



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC) Meeting 36

Meeting minutes

4 March 2022

10:47-16:40

Microsoft Teams



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC)

Meeting 36 – 4 March 2022

Agenda

Time (AEDT): 10:45 – 16:15

Location: Microsoft Teams

Chair Name: Daryl McPhee

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
10:45 (45 min)	Agenda item 1. Preliminaries		
	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
	1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings	For noting	Executive officer
11:30 (30 min)	Agenda item 2. Fishery Updates		
	2.1 AFMA Management	Taken as read	AFMA member
	2.2 State fisheries	Taken as read	State observers
	2.3 Industry	Taken as read	Industry members
	2.4 Environment	Taken as read	Environment member
	2.5 Economic	Taken as read	Economic member
12:00 (45 min)	Lunch		
12:45 (30 min)	Agenda item 3. Harvest Strategy Review 3.1 Accounting for economic performance	For advice	Invited Participants
13:15 (120 min)	Agenda item 3. Harvest Strategy review (continued) 3.2 Key priorities in the Harvest Strategy 3.3 Additional considerations	For advice	AFMA member
15:15 (15 min)	Afternoon Tea		
15:30 (30 min)	Agenda item 4. Five Year Strategic Research Plan	For advice	AFMA member
16:00 (15 min)	Agenda item 5. BSSIA project update	For advice	BSSIA executive office
16:15	End of meeting		

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:47

Agenda Item 1. Preliminaries

1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. Dr Daryl McPhee the Chair, welcomed members and observers to the meeting 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 Scallop Management Advisory Committee (the MAC) members noted the Acknowledgement of Country, that the meeting was being recorded and commenced proceedings.

3. Membership

Daryl McPhee	Chair
Brendan Kelaher	Scientific member
Julian Morison	Economic member
Sylvia Zukowski	Environment member
Peter Mellios	Industry member
Debbie Wisby	Industry member
Andrew Watts	Industry member
Stuart Richey	Industry member
John Hammond	Industry member
John Cull	Industry member
Lara Ainley	AFMA member
Heather Johnston	Executive officer

4. Invited Participants

Andrew Sullivan	Industry
Bob Lister	Industry
Matt Koopman	Fishwell Consulting
James Parkinson	NRE TAS

5. Observers

Dan Corrie	AFMA Management
------------	-----------------

6. Apologies

Michelle Wenner	VFA
-----------------	-----

1.2 Declarations of interest

7. The MAC members followed the conflict of interest declarations as outlined in [Fisheries Management Paper 1 – Management Advisory Committees](#). Members and participants reviewed and updated the Declarations of Interest included at [Attachment A](#).
8. John Cull, Stuart Richey, Debbie Wisby, John Hammond, Andrew Watts and Andrew Sullivan declared a potential conflict with Agenda Item 6 'BSSIA Project Update'. The members and invited participants with the potential conflict left the meeting while the MAC considered their interest and how they should be managed.
9. The MAC agreed that John Cull, Stuart Richey, Andrew Watts, Debbie Wisby, John Hammond and Andrew Sullivan could be part of the discussion but should not participate in the forming of the MAC recommendation for Agenda Item 6.

1.2 Adoption of agenda

10. The MAC adopted the [agenda](#) as final.

1.3 Minutes of previous meeting

11. The MAC noted the final minutes of the ScallopMAC 35 meeting on 18 June 2021 are available on the [AFMA website](#) ('Fisheries Management' – 'Committees' - 'Management Advisory Committees' - 'Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Advisory Committee').

1.4 Actions arising from previous meetings

12. The MAC noted the action items from previous meetings and the updates provided by the AFMA member at [Attachment B](#).

Agenda Item 2 – Fishery update

13. The Chair introduced the Agenda Item and asked the MAC to note the AFMA Management, State fishery, industry, environment and economic updates for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF).

2.1 AFMA Management

14. The AFMA member provided an update on matters relevant to the management of the BSCZSF:
 - 60 per cent (2,330 t) of the 3,905 t commercial scallop total allowable catch (TAC) was caught by ten boats in 2021. 40 kg of doughboy scallop were caught and no protected species interactions were reported in 2021.
 - In the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARES) 2021 Fishery Status Report, commercial scallops were listed as not subject to overfishing and not overfished. The report noted:
 - There was a large and stable biomass of scallops identified in western Bass Strait.
 - The TAC and catch in 2020 were relatively small compared to the estimated biomass and, hence, the net economic return (NER) to the fishery is likely to be positive.
 - Information from recent surveys indicate that the stock is healthy and catches are sustainable.
 - Beach Energy completed the Prion 3D marine Seismic Survey between November and December 2021. A Before and After Control Impact (BACI) survey is being conducted, with the before phase undertaken in August 2021 and the after phase expected to be undertaken in April 2022.

- Dan Corrie has commenced in the role of Senior Manager, Demersal and Midwater Fisheries, and will continue to be based in Lakes Entrance.

2.2 State fisheries

15. The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) invited participant provided a written update on the Victorian scallop (ocean) fishery:

- The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) undertook a biomass survey in late 2021 to enable management decisions for the 2022 fishing season.
- Consultation on the 2022/23 total allowable commercial catch has now concluded and VFA are expected to formalise their decision soon.
- The Victorian scallop (ocean) fishery showed good signs of recruitment and catches in 2021.

16. The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Tasmania (NRE Tas) provided an update on the Tasmanian scallop fishery:

- The 2021 Tasmanian scallop season opened on 1 September with a TAC set at 1,495 t.
- Following the season opening there were reports of poor quality, dying or dead scallops and no fishing occurred after 8 September.
- Four scallop entitlements were active, landing 56 t from eight trips.
- Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) advice, provided using evidence based on sea-surface temperature, suggested the die off may have occurred due to a warm water event experienced in early August.

2.3 Industry

17. The MAC industry members provided an update on matters relevant to the BSCZSF:

- Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 season was successful with the beach price increasing midway through the season.
- The market increased with a reduction in catches from other Australian scallop fisheries and imports.
- Staffing for processors and boats continues to be an issue.

2.4 Environment

18. The MAC environment member provided an overview of research undertaken on matters relevant to the BSCZSF and scallops:

- A study was recently undertaken in Australia that tested the natural mortality rate of saucer scallops through a tag-recapture study. It was through that there was a higher natural mortality over summer months compared to winter months and found the natural mortality to be higher than previously thought.

2.5 Economic

19. The RAG economic member noted according to the ABARES status report there had been a drop in the GVP in 2020.

20. The RAG noted that the update to the RAG on the project '*Informing the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Harvest Strategy and TAC setting process with economic data and MEY proxies*' will be provide at Agenda Item 3.1.

Matt Koopman left the meeting

Agenda Item 3 – Harvest Strategy review

21. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda Item and asked the MAC to provide advice on the review of the Harvest Strategy.

22. The MAC noted the following background:

- The *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy 2018 (HSP)* and *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy (HSP Guidelines)* were released in November 2018. Accordingly, all Commonwealth fishery harvest strategies need to be revised within four years to ensure they meet the requirements of the HSP.
- the Harvest Strategy last had a comprehensive review in 2014 in response to industry concerns about the cost effectiveness and flexibility of the 2012 Harvest Strategy. Since this review, in addition to the release of broader fishery policies, the management of the BSCZSF has evolved, underpinned by a better understanding of stock status from the annual biomass survey, and the need to consider the economic performance of the fishery when setting the TAC.
- AFMA are in the process of reviewing and updating the Harvest Strategy to better reflect the current state of the fishery; and which is scalable and can respond to changes in biomass or economic factors over time.

3.1 Accounting for economic performance

23. The MAC noted the following:

- The Harvest Strategy currently considers sustainability and the outputs of the annual biomass survey as the key factor in determining a TAC. The inclusion of decision rules in the Harvest Strategy that account for the economic performance of the fishery have been identified as a gap, and are a key factor being considered in this review.
- An objective of the *Fisheries Management Act 1991* (the Act) is to maximise the net economic returns (NER) to the Australian community by implementing efficient and cost-effective fisheries management on behalf of the Commonwealth. AFMA are working on developing guidance on how the NER objective is interpreted, measuring economic performance and providing support for RAGs and MACs to consider economic information. AFMA will commence consultation with key stakeholders, including RAGs and MACs, as the development of this work progresses.
- In June 2020, AFMA funded the research project (190836) '*Informing the BSCZSF Harvest Strategy and TAC setting process with economic data and Maximum Economic Yield (MEY) proxies*'. A key output of the project was to develop a Fisheries Gross Margin (FGM) model with a view to providing information on how the fishery will perform under a range of TAC scenarios.
- The objectives of this project were to collect economic information from the scallop fishery and supply chain; suggest appropriate MEY proxies that align with the HSP; provide economic information to be considered in the TAC determination process with regards to maximising NER, and report the results to AFMA, ScallopRAG and the MAC. Further work, AFMA funded research project (200811) '*Analysis of economic data collected in the fishery*', which updates and builds on the FGM model is also progressing and is expected to be completed by June 2022.
- Both projects have raised concern that industry participation is low and will need to be improved to generate more meaningful results. The AFMA Commission have requested advice from ScallopRAG and the MAC on the findings from this project, including whether revisions to the Harvest Strategy

should continue to explore incorporating the FGM model and economic-related decision rules in the TAC setting process.

- ScallopRAG provided the advice that while the current iteration of the FGM model is not ready to be included in a revised Harvest Strategy, ScallopRAG considered the approach to be reasonable and supported further development.

24. The MAC made the following key points:

- Assumptions on price flexibility needs to be revised if the model is going to be more accurate and informative.
- The TAC needs to be set using the best available information, noting that from a biological status the TAC could be higher than it is currently set.
- The FGM model wouldn't determine the TAC but would provide advice through decision rules and a discussion would still be had by ScallopRAG and the MAC when providing TAC advice.
- The next step for the project would be reach out to operators again and understand the dynamics of the fishery and use this information to determination an estimate of price flexibility that is appropriate.
- While leasing cost is a consideration for operators, leasing costs has not been incorporated into the model.
- The catch or TAC from the previous season would be an appropriate starting point for the TAC for the following season.
- The model seems to fit around the current TACs and catches, consistent with the capacity of the fishery, and can respond to changes in the fishery.
- AFMA data (catch, dredge hours, CPUE) for the non-respondents were used to align the reported variable costs of the surveyed business to the fishery as a whole. This adjustment for survey bias would occur again in the future but, ideally, higher response rates will be achieved to reduce/eliminate the impact of outliers.
- How CPUE is included in the model could be further refined. For example, more weight given to the most recent year; incorporating recovery, size, density as metrics as these are commonly used by industry.

25. The MAC supported ScallopRAG's advice to further develop the model.

3.2 Key priorities in the Harvest Strategy

3.2.1 Definitions

26. The MAC noted the following:

- The review of the Harvest Strategy has highlighted the need for clear, robust and scalable decision rules to guide the TAC setting process.
- The Harvest Strategy Working Group (the Working Group) has discussed possible definitions of terms to be included in the revised Harvest Strategy and used in decision rules, particularly relating to scallop size, maturity, recruitment, density and how closures are implemented.
- There is currently no minimum size limit regulated in the BSCZSF, and the Working Group have advised that introducing a limit would create significant logistical and operational issues within the fishery. AFMA expects that appropriately designed closures, market limitations, and adaptive in-

season management would achieve the same outcomes. AFMA propose to no longer consider a minimum landing size limit during this review.

27. The MAC noted the proposed definitions for key terms used in the fishery:

- Mature Scallop: A scallop which is 85 mm or larger
- Recruit: A scallop which is larger than 76 mm and smaller than 85 mm
- Pre-recruit: A scallop which is smaller than 76 mm
- Mature scallop bed: An area or scallop bed containing no less than 80% of scallops that are greater than 85 mm in size; and where the estimated density of scallops greater than 85 mm in size is greater than 0.2 individuals/m²
- Formal closure: A formal closure is one implemented by AFMA under the Harvest Strategy through a legislative determination and remains in place for the duration of the fishing season.
- Voluntary closure: Voluntary closures are managed through the Industry Co-management Committee and may be amended in-season to adapt to any changes or issues that arise during the season (eg, swapping).

28. The MAC made the following key points:

- While the MAC understood the need to be explicit in the definitions, some members felt that the formal closure definition did not need to state that the closure would remain in place for the duration of the season as there may be circumstances where this may not apply.
- While these definitions are proposed for the revised Harvest Strategy, if for any reason they needed to be amended it is a routine process which could be done in consultation with ScallopRAG and the MAC.
- The definition for formal closure could be amended to be 'a formal closure is one implemented by AFMA under the Harvest Strategy through a legislative determination', removing the explicit requirement for the formal closures to be in place for the duration of the fishing season.

29. The MAC supported ScallopRAGs advice and recommended:

- That the proposed definitions be incorporated into the revised Harvest Strategy, noting the discussion regarding whether to include the need for the formal closures to be in place for the duration of the fishing season.
- That a formal minimum size is not implemented.

3.2.2 Default opening

30. The MAC noted the following background:

- Under the current Harvest Strategy, prior to the opening of the scallop fishing season, AFMA with advice from the BSCZSSF Industry Management Committee (the Co-Management Committee) decide if the fishery should open under the default arrangements (150 t TAC) or conduct a biomass survey to determine if the fishery can open with a higher TAC.
- In recent years, the Co-Management Committee have opted to conducting a biomass survey, and the 150 t 'searching TAC' has not been utilised.
- Under the revised Harvest Strategy, AFMA proposes that the biomass survey is conducted by default, unless otherwise advised by the Co-Management Committee. In scenarios where the

biomass is low, or industry may need to search for scallops after periods of closure, a TAC of 150 t may be utilised as an alternative to the default opening.

31. The MAC made the following key points:

- The use of a default opening will also be dependent on other components of the Harvest Strategy review such as the application of a multi-year TAC (MYTAC).

32. The MAC supported ScallopRAGs advice and recommended:

- That a default opening under the revised Harvest Strategy be that a biomass survey is conducted, unless otherwise advised by the Co-Management Committee.

3.2.3 Stock biomass level, reference points and TACs

33. The MAC noted the following:

- Under the revised Harvest Strategy, AFMA's preference is to include clear and objective decision rules for recommending TACs that are robust, scalable and reflect the current state of the fishery.
- While the estimate of biomass is based on a clearly defined and well understood survey, there is little guidance in the current Harvest Strategy on how this translates to a TAC.
- AFMA are seeking feedback on a framework, which provided an example of how an estimated biomass would translate to closure requirements, estimates of maximum sustainable harvest and a TAC range.
- The framework is proposed to be the 'first layer', with the final recommendations for closures and the TAC to be determined based on a series of decision rules, to be developed, considering factors such as stock dynamics and fishery economics.
- The Working Group noted that while the framework provides a general approach, there is limited information available to quantify sustainable harvest levels and closure requirements at various biomass levels and proposed that further advice was required.
- ScallopRAG recommended AFMA seek expert advice to inform the values within the Harvest Control Rules (HCR) framework, specifically sustainable harvest levels and a minimum limit threshold.

34. The MAC made the following key points:

- There should be a mechanism in the revised Harvest Strategy to standardise the biomass survey to prevent the TAC being cherry picked, based on the areas surveyed.
- The minimum biomass to close could be a percentage rather than a tonnage.
- In the proposed framework, rather than stock biomass level (surveyed t) it could be estimated biomass of mature scallops (surveyed t).

35. The MAC supported ScallopRAGs recommendation for AFMA to seek expert advice to inform the values within the HCR framework, specifically sustainable harvest levels and a minimum limit threshold.

3.2.4 Closures and adaptive in-season management

36. The MAC noted the following:

- The biomass, condition and size of scallops, and presence of recruits and pre-recruits identified during the pre-season biomass survey and are a key factor in providing advice on closures. However, the understanding of the stock dynamics may change throughout the season, which may

warrant flexible or adaptive management strategies that ensure continued access to the best quality scallops, whilst ensuring sustainability objectives are met.

- Scallop beds that are closed under voluntary arrangements provide greater flexibility to adapt to changes during the fishing season. However, AFMA's position is that there is still a need for formal closures, based on sustainability, that should remain closed for the duration of the fishing season.
- Guidance on determining when it is appropriate to implement a formal closure or a voluntary closure, as well as adaptive in-season management, will be captured in the revised Harvest Strategy and incorporated in the Co-Management Committees terms of reference where relevant.

37. The MAC made the following key points:

- In recent years the amount of biomass closed under formal closures is in excess of what is required under the current Harvest Strategy.
- It needs to be ensured that the minimum amount closed under formal closures is adequate.
- It should be explicit that meeting the indicator does not require a management response.
- There could be a maximum amount that could be closed under the formal closures.
- The revised Harvest Strategy should be explicit on the type of survey being undertaken to obtain the biomass estimate.

3.3 Additional considerations

3.3.1 Multi-year total allowable catch

38. The MAC noted the following:

- The current Harvest Strategy requires that, following advice from the Committee, an annual biomass survey be conducted to inform the TAC determination each year. AFMA have proposed that the biomass survey is conducted annually as the default opening of the fishery.
- A multi-year total allowable catch (MYTAC) may be considered where biomass is estimated at a high level, requiring the survey to be conducted less regularly and generating savings for the management costs of the fishery.

39. The MAC made the following key points:

- The absence of the 2020 biomass survey is an example of when a MYTAC has been set in the fishery, discount factors were applied and there was sufficient information available to make an informed decision.
- It would be feasible to set a MYTAC however the concept needs to be further refined, including fishery dependent data, economic metrics and break out rules.
- If a MYTAC was applied, closures could be applied for the extent of the MYTAC to ensure sufficient protection is applied.
- A MYTAC would provide stability to industry.
- Industry data collection could be used to provide information in years without a biomass survey.

3.3.2 Outcomes of research

40. The MAC noted the following background:

- Research funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC; Project 2012-027, *'Determining when and where to fish: Linking scallop spawning, settlement, size and condition to*

collaborative spatial harvest and industry in-season management strategies’) has provided useful insights into the biological characteristics of scallops, including fecundity and size at maturity, and peak spawning and settlement periods across the fishery.

- Some of these factors, particularly size at maturity, are explicit components of the current Harvest Strategy, whereas others such as peak spawning and settlement periods are considered for adaptive in-season management purposes.
- The current Harvest Strategy defines a commercially viable scallop as being greater than 85 mm in shell size. This is based on scallop maturity and the assumption that a scallop of that size has likely spawned twice and that after this stage, it would be suitable to harvest. However, FRDC project 2012-027 suggested that the fecundity is greater for scallops that are 90 mm in shell size.
- FRDC project 2012-027 highlighted that areas of the fishery that differ in terms of the timing of peak fishing (scallop condition), and spawning and recruitment events, which may warrant regional approaches to management.
- ScallopRAG noted industry-driven, adaptive in-season management may provide adequate flexibility to manage peak spawning and harvesting times during the season, and the season start and end dates can continue to be determined annually.

41. The MAC made the following key points:

- The current Harvest Strategy does not recognise scallops under 85 mm, scallops within the marine protected areas and the biomass in the adjoining state fisheries.
- Underwater video surveys will be beneficial for obtaining biomass estimates in areas such as marine protected areas.

3.3.2 Climate change

42. The MAC noted the following:

- Temperature has been shown to be a clear predictor of scallop spawning timing, and is also known to influence the spatial distribution and availability of scallops during the season.
- While the Working Group recognises the need to consider the long-term impacts of climate change in the revised Harvest Strategy, they noted that where these are to be explicitly incorporated into a future Harvest Strategy, for example through harvest control rules, they should be subject to considerable scrutiny and supported by monitoring data.
- The collection of environmental data will be pursued through updates to the BSCZSF Data Plan and in collaboration with industry. In the meantime, the annual biomass survey provides a time-series and an insight to the longer-term dynamics of the stock, which is likely influenced by environmental conditions, and to some extent can be compared to environmental conditions and used as a predictor of future biomass.
- AFMA and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), through FRDC project 2016-059 ‘*Adaptation of Commonwealth fisheries management to climate change*’, have developed a handbook to understand the risks of climate change to fisheries and addresses the management required to mitigate those risks. Recommendations from this work will be considered and incorporated as appropriate and in consultation with stakeholders.
- ScallopRAG noted until such time that sufficient data and policy guidance is available to support consideration of longer-term climate change impacts within the Harvest Strategy, AFMA proposes to continue to utilise adaptive in-season management to respond to inter-annual environmentally driven changes in stock dynamics (for example, area closures).

43. The MAC made the following key points:

- There has been research conducted which suggested that ocean warming can directly increase recruitment of commercially fished scallops by enhancing gonad development.
- Ocean acidification has the potential to reduce biomass by up to 50 per cent in high emission cases and 13 per cent in low emission cases.
- The adaptive management that has been proposed would account for inter-annual environmentally driven changes.
- The timing of the fishing season and when the biomass survey is undertaken may be impacted by climate change.
- There is anecdotal data that increased water temperature may negatively impact commercial scallops.

3.3.2 Rebuilding strategy

44. The MAC noted the following:

- Formal rebuilding strategies are required to support rebuilding stocks when they are assessed as having fallen below a biomass limit reference point (or proxy thereof). Rebuilding strategies typically include a combination of management responses such as reductions to the TAC, area closures and modifications to gear requirements. Ongoing data collection and updates to stock assessments are also a key component of most rebuilding strategies, to ensure the status of the stock is monitored and the objectives of the rebuilding strategy are being met.
- To a large extent the mechanisms to rebuild scallop populations are already accounted for in the current Harvest Strategy; where the TAC is set at zero t and the fishery closed if the biomass level falls below a limit reference point. Further, noting that the definition of the default opening is being re-considered, the revised Harvest Strategy will outline a process whereby a biomass survey is not undertaken by default and a 150 t 'searching TAC' is utilised in low biomass scenarios such as during rebuilding.
- The Working Group advised that biomass levels in the fishery should be monitored during any phase of rebuilding, with clear objectives to inform when it is appropriate to re-open the fishery, regardless if under a formal rebuilding strategy. Consideration will be given to how such monitoring is funded, including whether research catch allowance is allocated, or through other data collection protocols.

45. The MAC made the following key points:

- An explicit rebuilding plan would provide industry with guidance on what would happen in a scenario when the biomass was below the proxy of a limit reference point.
- The proposed change to the default opening, 150 t, would be used during the rebuilding strategy.
- There should be some confidence in the fishery that the biomass can be rebuilt as it has occurred in the past.
- Retained catch alone might not be sufficient to undertake surveys in periods of low biomass, payment to the boats may be needed.

3.3.2 Findings from the MSC assessment

46. The MAC noted the following background:

- A recent Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) assessment for the fishery identified several conditions and recommendations that may be addressed under a revised Harvest Strategy.
- The Harvest Strategy review to date has already considered most of the conditions and recommendations that were made; and the Working Group advised that there was no immediate action required.
- Regarding the condition to peer review the assessment, ScallopRAG supported the current process of the assessment being reviewed by ScallopRAG. Noting there could be an additional process of independent review every five years, similar to other fisheries, however if it was required for maintaining MSC certification it should be paid for by the client.

47. The MAC made the following key points:

- AFMA are undertaking the Harvest Strategy review regardless of the MSC assessment and the decisions made under that review will be based on the needs of the fishery and the relevant policy.

Agenda Item 4 – Five year strategic research plan

48. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda Item and asked the MAC to provide advice on the developed of the BSCZSF Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2022-26.

49. The MAC noted the following background:

- In accordance with the *Fisheries Administration Act 1992*, one of AFMA's functions is to establish priorities in respect of research relating to fisheries and arrange for the undertaking of such research. This is achieved through the AFMA Strategic Research Plan 2017-22 which sets out a framework for each fishery to review its information and development needs and to plan and develop its five year strategic research plan.
- The research priorities for each Commonwealth fishery vary depending on the information requirements and issues faced within the fisheries. The AFMA Research Plan recognises that, due to the costs associated with research and as a result of competing pressures, there needs to be an emphasis on strategic planning to allow for the highest long-term return on research investment.
- The existing BSCZSF Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2017-18 to 2021-22 was developed in consultation with fisheries stakeholders at the BSCZSF Research Workshop in March 2017 and identifies areas of high priority research for the BSCZSF for the period 2017-18 to 2021-22 and includes a summary of research projects to be undertaken. However, the RAG recognised that it would require significant resources and funding to complete these projects and it was unlikely that all of the projects would be completed within the five year timeframe.
- It is the intention that the draft 2022-26 Research Plan will focus on new and emerging issues and provide strategic direction for the fishery's research needs, aligning with the priorities and objectives outlined in the AFMA Research Plan.

50. The MAC made the following key points:

- Monitoring of protected species interactions is a low priority in the fishery due to the low bycatch in the fishery. An update to the bycatch and discarding workplan is due to be reviewed and would capture the detail of how monitoring is currently undertaken in the fishery.
- The investigation of alternative tools to monitor scallop biomass shouldn't be restricted to the area of the fishery.
- AFMA are currently undertaking a review of the RAG and MAC process and this may influence how they are referred to in key documents.

Agenda Item 5 – BSSIA project update

51. The BSSIA Executive Officer introduced the Agenda Item. The MAC were asked to consider the BSSIA request for 28 t of RCA as part of the FRDC project '2019-120: *Building industry capacity to lead co-management initiatives within the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery: Training industry to conduct biomass estimate surveys and provide advice on any sustainability risks of surveys being conducted in areas closed in 2020 or areas identified to be closed in 2021*'.
52. The MAC noted the following background:
- FRDC project 2019-120 is a two year project, with the focus being educating and training skippers and crew in the use of survey techniques and equipment to enable reliable and quick assessments of scallop beds using the same methods currently used in the biomass survey.
 - An assessment of the Three Hummock – North and South was undertaken in November 2021 as part of FRDC project 2019-120.
53. In formulating its advice, the MAC noted the following:
- ScallopRAG supported the request for 28 t of RCA and recommended that the research be undertaken outside of the areas being surveyed during the 2022 biomass survey and those closed during the 2021 fishing season.
 - While the MAC are being asked to provide advice on the request for RCA, the approval is at the discretion of the AFMA Commission or the AFMA Research Committee. In this case the request would be put to the AFMA Commission and if possible a decision would be made prior to the start of the 2022 fishing season.
 - The first year was primarily about developing training and engaging with industry, with the second year to be an expansion.
 - Industry have been notified about the project being undertaken.
 - The MAC supported a proposal for RCA for this project in 2021, however due to timing this proposal did not get put to the AFMA Commission.
54. Those members and invited participants who declared a potential conflict left the meeting while the recommendations were being formed.

Recommendations

55. The MAC supported the request for 28 t of RCA.
56. Those members and invited participants who declared a potential conflict returned to the meeting.

Close of meeting

57. The Chair thanked the MAC for their contribution to the meeting.
58. The meeting was closed at 16:40.

Attachment A- register of interest

Table 1 declared interests

Name	Membership	Declared interests
Daryl McPhee	Chair	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Brendan Kelaher	Scientific Member	ScallopRAG Chair. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Julian Morison	Economic member	Director, Kuti Co Pty Ltd – SA Pipi quota holder; Economics member, SA Marine Scalefish Fishery, Management Advisory Committee (PIRSA); Economics member, Shark Resource Assessment Group (AFMA); Member, Economics Working Group (AFMA); Member, Human Dimensions Research subprogram Steering Committee (FRDC); Economics member, Spanner Crab Harvest Strategy Working Group (NSWDPI); Deputy economics member, Total Allowable Fishing Committee (NSWDPI)
Sylvia Zukowski	Environment Member	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise
Andrew Watts	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Debbie Wisby	Industry member	Holds State concessions and leases Commonwealth quota.
John Cull	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Peter Mellios	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth concession and a processor
Stuart Richey	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
John Hammond	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
Heather Johnston	Executive Officer	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Matt Koopman	Invited participant, Fishwell Consulting	Fishwell Consulting. We have undertaken the BSCZSF survey since 2015. We also submit research funding applications and undertake research projects for Commonwealth, State and International fisheries agencies and other organisations including fishery associations and private companies. We are regularly engaged by SETFIA to report to numerous seismic exploration companies on fishing catch, effort and value that takes overlaps with the proposed seismic testing areas. This included catch and effort from the

		BSCZSF. Related projects are looking at the effects of the seismic survey off east Gippsland on Danish seine catches, and on scallop densities in Bass Strait. I have no interest in any commercial fisheries.
Andrew Sullivan	Invited participant, Industry	Executive Officer, Bass Strait Scallop Industry Association
Bob Lister	Invited participant, Industry	Executive Officer, Scallop Fishermen's Association of Tasmania
Dan Corrie	Observer, AFMA Management	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Lara Ainley	AFMA Member, AFMA Management	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.

Attachment B- action items

Complete/Redundant

Underway

Yet to start

Need further advice

Table 2. Progress of action items from previous meetings

	Meeting #	Agenda Item	No.	Action Item	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe	Progress
	35	7	1	AFMA to write out to the recommended Co-Management Committee members and seek their recommendation on Chair, within the context of the membership	AFMA	Prior to 2021 fishing season	Completed, the Committee appointed Jonathan Hammond as Chair
	35	3.1	2	AFMA to write to operators to request that operators make every attempt to record any interactions with the four high risk species and include an identification guide in the 2021 fishing season Management Arrangements Booklet	AFMA	Prior to 2021 fishing season	Completed. Included in 2021 season rollover letter and Management Arrangements Booklet

	35	6	3	AFMA to confirm the minimum size for doughboy scallops.	AFMA	As soon as possible after ScallopMAC 35	No minimum size for doughboy scallops
--	----	---	---	---	------	---	---------------------------------------