



Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Northern Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee (NORMAC) 81 Minutes

22 February 2018

Brisbane Riverview Hotel

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Attendance

Name	Membership (type i.e. chair)
Stuart Richey	NORMAC Chair
David Carter	Industry member
Greg Albert	Industry member
Ron Earle	Industry member
Ian Knuckey	Research member
Steve Bolton	AFMA member
Gabrielle Miller	NORMAC EO
Annie Jarrett	Invited participant
Trevor Hutton	Observer
Phil Robson	Observer
Andy Prendergast	Observer
Adrienne Laird	Observer
Brian van Wick	Observer
Ian Butler	Observer, NPF Manager, NPRAG AFMA member

1 Preliminary business

Because you will only have one Heading 1, the numbering starts with Heading 2 - numbered.

1.1 Chairs opening remarks

The Chair opened the meeting at 8.30am (EST) at the Riverview Hotel in Brisbane on 22 February 2017. The Chair welcomed Gabrielle Miller as the NORMAC EO. Apologies were noted from the Environment member Claire van der Geest, the Queensland representative Darren Roy and Arthur Raptis an Industry member. The Chair welcomed Phil Robson who was sitting in for Arthur Raptis. Ian Butler - the new AFMA NPF Manager and AFMA NPRAG member - was welcomed as an observer.

1.2 Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without change noting that Ron Earle would be leaving at 2.30pm and that, depending on how the meeting was progressing, some items may be moved forward. The usual NORMAC self-assessment report would not be discussed as the results of the recent survey were still being finalised.

1.3 Declaration of interests

The Chair called for declarations of interest to be made by the group in relation to any pecuniary or other interests relevant to the agenda. Each person in membership groups left the room while interests and involvement in the meeting were discussed. The AFMA

member noted that NORMAC was not being asked to make recommendations that could benefit any of the industry members this time. It was noted that the broodstock permit tender process was now run by NPF Industry, as part of NPF's co-management contract but NPF do not have any pecuniary interest in the operations.

The Scientific member and CSIRO observers left the room while their interests in item 9 Research Proposals were discussed. It was decided that the scientific member and observer's input would be beneficial to the discussion but that the CSIRO observer would leave the room while a recommendation was made.

1.4 Minutes from previous meeting

It was noted that the Minutes from the February 2017 meeting were accepted out of session and had been published on the AFMA website

1.5 Actions arising

The Chair addressed the action items and updated NORMAC on progress. The Chair noted that the letter to GrowNorth was on hold pending outcomes from the Northern Waters Development research project, which would be presented at item 2.5. The AFMA member informed NORMAC that the draft Management Plan was on hold until the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy and Bycatch Policy were in place noting that the policies should be released by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources for another round of consultation shortly.

1.6 Correspondence received/sent

The list provided under item 1.6 was noted

2 Reports and updates

2.1 NPF Industry Report

Industry provided an update on the 2017 season. The MAC noted that the tiger season was poor compared to previous years with only half the catch of 2016. Tiger prawn catch was reduced across the entire fishery. Brown tiger prawns appeared to be more impacted. Red-legged banana prawn catch in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf was better than in the last 2 years when effort was low. Red Endeavour Prawns were of a good size, with 15% of the catch at U/10. Red tail endeavour catch increased in mid-August and was sustained through to the end of the second season.

Industry noted the domestic price for tiger prawns was higher than previous years despite smaller size. The increase in price was attributed to lower market supply. The white spot outbreak and the ban on imports created a shortfall in the domestic market. Whilst the domestic price increased, the offshore price of tiger prawns remained similar to previous years. Fuel price was on average \$0.64 per litre.

Industry noted that branding and brand recognition, e.g. Love Australia Prawns, Skull Island or MSC certification, were making NPF product sought after in the market. The group also discussed downsides to brand recognition such as brand theft and association

of the brand with inferior product resulting in decreases in faith in the brand from consumers. As the reputation of NPF prawns and consumer demand for the product increases, brand security will become a more important issue. Options for increasing traceability of a product were noted, including using block chain technology; DNA analysis and trace element analysis to determine where the product was caught. NORMAC noted that there are a number of projects investigating some of these options.

Industry noted that there has been some trading in vessels and SFRs. Questions were raised regarding the mandatory reporting of sale price for SFRs in GoFish. It is unclear who is responsible for reporting the sale price – seller or buyer. This is important as 1: the seller may no longer operate in the Commonwealth fleet and may not be inclined to report and 2: when multiple SFRs or a mix of gear and boat SFRs and vessel are sold, the buyer and seller have valued each component differently. It is also unclear why the data is being requested and given that it is mandatory to report the price, what the consequence of not reporting would be. Ian Butler responded to the queries stating that the intention is for the seller to report the sale price. For sales as package deals there is a check box in GoFish if the price is an estimate. This can be checked in the case of package deals or other situations when the exact price is uncertain. The data is being collected so that AFMA can understand how management decisions may impact the SFR trading. It was important, therefore that the data could be properly defined and used in this respect. NPF noted that the NPF is a very stable fishery, SFRs are generally less traded and not being quota fishery, trading is less impacted by management decision. Ian Butler stated that he will provide the feedback from Industry to the relevant area at AFMA and he is happy to answer questions that may arise in the future.

<p>ACTION: AFMA to confirm who is responsible for reporting the sale price of SFRs and what the data is being used for.</p>
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NPF Industry had a good year and celebrated some successes. The NPF was re-certified by the MSC for 5 years with only 3 conditions attached, two relating to Red Endeavour Prawns and one to Red-legged Banana Prawns. NPRAG have begun examining management/sustainability issues highlighted in the MSC client action plan which will need to be addressed over the next 4 years. NPF thanked AFMA and the NPRAG, particularly Ian Knuckey and Trevor Hutton, for their efforts during the re-certification process. NPF Industry won the Environment Award at the Queensland Seafood Industry Awards, and were runners up in the National Seafood Industry Awards for innovations in bycatch reduction, including the Bycatch Reduction Strategy. NPF thanked the AFMA Communications team for their work spreading the word about these achievements.

NPF provided an update on their co-management obligations. The Crew Member Observer program continued to grow with 13-14 CMOs working across the fleet. During 2017 nearly 4000 shots were monitored by CMOs for TEPs and at-risk species. The catch and effort data, and economic and gear survey data have been reconciled and provided to CSIRO. Approximately 75% of the NPF fleet responded to the surveys. In addition to the NPF survey, some operators have received a gear survey from AFMA. The Chair stated that he had also received a survey form from AFMA for his vessels. It seemed likely that AFMA were updating the gear information for all Commonwealth vessels. Ian Knuckey

informed the MAC that an industry-based gear survey is also being conducted by the Commonwealth Fisheries Association. It was suggested that three different gear surveys are unnecessary and that some coordination between the surveys is warranted.

ACTION: AFMA to follow up with the relevant bodies and provide the feedback.

2.2 AFMA Management Report

The AFMA member provided a report to NORMAC on the key areas of focus for AFMA, in the NPF and more broadly, for the coming year. In the NPF, the focus is to finalise the Autonomous Adjustment report. AFMA Management will work with the NPFI and NPRAG to finalise the report and submit it to the AFMA Commission for its consideration. As the next Commission meeting is in early March, the report will be submitted to the following meeting in May.

ACTION: AFMA to confirm Commission meeting dates for NPFI.

The AFMA Canberra office lease expires this year and AFMA is likely to move to a new office and is examining how this can improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The AFMA member noted that AFMA is likely to continue to reduce in size over time as initiatives such as co-management and One Fishery grow.

The export approval for the NPF under the EPBC Act expires in January 2019 and the AFMA management team will work on re-accreditation. The NPF ERA is scheduled to take place in the first half of 2018. More information is provided on this at item 7. AFMA is expecting to work with NPFI on the bycatch strategy to realise the 30% reduction, noting some additional work may be needed. AFMA is developing Fishery Management Strategies (FMS) and are close to finalising the FMS model in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery. The FMS is a single documented process that integrates management tools, such as the ERA/M, Harvest and Bycatch strategies and data management plans. The aim of this project is to make fisheries management and decision making processes clearer and more transparent. It is anticipated that having an FMS could be used to achieve accreditation under ISO standards (ISO9000) for the process of managing fisheries should that be of value.

Dr Knuckey noted that the FMS was a large document and would be very expensive for each fishery to produce manually. For the FMS to become cost effective parts of the process would need to be automated. Dr Knuckey asked how the AFMA IT restructure was progressing and whether parts of the FMS could become automated to reduce costs. Steve Bolton replied that an IT upgrade, including developing the eBoat/eFish systems that integrate different types of fishery data is ongoing. Ian suggested that, if the upgrade is planned, then it would make more sense to get the systems to a standard before each fishery is required to pay large amounts of money to manually develop the documents.

The Fisheries Management Standards project, renamed the Fisheries Management Guidelines, continues. The project seeks to describe what attributes and systems a fishery

should have in place to be successfully managed. Whilst the projects are separate, an effective Fishery Management Strategy could be one of the guidelines. The NPF was used as a test case for the Fisheries Management Guidelines project and rated highly against the guidelines.

The future of co-management across Commonwealth fisheries and within the NPF was discussed. Co-management in the NPF has been operating for a number of years, but hasn't progressed as far as it could. Generally, there has been an increase in interest in expanding co-management, and as stated in the AFMA Management update paper, other Commonwealth Fisheries are being assessed to determine how ready the fisheries are to adopt co-management at some level. There are still issues that AFMA are working to resolve including: how co-management bodies can work within Government frameworks from a legal and financial perspective, e.g. How could co-management bodies operate under the PGPA Act framework or how/who will be managing research and acquiring research funding, AFMA as a government organisation has buying power in terms of research.

One of the biggest challenges from an industry perspective is how industry can raise funds for co-management outside of the levy system. There are more restrictions on funding that is collected through the AFMA levy base for co-management activities than privately collected funds. These issues are not considered insurmountable and is something that AFMA is working to resolve. It was noted that research activities could be funded through the AFMA levy base under a co-management arrangement.

The conversation on co-management led to industry suggesting it has perceived some shift in AFMA's culture in dealing with some staff in recent time. The comment was linked to the prospect of significant expansion of co-management and the need for there to be a culture that supports that expansion. The AFMA member suggested that AFMA does have the appetite for more co-management but it is always possible for some individuals in an organisation to reflect a different culture when dealing with industry and this shouldn't be seen as representative. Industry offered the example of an apparent shift towards the use of cameras across all fisheries as an issue of trust and questioned whether this was AFMA policy. The AFMA member indicated that cameras had shown to be very effective in those fisheries with poor quality information but that AFMA does not have a policy position for cameras to be used in all fisheries, however, industry itself may wish to consider the costs and benefits.

Passwords for operators and skippers using e-log systems will need to match their GoFish password. Currently if operators/skippers forget their password they are required to call AFMA to change it resulting in security issues, whereas this will be able to be done online in future. More information will be provided to industry in the coming weeks.

<p>ACTION: AFMA to confirm and inform industry as to a) what exactly is being changed regarding passwords; and b) the reason for the change.</p>

NPFI requested that the Environment report be amended. The report states that the absolute number of "Unidentified sawfish" has increased. However, the proportion of unidentified sawfish being reported compared to the total number has decreased.

ACTION: AFMA to amend the record to reflect the reduction in the proportion of unidentified sawfish being reported.

2.3 NPRAG Update

The NPRAG Chair provided copies of his report to members, noting there were some technical issues with the document prior to the meeting. NORMAC noted that many of the items in the report would be discussed in later items.

During the past year NPRAG reviewed and updated the tiger prawn assessment, including what sensitivity tests would be conducted and updates in the model that CSIRO developed. The RAG are happy to continue improving the model, however, it was decided to spend one year testing the model to ensure any inclusions wouldn't unexpectedly change the output. Fishing power time series analysis, which underpins the assessment model, is currently being updated. There were discussions about revising the species split model, which uses information to determine the spatial and temporal distribution separating brown and tiger prawns. The RAG emphasized that it wants to maintain the quality of the model, which means that improvements will need to be made from time to time.

MSC re-certification has been completed and resulted in a number of issues that need to be resolved. The RAG will be working on how best to conduct an assessment for Red Endeavour Prawns given it was dropped from the assessment model over the last 5 or so years due to a lack of good information.

Two very low effort years in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf (in 2015 and 2016) which made it unviable for an assessment to be conducted on Red-legged bananas for two years uncovered a flaw in the harvest strategy relating to criteria for opening the fishery. The RAG has now conducted an analysis comparing effort in the fishery with a suite of environmental indices (e.g. Southern Oscillation Index, SOI) to postulate which variables had the largest effect on fishing effort and/or catch rates. The RAG has been working on including aspects of the results of these analyses into the harvest strategy control rules for the red legged banana fishery in the JBG. This is also relevant to the MSC re-certification.

David Carter asked whether there was an understanding of possible impacts of seismic activity. Dr Knuckey said that it is hard to pinpoint the effects of seismic, particularly for short-lived species whose recruitment and biomass fluctuate naturally. A recent survey in the Great Australian Bight showed significantly reduced catch of some species that has been linked to seismic activity. Similarly, the scallop fishery in southern Australia is known to be affected by seismic activity. NOPSEMA have been made aware that this is an issue for fisheries. Industry, and others, do have the opportunity to comment on any environmental plans that are released on the NOPSEMA website. It was suggested that if any seismic work is planned within an area of the fishery that stakeholders inform NOPSEMA of the possible negative impact. NOPSEMA use these responses to ensure that the applicants are addressing the concerns of stakeholders. In response to the initial question, the impact of seismic on red legs has not been investigated.

The RAGs input into autonomous adjustments and performance indicators would be discussed in a later item. Generally, the RAG has been working with industry to respond to the requests of the AFMA Commission and NORMAC to finalise the autonomous adjustment and fishery indicators paper.

The RAG Chair stated that based on feedback from the RAG and industry, northern development and water management are the biggest current external threats to the fishery and the potential impact of infrastructure on rivers that potentially impact on the fishery should not be underestimated. This is especially true given the reliance on water flows and temperature to kick start the life cycle of prawns. The RAG has recommended using the CSIRO-developed MICE models (Models of Intermediate Complexity for Ecosystem assessments) that examine the impact of altered flow regimes on the fishery. The RAG also recommended that capacity building to assist industry to provide input into development processes should be included. There is a concern that the potential impact on the fishery or the comments from industry are not always being included in the development of these infrastructure projects.

The MAC noted that an update on the Northern Waters development project is scheduled for later in the meeting and it was decided to discuss RAG opinions and concerns then.

The RAG has discussed broodstock collection and the potential impact on the wider fishery. The number of individuals being collected (9000) is not considered a threat to sustainability. There are however concerns about discarding of target species and TEP species interactions. The data being collected by the broodstock operators has improved and is meeting the RAG's data needs for ongoing assessment.

2.4 Northern Development Update

NORMAC noted a presentation by Dr Hutton reporting on the outcomes of the Northern Waters Development Project led by Rob Kenyon. The PDF of the presentation was provided. The project covered a number of areas including:

- Outlining the legislation that governs water in Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia and in the Commonwealth.
- Detailing the proposed developments in the catchment of the Northern Prawn Fishery, including the current state of the project and proposed infrastructure that could alter flow;
- Described life history of banana prawns and abiotic factors that impact on each stage including "new knowledge";
- Details key research projects, FGARA, NAWRA and NESP, and the key development projects for each jurisdiction;
- Recommended water management protocols to minimise downstream, effects particularly on crustaceans and fish;
- Recommendations for NPF engaging with future water development projects.

Following the presentation, NORMAC and particularly industry, discussed avenues for engaging in the development projects. Previous developments have seemed to occur with little if any consultation either with fisheries managers or with individual companies. A single representative was discussed, someone separate to management and business, who could engage with the development process and advocate for the NPF. The

possibility of working with other potentially impacted fisheries was discussed, such as finfish fisheries in the Gulf. CSIRO suggested that having multiple fisheries involved could add more resources to evaluate the greater ecosystem impacts.

2.5 Jurisdiction update

NORMAC noted an apology from Darren Roy (Queensland representative). The jurisdictional update paper was taken as read.

3 NPM Bycatch paper

Bycatch Reduction Strategy

NORMAC noted an update from NPM on the Bycatch Reduction Strategy implementation plan. The Bycatch Strategy aims to reduce small bycatch across the NPM by 30% over 3 years and is due to be achieved by 2018. Following successful scientific trials, the Kon's Covered Fisheye was approved for use in the NPM in 2017. There was little voluntary uptake but a number of scientific permits were granted for industry to do further tweaking and trialling of the device.

Industry members expressed concern about the current KCF design as it is two metal frames in each net and is a potential OHS threat. Industry modified the approved device and conducted preliminary trials during the 2017 tiger prawn season. These results are promising with a reduction in bycatch of 30-50% and a prawn loss of 2.3-10%. In addition, CSIRO have provided NPM the final report on trials of BRDs in Papua New Guinea. The report suggests that a standard fisheye or square mesh panel (SMP) located at 50-60 meshes will reduce bycatch by 30-40% with 0-5% prawn loss.

Following the success of the preliminary trials and the trials in PNG, NPM intend to conduct scientific trials at the end of the 2018 banana season. Austral, Austfish and WA Seafoods have agreed to provide a boat each for the scientific trials of the modified KCF and the square mesh panel at 50-60 meshes. Following the scientific trials, NPM will review all currently approved BRDs and remove any that don't meet the 30% reduction (determined against the previous standard square mesh panel).

NPM stated implementation of the approved bycatch reduction devices will be staged beginning during the 2018 tiger season. All boats will be required to have an approved BRD installed in 50% of the nets during the 2018 tiger season. From 2019, when fishing for tigers, all nets will have to have an approved BRD installed. The RAG member expressed concerns that implementation had not begun during the three-year strategy period.

<p>ACTION: NPM and AFMA to conduct scientific trials on the single KCF and SMP at the end of the banana season.</p>
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<p>ACTION: NPM to review the current list of BRDs with view to removing any that don't meet the reduction target.</p>
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<p>ACTION: AFMA to work with NPFI to update the gear direction to be implemented for the start of the tiger season 2018.</p>

Sawfish mitigation

Sawfish mitigation

NPFI have been working with CSIRO and operators to improve the identification of sawfish. Sawfish identification guides were developed by NPFI and handed out at the 2017 tiger prawn pre-season briefings. As a result, the proportion of unidentified sawfish being reported has declined.

In addition, CSIRO provided 10 cameras to skippers so that sawfish ID can be validated. Improving the quality of logbook sawfish data will allow CSIRO to use logbook data in sustainability assessments. This is particularly important for the rare species, such as the freshwater sawfish, that may not be seen by the CMOs or AFMA Scientific observers. The program was successful and so far CSIRO have been provided with photographs of 37 sawfish. All individuals were able to be identified to the species levels, including 12 that were recorded in the logbooks as unidentified.

In addition to the photographs, CMOs are collecting tissue samples from sawfish to be included in population genetic studies being conducted by CSIRO.

A project proposal was submitted to FRDC to investigate the use of an electric pulse device to reduce sawfish interactions. The project has been funded and NORMAC look forward to hearing about progress.

The point was made that logbook reporting of TEP interactions is clearly well below the levels reported by CMOs. Whilst the validation and mitigation projects are essential, the logbook reporting of TEPs is mandated by law and needs to be improved to ensure all data sources are well correlated.

4 Autonomous Adjustment

NORMAC noted the history of autonomous adjustment and fishery indicators discussions at previous NORMAC meetings and at the AFMA Commission. The MAC noted the outcomes from the most recent AFMA Commission which considered the NPFI fishery indicators report. The Commission welcomed the report and recognised the effort that NPFI put into developing it. The Commission requested:

- The report be expanded by NPFI to include explanations of each indicator and where appropriate, the relevance to managing fishing capacity, along with what constitutes acceptable ranges for each indicator;
- Further work on the proposed indicators to include an overall summary of the indicators to articulate the broad economic position of the fishery; and
- Further work to clarify industry mitigation responses to keep indicators in the acceptable range.

The minutes relating to autonomous adjustment from the NPRAG December 2017 meeting were provided to NORMAC. NORMAC noted the discussions and the action items listed below:

- NPRAG Chair to provide information to NPFII on how mechanisms of shelving effort have operated in other fisheries;
- CSIRO to add profits back into the assessment model as a base case; and
- NPFII to re-draft the Autonomous Adjustment report and circulate to the RAG and the economic working group before February 2018.

NPFII presented a revised draft of the indicator reports to NORMAC, which had been discussed at the NPFII meeting the day before. Annie Jarrett detailed the changes that have been made to the report and relevant discussions from the NPFII meeting. Major changes include:

- Descriptions for the majority of the indicators have been included. There are still some indicators that are missing, such as profit vs profit at MEY and profit, which will be included in the stock assessment model. These indicators are being developed in collaboration with the NPRAG.
- NPFII discussed including ranges for the indicators. NPFII believe that ranges are not relevant for all of the indicators e.g. maximum number of boats or maximum profit. Including ranges for the indicators could result in too much emphasis being placed on where the fishery sits within the range rather than trends in the fishery, which is the point of the indicators.

NPFII made it clear that, as an industry body, they are unable to force any of their members to adjust in response to declines in trends. At this stage, NPFII does not believe there is a “silver bullet” solution that would be accepted by the AFMA Commission. Instead NPFII intends to present the Commission with a range of response mechanisms. The options would be suitable for a range of scenarios based on the make-up of the fleet. NORMAC discussed in depth a range of options and how the options would work. Some of the options that were discussed include:

- Industry funded buy-back. This could work by NPFII collecting funds from operators and holding on to these funds until required;
- Reverse auctions for shelving boats. Operators would put in a bid for how much money they would accept to not fish for a year or so. The fund for the pay-out would need to come from all SFR holders and likely would come from the levy base as the temporary shelving impacts the entire fleet not only NPFII members;
- Minimum holdings. The Commission had previously stated that a minimum holding was a heavy handed approach and not an ideal solution. Industry have stated that they would be willing to consider a minimum holding if the AFMA Commission would also consider it.

In addition to these mechanisms, NPFII suggest including “yellow” and “red” zones for key indicators. For example, industry has identified that the fleet become inefficient when gear SFRs fall below 6cm which would equate to the red zone. It was suggested that the yellow zone could be when industry would examine the fleet and consider the proposed mechanisms to determine which is most practical. The yellow zone would be a trigger for industry to consider the make-up of the fleet at that time and select the best response

mechanism available. NPFI consider this to be a practical strategy. Currently the fishery is operating below MEY and is in very good (green) condition and unlikely to hit any of the proposed indicators in the short to medium term. Setting up yellow warning zones on key indicators will trigger a response from industry to get the fishery back into the green in a timely way.

ACTION: AFMA to work with NPFI to finalise the report and response to the Commission for the May 2018 Commission meeting.

5 Stretched mesh measuring protocol

The AFMA member provided an overview of reported compliance issues with the TED double flap overlap as reported by industry and AFMA compliance. This issue was discussed at the recent NPRAG and NPFI and AFMA were asked to develop a protocol for measuring the stretched overlap. Ms Laird (NPFI project officer) advised she had looked at some State methods but these would not be suitable for use in the NPF. The AFMA member advised that Compliance are willing to develop a protocol to measure under a set tension, but that this would require resources that are not currently available. Consequently, a protocol would not be ready before the start of tiger season. Phil Robson suggested that, instead of a measuring protocol, that a guide could be developed that states the number of meshes overlapped for each mesh size so that the meshes cannot be stretched past 38cm. NORMAC agreed that this would be a good compromise.

ACTION: Phil Robson to develop a guide in consultation with other industry members and circulate to AFMA Compliance for agreement.

6 Joseph Bonaparte Gulf Red-legged banana harvest strategy rule

NORMAC decided to postpone discussing this item until the harvest strategy control rule had been redrafted and NPRAG had made a recommendation.

7 ERA/ERM

NORMAC noted a presentation and paper from Ian Butler outlining the new ERA process and how it has changed from the previous ERA. NORMAC noted that the NPF last underwent the ERA process in 2012 and that ERAs should be conducted every 5 years. Consequently, the NPF is scheduled to undergo an ERA in the first half of 2018. CSIRO have been contracted to conduct this work and are expected to present the draft report to NPRAG in October and then to NORMAC. Initial reports suggest that there shouldn't be big changes. Dr Knuckey queried whether a sub-committee would be set up to provide feedback to CSIRO during the initial stages of the ERA, e.g. with species classification, to reduce the work load for NORMAC and NPRAG.

ACTION: AFMA to determine whether a sub-committee could be set up as the primary contact for the ERA.

8 Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Act

The AFMA member outlined the recent changes to the Fisheries Legislation so that AFMA are required to give regard to commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishing interests when making management decisions. AFMA is taking a staged approach to implementing the amendments and will initially allow for Indigenous and recreational members on the MACs and RAGs. AFMA is seeking feedback from the MAC on possible issues associated with considering recreational and Indigenous fishing interests.

During discussions the key comments and feedback from NORMAC were:

- It is currently unclear what is meant by “interests”. The MAC have requested that this be clarified and a clear term of reference be provided.
- Concerns were raised that the MAC process could be derailed by new members. The SPF was cited as a case where one interest group was not able to work within the governance rules of the MAC.
- NORMAC asked for guidance on how to appoint an Indigenous member, when the NPF covers 72 different Indigenous groups, 30-40 of which have sea land that overlaps the NPF. NORMAC noted it had previously issued open and ongoing invitations to Indigenous groups adjacent to the NPF fishery. Representatives from these groups have attended the MAC in the past to discuss issues of concern. In addition, NPF liaise with Land Councils in WA, NT and Queensland on a regular basis. Having this open dialogue with the relevant groups has been effective within the NPF.
- A difficulty in bringing any new members is bringing the members up to speed on the history and major issues associated with the fishery. NORMAC recommend that time be spent in capacity building for any new members.

In FMP 1: 4.2.9.2 Criteria dot point 3 “Have the confidence and authority of their stakeholder group to undertake their functions as a MAC member and be prepared to consult with members of their stakeholder group as necessary to effectively contribute to MAC discussions” was identified as being potentially difficult for any one individual to meet particularly given the large number of groups that are adjacent to the NPF.

In FAP 12: 4.2.8.3 “...will be sought publicly and/or targeted from relevant Land Councils”. NORMAC recommend ending the sentence after “will be sought”. NORMAC suggest that targeting one Land Council over another could be problematic.

In FAP12, concern was raised around the inference that the RAG should provide advice “that is consistent with Australian Government fisheries policy”. NORMAC requested clarification as the MACs understanding was that the RAG provided sound advice based on science which was used to inform policy.

The AFMA member advised that the costs associated with non-industry MAC members was funded by AFMA.

9 Research proposals

NORMAC noted that the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) has requested feedback from the MACs and RAGS on research proposals that have been submitted for funding. The ARC received four research proposals that were relevant to the NPF. These proposals were developed in consultation with the NPRAG and are integral to the successful management of the NPF. CSIRO observers were asked to leave the room so that NORMAC could discuss the research proposals. Following a short discussion, NORMAC confirmed that it supports all of the research proposals as being necessary.

10 Other business

NPFI were asked to provide an update on broodstock permits for the upcoming year. NPFI have received a draft order schedule from the prawn farming industry for 2018.

Discussions have begun with businesses that may be interested in participating in the tender process for the broodstock permits. At this stage it is anticipated that there will be 1 boat fishing full time for broodstock and possibly a second boat part time, and that Austfish were also fishing for broodstock on a NPF license outside of the closure areas.

The AFMA member was asked to confirm AFMA's intention with regards to this being the last term for the current NORMAC Chair. At this point, the NORMAC Chair left the room to allow the discussions to continue. The AFMA member confirmed that it is AFMA policy to look for new Chairs after a lengthy term. The current Chair was informed in his letter of appointment that this was expected to be the final term. AFMA is currently conducted the selection process for a new Chair. The current Chair had not reapplied but offered his services as chair if a suitable replacement was not found.

NORMAC noted that this would be the last meeting with Stuart Richey as the Chair. NORMAC extend sincere thanks to Stuart for 16 years of outstanding service to the fishery, providing clarity and stability through extraordinary changes the fishery had been through under his watch. The Chair thanked NORMAC for the kind words and officially closed the meeting.

Signed (Chairperson):

List of Attachments

- 1) NORMAC Annotated Agenda
- 2) NORMAC Declared conflicts of Interest

Attachment 1

Draft Agenda

Northern Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee (NORMAC) meeting

22 February 2017

8.30 am – 5.00 pm (Eastern Standard Time)

Title	Presenter	Outcome
1. Preliminary Business <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Chair's opening remarks Apologies: Claire van der Geest(ii) Adoption of Agenda(iii) Declaration of interests(iv) Minutes February 2017 meeting(v) Actions arising(vi) Correspondence sent/received(vii) MAC Self-assessment	Chair	Noting/Discussion
2. Reports/ Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) NPF Industry Report(ii) AFMA Management Report(iii) NPRAG update(iv) Northern Development update(v) Queensland update	NPFI AFMA NPRAG Chair CSIRO Qld	
Morning Tea		
3. NPF Bycatch Reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Update on modified KCF trials(ii) Future gear requirements <p><i>Outcome: NORMAC to discuss NPF gear requirements, with regard to the NPFI Bycatch Strategy, and make a recommendation.</i></p>	AFMA/NPFI	Recommendation
4. Autonomous Adjustments <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Outcome from AFMA Commission meeting(ii) Re-drafted Autonomous Adjustments report(iii) Comments from NPRAG and AFMA Economic Working Group	AFMA/NPFI	Discussion

Title	Presenter	Outcome
<i>Outcome: NORMAC to consider NPRAG advice</i>		
Lunch		
<p>5. Stretched mesh measuring protocol</p> <p>(i) Suggested protocol for standardising measurement of stretched meshes in TEDs</p> <p><i>Outcome: NORMAC to agree to the standard protocol for measuring stretched meshes</i></p>	AFMA/NPFI	Recommendation
<p>6. JBG Red-legged Banana prawn harvest strategy rule</p> <p>(i) CSIRO to present the proposed Red-leg harvest strategy rule</p> <p>(ii) NPRAG recommendations</p> <p><i>Outcome: NORMAC to discuss NPRAG recommendations</i></p> <p>NOTE: This item may become a recommendation on the harvest strategy rule depending on whether the necessary changes are made to the HSR in time for NORMAC</p>	CSIRO/AFMA	Discussion
Afternoon Tea		
<p>7. ERA/ERM</p> <p>(i) Updating the ERA/ERM</p> <p>(ii) Harvest Strategy Policy</p> <p>(iii) Fisheries Management Strategy</p> <p>(iv) Timeline for the process</p>	AFMA	Noting/Discussion
<p>8. Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017</p> <p>(i) Overview of the Amendment</p> <p>(ii) Implementation process</p> <p>(iii) Implications for NORMAC</p>	AFMA	Noting
9. ARC Research Proposals	AFMA	Comment
10. Other business/ next meeting	Chair	Noting

Attachment 2

NORMAC Declared Conflicts of Interest

Participant	Membership	Interest declared
Stuart Richey	NORMAC Chair	NORMAC Chair, Torres Strait Prawn MAC Chair. No pecuniary interest
David Carter	Industry member	NPF Statutory Fishing Right (SFR) holder, interested in the successful management of a profitable and sustainable fishery
Greg Albert	Industry member	NPF SFR holder, interested in the successful management of a profitable and sustainable fishery
Ron Earle	Industry member	NPF SFR holder, interested in the successful management of a profitable and sustainable fishery
Ian Boot	Industry member	Managing Director of Austfish, a company which has SFR holdings in the fishery.
Ian Knuckey	Research member	Scientific member on NORMAC and independent Chair of the Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group (NPRAG). Specific interests outlined in Attachment 3
Steve Bolton	AFMA member	AFMA employee. No pecuniary interest.
Gabrielle Miller	NORMAC EO	NORMAC EO and AFMA employee. No pecuniary interest
Annie Jarrett	Invited participant	CEO of NPF Industry Pty Ltd (NPFII). No pecuniary interest in relation to holding NPF SFRs. MSC Stakeholder Council Member, Director of MSC Asia Pacific, Chair of the Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries (ACPF)
Trevor Hutton	Observer	CSIRO employee. Participates in projects related to the NPF that currently receives funding and will seek to receive funding in the future
Phil Robson	Observer	Fleet Manager for company with SFR holdings in the fishery
Andy Prendergast	Observer	Fleet Manager for company with SFR holdings in the fishery

Participant	Membership	Interest declared
Adrienne Laird	Observer	Contractor to NPFI. No pecuniary interest
Ian Butler	Observer	AFMA NPF Manager and NPRAG member. No pecuniary interest.
Brian van Wick	Observer	Employee of a company with SFR holdings in the fishery