



Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee

Meeting #53


October 28 2010

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

Chair: Mr Ian Cartwright

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

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The 53rd meeting of the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) was held in Cairns on 28 June 2010.

Major outcomes

The TSSAC:

- reviewed twelve submitted pre-proposals; four were recommended to be developed to full proposals and a further two were referred back to the Principal Investigators to make significant modifications, prior to resubmitting pre-proposals for consideration out of session by the Committee;
- agreed to recommend to the PZJA that the membership of the TSSAC be amended to include full membership for the Torres Strait Regional Authority; and
- considered an annual Research Delivery Day at Thursday Island.

Operational Plan for Torres Strait fisheries

After the annual review of the Operational Plan for Torres Strait Fisheries (the Plan), the Committee at TSSAC #52 sought input and feedback from other PZJA consultative committees. Feedback on the research priorities was provided from the Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group (TRLRAG) and several research priorities recommended. The TSSAC noted these recommendations from the TRLRAG.

The Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee (TSPMAC) had insufficient time to discuss the research priorities but will do so when time permits. However, the TSPMAC indicated possible research projects may include investigations of efficacy or alternatives for prawn Harvest Strategies and trigger points, potential removal of the 20m boat rule and external leasing agreements.

The Hand Collectable Working Group (HCWG) had no additional priorities to add.

Feedback on the research priorities will be considered in revising the 2011 Annual Operational Plan.

Research Proposals

The Committee assessed twelve pre-proposals. The TSSAC strongly supported four pre-proposals and requested Principal Investigators to develop full proposals for consideration of the Committee. These projects were:

1. *Assessing stock recovery using experimental fishing for sandfish on Warrior Reef, Torres Strait.* (PI Murphy and Skewes, CSIRO)
2. *Assess benefits and develop protocols for "reef gardens" in Torres Strait – community based management in action.* (PI Murphy and Skewes, CSIRO)
3. *Understanding the costs, benefits and risks associated with current and potential Torres Strait fishery resource utilisation* (PI Vieira, ABARE/BRS)
4. *Empowering Torres Strait Islanders to Have A Greater Role In The Research and Development (R&D) Process* (PI Calogeras, Fishwell Consulting)

A further two projects were recommended for further consideration. The Principal Investigators of these projects will be requested to submit modified pre-proposals following addressing the comments from the Committee.

The remaining projects were not supported and will not be considered for funding in this round.

The Committee agreed to consider running a further round of targeted calls for proposals for funding in 2011-2012.

Current project update

A contract is being drafted with a company to facilitate organisation of the '*International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum*'. The Steering Committee is actively seeking further sponsorship from local and international organisations and the forum is set to be held in Cairns in November 2011. AFMA will continue to work with the TSSAC as this forum progresses.

The Principal Investigator of the research '*Recovery of the *Holothuria scabra* (Sandfish) population on Warrior Reef, Torres Strait*' presented interim results at the recent HCWG meeting in July 2010. The final report has yet to be released.

Work has begun on '*An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster population*' and a Steering Committee has been formed. Researchers visited Badu, Mabuiag, Iama and Thursday Island in August 2010 for introductory meetings with communities. Further meetings and consultation with Torres Strait Island communities are scheduled for November 2010 and February 2011.

The '*Cultural Protocols for researchers working in the Torres Strait*' document was amended as per discussions at TSSAC #52 and now consists of a shorter practical guide for researchers as well as the full report. Both documents are awaiting distribution by TSRA to communities for comment.

Update from Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees

The TSSAC noted outcomes from the Hand Collectable Working Group, Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group, Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee and Fisheries Bilateral meeting.

Other Business

Climate Change

The TSSAC noted there is a need to define exactly what data is needed and to collect targeted information. Consideration should be given to research that is relevant to management decisions such as lobster recruitment and seagrass grow back. The committee felt that a short report on the potential impacts of short and long term climatic change on Torres Strait marine resources would be useful to inform better decision making. This will help distinguish between natural variability in stock with climate variability and change.

TSSAC membership

The TSRA is a member of the PZJA and have attended the TSSAC since 2007 as a permanent observer. The TSRA is contributing a greater role in fisheries research and development and there is a need to better coordinate communications between PZJA agencies.

The Committee agreed to recommend to the PZJA that the TSRA be endorsed as a full member on the TSSAC.

Annual research delivery day

The Committee discussed holding an annual research delivery day on Thursday Island, modelled on an event held by the Western Australian marine science institute. The day would provide local communities with an opportunity to hear directly from researchers

about projects in their region, and researchers would communicate project methods, results, and any implications for fisheries management. Participants could include representatives from research groups and TSSAC members. The proposal will be given further consideration at the next TSSAC meeting.

Attendance

In attendance at TSSAC 53 were:

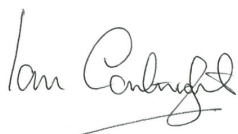
Name	Role	Declaration of Interest
Mr Ian Cartwright	Chairperson	Consultant
Dr Annabel Jones	AFMA Representative	Manager, Thursday Island
Ms Rebecca Williams	Executive Officer (AFMA)	A/g Senior Management Officer, Torres Strait Fisheries
Dr Michael O'Neill	Scientist	Agri Science QLD, DEEDI
Dr Roland Pitcher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

Observers

Name	Role	Declaration of Interest
Mr Vic McGrath	TSRA	Observer

Apologies

Name	Role	Declaration of Interest
Mr Lester Baule	PNG Representative	PNG National Fisheries Authority



Mr Ian Cartwright
TSSAC Chair