

**TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE FISHERIES WORKING  
GROUP – No. 1  
9-10 October 2007  
AFMA MEETING ROOM, THURSDAY ISLAND**

**DRAFT RECORD OF MEETING**

THESE ARE **DRAFT** MINUTES WHICH HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO MEMBERS OF THE HAND COLLECTABLE FISHERIES WORKING GROUP (HCWG) AND WILL BE RATIFIED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

***Attendance***

**Day 1**

Toshio Nakata	Chair
Jim Prescott	AFMA Manager Torres Strait Fisheries
Shane Gaddes	QDPIF Senior Fisheries Management Officer
Timothy Skewes	CSIRO
Nyall Ledger	TVH representative
Paul King	Pearl Industry representative
Francis Pearson	Poruma Island
Kila Odo	Murray Island
Charles David	Yam Island
Mika David	Warraber Island
Grant Leeworthy	Tasmanian Seafoods
Lyndon Pedell	Queensland Fisheries and Boating
Erik Raudzens	Executive Officer, AFMA

***Observers***

Gilbert Hanson	Tasmanian Seafoods
Juliet Corley	Minutes, AFMA
Annabel Jones	AFMA

***Apologies***

Manai Nona	Badu
Willie Wigness	Ngurupai

**Day 2**

**Attendance**

Same as day one with the inclusion of Chris Parry (AFMA Compliance).

## **DAY 1 - RECORD**

### **Preliminaries**

The meeting commenced at 9.15 am on 9 October 2007. As part of the welcoming address the Chair asked all attendees to introduce themselves. The agenda was then adopted by members.

The Chairperson expressed the need for a more permanent Chairperson due his dual roles as TSRA Representative and Chairperson. Working group members discussed the process for nomination of the Chairperson. Due to cost constraints and the desire to have a chairperson with suitable experience with Torres Strait issues the working group agreed in principle to seek an independent chair from current TSRA employees.

<b>ACTION</b> –Chairperson to investigate the possibility of nominating a TSRA employee, with suitable experience, to act as chairperson for future HCWG meetings.
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<b>Item 1.1 Roles and responsibilities of Working Group Members</b>
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The Chairperson reminded working members of their roles and responsibilities as working group members as stated in PZJA Fisheries Management Paper No.1.

Some working group members expressed concerns that it was their obligation to represent the interests of HC fisheries as a whole rather than as an advocate for any particular organisation, interest group or regional concern.

Mr Charles David, Traditional Inhabitant Member representing Yam Island, expressed concerns that agreements made by the working group may be contradictory to his community's wishes. Mr Odo, Traditional Inhabitant Member representing Murray Island, also stated that he would not agree to working group decisions that jeopardise his communities best interests.

Mr Shane Gaddes, QDPI member, stated that individual members do not need to always agree to working group decisions and if members do not agree their sentiments will be recorded in the minutes of meetings.

Mr Erik Raudzens, WG Executive Officer, reminded working group members that the roles and responsibilities of members are the same for all Torres Strait Fisheries working groups and that many members were already adhering to these principles as members of other working groups. This WG was being reminded of their roles and responsibilities as it was the first HCWG meeting and some members were new to the WG concept.

Mr Charles David stated he wished to have a proxy represent him at the next HCWG meeting and queried the WG regarding proper process. Mr Prescott stated the while it was preferred that proxies not be used to ensure continuity with issues, that it was at times unavoidable. Erik Raudzens stated that applications for the use of a proxy were at the discretion of the WG Chairperson. In addition it is stated in Fisheries Management Paper No.1 that the Chairperson has grounds for dismissing a working group member if

they are absent, except with the leave of the Chair, from two consecutive meetings of TSFMAC or a Working Group.

### Item 1.2 Declarations of interest

The Chairperson asked each WG member to declare their material personal interests, including a direct or indirect financial or economic interest in Torres Strait Hand Collectable Fisheries. Working group members made the following declarations of interest:

**Lyndon Peddell** – No economic interest in the Fisheries

**Erik Raudzens** – No economic interest in the Fisheries

**Jim Prescott** – No economic interest in the Fisheries

**Tim Skewes** – CSIRO has research interests providing 50% funding. Has a general scientific interest.

**Grant Leeworthy** – Employed by Tasmanian Seafoods which has a license to purchase beche-de-mer and trochus from Torres Strait waters. Has a long term interest in Torres Strait and has concerns the fishery has not been able to operate for the last few years. Mr Leeworthy also stated he has personal interest in the fisheries as a researcher.

**Kila Odo** – Has removed beche-de-mer and trochus endorsements from his license. His entire interest is in the conservation of finfish, beche-de-mer and trochus. Murray Islanders have the highest costs of living in the Torres Strait therefore there is a need for better management.

**Shane Gaddes** - No economic interest in the Fisheries.

**Mika David** – Has TIB beche-de-mer and trochus endorsements. Mr David feels trochus is the most important fishery for his community and there is need for improved management of the fishery.

**Francis Pearson** – Has TIB beche-de-mer and trochus endorsements. Mr Francis stated he would like to see the fishery managed properly in the best interests of future generations. He feels this should not be difficult as traditional management by the community in the past had always been sustainable. Traditional knowledge needs to be incorporated into management. Mr Pearson stated he has an interest in understanding the goals of the working group to ensure the best interests of his community.

**Paul King** – Has TIB crayfish, pearl, crab and aquaculture endorsements. Mr King also has 9.2 hectares of land at the west end of Saibai Island for a small (clam and pearl?) project. Mr King expressed concerns regarding the history of the pearl fishery and stated that some areas of the fishery have recovered while others have not. He expressed his interest in creating a vibrant pearl fishery again, benefiting island communities and easing back into a robust industry.

**Nyall Ledger** – Has TVH beche-de-mer and finfish endorsements. Mr Ledger has been visiting Torres Strait islands for over 14 years and is the only remaining non-indigenous commercial license holder (non-transferable) for beche-de-mer. Mr Ledger stated he believes formal regulations are needed for a sustainable fishery.

**Charles David** – Has TIB crayfish, beche-de-mer and trochus endorsements. Mr David stated he has environmental sustainability and community welfare interests for the Torres Strait. Mr David also expressed concerns in the high costs of living in the region and more investment needs to be undertaken in compliance and management if hand collectable fisheries are to be sustainable.

Working group members queried AFMA and Queensland fisheries representatives about the availability and conditions of license for Torres Strait hand collectable fisheries.

**ACTION** – Shane Gaddes to brief the working group on individual license conditions for TPC and TVH beche-de-mer licences.

### **Item 1.3 Open discussion: Working group member expectations and aspirations**

Each member of the WG was invited to make a brief presentation regarding their expectations and aspiration for the working group. The following are the main points raised by each WG member during their presentation.

#### **Nyall Ledger**

- Wants to ensure that what is to be decided by the working group is based on the fact that the whole beche-de-mer fishery is viable and sustainable.
- Warrior reef is unique to the fishery. Does not know how to allocate resources, but having 100's of fishers out there as in the past will not be sustainable.
- Walking over the reef has caused damage. There was high diversity of marine life before 1997, since then most marine life appears to have been damaged and has disappeared.
- Concerns that resource allocation between islands will not be successful.
- Considers the protection of Home Reefs as an option to enhance recovery of the fishery.

#### **Paul King**

- The black pearl industry Western Australia is quite profitable and may be good example for the Torres Strait pearl fishery.
- TAFE has been supporting and running courses including drift-diving and seeding techniques.
- In the waters around Saibai pearl shell stocks appear to be prolific inside the 3 mile economic zone and probably is outside the area as well.
- Suggests a pearl farm will alleviate the high cost of living, alcohol abuse and other social problems including low literacy and numeracy.
- There is potential for high profits if new technologies are developed.
- The pearl industry tends to follow a boom/bust cycle due to poor economic management.
- Recognises there is a need to protect it, study it, do research on spawning, and look further at the northern sector.
- Aquaculture has taken off in Broome and Darwin and it appears Torres Strait missed many opportunities
- Torres Strait has an additional marketing advantage with its pearls having a thick nacre and superior lustre.

- Global warming will be an issue that may override any management decisions and may pose the biggest environmental risk to the Torres Strait.

### **Francis Pearson**

- Concerned about the ecosystem effects of fishing i.e. if you remove something from the ground, some other species may be affected.
- Concerns over how crayfish were affected when beche-de-mer fishing caused physical damaged to warrior reef.
- His ancestors managed their fisheries using indigenous knowledge and practices and did not have issues with fish stocks collapsing.
- There needs to be an understanding of what has gone wrong with management.
- There is a need to make policy that benefits both sides.
- There is a need to mould the future but also look back and utilise indigenous knowledge.

### **Mika Charles**

- Comes from small community which is dependant on Hand Collectable fisheries, mostly trochus fishing.
- Trochus and beche-de-mer are important source of income during the closed season for crayfish, with fishing dependant on weather conditions.
- Trochus and beche-de-mer fishing has a long tradition in his community and there have never been issues of overfishing in the past as the community self regulates its practices.
- His community will continue to fight for access rights and better management.

### **Grant Leeworthy**

- Wants industry to self-manage the fishery, and feels it has the ability to keep the fishery sustainable.
- Has looked at other fisheries around world with similar fisheries. He is confident that management techniques such as rotational harvesting and spatial management will aid Torres Strait fisheries
- He has done many stock assessments on beche-de-mer.
- Aquaculture and reseeding projects are starting to get results elsewhere.
- He understands that Torres Strait fisheries are in a difficult situation but wants long-term sustainable of fishery.

### **Shane Gaddes**

- As with all fisheries, his purpose is maximise sustainable yield of fishery for the good of all communities.

### **Kila Odo**

- Beche-de-mer, trochus and finfish is what Murray Island solely survives on.
- Depletion of beche-de-mer is not through the efforts of indigenous fishers but due to commercial fishers.
- He has predicted what has happened to the finfish and beche-de-mer fisheries.

- As long as TVH sector has access to the fishery there will never be enough fish for all. They take cream and move on leaving indigenous fishers with the dregs. It is the same situation with finfish. Commercial operators had previously claimed there is not enough coral trout or beche-de-mer for both the TVH and TIB sectors.
- The PZJA is not protecting indigenous communities and is favouring the commercial sector.
- Fishery has to be sustainable for indigenous fishers. Individual businessmen have made millions of dollars and left. Business people can relocate after. Murray Islanders can't, they live on the island and will die there.
- Murray Islanders have already developed a community management plan that includes rotational harvesting and spatial management which needs to be recognised by management.
- Would like to see beche-de-mer fishery re-opened around Murray Island as local fishers feel that stocks are still high.

### **Charles David**

- Would like to agree with Kila Odo.
- Fishing is the most important source of income for Torres Strait Islanders as there are few employment opportunities in Torres Strait.
- There is need to harvest sustainably.
- Would like to see the working group develop the beche-de-mer fishery and re-open it for his community using a TAC system.
- Warrior reef fishery collapsed because there was no management or compliance allowing people from anywhere to access the fishery.
- It is very distressing for indigenous people to see the reefs not respected.
- He is glad there is now an opportunity to work on management with the creation of the working group and feels the fisheries should be managed to maximise employment opportunities for indigenous peoples.
- Beche-de-mer is very important to indigenous fishers, especially during the times of closures for other fisheries.
- Beche-de-mer should only be harvested by indigenous fishers.
- The working group should explore aquaculture for pearl and crab fisheries to increase employment opportunities.

### **Tim Skewes**

- Wants sustainable use and is aware peoples livelihoods are affected by his work.
- Wants people to continue to gain a livelihood from the sea but is always looking to the long-term sustainability of fisheries.
- Has worked worldwide on beche-de-mer fisheries.
- Other hand collectable fisheries around world are under too much fishing pressure, so the value of these resources will go up therefore there is the opportunity for Torres Strait to have valuable resource in future.
- We should take as few risks as we can with regard to stock collapse as these fisheries take a long time to recover (some have been closed more than 15 yrs and have not bounced back).

- Indicators show that these resources are depleted, so we should take a conservative approach that takes the long term view into account.
- There is also a need to look at ecosystem impacts of fishing.
- Communication is important and there needs to be more integration of islander knowledge.
- There is a need get out of a boom-bust fishery. Perhaps the development of a multi-species fishery, with fishing for a dozen species at once will reduce pressure on the fishery as a whole.

### **Jim Prescott**

- The Torres Strait pearl industry has the most potential for the future and suggests that the working group invest its resources towards its redevelopment.
- Other markets for pearl meat and shell should be looked into. There is the potential for 'market branding' of Torres Strait products e.g. higher quality product.
- Stocks appear depleted although there is not much research material to assess the real status of the fishery. There appears to be widespread depletion although there is also anecdotal evidence of localised recoveries.
- We should conclude that pearl shell stocks are badly depleted as they used to be harvested by the tonnes, and are now counted as individual shells caught.
- As there is a very small proportion of pearl virgin biomass remaining stocks should be left to recover as recruitment is effected by the allele effect.
- Can recover stocks by relocating pearl shell closer together increasing the chance of fertilization and recruitment although all risks and costs need to be thoroughly researched
- The working group should keep pushing PNG to stay out of pearl areas.
- Ecosystem effects of pearl shell harvesting need to be considered. Before commercial harvest the very high abundance of pearl shell would have had a dramatic effect on other fisheries e.g. spat available for food, shelter on seabed, and a food source.
- The trochus fishery has limited potential. There is a need for communities to decide how many fishers will harvest trochus as there is a small capacity in the fishery and only a limited number of fishers will be able to make a livelihood from harvesting.
- The working group needs to be behind the researcher and support research or we risk not getting any research funding. At moment we are tearing it down. We are unlikely to get funding if the stakeholders are not supportive.
- The Working group also needs to consider interests in the harvest of live corals for the aquarium trade, as there are probably good opportunities if managed correctly.
- Sea-ranching of beche-de-mer and trochus has potential. Research into potential sea-ranching areas should be undertaken soon.
- The rights of PNG to harvest areas that are used for sea-ranching should also be investigated as PNG may be entitled to 25% of any potential harvest.

## **Erik Raudzens**

- There is a need for better communication between AFMA and stakeholders. All working group members should feel free to contact AFMA for any queries relating to Hand Collectable Fisheries.
- AFMA has started to collate a very useful data set via the docket book system. The current docket book data does have some accuracy issues due to a lack of reporting in the past. This should be remedied when docket book reporting is made compulsory next year.
- It is in all stakeholders' best interests to support the docket book system as it is a cost effective management tool.

## **Lyndon Pedell**

- Compliance issues change with the amount of participation in the fishery.
- The more active the working group is the more pressure can be put on getting more resources for these fisheries.

## **Toshio Nakata**

- The TSRA is always seeking to support opportunities for Traditional Inhabitants.

### **Item 2.1 CRC beche-de-mer survey results**

Tim Skewes made a presentation on the CRC project *Sustainability Assessment of Torres Strait Sea Cucumbers*. The presentation demonstrated that there was no improvement in beche-de-mer stocks around Warrior Reef and in the eastern Torres Strait region. Tim Skewes also described the sampling and analytical techniques used for the survey in detail.

Mr Grant Leeworthy expressed that other fisheries had suffered from the assumption that there needs to be a risk-adverse strategy. He would like to ensure that this fishery's risk adverse position is well based and not lacking any data. Mr Skewes replied stating that if there is a lack of data there is a need to be more conservative and if the wrong decisions are made it will take a long time for the fishery to recover. Mr Leeworthy stated that it appears Warrior Reef is not recovering most likely due to illegal fishing

Mr Charles David raised concerns regarding illegal fishing for beche-de-mer on Warrior reef and is looking to implement a ranger program on Yam Island. He also stated that there needs to be a better collaborative approach between the TIB sector and Foreign Compliance.

The working group discussed the possibility of opening the sandfish fishery on warrior reef so that Australian fishers could 'chase away' PNG boats. Government members were not in favour of the idea as it does not appear to work for the TRL fishery. In

addition there is duty of care for stakeholders in the fishery as confrontation with illegal fishers may result in physical confrontation.

Grant Leeworthy claims he has seen beche-de-mer hotspots in many fisheries. These hotspots can be very productive and it would be beneficial if these areas could be opened to fishing.

Jim Prescott stated that averages from scientific assessments are calculated from places where biomass is none, a few, and high. If we fish hotspots it will decrease the average dramatically.

Tim Skewes advised leaving large proportion of the population if we are to achieve sustainability. We have to stop fishing when still see plenty on the ground. Better information is also needed. It may be too late already with these fisheries. We need to just take cream off top year in year out- it would be an ideal goal if can get to that point.

Kila Odo stated that Murray Island already have a management plan. It includes cutting the area into four pieces and working two neap tides in one area (4 days), then moving on to next clockwise. Fishing will not concentrate on hotspots. Every four months fishers will get back to same place and can see how much fish were taken out and how beche-de-mer stocks are surviving.

Tim Skewes stated that Kila Odo's suggestion sounded viable and good management practice.

Jim Prescott asked how will we determine how much will be taken.

Kilo Odo stated if AFMA could supply a workable quota it could be trialled.

Erik Raudzens stated that this sounded like a worthwhile harvest strategy to be implemented by Communities on a voluntary basis. We should conducted Community Consultation visits to gauge ways in which Communities wish to harvest their resources. We would need to come up with community specific TACs for this to work which would require further research.

Jim Prescott raised concerns of compliance issues and the cost of such research.

Charles David stated that any changes to management must be decided on and come from Traditional fishers.

**ACTION** – AFMA to investigate research needs into to developing Community specific TACs for beche-de-mer which would compliment a voluntary Community initiated harvest strategy.

**ACTION** – AFMA to conduct Community consultation visits to investigate Community driven harvest strategies before the next working group

## Item 2.2 Trochus and bêche-de-mer data summary

Erik Raudzens presented the results from the Torres Strait trochus and bêche-de-mer data summary 2005-06. He noted that the results were not conclusive due to docket book reporting not being compulsory. Despite this, the potential future results were promising if fishers agreed on the importance of this information for management.

Charles David raised concerns about interpreting docket book locations as some Yam Island fishers sell product to Warraber Island.

Jim Prescott stated that docket books will be compulsory from July next year. It is a new license so anyone buying/receiving will be required to have a licence. It is currently voluntary but soon will be compulsory. Erik Raudzens stated that there is a need to spread the word around what docket books are like and that they will be compulsory. Jim Prescott stated that it was previously up to AFMA to work out who is buying product. This has been very hard, especially if buying occurs out of the Torres Strait. Erik Raudzens requested that if working group members know of people buying to please contact AFMA so we can ensure we obtain all data.

Charles David raised concerns with data from illegal catch not being included in the data. AFMA managers agreed that this was a problem but figures are difficult to obtain. AFMA agreed to look into the possibility of incorporating such data but noted it may be cost prohibitive.

Shane Gaddes and Charles David raised concerns about the confidentiality of the data.

Erik Raudzens stated that the data met AFMA guidelines in relation to not publishing data from individual fishers and that the data represented only highlighted averages.

Jim Prescott stated that such data could be important to fishers for presenting a business case for developing the fishery.

Francis Pearson stated that some fishers may want their individual catches presented for business expansion purposes.

Shane Gaddes stated that this could be done on an individual basis but would not be available to public.

## **Day 2 record**

### **Item 2.3 Pearl shell fishery discussion paper**

Erik Raudzens presented a paper developed by AFMA regarding options for future management of the pearl fishery.

Paul King stated that the working group should consider closing the pearl fishery to tropical rock lobster fishers. He was concerned that the lobster fishers were stockpiling pearl and that the tropical rock lobster fishery subsidises the continued exploitation of the pearl fishery as a byproduct.

Tim Skewes stated that the standing biomass of pearl is in the order of 2 to 3 million and minor catches were unlikely to damage the fishery.

Shane Gaddes asked the working group whether it would approve closing the fishery and issue permits to collect broodstock and/or seedstock. The working group stated it would need to get back to its members.

Charles David reminded the working group that any decisions should consider maximising the economic development of Traditional fishers and that any latent effort should be removed from the TVH sector before the TIB sector.

Shane Gaddes suggested that the group should write to the TSMAC advising of concerns with latent effort in the fishery.

Jim Prescott suggested that these concerns should be first brought up with a specific workshop for the pearl fishery which could then advise the working group with strategic advice for the PZJA.

**ACTION** – AFMA to seek funding for a workshop on Pearl Fishery issues which is inclusive of all stakeholders.

### **Item 2.4 Department of the Environment and Water Resources (DEWR) Strategic Assessment**

Erik Raudzens presented an update of Department of Environment and Water Resources (DEWR) requirement for the trochus and beche-de-mer fisheries. He noted that there were issues with the TACs and stock assessments for both fisheries. In addition the working group needed to come up with a strategy to prevent localised depletion.

The Chair noted these concerns need to be addressed to ensure the fisheries remain open.

Tim Skewes noted the biggest challenge is to prove whether the TACs are sustainable. At the present we have no idea for trochus although it seems to have been sustained in past. There is a need for a harvest strategy which incorporates TIB knowledge.

Charles David noted that the TAC for trochus appeared to be sustainable as catches probably exceeded this figure (150 tonnes) during the 1980s and 1990s.

Jim Prescott suggested the fishery could be managed in a boom bust style with market price dictating catch as there is no point restricting catch when prices are high.

Tim Skewes suggested this would be a risky strategy as the population could collapse suddenly as has occurred elsewhere in the world.

Charles David suggested that the trochus fishery could be closed during the lobster fishery. The chair noted that this could be done as a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or code of practise with TIB fishers.

Shane Gaddes suggested an MOU or code of practice could be trialled for a few years as a flexible traditional arrangement which would allow compliance resource to be utilised elsewhere.

Jim Prescott suggested that this could be used in the harvest strategy for the fishery as suggested in item 2.1.

The chair noted this could satisfy DEWR requirements for the fishery.

Charles David suggested this could be incorporated into the proposed ranger program for Torres Strait.

### **Item 3.1 Background on abundance estimate techniques**

Tim Skewes presented the abundance techniques utilised in previous CSIRO beche-de-mer research.

Charles David and Kila Odo suggested that there needs to be more Traditional Inhabitant input into research to ensure communities have faith in research results. Charles David also noted that he stated that Traditional observer should be used for research at the last Torres Strait Prawn Management Advisory Committee.

Tim Skewes made the working group aware that Traditional Inhabitants were involved in previous research although he agreed that CSIRO and AFMA could to a better job in the future.

### **Item 4.1 Proposed trochus and bêche-de-mer research**

Erik Raudzens asked the working group to consider research priorities for Hand Collectable fisheries. He suggested a GIS habitat model could be the most cost effective way forward as this type of system may allow for better estimates of TACs for individual communities.

Jim Prescott suggested that priority should be given to trochus to give a better estimate of a TAC as beche-de-mer surveys have already been completed.

The Chair asked each working group member to state what future research should focus on.

- Nyall Ledger recommended a trochus be given priority with recovery assessments of beche-de-mer to continue.
- Paul King recommended a trochus be given priority with recovery assessments of beche-de-mer to continue.
- Francis Pearson recommended a trochus be given priority with recovery assessments of beche-de-mer to continue.
- Mika David recommended a trochus be given priority with recovery assessments of beche-de-mer to continue.
- Grant Leeworthy recommended GIS study for trochus and beche-de-mer.
- Shane Gaddes recommended a trochus be given priority with recovery assessments of beche-de-mer to continue.
- Kila Odo recommended beche-de-mer should be given priority.
- Charles David recommended research into re-seeding of beche-de-mer stocks should be trialled around Yam Island. He also recommended that funding should be sought for the Ranger program.
- Jim Prescott recommended trochus should be given priority.

The Chair noted general consensus in the working group was for priority to be given to trochus research although beche-de-mer research also needs to be conducted, possibly in conjunction with each other. The Chair also noted that Traditional Inhabitants need to be involved in any future research.

Charles David also raised the issue of re-seeding beche-de-mer stocks on Warrior Reef. Erik Raudzens requested Grant Leeworthy to present the results of re-seeding trials conducted elsewhere in Australia and overseas for the next working group.

<p><b>ACTION</b> – Grant Leeworthy to supply results of re-seeding trials for beche-de-mer for the next working group</p>
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The Chair noted that due to time constraints the working group would update the agenda to ensure compliance issues were raised. Items missed during this working group would be raised at the next meeting.

### **Item 8.2 Update on international compliance**

Chris Parry presented an update of AFMA Compliance issues to the working group. He stated that there were 95 apprehensions since the beginning of the year with three of those involving PNG nationals. He noted Canberra is aware of the Warrior Reef problem and has committed an increase in resources with two ACVs constantly being available in Torres Strait. He expects the level of resources to last for the next 18 months.

Francis Pearson queried which contact numbers were relevant for sighting of non-domestic illegal fishing.

Chris Parry stated that John Marrington or he could be contacted or Customs Border Protection Command on 1300 2878667.

Paul King stated that it would be beneficial to gather information on whether illegal fishers were from PNG treaty villages. He suggested that management should be in contact with treaty villages to educate and inform them of the issues.

Chris Parry stated that such information was being gathered and AFMA Compliance has made a commitment to visit treaty villages to raise awareness of illegal fishing issues.

Charles David queried the processing of illegal PNG fishers and the progress of legal proceedings.

Chris Parry stated that at the present AFMA could only undertake legislative forfeitures which involved taking fishing gear from PNG fishers and sending them home. He stated AFMA was working on the ability to seize boats which would be rectified by the end of the year. There continues to be problems with facilities to hold PNG nationals on Horn Island as there are concerns with health issues of PNG nationals and the potential spread of diseases.

Jim Prescott noted that PNG Fisheries had agreed to fund five to seven co-ordinated patrols with AFMA in 2008.

### **Working group conclusions**

The Chair requested that the working group consider the issues raised during the process of the meeting so that any additional action items could be initiated or recommendations to the PZJA, Management Advisory Committee of the Scientific Advisory Committee could be recorded.

**Recommendation to the PZJA** – The working group recommended that the PZJA note that significant illegal fishing on the Warrior Reef complex by PNG fishers is impeding the recovery of beche-de-mer stocks. The working group has been updated on increased resources being allocated to combat illegal fishing in this region

**Recommendation to the SAC** -The working group recommends that the SAC notes there is need for the assessment of trochus stocks and an assessment of the recovery of beche-de-mer stocks and that such research being given priority. Any proposed research must incorporate Traditional Inhabitant knowledge and input.

**ACTION** – Tim Skewes to recommend a precautionary TAC for deepwater redfish which includes:

1. A mechanism to identify deepwater redfish from surf redfish
2. A mechanism to close the fishery when quota is reached

## Summary of Action Items

Action Item	Responsibility
Chairperson to investigate the possibility of nominating a TSRA employee, with suitable experience, to act as chairperson for future HCWG meetings.	Toshio Nakata
QLD DPI to brief the working group on individual license conditions for TPC and TVH beche-de-mer licences.	Shane Gaddes
AFMA to investigate research needs into to developing Community specific TACs for beche-de-mer which would compliment a voluntary Community initiated harvest strategy.	Erik Raudzens
AFMA and TSRA to conduct Community consultation visits to investigate Community driven harvest strategies before the next working group.	Erik Raudzens and Toshio Nakata
AFMA to seek funding for a workshop on Pearl Fishery issues which is inclusive of all stakeholders.	Erik Raudzens
Grant Leeworthy to supply results of re-seeding trials for beche-de-mer for the next working group	Grant Leeworthy
Tim Skewes to recommend a precautionary TAC for deepwater redfish which includes: 1. A mechanism to identify deepwater redfish from surf redfish 2. A mechanism to close the fishery when quota is reached	Tim Skewes