



**Australian Government**

**Australian Fisheries Management Authority**

## **Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC) Meeting 38**

**Meeting minutes**

**8 June 2023**

**9:00-15:12**

**Microsoft Teams**



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

## Meeting 38 – 8 June 2023

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### Agenda

**Time (AEDT):** 9:00 – 15:10

**Location:** Microsoft Teams

**Chair Name:** Daryl McPhee

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter	
9:00 (30 min)	<b>Agenda item 1. Preliminaries</b>			
	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	AFMA member	
9:30 (30 min)	<b>Agenda item 2. Fishery update</b>			
	2.1 AFMA Management	For noting	AFMA member	
	2.2 Industry	For noting	Industry members	
	2.3 State fisheries	For noting	State managers	
	2.4 Environment	For noting	Environment member	
	2.5 Economic	For noting	Economic member	
	2.6 Research	For noting	Scientific member	
10:00 (60 min)	<b>Agenda item 3. 2023 pre-season survey</b>		For noting	Matt Koopman
	3.1 Biomass survey results			
11:00 (15 min)	Morning Tea			
11:15 (60 min)	<b>Agenda item 4. 2023 season recommendations</b>		For advice	AFMA member
	4.1 TAC (commercial and doughboy scallop)			
	4.2 Closures			
	4.3 Season dates			
12.:15 (30 Min)	<b>Agenda item 5. Harvest Strategy review update</b>			
	5.1 Harvest control rules – advice and recommendations	For noting		AFMA Member

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
	5.2 Consideration of economics in the management of the BSCZSF	For advice	Julian Morison
12:45 (30 min)	<b>Agenda item 6. Climate Change</b>	For advice	AFMA member
13:15 (30 min)	<b>Lunch</b>		
13:45 (45 min)	<b>Agenda item 7. Research priorities</b>	For advice	AFMA member
	7.1 Five year strategic research plan		
	7.2 Annual research statement		
14:30 (15 min)	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>		
14:45 (30 min)	<b>Agenda item 8. Co-Management Committee</b>	Update	AFMA
15:15 (15 min)	<b>Agenda item 9. Any other business</b>	For advice	AFMA member
15:30	<b>End of meeting</b>		

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:00

## Agenda Item 1. Preliminaries

### 1.1 Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair, Dr Daryl McPhee, welcomed members, participants and observers to the meeting.
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
Andrew Watts	Industry member
Stuart Richey	Industry member
John Hammond	Industry member
John Cull	Industry member
Julian Morison	Economic member
Sylvia Zukowski	Environment member
Steve Hall	AFMA member
Yvette Lamont	Executive officer

### 4. Invited Participants

Matt Koopman	Fishwell Consulting
Bob Lister	Industry
Ewan Flanagan	VFA

James Parkinson	Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas)
Ross Bromley	Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group
Alice McDonald	AFMA Presenter

## 5. Observers

Sally Weekes	AFMA Management
Renee Pearce	Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group

## 6. Apologies

7. No apologies were received

## 1.2 Declarations of interest

8. 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](#).
9. Chair asked members to consider that Industry members were valuable in the discussion regarding the 2023 Season recommendations with the RAG unanimously deciding that Industry members and invited participants would be involved in the discussion but would not be present for the final advice.
10. Chair asked members to consider that scientific members were valuable in the discussion regarding the research priorities for 2024-25 with the RAG unanimously deciding members and invited participants with a conflict of interest would be involved in the discussion but would not be present for the final advice.

## 1.2 Adoption of agenda

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

## 1.3 Minutes of previous meeting

12. That ScallopMAC noted that the minutes of the ScallopMAC 37 meeting on 9 June 2022 have been finalised and are available on the [AFMA website](#).

## 1.4 Actions arising from previous meetings

13. The MAC noted there are no outstanding action items from previous meetings.

## Agenda Item 2 – Fishery update

14. 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

15. The ScallopMAC noted an update on matters relevant to the management of the BSCZSF provided by the AFMA member:
  - AFMA, in consultation with the BSCZSF Harvest Strategy review Working Group (the HS Working Group), BSCZSF Resource Assessment Group (ScallopRAG) and BSCZSF Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC), is reviewing the current Harvest Strategy with the intention to develop a revised Harvest Strategy that better reflects the current state of the fishery.

- At the recent meeting of the HS Working Group and the ScallopRAG meetings, AFMA noted the need to revisit how best economic information can inform the management of the fishery.
- Steve Hall is currently the Acting Manager of the BSCZSF, Southern Squid Jig Fishery and Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF). Yvette Lamont is the Executive Officer for respective RAG and MACs for these fisheries including ScallopRAG and ScallopMAC. Sally Weeks is currently the Acting Senior Manager for the Demersal and Midwater Fisheries.
- AFMA is mandating the use of electronic logbooks (elogs) and electronic catch disposal records (eCDRs) across Commonwealth fisheries. It is now mandatory for all operators who have the software installed to use elogs. eCDRs are expected to be available for the 2023 fishing season and can be used in parallel to the elogs.

## 2.2 Industry

16. The ScallopRAG noted an update on matters relevant to the BSCZSF provided by industry members:

- Tasmanian surveys are complete and within timeframe given weather constraints. The Scallop Fishery Advisory Committee (ScFAC) have a scheduled meeting for the 29 June to finalise setting of the TAC and season open date for the Tasmania Scallop Fishery.
- Tasmanian Surveys show high scallop biomass which if too high influences growth, producing a slow die off with noticeable die off in some beds whilst undertaking surveys. Survey of North Standley indicate that scallops in this area are healthy with a large biomass.
- Large amount of scallops available to be fished across fisheries however this is hindered by lack of boats, crew and processors. Market price is stable though there is concern that the market may crash if flooded with product however this may provide the opportunity for exporting goods.
- State fisheries have new VMS requirements that differs from Commonwealth Fishery (AIS) software, industry is looking for consistent monitoring requirements between state and Commonwealth fisheries
- Mr Ross Bromley provided an update of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification process for the BSCZSF, including information around the recent two-year surveillance assessment.

## 2.3 State fisheries

17. The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) Invited Participant provided an update on the Victorian scallop (ocean) fishery:

- Ewan Flanagan is the new manager for the Victorian scallop fishery.
- 2022-23 season catch was very low with less than 100 tonnes of the 979 tonnes TAC being caught.
- The 2023 pre-season survey indicated biomass levels had approximately halved. Similar levels of reduction occurred in both areas that had been closed to commercial fishing and areas that were open. With such low catch in 2022, the reduction cannot be attributed solely to removals by fishing. It appears many of the scallops died as a result of natural mortality in 2022.
- The TAC for the 2023-24 season has been set to the baseline level of 135 tonnes, under which fishing pressure does not impede the ability for the stock to recover. Fishing is only open to half of the Tarwhine bed (West Tarwhine). It is anticipated that many Victorian operators will opt to fish the Tasmanian fishery where scallops are again predicted to be of high abundance and quality.

18. The Invited Participant from (NRE Tas) provided an update on the Tasmanian scallop (ocean) fishery:

- Exploratory and annual surveys around White rocks in the North West are completed and suggesting an improvement in size and condition from 2022. This is a positive sign given the large amount of effort in this area during the 2022 season.
- The Tasmanian fishery is expected to open again in 2023 with a TAC in the order of 3,000 to 4,000 tonnes with an expected season opening of the 7 July. This will be finalised after the Tasmanian Scallop Fisheries Advisory Committee (ScallopFAC) meeting on 29 June 2023 to consider the outcome of the Tasmanian assessment.
- A project is underway for wider investigation of the use of video survey techniques to determine commercial scallop abundance. The project will develop a survey method for both inshore and offshore waters to estimate both legal and sub-legal scallop density/biomass in fishery zones, as well as areas closed to dredging and known juvenile beds. This will in turn inform management decisions, such as area closures and setting of TACs, and contribute to more sustainable fisheries.

## 2.4 Environment

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

- Jézéquel, Y., Cones, S. and Mooney, T.A., 2023. Sound sensitivity of the giant scallop (*Placopecten magellanicus*) is life stage, intensity, and frequency dependent. *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 153(2), pp.1130-1137.
- Pousse E, Poach ME, Redman DH, Sennfelder G, Hubbard W, et al. (2023) Juvenile Atlantic sea scallop, *Placopecten magellanicus*, energetic response to increased carbon dioxide and temperature changes. *PLOS Climate* 2(2): e0000142. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pclm.0000142>
- Gigot, Mathilde & Olivier, Frédéric & Cervello, Gauthier & Tremblay, Réjean & Mathias, Delphine & Meziane, Tarik & Chauvaud, Laurent & Bonnel, Julien. (2023). Pile driving and drilling underwater sounds impact the metamorphosis dynamics of *Pecten maximus* (L., 1758) larvae. 191. 114969. 10.1016/j.marpolbul.2023.114969.

20. Members discussed the outcomes of the research and relevance to the BSCZSF given the competition for development from various industries in Australian waters.

## 2.5 Economic

21. The ScallopMAC noted an update from the economic member, including:

- The recent federal budget included an increase in funding for biosecurity which will involve a partial (ten percent) contribution from primary industry towards a biosecurity protection levy.
- The rollout of country of origin labelling for the hospitality industry is underway, as part of this process.
- The recent senate enquiry on fisheries quota systems noted the following outcomes (as a result of quota implementation):
  - all fisheries are showing lower GDP but higher profit;
  - TAC and ITQs have resulted advantages and disadvantages for fishery industry; and
  - the character of fishing communities has changed over time.

## Agenda Item 3 – 2023 pre-season survey

22. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda Item and asked the MAC to note the results of the 2023 pre-season biomass survey to be presented by Matt Koopman.

23. The MAC noted the following background:

- In accordance with the BSCZSF Harvest Strategy, the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for commercial scallops will not be increased above 150 tonnes unless a biomass estimate, as determined by the biomass survey, is able to identify an area or scallop bed containing at least 1,500 tonnes biomass of high density scallops with a minimum size of 85 mm.
- The objectives of the annual biomass survey are to:
  - coordinate a fishery survey to measure the size distribution and calculate biomass estimates to assess the potential for commercial catch rates in the BSCZSF; and
  - inform the assessment of fishery impacts on bycatch.
- The identification of the 2023 survey beds was done in consultation with industry and Fishwell Consulting, with consideration given to previous survey beds, recent commercial catch and exploratory marks provided by industry.
- The Industry Co-Management Committee and the RAG provided advice on the prioritisation of the survey beds, with the final survey plan including 12 beds, which were a mix of known beds and exploratory marks across the regions of the fishery.
- In March 2023 AFMA wrote to all concession holders and active operators seeking expressions of interest to participate in the 2023 survey. Five boats were selected by an independent panel based on the terms set out in the call for expression of interest.

24. Dr Koopman presented the 2023 pre-season biomass survey results:

- The owners and crew of the boats that participated in the survey were acknowledged for their valuable contribution.
- The 2023 pre-season biomass survey was conducted during May and aimed to estimate the commercial scallop biomass, discard rate, number of meats per kg, size frequency distribution, density of scallops and bycatch of 12 beds near Flinders Island, King Island and Apollo Bay.
- Stratified random surveys were conducted for each of the 12 beds.
- For each random tow, the following were recorded:
  - The weight of all catch (including dead shell)
  - The length of at least 35 scallops (where available)
  - Record tow details
  - Record bycatch
- For every 5 tows, 10 samples were taken for:
  - Length-weight relationship
  - Length-width-height relationship
  - Meat weights
  - Gonad staging
- For analysis, an assumed dredge efficiency of 33 percent was applied to scale density estimates. The 33 percent dredge efficiency comes from the 2008 Commonwealth BSCZSF Survey, which considered previous dredge efficiency studies, with 33 percent being the best average estimate.
- The final report of the [2023 BSCZSF annual biomass survey](#) is available on the AFMA website.

## Agenda Item 4 –2023 season recommendations

25. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda Item and asked the MAC to provide advice to the AFMA Commission on TACs, closures and season dates for the BSCZSF 2023 fishing season. In formulating its advice the MAC considered the results of the 2023 biomass survey ([Agenda Item 3.1](#)) and ScallopRAG advice from its meeting on 7 June regarding 2023 season arrangements.

### 2023 commercial scallop TAC

26. The MAC noted the key points made by the RAG regarding the 2023 biomass survey and advice regarding a commercial scallop TAC for the 2023 season:

- The Flinders Island region is likely to be targeted by industry in the upcoming (2023) season, due to the high meat weights experienced in the 2022 season and observed in the 2023 biomass survey.
- The TAC was under-caught in the 2022 fishing season, with 517 tonnes caught from a 4,000 tonnes TAC.
- With both the Tasmanian and Victorian scallop fisheries open again in 2023, effort will likely be predominantly targeted in state waters.
- The Research Catch Allowance (RCA) will be subtracted from the 2023 TAC recommendation and consistent with arrangements in 2022, the RCA may be caught pre-season and in-season, in years where the fishery is open to commercial fishing, and the TAC is above 1500 tonnes.
- ScallopRAG recommended rolling over the 2022 season TAC of 4,000 tonnes, on the basis that:
  - no compelling argument was made to justify any change to the TAC for the upcoming season;
  - maintaining the TAC at 4,000 tonnes would provide industry with stability and consistency;
  - due to operational reasons, the TAC has been under-caught for the last three seasons, and there are a number of factors likely to impact the total catch in the fishery in 2023, including fleet capacity, processing capacity, and the Victorian and the Tasmanian state fisheries both being open.

27. In formulating its advice regarding a commercial scallop TAC, the MAC noted the following:

- The recommendations made by the RAG were appropriate and widely agreed with maintaining the TAC at 4,000 tonnes for the 2023 season, on the basis that:
  - the 2022 season under-caught TAC does not reflect that there are any sustainability issues with the fishery;
  - the Tasmanian and Victorian scallop fisheries are open; and
  - it provides stability for industry and is an indication that the fishery is well-managed and there is a healthy biomass of scallops for industry to utilise sustainably.
- A 4,000 tonnes TAC would represent approximately 8% of the estimated biomass of scallops  $\geq 85\text{mm}$ .

### **2023 doughboy scallop TAC**

28. The MAC noted the key points made by the RAG regarding setting a doughboy scallop TAC for the 2023 season:

- The BSCZSF Harvest Strategy allows for a TAC for doughboy scallops to be determined at different levels each year, however as this species is not generally targeted the default TAC of 100 tonnes is typically applied;
- A 100 tonnes TAC allows for exploration of the fishery and markets; and
- Considering the number of doughboy scallop quota statutory fishing rights (SFRs), a reduction in the TAC may limit individual SFR holder's ability to explore the fishery and markets.

### **2023 area closures**

29. The MAC noted the following background regarding area closures:

- In order for an area/scallop bed to be closed under the Harvest Strategy it must have been surveyed during the biomass survey, with any beds that are closed, remaining closed for the entire fishing season.



- Beds fished that exceed a discard rate of 20 per cent of scallops less than 85 mm will be closed under a voluntary arrangement applied by industry via the Industry Co-Management Committee.

30. The MAC noted the key points made by the RAG regarding the 2023 biomass survey and advice regarding area closures for the 2023 season:

- Based on past commercial catches, it is unlikely that if the TAC was fully caught it would come from only one region of the fishery. However, there needs to be a level of precaution applied through the TAC and closures, as there could be sustainability concerns if the whole TAC was caught from a single bed. The Principles for prioritising survey beds document recommends that closures are implemented across the Flinders Island, King Island and Apollo Bay sites.
- The following areas were recommended for closure by ScallopRAG on the basis of the 2023 biomass survey data;
  - Apollo Bay The Hill North (estimated biomass  $\geq 85$  mm – 1,861 tonnes)
  - Flinders Island (estimated biomass  $\geq 85$ mm – 3,224 tonnes)
  - Flinders Island South (North of Babel) (estimated biomass  $\geq 85$ mm – 107 tonnes)
  - Three Hummocks Deep (estimated biomass  $\geq 85$ mm – 18,873 tonnes)
- The requirement to close 3,000 tonnes has been met, as well as the requirement of the principles document to capture closures in all three regions.

31. In formulating its advice regarding area closures, the MAC noted the following:

- These closures align with the requirements of both the Harvest Strategy in terms of biomass, and the *Principles for prioritising survey beds* document in terms of spatial coverage.
- The Three Hummocks Deep bed provides a high level of biomass that meets the closure requirements of the Harvest Strategy on its own.
- Industry will likely have an interest in fishing the Flinders Island region based on its consistency in recent years and the high meat weights experienced in the 2022 season.
- The closure sites were selected to maximise opportunities to industry, whilst closing an appropriate level of biomass.
- The RAGs closure recommendations incorporate a total biomass of 24,065 tonnes, which represents 49% of the estimated biomass of scallops  $\geq 85$ mm.

32. The MAC adopted the RAG's area closure recommendations.

### **2023 fishing season dates**

33. In formulating its advice regarding fishing season dates, the MAC noted the following:

- In recent years, the season has commenced in July, after the pre-season survey, and closes on 31 December to protect settling or newly settled scallop spat.
- The [Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Plan 2002](#) states that the fishing season to be 'a period determined by AFMA'.
- Given that the season opened on 12 July last season, industry is broadly planning towards this date for the season opening.
- It is unlikely that industry will seek to fish in the BSCZSF immediately, given that the Tasmanian scallop fishery will be open.
- ScallopRAG recommended that the season should open as soon as possible, with 08 July 2023 recommended and that the season close on 31 December 2023.

### **Climate Change**

34. The ScallopMAC also considered information provided at the meeting by AFMA about the expected impact of climate change in Bass Strait – namely increased variability in key indicators and increased

water temperature. ScallopMAC considered that the annual biomass survey and TAC setting process enable AFMA to respond quickly to changes in the fishery and that the TAC is sufficiently precautionary to account for any potential risks posed by climate change.

35. Those members and invited participants with declared potential conflicts of interest left the meeting while recommendations were made.

Noting the advice above, the MAC supported the RAG recommendations of:

**Recommendation 1:** Consistent with arrangements in 2022, the RCA may be caught pre-season and in-season, in years where the fishery is open to commercial fishing, and the TAC is above 1500 tonnes

**Recommendation 2:** The commercial scallop TAC be set at 4,000t (less research catch allowance) and doughboy scallop set at 100t

**Recommendation 3:** The following areas be closed

- Apollo Bay the Hill North (estimated biomass – 1,861 tonnes)
- Flinders Island (estimated biomass – 3,224 tonnes)
- Flinders Island South North of Babel (estimated biomass – 107 tonnes)
- Three Hummocks Deep (estimated biomass 18,873 tonnes)

**Recommendation 4:** the fishing season open on or as soon thereafter 08 of July 2023 and close on 31 December 2023.

36. The members and invited participants who declared a potential conflict returned to the meeting.

## Agenda Item 5 – Harvest Strategy review update

37. The MAC noted the following ScallopRAG advice regarding incorporation of the proposed Harvest Control Rules (HCR) framework into the [Harvest Strategy](#):

- ScallopRAG remains uncertain regarding whether the proposed HCR framework is sufficiently precautionary, noting that it does not scale TACs against different levels of survey biomass, and allows for high levels of fishing mortality under situations of both high and low survey biomass;
- the current Harvest Strategy has not been assessed using a management strategy evaluation (MSE) or similar testing/evaluation process so the degree to which its settings meet the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy requirements are uncertain;
- the Harvest Strategy, including the proposed HCR framework, should be further tested using MSE or equivalent process prior to the implementation of these measures into the Harvest Strategy; and
- The population dynamics project is expected to provide useful information relevant to the ongoing review of the Harvest Strategy and testing of the HCR framework.

38. The MAC supported the ScallopRAG's recommendations regarding further review and updates of the harvest Strategy.

39. The Economic member provided a presentation on economic considerations in the management of the BSCZSF and the merits of developing an economic index for the fishery to inform management. The MAC noted the following:

- AFMA has investigated the use of a Fishery Gross Margin (FGM) model to incorporate economic factors in the TAC setting process. However, due to issues in collecting representative economic data for the BSCZSF to support the model, and also because it would constrain

factors such as quota lease price and market value, in 2022 the Commission agreed it was beyond the scope of AFMA's economic objectives and decided not to pursue this approach.

- Due to the difficulties around collecting detailed economic data from fishers, ABARES has developed an "economic conditions index" that could be used as a proxy for Net Economic Returns (NER).
- The proposed economic condition index would inform management of how the fishery is changing over time and monitors the economics of the fishery at a basic level and therefore requiring less data collection than the previously proposed FGM model.
- The proposed economic conditions index would not directly inform the TAC setting process but rather provide contextual information that can be considered by AFMA when making decisions.
- This approach is already used in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF).
- ScallopRAG supported the exploration of developing an economic conditions index to inform management of the fishery provided it is fit for purpose and relevant to the fishery.
- Industry voiced concerns over basing the economics solely on the commonwealth fishery and would prefer that state data is incorporated to give a more robust economic index across the scallop fisheries.

40. Noting the above advice, the MAC supported the development of an economic index for the fishery to inform management.

**Action 2:** AFMA, the ScallopRAG/MAC Economic Member and BSCZSF industry to work together to develop a fit for purpose economic conditions index to inform management of the fishery and provide an update of progress at the next ScallopRAG meeting in 2024. Where possible, economic data from state jurisdictions should be incorporated into the index.

## Agenda Item 6 – Climate change update

41. AFMA provided an overview of its Climate Adaptation Program and general information on predicted climate impacts in south eastern Australian waters relevant to the BSCZSF. ScallopRAG noted that the AFMA Commission has endorsed the introduction of a standing Climate Change agenda item in all AFMA RAG and MAC meetings where TACs are being discussed, and sought feedback from ScallopRAG regarding the draft 'Climate and Ecosystem Status Report' that has been prepared for the fishery.

42. ScallopMAC noted the following:

- Industry queried the changing acidity levels and how this may affect shell production, AFMA responded that the impacts on calcifying benthic organisms and planktonic organisms was quite low however despite improved research there is still high uncertainty and although the predicted change is reasonable, a precautionary approach in interpreting this information is required.
- There is a general warming at depth as well as at the surface which is dependent on oceanography. Currently there is sparse information on change of oceanography within the Bass Strait with fishers indicating the ocean is warmer at bottom than at surface and general agreement that there is noticeable warming throughout the region.
- Reasonable increase in primary productivity due to the higher levels of chlorophyll could result from climate change. This could be beneficial to scallops with Industry confirming that it correlates with scallop numbers bouncing back.
- AFMA recommends ongoing stakeholder adaptation workshops to discuss fisher observations and what adaptation will be required for industry and management in relation to climate change impacts.
- Industry is collecting data as part of the Trials of oceanographic data collection on commercial fishing vessels in SE Australia (FRDC 2022-007) project. The project aims to use commercial

fishing gear as a research platform to collect fine-scale spatial and temporal resolution data required for fisheries management.

- Fishers have observed noticeable increase in northern species such as Blue Grenadier, Yellowtail Kingfish, King George whiting and Snapper but noted that the acceleration of climate change impacts had not specifically been noticed in scallops within the BSCZSF. There is particular concern of how climate change will impact on scallop larvae in the BSCZSF and adjacent jurisdictions.

## Agenda Item 7 – Research priorities

43. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda Item and asked the ScallopMAC to note the [BSCZSF Five Year Strategic Research Plan 2022-26, the Annual Research Statement, and sought ScallopRAG's advice on priority research for 2024-25 to be included in the Annual Research Statement.](#)
44. ScallopMAC noted ScallopRAG advice and supported the following priority research projects for inclusion in the [Annual Research Statement and](#) consideration for funding in 2024-25:

### *AFMA funding*

- BSCZSF 2025 annual biomass Survey including target species and bycatch
- Developing a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the BSCZSF Harvest Strategy (inc. testing of proposed harvest control rules (HCR) framework)

### *FRDC funding*

- Understanding sources of fishing mortality and recruitment estimation in the BSCZSF (inc. incorporating video survey techniques with biomass survey)
  - Impact of seismic surveys on larvae
45. The ScallopMAC Research member noted the previous seismic work, which did not demonstrate detrimental impacts to scallops or the BSCZSF industry. He expressed that future investment in seismic surveys with the mindset of seeking to find detrimental impacts on scallop is unlikely to result in desired outcomes and will provide limited return on investment. A more effective strategy would be to put the industry's efforts into having a face to face presence in negotiations with proponents of offshore non-fishing activities (i.e. seismic, wind farm and other proponents).

## Agenda Item 8 – Co-management committee membership

46. The AFMA member introduced the Agenda item and asked the MAC to provide advice on the membership of the Co-management committee.
47. The MAC noted Andrew Sullivan's departure from the position as the Bass Strait Scallop Industry Association observer and agreed that Renee Pearce as the Atlantis Industry representative was an appropriate candidate to fill the vacant position.

### **Recommendation 5:** The ScallopMAC recommend that

- a) Renee Pearce be appointed to the BSCZFS Co-Management Committee as the Atlantis Industry representative observer; and
- b) membership of the BSCZFS Co-Management Committee be reviewed annually.

## Agenda Item 9 – Other business

48. The Chair introduced the Agenda item and asked the MAC if there were any other matters that they would like to discuss.

## VMS systems

49. Industry enquired whether the new reporting software used by other Commonwealth/State agencies for VMS and elogs would be compatible with the software used in equivalent AFMA systems.

**Action 3:** AFMA Member to enquire with AFMA's VMS section why other State/Commonwealth agencies are using different VMS systems to what is being used by AFMA for commonwealth fisheries (i.e. AIS)

## 2023-24 draft cost recovered budget

50. AFMA was asked to provide further information regarding the draft cost recovered budget for 2023-24 that was recently distributed to members. The MAC noted the following:

- Industry voiced concerns over the increase costs given there is very little effort in the BSCZSF and that the increase appears disproportionate given that the BSCZSF is a small Commonwealth Fisheries.
- The increase of approximately \$73,500 (18.9%) in the 2023-24 was primarily driven by an increase in RAG and MAC meetings to review the Harvest Strategy, a move back to face-to-face meetings and staff time to administer committees.
- An updated ERA that is currently being undertaken for the fishery has also contributed to the increase budget.
- The cost recovery category 'Strategy, governance & leadership' includes staff time and overheads for the Deputy CEO, and the General Managers of Corporate Services, HR and Legal Department. Staff time and overheads increase for projects such as ERAs and harvest strategy reviews both of which are underway in the BSCZSF.
- Industry noted that the large increase for the BSCZSF in 'RAG and MAC' and 'Strategy, Governance & Leadership' cost recovered categories appeared disproportionate given extra costs that have been shifted to Industry.
- Industry noted that should these costs further increase, future cost cutting measures may need to be considered.
- AFMA confirmed that there is an opportunity to formally respond to the draft cost recovered budget up until 15 June.

## ScallopMAC membership vacancies

51. AFMA advised that there are currently ScallopMAC has two vacant (Industry) positions following the resignations of Debbie Wisby and Peter Mellios. The MAC acknowledged the contributions made by Debbie and Peter during their appointment on ScallopMAC.

52. The ScallopMAC noted that there is review underway of AFMA RAG and MAC's with outcomes to be presented to the commission in September 2023. Until the review is complete appointments of new members are only being made until 31 Dec 2023.

53. The AFMA member suggested running an appointment process in early 2024 to fill the vacant positions, noting that the outcomes of the review will be finalised, this provides time for industry to nominate appropriate candidates for the positions post season, and the ScallopMAC is not formally scheduled to meet again until June 2024.

54. Industry noted it was keen to have processors represented at ScallopMAC and, subject to the outcomes of the RAG/MAC review, would nominate suitable processors as part of any future appointment process.

**Action 4:** Subject to the outcomes of the review of AFMA RAGs/MACs, AFMA to contact industry stakeholders to encourage suitable industry representatives to apply for the vacant ScallopMAC Industry Member positions and organise a formal appointment process in early 2024.

### **ScallopRAG & ScallopMAC remuneration**

55. AFMA provided an update on remuneration for RAG and MAC members.

### **Close of meeting**

56. The Chair thanked the MAC for their contribution to the meeting and wished industry all the best for the 2023 fishing season.

57. The meeting was closed at 15:12.

## 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.
Andrew Watts	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
Stuart Richey	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
John Hammond	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.
John Cull	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions
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); Deputy economics member, Total Allowable Fishing Committee (NSWDPI)
Sylvia Zukowski	Environment Member	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise
Steve Hall	AFMA member	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Yvette Lamont	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. This included catch and effort from the BSCZSF. I have no interest in any commercial fisheries.
Bob Lister	Invited participant, Industry	Executive Officer, Scallop Fishermen’s Association of Tasmania. Holds Commonwealth and State concessions

Ewan Flanagan	Invited participant, VFA	VFA employee, No interest in the pecuniary or otherwise.
James Parkinson	Invited participant, NRE Tasmania	NRE Tasmania employee, no interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Ross Bromley	Invited participant, Atlantis/Industry Association	Employed by Atlantis Consulting, representing industry clients as part of current MSC accreditation process.
Alice McDonald	Presenter	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Sally Weekes	Observer, AFMA Management	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.
Renee Pearce	Observer, Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group	Employed by Atlantis Consulting, representing industry clients.



## Attachment B – Summary of 2023 Biomass survey

Table 2. 2023 Biomass survey summary

<i>Area</i>	<i>Bed</i>	<i>Estimated biomass (t)</i>	<i>% weigh ≥ &gt; 85 mm</i>	<i>Estimated biomass ≥85 mm (t)</i>	<i>Density (ind/m<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Mean Length</i>
<i>Apollo Bay</i>	<i>AB The Hill North</i>	<i>2,436</i>	<i>76.4</i>	<i>1,861</i>	<i>0.22</i>	<i>91</i>
<i>Flinders Island</i>	<i>FI</i>	<i>4,229</i>	<i>76.2</i>	<i>3,224</i>	<i>0.31</i>	<i>89</i>
	<i>FI North - The Sisters</i>	<i>880</i>	<i>88.6</i>	<i>780</i>	<i>0.57</i>	<i>93</i>
	<i>FI South – North of Babel</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>87.4</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>0.02</i>	<i>98</i>
	<i>FI The sisters East</i>	<i>345</i>	<i>91.2</i>	<i>315</i>	<i>0.27</i>	<i>94</i>
	<i>FI The Wreck A</i>	<i>249</i>	<i>95.9</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>101</i>
	<i>FI The Wreck B</i>	<i>284</i>	<i>92.0</i>	<i>262</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>99</i>
<i>King Island</i>	<i>KI-10</i>	<i>1,464</i>	<i>80.6</i>	<i>1,180</i>	<i>0.61</i>	<i>90</i>
	<i>KI-9</i>	<i>3,293</i>	<i>70.7</i>	<i>2,330</i>	<i>0.71</i>	<i>87</i>
	<i>KI-BDSE</i>	<i>1,714</i>	<i>55.5</i>	<i>950</i>	<i>0.14</i>	<i>84</i>
	<i>KI Three Hummocks East</i>	<i>62,075</i>	<i>43.9</i>	<i>27,274</i>	<i>2.86</i>	<i>82</i>
	<i>KI Three Hummocks West</i>	<i>14,479</i>	<i>72.7</i>	<i>10,522</i>	<i>2.40</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>Total</i>		<i>91,570</i>		<i>49,044</i>		

## Attachment C – Action items and recommendations

**Table 3. Actions from meeting 42**

Agenda Item	No.	Action	Agency/Person R
2.5	1	AFMA, the ScallopRAG/MAC Economic Member and BSCZSF industry to work together to develop a fit for purpose economic conditions index to inform management of the fishery and provide an update of progress at the next ScallopRAG meeting in 2024.	Julien Morison
5	2	AFMA, the ScallopRAG Economic Member and BSCZSF industry to work together to develop a fit for purpose economic conditions index and where possible, economic data from state jurisdictions should be incorporated into the index.	Julien Morison
9	3	AFMA Member to enquire with AFMA's VMS section why other State/Commonwealth agencies are using different VMS systems to what is being used by AFMA for commonwealth fisheries (i.e. AIS)	
9	4	Subject to the outcomes of the review of AFMA RAGs/MACs, AFMA to contact industry stakeholders to encourage suitable industry representatives to apply for the vacant ScallopMAC Industry Member positions and organise a formal appointment process in early 2024.	

**Table 4. Recommendations from meeting 42**

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person R
4	1	Consistent with arrangements in 2022, the RCA may be caught pre-season and in-season, in years where the fishery is open to commercial fishing, and the TAC is above 1500 tonnes.	AFMA
4	2	The commercial scallop TAC be set at 4,000t (less research catch allowance) and doughboy scallop set at 100t	AFMA
4	3	<p>The following areas will be closed for the 2023 season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apollo Bay the Hill North (estimated biomass – 1,861 t)</li> <li>• Flinders Island (estimated biomass – 3,224 t)</li> <li>• Flinders Island South North of Babel (estimated biomass – 107 t)</li> <li>• Three Hummocks Deep (estimated biomass 18,873 t)</li> </ul>	AFMA
4	4	The fishing season open on or as soon thereafter 08 of July 2023 and close on 31 December 2023.	AFMA

8.0	5	<p>a) Renee Pearce <u>be appointed to the BSCZFS Co-Management Committee</u> as the Atlantis Industry representative observer; and</p> <p>b) membership of the BSCZFS Co-Management Committee be reviewed annually.</p>	BSCZFS Co-Management Committee
8.2	5	<p>Research priorities for consideration of AFMA funding in 2024-25;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025 annual biomass Survey including target species and bycatch as a low cost, high priority and feasibility</li> <li>• MSE evaluation as part of developing a HCR to consider management strategy evaluation, this is a medium cost, high priority and feasibility</li> </ul>	AFMA/
8.2	6	<p>Research priorities for consideration of FRDC funding in 2024-25;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding sources of fishing mortality and recruitment estimation in the BSCZSF (including camera work in conjunction with the biomass survey), medium cost, high priority and feasibility.</li> <li>• Impacts of seismic surveys on larvae identified as medium cost, high priority and feasibility.</li> </ul>	AFMA/F