



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority



TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING NO. 52

MINUTES

BRISBANE
16 JUNE 2010

CHAIR: MR IAN CARTWRIGHT

These minutes were ratified at TSSAC #53 on the 28th October 2010.

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

Final Agenda

1. Meeting Administration

- 1.1. Preliminaries - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Chairs Opening Remarks/Meeting attendance/Declaration of Interests/Apologies
- 1.2. Review and Adoption of Agenda
- 1.3. Correspondence
- 1.4. Ratification of TSSAC 51 Minutes
- 1.5. Action Items from TSSAC 51

2. TSSAC procedures

- 2.1. Operational Plan annual review

3. Cultural Protocols document from Martin Nakata

4. Project Assessment: Sustainable Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectable Fisheries PI Skewes)

5. TSSAC Current Project update

- 5.1. International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum
- 5.2. Warrior reef Bêche-de-mer surveys (PI Skewes)
- 5.3. An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster population (PI Plaganyi-Lloyd)

6. Funding round for the 2011/2012 financial year

- 6.1. Call for pre-proposals

7. Update from TSFMAC

8. Budget

9. Other business

- 9.1. PNG Hand Collectable
- 9.2. Climate Change
- 9.3. TSSAC teleconference discussion
- 9.4. Coral Bleaching in Torres Strait
- 9.5. Sea Grass Monitoring in Torres Strait
- 9.6. Confirmation of TSSAC No. 53



ATTENDANCE

The following members and observers were in attendance at TSSAC No. 52:

Members

| Name | Role | Declaration of Interest |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Mr Ian Cartwright | Chairperson | Consultant |
| Dr Annabel Jones | AFMA Representative | Manager, Thursday Island |
| Ms Rebecca Williams | Executive Officer (AFMA) | Senior Management Support Officer, Thursday Island |
| Dr Michael O'Neill | Scientist | Agri Science QLD, DEEDI |
| Dr Roland Pitcher | Scientist | CSIRO researcher |
| Ms Sevaly Sen | Social/Economics Member | Consultant |
| Dr Stephen Newman | Scientist | WA fisheries scientist |
| Mr Ian Jacobsen | Fisheries Queensland Representative | Fisheries Manager |
| Mr Steve Hall | TSRA representative | Fisheries Policy Officer |
| Mr Tony Vass | Industry Representative | Ex Mackerel Licence Holder |
| Mr Gavin Mosby | Proxy Islander representative | TIB Fisher (Masig) and Traditional Owner |

Apologies

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mr Augustine Mohiba | PNG Representative | PNG National Fisheries Authority |
| Mr Charles David | Community Fisher Representative | Iama Traditional Owner |



ACTION ITEMS

| # | Action Item | Item No. | Due Date | Champion |
|---|--|--|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Request Professor Nakata to be present at a future TSSAC to discuss feedback from stakeholders on ' <i>Cultural Protocols for Researchers Working in the Torres Strait</i> ' | 52.1.5 (Carry over from TSSAC 51.1.5) | TBC | AFMA |
| 2 | Further work will be undertaken by the steering committee to secure funding and develop details for the International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum. | 52.1.5 (Carry over from TSSAC 50.1.5) | 30 Sep 2010 | AFMA |
| 3 | The feasibility of developing a TRL education program for Torres Strait Islander students will be discussed with James Cook University, Thursday Island and the Thursday Island high school. | 52.1.5 (Carry over from TSSAC 51.1.5) | 23 Jul 2010 | AFMA |
| 4 | Steven Newman to send AFMA a rock lobster education package developed for WA students. | 52.1.5 | 30 Aug 2010 | S. Newman |
| 5 | TSSAC will obtain a copy of the CSIRO data and report using fine-scale modelling to detect possible changes to water temperature and salinity levels in response to climate change to discuss at future meetings. In addition, CSIRO will further investigate the approach to climate change in Torres Strait fisheries that identifies key species and associated climate change impacts. | 52.1.5 (Carry over from TSSAC 51.1.5) | | CSIRO AFMA |
| 6 | PZJA Working Groups will be provided with and asked to comment on relevant research priorities included in the 2010 Annual Operation Plan. Working Groups will also be requested to include a standing agenda item in their meetings to consider research priorities. | 52.2.1 | dependant on timing of WG meetings | AFMA |
| 7 | The Annual Operation Plan will be amended to incorporate the changes discussed and distributed to members out-of-session for final comment and agreement. | 52.2.1 | 30 July 2010 | AFMA |
| 8 | A stand-alone operational guide for researchers, based on information provided in Section 4 of the Cultural Protocols document (Nakata 2010) be developed and distributed to stakeholders for public comment along with the Cultural Protocols. | 52.3 | 30 July 2010 | AFMA/TSSAC members |
| 9 | TSRA to provide information at the next TSSAC on development of a repository for research information planned for TSRA funded research. | 52.3 | 27 Oct 2010 | TSRA |



| | | | | |
|----|---|--------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| 10 | Research agreements to include as a milestone a communications strategy for disseminating information to Torres Strait Islander communities, including the provision of a plain English summary of the research. | 52.3 | For 2011/2012 research projects | AFMA |
| 11 | Amend the document 'Cultural Protocols for researchers working in the Torres Strait' incorporating the minor changes requested by the TSSAC and distribute to stakeholders for public comment. | 52.3 | 13 Aug 2010 | AFMA |
| 12 | TSSAC to write to the PI of the research, ' <i>Sustainable harvest strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectables Fisheries</i> ' thanking him for his efforts and acknowledging the outcomes of the research. | 52.4 | 23 Aug 2010 | AFMA |
| 13 | The TSSAC will recommend to AFMA that research agreements include: 1) a requirement (milestone) for researchers to approach formal (written) support from communities (through TSRA) prior to research field work commencing; 2) researchers to provide details of where data is stored and the level of accessibility in the final report. | 52.4 | 31 Aug 2010 | TSSAC EO |
| 14 | The pre-proposal template will be edited to take into account the Draft Cultural Protocols document developed by Professor Martin Nakata. | 52.6.1 | 13 Aug 2010 | TSSAC EO |
| 15 | AFMA will call for pre-proposals on the TSSAC's behalf for research commencing in the 2011/2012 financial year following the process and timelines agreed to by TSSAC. | 52.6.1 | 13 Aug 2010 | AFMA |
| 16 | TSSAC to request NFA to provide to the TSSAC with information on any research of sandfish at Warrior Reef when available. | 52.9.1 | 31 Aug 2010 | TSSAC EO |
| 17 | The James Cook University (JCU) report on coral bleaching in the Torres Strait to be distributed to TSSAC members when available. | 52.9.3 | 30 Sep 2010 | TSRA |
| 18 | TSSAC members to investigate potential of weather stations in the Torres Strait to collect climate data such as rainfall at water temperature at different depths to allow for better monitoring of climate change in the Torres Strait. | 52.9.3 | 27 Oct 2010 | TSSAC Members |
| 19 | Further information on benthic seagrass monitoring in the Torres Strait to be provided to TSSAC members out of session. | 52.9.5 | 30 Sep 2010 | TSRA |



DECISION RECORD – TSSAC #52 (16 June 2010)

1.4.1 The committee **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC 51 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2.1.1 TSSAC **AGREED** to endorse the 2010 Annual Operation Plan as discussed at TSSAC 52 pending discussed amendments being made to the Plan.

4.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend that the TSFMAC note the outcomes of the research project '*Sustainable harvest strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectables Fisheries*' (PI: Mr Tim Skewes, CSIRO).

6.1.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to call for proposals for research projects commencing in the 2011/2012 financial years following agreed processes and timelines.

6.1.2 The TSSAC **AGREED** to actively seek pre-proposals from appropriately qualified research providers for high priority research needs in the event that the initial round of pre-proposals do not address identified high priority need and appropriate budget is available.

MINUTES

Agenda Item 1.3 Correspondence

The Committee **NOTED** a letter from the Principal Investigator (PI) of the submitted full research proposal '*An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster population*' addressing comments from the TSSAC on the full proposal submitted and discussed at TSSAC 51. A revised proposal has been submitted to AFMA for funding as recommended at TSSAC 51.2.1.1.

Agenda Item 1.4 Ratification of TSSAC 51 Minutes

1.4.1 The committee **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC No. 51 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Agenda Item 1.5 Action Items from Previous Meeting TSSAC 51

The TSSAC **NOTED** progress on action items from TSSAC 51. Action items were complete with the following exceptions:

Action Item 4: Discussions are continuing on the draft protocols document (**Action Item 1**).

Action Item 5: Further work is continuing by the steering committee to secure funding and develop details to hold a Indigenous fisheries forum (**Action Item 2**).

Action Item 6: regarding discussions with James Cook University (JCU), Thursday Island and the Thursday Island high school on the feasibility of developing a Tropical Rock Lobster (TRL) education program for Torres Strait Islander students is ongoing (**Action Item 3**). Key staff at the high school have been identified as possible contacts and the program may be able to be run through the capacity development program currently being developed by TSRA.

AFMA and TSRA (and Gavin Mosby) will discuss the inclusion of TRL education program for Torres Strait Islander students in TSRA capacity development work. Examples of Western Australia education materials will be provided to the TSSAC by Steve Newman (**Action Item 4**).



Action Item 7: CSIRO data and report using fine-scale modelling to detect possible changes to water temperature and salinity levels in response to climate change is pending finalisation. In addition, CSIRO will further investigate ways to approach to climate change in Torres Strait fisheries that identifies key species and associated climate change impacts (**Action Item 5**).

Agenda Item 2 TSSAC Procedures

Agenda Item 2.1 Annual Operational Plan Review

The Committee conducted its annual review of the Annual Operational Plan (AOP) for Torres Strait fisheries as agreed at TSSAC No. 48 (48.4.1). The TSSAC discussed distinguishing research priorities from management issues and appropriate processes for communicating research priorities between the TSSAC and PZJA Committees.

Indicative timeframes

Although all research included in the Annual Operational Plan are considered to be of high priority, some have more immediate need than others. The TSSAC agreed to identify different indicative timeframes for research needs in the Annual Operational Plan as Tactical or Strategic or longer term. Tactical (T) research have immediate need within the next financial year. Strategic (S) research should be carried out within the next couple of years. Longer term research needs have an indicative future date at which time they would be considered essential. For example, surveys undertaken every five years to satisfy requirements for Strategic Assessments do not have priority every year. Conversely, research into a Bêche de mer harvest strategies is essential before a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is lifted for no-take species. Research of most urgent need will be given priority for recommended funding, but, other projects will also be considered based on available funding.

Soliciting proposals

The Committee discussed ways to solicit proposals of high quality to address tactical research needs. It was agreed that if submitted pre-proposals following the call for proposals did not address all tactical research needs, and funding was available, the TSSAC would actively encourage appropriate researchers to submit proposals for consideration.

Research priorities for individual fisheries

The Committee made a number of amendments to the research priorities for individual fisheries included in the 2010 Operational Plan. The TSSAC also agreed to solicit feedback on these priorities from Torres Strait working groups and committees as soon as is practicable to assist the TSSAC in identifying individual fishery research priorities. The TSSAC will also request relevant working groups to include a standing agenda item at their meetings to discuss research priorities (**Action Item 6**).

Other Discussions

The TSSAC discussed the need for fishers to understand why agencies such as AFMA request information such as catch and effort. In addition, researchers should communicate to fishers what data and information they are collecting and the reasons for doing so. These discussions highlighted the need for all involved in research (TSSAC and researchers) to carefully consider appropriate and effective communication techniques. This need is also identified in the Cultural Protocols for researchers discussed at Agenda 3.

The AOP will be amended to incorporate the changes discussed and distributed to members out-of-session for final comment and agreement (**Action item 7**).



2.1.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to endorse the 2010 Annual Operation Plan as discussed at TSSAC 52 pending discussed amendments being made to the Plan.

Agenda Item 3 Cultural Protocols document from Martin Nakata

The TSSAC continued discussions on the draft report *‘Development of Cultural Protocols for researchers working in Torres Strait’* developed by Professor Martin Nakata from TSSAC No. 51.

Overall, it was felt the draft document needed to more clearly identify the operational aspects for researchers to follow, outlining the practical steps needed to undertake research in an appropriate manner. The TSSAC felt that the draft cultural protocols contained this information but readers would be unable to effectively identify it.

The TSSAC agreed to develop a stand-alone operational guide for researchers, based on information provided in Section 4 of the protocols document and released to stakeholders for comment along with the Cultural Protocols (**Action Item 8**). This guide will be provided to researchers, with the larger cultural protocols document referenced as a source of further, more detailed, information.

The TSSAC considers the recommendations provided in the Cultural Protocols and made the following comments:

| Recommendation | TSSAC response |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>‘Review and adapt current grant application as a single point of documentation for proposed research project details and ethical practice’</i> | Accept. |
| 2. <i>‘Establish TSSAC Ethic committee to review grant applications related to ethical practice and safety for both researchers and participants, and provide reports to the TSSAC’</i> | Partially agree. The TSSAC includes consideration of research ethics in its assessment of research projects. However, the TSSAC or a related committee did not consider itself responsible for the safety of researchers. The term “ <i>safety</i> ” should be removed from the draft Cultural Protocols and Guidelines for Researchers. |
| 3. <i>‘Establish a set of ethic guidelines for researchers’</i> | Disagree. Ethics guidelines are included in the cultural protocols document. |
| 4. <i>‘Establish Islander representative on all decision –making committees of fisheries research in the Torres Strait Islands and remunerated on Commonwealth allowances established for boards or councils’</i> | There is currently representation of Torres Strait Traditional Inhabitants on all PZJA committees. Remuneration for these representatives is an ongoing issue. This recommendation will be reviewed when the Community Fisher Group (CFG) review being conducted by TSRA has been completed. |
| 5. <i>‘Provide the necessary training for Islanders to be fully engaged in committees’ discussions and assessments of the research and ethic requirements’</i> | The TSSAC agreed that this is a useful recommendation. Capacity of Islander representatives is being considered through the CFG review and will be considered based on recommendations from this review. |



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| 6. <i>'Establish and resource a central contact person to coordinate between researchers, communities, participants, relevant community organisations, and TSSAC'</i> | Defer at this time. This recommendation has significant merit; however, this position does not currently exist and is not budgeted for by any organisation. |
| 7. <i>'Reconstitute TSSAC membership to include central contact person'</i> | Defer at this time. This recommendation has significant merit; however, is dependant on recommendation 7. |
| 8. <i>'Establish online repositories for research materials on Torres Strait fisheries'</i> | <p>Recommendations 8, 9 and 10 were considered as a single recommendation.</p> <p>The TSSAC agreed that there is merit for a central repository for information where all past, present and future Torres Strait research projects can be stored in a central location. Appropriate data management and access is a major issue that would need to be fully explored as discussed in relation to data collected by Turtle and Dugong rangers.</p> <p>Custodians of this repository would most likely be TSRA as they are currently setting up a repository for certain research projects.</p> <p>TSSAC requested TSRA to provide at the next TSSAC information on development of this repository (Action Item 9).</p> |
| 9. <i>' Establish processes for Researchers at the completion of projects to submit forms that confirms safe and ethical practice, that materials will be deposited into central repository, and commit to providing copies of future publications'</i> | Refer to comment for recommendation 8. |
| 10. <i>'Establish in position description of the central contact person a clearly defined role in a follow-up procedure for completed projects to ensure completed ethic form have been submitted, that materials are deposited, and future publications continue to be uploaded into the repository'</i> | Refer to comment for recommendation 8. |

A central repository

It is agreed that a central repository would be beneficial but felt that effective distribution of research material was broader than this recommendation. The TSSAC agreed that there should be contractual requirement for researchers in research agreements to disseminate information to communities, through a variety of mediums such as workshops, and provide final reports in appropriate formats. Data management (including provision of research material on online repositories) is a requirement for research proposals.

Committee would like research agreements to include as a milestone a communications strategy for disseminating information to Torres Strait Islander communities, including the provision of a plain English summary of the research (**Action Item 10**).



The TSSAC also agreed that there is a need for research contracts to specifically address the issue of data, data storage and data publication and proper use of information for the context for which it was intended. This is currently being investigated with the turtle and dugong data collected by Turtle and Dugong rangers

Further activities for the Cultural Protocols

The TSSAC will amend the Draft Cultural Protocols as discussed and provide the document for public comment to stakeholders, particularly Torres Strait Islander communities, along with the stand alone Guidelines for Researchers (see action item 8) (**Action Item 11**).

Professor Nakata will be invited to attend the TSSAC to discuss the feedback following a public comment period at a future TSSAC meeting (as per Action Item 1).

Agenda Item 4 Project Assessment: Sustainable Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectable Fisheries

The TSSAC assessed the completed research '*Sustainable harvest strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectables Fisheries*' (PI: Mr Tim Skewes, CSIRO) using an agreed assessment proforma.

Overall, the Committee assessed the final report from the research very favourably, especially with regards to the involvement and employment of Torres Strait Islanders and the value it added to previous research. The TSSAC agreed that the researcher has delivered quality research in the area of hand collectables research in the Torres Strait and could be approached for future research in this area if needed.

A decision support tool, a GIS/mapping tool to illustrate and communicate the survey findings (an objective of the research project) had yet to be delivered and therefore the whole research project is considered to be incomplete. However, the researcher is currently finalising the decision support tool which will be provided soon. The Committee also noted that one performance indicator being, development of harvest strategies suitable to adaptive co-management framework were not fully completed, however this outcome had been progressed as part of a related project (Alifereti, '*Livelihood benefits of co-management of hand collectable fisheries in the Torres Strait*') and was not an expected outcome of this research project. The late provision of the final report to AFMA was also noted.

The TSSAC will write to the principal investigator thanking him for his efforts and acknowledging the outcomes of the research (**Action Item 12**).

In general, as proposals are assessed on their ability to extend and communicate to Torres Strait Islanders, the Committee would like future research agreements to specifically require community consultation be carried out before research starts if appropriate and information is disseminated to communities when the research finishes. The TSSAC recommend that research agreements include a requirement (milestone) for researchers to seek formal (written) support from communities (through TSRA) prior to research field work commencing

The Committee also noted that specific requirements for storage of metadata are not generally included as a contractual agreement with researchers. Until a central repository for research data/information is developed (as per discussion at Agenda item 3), it should be a requirement for AFMA funded research projects in Torres Strait that researchers will provide details of where data is stored and its level of accessibility in the final report.

TSSAC will write to AFMA requesting that AFMA consider including:

1) a requirement (milestone) for researchers to approach formal (written) support from communities (through TSRA) prior to research field work commencing; and



2) researchers to provide details of where data is stored and the level of accessibility in the final report (**Action Item 13**).

4.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend that the TSFMAC note the outcomes of the research project '*Sustainable harvest strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectables Fisheries*' (PI: Mr Tim Skewes, CSIRO).

Agenda Item 5 TSSAC current project update

Updates were given on the following projects currently being funded by the TSSAC:

1. Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum - Approval is currently being sought from AFMA for seed funding. An organising company will be hired to seek further sponsorship and to facilitate the organisation of the forum. AFMA will continue to work with the TSSAC as this forum progresses.

2. '*Recovery of the *Holothuria scabra* (sandfish) population on Warrior Reef, Torres Strait*' (PI: Mr Tim Skewes, CSIRO). Community consultation, field surveys and provision of a report on the field surveys were completed and the project is on track and on budget. The milestone report was provided to Committee members. The project progress was viewed positively by the TSSAC.

Sandfish of varying sizes were sighted at Warrior reef and there is some indication of recovery of stocks on the reef.

An article on this research was published in the Torres News which is read widely by members of the Torres Strait community.

3. A full revised proposal for the research project '*An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster population*' (PI Plaganyi-Lloyd) has been provided to AFMA for funding when 2010/2011 budgeting is finalised. A letter addressing TSSAC comments from TSSAC 51 was also provided to Committee members.

Sevaly Sen noted that despite her name being mentioned in the MSE proposal, she has not yet been contacted regarding her involvement with this research.

Agenda Item 6 Funding round for the 2011/2012 financial year

Agenda Item 6.1 Call for pre-proposals

The pre-proposal template will be edited to take into account the Draft Cultural Protocols document developed by Professor Martin Nakata (**Action Item 14**).

The TSSAC agreed that the process for calling for pre-proposals in 2009 was effective and efficient and that the same process for the calling for pre-proposals for the 2011/2012 financial year would be adopted with one addition. After the initial receipt of pre-proposals, the TSSAC will assess the research gap and, where appropriate and subject to funding, commission proposals as per the discussions at agenda item 2.1. The timeline that will be adopted for the calls for proposals is as follows.

| Action | Date |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Calls for pre-proposals released via PZJA website, Torres News, NRM Jobs and other avenues. | 13 August 2010 |
| 2. Pre-proposals due for submission. | 17 Sept 2010 |



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|---|---------------|
| 3. Pre-proposals assessed for research gap and TSSAC to seek additional proposals if necessary. | 24 Sept 2010 |
| 4. Pre-proposals considered at TSSAC 53. | 27 Oct 2010 |
| 5. Results of TSSAC evaluation provided to Principal investigators. | November 2010 |
| 6. Full proposals due for submission. | February 2011 |
| 7. Full proposals considered at TSSAC 54. | March 2011 |

The call for pre-proposals will be released in public through the PZJA website, Torres News, NRM Jobs website and other forums including TSSAC networks where appropriate.

6.1.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to call for proposals for research projects commencing in the 2011/2012 financial years following agreed processes and timelines (**Action Item 15**).

6.1.2 The TSSAC **AGREED** to actively seek pre-proposals from appropriately qualified research providers for high priority research needs in the event that the initial round of pre-proposals do not address identified high priority needs and appropriate budget is available.

Agenda Item 7 Update from TSFMAC

The Committee noted the update provided on the TSFMAC No.11 held on Thursday Island in November 2010 and the PZJA Standing Committee public forum held in conjunction with the TSFMAC. Further information on TSFMAC No. 11 is available on the PZJA Website.

Agenda Item 8 Budget

The 2009/2010 Torres Strait research budget has been reduced in mid-year budget cuts however this had not affected any approved projects.

The TSSAC expressed concern regarding the progress of AFMA finalising budgets without consideration of funding the TSSAC recommended research project '*An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster population*'. This research is viewed as having significant importance in future management of Torres Strait fisheries.

The Committee feels that it has significant expertise to effectively assess research projects based on a wide range of criteria in a transparent and objective manner¹. The TSSAC feels that its recommendations should be considered by AFMA with some weight in consideration of the TSSAC's relevant expertise.

Agenda Item 9 Other Business

Agenda Item 9.1 PNG hand collectable

In Mr Mobiha's absence Dr Jones informed the group that Bêche de mer surveys had evidently been carried out on the PNG side of Warrior Reef. Surveys in PNG were conducted separately to the CSIRO surveys undertaken in February 2010. So far, the closure of PNG Bêche de mer fisheries appears to be working, however, there have been reports that buyers were still buying Bêche de mer on occasion suggesting a small amount of illegal harvest is still occurring. The TSSAC are keen to hear more updates on the PNG surveys when they are

¹ The process for and criteria used by the TSSAC to assess research proposals can be found in the Operational Plan for Torres Strait Fisheries at pzja.gov.au/resources/publications/fishery_publications.



available. Mr Mobiha, through an email communication, indicated he will seek to attend the next TSSAC meeting and will provide an update on the issue at this time.

Action Item 16: TSSAC to request NFA to provide to the TSSAC with information on any research of sandfish at Warrior Reef when available.

Agenda Item 9.2 Climate change

Nil to report.

Agenda Item 9.3 Coral bleaching in the Torres Strait

Reports have been received by TSRA and AFMA regarding coral bleaching in Torres Strait. Coral bleaching was also observed by CSIRO during the lobster mid-season surveys in June 2010. TSRA Land and Sea Management Unit (LSMU) have sought advice on the bleaching event from a relevant James Cook University professor who indicated that likely reasons for the bleaching include higher water temperatures and exposure of coral at very low tides. Little algal growth has been observed on the coral since bleaching suggesting that it has not died completely and may recover. TSRA will distribute the JCU report on coral bleaching in the Torres Strait to TSSAC members when available (**Action Item 17**).

CSIRO representatives raised the suggestion of installing weather stations in Torres Strait to collect climate data such as water temperature at different depths. The TSSAC members (CSIRO and TSRA) will further investigate the potential for such weather stations in the area and possible location to allow for better monitoring of climate change in the Torres Strait (**Action Item 18**).

Agenda Item 9.4 Seagrass monitoring in the Torres Strait

TSRA provided an update on the benthic seagrass monitoring currently taking place in the Torres Strait by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI). Activities will include an assessment of seagrass in the dugong sanctuaries in different seasons and the potential effects of shipping incidents on seagrass habitat.

Further information on benthic seagrass monitoring in the Torres Strait will be provided to the TSSAC out of session (**Action Item 19**).

Agenda Item 9.5 TSSAC teleconference discussion

TSSAC teleconference discussion

The TSSAC discussed feedback from the teleconference of the last meeting and whether it has use in certain situations. Despite a few technical issues, teleconferencing was seen as an effective tool to use if there are few agenda items. Various video-conferencing software solutions were also discussed and will be investigated further.

The logistics and cost of using videoconferencing software for TSSAC meetings when appropriate will be considered in future when such software is available for use.

Agenda Item 9.6 Confirmation of TSSAC #53

TSSAC No. 53 will be held on the 27 - 28 October 2010 in Cairns. Venue TBC.

