



**Australian Government**

**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**

## **South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC)**

### **Meeting 47 Commonwealth Trawl Sector Closure Advice**

#### **Meeting minutes**

**31 August 2022**

**Microsoft Teams**

# South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC)

## Meeting 47

### Commonwealth Trawl Sector (CTS) Closure Advice

31 August 2022

#### 1.1 Agenda

**Time (AEST):** 10:00

**Location:** via Teams Conference

**Chair Name:** David McGlennon

Attendees	Membership
Anissa Lawrence	Environment member
Daniel Corrie	AFMA member
Paul McShane	Scientific member
Kyri Toumazos	Industry member
Simon Boag	Industry member
Will Mure	Industry member
Gerry Geen	Industry member
John Harrison	Recreational member
Sarah Jennings	Economics member
Rebecca Jol	Executive Officer
Mark Grubert	AFMA Staff
Aaron Puckeridge	AFMA Staff
Heath Folpp	NSW DPI State-invited participant
Apologies	
Gerry Geen	Industry member

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
10:00-10:30	<b>Agenda item 1. Preliminaries</b>		
30 mins	1.1 Welcome and apologies	For action	Chair
	1.2 Declaration of interests	For action	Chair
	1.3 Adoption of agenda	For action	Chair
	1.4 Minutes from previous meeting	For noting	Chair
10:30-11:40	<b>Agenda item 2. CTS Closures</b>		Mark Grubert
70 mins			Dan Corrie
11:40-11:50	<b>Any other business</b>	Noting/Questions	Chair
10 mins			
11:55-12:00	<b>Meeting Close</b>	Noting	Chair
5 Mins			

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:00

## Agenda item 1. Preliminaries

### 1.1 Welcome and apologise

1. Mr David McGlennon, the Chair, welcomed members and observers and made an Acknowledgement of Country, paying our respects to this country's First People and Traditional Custodians of the land throughout Australia. Acknowledging Australia's Traditional Custodians of Country and recognising their continued connection to land, waters and community. Paying our respects to them and their cultures and to Elders past present and emerging.
2. The South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC) members noted the Acknowledgement of Country, accepted the meeting was being recorded and commenced proceedings.

### Membership

David McGlennon	Chair
Anissa Lawrence	Environment member
Daniel Corrie	AFMA member
Gerry Geen	Industry member
Paul McShane	Scientific member
Kyri Toumazos	Industry member
Simon Boag	Industry member
Will Mure	Industry member
John Harrison	Recreational member
Sarah Jennings	Economics member
Rebecca Jol	Executive Officer

### Invited Participants

Heath Folpp                      NSW DPI

### AFMA Staff

Mark Grubert

Aaron Puckeridge

### 1.2 Declarations of interest

3. SEMAC members followed the conflict-of-interest declarations as outlined in *Fisheries Management Paper 1*. Members and participants reviewed and updated the Declarations of Interest included at **Attachment A**.
4. The following members declared a conflict of interest for agenda item 2:
  - Simon Boag (Industry member)
  - Will Mure (Industry member)

5. The members with an agenda conflict left the meeting whilst the Chair sought advice on how SEMAC should manage these conflicts and agreed that members with an agenda conflict can participate in the discussion but will disconnect from the conference whilst recommendations are made.

### 1.3 Adoption of agenda

6. SEMAC adopted the agenda as final.

### 1.4 Minutes of previous meeting

7. SEMAC noted the final minutes of the SEMAC meeting of July 2022 will be finalised and sent out to members for comment in coming days.

## Agenda item 2 – CTS Closures

8. The Chair introduced the agenda item, asking SEMAC to provide advice to the AFMA Commission on the final design of the proposed spatial closures in the CTS, including an implementation timeline.
9. The AFMA Trawl manager Dr Mark Grubert presented a summary of the three rounds of consultation and subsequent refinements of the closure design, including a summary of how the impacts of the closures have been mitigated over the course of the consultation process [Appendix C](#).
10. SEMAC noted:
  - Feedback and requests raised during the second round of port meetings and the AFMA Commission meeting in mid-July prompted a third set of analyses and refinements to the proposed closures.
  - This included an examination of additional lost catch through the proposed “buffer” effect around all closures and the “bridge” effect between opposing ends of closures B and C and closure C and D.
    1. AFMA undertook an analysis of recent Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and logbook data around an existing dogfish closure at similar depths and found that operators are able to fish hard against the edge of this closure ([Attachment B – Trawling Effort \(otter boards\)-SESSF schedule 39 closure 2020-21](#)).
    2. AFMA also examined historical effort data that showed very little fishing activity in the areas between the proposed closures over the last three years, and the impact on commercial catch was considered negligible.
    3. Based on the above, AFMA did not include the potential effects of buffers or bridges in the final impact analysis.
  - Patterns in jackass morwong and John dory catches in recent years (2019 to 2021) were also examined, including daily and seasonal patterns. While there were some trends in the data, they were not sufficiently compelling to avoid additional catch of jackass morwong or John dory through some form of temporal closure.
  - Industry identified juvenile hotspot areas were overlaid with the boundaries of the proposed closures.
    1. The western side of Closure D was adjusted to align with a juvenile hotspot area with negligible impact on fishery Gross Value of Production (GVP).
    2. Another area of high juvenile discards was identified within the boundaries of Closure A.

- The western side of Closure A and the north-east corner of Closure D were adjusted to further reduce impacts on the catch of flathead and shelf break species (e.g., frostfish) respectively.
- AFMA examined the relative impacts of the five closures on the catches of target and at-risk species by Danish seiners and otter trawls for the period 2019-2021. This analysis revealed that Danish seine operators would be disproportionately impacted by Closure D, in that they would lose a far greater amount of flathead catch than otter trawlers, relative to the amount of jackass morwong or John dory catch conserved (summarised in Table 1 below)
- For the three-year period 2019-2012, Danish seiners caught ~500 kg of jackass morwong and ~120 t of flathead each year in closure D, compared to the annual catch of ~15 t of jackass morwong and ~130 t flathead by otter trawlers operating in the same area.

## Closure D Catch Statistics

Species	Danish seine		Otter trawl	
	Catch removed	% of catch removed	Catch removed	% of catch removed
Flathead	118.0 t	5.6%	129.4 t	6.1%
Jackass morwong	0.5 t	0.5%	15.0 t	14.8%
Blue warehou	0.0 t	0.1%	0.0 t	1.2%
Gemfish	0.0 t	0.0%	2.6 t	5.9%
John dory	3.2 t	5.3%	8.4 t	14.1%
Redfish	0.0 t	0.0%	0.2 t	0.8%
School shark	0.0 t	0.0%	0.2 t	6.2%

Note – Percentages are calculated from the fishery total (both gear types) east of 147

- Given the disproportionate impact and small amount of jackass morwong caught by Danish seiners in Closures D, AFMA proposed that Danish seine vessels may be allowed to fish within this area on the condition that changes to mesh are implemented across the Danish seine fleet to reduce the catch of small flathead and at-risk species across the sector (to offset the bycatch of these fishes).
- AFMA will work with Industry to determine the exact nature of the changes to gear specifications.
- AFMA proposed to allow strictly controlled access to the closures once implemented, to monitor their effectiveness and evaluate innovative methods to reduce the bycatch of at-risk species.
  1. Longer-term access to the closures will be considered for operators who can demonstrate that they can avoid catching at-risk species. This will likely be subject to the implementation of Electronic Monitoring (EM) across the fleet to validate catches.
  2. In the meantime, AFMA will support industry through co-management to investigate options for gear modification and trialling EM as a validation tool in the CTS.

- AFMA presented a table showing the GVP and impacts on total catch, flathead catch and the catch of at-risk species [Attachment C](#).
- The shift in effort and reduced catch from the closed areas is expected to impact Catch-Per-Unit-Effort (CPUE) analyses as well as the collection of data to support stock assessments. AFMA will work with industry to ensure ongoing monitoring inside the closures to minimise this impact.
- Timeframe considerations – consultation has taken longer than expected. AFMA are considering the impacts on the fishing year, quota investments and the timing needed for gear modifications. The Commission will make a final decision on the design and implementation timeframe for the closures at the 7-8 September 2022 meeting. The outcomes of this meeting will be explained to Industry in a correspondence and AFMA will continue to support Industry throughout the transition process.

#### 11. SEMAC discussed:

- Access to Closure D by Danish Seiners will be contingent upon the adoption of more selective gear (larger mesh) across the fishery.
- Reduced catches of small jackass morwong and John dory will likely offset additional catches in Closure D by the danish seine sector.
- Mr Simon Boag (Industry Member) noted that there are three options for gear changes that are being considered. The South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) have convened a working group to consider options for gear modifications and will provide advice to AFMA in time before the commencement of the next fishing season 1 May 2023.
- Industry have requested that the closures be implemented at the start of the next SESSF season (i.e. 1 May 2023) for the following reasons:
  1. To allow time to investigate potential gear modifications options, and
  2. In recognition that some operators have leased significant quota packages for the 2022–23 fishing season, which could not be fully utilised if the closures were to be implemented during the current season.
- AFMA are seeking an informed proposal from Industry for potential gear modification (increased mesh size) to be considered before the closures are implemented.
- It is not expected that the proposal is backed by research trials however Industry will need to work with fishing gear technicians or experts in fishing gear operations to provide a meaningful and supported proposal.
- AFMA encouraged industry participation in a Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) funded project on gear selectivity in the SESSF run by Matt Broadhurst of NSW Fisheries, adding that this work will support future improvements for the fishery. It was noted that the gear modifications being proposed by industry will be separate to this work.
- On-going monitoring will be important to ensure that the objectives for the closed areas are achieved; i.e., the total mortality is reduced and that fish stocks rebuild. This will be dependent on the collection of information across the entire fishery.
- Closures will compromise the ability to collect data and measure recovery in some areas. Data collection will be considered a priority to ensure that conservation targets are met and to monitor future changes in species distribution and abundance. Periodic independent surveys,

scientific permits and/or Close-Kin Mark-Recapture (CKMR) assessments will be considered to address these data needs.

- Simon Boag reiterated that the proposed closures will have a detrimental impact resulting in too many trawlers for the remaining amount of fishing ground and awaits confirmation of a structural adjustment package.
- AFMA have not received any further advice on the possible structural adjustment package in the CTS since the last SEMAC meeting.
- Sarah Jennings (economics member) noted that the closure design process has focussed on the impact of closures on fishery GVP rather than expected changes to profitability - which would account for changes in fisher behaviour (particularly the distribution of effort), costs and revenues. The point was made that, for price-flexible species, reduced catches may result in increased prices, meaning that the realised reduction in the GVP of the fishery may be less than predicted. It was also suggested that the broader economic and social impacts of the closures be monitored over coming years.

12. SEMAC supported the changes to the design and applicability of the proposed spatial closures for the CTS noting that future access to Closure D by Danish Seiners will be contingent upon the adoption of more selective gear (across the whole fishery).

13. SEMAC recommended the following:

- That the closures be implemented at the start of the next SESSF season - 1st May 2023 noting that some operators have leased significant quota packages for the 2022-23 fishing season and that time will be required to consider options for mesh gear modifications.
- That a clear timeline for the proposed closures is communicated with industry.
- That the profitability of the fleet and socioeconomic and regional impacts are monitored to adequately assess the impacts of the closures on the fishery over time.
- That on-going research and monitoring needs are considered as a priority to ensure that the objectives of the closed areas are achieved.

14. SEMAC acknowledged the professional approach taken by AFMA throughout the consultation process to refine the closures.

15. SEMAC acknowledged the work of ABARES staff and valued their involvement during the closure design phase.

## **Close of meeting**

16. The Chair thanked MAC members for their contribution and closed the meeting at 11.42 am.



## Attachment A - register of interest

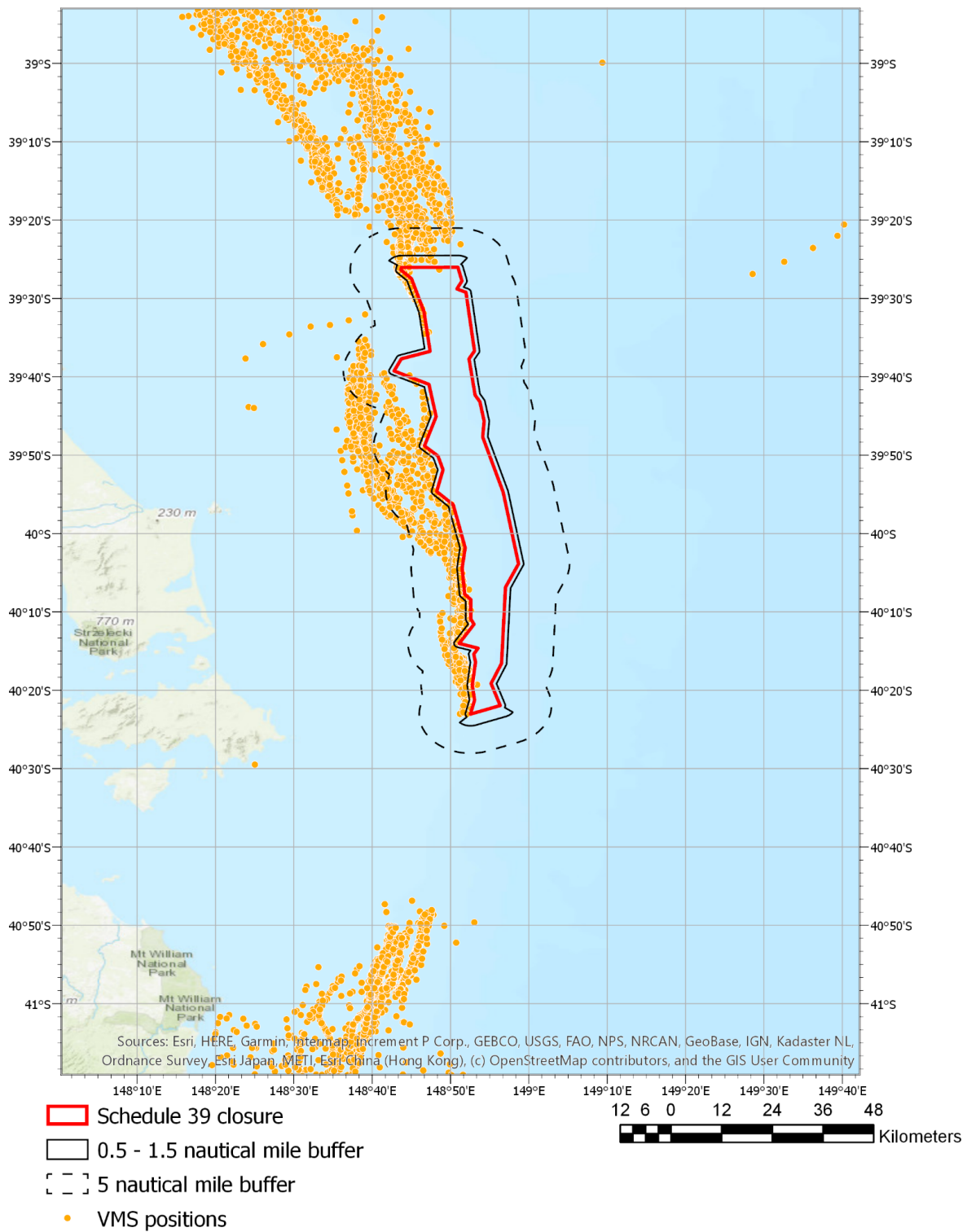
Table 1. Members, invited participants and observers declarations of interests.

Members	
Dr David McGlennon	SEMAC Chair - No interest pecuniary or otherwise
Ms Anissa Lawrence	No pecuniary interest Director of TierraMar Ltd Independent consultant Undertakes contracts for a number of Conservation NGOs, government departments, non-government agencies and the private sector on a range of fishery related matters Conservation member on SHARKRAG, SPFRAG, SEMAC and the South Australian Rock Lobster MAC Chair of Ocean Future Fund Inc
Mr Gerry Geen	No pecuniary interest.
Mr Will Mure	Sole Director of Mures Fishing P/L Commonwealth fish receiver permit, Tasmania fish processing licence Scalefish hook boat SFR SEQ Quota Holding Permits Auto longline fishing permit High Seas permit Blue eye trevalla SFRs Ling SFRs Ribaldo ITP Mixed species Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) and SFRs Member of various fishing related associations including Seafood Industry Australia (SIA), SETFIA, Southern Shark Industry Alliance (SSIA), Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) Industry Member on SERAG
Dr Paul McShane	Chair of SERAG and a member of SEMAC and SESSFRAG. No pecuniary interest in the SESSF. Principal of Global Marine Resource Management Pty Ltd. Adjunct Professor (Fisheries and Aquaculture) College of Science and Engineering, James Cook University.
Dr Sarah Jennings	Economics member on SERAG and SESSFRAG Economics coordinator, FRDC Human Dimensions Subprogram. Member of AFMA Economics Working Group. Independent economics consultant. No pecuniary or other interest.
Mr John Harrison	Panel Member of the Independent Review of the Domestic Commercial Vessel Safety Legislation and Cost and Charging Arrangements.
Mr Simon Boag	Industry member on SERAG. Executive Officers to SETFIA, SSIA and SPFIA. SETFIA and SSIA receives funding from AFMA to complete projects under co-management agreements.

	Undertakes contracts as an independent consultant.
Mr. Kyriakos Toumazos	<p>Director of Southern Sea Eagles Pty Ltd</p> <p>Director of Southern Fisheries Pty Ltd</p> <p>Board Member of South Australian Boating Facility Board</p> <p>Executive Officer of South Australian Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association</p> <p>Board Member of Southern Shark Industry Alliance</p> <p>Industry Member on Shark Resource Assessment Group</p> <p>Industry Member of AMSA Regional Safety Committee</p> <p>Director of Health Balance Pharmacies</p>
Dr. Mark Grubert	AFMA Demersal and Midwater Senior Manager – AFMA SEMAC member – no interest pecuniary or otherwise.
<b>Invited participant</b>	
Mr. Heath Folpp	NSW DPI State – no interest pecuniary or otherwise.
<b>Executive Officer</b>	
Rebecca Jol	AFMA – Senior Management support Officer, Demersal and Midwater Fisheries. No interest pecuniary or otherwise.

## Attachment B

### Trawling effort (otter boards) - SESSF schedule 39 closure 2020-21



## Attachment C

Table 1: Change in the Gross Value of Production (GVP) and impacts on total catch, flathead catch, and at-risk species catch through the closure consultation process.

Component	3-year annual catch/value	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3	
		% reduction in catch/value	Impact on catch/value	% reduction in catch/value	Impact on catch/value	% reduction in catch/value	Impact on catch/value
GVP (\$M)	\$36.1	25%	\$9.0	15%	\$5.4	12%	\$4.4
Total Catch (t)	6,170.5	24%	1,505.6	15%	831.5	11%	674.1
Flathead (t)	2,114.7	32%	666.6	22%	470.4	16%	342.5
Jackass morwong (t)	101.5	68%	69.1	62%	62.8	60%	61.1
Blue warehou (t)	4.0 t	50%	2.0 t	41%	1.6 t	40%	1.6 t
Gemfish (t)	44.8 t	30%	13.7 t	11%	4.9 t	10%	4.3 t
John dory (t)	59.4 t	43%	25.8 t	38%	22.3 t	37%	18.9 t
Redfish (t)	26.1 t	8%	2.0 t	6%	1.5 t	5%	1.2 t
School shark (t)	3.6 t	69%	2.5 t	57%	2.0 t	57%	2.0 t