Australian Government
Australian Fisheries Management Authority

# South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC) Meeting Out of Session

## Meeting minutes

**24 March 2021**

**Online Meeting**

# Agenda item 1. Preliminaries

## 1.1 Welcome and apologise

1. The SEMAC Chair, Mr David McGlennon, opened the meeting at 1002 on 24 March 2021 by welcoming those present and making an *Acknowledgement of Country* statement recognising the traditional owners of the many lands in which we met, paying our respects to elders past, present and emerging. Members noted that the meeting was being recorded, and commenced proceedings.

2. The Chair confirmed attending members, participants and observers and noted apologies from Mr Will Mure (member), Ms Fiona Hill (member), and Ms Debbie Wisby (invited participant). An apology was noted from AFMA Commissioner Mr Brett McCallum, with AFMA Commissioner David Smith in attendance. The Chair noted that a quorum still remained for decision making purposes.

**SEMAC Members**

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|---|---|
| David McGlennon | Chair |
| Michael Steer | Scientific member |
| Sarah Jennings | Economic member |
| Anissa Lawrence | Environment member |
| Gerry Geen | Industry member |
| Shane Dugins | Industry member |
| Simon Boag | Industry member |
| Will Mure | Industry member |
| John Harrison | Recreational member |
| Fiona Hill | AFMA member |
| Julia McCourt | Executive officer |

**Invited Participants**

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|---|---|
| Heath Folpp | NSW DPI Fisheries - State invited participant |
| Toni Clark | Industry invited participant |
| Debbie Wisby | Industry invited participant |

**Observers**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| David Smith | AFMA Commissioner | All sessions |
| Daniel Corrie | AFMA Staff | Presenter |
| Sally Weekes | AFMA Staff | Presenter |
| Mardi Albert | AFMA Staff | Presenter |
| Nigel Abery | AFMA Staff | Presenter |

**Apologies**

| | |
|---|---|
| Will Mure | Industry member |
| Fiona Hill | AFMA member |
| Debbie Wisby | Invited Participant |

## 1.2 Declarations of interest

3. SEMAC members noted the conflict of interest requirements as outlined in the *Fisheries Management Paper 1*. Members and participants reviewed and updated the Declarations of Interest made at **Attachment A** including any specific conflicts of interest with items on the agenda.

4. The Chair sought advice on how the MAC should manage these conflicts, and whilst members with a conflict left the room, remaining members agreed that members and invited participants with an agenda conflict will be managed as follows:

    - Industry members and invited participants with a conflict with Items 3 and 6 could participate in the discussion but would be excluded from the meeting for recommendations.

    - Industry members and invited participants with a conflict with item 4 could participate in the discussion and remain for the recommendations noting that the recommendations are at a strategic level and unlikely to result in specific research priorities being recommended.

## 1.3 Adoption of agenda

5. SEMAC members noted that Ms Hill was absent and Mr Dan Corrie would present the relevant agenda items on her behalf. Members then adopted the agenda at **Attachment B** as final.

# Agenda item 2 – FMP 5 – Draft Exploration of Fish Resources Policy

6. Mr Nigel Abery (AFMA) introduced this item by noting that the current Fisheries Management Paper 5 (FMP5) is under review, and it has been modified to better enable exploration and development of new fisheries and simplifies the process of exploring new resources based on balancing risk and cost while using AFMA's Ecological Risk Management (ERM) Framework. AFMA is seeking SEMAC input on the draft policy provided to members as part of the agenda papers.

7. SEMAC noted the following:

    - The rationale behind the revision to the current policy, drafted in 2005, and the need for AFMA to support new opportunities to achieve optimum utilisation of the living resources within the Australian Fishing Zone within a robust, modern framework.

    - The extent of consultation with stakeholders including the general public, about the draft policy. Mr Abery noted the draft policy has been edited and updated in response to comments where relevant, and that the MAC comments will be considered in the final draft that will be presented to the July 2021 Commission meeting for approval.

8. SEMAC discussed:

    - the general improvements in the content and the positive approach in developing a fishery and in recognising pioneers, notwithstanding some comments around consistency in the terminology and some of the wording used in the draft; and

    - the extent of engagement, where Mr Harrison noted that the recreational sector did not appear specifically on the list of groups approached through this process and was disappointed that this has not occurred. Mr Abery noted that there was a long public consultation process and MAC's and RAG's were consulted and deemed to represent sectors including the recreational fishers. The Chair suggested that the recreational member provide Mr Abery with

contact details of groups that could be approached to provide input. Industry members noted that not every commercial fisherman or commercial industry group had been approached directly, and that this was not the industry's expectation, rather it was the MAC process (with members drawn from various groups) that achieved this consultation.

9. Members of the MAC suggested the following:

    - The issue of pioneer rights and how they are recognised should be considered further, specifically how the process of determining the amount of effort gone into developing the resource and the contribution of pioneers will be incorporated into the independent panel's algorithm, and how it will be operationalised.

      Mr Abery noted that those processes would be developed by the panel.

    - Consider how the panel will give consideration to pioneers, and how the decisions around auction or tender for rights will be made in the context of the Exploratory Fishing Management Report (EFMR) that must be completed before exploratory fishing begins.

      Mr Abery noted that this will be managed on a case by case basis.

    - Provide more detail around what incentives there were for pioneers and how they will be given preference in an auction system.

    - Consideration of and wording around the impact of the development of a fishery - not disadvantaging existing users – and how that will be managed.

    - The wording around how future access rights will be allocated is too prescriptive, particularly in view of the intent to use a panel to advise AFMA on the rights allocation.

    - The sentence in 11.5.1 that states "Pioneer allocations will be based on the level of effort and investment in developing the fishery" should be deleted. This may create incentives for fishers to invest in boats, gear, factories etc. in the early development of a fishery to gain advantage with respect to future allocation of fishing rights. This would be inefficient and contrary to AFMA's economic efficiency objective.

    - Change the wording in Figure 1 of the policy from "Do you have an ERA?" to something broader such as "does an ERA exist?" or "Is there an ERA?" to make it clearer to applicants that this is not something they are required to do to start the process. The MAC agreed with the intent of the decision tree, but suggested a review of the language was warranted.

    - The application process could be clearer about applicant responsibilities vs AFMA.

10. In conclusion, the MAC generally supported the direction of the revised policy. Mr Harrison undertook to provide a list of recreational fishing bodies to Mr Abery, and other members were encouraged to provide additional feedback via email. Mr Abery was thanked for his presentation.

## Agenda Item 3 – Rebuilding Strategies – Orange Roughy and Blue Warehou

11. Ms Mardi Albert (AFMA presenter) introduced the agenda item providing SEMAC with a summary of the outcomes of the annual and five year strategic reviews of the rebuilding strategies, the consultation period and previous RAG/MAC considerations. AFMA now seeks SEMAC support for the finalised rebuilding strategies for orange roughy and blue warehou.

12. SEMAC noted:

    - AFMA undertook five year reviews of the existing rebuilding strategies for both species and in consultation with the relevant RAG and MAC, developed a summary of proposed changes to be included in the revised strategies. Public comment was sought on these early 2021, and submissions were received for each strategy from the South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) and the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS).

- The primary objectives for both species are to rebuild the stocks in the area of the SESSF to or above the default biomass limit reference point ($B_{LIM}$); by no later than 2072 for orange roughy stocks (except Eastern Zone and Cascade Plateau that are already assessed as having rebuilt) and by no later than 2024 for blue warehou (east and west).
- Key changes to the strategies were summarised in the presentation by Ms Albert and provided in a summary document as part of the agenda papers.
- The timeline is to gain support for the revised rebuilding strategies from SEMAC and GABMAC by the end of March 2021, conduct a final review for consistency across the strategies, then final drafts will go to the TSSC prior to seeking endorsement from the AFMA Commission in July 2021.

13. SEMAC discussed:

- SETFIA's general position is that the fishing industry is looking for a whole of government approach. In a recent review of the EPBC Act it was noted that AFMA could become accredited under the EPBC Act, and harvest strategy objectives and TSSC listing criteria should be aligned. Industry note it is confusing to buyers and third party sustainability accreditors if Government agencies appear to be working at odds with each other. The EPBC Act review process would take time and those recommendations are yet to be worked through.
- The TSSC refers to populations and stocks, and AFMA refers to stocks – there is an opportunity for the TSSC and AFMA to work together to resolve some of the associated issues.
- An industry member noted there is a clear precedent for the TSSC to look at stocks and/or species. For example, eastern gemfish is listed as conservation dependant and western gemfish is not.
- The points raised by ACMS around benthic impacts and climate change are quite valid, and AFMA has not fully addressed their concerns in the response document. AFMA noted that climate change is addressed in the strategies, and agreed to amend the AFMA response document to more clearly articulate how benthic impacts are mitigated in the fishery.
- Annual updates can be made to rebuilding strategies to update climate change responses as the science and management responses evolve. Work is being done on quantifying ecosystems functions and climate impacts but will take some time to ultimately translate to actions.
- AFMA's ability to monitor the effectiveness of move-on provisions is dependent on logbook records. While logbook reporting of discards appears to be improving, there is still room for improvement. A trial of EM in the trawl sector showed it is not an effective tool for determining species-level discard weight, based on the configuration of cameras during the trial.
- An industry member suggested there will be some level of unreported discards, but it is likely immaterial to the rebuilding success of blue warehou.
- The 2024 rebuilding timeframe for blue warehou is unlikely to be achieved. There is currently no reliable data to recommend any change to the rebuilding timeframe, and so this has remained unchanged in the revised rebuilding strategy.
- Blue warehou is a viable candidate for reviewing how rebuilding strategies can be adapted if the stock is not rebuilding. AFMA have committed to discussing this further with ABARES and the Department and will present a discussion paper to SESSFRAG at the 2021 Data meeting in August.
- The dynamic $B_0$ project being undertaken by Andrew Penney will also consider the potential effect of climate change on species productivity and rebuilding capacity, including what data is needed to demonstrate a climate-driven shift.

- The issue of climate-driven rebuilding failure has been elevated to the Commission through the South East RAG, however there is unlikely to be a short-term solution.
- SERAG should consider whether there is ontogenetic discrimination between juveniles and adults and whether they are spatially and temporally aggregated. An industry member noted that the juvenile blue warehou never seem to grow into adults and questioned whether they have been tested to confirm that they are genetically related. It could also be that the adults are moving somewhere else, and this is indicative of the problems with trying to rebuild this species. Potentially an ecosystem survey is the only way of finding that out, but it will take some time to really understand what is happening.

14. In summary, SEMAC supported both the revised orange roughy and the blue warehou rebuilding strategies, noting the thorough committee consideration, and SERAG support. Action items arising in relation to this agenda item are outlined below and provided in **Attachment C:**

    **Action item OOS.1** AFMA to request SERAG reconcile any spatial or temporal differences in juvenile and adult components of the blue warehou stocks.

## Agenda Item 4 – SESSF Five Year Research Plan

15. Mr Daniel Corrie introduced the agenda item seeking SEMAC advice and input as required on the research priorities outlined in the draft 2021-2025 Research Plan (the Research Plan).

16. SEMAC noted:

    - The Research Plan is at a strategic level and does not identify specific research projects, rather, it outlines broad areas of research that are considered a priority for this fishery, consistent with the objectives of the AFMA Strategic Research Plan 2017-22 which specifies four key research programs: fishery stocks, biology, and the marine environment; economic and social; development and evaluation.
    - AFMA sought advice from SESSFRAG in late 2020 on the draft Research Plan, with a particular focus on new and emerging issues in the SESSF which may drive the need for research. AFMA will also be consulting with the Great Australian Bight Management Advisory Committee (GABMAC) later in March 2021.
    - The draft Research Plan includes the four AFMA research programs outlined above, as well as fishery research priorities developed by SESSFRAG. In its consideration, SEMAC is asked to also consider the outcomes from research projects currently underway and recently completed. Mr Corrie gave an outline of these projects, and more detail was provided with the agenda papers.

17. SEMAC discussed:

    - SESSF Monitoring and Assessment Research Project (SMARP). Mr Corrie noted that the SMARP project concluded with 21 associated recommendations, a number of which are complete or underway, but AFMA hasn't been providing regular updates to the MAC's/RAG's. He noted that his team will be working on this in 2021 and undertook to give a preliminary report on SMARP implementation at the next SEMAC. Mr Boag stated that the benefits of SMARP are significant and warrants a dedicated project manager to ensure that the benefits are realised. He noted that this will require significant commitment at senior levels to effect this change but proposed that the benefits will outweigh the short term costs.

Fishery Stocks, biology and the Marine Environment

- AFMA should include wording around reviewing key inputs to stock assessments, including updating biological parameters and approaches to standardising CPUE, incorporating sensitivity testing of model parameters, and to reduce uncertainty in assessments.
- Dot point 4 – 'Engage with state fisheries to obtain' – to change to 'obtain and improve'.

- Consider a broader heading around the evaluation and application of new and emerging technologies.
- Fleet dynamics is important, and should be included as an introductory paragraph to also include the multi-species nature of the fishery.
- Shared access and cross jurisdictional issues should be included as an area of research for management purposes.
- The Research Plan needs to be clearer about adaptive management and future proofing, noting that some species might be expected to benefit from climate change. This issue is broader than just climate change, and might be best considered as 'scenario planning for external shocks' under the economic and social category.

Economic and Social

- AFMA's use of the term 'economic efficiency targets' needs to be clarified for internal consistency.
- The term 'consider' has been used in this section rather than more active terms such as 'measure' and 'identify' in other sections. Where applicable, AFMA should use the latter.
- The use of the term 'social drivers' could be added to broaden the scope and assist understanding.
- The risk/cost/catch dot point should be clarified in the context of the rebuilding plan and the harvest strategy.

Development

- Industry are supportive of AFMA outsourcing projects such as those outlined in this section, as this frees up internal resources to work on improving the fishery. The GHAT fishery is an example where efficiencies can be found if there is time to focus on this.
- Where applicable, use 'measure' and 'identify' rather than 'consider'.
- Mr Boag raised the issue of communication with stakeholders and the impact on logbook reporting, and re-affirmed SETFIA's position on wanting to help and improve those issues in the SESSF.

Evaluation

- AFMA should consider retrospective reviews of significant management decision, such as moving to unlimited net length in the GHAT, to assess whether the decisions made at the time resulted in the kind of results that were expected.
- The last dot point could be extended to evaluate economic consequences of past decisions, using some form of retrospective analyses. Amending the first dot point to 'quantitatively evaluate' would lead to a better outcome.

18. SEMAC supported the revised Research Plan subject to the incorporation of comments made during the discussion. SEMAC members requested that they have the opportunity to review the revised draft out of session, prior to it returning to SEMAC 43 for final adoption. Action items arising in relation to this agenda item are outlined below and provided in **Attachment C:**

    **Action item OOS 2** AFMA to provide SEMAC with an interim update on SMARP implementation at SEMAC 43

    **Action item OOS 3** AFMA to provide members with the revised draft SESSF Five-year Strategic Research Plan out of session (incorporating SEMAC comments) prior to seeking final SEMAC support at SEMAC 43.

## Agenda Item 6 – Review of Legislative Instruments

19. Paper for this agenda item were provided via email, and the purpose of this session was limited to recording SEMAC recommendations. Ms Sally Weekes summarised the Legislative Instruments, pertinent changes and reasons for re-making these items. The following advice was recorded:

| Legislative Instrument | SEMAC Advice |
|---|---|
| SPF Fishing Period | Supported |
| SPF EM Direction | Supported |
| SESSF EM Direction | Supported, noting work still to be done getting SESSFRAG/SERAG to look at spatial representativeness of EM coverage on hook boats with respect to TAP requirements. AFMA undertook to work with industry to ensure the benefits of EM are fully realised. |
| SESSF & SPF Closure Direction | Supported |

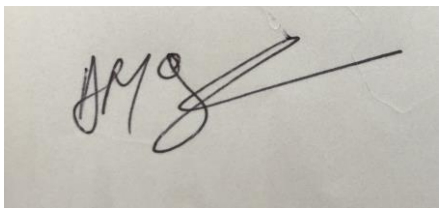
## Agenda Item 7 - SESSF Priorities and Planning, Action Items, Meeting Close

20. Mr Corrie noted that a detailed presentation on SESSF priorities will be provided at SEMAC 43. He then gave a very quick update on the planning activities that the Demersal and Midwater team had been working through to assist in setting priorities and identifying key projects and potential resourcing issues for the next 12 months. The Chair noted that without further detail it was better to delay detailed discussion on these priorities until the next meeting.

21. The EO then shared draft actions items with members and made some minor edits, noting that they will be reviewed as part of the minutes:

| No | Action | When | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| OOS1 | AFMA to request SERAG reconcile any spatial or temporal differences in juvenile and adult components of the blue warehou stocks | Next SERAG | Dan Corrie |
| OOS2 | AFMA to provide SEMAC with an interim update on SMARP implementation at SEMAC 43 | SEMAC 43 | Dan Corrie |
| OOS3 | AFMA to provide members with a revised draft SESSF Five-year Strategic Research Plan out of session (incorporating SEMAC comments) prior to seeking final support at SEMAC 43. | SEMAC 43 | Dan Corrie |

22. The Chair thanked attendees and presenters for their input and closed the meeting, noting the next formal SEMAC is scheduled for 15-16 June 2021 with location and format to be confirmed.



**Signed (Chair):**

**Date: 11th June 2021**

Attachments

A. SEMAC 42 Declared conflicts of Interest
B. Final Agenda
C. SEMAC 43 Action Items

## Attachment A - Declared Conflicts

| | Declared Interest - Last updated: December 2020 |
|---|---|
| **Members** | |
| Dr David McGlennon | SEMAC Chair - No interest pecuniary or otherwise |
| Ms Anissa Lawrence | Director of TierraMar Ltd, Independent consultant TierraMar Consulting Pty Ltd<br>Undertakes contracts for a number of Conservation Non-Government Organisations, government departments, non-government agencies and the private sector on a range of fishery related matters.<br>No pecuniary interest.<br>Conservation member on South Australia Rock Lobster MAC<br>Conservation member on GABMAC<br>Conservation member on SPFRAG |
| Mr Gerry Geen | A partner in Seafish Tasmania Pty Ltd that holds a SESSF Trawl Boat SFR |
| Mr Will Mure | Sole Director of Mures Fishing P/L<br>Commonwealth fish receiver permit, Tasmania fish processing licence<br>Scalefish hook boat SFR<br>SEQ Quota Holding Permits<br>Auto longline fishing permit<br>High Seas permit<br>Blue eye trevalla SFRs<br>Ling SFRs<br>Ribaldo ITP<br>Mixed species Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) and SFRs<br>Member of various fishing related associations including Seafood Industry Australia (SIA), South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA), Southern Shark Industry Alliance (SSIA), Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) |
| Dr Michael Steer | Acting Research Director at South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) Aquatic Sciences<br>Chair of South East Resource Assessment Group (SERAG)<br>Member of Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark RAG (SESSFRAG)<br>Member of the Snapper Management Advisory Committee (SA)<br>No pecuniary interest in the SESSF. |
| Dr Sarah Jennings | Economics member on SERAG and SESSFRAG<br>Economics coordinator, FRDC Human Dimensions Subprogram.<br>Member of AFMA Economics Working Group.<br>Independent economics consultant.<br>No pecuniary or other interest. |
| Mr John Harrison | FutureFocused Consulting and Executive Chair for FRDC's Seafood Industry Safety Initiative.<br>Member, NW Marine Park Advisory Committee. |
| Mr Simon Boag | Non-beneficiary Director of two fishing companies in the SESSF.<br>Industry member on SERAG.<br>Executive Officers to SETFIA, SSIA and SPFIA<br>Undertakes contracts as an independent consultant. |
| Mr Shane Dugins | Chair of the Sustainable Shark Fishery Association. Shareholder and Director of a Fishing Company that holds: Commonwealth SFRs including Shark and Scalefish SFRs, leases quota, Victorian and Tasmanian licences and Victorian Crayfish quota. Consultation services provided to AFMA for specialist fishery knowledge. |
| Ms Fiona Hill | AFMA Demersal and Midwater Senior Manager – AFMA SEMAC member – no interest pecuniary or otherwise. |

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|---|---|
| **Invited participant** | |
| Mr Heath Folpp | NSW DPI (Fisheries)– no interest pecuniary or otherwise |
| Ms Toni Clark | Operations manager for Peter and Una Fishing Co Pty Ltd and Sealord Deepwater fishing P/L an Australian resident company which holds various fishing rights in, and operates vessels in the SESSF, GHAT, Commonwealth and state (Tasmania) Scallop fishery, East Coast Tuna Fishery, Offshore Fisheries and Tasmania State Fisheries. My pecuniary interest is limited to the extent of an employee of the company |
| **Executive Officer** | |
| Julia McCourt | AFMA – Senior Management Officer, Demersal and Midwater Fisheries. No interest pecuniary or otherwise. |
| **Observers** | |
| Mr David Smith | AFMA Commissioner<br>Consultant -Fisheries and marine resources research and assessment. No activities directly related to AFMA (except where national project, see below or funded by AFMA)<br>Member – National Marine Science Committee, Commonwealth Research Advisory Committee, SA Snapper Management Advisory Committee, FDRC Projects (Revisiting biological parameters and information used in the assessment of Commonwealth fisheries: a reality check and workplan for future proofing. (FRDC project 2019- 010) unpaid; SESSF Multi-species Harvest Strategy Project (unpaid); impacts of COVID-19 on the Australian Seafood Industry: Jan-June 2020<br>Adjunct Professor Centre for Marine Socio-ecology, IMAS, Utas<br>Honorary Fellow CSIRO - unpaid |
| Mr Dan Corrie | AFMA Trawl, Squid and Scallop Manager - no interest pecuniary or otherwise. |
| Ms Sally Weekes | AFMA Small Pelagic Fishery Manager - no interest pecuniary or otherwise. |

## Attachment B- Final Agenda

| Agenda Item | Speaker | SEMAC Action | Timing/Duration |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DAY 1 – Teams Conference/AFMA Swordfish Room** | | | 1000-1430 |
| **Preliminaries** | | | |
| 1.1 Welcome and apologies | Chair | Advice | **15 mins** 1000- 1015 |
| 1.2 Acceptance of agenda | Chair | Advice | |
| 1.3 Declarations of interest | Chair | Noting | |
| **Business Items** | | | |
| 2. FMP5 Draft Exploration of Fish Resources Policy | Nigel Abery | Advice | **30 Mins** 1015-1045 |
| 3. Rebuilding strategies<br>a. Blue warehou<br>b. Orange roughy | Daniel Corrie | Advice | **120 mins** 1045-1245 |
| **Lunch** | | | **30 mins** 1245-1315 |
| 4. SESSF Five Year Research Plan | Daniel Corrie | Advice | **45 mins** 1315-1400 |
| 5. SESSF Priorities and Planning | Fiona Hill | Advice | **30 mins** 1400-1430 |
| 6. Legislative instruments advice and Action items | Fiona Hill/EO | Advice | **30 Mins** 1430-1455 |
| Meeting Close | Chair | Noting | **5 mins** 1455-1500 |

## Attachment C - Action Items from SEMAC Out of Session March 2021

| No | Action | When | Who |
|---|---|---|---|
| OOS1 | AFMA to request SERAG reconcile any spatial or temporal differences in juvenile and adult components of the blue warehou stocks | Next SERAG | Dan Corrie |
| OOS2 | AFMA to provide SEMAC with an interim update on SMARP implementation at SEMAC 43 | SEMAC 43 | Dan Corrie |
| OOS3 | AFMA to provide members with a revised draft SESSF Five-year Strategic Research Plan out of session (incorporating SEMAC comments) prior to seeking final support at SEMAC 43. | SEMAC 43 | Dan Corrie |