



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority



Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC)

MINUTES

16TH MEETING OF TTMAC

02 MAY 2017

AFMA OFFICE

CANBERRA

Agenda Item 1 Preliminaries/matters arising

Agenda Item 1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair, Ms Catherine Sayer, opened the meeting at 8:30 am and welcomed members, invited participants and observers to the 16th meeting of the Tropical Tuna Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC 16). Attendees at TTMAC 16 were:

Members

Ms Catherine Sayer – Chair
Mr Trent Timmiss – AFMA Member
Dr Robert Campbell – Research Member
Mr Terry Romaro OAM – Industry Member
Mr Cathal Farrell – Industry Member
Mr Paul Lavalle – Industry Member
Mr Pavo Walker – Industry Member
Mr Grahame A Williams OAM – Recreational/Charter Fishing Member

Invited Participants

Mr Gary Heilmann – Industry
Mr Paul Williams – Industry
Mr Ian Bladin – Recreational/Charter Fishing
Mr Phil Bolton – NSW State Government
Mr David Ellis – Tuna Australia

Executive Officer

Ms Natalie Couchman

Observers

Dr Don Bromhead – AFMA
Mr John Skoljarev – Industry (joined the meeting from Agenda Item 3.4)

2. Apologies were received from Mr Brian Jeffriess AM (Invited Participant - Industry) and Mr Peter Trott (Conservation Member). Mr Trott provided written comments and these were stated by the Chair during discussions under the relevant agenda items.
3. The Chair welcomed Mr David Ellis as a new invited participant to TTMAC. TTMAC noted Mr Ellis is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tuna Australia.

Agenda Item 1.2 Adoption of agenda

4. The agenda was adopted by TTMAC with no changes (**Attachment A**).

Agenda Item 1.3 Declarations of interests

5. The Chair stated that as outlined in the *Fisheries Administration Act 1991* and *Fisheries Management Paper 1*, all members and invited participants of TTMAC must declare any interests, not limited to just pecuniary gain, in tropical tuna fisheries as they relate to specific agenda items at the commencement of the meeting (**Table 1**). TTMAC noted that if a member or invited participant discloses an interest in an agenda item, the person must absent themselves from the meeting while TTMAC makes a decision as to whether they can participate in the discussion and in the making of recommendations, or remain absent from the meeting for the agenda item.

Table 1: Declarations of interests for TTMAC members and invited participants.

Name	Declared Interests	Agenda Items Relevant to Declared Interests
Members		
Ms Catherine Sayer	Chair TTMAC, CEO of Food South Australia. No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil
Mr Trent Timmiss	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil
Mr Terry Romaro OAM	Director of a company that owns Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) boat statutory fishing rights (SFRs), minorline SFRs, ETBF longline SFRs, Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) boat SFRs, WTBF longline SFRs, Coral Sea Trawl permit, Western Skipjack Tuna Fishery (WSTF) purse seine permit, Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) purse seine, mid-water trawl SFRs, and SPF quota SFRs. Shareholder of a company that owns shares in a proposal to fish with foreign longliners in the WTBF. Industry member on Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) MAC and industry representative at the Commission for the Conservation of SBT (CCSBT).	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
Mr Paul Lavalle	Director of a company that owns ETBF boat SFRs, minorline SFRs and ETBF quota SFRs for all five species. Director and member of fish receiving co-operative.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
Mr Cathal Farrell	Manager of fish receiving business and holder of an ETBF boat SFR. Director of fishing company that holds boat and quota SFRs.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
Mr Pavo Walker	Owner of several ETBF boat SFRs, and ETBF quota SFRs for all five species. Holds a Coral Sea permit and minorline permit.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
Mr Peter Trott	Principal of an environmental consulting business (Fishlistic), no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries. Member of the Great Australian Bight MAC, Commonwealth Fisheries Research Advisory Committee, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Board Member and Lead Auditor for ME Certification (MEC) in relation to the Walker Seafoods MSC annual audit.	Nil
Dr Robert Campbell	Employee of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), no pecuniary interests in Australian tropical tuna fisheries. Actively engaged in research on the ETBF and WTBF. Principal investigator of the following research projects: <i>Data management</i> ,	Nil

Name	Declared Interests	Agenda Items Relevant to Declared Interests
	<i>provision of fishery indicators and implementation of the harvest strategies for Australia's tropical tuna fisheries; and, Developing innovative approaches to improve CPUE standardisation for Australia's multi-species pelagic longline fisheries.</i>	
Mr Grahame A Williams OAM	Past President of the Game Fishing Association of Australia, Treasurer and Records Officer of the NSW Game Fishing Association and Game Fishing Association Australia Executive Officer. No pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil
Executive Officer		
Ms Natalie Couchman	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil
Invited Participants		
Mr David Ellis	CEO of Tuna Australia (industry association), previously involved in the SA tuna fishery, Managing Director of consultancy company (David Ellis and Associates) and member of the SA Aquaculture Tenure Allocation Board.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
Mr Paul Williams	Director of a company that holds ETBF boat SFR and ETBF longline SFRs, minorline SFRs and a Commonwealth fish receiver permit. Member of TTRAG.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5
Mr Gary Heilmann	Director of companies that hold a fish receiver permit and a Coral Sea permit. Member of TTRAG.	Nil
Mr Ian Bladin	Game Fishing Association of Australia executive, Queensland Game Fishing Association and charter boat owner, no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil
Mr Phil Bolton	Recreational Fisheries Manager at the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil
Observers		
Mr Don Bromhead	Employee of AFMA, no pecuniary interests in tropical tuna fisheries.	Nil

6. The following members and invited participants declared interests under Agenda Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5:
- a. Mr Terry Romaro OAM – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Romaro left the room. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Romaro should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.
 - b. Mr Paul Lavalle – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Lavalle left the room. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Lavalle should be allowed to return for all discussions and

recommendations made under Agenda Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.

- c. Mr Cathal Farrell – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Farrell left the room. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Farrell should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.
- d. Mr Pavo Walker – as per requirements as a MAC member who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Walker left the room. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Walker should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.
- e. Mr David Ellis – as per requirements as a MAC invited participant who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Ellis left the room. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Ellis should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.
- f. Mr Paul Williams – as per requirements as a MAC invited participant who has declared interests under an agenda item, Mr Williams left the room. The remaining members of TTMAC agreed that Mr Williams should be allowed to return for all discussions and recommendations made under Agenda Items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5.

Agenda Item 1.4 Adoption of Minutes from TTMAC 15

- 7. TTMAC adopted the minutes from TTMAC 15 as final and with no amendments.

Agenda Item 1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings

- 8. TTMAC noted the report provided by the AFMA Observer advising of the status of actions arising from previous TTMAC meetings (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Status of actions arising from previous TTMAC meetings.

Item	Meeting raised	Action	Responsibility	Status
1	TTMAC 14 – action arising 1	Inform ETBF fishers of NSW review of bait-fishing arrangements.	NSW State Government Invited Participant	Ongoing. There is in-principle agreement to give all ETBF operators NSW bait access. On 28 April 2017, AFMA received a request from the NSW DPI seeking the circulation of a letter to all ETBF concession owners and operators. The letter concerns a review of NSW bait-fishing arrangements upon which they are seeking stakeholder comment. It was noted that this issue is the responsibility of the NSW DPI, and is for TTMAC to note. AFMA circulated a copy of the NSW DPI letter to TTMAC which was discussed further under Agenda Item 5.1.

2	TTMAC 14 – action arising 2	An explanation of levy allocation to be included in the ETBF management arrangements for the 2017/18 season.	AFMA	Completed. An explanation of the levy allocation has been included in the ETBF management arrangements booklet for the 2017/18 season.
3	TTMAC 14 – action arising 3	A change to the WTBF shark trip limits from per trip to per day to be investigated and discussed with the WA Government.	AFMA	Ongoing. The WA Department of Fisheries is currently undertaking a review of their shark management arrangements. Most recently, in February 2017, the WA Department of Fisheries held a workshop on future directions for the Northern Shark Fisheries. Industry and AFMA attended. AFMA will continue to engage with the Department on this issue, but progress is unlikely until the review is completed.
4	TTMAC 15 - action arising 1	Letter to be sent to the AFMA Commission regarding TTMAC Member concerns over the 2017/18 Yellowfin TACC decision and need for more adaptive management of species which exhibit inter-annual variations and large episodic events. Letter to be circulated to members for approval out-of-session before being submitted.	TTMAC Chair	No longer required. Discussed further under Agenda Item 5.4.
5	TTMAC 15 – action arising 2	AFMA to work with Tuna Australia to look at options to improve overcatch and quota accessibility and flexibility for the ETBF.	AFMA and Tuna Australia	Ongoing. AFMA has had preliminary discussions with Tuna Australia regarding this matter. Discussed further under Agenda Item 5.4.

Agenda Item 1.6 Intersessional correspondence between TTMAC 15 and TTMAC 16

9. TTMAC noted the correspondence circulated out-of-session since TTMAC 15 held on 3 November 2016 (**Table 3**).

Table 3: Correspondence circulated out-of-session since TTMAC 15.

Date	Item
01 December 2016	AFMA circulated the draft TTMAC 15 minutes, to Members for comment.
21 December 2016	AFMA notified TTMAC of the finalised Cost Recovery Impact Statement (CRIS) model to be used from 2017/18 onwards.
13 January 2016	AFMA circulated a letter from Dr James Findlay to Catherine Sayer, regarding AFMA Commission decision on TACCs for the 2017 fishing season.
02 February 2017	AFMA circulated two expressions of interest (EOI) to Members for comment. These EOIs were submitted in response to the AFMA Research Committee 2017 Call for Research: - <i>SBT Inter-sessional Science 2017-18</i> (Ann Preece, CSIRO); - <i>Data Management, Assessment and Implementation of HS for Australia's Tropical Tuna Fisheries</i> (Rob Campbell, CSIRO).
14 February 2017	AFMA advised Members that the draft TTMAC 15 minutes had been posted to GovDex pending adoption at TTMAC 16
02 March 2017	AFMA circulated an EOI to Members for comment. This EOI was submitted in response to the FRDC December 2016 Call for Proposals: - <i>Investigating oceanographic and environmental factors impacting on the ETBF</i> (Alistair Hobday, CSIRO).
10 March 2017	AFMA circulated the draft <i>Fisheries Management Paper 14 - AFMA Bycatch Strategy</i> , to Members for comment.
16 March 2017	AFMA circulated the 2017-19 National Compliance Risk Assessment, to Members for comment.
31 March 2017	AFMA circulated the draft 2017/18 budget for the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF), Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery (WTBF) and Skipjack Tuna Fishery (STF), to Members for comment.
04 April 2017	AFMA circulated a letter from Dr Nick Rayns to Catherine Sayer, regarding the time taken to finalise MAC and RAG minutes.
04 April 2017	AFMA circulated the draft TTMAC 16 agenda, to Members for comment.

10. An Industry Invited Participant sought clarification as to whether the model apportioning levies against SFRs has been considered by TTMAC in recent times. The Invited Participant noted that there have been recent changes to management arrangements and fishing regimes, including the introduction of electronic monitoring (EM) and a shift in longline effort to SBT, which may affect how apportionment is calculated. Later, under Agenda Item 5, the AFMA Member advised that the issue had been considered most recently at TTMAC 14 and TTMAC agreed that the apportionment model for calculating ETBF levies was still appropriate for the fishery. The AFMA Member agreed that AFMA will again review the apportionment model used to calculate ETBF levies, in light of recent management changes including EM and shifts in effort.

Action 1

AFMA to review the apportionment model used to calculate ETBF levies, in light of recent management changes including electronic monitoring and shifts in effort.

Agenda Item 2 Background Information/Discussion Items

Agenda Item 2.1 AFMA Management report on the ETBF and WTBF

11. TTMAC noted the report provided by the AFMA Observer regarding developments and issues relevant to the management of the ETBF and WTBF, noting a number of management issues would be discussed under later agenda items:
- a. the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DoAWR) is currently revising and updating the *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy* and *Commonwealth Policy on Fisheries Bycatch*. It is expected that DoAWR will release revised drafts of these policies within the next week for public consultation, including for comment by RAGs and MACs. The deadline for comments is not known at this stage, nor whether DoAWR will be seeking a coordinated or individual responses from RAGs and MACs. AFMA will provide clarification on these points to TTMAC once the draft policies are released.

Action 2

AFMA to clarify with TTMAC the required feedback processes on the draft *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy* and *Commonwealth Policy on Fisheries Bycatch*, once the policies have been released for public consultation.

- b. the proposed listing of Hammerhead Sharks under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is still under consideration by the Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE).
- c. there is currently a Bill (*Fisheries Legislation Amendment (Representation) Bill 2017*) before Parliament proposing the amendment of the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (FMA) to include an additional objective that will require AFMA, the Minister and the Joint Authorities to have regard to ensuring that the interests of recreational and Indigenous fishers are taken into account in the context of managing Commonwealth commercial fisheries. The amendments also increase the membership of MACs to ten, to provide the opportunity to include expertise in matters relating to recreational and Indigenous fishing. The Bill has support and will be considered during the winter sitting period. TTMAC noted that these amendments were a Coalition election promise.

Agenda Item 2.2 Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and Indian Ocean Tuna Commission meetings update

12. TTMAC noted the report provided by the AFMA Observer advising of key outcomes from the 13th meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC 13) held from 5-9 December 2016, including:
- a. the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) put forward 13 proposals for consideration by Members at WCPFC 13. Incremental progress was made on a range of matters.
 - b. Australia's focus at the meeting was to progress the development of harvest strategies in line with the agreed Harvest Strategy Work Plan. The WCPFC made progress on a number of elements of the Work Plan including agreeing an interim timeframe and target for rebuilding Bigeye Tuna (BET) stocks (to the limit reference point (LRP) $0.2SB_{F=0}$ within ten years) and agreeing a range of acceptable levels of risk for tuna species (excepting BET). The WCPFC also tasked Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) with developing performance indicators for South Pacific Albacore Tuna (SPALB), proposing that SPC make reference to interim performance indicators for Skipjack Tuna (SKJ).
 - c. there was no agreement for FFA-proposed SPALB target reference point (TRP). Future progress on developing a harvest strategy for SPALB is likely to be resisted by some distant water fishing nations (DWFNs), and FFA Members are considering how to

resolve this impasse. It was noted that one DWFN in particular uses subsidies which allows their fleet to fish, when other fleets find it uneconomical.

- d. initial discussions took place on the development of a new tropical tuna management measure, as the current measure will expire in 2017. Members, including Australia, will meet intersessionally to progress this work. A final measure is due to be adopted in December 2017.
 - e. the WCPFC agreed to strengthened rules to protect the safety of fisheries observers at sea.
13. TTMAC noted the comments made by the Tuna Australia Invited Participant advising of key outcomes from the 12th meeting of the WCPFC Northern Committee (NC 12). The current status of Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBF) is 2.6% of $SSB_{F=0}$. Pressure was applied by Members at WCPFC 13 for more to be done to rebuild the stock but to date the response from the NC is not considered satisfactory by most members
 14. TTMAC noted the report provided by the Research Member regarding key outcomes from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Preparatory Stock Assessment Workshop where key scientific work is progressed prior to meetings of the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC). The focus of the work plan in 2017 concerned Yellowfin Tuna (YFT), BET and Broadbill Swordfish (SWO). Striped Marlin (STM) will be assessed next year. This work included a review of standardisations as well as region boundaries used in the BET assessment. Australia also provided advice on sensitivity analyses to be done as part of the SWO assessment.
 15. TTMAC noted the report provided by the AFMA Member regarding the 21st meeting of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) to be held from 15-26 May 2017. Key issues for the meeting include the review of YFT and SKJ management measures. It was noted that at the last meeting, Australia took out a reservation to the SKJ measure that was adopted, on the basis that it established an allocation scheme for SKJ once the stock falls below a threshold level. The model implied an unacceptable decrease in Australia's current TAC in the WTBF. Australia is of the view that allocation discussions should be kept separate from the development of harvest strategies and finds it unacceptable to be unable to access and fisheries resource in Australian waters. It was noted that a YFT measure was adopted which proposed similar cuts, but the cuts wouldn't impact on Australia's current current TAC in the WTBF of 5,000 tonnes.

Agenda Item 2.3 Forum Fisheries Agency meeting update

16. TTMAC noted the report provided by the AFMA Observer advising of upcoming meetings of FFA Members:
 - a. Forum Fisheries Committee (FFC) meetings will be hosted by Australia in 2017. Pre-FFC meetings are being held this week in Canberra, including the Tokelau Arrangement Workshop from 4-5 May 2017 which AFMA will be attending. Australia doesn't expect the FFA Secretariat will gain agreement to the catch management proposal as it is currently drafted, given it will decrease the catch allocation for a number of Members including Australia. This is not acceptable to Australia.
 - b. FFC 102 (Officials) will be held from 8-12 May 2017 in Canberra. It was noted that AFMA and the Tuna Australia Invited Participant will be attending this meeting.
 - c. FFCMIN 14 is tentatively scheduled for July 2017 in Mooloolaba.
 - d. SPALB and BET are Australia's priorities for these meetings, noting BET is currently undergoing re-assessment. It was noted that the assessment will take account of the findings of the MRAG Asia Pacific report, *Towards the Quantification of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the Pacific Islands Region*. An Industry

Invited Participant also suggested the findings of recent genetics research should be taken into account.

Agenda Item 2.4 Tuna Australia / Industry update

17. TTMAC noted the report provided by the Tuna Australia Invited Participant advising of recent industry association activities, in particular:
- a. working with DoEE, non-government organisations and industry in the development of Commonwealth Marine Reserves. They are currently awaiting the release of revised maps.
 - b. following the announcement by the Hon Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Immigration and Border Protection concerning the abolishment of Subclass 457 Visas for foreign workers, Tuna Australia is working with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection to have current fishing industry positions transferred to the occupation lists underpinning the new Temporary Skill Shortage Visa.
 - c. working with AFMA to identify improvements and efficiencies in AFMA and industry processes.
 - d. progressing a project looking at real time reporting.
 - e. looking to assist stakeholders in the WTBF with utilising latent effort.
 - f. development of an acceptable daily intake policy for residues and contaminants.
 - g. strategic organisational planning.

Agenda Item 2.5 General update from members, invited participant and observers

18. TTMAC noted the following updates provided by members and invited participants:
- a. an Industry Member observed that catches off the NSW coast have been lower than the same time last year, though sizes and quality are good and attracting decent prices. To compensate for the lower catch rates they are using a higher ratio of live bait to hooks (75:25% live/dead bait as opposed to the usual 50:50%).
 - b. another Industry Member observed that catches of both SWO and tuna on the shelf were poor for the last few months. His boats also haven't seen the pulse of BET that would usually be expected this time of year. Given the situation, the boats are doing longer trips and deploying a greater number of hooks just in case a pulse comes through but this strategy is currently showing little return.
 - c. An Industry Invited Participant observed that landings are about 50% of usual and boats off the Queensland coast haven't see the pulse of YFT that would usually be expected around September. He is seeing BET but not in the same amounts as last season. SWO are not there as they have been in previous years to fill the gap. However big SWO are being caught by game fishers down in Tasmanian waters. It was suggested that this was due to warmer temperatures than normal (19 degrees is a new record, surpassing the previous record of 17 degrees) as a result of the East Australian Current (EAC) pushing harder and further South.
 - d. another Industry Member noted that the prohibition on transshipment in the WTBF is hampering the operations of some operators. The AFMA Member agreed to advise industry and TTMAC of IOTC transshipment requirements, in particular under what circumstances fresh fish can be transferred. It was noted that the requirements differ between the WCPFC (ETBF) and IOTC (WTBF). It was further noted that one IOTC requirement was the carriage of an observer on the receiving boat. It was further advised that EM has yet to be endorsed as an equivalent monitoring method, something Australia is looking to progress in both the WCPFC and IOTC. The Industry Member

advised that there are a number of proposals in the pipeline to bring new boats into the WTBF, enabling Australia to build a catch history in the fishery.

Action 3

AFMA to advise industry and TTMAC of IOTC transshipment requirements in the WTBF, in particular under what circumstances fresh fish can be transferred.

- e. the Recreational/Charter Fishing Invited Participant observed that game and recreational fishers have been experiencing a few very poor months along the entire East coast from Queensland to Victoria, consistent with commercial operators. There has not been the usual pulses of SWO or YFT, though it is understood that there is some YFT in Tasmanian waters. At a recent tournament it was noted, only 115 fish were caught over a three day period, compared to 700 fish at the same tournament the preceding year. Only Bermagui has recently been experiencing good catches, consistent with the EAC pushing harder and further South.
- f. the NSW State Government Invited Participant also observed that they are not seeing YFT. STM are starting to appear but much later than usual (usually January to March).
- g. the Research Member advised he was progressing work to feed into the next TTRAG meeting, including compiling the necessary data and reviewing current CPUE standardisations. The Research Member also advised of their recent attendance at the SPC Preparatory Stock Assessment Workshop noting changes to the SWO assessment which, following recent research, will now use a single growth curve instead of the previous two (Hawaii and Australia). The BET assessment will also use new growth data. The SWO assessment will also be sex disaggregated, accounting for females growing larger than the males.

Agenda Item 3 Consideration/Decision Items

Agenda Item 3.1 Proposed change to season dates

- 19. The AFMA Member introduced an industry proposal to change the ETBF fishing season dates. The AFMA Member advised that current season starts on 1 March each year and ends on 28 February the following year. The proposal will look to bring forward the start date of the season to either 1 January or 1 February with the corresponding end date being twelve months later on 31 December or 31 January.
- 20. The AFMA Member explained that when a 1 March fishing season start date was initially agreed, this was selected on the basis that January and February are usually the quiet months of the season (i.e. low catch rates), particularly for those operating off NSW. Operators wanted to be able to utilise this quiet period to conduct maintenance. This also coincided with a time when quota was generally in short supply or had been fully caught.
- 21. The AFMA Member further explained the driver for this proposal is there is a concentration of quota owners which operate off the NSW coast. Those operating off the Queensland coast tend to lease in quota. Periodically there will be large pulses of fish during this period, in particular YFT. These events are highly variable and not well understood. Given these pulses, the resultant behavior is quota owners tend to hold onto their quota through the middle of the year (April-November) to cover potential catches in January and February. This creates uncertainty in the quota market, particularly for those leasing in quota. Quota is also under utilised when these large pulses of fish do not eventuate. Changing the season start date to 1 January or 1 February, means these variable months are moved to the start of the season, providing quota owners a more certain operating environment and the opportunity to better utilise their quota and potentially improve the availability of quota to those that lease in.

22. Industry Members and Industry Invited Participants advised the preferred option is 1 January, as this would maximise the benefits to industry (e.g. utilisation of latent quota and quota availability). There was doubt that a 1 February start date would yield the benefits necessary to justify the change.
23. The AFMA Member advised that there are a number of administrative issues that need to be considered as part of this proposal. TTMAC noted the current TACC setting process involves TTMAC meeting in October/November and making preliminary TACC recommendations contingent on decisions made at WCPFC. WCPFC then meets in the first week of December and the AFMA Commission will not set TACCs until then due to obligations under the FMA and ETBF Management Plan to take account of international decisions. The AFMA Commission must then set TACCs, a TACC Determination is registered on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments, AFMA systems are updated with the TACCs for the coming season and extracts of register including fishing concession conditions as well as management arrangements booklets are issued to operators. The AFMA Member advised that AFMA's primary concern is with the WCPFC meeting at the start of December, completing the TACC setting process prior to a season start on 1 January will be logistically very difficult.
24. Further to this, The AFMA Member advised that all AFMA staff are on mandatory leave (known as the Christmas shutdown) for the period between and including Christmas Day and New Year's Day and all AFMA offices cannot be accessed during this period. This may create issues for operators that lease in quota at the start of the season as there will be no manual processing of paper forms or technical assistance for industry during this period. It was noted that the rollover between seasons tends to be when such services are in the highest demand and most technical issues are encountered. Further to this, the AFMA Member advised that there is limited staff availability in the weeks either side of the Christmas shutdown due to staff taking leave. This poses the risk that should technical issues with AFMA's ICT systems (e.g. GoFish) be encountered, delays in quota trading may result.
25. Industry Members and Invited Participants further discussed the administrative challenges and constraints detailed by the AFMA Member. An Industry Invited Participant, noted that one of the main impediments to this proposal appears to be the timing of the WCPFC meeting and AFMA's obligation to take account of WCPFC decisions in setting TACCs. It was suggested that the likelihood of the WCPFC coming to a contrary decision that would require an adjustment to the TACCs set by the AFMA Commission is low and this risk could be managed.
26. Industry Members and Invited Participants acknowledged that there won't be manual processing of paper forms or technical assistance for industry during the Christmas shutdown period and the risk of delays to quota trading should technical issues with AFMA's ICT systems be encountered. Industry suggested these constraints should be made clear to operators well before the start of the fishing season so that operators can plan around this.
27. On these points, the Chair conveyed written comments provided by the Conservation Member: "*There seems to be quite a few issues (mainly admin) that could be prohibitive to amending the season start date to an earlier time. Also there seems to be quite a high risk of having delays caused by these admin issues, to the early season start. I believe that this is an industry and AFMA decision to make, and to way up the risk proceeding to an earlier start date. If industry is willing to accept the risk of delayed season starts with the realization of subsequent financial penalties (lost catch, lost revenue, etc.) as a result then it should be changed.*"
28. The AFMA Member advised that in order to better manage the risks associated with this proposal, the AFMA Commission could look to set TACCs in October, noting that it would

be unlikely the AFMA Commission would look upon the compressed timeframes around December favourably. However, this approach will constrain Australia's bargaining position in the WCPFC, and implementation would be complicated should the WCPFC make a decision requiring a TACC cut. It was advised that DoAWR would need to consent to AFMA setting TACCs before the WCPFC meeting.

29. The AFMA Member also explained that the October to December period is a particularly busy time for the Tuna and International Fisheries section due to the scheduling of annual meetings of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Commission for the Conservation of SBT (CCSBT), FFA and WCPFC. The Antarctic and SBT Fisheries' fishing seasons also start on 1 December. The section will need to revise its work plan for this period to accommodate the change and this may have cost implications.
30. Noting these considerations, TTMAC recommended the ETBF season start date is changed from 1 March to 1 January. AFMA agreed to undertake further analysis on options for TACC setting (AFMA Commission to set TACCs in October vs. December) and present this to the AFMA Commission and DoAWR for consideration. TTMAC requested the benefits to industry from this proposal are clearly stated in what is put forward for consideration.

Action 4

AFMA to undertake further analysis on options for TACC setting (AFMA Commission to set TACCs in October vs. December) and present this analysis and the TTMAC recommendation to change the ETBF season start date to 1 January, to the DoAWR and then the AFMA Commission for consideration.

31. TTMAC noted that, to give effect to the change, a transitional 10 month fishing season will be required and TACCs will need to be adjusted for that season (as TACCs are normally set for a 12 month period). The Research Member presented a paper, *Determination of a Transitional TACC in the ETBF due to changes in the dates of the Fishing Season*. The Research Member explained that the paper provides a method for calculating TACCs during a transitional fishing season using catch disposal record (CDR) data averaged over five fishing seasons to determine the proportion of total fish landed by month for each of the five ETBF quota species. This methodology was endorsed by TTRAG 17. TTMAC further endorsed the methodology as suitable to the purpose.

Agenda Item 3.2 2017 CRIS and 2017/18 budget

32. The AFMA Member informed TTMAC of revised cost recovery arrangements to be applied by AFMA in the 2017/18 financial year. TTMAC noted that Government policy requires AFMA to review and update its cost recovery arrangements at least every five years. Subsequently, AFMA has developed the 2017 CRIS which represents an update upon the previous 2010 CRIS.
33. TTMAC noted the 2017 CRIS has been approved by the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources, the Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, and has been used in preparing the draft 2017/18 cost recovered budget for AFMA managed fisheries.
34. TTMAC further noted the 2017 CRIS takes into account the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines. The AFMA Member explained these guidelines outline what fisheries management activities AFMA should charge for and has contributed to a range of significant changes that appeared in the 2017 CRIS relative to the 2010 CRIS. These changes combined with AFMA's new activity based costing approach makes direct comparison between the 2010 and 2017 CRIS difficult, but in future years comparisons will be more relevant.
35. The AFMA Member further explained the main changes to AFMA's cost recovery arrangements from the 2010 CRIS:

- a. Management of Domestic Commercial Fisheries – now encompasses a range of activities. Acknowledging that some work is being done on a day-to-day basis which is driven by government requirements, 5% of the activities for fisheries management is now funded by government, previously many activities were 100% cost recovered. Components of Executive Manager Fisheries and General Manager Corporate will now be cost recovered as portions of their work directly relate to management of fisheries and staff managing fisheries, these costs were previously charged through overheads.
 - b. AFMA Bycatch Program – previously bycatch work done by the Tuna and International Fisheries section and Bycatch section was recovered at a rate of 100% and 50% respectively from industry. It is now 70% across the board.
 - c. Data Collection and Management – fee for service model now applied to certain data requests. There is now a government contribution to observer and EM administration respectively. The SBT monitoring program (e.g. 100 fish sampling) is now 100% industry cost recovered consistent with other Commonwealth fisheries, previously it was 50%.
 - d. Research – AFMA previously applied a number of ways to charge government and industry depending on the type of research. This has been simplified and now all research will be funded 75% by industry and the other 25% by government. Net result of this is a greater government investment in research.
 - e. Policy Support – costs from fishing operational policies will now be recovered at a rate of 50% from industry.
36. TTMAC noted the summary presented by the AFMA Observer for each of the tropical tuna fisheries. The AFMA Observer advised that he has had discussions both internally and with Tuna Australia on how to run the budget process better for subsequent years. TTMAC noted the increase in the draft 2017/18 budgets for each of the tropical tuna fisheries is attributable to:
- a. changes in cost recovered activities under the 2017 CRIS. In all fisheries, a number of activities have either increased in the percentage cost recovery or are now fully cost recovered.
 - b. variation in planned management activities and research milestone payments. The 2017/18 financial year coincides with the finalisation of the current three year assessment project and the start of the next three year assessment project, meaning two milestone payments (one of them quite large) being due in the same year – this happens every three years.
 - c. the costs of the EM Program have also contributed to the increases in 2017/18 budgets for the ETBF and WTBF. Following on from TTMAC and Tuna Australia feedback, AFMA will look to review EM Program costs in consultation with TTMAC and Tuna Australia through 2017. This will include the formation of an oversight committee, something that was planned from the inception of the Program.
37. TTMAC Members questioned whether the increase in EM Program costs was through any prior arrangement. The AFMA Member advised that AFMA has a contract with Archipelago Asia Pacific (AAP) to deliver EM services. Some of these services have fixed unit prices (e.g. hourly labour rate) but others are more variable (e.g. servicing, equipment). Currently the EM Program is budgeted using a cost projection model, however the model is outdated and certain services have proven more expensive than projected (e.g. servicing and maintenance).
38. The AFMA Member informed TTMAC, that in 2017/18, the EM Program budget for the ETBF is \$677,000. This is a saving on the previous Observer Program for the ETBF. When observers were last deployed, the Observer Program budget was \$810,000, and there was lower effort in the fishery at that time. The AFMA Member advised the increase in costs in

the EM Program budget in 2017/18 is a result of an increase in effort and a higher than projected level of servicing and maintenance.

39. TTMAC noted that AFMA are looking at the options concerning the contracted delivery of EM services, including an extension of the current contract prior to approaching the market again. It was noted that there are more providers in the market than when the EM Program started. A number of other countries are also looking to implement EM by 2019, including New Zealand and the Solomon Islands.
40. TTMAC further noted that both CSIRO (at no cost to AFMA) and the Nature Conservancy (in partnership with Google) are working to develop image recognition software that will identify fish species from images and EM footage. Another capability being investigated is software that will automatically filter EM footage for catch events (i.e. when a fish is in-frame). The objective of this is to reduce footage review time and therefore costs.
41. TTMAC discussed areas to reduce costs. The AFMA Member advised the areas to focus on are direct management costs, data collection and research. TTMAC noted, that compared to similar sized fisheries (e.g. the Gillnet Hook and Trap Fishery with 30 boats, South East Trawl Fishery with 50 boats and the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF) which is also of similar size), direct management costs for the ETBF are significantly lower. The SPF also has no active boats but is still costing more than the ETBF. It was further noted that the ETBF budget is typically underspent.
42. An Industry Member expressed disappointment that the cost of accessing the ETBF between 2002 and present day has increased many fold. The AFMA Member acknowledged this concern and clarified that total management costs have decreased from \$2.5 million at their peak in 2005 to about \$1.8 million at present. Fishing effort present day is similar, but is now being done with less boats. An Industry Invited Participant also expressed disappointment that the hard work to decrease the budget from \$1.8 to \$1.6 million has been undone and recommended the budget be reviewed to identify cost savings.
43. TTMAC noted that AFMA will review a number of budget issues, in consultation with Tuna Australia and TTMAC, through 2017 leading into the 2018/19 budget including:
 - a. EM Program costs.
 - b. size monitoring research.
 - c. apportionment of EM Program compliance activity costs for vessels targeting SBT.
 - d. apportionment of licensing related ICT costs to the STF.
44. An Industry Member observed that the savings promised at the inception of the EM Program have not been realised. The AFMA Member clarified that original savings estimates were on the basis that operators would be buying, servicing and maintaining their own units. Subsequent to this, AFMA made a decision to cover the costs of units, servicing and maintenance under the levy base and this has cost more than initially forecast. The costs of units have been amortised over a number of years, and was in part covered through an underspend from the Observer Program.
45. The Tuna Australia Invited Participant noted that units are coming to the end of their life, and will require replacement. AFMA and industry needs to look at how this is funded.
46. Industry Members sought clarification on which EM costs are included under the levy base. The AFMA Member advised that any warranty or radio frequency interference related costs do not come out of the levy base, but other costs (e.g. servicing and maintenance) do. Figures on servicing and maintenance costs under the EM Program will be made available to Tuna Australia as part of the review.
47. An Industry Member noted that given his considerable quota holdings, he is indirectly covering the costs of the servicing and maintenance of units of other operators, under the

EM Program component of the levy base. The AFMA Member advised that new installations are now paid for by individual operators and AFMA is looking at options to apply a direct billing model against non-warranty repairs and maintenance costs. The budget also provides for the replacement of 10% of units per year. It was also noted that AFMA will be looking in future at type approving EM units and AFMA system updates, to allow EM units to be used in place of traditional vessel monitoring system (VMS) units.

48. With regards to other activity groups for review, the Research Member observed that the 33% allocation of logbook costs to the ETBF seemed high. The AFMA Member explained that other fisheries (e.g. Great Australian Bight Trawl Fishery and NPF) have a much higher electronic logbook uptake than the ETBF which only has four boats consistently using the system. Industry advised that a lot of operators are wary of using the system, particularly for longer trips, given poor mobile coverage and risk that if the system fails, data is lost.
49. The AFMA Member noted that for the third year there have been 20 observer days budgeted for the STF, but in previous years these haven't been used as the operator hasn't been active. It was noted, that while fee for service has been considered, but this is not the approach adopted in most fisheries as it is generally too costly to do it on an individual basis. The SBT Fishery is an exception to the rule.

Agenda Item 3.3 ETBF Ecological Risk Assessment

50. TTMAC noted an update provided by the AFMA Observer concerning the review of the ETBF Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA). TTMAC noted that Commonwealth legislation (e.g. the FMA and the EPBC Act) requires that AFMA to pursue the objective of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) and one part of this is to ensure the sustainability of species, populations and ecosystems with which Commonwealth fisheries interact. AFMA pursues ESD through the implementation of Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs) under the Ecological Risk Management (ERM) framework.
51. TTMAC further noted that since 2013, review of the ERM framework has led to updates and improvements to processes and methodologies. The ETBF and SPF have been chosen as test fisheries for the application of the revised ERM approach, including revised ERA methodologies. This work is being funded under separate project funding and will not be recovered through the levy base. CSIRO have presented draft ETBF ERA results to TTRAG 16 and TTMAC 15 and most recently, TTRAG 17. In refining the revised methodologies, advice has also been sought through AFMA's ERA Technical Working Group (TWG).
52. The AFMA Observer explained key changes to the ETBF ERA since it was last considered:
 - a. the ERA species list will be based on observer, logbook and EM data for the period 2001-2015, to provide greater confidence that the species list covers all species interacting with the fishery.
 - b. the key commercial species category will now include YFT, BET, ALB, SWO, STM and SBT (noting the latter is managed under the SBT Fishery).
 - c. no species will be included in the secondary commercial species category until relevant Commonwealth fisheries policies are finalised.
 - d. the byproduct species category will now include all retained (or occasionally retained) species that are not key commercial species. This includes species such as Mahi Mahi.
 - e. for protected species groups identified in fishery data, scientific expert opinion will be used to expand family/genus level species groups (e.g. Albatross) from observer, logbook and EM data, to include the most likely species.
 - f. based on ETBF size, its multispecies nature, previous ERA results (including recent revised draft results) and stability in fishing methods used, the ETBF ERA will not be required to undertake a Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis (SICA) on species

- components in its overall ERA. TTRAG 17 determined that the advice should have related specifically to direct impacts of fishing capture, not all fishing hazard impacts on species components. This will be raised further with the ERA TWG.
- g. for international fisheries like the ETBF, the ERA assesses local scale ecological risk for each species using either Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) (mainly for protected species) and Sustainability Assessment for Fishing Effects (SAFE) (mainly for general bycatch and byproduct species). The ETBF ERA report should also reference broader scale Western and Central Pacific Ocean stock assessments. AFMA can then take into account both local scale and stock wide information when considering management responses.
 - h. the ERA TWG recommended the PSA and SAFE results be screened for potential 'false negatives' (i.e. results that come out as medium risk that are in fact high risk). This follows on from research (by CSIRO) that indicates that SAFE in particular has the potential to occasionally under-estimate risk.
53. TTMAC noted that these changes are to be addressed by CSIRO except the last one, which will be done by TTRAG 18.
54. The AFMA Observer explained the key changes to the draft ETBF ERA results since they were last considered:
- a. following advice from the ERA TWG to expand the species list to include all species reported in the fishery (observer, logbook and EM data) for the period 2001-2015, 266 species are now included in the revised ERA, an increase of 156 species.
 - b. a total of 266 species were evaluated at level 2 using the PSA and SAFE methodologies.
 - c. a total of 85 protected species were assessed via PSA and seven were determined to be at potential high risk. CSIRO have subsequently applied residual risk analysis which was reviewed at TTRAG 17. CSIRO have advised that the analysis indicates that none of the seven species remain at potential high risk. The key factors resulting in a reduction in risk were revised productivity and susceptibility parameter values using published information or expert opinion as well as extremely low (or absent) interaction rates.
 - d. a further seven protected species were assessed via SAFE, which found none to be at high risk (i.e. above the LRP).
 - e. a total of 110 byproduct and 60 general bycatch species were assessed via SAFE. Of these, 21 byproduct species and 8 bycatch species did not have sufficient biological information to support the estimation of fishing mortality reference points. TTRAG 17 advised that these species should be assessed via PSA and will be seeking further ERA TWG advice on this. All other byproduct and general bycatch species were assessed to not be at high risk.
55. TTMAC noted that additional technical work to further refine the draft ETBF ERA will be undertaken over the coming two months with final results to be presented to TTRAG 18 in July 2017. TTRAG will aim to provide final advice to TTMAC 17 in October 2017. TTMAC 17 will be asked to provide advice on management options.
56. TTMAC noted that the draft SPF ERA did not progress past the level 1 (SICA) assessment. The review of the Heard Island and McDonald Islands (HIMI) Fishery ERA has also commenced.
57. TTMAC noted SBT targeting has been factored into CPUE standardisation by removing sets that contained SBT from the Southern region and this was found to make no difference to the standardised CPUE.

Agenda Item 3.4 ETBF Fishery Management Strategy

58. TTMAC noted an update provided by the AFMA Observer concerning the development of the ETBF Fishery Management Strategy (FMS). The AFMA Observer advised the ETBF is a test case for the FMS concept. The FMS will be designed to integrate and replace separate fishery specific management strategies (i.e. harvest strategies, ecological risk management strategies, research strategies and data strategies). The structure of the FMS will align to ISO standards (ISO 90001), which is a four phase management framework, structured in terms of planning, implementation, monitoring/reporting and evaluation/improvement. The overarching objective of the FMS is to increase the understandability, transparency, efficiency and accountability of AFMA's fisheries management framework and processes.
59. The AFMA Observer explained the timing of this project is appropriate as a number of key (currently separate) fishery strategy documents in the ETBF are due for review and updating, including the ETBF Harvest Strategy, the ETBF Bycatch and Discard Work Plan, and the ETBF ERA and ERM Strategy. The ETBF 5 Year Research Strategy was recently revised and will also form part of the FMS.
60. TTMAC noted the ETBF FMS is currently in a preliminary stage of drafting, with a number of elements still to be added.
61. TTMAC further noted that the FMS will be presented alongside a range of other key documents, forming in essence a 'box set' for the fishery in terms of management information:
 - a. ETBF Management Plan 2010;
 - b. ETBF FMS 2017-2022;
 - c. ETBF Annual Work Plan – the FMS will be used to guide the development of an Annual Fishery Work Plan. Each year the RAG and MAC will review the work plan to ensure work to achieve the FMS is progressed and/or completed;
 - d. ETBF Annual Research Statement;
 - e. ETBF Annual FMS Performance Report – AFMA's progress against the FMS (and thus its performance against legislated objectives and requirements) will be reported here. This report will be designed to meet a range of domestic reporting requirements and further consultation needs to be undertaken with DoAWR and DoEE. The Chair commented that different reporting timeframes will need to be accommodated within the report.
 - f. ETBF Overview.
62. An Industry Member sought clarification on the benefits to industry from this project. The AFMA Observer acknowledged that the benefits to industry need to be better articulated and clarified:
 - a. the project is predicted to yield efficiencies (realised in part through cost savings) in terms of consolidating key management information for each fishery into one place. Overall this will mean such information is more accessible, will improve transparency and in doing so improve the understanding and trust of stakeholders, including the general public, in AFMA's management framework and processes.
 - b. the project will make it cheaper and easier for third party certification organisations, such as the Marine Stewardship Council, to assess AFMA's fisheries management framework and processes.
 - c. ISO accreditation (if achieved AFMA wide) may in the future replace other forms of accreditation.

- d. some of the work involved (e.g. review of the ETBF Harvest Strategy, the ETBF Bycatch and Discard Work Plan, and the ETBF ERA and ERM Strategy) needed to be done regardless. The FMS project capitalises on this concurrent work.
63. The AFMA Member advised that given there is a public good element to this project, it will be partially funded by government (5%).
64. TTMAC discussed the structure of the draft ETBF FMS, and key changes since it was last considered:
- a. Introduction – this section provides an overview of the need for the FMS and further legislative/policy background.
 - b. Key elements of FMS – this section describes the scope, structure, objectives, types of performance criteria, consultation and review processes.
 - c. Commercial species – this section has been expanded and now outlines the assessment and management approaches used for key commercial and byproduct species. It now includes detail of the two approaches applied to determining TACCs (HCR and indicator based) for key commercial species in the ETBF. It also introduces the concept of monitoring rules for managing byproduct species, and may eventually also include consideration of the management of commercial discards (which were previously considered under AFMA’s Bycatch and Discard Work Plans).
 - d. Bycatch species – this section outlines the management processes and arrangements for general bycatch and protected bycatch species. This section effectively replaces and updates the former ETBF ERM Strategy and incorporates elements of the former ETBF Bycatch and Discard Work Plan as well as requirements under the EPBC Act. TTRAG 17 advised that AFMA should consider splitting this section of the FMS to more clearly highlight management arrangements for protected species, separate to those for general bycatch species.
 - e. Data – this section has yet to be drafted but will outline the data and monitoring requirements needed to support the commercial and bycatch species arrangements.
 - f. Research – this will be the current 5 year research strategy, the *Australian Tuna and Billfish Fisheries Strategic Research Plan 2017-2021*.
65. The Research Member advised that given the FMS is to be reviewed every five years, the FMS needs to provide for any significant changes to management arrangements (e.g. WCPFC adopts new requirements) to be incorporated in the intervening period.
66. The Chair conveyed written comments provided by the Conservation Member: *“This is a great positive step for AFMA and one which is fully supported. I note that this is still in its early drafting stages but it would be good to see a much larger (or stronger emphasis) section (potentially up front) on management system evaluation and review. Furthermore, inclusion of a high level overview of the MCS used in the fishery, particularly compliance and enforcement, would be good. Currently it is provided “here and there” in dribs and drabs through the document under various sections. If possible it would be good to have a clearer picture of this upfront. I am wondering what industry’s view would be to also including some market/economic related objectives and strategies into the FMS? I would be supportive of including such elements.”*
67. TTMAC noted that the FMS includes some elements that will assist a move towards potential ISO accreditation. AFMA has further work to do to set up (and document within the FMS) the underpinning arrangements necessary to support accreditation. The AFMA Observer further clarified that the potential future pursuit of ISO accreditation would be for AFMA as a whole, not individual fisheries.

68. The Chair advised that sections 3.7.3 and 3.7.4 should be amended to reflect that the chairs of RAGs and MACs are independent.
69. Finally, TTMAC noted the development of the FMS will be an iterative process and is dependent on the finalisation of other strategies and policies currently under review. The next steps will be to consult with Tuna Australia, TTRAG and TTMAC over the coming months with AFMA aiming to present a final draft at TTMAC 17.

Agenda Item 3.5 Research update

70. TTMAC noted an update provided by the AFMA Observer on current research projects, including:
 - a. the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) considered initial proposals submitted in response to its December 2016 call at its 2 March 2017 meeting and endorsed one new tropical tuna project, *Data Management, Assessment for Implementation of harvest strategies for Australia's Tropical Tuna Fisheries 2017/18 to 2020/21*, for development into a full proposal. This project is accounted for in the 2017/18 budget. If the project isn't given the go ahead, which is unlikely given its import, AFMA would adjust for this. The Research Member advised that the budget for this project is 10% less than the preceding one.
 - b. the Commonwealth Research Advisory Committee (ComRAC) considered preliminary expressions of interest submitted in response to the FRDC's December 2016 call for applications, at its 4 April 2017 meeting. The oceanographic project, *Investigate oceanographic and environmental factors impacting on the ETBF*, was looked upon favourably and ComRAC recommended it be developed into a full proposal. The project team will be approaching FFA Members at the upcoming FFC meeting proposing collaboration on this project including accessing Members' data held by SPC. The FFA Secretariat had expressed some concerns around the proposal, in particular relating to whether it was an attempt to examine stock contraction hypotheses, as well as data sharing and proposal clarity concerns.
71. TTMAC also noted:
 - a. Dr Sean Tracey will present the findings of tagging research he conducted off Tasmania to TTRAG 18.
 - b. Dr Julian Pepperell has submitted a proposal for NSW Recreational Fishing Trust funding, titled *Where have all the Yellowfin gone?* The proposal will be considered by the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee on 10 May 2017 and if approved will go to the NSW Minister for Primary Industries for consideration. Dr Pepperell has been working with the Principal Investigator for the oceanographic project, Dr Alistair Hobday, to ensure the projects complement each other.
 - c. the Annual Research Statement for the 2018/19 financial year will be circulated out-of-session for both TTRAG and TTMAC comment.

Agenda Item 3.6 Other outcomes from TTRAG 17

72. TTMAC noted an update provided by the AFMA Observer concerning the review of the ETBF Harvest Strategy. TTMAC noted the ETBF Harvest Strategy was first applied in 2011 and requires review every five years. The review will focus on the Harvest Strategy process currently applied to SWO and STM, noting it is not applied to tropical tuna species at this time.
73. The AFMA Observer advised that TTRAG 17 have commenced the review, which looked at a summary of Harvest Strategy issues that had been raised by TTRAG over the past three years. This summary formed the starting point for the review. TTRAG also considered range of intersessional technical work conducted by CSIRO relating to the current Harvest

Strategy, and issues identified through this work. TTRAG then screened and prioritised issues to be considered under the review and provided explanation for why other issues were not considered a priority or have been addressed by existing technical work or information.

74. The AFMA Observer provided a summary of the findings of the intersessional technical work conducted by CSIRO and relevant to the review:
- a. *Development of an approach to harvest strategy management of internationally managed multispecies fisheries* - Dr Rich Hillary presented on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) work.
 - b. *Re-estimation of the Target CPUE for Striped Marlin and Broadbill Swordfish in the ETBF* - Dr Robert Campbell presented on a review of the current method for setting the target CPUE and re-estimation the TRP and LRP CPUE values based on several different approaches.
 - c. *Estimation of target and limit reference points for ETBF billfish harvest strategies* - Dr Hillary presented on the basis for setting CPUE-based reference points (i.e. TRPs and LRPs) based on the relationship between CPUE in the ETBF and estimates of stock spawning biomass (SSB) from WCPFC stock assessments.
 - d. *Developing innovative approaches to improve CPUE standardisation for Australia's multi-species pelagic longline fisheries* - Dr Campbell presented on the results from the testing of a large range of different CPUE modelling approaches to determine if the current approach can be improved.
75. TTMAC noted that following consideration of CSIRO's work, TTRAG identified a range of priority issues to follow up under the Harvest Strategy review, including:
- a. additional work on the CPUE standardisations that support assessments, including:
 - i. the identification of existing data fields that could be included in future standardisations or additional data fields requiring collection.
 - ii. reviewing model areas and time periods used and whether they are still appropriate? This includes potentially dropping the 1997 data, as it is only available for the last six months.
 - iii. investigate if in-season quota limitation affects fishing behaviour and the potential implications for CPUE models and the Harvest Strategy.
 - iv. explore the application of species specific CPUE standardisation models.
 - v. investigate the potential for vessel effects and inter- and intra-species hook competition effects.
 - b. additional work on reference points and the Harvest Strategy decision tree, including:
 - i. reviewing the need for applying the lower levels of the current Harvest Strategy decision tree. Early MSE work suggested the lower levels may not improve the functioning of the Harvest Strategy. A retrospective analysis will test if that is correct.
 - ii. Review and re-estimation of the TRPs, particularly for SWO which has been demonstrated to have a non-linear relationship between SSB and CPUE, suggesting that the current TRP may not meet the requirements of the Harvest Strategy policy This work will be conducted after the new stock assessment is available and been reviewed by the WCPFC Scientific Committee in August 2017. For STM, the relationship was more linear.

76. The AFMA Observer advised that work to resolve the issues around the SWO TRP will not be completed until 2018 and the 2018/19 season TACCs will need to be set before this. Context around uncertainties in the Harvest Strategy will be provided to the AFMA Commission so they can take those into account when making a decision on this matter. The review is set for completion by March 2018, allowing any revisions to the Harvest Strategy to flow through to the determination of 2019/20 season TACCs.
77. TTMAC noted, that to assist in the SWO TRP review and re-estimation, the Research Member has contacted the SPC stock assessment scientists and requested that a number of sensitivity analyses be conducted as a part of the upcoming stock assessment process including removal of the North East assessment region catches, which available evidence suggests might not be part of the South West Pacific SWO stock and testing of alternate mixing rates between model regions.
78. TTMAC noted that it may be useful at some point in future to have an economic evaluation of the profitability of TRPs, though given the scope of work to be completed, it was not considered a high priority.

Agenda Item 4 Other Information/Discussion Items

Agenda Item 4.1 US Import Regulations (Marine Mammals) update

79. TTMAC noted an update provided by the AFMA Member concerning the US Government's introduction of a new rule, under the US *Marine Mammal Protection Act 1972* (MMPA). This rule will require harvesting nations importing seafood into the US to meet minimum standards for fisheries management with regard to interactions with marine mammals and comes into force on 1 January 2022.
80. The AFMA Member explained that the US rule came about after the World Trade Organization (WTO) found that the US "dolphin safe" labeling program discriminated against Mexican tuna imports in violation of the WTO *Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade*. Following that finding, the US introduced a blanket rule covering all harvesting nations importing seafood into the US.
81. TTMAC noted the US rule impacts on a number of Commonwealth fisheries including the ETBF, HIMI Fishery, NPF and Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery. Industry advised that the US is a very significant market for the ETBF.
82. TTMAC further noted that DoAWR has provided a submission to the US National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), on behalf of all Australian fisheries exporting to the US, highlighting the level of recorded interactions and regulatory measures to prevent and monitor interactions with marine mammals.
83. The AFMA Member explained that information provided by export countries will be used by the US to classify fisheries as either 'exempt' or 'export' fisheries under the US rule. Fisheries will be classified 'exempt' where the US determines there is a remote likelihood of, or no known incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations. Australia is seeking 'exempt' status. If Australian fisheries are classified as 'export' fisheries, Australia will seek to demonstrate that marine mammal mitigation measures are comparable to that of the US.
84. The AFMA Member further explained that Australia's main concern with the US rule, is that the US strategy for managing marine mammal interactions in its fisheries uses the concept of Potential Biological Removal (PBR), where most other countries, including Australia, do not. PBRs set an upper limit on the number of marine mammals that are able to be interacted with without impacting on that stock. The PBR approach is inconsistent with the EPBC Act, and Australia is seeking to better understand the implications of this for Australia.

85. TTMAC noted that the US political and organisational environment is currently highly uncertain, given major policy changes following the change of administration. AFMA will continue to work with DoAWR on this issue.

Agenda Item 4.2 Electronic Monitoring update

86. TTMAC noted the report provided by the AFMA Observer concerning the status of the EM Program in the ETBF and WTBF. Further to discussions under Agenda Item 3.2, TTMAC noted:
- a. a comparison of logbook reporting in the ETBF over the last 6 years (2011-present). The overall trend observed is that logbook reporting of discards has improved consistently since the implementation of the EM Program. The Research Member advised that some of the figures presented were incorrect – the percentage discard figures have been calculated as a percentage proportion of the total retained catch, where it should be a percentage proportion of the total catch (i.e. retained plus discards).

Action 5

AFMA to review the figures provided to TTMAC 16 and provide corrected figures for TTMAC 17.

- b. AFMA are working with Nature Conservancy to develop software that will automatically filter EM footage for catch events (i.e. when a fish is in-frame). The objective of this is to reduce footage review time and therefore costs.
 - c. AFMA plans to investigate the feasibility of a direct billing model for certain EM services. Under this model, boats would be billed directly for any non-warranty repairs and maintenance, rather than the cost being recovered through the levy base. The objective is to reduce overall costs to the program by improving individual accountability.
 - d. with regards to the radio frequency interference (RFI) issue, following extensive investigation and trials of a range of potential fixes, AAP have developed an RFI mitigation protocol that they will test shortly on three boats. It is hoped the protocol can be rolled out across the remaining affected operators should the test cases prove effective.
87. The State Government Invited Participant sought an update on the issue around reporting the life status of Mako Sharks in logbooks. The AFMA Member advised that given the large number of Mako Sharks caught, operators are not required to report each interaction individually on a protected species reporting form, but instead in the logbook.

Agenda Item 4.3 Environment update

88. TTMAC noted an update provided by the AFMA Observer regarding a range of environment issues, in particular:
- a. under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DoEE, AFMA provides quarterly reports of protected species interactions collected through AFMA logbooks. In both the ETBF and WTBF, the majority of interactions in the last two quarters of 2016 were with Shortfin Mako Sharks. The interactions seen in this period are consistent with what has been reported in previous quarters. Seabird interactions were deferred for discussion under Agenda Item 5.5.
 - b. DoEE is currently undertaking a review of the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network. AFMA is keeping a close eye on developments. Tuna Australia advised it expects an announcement on this in the coming months.

Agenda Item 4.4 Fishery Catch Data – 2016/17 season to date

89. TTMAC noted a summary of ETBF catch and effort data sourced from logbooks and CDRs for the period 2012-12 April 2017 covering quota species and Blue and Black Marlin.

Agenda Item 4.5 Productivity Commission review

90. TTMAC noted an update provided by the AFMA Observer concerning regarding the Productivity Commission inquiry into Marine Fisheries and Aquaculture. A final report was handed to the Australian Government on 19 December 2016, however it is not publicly available at this time. The Government will now prepare a response to the final report, due late May.

Agenda Item 5 Other Business

Agenda Item 5.1 Bait collection near gamefish tournaments

91. TTMAC discussed a letter from the NSW DPI to all ETBF concession owners and operators concerning a review of NSW bait-fishing arrangements. In the ETBF, operators are unable to fish for bait within 3 nm of the NSW coastline, unless they hold a Section 37 Permit issued under the NSW *Fisheries Management Act 1994*. In 2012, the NSW DPI established the Baitfish Working Group to review arrangements relating to the collection of bait from NSW waters for use in commercial fisheries including the ETBF. On 28 April 2017, AFMA received a request from the NSW DPI seeking the circulation of a letter. Comment on issues covered in the letter is sought by 24 May 2017. TTMAC noted that this issue is the responsibility of the NSW DPI, and TTMAC advice is not requested. TTMAC further noted that Tuna Australia will be coordinating an industry response to the letter.
92. On 11 November 2016, AFMA sent a letter to ETBF concession holders regarding recreational and game fishing events during 2017, and operators' obligations under the ETBF Code of Practice for Responsible Fishing. The Code requires that licensed commercial operators should, where practical, avoid fishing in areas where recreational fishing tournaments are in progress to minimise conflict and provide more fishing time for all users. Similarly, there is a National Code of Practice for Recreational and Sport Fishing that clearly states that recreational fishers should not interfere with licensed commercial operators and should also not presume to act as an officer of the law.
93. An Industry Member sought clarification as to whether bait-fishing at night near game fishing tournaments was considered acceptable under the Code. The Recreational/Charter Fishing Invited Participant advised that bait-fishing was not considered appropriate, regardless of time of day or whether the tournament area is the only area at the time with baitfish present. TTMAC discussed that in the past, disputes over bait access has been the biggest source of conflict between licensed commercial operators and recreational fishers. The Recreational/Charter Fishing Invited Participant further advised he has not received a complaint relating to commercial bait-fishing in years.

Agenda Item 5.2 Options for adjustment of Albacore TACC

94. TTMAC discussed a request from Tuna Australia for AFMA to consider options to allow the adjustment of the ALB TACC. The AFMA Member explained that the ALB TACC has been set at 2,500 tonnes since quota SFRs and TACCs were implemented in 2011, the basis for this being the highest catch landed in the 2006 calendar year. Since quota was implemented the TACC has not been more than 40% caught. However, there has been interest in developing the fishery including bringing in boats with freezer capacity. Given this AFMA are considering what arrangements need to be implemented to enable this.
95. The AFMA Member proposed that once the TACC is 80% caught, AFMA will conduct analysis on what an appropriate mechanism would be to adjust the TACC, but noted that there are also regional arrangements and sensitivities that must be considered. Any such mechanism, if adopted, would likely be based on CPUE and size data. TTMAC noted AFMA will continue to work with Tuna Australia to manage this issue as it develops.

Agenda Item 5.3 Review of catch history for target species

96. TTMAC discussed a proposal to review ETBF annual catch statistics provided to SPC and WCPFC. The AFMA Member explained that WCPFC measures prohibit Members from exceeding catches above a certain level over a certain reference period. There is some uncertainty in Australia's limits due to variations caused by variable data sources and possibly variations in data processing protocols applied by ABARES and SPC through the years. Noting this, CSIRO in collaboration with the SPC will look to develop an agreed catch history per target species per calendar year.
97. The Research Member and AFMA Observer advised that discrepancies in Australia's catch history can be attributed to:
- a. variable use of processed vs. whole weights over time.
 - b. the source and reliability of data over time has also changed. Prior to 1997, data quality was poor. A size monitoring program was implemented in 1997 and CDRs in 2006.
 - c. SPC apply data processing protocols to Australia's data. These protocols have changed over time and may have created discrepancies. The Research Member will work with SPC to determine what these protocols were and their impact on calculating catch figures.
98. TTMAC noted this work will be completed by the next WCPFC meeting. This will assist in the development of Australia's position in negotiations on a new tropical tuna management measure, and provide useful information to assist TTMAC and the AFMA Commission in future TACC deliberations.

Agenda Item 5.4 Yellowfin Tuna overcatch in the 2016/17 fishing season

99. TTMAC discussed whether a response to the AFMA Commission, on its decision not to allow a 20% overcatch of YFT in 2016/17, is still required (TTMAC 15, action arising 1). The AFMA Observer reiterated that following the AFMA Commission decision not to allow a 20% overcatch of YFT in 2016/17, TTMAC 15 agreed to write a response letter to the AFMA Commission, noting the current inflexibility of AFMA's management systems to account for inter-annual variations and episodic events which affect the availability of quota species and to request clarity from AFMA on how to address this issue.
100. The AFMA Observer further explained that subsequent to this, the AFMA Commission did accept a separate proposal from AFMA and TTMAC (based on advice from TTRAG) for a 200 tonnes increase in the YFT TACC. This increase will assist industry to take advantage of episodes of high YFT availability in future years. The catch history for target species is also currently under review. Given this, AFMA delayed drafting the letter pending further discussion with TTMAC.
101. TTMAC agreed the letter is no longer appropriate and industry will raise the issue with the AFMA Commission at their next meeting, to be held in Mooloolaba. The Tuna Australia Invited Participant noted this will be one of the topics covered in his presentation at this meeting.

Agenda Item 5.5 Seabird Threat Abatement Plan

102. TTMAC noted that the seabird bycatch limit, as prescribed under the *Threat Abatement Plan 2014 for the incidental catch (or bycatch) of seabirds during oceanic longline fishing operations* (the TAP), may be exceeded in at least one ETBF zone for the current summer season (1 September 2016 to 30 April 2017). TTMAC noted that the figures provided were preliminary only. Although the summer season ended on 30 April 2017 AFMA does not expect to have final figures until mid to late June due to a lag in receiving and processing logbook data.

103. The AFMA Observer explained, that for the ETBF, the TAP requires that seabird bycatch in all fishing areas and seasons is less than 0.05 birds per 1000 hooks in each fishing area. Fishing area means areas within the ETBF south of the parallel of 25 degrees South divided into five degree latitudinal bands. Season is defined as two periods: summer from 1 September to 30 April; and, winter from 1 May to 31 August.
104. TTMAC noted that in response to this issue, AFMA has taken the following actions to date:
- a. further details of each seabird interaction have and are being compiled.
 - b. individual operators involved in seabird interactions in the current season to date have been contacted to highlight the issue and obtain a better understanding of the circumstances of each seabird interaction. Some of the interactions in question have been attributed to tori lines breaking in rough conditions, and a lack of materials on board to fabricate replacements. The seabirds in question are Albatross.
 - c. Tuna Australia have also communicated the issue to industry members and the need for additional caution.
105. The AFMA Observer advised that following the conclusion of the summer season on 30 April 2017, AFMA will compile final figures and take action as per TAP requirements. TTMAC noted that under the TAP, if the criterion in the ETBF of 0.05 birds per 1000 hooks is exceeded in a fishing area during one season, AFMA is required to review the mitigation measures currently deployed in the fishing area or fishery and the relevant circumstances - environmental conditions and fishing practices including compliance - this review will include examination of all relevant seabird incident data, independent monitoring reports and other information.
106. The AFMA Observer explained that if the criterion is exceeded in a fishing area in the next corresponding season (e.g. consecutive summer or winter seasons, not consecutive summer and winter seasons), the TAP then requires AFMA to implement additional mitigation measures, if identified, for individual boats that have exceeded the criterion. AFMA would also likely send a Bycatch Officer to work with the individual boats to improve seabird mitigation practices.
107. The Chair conveyed written comments provided by the Conservation Member: *“While it is disappointing for all that the triggers are being reached, it is good to see this level of reporting on this matter, although it would be good to have at this meeting a clearer account of how these interactions have occurred and gain an understanding of whether these happened through no fault of the operators or where a result of poor operational practices. These accounts should have already been provided in time of the meeting and ideally they should be fully reported almost in real time once the interaction occurs. I am assuming that AFMA has already reviewed the footage of these interactions? I trust that AFMA will compile these cases ASAP and follow the plan accordingly.”*
108. On these points, the AFMA Member clarified that what the Conservation Member is suggesting are requirements under the Plan and AFMA is looking to address each of these as part of the process that AFMA has underway. AFMA is waiting on final data analyses to confirm if the TAP triggers have in fact been breached.
109. An Industry Member advised that there is recent research to suggest that the use of wire trace reduces seabird interaction rates as baits sink a lot faster. The AFMA Member advised that sink rate trials could be conducted should AFMA wish to investigate this option.
110. The AFMA Member noted that the further South operators fish, the higher the risk of seabird interactions. Increased interactions have in part been driven by an increase in the targeting of SBT using longline to the South. AFMA will be monitoring these activities closely to identify any further issues as they arise.

Agenda Item 6 Date and venue for next meeting

111. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for the week of 16 October 2016. A final date and venue will be decided out-of-session.

Attachment A

Tropical Tuna Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (TTMAC) 16

02 May 2016
8:30 am – 5:30 pm

AFMA Aquarium Room
Level 6, 73 Northbourne Avenue, Canberra

AGENDA

- 1. Preliminaries/Matters Arising**
 - 1.1. Welcome and apologies
 - 1.2. Adoption of agenda
 - 1.3. Declarations of interests
 - 1.4. Adoption of Minutes from TTMAC 15
 - 1.5. Actions arising from previous meetings
 - 1.6. Intersessional correspondence between TTMAC 15 and TTMAC 16
- 2. Background Information/Discussion Items**
 - 2.1. AFMA Management report on the ETBF and WTBF
 - 2.2. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and Indian Ocean Tuna Commission meetings update
 - 2.3. Forum Fisheries Agency meeting update
 - 2.4. Tuna Australia / Industry update
 - 2.5. General update from members, invited participants and observers
- 3. Consideration/Decision Items**
 - 3.1. Proposed change to season dates
 - 3.2. 2017 CRIS and 2017/18 budget
 - 3.3. ETBF Ecological Risk Assessment
 - 3.4. ETBF Fishery Management Strategy
 - 3.5. Research update
 - 3.6. Other outcomes from TTRAG 17
- 4. Other Information/Discussion Items**
 - 4.1. US Import Regulations (Marine Mammals) update
 - 4.2. Electronic Monitoring update
 - 4.3. Environment update
 - 4.4. Fishery Catch Data – 2016/17 season to date
 - 4.5. Productivity Commission review
- 5. Other Business**
 - 5.1. Bait collection near gamefish tournaments
 - 5.2. Options for adjustment of Albacore TACC
 - 5.3. Review of catch history for target species
 - 5.4. Yellowfin Tuna overcatch in the 2016/17 fishing season
 - 5.5. Seabird Threat Abatement Plan
- 6. Date and venue for next meeting**