



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**



**TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING NO. 54**

## **MINUTES**

**BRISBANE**  
**17 FEBRUARY 2011**

**CHAIR: MR IAN CARTWRIGHT**

These minutes were ratified at TSSAC 55 on 20 June 2011.

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 53 Minutes
- 1.5. Action Items from TSSAC 53

### 2. TSSAC procedures

- 2.1. Update on progress on developing a central web-based repository of Torres Strait research (TSRA)

### 3. Research

- 3.1. Assessment of full proposals:
  - 3.1.1. *'Characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea)'* (PI Busilacchi, JCU)
  - 3.1.2. *'Empowering Torres Strait Islanders to have a greater role in the Research and Development (R&D) process'* (PI Calogeras)
- 3.2. Re-assessment of Pre-proposal *'Development of an efficient management procedure for Torres Strait Spanish mackerel'* (PI Chambers, ABARE-BRS)(AFMA)
- 3.3. Second call for pre-proposals for the 2011/12 financial year
- 3.4. 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 Budget (AFMA)
- 3.5. Co-ordination of research priorities

### 4. TSSAC Current Project Update

- 4.1. International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum (AFMA)
- 4.2. Warrior reef Bêche-de-mer surveys (PI Skewes)
  - 4.2.1. Discussion of draft final report
- 4.3. An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster population (PI Plaganyi-Lloyd)
- 4.4. Cultural protocols for researchers working in Torres Strait (AFMA)

### 5. Update from Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees

- 5.1. Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (AFMA)

### 6. Other business

- 6.1. PNG Hand Collectable (NFA)
- 6.2. Climate change
- 6.3. TSSAC membership – for decision
- 6.4. Fisheries Education in the Torres Strait
- 6.5. Annual Research Delivery Day
- 6.6. Sponge research application
- 6.7. Confirmation of TSSAC No. 55



## ATTENDANCE

The following members and observers were in attendance at TSSAC No. 54:

### Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest</b>
Mr Ian Cartwright	Chairperson	Consultant
Dr Annabel Jones	AFMA Representative	Manager, Thursday Island
Ms Rebecca Williams	Executive Officer (AFMA)	Senior management officer, Canberra
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
Ian Jacobsen	Fisheries Queensland Representative	Fisheries Queensland Senior Fisheries Management Officer
Mr Steve Hall	TSRA representative	TSRA Fisheries Policy Officer
Mr Tony Vass	Industry Representative	Ex Mackerel Licence Holder
Mr Gavin Mosby	Proxy Traditional Inhabitant representative	TIB Fisher (Masig) and Traditional Owner
Mr Shane Fava	Observer	TSRA
Mr Vic McGrath	Observer	TSRA

### Apologies

Mr Ludwig Kumuru	PNG Representative	PNG National Fisheries Authority
------------------	--------------------	----------------------------------



## ACTION ITEMS

#	Action Item	Item No.	Due Date	Champion
1.	The TSSAC Chair to endeavour to contact PNG National Fisheries Authority regarding potential collaboration on a pending research project on subsistence fishing in PNG treaty villages.	1.1	30 April 2011	Chair
2.	Action items from the 21 December 2010 Out-of-Session teleconference to be added to the relevant meeting record.	1.4	25 March 2011	AFMA
3.	AFMA will provide the outstanding outcomes of the research ' <i>Sustainable harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait hand Collectable Fisheries</i> ', being the decision support tool and access to metadata, to the TSSAC when made available by the PI.	1.5	30 April 2011	AFMA
4.	The TSSAC to write back to the TRLRAG thanking them for their explanation of why a different method for estimating an indicative TAC is now being used.	1.5	24 Feb 2011	AFMA
5.	AFMA to circulate information and a presentation on a rock lobster education package for WA lobster to TSSAC members.	1.5	25 March 2011	AFMA
6.	CSIRO to provide the TSSAC with data and a 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.	1.5	Ongoing pending release of final report	CSIRO
7.	AFMA to include the Torres Strait research CD on the research section on the PZJA website when intellectual property rights to the CD have been confirmed.	1.5	30 April 2011	AFMA
8.	AFMA to investigate developing a policy regarding collection and storage of data and metadata from AFMA funded research.	1.5	30 April 2011	AFMA
9.	The TSSAC Chair will contact PNG requesting the release of reports on sandfish research in PNG to the TSSAC in confidence.	1.5	30 April 2011	AFMA
10.	AFMA to investigate the feasibility of a research project on investigating the potential impacts of short and long term climatic change on Torres Strait marine resources.	1.5	Ongoing pending outcome of action item 6	AFMA



11.	The TSSAC to write to the Chair of the TRLRAG, acknowledging the comments on the Tropical Rock Lobster stock assessments and ensuring that communication between the two committees continues.	1.5	24 Feb 2011	AFMA
12.	The TSSAC to inform the HCWG that some form of quota allocation will have less impact than implementing an Olympic (competitive) quota if the Total Allowable catch for Black teatfish is removed.	1.5	24 Feb 2011	AFMA
13.	The TSSAC to provide suggestions on improvements to the TSRA research website and feedback on how to progress a TSRA central repository. The link to the TSRA research webpage will be sent to TSSAC members for their consideration.	2.1	30 April 2011	AFMA/TSSAC members
14.	The Committee to decide whether or not to commission a report or business plan to examine the various needs for a central web-based repository for Torres Strait fisheries research and how such a repository would be created and maintained.	2.1	TSSAC 55	AFMA/TSSAC members
15.	TSSAC comments on the full proposals to be circulated to Committee members, for internal information only.	3.1	24 Feb 2011	AFMA
16.	The TSSAC to write to the Principal Investigators of both recommended research proposals, requesting amendments to the proposals prior to submission to AFMA funding.	3.1	1 March 2011	AFMA
17.	Modify the assessment pro-forma and guiding information for researchers in the full proposal template to request specific information on path to uptake and relevance to fisheries management	3.1	30 March 2011	AFMA
18.	Incorporate Committee discussions on research priorities into the draft 2011 Annual Operational Plan, to be discussed further at TSSAC 55	3.3	By TSSAC 55	AFMA
19.	Discuss several research priorities listed for Tropical Rock Lobster in the Annual Operational Plan with the Principal Investigator of the research developing a Management Strategy Evaluation for Tropical Rock Lobster in the Torres Strait to determine if the research addresses any of these priorities.	3.3	By TSSAC 55	AFMA
20.	Include collaborative research in the Torres Strait regarding the impact of overfishing of Beche de Mer on PNG Warrior Reef on the agenda at the next bilateral meeting	3.3	By the next bilateral meeting	AFMA



21.	AFMA to investigate commissioning an independent assessment of past and present turtle and dugong scientific research in the Torres Strait for stock assessments. To be discussed at TSSAC 55 <sup>1</sup> .	3.3	TSSAC 55	AFMA
22.	Frank Loban (TSRA) to give an update at TSSAC 55 on progress of turtle and dugong catch data collection and storage at TSSAC 55.	3.3	TSSAC 55	AFMA
23.	The TSSAC will write to the TSRA (Damian Miley) highlighting: concerns with issues relating to turtle and dugong data; the need to fully analyse all available data both past and present; the priority of targeted research; the willingness of the TSSAC to collaborate with the TSRA in the area of research for sustainable turtle and dugong management; and the intention of the TSSAC to commission an independent review of turtle and dugong research to inform management decisions.	3.3	30 March 2011	AFMA
24.	The Chair to write to PNG to highlight the importance of engagement between the TSSAC and PNG in identifying opportunities for collaborative research on shared fisheries stocks between PNG and Australia.	3.3	30 March 2011	AFMA
25.	AFMA and Michael O'Neil will work together to devise a table to be used for the efficient updating of research priorities in the Annual Operational Plan for Torres Strait fisheries.	3.5	By TSSAC 55	AFMA/M. O'Neil
26.	AFMA and the TSRA will work on developing a smaller version of the International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries forum and will update the TSSAC on progress TSSAC 55.	4.1	By TSSAC 55	AFMA/TSR A
27.	TSSAC comments on the draft final report from the Warrior Reef Sandfish research project to be provided to the Principal Investigator with a recommendation that they be addressed in developing the final report.	4.2	18 March 2011	AFMA
28.	AFMA to request that the Principal Investigator of the Experimental fishing for Sandfish on Warrior Reef project confirm that the 5t take of Sandfish in the experimental fishing research project poses no risk to sandfish recovery on Warrior Reef.	4.2	18 March 2011	AFMA
29.	The Principal Investigator of the Tropical Rock Lobster Management Strategy Evaluation research to be requested to present further findings from the research at the next Brisbane TSSAC meeting.	4.3	By TSSAC 56	AFMA
30.	A PDF version of the TSRA Climate Change Strategy document and/or a link to the on-line version of the report will be circulated to TSSAC members.	6.2	11 March 2011	TSRA/AFM A



31.	Roland Pitcher will contact James Butler to provide feedback to the TSSAC on National Environment Research Program projects.	6.2	30 March 2011	R. Pitcher
32.	AFMA will work with the English department at Tagai college to explore opportunities to introduce fisheries related material into marine studies at the college.	6.4	30 April 2011	AFMA
33.	AFMA will discuss the possibility of including fisheries related material in the Marine Discovery Centre with Tagai College.	6.4	30 April 2011	AFMA
34.	AFMA and the TSRA will work together to further investigate opportunities for researchers to present at forums such as Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility research delivery day and soon to be formed Indigenous Fisheries Advisory Committee meetings.	6.5	30 April 2011	AFMA/TSR A
35.	AFMA will provide comments on the Sponge farm research pre-proposal to FRDC.	6.6	24 Feb 2011	AFMA



## DECISION RECORD – TSSAC #54 (17 February 2011)

- 1.4.1 The committee **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC No. 53 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
- 1.4.2 The committee **AGREED** to accept the meeting record of the TSSAC Out-of-Session teleconference on the 21 December 2010 as a true and accurate record of the meeting, with the addition of a list of actions arising from the meeting.
- 3.1.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the proposal '*Characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Torres Strait Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea)*' (PI Busilacchi, JCU/CSIRO) to AFMA for funding, subject to further modifications being made to the full proposal to the satisfaction of the Committee.
- 3.1.2 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the proposal '*Empowering Torres Strait Islanders to have a greater role in the Research and Development (R&D) process*' (PI Calogeras, C-Aid) to AFMA for funding, subject to further modifications being made to the full proposal to the satisfaction of the Committee.
- 4.4.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to accept the '*Cultural Protocols for researchers working in the Torres Strait*' as a final document to be made available to all researchers conducting research in the Torres Strait.
- 6.3.1 The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend to the Protected Zone Joint Authority that current elected members of the TSSAC continue for another three year term.

## MINUTES

### Agenda Item 1.1

The Chair undertook to engage further with Papua New Guinea (PNG) regarding a pending research project on subsistence fishing in PNG treaty villages. The project will require extensive collaboration with, and potentially funding from, PNG. The TSSAC Chair will endeavour to contact the PNG National Fisheries Authority regarding potential collaboration on the project (**Action item 1**).

### Agenda Item 1.3 Correspondence

The Committee **NOTED** the correspondence listed in the meeting papers.

### Agenda Item 1.4 Ratification of TSSAC 53 Minutes and Out-of-Session teleconference

- 1.4.3 The committee **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC No. 53 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
- 1.4.4 The committee **AGREED** to accept the meeting record of the TSSAC Out-of-Session teleconference on the 21 December 2010 as a true and accurate record of the meeting, with the addition of a list of actions arising from the meeting.

Action items from the 21 December 2010 Out-of-Session teleconference will be added to the meeting record (**Action item 2**).





The committee requested that in the future, an internal TSSAC document be circulated to members detailing the group's assessment of pre and full proposals. These comments will not be made publically available.

## **Agenda Item 1.5      Action Items from Previous Meeting TSSAC 53**

The TSSAC **NOTED** progress on action items from TSSAC 53. Action items were complete with the following exceptions:

*Action item 1*, for CSIRO to provide outstanding outcomes from research on Torres Strait Hand Collectable fisheries is ongoing due to delays in updating the Decision Support Tool (**Action item 3**).

*Action item 2* for the TSSAC to write to the Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group (TRLRAG) thanking them for their explanation of why a different method for estimating an indicative Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is now being used will be completed by the 24 February (**Action item 4**).

*Action item 5*, for Stephen Newman to send AFMA information and a presentation on a rock lobster education package is complete and this information will be circulated to TSSAC members (**Action item 5**).

*Action item 6* for CSIRO to provide the TSSAC with a report on modelling to detect changes in water temperature and salinity will remain ongoing until the report is released (**Action item 6**).

*Action item 8*, for AFMA to overhaul the research section on the Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) website is almost complete, pending inclusion of the Torres Strait research CD when intellectual property rights to the CD have been confirmed (**Action item 7**).

*Action item 9*, for research agreements to include additional caveats is complete, however, this raised questions as to how the metadata and data will be stored at AFMA once the researchers have provided it. AFMA will investigate developing policy to address this (**Action item 8**).

*Action item 10*, for PNG to provide the TSSAC with information on sandfish research is ongoing due to confidentiality issues. The Chair will contact PNG to request release of these reports to the TSSAC in confidence (**Action item 9**).

*Action item 11*, for AFMA to investigate the feasibility of a research project on investigating the potential impacts of short and long term climatic change on Torres Strait marine resources is ongoing pending the outcome of action item 6 (**Action item 10**).

*Action item 15*, for the TSSAC to write to the TRLRAG regarding their comments on the Tropical Rock Lobster stock assessments will be completed by the 24 February (**Action Item 11**).

*Action item 26*, for the TSSAC to inform the Hand Collectables Working Group that some form of quota allocation will have less impact than implementing an Olympic (competitive) quota if the TAC for Black teatfish is removed, will be completed by February 24 (**Action Item 12**).

## **Agenda Item 2      TSSAC Procedures**

### **Agenda Item 2.1      Update on central research repository**

The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) has been unable to progress the central web-based repository for Torres Strait research due to lack of resources. Currently, the TSRA have a webpage which provides links to research providers who have undertaken research in



the Torres Strait such as James Cook University and CSIRO. The TSSAC is encouraged to provide suggestions on improvements to the website and feedback on how a repository could be progressed. The link to the TSRA research webpage will be sent to TSSAC members for their consideration Out-of-Session (**Action item 13**). Creating a full research repository requires careful thought regarding the system to be used, what type of research would be available (reports only or associated data/metadata) and the ability to create restrictions on access to data (if uploaded). The Committee discussed commissioning a report or business plan to examine the various needs for a central web-based repository for Torres Strait fisheries research and how such a repository would be created and maintained. Whether or not the TSSAC will commission a report on this will be decided at TSSAC 55 (**Action item 14**).

### **Agenda Item 3      Research**

#### **Agenda item 3.1      Assessment of full proposals**

The Committee assessed the following two full proposals:

- *'Characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Torres Strait Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea)'* (PI Busilacchi, JCU/CSIRO)
- *'Empowering Torres Strait Islanders to have a greater role in the Research and Development (R&D) process'* (PI Calogeras, C-Aid)

The proposals were assessed using the assessment pro forma. A record of Committee comments on the full proposals, recorded separately to the meeting minutes and for internal information only, will be circulated to Committee members (**Action Item 15**).

The Committee endorsed both research proposals in principle, but recommended several amendments to the proposals be made prior to submission to AFMA funding (**Action Item 16**).

**3.1.3** The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the proposal *'Characterisation of the traditional subsistence fisheries in the Torres Strait Treaty communities (Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea)'* (PI Busilacchi, JCU/CSIRO) to AFMA for funding, subject to further modifications to the full proposal being made to the satisfaction of the Committee.

**3.1.4** The TSSAC **AGREED** to recommend the proposal *'Empowering Torres Strait Islanders to have a greater role in the Research and Development (R&D) process'* (PI Calogeras, C-Aid) to AFMA for funding subject to further modifications to the full proposal being made to the satisfaction of the Committee.

In addition to assessing the full proposals, the Committee also made some modifications to the assessment pro-forma and guiding information for researchers in the full proposal template to request specific information on path to uptake and relevance to fisheries management (**Action item 17**).

#### **Agenda item 3.2      Re-assessment of pre-proposal**

After examining budget figures for the 2010/2011 and 2011/12 financial years, the Committee re-assessed the pre-proposal *'Development of an efficient management procedure for Torres Strait Spanish mackerel'* (PI Chambers, ABARES). The Committee felt that there was currently insufficient need for the project to be considered as tactical given the low effort in the finfish fishery and available funds would best be put towards other more pressing projects.



### **Agenda item 3.3 Second call for pre-proposals for the 2011/12 financial year**

As agreed at the December 2010 Out-of-Session meeting, the committee discussed conducting a second call for pre-proposals. The Committee decided not to undertake a formal call for pre-proposals. Instead, the Committee conducted a preliminary review of research priorities in the 2010 Operational Plan to identify tactical priority research areas with a view to commission any projects that were of immediate importance. Many of the comments made in the discussions will be incorporated into the draft 2011 Annual Operational Plan to be discussed at TSSAC 55 (**Action item 18**).

The Committee felt a desktop study on the ecosystem effects of trawling in the Torres Strait Prawn fishery would be beneficial in the future pending outcomes of management decisions in the fishery such as reviews of the 20 metre boat rule and implementation of a harvest strategy. Research priorities 1a, 1b and 3 for Tropical Rock Lobster as detailed in the Operational Plan will be discussed with the Principal Investigator of the Tropical Rock Lobster Management Strategy Evaluation research to determine if their work addresses any of these (**Action Item 19**).

Collaborative research in the Torres Strait regarding the impact of overfishing of Beche de Mer on PNG Warrior Reef will be placed on the agenda at the next bilateral meeting (**Action item 20**).

The Committee discussed sustainable management of turtle and dugong stocks in the Torres Strait Protected Zone. The PZJA is ultimately responsible for management of turtle and dugong as set out in the Torres Strait Fisheries Act and therefore requires scientific information, along with traditional ecological knowledge, to manage the fishery effectively. The TSSAC, as the body responsible for providing the PZJA with scientific advice, requires appropriate data to be able to provide advice to the PZJA or recommend research projects to address information gaps. The TSSAC felt that there was some uncertainty regarding the current state or availability of information and data on turtle and dugong in the Torres Strait. The Committee agreed to investigate commissioning an independent review of past and present turtle and dugong research and will discuss this further at TSSAC 55 (**Action item 21**).

The Committee noted that catch data was a major information requirement for assessing turtle and dugong stocks but that that information is currently unavailable. An update from a TSRA observer, Vic MacGrath, indicated that several communities are collecting turtle and dugong catch as part of the ranger program implementing the Turtle and Dugong Management Plans. A consultant has been engaged to develop a centralised database at the TSRA for collating and storing turtle and dugong catch data. The TSRA (Frank Loban) will be asked to give an update on progress of data collection and storage at TSSAC 55 (**Action item 22**). The Committee noted that there is a high level of sensitivity regarding this data and agreements between communities and the TSRA should be developed as a matter of priority to ensure that the information is available in a mutually acceptable manner in the future. The TSSAC will write to the TSRA (Damian Miley) highlighting:

- concerns with issues relating to turtle and dugong data
- the need to fully analyse all available data, both past and present
- the priority of targeted research
- the willingness of the TSSAC to collaborate with the TSRA in the area of research for sustainable turtle and dugong management; and



- the intention of the TSSAC to commission an independent review of turtle and dugong research to inform management decisions (**Action item 23**).

The Committee also highlighted the need for involvement from Papua New Guinea in turtle and dugong research. The Chair of the TSSAC will write to PNG to highlight the importance of engagement between the TSSAC and PNG in identifying opportunities for collaborative research on shared fisheries stocks between PNG and Australia (**Action Item 24**)<sup>1</sup>.

### **Agenda item 3.5 Co-ordination of research priorities**

AFMA and Michael O'Neil will work together to devise a table to be used for the efficient updating of research priorities in the Annual Operational Plan for Torres Strait fisheries (**Action item 26**). The table will be used by all Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees to ensure that research priorities are updated on a regular basis and this information is communicated back to the TSSAC.

## **Agenda Item 4 TSSAC current project update**

### **Agenda Item 4.1 International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum**

Organisation of the International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum has not progressed due to lack of resources and the forum still requires a champion to lead its development. Seafood Directions is being held on the Gold Coast in November 2011 so there may be opportunity for the forum to be held in conjunction with this conference. However, this may mean reduced sponsorship opportunities for the forum as potential funding bodies such as FRDC are also sponsoring Seafood Directions. In addition, there is now not enough time to secure key note speakers for October/November 2011.

A smaller and more targeted event in 2012, such as a technical working group workshop, was discussed as a more feasible option. Participants could include those from the Torres Strait and five key international countries such as New Zealand, Canada, Alaska, the United States and the Pacific. Input from Aboriginal communities in other parts of Australia would also benefit the workshop. The workshop could be held on Thursday Island at the TSRA at a reduced cost and with less organisation required. AFMA and the TSRA will work on developing a smaller version of the forum and will update the TSSAC on progress at the next meeting (**Action Item 26**).

### **Agenda Item 4.2 Warrior Reef Beche de Mer surveys**

The TSSAC discussed the draft final report for the research '*The Recovery of *Holothuria scabra* (sandfish) population on Warrior Reef, Torres Strait*' and generally approved of the information provided in the draft final report. The TSSAC will provide comments on the report to the Principal Investigator and recommend that the feedback is incorporated in to the final report (**Action Item 27**).

The Committee raised concerns that the report was not as favourable in its assessment of stock recovery of Sandfish as had been previously communicated. The TSSAC was

---

<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to the TSSAC meeting, a Dugong Taskforce meeting was held in Cairns on 18 February 2011. The Taskforce recommended an assessment of the current state of knowledge related to dugong stocks in Australia, particularly in Torres Strait and Queensland being the main strongholds for dugong nationally. To avoid overlap the TSSAC will concentrate on turtle research in the Torres Strait whilst monitoring outcomes from the National Dugong Taskforce.



concerned about the potential impact of fishing the recovering stock which will occur as part of the recently recommended experimental fishing project (OOS 2010 decision no. 1.1.ii). The Committee requested that the Principal Investigator confirm that the 5 tonne take of Sandfish in the experimental fishing research project poses no risk to sandfish recovery on Warrior Reef (**Action Item 28**).

#### **Agenda Item 4.3      An Integrated management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Torres Strait tropical rock lobster population**

The Committee noted the large amount of work and positive progress that has been made by the researchers for the project '*An Integrated Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster*' including:

- Analysis of Traditional Inhabitant catch data from docket books to understand fishing patterns for Traditional Inhabitants and trends over time,
- Analysis of non-Traditional Inhabitant catch data,
- Workshops with stakeholders to determine the drivers and barriers to fishing for the Traditional Inhabitant sector, and
- Commencement of a draft literature review and paper on analysis of catch records.

Further workshops are planned in March for Iama and Badu as well as semi-structured interviews for Thursday Island. The Principal Investigator will be requested to present a progress update in person at the next Brisbane TSSAC meeting (**Action Item 29**).

#### **Agenda Item 4.4      Cultural Protocols for researchers working in the Torres Strait**

The TSSAC noted that the TSRA had circulated the Cultural Protocols to communities in the Torres Strait and that no comments had been received regarding the document. The protocols will be made available to all researchers conducting research in the Torres Strait and will be reviewed regularly.

**4.4.1** The TSSAC **AGREED** to accept the '*Cultural Protocols for researchers working in the Torres Strait*' as a final document to be made available to all researchers conducting research in the Torres Strait.

#### **Agenda Item 5      Update from Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees**

The Committee noted the update provided on the Torres Strait Fisheries Management Advisory Committee teleconference held in November 2010. Further information on this meeting will be available on the PZJA website.

#### **Agenda Item 6      Other Business**

##### **Agenda Item 6.1      PNG hand collectable**

There was nothing to report due to the absence of a PNG representative.

##### **Agenda Item 6.2      Climate change**

The TSRA has released a Torres Strait Climate Change Strategy 2010-2013 which includes information on the impact of climate change on fisheries. The TSRA will work with the TSSAC



on projects which address this issue. Funding from the National Environment Research Program (NERP) has already been approved for research which will include climate change impacts on fisheries resources. A PDF version of the Climate Change Strategy and/or a link to the on-line version of the report will be circulated to TSSAC members (**Action item 30**). The Committee will liaise with the TSRA as research projects funded under this scheme are progressed. Roland Pitcher will contact James Butler to provide feedback to the TSSAC on the NERP projects (**Action item 31**).

### **Agenda Item 6.3 TSSAC membership**

The TSSAC discussed the membership of the TSSAC as the current terms lapse on 30 April 2011. The elected members of the TSSAC (the scientific members and the Industry member) are selected from nominations following procedures set out in Fisheries Management Paper (FMP) No. 1. The TSSAC noted that it is not clear from FMP No. 1 if the lapse in membership requires the positions to be readvertised. All elected committee members expressed that they wished to remain on the committee for a further three years. PZJA agencies will continue to send nominated members as appropriate.

**6.3.1** The TSSAC **AGREE** to recommend to the Protected Zone Joint Authority that current elected members of the TSSAC continue for another three year term.

### **Agenda Item 6.4 Fisheries Education in the Torres Strait**

Marine studies are an important part of the curriculum at Tagai College for pupils in year ten to twelve although there is a large focus on aquaculture. AFMA has discussed with staff at the College the potential to include commercial fisheries information as part of marine studies. For example, students study management plans for turtle and dugong, but there is potential for them to study similar topics for the Tropical Rock Lobster fishery. Similarly, there are opportunities for students to develop brochures and information flyers about the Finfish Management Plan, Tropical Rock Lobster life cycle and TAC setting for communities. Students could then present this information to younger students. AFMA will work with the English department at Tagai college to progress work on this (**Action item 32**).

A Marine Discovery Centre is currently in development at Tagai College on Thursday Island. AFMA will discuss with the College the possibility of including fisheries related material in the Centre (**Action item 33**). School students from all campuses at Thursday Island and from outer islands also take part in excursions to learn about the marine environment. There is opportunity for PZJA officers to assist in these excursions.

The TSSAC requested to be kept up to date on the progress of marine education in Torres Strait schools.

### **Agenda Item 6.5 Annual Research Delivery Day**

An Annual Research Delivery day for Torres Strait research in the Torres Strait may be difficult to organise and fund. It may be more appropriate to request Principal Investigators of AFMA funded research to give presentations at TSSAC face to face meetings throughout the year, particularly when TSSAC meetings are held close to where researchers are based. AFMA and the TSRA will work together to investigate opportunities for researchers to present at other forums such as Marine and Tropical Sciences Research Facility research delivery



day and meetings of the (soon to be formed) Indigenous Fisheries Advisory Committee (IFAC) (**Action Item 34**).

**Agenda Item 6.6      Sponge research application**

The Committee was asked to provide comments on an application to FRDC for a sponge farm aquaculture project. The Torres Strait Traditional Inhabitant representative on the Committee, who resides at Masig where the Sponge farm is located, raised concerns that despite being a community member he was not informed of the need for the research nor the research proposal itself. There was also concern that the research application identified a threat to the sustainability of sponge harvest for the current farm, which had not been communicated to either the community or previous funding bodies of the sponge farm. AFMA will provide comments to FRDC highlighting the TSSAC comments (**Action item 34**).

**Agenda Item 6.7      Confirmation of TSSAC #53**

TSSAC No. 55 will be held via teleconference in June 2011. Date TBC.

