

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
MEETING ADMINISTRATION Ratification of TSHCWG No. 1 and 2 meeting records (AFMA)	Agenda Item No. 1.1 FOR RATIFYING

PURPOSE:

To **RATIFY** the minutes from TSHCWG meeting 1 and 2.

BACKGROUND:

Due to time constraints at TSHCWG meeting 2, the minutes from TSHCWG 1 were not ratified (See attachment 1.1A). The minutes from TSHCWG 2 were sent to members by Shane Fava on 20 August 2008 and forwarded to CFG members by Toshi Nakata. Nil Comment was received (See Attachment 1.1B).

RECOMMENDATION:

Members **RATIFY** the attached minutes

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Nil

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
MEETING ADMINISTRATION Action Items from TSHCWG #2	Agenda Item No. 1.2 FOR INFORMATION

PURPOSE:

To provide the TSHCWG with an update on the progress relating to Action Items from TSHCWG 2.

BACKGROUND:

#	Action	Champion	Progress
1	Mr Nakata will approach potential candidates for the position as Chair including Kerrod Beattie, George Pitt, Stan Lui and investigate their availability in interest in the position of Chair for the TSHCWG.	Toshi Nakata	Complete – (Agenda Item 1.3)
2	New members of the TSHCWG are to familiarise themselves with the PZJA Fisheries Management Paper No. 1 and to formally acknowledge their roles and responsibilities as a working group members by signing the formal letter of acknowledgement and return to the HCWG secretariat.	New Members	
3	Mr Nakata will approach the TSRA economic development program about providing an update on issues pertaining to capacity building to the TSHCWG or the MAC.	Toshi Nakata	See Agenda Item 3.4
4	All working group members to provide options for employing Traditional Owners to participate in research projects at the next TSHCWG meeting for to participate in research projects.	TPO	Actioned by TPO's at 'impediments' working group forum in Feb 09
5	Mr Skewes to include the recommendations from the TSSAC to the current beche-de-mer research proposal.	T. Skewes	Completed
6	On receiving letters of support from relevant PBCs of participating communities, CSIRO is to visit each community and meet with the PBCs and other community members to discuss the proposed research on trochus and beche-de-mer, the budget and the engagement of Traditional Owners. The PBCs will determine the most appropriate participants for each project (Tim Skewes)	T. Skewes	Completed

7	TSRA is to provide the relevant PBCs with more information on the MTSRF/CSIRO researcher and the proposed research funded by MTSRF on developing harvest strategies with communities.	TSRA	
8	Shane Fava to provide information on why Nyall Ledger's TVH licenses in the beche-de-mer fishery are not transferable.	Shane Fava	Completed
9	That the QDPI&F provide information to the TSFMAC on the arrangements in place for Torres Strait Islander fishers to operate outside the protected zone and reciprocal arrangements for Cape York inhabitants to access the protected zone (Shane Fava).	Shane Fava	Completed
10	Invite an AIMS representative working on the Masig Is sponge farm to the next TSHCWG meeting to give a presentation on Torres Strait sponge, specifically spatial distribution of sponges in the Torres Strait.	TSRA	Will provide update (Agenda Item 2.2)
11	AFMA, DPI and TSRA staff identified available and appropriate courses on indigenous studies/native title for PZJA agency staff.	AFMA, DPI and TSRA	Pending
12	AFMA to seek funding for a dedicated pearl shell workshop to discuss the future of the fishery.	AFMA	Pending budget availability
13	To include an agenda item at the next TSHCWG meeting to discuss removal of the restriction on use of hookah apparatus in the beche-de-mer fishery in the Torres Strait	AFMA	Completed (agenda 3.4)

RECOMMENDATION:

Members **NOTE** the progress on Action Items and provide comment

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Nil

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
MEETING ADMINISTRATION Replacement of Toshi Nakata as Chair of TSHCWG	Agenda Item No. 1.3 FOR DECISION

PURPOSE

That the TSHCWG **AGREE** to **RECOMMEND** to the PZJA that Mr. Kenny Bedford replace Mr. Toshi Nakata as Chair of the Torres Strait Hand Collectable Working Group (TSHCWG).

BACKGROUND

On 28 August 2007 the PZJA appointed Mr. Toshio Nakata as the Chair of the TSHCWG.

On 17 July 2008, at TSHCWG No.2, 'The Working Group **AGREED** that an independent chair was preferred to allow for Mr Nakata to support the CFG members effectively.' (TSHCWG 2.1.3.2)

Mr. Nakata's role as chair was conducted as an employee of TSRA. Mr. Nakata retired from TSRA's service in early 2009, thus ceasing his role as Chair of the TSHCWG.

In July 2009 TSRA approached Councillor Kenny Bedford whom has agreed to Chair TSHCWG No. 3.

RECOMENDATION

That TSSAC **AGREE** to **RECOMMEND** to the PZJA that Mr. Kenny Bedford is appointed as the permanent Chair of the TSHCWG replacing Mr. Toshio Nakata.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Travel Costs for Mr. Bedford to attend TSHCWG's from Erub will need to be considered. Previous Chair was a Thursday Island resident; hence there were nil travel costs associated with his attendance.

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
REPORTS TSSAC Update (AFMA)	Agenda Item No. 2.1 FOR INFORMATION

PURPOSE

To provide the TSHCWG with an update on the current research/research related projects coming from the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee.

BACKGROUND

The 49th meeting of the Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) was held at Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, Brisbane on 25 June 2009.

TSSAC Strategic Research Plan and 2009 Operational Plan

The Strategic Research Plan for Torres Strait Fisheries has been developed to provide direction and guidance on Torres Strait fisheries research to the PZJA, stakeholders and research providers. The Plan will also ensure the research evaluation process undertaken by the TSSAC is conducted in a transparent, strategic and robust way. It describes the principles, administration and funding aspects of the Torres Strait fisheries research program and identifies the key factors influencing Torres Strait research needs and presents the six research themes.

An Operational Plan for Torres Strait Fisheries has been developed to complement the Strategic Research Plan and outlines the assessment criteria used by the TSSAC to prioritise research projects and lists priority research areas.

A Strategic Research Plan and the Operational Plan were adopted by the Committee subject to minor amendments. The Strategic Plan and 2009 Operational Plans will now be distributed to interested parties and posted on the PZJA website.

Funding cycle beginning 2010/2011

The Committee adopted a process for attracting and considering research proposals for the year beginning 2010/2011 financial year based predominately on the 09/10 finding cycle.

The call for pre-proposals will be distributed via advertisements on the NRM Jobs website, Torres News, targeted emails, PZJA website and other means as appropriate from the 31 July 2009 with Pre-proposals to be submitted before 30 August 2009.

International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum

There was strong support for a proposed International Indigenous Commercial Fisheries Forum to:

- 1) hold a three day international forum in the first half of 2010 in Cairns, Queensland. The aims of the forum would be to:
 - Share experiences of commercial indigenous fisheries management from around the world
 - Assess what type of models/agreements have worked and why
 - Discuss and develop sustainable structures for indigenous commercial fisheries development and management, including aquaculture.
- 2) Host a one day workshop to build upon the forum experiences to develop ways forward for Torres Strait fisheries.

TSRA Board role in TSSAC research

The TSRA Board has requested that they be given the opportunity approve all research projects to be delivered in Torres Strait. The TSSAC discussed and agreed that the Committee was an expert independent committee of the PZJA and as such, it would not be appropriate for TSSAC recommendations for funding to be dependent on TSRA Board approval.

TSRA currently sits as a permanent observer on the TSSAC and has input in assessing proposals. The TSSAC will continue to provide pre-proposals and full proposals to TSRA to inform them of research being considered by the TSSAC, and those that the TSSAC support for funding. TSRA input will continue to be considered as important part of the current, agreed TSSAC assessment procedures.

Supported research proposals

- 1) Population structure and genetic composition of green turtles sold in the Daru market

Principle Investigator: Dr Mark Hamann. JCU

Aim: determine the genetic composition of turtles in Daru markets. This will allow an estimate of the percent of turtles sold at the markets that are derived from Australian breeding turtles.

The Committee agreed to recommend the proposal for funding by AFMA provided some amendments are incorporated regarding more detail being provided on discussions with PNG and clarification on how the proposed workshops are going to extend the outcomes of the project.

Outputs: Publications and workshops to be held in Daru and Torres Strait.

Completion date: December 2010

Funded research proposals

- 1) Estimation of Total Allowable Catch and Stock Abundance Surveys of the Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster Fishery – 2008

Principle Investigator: Mr Darren Dennis. CSIRO

Aim: Assess the status of rock lobster stocks in Torres Strait and recommend a Total Allowable Catch for the fishery.

Draft results from 2008 stock assessment was discussed with the TRL RAG in March 2009.

The total catch of lobster for 2008 in the Australian jurisdiction of the Torres Strait was 285 tonnes, or 56% of the Australian TAC (506 tonnes) recommended for 2008. This catch was down from 2007 when approximately 82% of the Australian TAC was taken.

The 2008 rock lobster surveys conducted by CSIRO showed a much lower than average numbers of one-year-old lobsters. The 2009 catch which will target these lobsters is therefore predicted to be below the long-term average. With this in mind, the TRL RAG decided that, if a Total Allowable Catch was set for 2009, it would also need to be low. It recommended an initial estimate for a notional 2009 TAC for Australian fishers of 303 tonnes.

The outlook for 2010 does appear more promising. Based on CSIRO estimates of numbers of adult lobster in the fishery in mid 2007 (which spawn and provide larvae to the fishery in 2010), the TRL RAG is recommending the TAC for the Australian sector be set higher at 457 tonnes in 2010. A mid-season survey was completed in May 2009 with results to be provided to the TRL RAG in October 2009.

Outputs: Final report submitted to the TRL RAG members for comment in July 09 and presentations to the TRL RAG.

End Date: October 2009.

2) Cultural Protocols

Aim: Develop a plain-English, practical, single source, web-based document that provides guiding protocols specific to Torres Strait for researchers working in the Torres Strait.

Professor Martin Nakata, the consultant developing the *Cultural Protocols for Researchers Working in the Torres Straits*, has conducted a literature search of existing information on international and national protocols for working with Indigenous people. Prof Nakata visited hub communities from 13 -17 July to discuss these findings to incorporate the individual Communities' aspirations regarding researcher engagement and protocols.

Professor Nakata has emphasised that principles would be built on areas of common interest (eg sustainability of resources) and Torres Strait Islanders and researchers need to ensure the protocols are efficient and enhance benefit to all stakeholders.

Outputs: Down-loadable document which can be utilised by researchers to help them plan and guide their research in the Torres Straits

Completion Date: September 2009.

3) Harvest Strategies for Hand Collectables

Discussed in Agenda Item 4

RECOMMENDATION:

The TSHCWG Notes:

1. The update on the current research/research related projects coming from the Torres Strait Scientific Committee.

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
REPORTS Strategic Assessments of beche de mer and trochus (AFMA)	Agenda Item No. 2.3 FOR INFORMATION

PURPOSE

That the TSHCWG **NOTE** the content of the current TSTF and TSBDMF WTO endorsements issued by DEWHA.

BACKGROUND

In order to commercially export trochus and beche de mer harvested in the TSTF and TSBDMF it is necessary to maintain a World Trade Organisation (WTO) endorsement by undergoing a Strategic Assessment by the Department of Environment Waters Heritage and Arts (DEWHA). Both the TSTF and the TSBDMF maintain current WTO endorsements which are to expire in November 2011.

Both reports are attached (See Attachments 2.3 A and B).

RECOMMENDATION

The TSHCWG **REVIEW** the DEWHA Strategic Assessment Reports for TSTF and TSBDMF

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT Research results: 'Sustainable Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectable Fisheries' (CSIRO)	Agenda Item No. 3.1 FOR NOTING

PURPOSE

That the TSHCWG **NOTE** the results of the CSIRO stock abundance survey, 'Sustainable Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectable Fisheries' (P.I. Tim Skewes).

BACKGROUND

In order to compile baseline stock abundance data to assist the development of future Community Based Harvest Strategies (CBHS), The Torres Strait Scientific Advisory Committee (TSSAC) recommended the above mentioned research project for funding by AFMA in November 2008. The Principle Investigator was Tim Skewes from CSIRO. The TSSAC ensured that the project incorporated proper community consultation, approval and involvement of Torres Strait Islanders throughout the project. The aim of the projects was to:

1. To assess the size, status and spatial structure of trochus and sea cucumber (except sandfish) stocks in Torres Strait which will be utilised in developing adaptive co-management framework, and
2. to develop a decision support tool that can be used for the development of spatial management strategies and for community consultation.

Extensive Community consultation was performed by AFMA and CSIRO in the form of:

- a. Community visits by AFMA and TSRA,
- b. faxes to all relevant PBC Chairs and TSIRC Councillors,
- c. followed by phone calls to each Chair and Councillor explaining project and answering questions,
- d. followed by Community visits to Warraber, Masig and Ugar,
- e. followed by further Community visits during the survey.

The project also included the training of 12 Torres Strait Islanders, nominated by their respective CFG's, in benthic sampling, in order to assist them in future monitoring of their reefs, and also, for some of the attendees to take part in the upcoming surveys. The training took place over two days at the AFMA Office on Thursday Island and was well received by all trainees. The trainees were paid for their attendance.

The survey took place between 19 to 28 March 2009. Some participants of the workshop (Mer and Erub Islands) also assisted CSIRO researchers during

the survey. The survey was designed to assess the status of trochus and all commercial sea cucumber species, with particular interest in the two currently closed species, black teatfish and surf redfish.

Results of the survey, plus release of the decision support tool will be delivered personally by Tim Skewes at the upcoming Torres Strait Hand Collectable Working Group on the 5th and 6th of August 2009. This information will assist in the development of the upcoming CBHS.

RECOMENDATION

That TSSAC **NOTE** the results of the CSIRO stock abundance survey

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT Proposal for a Warrior Reef Survey (CSIRO)	Agenda Item No. 3.2 FOR NOTING

PURPOSE

That the TSHCWG **NOTE** the development of a proposal by CSIRO to perform a beche de mer survey of Warrior Reef.

BACKGROUND

Following concerns of serious resource depletion and overexploitation of sandfish (*Holothuria scabra*) stocks on Warrior Reef, five fishery independent surveys have been commissioned to assess the level of reduction in sandfish abundance in 1995/1996, 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2005. A 'zero' TAC was set for this species following the 1998 survey which reported that the remaining stock on Warrior Reef was approximately 80% less than in November 1995.

This project would be to again carry out a relative density survey of the sandfish population of Warrior Reef in late 2009. The continued monitoring of the density and dynamics of the depleted sandfish population is essential to developing an understanding of the recovery dynamics of this, and other sea cucumber populations. This survey will also help determine recovery targets for renewed fishing of this species.

The survey would be carried out during the 2009 pre-season rock lobster survey, providing efficiencies to project costs and keeping charter costs to a minimum. The survey would be conducted in accordance to surveys undertaken in previous years and would include involvement of Traditional owners in the project design and survey.

This survey will be conditional on receiving Torres Strait Islander approval and on securing the necessary funding.

RECOMENDATION

That TSHCWG **NOTE** the progress of this proposal.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT Livelihood benefits of co-management of hand collectable fisheries in the Torres Strait (Alifereti Tawake)	Agenda Item No. 3.3 FOR NOTING

PURPOSE

That the TSHCWG **NOTE** the interim results of the above mentioned research project by Principle Investigator Alifereti Tawake

BACKGROUND

PhD Candidate, Alifereti Tawake is the Principle Investigator of the research project, 'Livelihood benefits of co-management of hand collectable fisheries in the Torres Strait'.

In late 2008, through the TSRA board, Torres Strait communities were asked if they wanted to become involved in this project. The two communities that have expressed a keen interest in being involved are Darnley and Warraber. The first consultation visit was conducted in February, 2009 by Vic and Alifereti to introduce the project. The CSIRO team have also conducted a community monitoring training and a stock assessment survey in March. The outcomes from this work will provide a basis for other communities that wish to pursue a co-management approach to fisheries management in the Torres Strait.

This project aims to test an adaptive co-management framework approach for trochus and beche-de-mer (i.e. managed by the government and the communities) in two Torres Strait Island communities. The project will test the success of co-management in terms of social, economic, cultural and ecological outcomes for Torres Strait Islanders.

Alifereti Tawake will give a briefing regarding some of the interim results from the project. This will assist the working group when discussing agenda item 4.2, 'Opportunities for Development.'

RECOMENDATION

That TSHCWG **NOTE** the interim results from the Tawake research project

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT Marketing Opportunities	Agenda Item No. 3.4 FOR DISCUSSION

PURPOSE

That the TSHCWG **DISCUSS** opportunities for the sustainable economic development of the Torres Strait Hand Collectable Fisheries

BACKGROUND

There has been NIL recorded catch data in the TSBDMF for 2008/2009. The PZJA has a mandate under the Torres Strait Treaty to ensure the optimum utilisation of Protected Zone commercial fisheries. (Article 21, Torres Strait Treaty). To ensure the PZJA fulfils this obligation the TSHCWG should discuss the following possible avenues to ensure this fishery is sustainably utilised to its full potential:

- Lifting of the current ban on the used of 'underwater breathing apparatus (FMN 54) to facilitate fishing of deeper dwelling species.
- Development of a business plan to more fully exploit currently underexploited species.
- Individual TAC's for the 80 ton all inclusive quota for 'other' species of Sea Cucumber.

RECOMENDATION

That TSHCWG **DISCUSS** the possible means to more fully utilise the fishery

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
COMMUNITY BASED HARVEST STRATEGIES DEWHA RECOMMENDATIONS	Agenda Item No. 4.1 FOR INFORMATION

PURPOSE

That the TSHCWG **NOTE** the DEWHA recommendations from the Strategic Assessments of the TSTF and TSBDMF.

BACKGROUND

In order to commercially export trochus and beche de mer harvested in the TSTF and TSBDMF it is necessary to maintain a World Trade Organisation (WTO) endorsement by undergoing a Strategic Assessment by the Department of Environment Waters Heritage and Arts (DEWHA). Both the TSTF and the TSBDMF maintain current WTO endorsements which are to expire in November 2011. DEWHA issues a number of recommendations during the Strategic Assessment process which the PZJA endeavour to comply with in order to ensure they maintain the WTO endorsements.

DEWHA has accepted AFMA's recommendation (and that of the TSHCWG) that the development of Community Based Harvest Strategies will address a large number of DEWHA recommendations, specifically recommending the following (NOTE: Recommendations are the same for TSTF and TSBDMF):

- PZJA to develop and finalise the harvest strategy for the TSBDMF/TSTF with objectives, performance indicators and performance measures appropriate to the fishery by 30 June 2010.
 - a. The harvest strategy should also implement measures to prevent localise depletion, and
 - b. incorporate a rebuilding strategy for overfished species.
- PZJA to undertake appropriate research on target species in the TSBDMF to inform the setting of sustainable catch levels through the harvest strategy. Research should focus on providing reliable biomass estimates and where possible also:
 - a. address key gaps in the understanding of the biology and ecology of bêche-de mer, and
 - b. provide an assessment of the ecosystem impacts of the fishery in the Torres Strait.

RECOMMENDATION

The TSHCWG **NOTE** the current DEWHA recommendations in regards to developing Community Based Harvest Strategies.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Cost of developing harvest strategies

TORRES STRAIT HAND COLLECTABLE WORKING GROUP	Meeting 3 5-6 August 2009
COMMUNITY BASED HARVEST STRATEGIES Opportunities for Development	Agenda Item No. 4.2 FOR DISCUSSION

PURPOSE

That the TSHCWG **DISCUSS** their Communities aspirations for how they would like the Community Based Harvest Strategies to be developed and implemented, and **DISCUSS** the proposed process of developing Community Based Harvest Strategies and DISCUSS

BACKGROUND

Community Based Harvest Strategies (CBHS) are intended to incorporate traditional practice and knowledge into the management arrangements of these fisheries.

At Torres Strait Hand Collectable Fisheries Working Group No. 1, the working group agreed that AFMA was to investigate research needs into to developing Community specific TACs for beche-de-mer which would compliment a voluntary CBHS. In addition the working group agreed AFMA and TSRA were to conduct Community consultation visits to investigate CBHS before the next working group.

Research to formulate baseline stock abundance for the formulation of CBHS was conducted by CSIRO in early 2009. Community consultations visits were conducted by AFMA and TSRA regarding Hand Collectable fisheries issues and CBHS from 10-13 June 2008.

Options to be included in individual CBHS may include, but are not limited to:

- Community specific TAC's by species,
- Recovery strategies for currently closed species,
- Rotational Harvest (prevention of localised depletions),
- Lifting of ban on use of hookah,
- Monitoring plan, and
- Data sharing agreements with AFMA/CSIRO

It is AFMA's intention to contract a Consultant to assist Torres Strait Communities with the development of their harvest strategies. The draft timeline is as follows:

1. CSIRO deliver results from TSSAC recommended project 'Sustainable Harvest Strategies for the Torres Strait Hand Collectable Fisheries'	5 August 2009
2. Provide harvest strategy options to Community stakeholders	6 August 2009
3. Proactively seek consultant to submit pre-proposal to the TSSAC for consideration at October SAC	August

4. Research harvest strategy options and consult with successful champions of relevant harvest strategies	August-September 2009
5. Prepare harvest strategy options for Community.	30 September 2009
5. Present paper to MAC (provided we have TSHCWG agreement) seeking endorsement to draft revised FMN 54 by revoking section 8 – Thus allowing use of underwater breathing apparatus to collect beche de mer (on the condition it is endorsed by the PZJA)	October 2009 (Next TSFMAC)
6. Site visits to Communities. Present Options. Train Communities in decision support tool use. Assist Community to decide upon Harvest strategy options	October-November 2009
7. Present DRAFT Harvest Strategy to Community for comment/feedback at TSHCWG 4 in Thursday Island	15 February 2010
8. Develop MOU with AFMA legal (will govern framework harvest strategy sits in – covering traditional property rights, data sharing, etc.)	15 April 2010
9. Present FINAL Harvest Strategy to Community for endorsement	May 2010
10. MOU/Harvest Strategy prepared for signing at next PZJA meeting	30 June 2010

RECOMMENDATION

The TSHCWG:

- a. **NOMINATE** their Community for development of CBHS,
- b. **NOTE** the proposed timeline, and
- c. **DISCUSS** options to be included in their individual CBHS.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

AFMA will endeavour to cover costs with annual hand collectable budget and AFMA Research Funds (TSSAC recommended funding). Additional funds may be necessary and will consult with stakeholders if need arises.