



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



**TORRES STRAIT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING NO. 59**

**MINUTES**  
**19-20 NOVEMBER 2012**

**CHAIR: MR IAN CARTWRIGHT**

These are draft minutes for consideration by the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee. If no comments are received by 21 December 2012 then these minutes will be ratified at the next meeting of the TSSAC.

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
  - 1.3.1. Update letter from Anthony Defries
- 1.4. Ratification of TSSAC 58 Minutes
- 1.5. Action Items from TSSAC 58

### 2. TSSAC Research

- 2.1. Finalised Research Projects **(AFMA – for noting)**
  - 2.1.1. Management Strategy Evaluation **(CSIRO)**
  - 2.1.2. Sandfish Survey on Warrior Reef **(CSIRO to update)**
  - 2.1.3. Reef Gardens **(CSIRO to update)**
- 2.2. **Current Research Projects**
  - 2.2.1. TRL surveys **(AFMA to update)**
  - 2.2.2. Empowering Torres Strait Islanders to have greater Engagement in the Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Process **(AFMA to update)**
  - 2.2.3. Characterization of the traditional subsistence fisheries in PNG Treaty Communities **(AFMA to update)**
  - 2.2.4. Smart phone technology for remote data collection in Torres Strait Traditional Inhabitant finfish fisheries **(UTAS to update)**
- 2.3. Other AFMA funded research projects **(AFMA – for noting)**
  - 2.3.1. Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the Torres Strait **(AFMA to update)**
  - 2.3.2. Sustainability assessment for Trawl bycatch in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery **(CSIRO to update)**

### 3. TSSAC Processes

- 3.1. 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 Budget **(AFMA to update)**
- 3.2. Research pre-proposals assessment **(TSSAC – for decision)**
  - 3.2.1. Climate Change impacts on key Torres Strait Bech De Mer species
  - 3.2.2. Invasive fish species in Torres Strait Islands
  - 3.2.3. Identification Guide for Sea Cucumber
  - 3.2.4. Torres Strait Sea Cucumber Management Strategy Evaluation
  - 3.2.5. Action Plan for increasing Torres Strait islander participation in the Torres Strait Finfish fishery
  - 3.2.6. Implementation of Community - Based Management Plan and Harvest Strategies(CBMPHS) for two Torres Strait Communities
  - 3.2.7. Operational Implementation of Community based Sea Cucumber Harvest Strategies across Torres Strait

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

- 4.1. Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group **(AFMA to update)**

### 5. Other business





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- 5.1. Call for Pre- Proposal Process-
  - 5.1.1. Investigating options for attracting pre-proposal applications (**TSSAC – for decision**)
  - 5.1.2. Papua New Guinea and Australia collaborative research opportunities (**TSSAC – for decision**)
- 5.2. Commissioning an independent assessment of past and present turtle and dugong scientific research (**AFMA to update**)
- 5.3. Climate change (**CSIRO Presentation**)
- 5.4. Confirmation of TSSAC No. 60

Individuals wishing to attend the meeting as an observer are required to contact the Chair, Mr Ian Cartwright: c/o TSSAC Executive Officer – Alicia Sabatino (Alicia.sabatino@afma.gov.au) to notify of your desire to attend.





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**ATTENDANCE – TSSAC #59 (19 & 20 November 2012)**

The following members and observers were in attendance at TSSAC No. 59:

Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Declaration of Interest</b>
Mr Ian Cartwright	Chairperson	Consultant, AFMA Commissioner
Mr Shane Fava	AFMA Representative	Manager, Thursday Island
Ms Alicia Sabatino	Executive Officer (AFMA)	Management Officer, Thursday Island
Dr Michael O'Neill	Scientist	Fisheries Scientist, QDAFF,
Dr Roland Pitcher	Scientist	Researcher, CSIRO
Dr Stephen Newman	Scientist	Scientist , WA Fisheries
Ms Sevaly Sen	Social Scientist	Consultant
Dr Ian Jacobsen	QDAFF Representative	Fisheries Management Officer, QDAFF
Mr John Adams	TSRA Representative	Fisheries Project Manager, TSRA
Mr Kenny Bedford	TSRA Representative	Fisheries Portfolio Member, TSRA Board Member for Erub
Mr Tony Vass	Industry Representative	Commercial Fisherman





**DECISION RECORD – TSSAC #59 (19 & 20 November 2012)**

- 1.4 The committee **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC No. 58 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
- 1.5 The committee noted the current lack of a central repository for Torres Strait research and **AGREED** to seek project proposals to establish such a resource potential funding in the current financial year.
- 3.2 The committee **AGREED** to invite the Principal Investigators (PIs) of the following research proposals to submit full research proposals for consideration by the TSSAC at its next meeting:
  1. *Identification Guide for Sea Cucumber (PI Nicole Murphy, CSIRO); and*
  2. *Torres Strait Sea Cucumber Management Strategy Evaluation (PI Tim Skewes, CSIRO)*
- 5.2 The committee **AGREED** to endorse the suggested researcher to undertake initial phase (desktop review) of the independent review on Turtle and Dugong research in the Torres Strait.
- 5.3 The committee **AGREED** to fund a desktop risk assessment into climate change impacts on Torres Strait commercial fish species potential funding in the current financial year.





**Action Items – TSSAC #59 (19 & 20 November 2012)**

No.	Action Item	Agenda no.	Champion	Due date
1	Annual Operational Plan to be reviewed at TSSAC Meeting #60	1.5	AFMA	TSSAC 60
2	AFMA to write a paper on options for managing and evaluating completed projects.	1.5 (58.1.5)	AFMA	TSSAC 60
3	AFMA to progress the development of a Torres Strait Marine Research Repository project proposal.	1.5 – Relates to action Item 19	AFMA/CSIRO	TSSAC # 60
4	AFMA to arrange a meeting between PI Chris Calogeras, TSSAC Chair and AFMA to confirm research project scope.	2.2.2	Chair/AFMA	18 December 2013
5	AFMA to write to Dr Sara Busilacchi regrading suggestions made by the Committee on household survey techniques (creel).	2.2.3	AFMA/Sevaly Sen	20 January 2013
6	The TSSAC to communicate to Anthony De Fries that it supports the targeted consultation component of his project being completed in Jan/Feb 2013 (Noting the TSRA did not support this approach).	2.3.1	AFMA	TSSAC # 60
7	The TSRA to write a formal result to Anthony De Fries inviting him to attend the next TSRA Board meeting to discuss his project.	2.3.1	TSRA	Prior to TSRA Board meeting
8	AFMA to reply to pre proposal applicants	3.2	AFMA	28 November 2012
9	Research priorities table to be incorporated as a standing item on all RAGs, MACs and Working Groups agendas to assist in the identification of research priorities.	5.1.1	AFMA	Ongoing





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10	AFMA to engage identified consultant to undertake independent review of the Turtle and Dugong fishery	5.2	AFMA	Ongoing
11	AFMA to progress the development of a Climate change project proposal.	5.3	AFMA/CSIRO	TSSAC # 60





## MINUTES

### Agenda Item 1.1 Preliminaries - Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Chairs Opening Remarks/Meeting attendance/Declaration of Interests/Apologies

Chair welcomed TSSAC members and acknowledged traditional owners. The Chair also welcomed AFMA staff, advised members to sign the declaration of interest and detailed meeting apologies.

### Agenda Item 1.2 Review and Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by the Committee.

### Agenda Item 1.3 Correspondence

The committee **NOTED** the following correspondence;

1.1.1. Update letter from Anthony De Fries

Discussion on this item is captured under agenda item 2.3.1

### Agenda Item 1.4 Ratification of TSSAC 58 Minutes

The committee **AGREED** to accept the minutes of TSSAC No.58 as true and accurate record of the meeting.

### Agenda Item 1.5 Action Items from TSSAC 58

The Committee **NOTED** progress and the completion of action items from TSSAC 58, the following action items were identified as ongoing;

- *Action Item 1*, the Committee agreed to review the 2012 Annual Operational Plan at the next TSSAC meeting (**Action Item 1 TSSAC # 59**).
- *Action Item 9*, The Committee agreed that for projects over \$100,000 PI's should present outcomes to the TSSAC in person as part of their final milestone. It was also agreed that final reports will be assessed by an independent peer review. AFMA to write a paper on managing and evaluating options for completed projects (**Action Item 2 TSSAC # 59**)
- *Action Item 19*, AFMA to progress the development of a Torres Strait Marine Research Repository. (**Action Item 3 TSSAC # 59**).
- *Action Item 12*, Committee provided comments to PI regarding house hold survey.

### Agenda Item 2 TSSAC Research Projects

#### Agenda Item 2.1 Finalised Research Projects

##### *Agenda Item 2.1.1 Management Strategy Evaluation (CSIRO)*

The Committee **NOTED** the completion of the Tropical Rock Lobster Management Strategy Evaluation project and presentation provided by PI at TSSAC #58. The Committee **AGREED**







that the finalised project will benefit the Tropical Rock Lobster fishery and inform the future management of the fishery.

The Committee discussed the ground breaking nature of the research and noted that any the opportunity for a peer-review of the work had passed.

#### *Agenda Item 2.1.2 Sandfish Survey on Warrior Reef*

The Committee **NOTED** the completion of the Sandfish Survey on Warrior Reef. The Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) questioned if comments were looked at in relation to the project objectives primarily training of Traditional Inhabitant observers, the AFMA representative advised the Committee that there was Traditional Inhabitant involvement and training was undertaken prior to work. It was also **NOTED** by the Committee that a full presentation on this finalised project will be delivered at the TSSAC #60.

#### *Agenda Item 2.1.3 Reef Gardens*

The TSSAC **NOTED** the completion of the Reef Gardens Project and that the final report has been submitted to AFMA for evaluation. The Committee also acknowledged that a full presentation will be provided by the PI at TSSAC # 60.

### **Agenda Item 2.2 Current Research Projects**

#### *Agenda Item 2.2.1 TRL surveys*

The Committee **NOTED** the progress of this project and that the final field survey report has been submitted to AFMA for evaluation.

Dr Darren Dennis (CSIRO) presented to the Committee work that had been undertaken in the Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery primarily focussed on the Annual Stock Assessment and setting of a Total Allowable Catch for 2013. The Committee also noted the ongoing commitment to fund the Tropical Rock Lobster Surveys by AFMA.

Dr Dennis detailed that the mid-year surveys have been running since 1989 with pre-season surveys conducted from 2005-2009. He commented that CSIRO uses a number of data sources for the annual stock assessment including data from mid-year and pre-season surveys, TVH catch rate data, length-frequency data and catch statistics. He also went on to say that the CSIRO undertook a cost-benefit analysis to assess whether the benefits of conducting the mid-season and pre-season surveys exceed the cost of the surveys. The analysis found that the addition of survey data allowed for a more refined Total Allowable Catch (TAC) estimate which could allow for greater catch. Noting that additional revenue resulting from this catch would exceed the cost of the surveys. Dr Dennis also stated that while one survey (either pre-season or mid-season) on its own has benefit, having both surveys has greater value but it is not clear as to which survey is of most value.

#### *Agenda Item 2.2.2 Empowering Torres Strait Islanders to have greater Engagement in the Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Process (PI, Chris Calogeras)*

The Committee **NOTED** the delays that the PI has experienced during the recent 12 months. The Chair in consultation with AFMA representatives agreed to contact the PI out of session





to review the project scope as the Committee consensus was that it had progressed past the original proposal's objectives (**Action Item 4**)

*Agenda Item 2.2.3 Characterization of the traditional subsistence fisheries in Papua New Guinea Treaty (PNG) Communities*

The Committee **NOTED** the progress of this project and the current schedule of consultation with PNG treaty villages to be undertaken by the PI. AFMA detailed that the PI is currently in PNG and will provide an update to the TSSAC at meeting #60. The committee noted the extent of funds that have been potentially committed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of project. It was also noted that the PI will need to incorporate suggestions made by the Committee regarding household survey techniques to be implemented during visits to treaty villages (**Action Item 5**).

*Agenda Item 2.2.4 Smart phone technology for remote data collection in Torres Strait*

The Committee **NOTED** the progress of this project. The AFMA representative advised that due to the change of Project PI has resulted in some unexpected delays. The new PI has scheduled a visit to Torres Strait communities in late January 2013 as the initial phase of the project.

**Agenda Item 2.3 Other AFMA funded research projects**

*Agenda Item 2.3.1 Targeted Indigenous Community Consultation in the Torres Strait*

The Committee **NOTED** the status of this project and the delays the PI has experienced due to the availability of community representatives. The AFMA representative advice to the PI was to hold community consultation in January 2013 as further delays may undermine the efficiency of the project. The AFMA representative confirmed that they would continue to liaise with PI regarding community consultation and keep the Committee updated on this matter. The TSRA Fisheries Portfolio Member advised that the PI would be invited to the next TSRA Board meeting, to provide an update on the project and discuss the outcomes of the project (**Action Item 6 & 7**).

*Agenda Item 2.3.2 Sustainability assessment for Trawl bycatch in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery*

The Committee **NOTED** that this project has been delayed due to policies regarding the availability of data from Queensland Fisheries. The PI presented the current findings and advised the Committee that once the contract has been finalised work will commence.

**Agenda Item 3 TSSAC Processes**

**Agenda Item 3.1 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 Budget (AFMA to update)**

The Committee **NOTED** the status of the budget for both the 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years primarily discussing funds currently committed to research projects and surplus' that may exist. A spreadsheet detailing the milestone payments for each project and annual funding commitments was distributed to the Committee for review.





Members raised questions regarding the availability of funds for the current financial year as this was detailed as being in excess of \$140k. On investigation it was detailed by the AFMA representative that these funds may still be available if utilised in the 2012/13 financial year.

### **Agenda Item 3.2 Assessment of pre-proposals for 2013/2014**

The Committee assessed seven pre-proposals for Torres Strait research in the 2013/2014 financial year.

The committee **AGREED** to invite the PI's of the following research pre-proposals to submit full research proposals for consideration by the TSSAC at its next meeting:

1. *Identification guide for Bech-de-mer species (PI, Dr Nicole Murphy, CSIRO)*
2. *Management strategy evaluation – Bech-de-mer (PI, Dr Timothy Skewes, CSIRO)*

The PI's of these pre-proposals will be requested to make a number of changes to their projects when submitting their full proposals to better align them with the research needs and guidelines as defined by the TSSAC. The Committee will communicate specific comments made on the pre-proposals to the relevant PI's to address when developing their applications further. The committee **AGREED** for AFMA to write to the successful and unsuccessful applicants (**Action Item 8**).

The TSSAC also noted the following five pre-proposal that were received that were deemed unsuccessful;

1. *Climate Change impacts on key Torres Strait BDM species*
2. *Invasive fish species in Torres Strait*
3. *Action Plan for increasing Torres Strait islander participation in the Torres Strait Finfish Fishery*
4. *Implementation of Community- Based Management Plan and Harvest Strategies (CBMPHS) for two Torres Strait Communities*
5. *Operational Implementation of Community based Sea Cucumber Harvest Strategies across Torres Strait*

### **Agenda Item 4 Update from Torres Strait Working Groups and Committees**

#### **Agenda Item 4.1 Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group**

The Committee **NOTED** the update from the Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group (TRLRAG) and that the main outcomes were:

- The TRLRAG accepted the 2012 stock assessment model presented by CSIRO
- The TRLRAG accepted the TAC table presented by the CSIRO.

### **Agenda Item 5 Other business**

#### **Agenda Item 5.1.1 Call for Pre- Proposal Process**

The Committee discussed the need for investigating options for attracting pre-proposal applications that are more strongly aligned with the research priorities. The Committee





recommended that the targeted research priorities table (detailed in the TSSAC Annual Operational Plan) be presented to all working group meetings and that AFMA ensure this is a standing agenda item at all such meetings (**Action Item 9**).

#### Agenda Item 5.1.2 Papua New Guinea and Australia collaborative research **opportunities**

The AFMA representative provided an update regarding the recent meeting with the PNG National Fisheries Authority (NFA), this included discussions on the following topics:

- PNG's indication (verbally) that they would like to commit to future research surveys (similar to Dr Clive Turnbull's surveys) to be undertaken in the Torres Strait Prawn Fisheries;
- Last survey similar to this was done in 2004/2005 by CSIRO;

The Committee **NOTED** that the intention PNG is to actively encourage participation in the Torres Strait Prawn Fishery by PNG Prawn Fishery licence holders and supports the survey only if the NFA provide complementary funding support.

#### Agenda Item 5.2 Commissioning an independent assessment of past and present turtle **and dugong scientific research (AFMA to update)**

The Committee **AGREED** that the suggested researcher undertake the initial phase (desktop review) of the independent review of Turtle and Dugong research in the Torres Strait. The AFMA representative gave an update detailing that correspondence with Dr Marsh has indicated that she was happy to give access to data that she collected and also be involved in review.

The Committee commented that the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) provided was too extensive for the scope of an initial \$10K pilot project and it was **AGREED** that they would be scaled back (**Action Item 10**).

#### **Agenda Item 5.3 Climate change (CSIRO Presentation)-**

AFMA will approach CSIRO to attend TSSAC meeting in March to present Climate Change Workshop findings.

The Committee discussed the possibility of funding a desktop analysis of potential climate change impacts of commercial Torres Strait fisheries stocks. It was suggested that the review could mirror the work already completed by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and AFMA which focussed on other commercial fish stock around Australia. The Committee noted the potential availability of funds to complete such a review in the current financial year and requested the AFMA representative initiate dialogue with the CSIRO on this matter with the aim of developing a project proposal for review at the next TSSAC meeting.

**(Action Item 11)**

#### **Agenda Item 5.4 Confirmation of TSSAC No. 60**

TSSAC 60 will be held in Cairns March 2013. Venue and date TBC.

Meeting Closed at 1:30pm (Day 2)

