely that operators that take an observer for 10 days or so may receive a free day from this pool, rather than a 1 for 1 swap. Alternatively, he suggested that operators who take observers could be given priority access to PNG days or to cross

endorsement to enter the PNG area of jurisdiction. Mr Bensley informed the meeting that the TSPMAC should be aware that any incentive scheme may bias the results. The Chair asked if there would be an issue with offering an incentive and questioned whether this would be inline with AFMA policy for the observer program.

ACTION: AFMA to investigate if an incentive program could be implemented in the TSPF Observer Program such as providing “free” days to vessels that take observers for a certain period of time.

ACTION: DAFF to investigate whether the Australian Government days could be allocated for “free” to operators as a part of an observer incentive program.

The Chair asked if key operators showed leadership by taking observers, would other industry members follow their lead. Mr Gaddes informed the meeting that at the start of the observer program, a number of vessels took observers, however these operators realised no one else was stepping up and taking observers and they were bearing all of the costs.

Dr Wilson indicated that AFMA was currently looking at whether having a crew member observer program in the TSPF was feasible. Mr Turnbull informed the TSPMAC that crew based observers were suggested several years ago and industry advice was that this is difficult with the high turnover of deck hands.

The TSPMAC noted the low level of observer coverage and the concern to the indigenous sector and agreed to develop a system to improving observer uptake including incentives and education about the benefits of the program.

ACTION: AFMA to hold discussions with their observer program section to look at incentives in other fisheries.

ACTION: QDPI&F to provide information to AFMA regarding their observer program and how they improve uptake of observers.

2.5 Compliance Report

Mr Bob Russel presented the compliance report for the 2008 TSPF season to date. He commented that 25 days had been achieved at sea so far this season and 5 days were lost due to bad weather and vessel breakdowns, however the compliance target for the season is still likely to be achieved as more days are still available. Mr Russell informed the TSPMAC of the key compliance issues that had been encountered in the fishery so far this season;

- operators failing to have on board the vessels fishing and safety manuals including manning certificates and the vessels fishing authority;
- Vessels failing to carry the correct safety equipment in accordance with registration requirements;
- Vessels crew awareness of the nil take of TRL (no offences have been reported during this season so far)

The Chair questioned whether QB&FP are responsible for enforcing closures in the TSPF. Mr Russel stated that industry’s compliance with closures has been good to date.

Mr Toshio Nakata from the TSRA raised concerns with the current procedures for obtaining and paying for a TIB licenses, and questioned whether compliance officers

would take this money directly to make it easier for TIB license holders. He also questioned whether Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) would be a possible option. Mr Gaddes discussed the current update that is occurring on the licensing system and commented that an improvement to the payment system could be explored.

The TSPMAC noted the current compliance operations in the fishery and that the level of compliance has increased compared to levels in the fishery in past years.

ACTION: QDPI&F to talk to DPI&F licensing about better methods of transferring money for licenses such as Electronic Funds Transfers.

ACTION: QDPI&F to determine whether an alternative payment system, such as Electronic Funds Transfer, can be used by TIB license holders in order to make the process for obtaining these licenses more simple.

2.6 PNG Preferential Entitlements

Mr Gaddes outlined the background of the catch sharing arrangements between Australian and PNG Governments. He informed the meeting that at the 2007 Bilaterals, PNG agreed to roll over the 2007 arrangements, and thus the 2,104 nights allocated to PNG this year could be used by Australian operators.

Mr Gaddes explained that in the past, nights have been offered on a pro rata basis to operators, however at PZJA 22, it was decided that management agencies would allocate this additional effort in a manner that would provide potential for greater financial benefit to industry, and not be distributed to people who would not utilise the nights during the season.

Mr Gaddes informed the meeting that 20 responses had been received from the second round of offers, of these responses only 8 vessels had requested additional days, totalling 279. He informed the meeting that if all of these days are taken up, quota will then be 8,080 for the remainder of the season.

Mr Gaddes explained that some industry members had concerns with the method used for allocating PNG nights in the second round of offers (i.e. not on a pro rata basis). He commented that many industry members were of the opinion that the process used allowed for industry members that have a limited investment in the fishery to reap more benefit from this season, which would change the relative economic status of operators in the fishery for the season. The TSPMAC acknowledged this concern however noted that the intention of the method was to inject effort into the fishery in order to maintain the fisheries infrastructure for the season.

The TSPMAC noted the importance of implementing fisheries policy and management decisions, including the allocation of additional nights in the fishery, in a timely fashion, as many of these processes would provide greater benefit to industry if conducted prior to or early in the season.

2.7 PNG Quarantine and Access

Mr Nerdal provided an update on the process that will be involved to access the PNG area of jurisdiction, including quarantine issues. He informed the TSPMAC that under the *Quarantine Act 1908*, an import permit will be required to bring prawns back into Australia from the PNG area of jurisdiction, however as the prawns have the same disease status, food import forms will not be required if vessels do not make landfall in the PNG area of jurisdiction. Mr Nerdal commented that the database which is

required for the import of prawns to occur should be finalised by AQIS by the end of 2008, and no Australian operators can enter PNG jurisdiction until this time.

Mr Roland Pitcher of CSIRO raised concern with the use of the words “disease status” by Biosecurity Australia (BA) as he was concerned that it implies that the stock is in a state of disease. Mr Nerdal commented that this is a special term used by BA and has a specific meaning. The TSPMAC agreed that Mr Nerdal should find out the meaning of this term for presentation at the next TSPMAC.

ACTION: DAFF to determine Biosecurity Australia’s definition of the term “disease status” for presentation at TSPMAC 7.

The TSPMAC discussed past access by Australian operators to the PNG area of jurisdiction and Mr Turnbull noted that fishing used to be allowed in the area around Bramble Cay, however since the implementation of VMS, there has been no records of fishing occurring in this area.

Mr Gaddes commented that before the PNG jurisdiction became inaccessible to Australian operators, fishers would trawl on the way to Bramble Cay, which provided more economic return, however now these closures have been implemented it is not economic to go there.

Mr Russel questioned how the import process would work and questioned how we will know whether the prawns were caught in PNG or Australian waters. Mr Gaddes stated that he thinks the product will need to be clearly marked with the jurisdiction in which they were caught.

The TSPMAC agreed to the recommendations presented in the paper.

ACTION: DAFF to determine whether PNG caught product will need to be clearly marked with the jurisdiction in which it was caught.

ACTION: DAFF to draft a letter to AQIS on behalf of the TSPMAC Chair which will inform them of the starting date of next season and ask whether their quarantine database will be up and running by the start of the season. The letter should also request that if possible, it would be useful for the system to be in by 1 March if not by end of 2008.

3.1 Torres Strait Prawn Research Program

Mr Turnbull provided an update on the status of the research program to date. He informed the MAC that 4 surveys had been conducted last year. The November survey was cut short due to a Cyclone. The May and July surveys for 2008 have been successfully completed despite strong wind conditions and two more surveys remained for this season.

Mr Turnbull summarised the results of the research project to date. He commented that the overall catch rates and species compositions are similar for the Australian and PNG areas of the TSPZ and stated that the surveys are providing valuable data from PNG areas. Mr Turnbull discussed that CPUE for tiger and endeavour prawns was highest in May and lowest in November, and the percentage of ripe female tiger prawns was highest in September/November and lowest in May. Further, the majority of sites with higher percentages of ripe female tiger prawns were located in deeper waters to the east of Yorke Island and between Stephens Island and Bramble Cay. Mr Turnbull also indicated that the surveys are showing that juvenile prawns are settling

in seagrass beds west of Warrior Reef and then moving to shallows in West to feed and grow, which is why the late season closures are implemented in these areas.

Mr Turnbull explained stated that Mai Tanimoto of QDPI&F Research had extrapolated the survey catch data in ArcGIS to show prawn distribution by abundance, size and spawning condition over the area of the fishery. He explained that a spatial management model is currently being developed which will use survey and logbook data to refine spatial management arrangements for the fishery.

Mr Turnbull went on to discuss the endeavour prawn stock assessment that was developed by Ms Tanimoto who was appointed to the project's Fisheries Modeller position in September 2007. He commented that the stock assessment was based on the tiger prawn stock assessment. Mr Turnbull explained that current endeavour prawn assessment is less reliable than the tiger prawn assessment, as the model assumes that catch rates are directly proportional to abundance, however this is not always the case with endeavour prawns as they are generally a secondary species (as discussed in Item 2.2).

Mr Turnbull discussed the possibility of splitting the data into two sets; data where tiger prawns are targeted and data where endeavour prawns are targeted, by using the value of the catch of each species. The results of this analysis however failed to reduce the uncertainty around the estimate of MSY for endeavour prawns.

Mr Turnbull explained that another source of uncertainty in the endeavour assessment is the lower CPUE of endeavour prawns during the 1980's. This may be due to under reporting and discarding of endeavour prawns during that period as the main focus at that time was on catching tiger prawns. Expansion of the fishing into the southern part of Torres Strait, implementation of the east of Warrior closure in 1991 and the high levels of fishing effort during the 1990's favouring endeavour prawns are other possible explanations for the lower CPUE during the 1980's.

Mr Gillespie presented a brief history on the stock assessment process and commented that despite the current limitation with the endeavour prawn assessment, the stock assessment models have been carefully refined over the years and are amongst the best prawn stock assessments worldwide. He stated that the tiger prawn model was internationally peer reviewed in 2003 and recommendations were made to improve the model, and these changes were incorporated into the model. Further, he highlighted that the DAFF funding which is providing for these surveys will further improve the stock assessment process.

3.2 Seabed Mapping and ERA

Dr Pitcher presented results of the seabed mapping project which was undertaken during 2003-2006. The project aimed to provide information on seabed habitats and their associated biodiversity for use in regional marine planning through NOAA, and to look at the sustainability of the TSPF by developing sustainability risk indicators.

Dr Pitcher informed the TSPMAC that in the preliminary phase of the project predictions of the habitat distributions in the Torres Strait were undertaken by collecting data on sediments, bathymetry, slopes, current stress, nutrients and fishery effort. By using this data the project could ensure all habitat types were surveyed.

He commented that the secondary part of the survey included the field work component which collected sediment samples and data on seabed type, fish and other species that are interacted with during trawling. He commented that funding for the project was not adequate to cover the entire region of the Torres Strait, and therefore

key areas were picked for targeting during the surveys. 376 sites were surveyed during two one month voyages in November/December 2003 and March/April 2005.

The key results of the project indicated that there is limited biohabitat present in the areas of Eastern Torres Strait and the majority of the Torres Strait area is bare and silty and that this is the case even in untrawled areas. He stated that mainly algae and seagrass beds occurred in high current areas in the western Torres Straits and sponges were also found mainly in the high water flow areas. Dr Pitcher commented that approximately 3500 species of plants and animals were identified during the surveys (collected by epibenthic sled) and most of these samples were collected in the high current areas in the west of Torres Strait. Further, the most vulnerable species live in seagrass type areas and rich habitat areas that are exposed to minimal trawling.

Dr Pitcher summarised that the study indicates that changes to the species assemblages that directly related to trawling are very small compared to all of the other biological effects in Torres Strait. He commented that the areas that have a high exposure to trawling are trawled around 3 times over a year and have 100% exposure, however there appears to be a low level of effect on the species in these areas, which may be due to the short life cycles and high reproductive rates resulting in a fast recovery time for these species.

Dr Pitcher explained that risk assessments were conducted for 250 species encountered during this project by looking at estimated catch rates and natural mortality. He commented that the results found that one species was at sustainability risk and another three were flagged at being at moderate risk. Dr Pitcher then suggested that the top 20 species may want to be added to the “species of interest” list for the observer program data collection to allow monitoring of the status of these species.

ACTION: AFMA to add the higher risk species from the CSIRO seabed mapping project to the “species of interest” list for additional data to be collected during the scientific observer program.

Dr Pitcher commented that there was currently some uncertainty with the relative catch data and natural mortality data and stated that the project could be improved by refining this data.

In summary, Dr Pitcher commented that the vulnerable habitats currently have little or no exposure to trawling, however some of these habitats are currently still open to trawling, which we may want to consider closing, or look at restricting the fishery to the area that is current trawled.

Mr Nakata commented on the usefulness of both the seabed mapping project and Mr Turnbull’s research project and suggested that this information be developed into a form that can be disseminated to the Torres Strait community. The TSPMAC commented that some information could be presented in the Torres news and discussed that it may be useful to present some video footage showing the non-trawled trawled ground in order to show how barren they are without trawling.

ACTION: AFMA to work with the TSRA and AFMA communications section to consider a method disseminating the information from Mr Turnbull and Dr Pitcher’s reports to the indigenous sector.

The TSPMAC acknowledged the significance of both Mr Turnbull’s research projects and stock assessment models and Dr Pitcher’s seabed mapping project and

commented on the high standard of this work and its importance to the management of the fishery.

3.3 Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee

Dr Wilson informed the TSPMAC that the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) had been reconvened and held its 45th meeting on 17-18 June 2008. He stated that the Chairs summary is being finalised and will be on the PZJA website shortly and tabled at the next TSPMAC.

Dr Wilson commented that the purpose of the TSSAC is to assess research priorities for Torres Strait fisheries, and said that the TSSAC was currently developing a process for requesting, assessing and reviewing research proposals, however there were currently three key research priorities for the TSPF:

- Stock assessments for tiger and endeavour prawns;
- Assessment of effectiveness of BRDs; and
- Determine the most appropriate level of observer coverage in the TSPF.

Dr Wilson acknowledged that he would liaise with industry members to determine whether they still wanted to be permanent observers on the TSSAC and that this would need to be dealt with out of session due to the lack of industry representation at the TSPMAC.

ACTION: AFMA to liaise with TSPMAC industry representatives and determine whether they would still like observer status on the TSSAC.

4.1 Management Plan Update

Dr Wilson provided a history on the progress of the development and consultation on the TSPF Management Plan. He informed the meeting that following requests at TSPMAC 5, the draft Plan was distributed to all TSPMAC members, PZJA Standing Committee, PZJA agency staff and DEWHA for a two week internal consultation period from 11-25 March 2008. Dr Wilson stated that comments were received from a number of agencies and incorporated into the plan where possible, before the plan was distributed for a 30 day public consultation period on 2 June 2008.

Dr Wilson informed the meeting that the major changes that had been made to the plan as a result of comments received included;

- Changing the performance criteria to include:
 - the development of list of key traditional species and incorporate into management process;
 - and the development of a periodic assessment of the biological reference points.
- Using the term “days” instead of “nights” to conform with the Queensland East Coast Trawl Fishery system;
- Changing the PNG access rights section to ensure the plan does not impose any obligations on foreign countries.

Dr Wilson questioned whether there were any more comments on the draft Plan. Dr Wilson commented that QB&FP would be involved in setting the compliance levels for the fishery so this should not be an issue. Mr Gaddes added that the TSPMAC should also discuss the compliance rates to ensure they are set correctly and are targeting the right areas. The TSPMAC also agreed that the word “rates” should be

removed from the performance criteria, as rate is not a good measure to use for compliance and doesn't indicate the seriousness of certain breaches.

Mr Gaddes commented that he thought the PZJA would be setting performance indicators under the Plan as per the provisions of the Act. Dr Wilson commented that this will be put in a separate document as everything in the plan is valid for 10 years and placing the performance indicators in the Plan may cause too much rigidity.

Mr Gaddes discussed the phone calls he had received from concerned industry members regarding lack of external leasing and commented that he doesn't think internal leasing is compliant with national competition policy. Mr Russel stated that the rules may be different in the TSPF due to the treaty obligations.

ACTION: AFMA to determine whether the lack of external leasing in the TSPF Plan is in breach of the national competition policy.

Dr Wilson provided an overview of the timeline for the management plan. He commented that the aim is for the plan to be implemented prior to the 2009 season and acknowledged the need to keep pushing with this process to ensure the Plan is implemented in this timeframe.

The TSPMAC agreed to the recommendations and agreed to an OOS meeting in the coming months to finalise the Plan, probably via a phone hookup.

4.2 Long Term Harvest Strategy

Dr Wilson presented the progress on the development of the long term harvest strategy and commented that it is hoped that the Harvest Strategy will be finalised by the end of the 2008. He also reiterated that the long term harvest strategy is different to the previously proposed interim harvest strategy. Dr Wilson commented that the Harvest Strategy itself will not specifically define the TAE for the fishery, however it will outline the decision rules that should be used for setting and regulating the TAE throughout a season.

Dr Wilson suggested the possibility of forming a working group to finalise the HS process. Mr Gaddes commented that we should have industry involved to prevent questioning at a later date.

The TSPMAC discussed the difficulties that will be associated with developing an appropriate Harvest Strategy and agreed that the working group would be an appropriate place to make finalise the decision rules.

ACTION: Establish a harvest strategy working group including the TSPMAC research member and one member from AFMA, QDPI&F, DAFF, TSRA and industry (each agency to nominate a member).

TSPMAC 6 - DAY 2

National Fisheries Authority (NFA) representatives Mr Phillip Polon and Mr Lester Baule were in attendance at the meeting on the second day and requested that agenda item 2.7 - PNG prawn quarantine and access be discussed again for their information.

PNG Prawn Quarantine and Access Continued

Mr Nerdal reiterated the previous days' discussions and outlined the background relating to Australians accessing PNG waters and the issues that are encountered when bringing product back into the Australian jurisdiction.

The Chair questioned whether PNG operators are likely to start prawn trawling. PNG representatives commented that it is not likely to occur at this stage.

The Chair asked whether it would be useful to reiterate the key points from the stock assessment relevant to PNG. Mr Turnbull gave a brief update on the surveys and commented that they have been occurring in PNG waters, and agreed to run through them again with PNG at the end of the meeting if they were interested.

Item 4.3 Ghost Nets and Marine Debris

Ms Cocking presented this paper and explained that in August 2003, 'Injury and fatality to vertebrate marine life caused by ingestion of, or entanglement in, harmful marine debris' listed as a key threatening process. She stated that as a result, a Threat Abatement Plan (TAP) had been drafted by DEWHA, and this TAP was currently out for public comment. She explained the process for providing public comment regarding this document either through the TSPMAC, AFMA or providing comments directly to DEWHA.

Ms Cocking went on to discuss other concerns with trawl rubbish that are directly related to the Torres Strait prawn fishery. She commented that at PZJA 22, a CFG representative expressed concerns regarding the large number of ghost nets being found around Yorke and Coconut Islands and presented a piece of net identified as being prawn trawl net at this meeting. She stated that following this, the PZJA discussed an agreement made by PZJA agencies to review the trawl rubbish around these areas and discussed the possibility of utilising aerial seagrass surveys undertaken by QDPI&F. Ms Fiona Hill from QDPI&F commented that the Gulf of Carpentaria a ghost net project was currently collecting ghost nets, and of the 5.3 km of net that has been collected only 2% has been identified as being from Australian trawlers. It is important to note that these surveys have been undertaken in areas outside of the TSPF area.

Ms Cocking went on to explain possible funding sources for conducting further surveys into the extent of ghost nets and trawl rubbish in the concerned areas. She stated that funding may be able to be sourced through the TAP process if the TSPMAC or industry members presented a good case for the importance of the project. However she informed the TSPMAC that the TAP process may be quite lengthy and thus any funding may take time to obtain. She also commented that some funding may be available from the DEQHA "Caring for our Country" funding. Mr Nerdal commented that this funding had already been allocated, however there is likely to be another round of allocation sometime in the future if any funding remains from current projects.

ACTION: AFMA to follow up on possible funding options for further monitoring of ghost nets and liaise with TSRA while progressing this.

Mr Mohiba questioned how the nets are discarded by operators? He asked whether certain disposal areas could be identified, or alternatively whether damaged nets could be dropped at nearby islands such as Hammond, where islanders could repair nets and or possibly use the nets to make baskets or artwork instead of them being discarded.

Mr Gaddes informed the TSPMAC that it would be unusual for whole nets to be discarded. Mr Nakata informed the TSPMAC that nets have washed up on islands with dead olive ridley turtles which highlights the issues with ghost nets.

ACTION: AFMA to liaise with industry to request the development of an industry code of conduct relating to the disposal of marine debris for presentation at TSPMAC 7.

The Chair questioned the role of fisheries management organisations and the TSPMAC in sourcing funding for Ghost Net research and commented that it may be more appropriate for the TSRA. Mr Gaddes commented that as we are the source of the nets it is somewhat our responsibility. Ms Hill questioned whether or not the Gulf of Carpentaria Ghost Net Program could be extended to allow coverage into the eastern side of the Straits.

CFG representative Mr Lota Warriia commented that rubbish and nets have come into the anchorage areas and in the past wire and other rubbish has been dumped. He commented that the removal of such debris would be very beneficial. The TSPMAC discussed possible methods for implementing an initial survey including AFMA and QDPI&F staff conducting an assessment during trawl surveys. The TSPMAC discussed that this may be difficult as dive surveys will probably be required. Dr Pitcher commented that CSIRO conduct annual lobster surveys which involve dives and questioned whether we could request these divers to document debris. Mr Turnbull went on to say that Michael Rasheed from QDPI&F uses video surveillance around ports in the Straits and it could be useful to in undertaking an initial survey.

ACTION: AFMA and QDPI&F to discuss hiring a contractor to survey the trawl rubbish in the areas around Yorke and Coconut Islands and quote the removal.

Dr Wilson suggested that the TSSAC be asked to look at potential funding for the assessments.

ACTION: AFMA to develop a research proposal to the TSSAC on potential funding sources.

Mr Nerdal questioned whether we should note the PZJA 22 decision to review ghost nets.

The TSPMAC agreed to note the PZJA recommendation.

Item 4.4 Strategic Assessment Conditions and Recommendations

Dr Wilson discussed the background of the Strategic Assessment process and explained that the process occurred as a part of the development and finalisation of the Management Plan. He commented that DEWHA has identified draft recommendations for management of the fishery which have been set around a number of risks and uncertainties that must be managed to ensure that impacts of the fishery are minimised. Dr Wilson informed the TSPMAC that he was seeking comment and agreement on the draft recommendations and noted that the PZJA had already agreed to the draft recommendations.

Mr Neil Bensley of BRS questioned when the current Strategic Assessment expires. Dr Wilson stated that it expires on 27 November 2008.

Dr. Wilson read through each of the Strategic Assessment recommendations individually and the following comments were received.

The following discussion points were raised about each recommendation.

Recommendation 1 – target species and harvest strategy

Mr Turnbull commented on the rigidity of the HS wording in the Strategic Assessment. Dr Wilson commented that the conditions and recommendations are guidelines that we should attempt to achieve.

Recommendation 2 – bycatch

The TSPMAC questioned whether TEDs and BRDs in try nets are feasible and commented on the short shot duration for try nets, being less than 30 minutes and thus not being a real threat to turtles. Ms Cocking commented that some people are still concerned with possible death of turtles in try nets, as turtles may be on their way to the surface for a breath when they are caught, and thus still drown. The TSPMAC acknowledged the need to collect data on turtles caught in try nets, which the TSPMAC previously agreed should be added to the data collection of observers where possible.

Recommendation 3 – protected species interactions

The TSPMAC acknowledged that the key areas to turtles have already been identified and been closed to trawling. Mr Nerdal questioned how PNG would enforce closures in areas of concern in PNG waters if cross endorsed Australia operators enter the PNG area of jurisdiction. Mr Polon commented that specific conditions would be placed on licenses of Australian operators fishing in PNG which prevent Australian operators from fishing in closure areas.

The TSPMAC acknowledged that this would be discussed further at the fisheries bilateral meeting later this year.

Recommendation 4 – refine spatial management

The TSPMAC discussed the progress of the spatial management arrangements that are currently in place in the fishery and development of other spatial management arrangements for the fishery in future. The TSPMAC also acknowledged the progress of Dr Pitcher's report and discussed how this may be used to develop further spatial management arrangements in the future.

Recommendation 5 – validating catch and effort data

The TSPMAC acknowledged that this validation process is occurring through the observer program and the CSIRO seabed mapping project. Mr Gaddes commented that validation can also be undertaken through buyer returns and VMS data.

Recommendation 6 – compliance with management arrangements

Mr Gaddes commented that the aim was to conduct all compliance risk assessments for Torres Strait fisheries together, however we may need to conduct the risk assessment for the TSPF first and follow up with the other fisheries.

Recommendation 7 – PZJA to work with other agencies for complimentary management.

The TSPMAC discussed the need for PZJA agencies to continue working with PNG in order to ensure complimentary arrangements are occurring where ever possible.

The TSPMAC agreed to all of the draft conditions and recommendations arising from DEWHA's reassessment of the TSPF.

4.5 Survey of TEDs, BRDs and Try Nets

Ms Cocking discussed a survey that is currently being developed by AFMA which aims to determine the range of BRDs, and TED and Try net configurations that are currently being used in the fishery. She commented that this information will allow us to determine whether there are any BRDs that are no longer being used by any operators and may be removed from the fishery. She also explained PZJA agencies intention to possibly conducting a technical review of the effectiveness of some of the BRDs used in the fishery, either aboard industry vessels or independently, depending on what funding could be obtained. Ms Cocking asked whether there were any commented on the survey and stated her intention to discuss the draft survey with TSPMAC industry representatives prior to finalisation and distribution.

Mr Gaddes commented that QB&FP could obtain information on BRDs and TEDs during inspections on TSPF boats (they do this in NPF) as a validation tool or a constant source of supply.

The TSPMAC also discussed that try nets information could be obtain from observers and questioned whether observers could undertake BRD trials while at sea.

Mr Gaddes informed the TSPMAC that previously in the NPF an observer spent 10 nights on one boat and undertook a BRD trial. He commented that this could then be undertaken without additional costs as long as a time, place and a willing boat are identified.

ACTION: After results of the BRD, TED and try net survey are received AFMA to discuss the potential for observers to conduct BRD trials through the AFMA observer program.

The TSPMAC commented that the TSSAC could review the survey design and possibly provide funding to offer incentives to boats who undertake the trials.

ACTION: AFMA to develop a proposal for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee, to conduct a technical review of some of the BRDs used on prawn vessels operating in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.

Dr Wilson commented on a BRD light trial which has just been completed by the Australian Maritime College and aims to exclude fish before they enter the trawl net. Ms Cocking commented that results of the project were promising however additional funding was required.

ACTION: Executive Officer to liaise with the Australian Maritime College and request that they provide a presentation on the light trials at TSPMAC 7.

Mr Gaddes asked how many surveys we expect to get back and how the response could be improved. Ms Cocking advise the TSPMAC that she intended to send out the surveys and then follow up with individuals over the phone.

Mr Russell suggested that alternative measures could also be used, such as observers or QBFP officers undertaking the surveys in the field. The Chair suggested that a second round could be to do the surveys over the phone to increase the level of feedback.

ACTION: 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.***

CFG members questioned whether these TEDs are effective and Mr Gaddes explained the process undertaken to accredit TEDs by the US. He commented that any new TEDs are sent to the US for trial.

ACTION: QDPI&F to send footage from the US TED trails to the TSRA and bring the footage for presentation at TSPMAC 7.

5.1 Cost Recovery

Dr Wilson explained the background around TSPMAC industry members concerns regarding cost recovery for the TSPF. He explained that following the buyback, the Australian Government holds approximately 25% of the fishing days for the TSPF, and industry members had questioned whether they were paying for this portion of the costs of fishery.

Dr Wilson informed the TSPMAC that the cost recovery budget represents 100% of the management costs of the 75% of licenses held by Australian operators. If any effort is temporarily transferred to Australian operators (i.e. through catch sharing arrangements), the costs are covered on a user paid system.

Mr Nerdal questioned whether PNG would pay for nights if they decide to use any in the future. Dr Wilson stated that under the treaty, PNG cannot be charged for any nights which they use and that the Australian government would need to find a way to fund the management of those nights if PNG accesses them.

5.2 Cost Share Budget

Dr Wilson informed the TSPMAC that the draft AFMA budget had been presented to the TSPMAC out of session during a phone hookup on 6 May 2008. At this time the AFMA portion of the TSPF budget totalled \$458,745. He explained that at the OOS meeting, TSPMAC industry members had made a specific request for PZJA management agencies to minimise fishery costs for the 2008 season as much as possible. Dr Wilson commented that following this OOS meeting, the AFMA budget was reviewed and finalised, with the final AFMA 2008/2009 TSPF budget totalling \$421,286, representing a \$37,459 decrease compared to the draft budget presented at the OOS meeting. Dr Wilson also explained the government subsidies provided by AFMA for the foreign compliance and observer sections (\$33,447) meant that the total AFMA cost recovered budget to be applied to the 2009 levies would be \$387,839.

Mr Gaddes gave a brief explanation of the QDPI&F portion of the budget and commented that the QDPI&F portion of the 2008/09 cost share budget equated to \$173,780, showing a small \$5,225 increase which was a result of increased staff wages associated with the standard public service enterprise bargaining process.

Dr Wilson explained that given the government levy relief runs out this year, the levies for the 2009 season are likely to be at least double if there is no budget surplus to roll over from the 2007/08 financial year budget.

Dr Wilson commented on discussions made at TSPMAC 5 regarding the possibility of an independent chair being elected to TSPMAC if Mr Jim Gillespie was no longer available for the position. He commented that following this request, the Executive Officer developed some estimated costings associated with having an independent TSPMAC chair. He explained that an independent chair is likely to cost around \$2,842 per TSPMAC meeting and costs are associated with air fares, travel allowance, and Chair fees. Dr Wilson stated that this information will be presented again at the next TSPMAC meeting when industry members are present.

The Chair informed the meeting that all TSPMAC positions are due to expire early next year.

6.1 OOS Meeting

Dr Wilson presented the decisions to come out of the OOS TSPMAC meeting which was held on 6 May 2008, to discuss the AFMA portion of the draft cost share budget for the TSPF.

6.2 Anchorage Exclusion Zones

CFG representative Mr Simeon Baluz presented a brief paper on proposed anchorage exclusions zones around the Warrior and Dungeness Reefs. He commented that these proposals are mainly to protect Tropical Rock Lobster and are being raised as a result of Australian operators possibly entering the PNG area of jurisdiction through the cross jurisdictional access arrangements. Mr Baluz commented that this closure would be issued across the board to all vessels above 6m, including TIB vessels. He also stated that the proposal acknowledges the possible need to anchor in these areas in bad weather.

The TSPMAC acknowledged that TSPF industry members are rarely in these areas and there is no history of prawn trawlers anchoring in the area. Further, Dr Wilson commented that prawn industry members are likely to support the proposal as they don't currently anchor in these areas.

The TSPMAC NOTED the paper presented by the CFG members and requested that a full proposal be presented at TSPMAC 7.

<p><i>ACTION: CFG representatives to develop a full proposal regarding the proposed anchorage exclusion zones around Warrior and Dungeness Reefs to all vessels over 6m, for presentation at TSPMAC No. 7.</i></p>

6.3 TSPMAC meeting locations

The executive officer informed the MAC, that at the OOS meeting on 6 May, PZJA agencies agreed to review the number and location of TSPMAC meetings in an attempt to reduce costs. As a result, the executive officer drafted comparison costings for meetings held in Cairns compared to Brisbane. Ms Cocking informed the meeting that although the costs associated with the cost recovery budget only differed by approximately \$80 (Brisbane being the more expensive option), when all of the costs to PNG and the TSRA we considered, it would be much cheaper for all stakeholders overall to hold meetings in Cairns. She also commented that this was the most central location considering those members travelling from Thursday Island and PNG. Further, the chair commented that as it is a north coast fishery, traditionally, meetings are held in Northern Australia.

The TSPMAC also acknowledged industries request for phone hook-ups if face to face meetings are not required.

6.4 Date of Next Meeting

The TSPMAC agreed to hold the next TSPMAC meeting on 3-4 December 2008.

6.5 Call for New TSPMAC Non-Traditional Inhabitant Member

The TSPMAC discussed the need to elect a new non-traditional inhabitant (industry) member onto the TSPMAC following Mr Bob Robbins resignation on 17 April 2008. The TSPMAC discussed the sort of role that the new industry member should have on the TSPMAC, and commented that it would be useful to have a processor with a good knowledge of the marketing side of the industry, especially considering the current economic status of the fishery and market prices. Mr Gaddes suggested putting more weight on applicants from a processor background during the selection process. The TSPMAC also agreed that it may be beneficial to have an industry member who is external to the Torres Strait Prawn Entitlement Holders Association (TSPEHA) in order to get representation from all areas of industry.

The TSPMAC discussed the process for electing a new TSPMAC member under PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008), which includes setting up a selection panel which comprises of PZJA agency staff, the TSPMAC chair and an industry representative. Mr Gaddes questioned whether it would be a conflict of interest having a TSPMAC industry member on the selection panel, and commented that other QLD fisheries use an independent industry member from another fishery for selection panels, as this still gives industry expertise however does not create a potential conflict of interest.

The TSPMAC agreed that a selection panel should be established to elect a new TSPMAC industry member which would include the Chair, 1 QDPI&F member, 1 AFMA member and one independent industry member from an external fishery. They also agreed that the process should aim to be finalised before the next TSPMAC meeting so that the new member may attend. The TSPMAC also agreed that AFMA should present a recommendation the PZJA Standing Committee seeking their approval to have an external industry member on the panel as this is a deviation from the usual processes outlined in PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008).

ACTION: The TSPMAC executive officer to start the recruitment process for electing a new TSPMAC industry member to the TSPMAC.

ACTION: AFMA to present a recommendation to the PZJA Standing Committee seeking their approval to have an external industry member on the panel as this is a deviation from the usual processes outlines in PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008).

Close

The Chair thanked members and observers for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 12.45pm.

Action reference number	Action	Date item was added	Responsibility	Status
TSPMAC 6.1	DAFF and the TSPMAC Executive Officer to liaise with TSPMAC industry representatives to determine whether the current draft PZJA decision record is providing the information which was intended when industry requested the record at TSPMAC 5.	TSPMAC 6	TSPMAC EO	
TSPMAC 6.2	AFMA to confirm whether the AFMA VMS system is able to pick up TSPF vessels that are not cross endorsed Commonwealth vessels (i.e. QLD ECOTF vessels).	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.3	TSPMAC to undertake an annual self assessment against PZJA indicators outlined in PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008).	TSPMAC 6		
TSPMAC 6.4	At TSPMAC 7, seek agreement from TSPMAC industry representatives and other TSPMAC members and permanent observers who were not present at TSPMAC 6 to abide by the PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008) policies.	TSPMAC 6	TSPMAC Chair	
TSPMAC 6.5	QDPI&F Research to work with ABARE to obtain historical prawn and fuel prices for presentation at TSPMAC 7.	TSPMAC 6	QDPI&F Research	
TSPMAC 6.6	AFMA to draft fishery specific objectives for the TSPF observer program which include scientific, cultural and social objectives and circulate these to the TSPMAC out of session for comment.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.7	The TSPMAC Executive Officer to ask industry representatives if they would like any other fishery specific objectives to be considered for the TSPF observer program.	TSPMAC 6	TSPMAC EO	
TSPMAC 6.8	AFMA to investigate if an incentive program could be implemented in the TSPF Observer Program such as providing “free” days to vessels that take observers for a certain period of time.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.9	DAFF to investigate whether the Australian Government days could be allocated for “free” to operators as a part of an observer incentive program.	TSPMAC 6	DAFF	
TSPMAC 6.10	AFMA to hold discussions with their observer program section to look at incentives in other fisheries.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.11	QDPI&F to provide information to AFMA regarding their observer program and how	TSPMAC 6	QDPI&F	

	they improve uptake of observers.			
TSPMAC 6.12	QDPI&F management to talk to QDPI&F licensing about better methods of transferring money for licenses such as Electronic Funds Transfers.	TSPMAC 6	QDPI&F	
TSPMAC 6.13	QDPI&F to determine whether an alternative payment system, such as Electronic Funds Transfer, can be used by TIB license holders in order to make the process for obtaining these licenses more simple.	TSPMAC 6	QDPI&F	
TSPMAC 6.14	DAFF to determine Biosecurity Australia's definition of the term "disease status" for presentation at TSPMAC 7.	TSPMAC 6	DAFF	
TSPMAC 6.15	DAFF to determine whether PNG caught product will need to be clearly marked with the jurisdiction in which it was caught.	TSPMAC 6	DAFF	
TSPMAC 6.16	DAFF to draft a letter to AQIS on behalf of the TSPMAC Chair which will inform them of the starting date of next season and ask whether their quarantine database will be up and running by the start of the season. The letter should also request that if possible, it would be useful for the system to be in by 1 March if not by end of 2008.	TSPMAC 6	DAFF	
TSPMAC 6.17	AFMA to add the higher risk species from the CSIRO seabed mapping project to the "species of interest" list for additional data to be collected during the scientific observer program.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.18	AFMA to work with the TSRA and AFMA communications section to consider a method disseminating the information from Mr Turnbull and Dr Pitcher's reports to the indigenous sector.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.19	AFMA to liaise with TSPMAC industry representatives and determine whether they would still like observer status on the TSSAC.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.20	AFMA to determine whether the lack of external leasing in the TSPF Plan is in breach of the national competition policy.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.21	Establish a harvest strategy working group including the TSPMAC research member and one member from AFMA, QDPI&F, DAFF, TSRA and industry (each agency to nominate a member).	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.22	AFMA to follow up on possible funding options for further monitoring of ghost nets and liaise with TSRA while progressing this.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	

TSPMAC 6.23	AFMA to liaise with industry to request the development of an industry code of conduct relating to the disposal of marine debris for presentation at TSPMAC 7.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.24	AFMA and QDPI&F to discuss hiring a contractor to survey the trawl rubbish in the areas around Yorke and Coconut Islands and quote the removal.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.25	AFMA to develop a research proposal to the TSSAC on potential funding sources.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.26	After results of the BRD, TED and try net survey are received AFMA to discuss the potential for observers to conduct BRD trials through the AFMA observer program.	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.27	AFMA to develop a proposal for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee, to conduct a technical review of some of the BRDs used on prawn vessels operating in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.28	Executive Officer to liaise with the Australian Maritime College and request that they provide a presentation on the light trials at TSPMAC 7.	TSPMAC 6	TSPMAC EO	
TSPMAC 6.29	AFMA to apply a 3 tiered approach to the TED, BRD and try net survey, which includes; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	
TSPMAC 6.30	QDPI&F to send footage from the US TED trails to the TSRA and bring the footage for presentation at TSPMAC 7.	TSPMAC 6	QDPI&F	
TSPMAC 6.31	CFG representatives to develop a full proposal regarding the proposed anchorage exclusion zones around Warrior and Dungeness Reefs to all vessels over 6m, for presentation at TSPMAC No. 7.	TSPMAC 6	TSRA	
TSPMAC 6.32	The TSPMAC executive officer to start the recruitment process for electing a new TSPMAC industry member to the TSPMAC.	TSPMAC 6	TSPMAC EO	
TSPMAC 6.33	AFMA to present a recommendation to the PZJA Standing Committee seeking their approval to have an external industry member on the panel as this is a deviation from the usual processes outlines in PZJA FMP No. 1 (May 2008).	TSPMAC 6	AFMA	

Ongoing or incomplete action items from previous meetings

TSPMAC 5.2	Compile a PZJA decision register which includes the date of the PZJA meeting, the decision title and the gazettal notice and date. A progress report will be provided at TSPMAC 6.	TSPMAC 5 – 4-5 December 2007	DAFF	Ongoing DAFF will provide a verbal update at the meeting. An example of how the record will be compiled will be provided. See attachments 1.2A, B and C.
TSPMAC 4.2	DAFF to meet with the AQIS imported foods program to determine if the testing regime for prawns from PNG waters can be reduced for vessels that have already obtained approval from AQIS to export prawns caught in Australian waters.	TSPMAC 4 – 14 June 2007	DAFF	Ongoing DAFF will provide a verbal update at the meeting.
TSPMAC 4.11	QDPI&F and AFMA to further identify options for the setting of reference points in the TSPF as part of an overall harvest strategy.	TSPMAC 4 – 14 June 2007	QDPI&F/ AFMA	Ongoing See agenda item 4.2 for details.
	Quarterly updates on the progress of the research plan are provided to the TSPMAC.	TSPMAC 1 – 13&14 June 2006	QDPI&F/ Clive Turnbull	Ongoing QDPI&F to provide a verbal update at the meeting.