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Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC)

CHAIRS SUMMARY
TSPMAC OOS
7 MAY 2009

TELECONFERENCE

CHAIR: Mr. Jim Gillespie

CHAIR'S SUMMARY
TSPMAC OOS 7 May, 2009

An Out of Session meeting of the Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC) was held via teleconference 7 May 2009. The following is a summary of the major discussion points from the meeting. A complete decision record can be found at Attachment A.

For further information, please contact Ms Lisa Cocking, the TSPMAC executive officer on (02) 6225 5451.

Draft 2009/10 TSPF budget

Mr Stan Lui of the Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) presented the draft budget paper for the 2009/10 season and discussed AFMA's new Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS) and the difference between the new CRIS 2009 and old CRIS 2004.

Mr Lui explained the background of the budget process for the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery (TSPF) and the role of AFMA and Queensland Primary Industries & Fisheries (QPI&F) in the budget process. He explained that the budget in this paper is the draft of what will be approved for the 2010 levies. He commented that the AFMA portion of the budget alone is what will be approved by the AFMA Commission Board in June this year.

Mr Shane Fava from QPI&F explained the QLD budget. He commented that the increased costs in the budget are mainly due to the need to provide additional training of staff associated with the updating of their current Vessel Monitoring System, and an increase in compliance costs. He stated that QPI&F are pursuing reductions of compliance costs through reducing the number of QPI&F officers permanently based on Thursday Island by utilising current staff out of Cairns for to conduct patrols which will reduce the overheads on Thursday Island including housing and office costs.

Mr Gillespie outlined the process for commenting on the CRIS. He explained that the comments recorded by the MAC today will be compiled in a letter from the Chair and presented to the AFMA Commission. Mr Fava added that at a later date the Commonwealth Minister will be required to approve the use of the CRIS 2009 or CRIS 2004 when determining the 2009/10 AFMA Budget. The Minister and Chair of the PZJA will be required to make a decision as to which cost recovery policy will be applied to the PZJA fisheries. A paper will need to be developed for the Standing Committee to seek approval from the PZJA in this regard.

Mr Earle discussed the level of observer coverage in the TSPF and associated costs. He commented that the coverage is considerably high allowing for the limited number of vessels operating. Mr Lui stated that AFMA are currently reviewing the number of observer days in the fishery and the process required to change this to a percentage of coverage rather than a whole number to allow the number to be changed as required throughout the season. He added that further information regarding this would be presented at TSPMAC 8. Mr Earle commented that observer days should be based on the risks of the fishery and its stocks which he didn't think was a large concern for the TSPF.

Mr Bourke questioned the specific role of the compliance section of QLD and whether other Torres Strait fisheries utilise the compliance section. Mr Fava commented that compliance surveys are targeted directly at TSPF license holders as

they usually fish in areas that you do not find TRL and other fisheries. He added that if they were to find another vessel from another fishery during a patrol the officers would board it however this doesn't occur that frequently.

The MAC discussed the new Environment item under the CRIS 2009. Mr Earle acknowledged that industry need to have responsibility for the environmental and sustainability issues which arise from fishing however feels there is also some community benefit to these costs and perhaps a portion should be paid by Government or overheads should be omitted from this section of the budget. The MAC also discussed whether it would be possible to phase the new budget component in over several years.

Mr Bourke questioned whether there was an indication of whether Government has a preference for either CRIS at present. Mr Southwell commented that it is possible that Government would consider a proposal based on table 3; applying the CRIS 2009 to the entire TSPF budget including QLD; however, only if a funding source is identified to cover the compliance costs borne by QPI&F.

The TSPMAC **AGREED** that the CRIS 2009 is the preferred cost recovery policy if applied to the entire TSPF budget including QLD (table 3), followed by the current cost recovery policy decision of the PZJA (table 1; based around CRIS 2004), with the CRIS 2009 being applied to the AFMA portion of the budget only being undesirable (table 2 – see Attachment 1 to the TSPMAC 7 May OOS paper on the PZJA website).

The MAC also agreed that it would be useful to view some of the comments from other MACS regarding the CRIS at TSPMAC 8.

Other Business

Mr Earle raised concern about the lateness of levies and commented that it causes large problems for industry. Ms Cocking and Mr Fava acknowledged their concern and explained that PZJA agencies are very aware of the problem and are doing all they can to have the levies finalised as early as possible.

Next meeting

The next face to face meeting will be held on 16-17 June in Cairns.

Mr Jim Gillespie

TSPMAC CHAIR

Attachment A

DECISION RECORD - TSPMAC OOS 7 May 2009

- 1.1 The TSPMAC **DISCUSSED** the suitability of applying CRIS 2009 to the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery.
- 1.2 The TSPMAC **NOTED** the draft 2009/10 budget totalling \$539,380 under the old cost recovery decision of the PZJA..
- 1.3 The TSPMAC **RECOMMENDED** that the observer coverage for the fishery be based on a method which reflects the current effort level in the fishery.
- 1.4 The TSPMAC **RECOMMENDED** that the new environment cost in the budget be introduced in a staggered method over a number of years.
- 1.3 The TSPMAC **AGREED** that the CRIS 2009 if applied to the entire TSPF budget including QLD would be the preferred cost recovery method followed by the current cost recovery policy decision of the PZJA, with the CRIS 2009 being applied to the AFMA portion of the budget only being undesirable.