



# Australian Government

## Australian Fisheries Management Authority

AFMADMW-1932364602-91789

### Minutes

Meeting	Bass Strait Central Zone Fishery Management Advisory Committee (ScallopMAC)		
Meeting Number	40	Dates	20 June 2025
Location	Online	Time	9:00 AM
Members	Daryl McPhee, Chair Brendan Kelaher, Scientific/Research member Andrew Watts, Industry member Stuart Richey, Industry member John Hammond, Industry member, John Cull, Industry member Steven Mantzaris, Industry member Caleb Gardner, Economic member Sylvia Zukowski, Environment/conservation member Yvette Lamont, AFMA member		
Apologies	Bob Lister		
Invited Participants	Matt Koopman, Fishwell Consulting Brad Milic, Atlantis fisheries consulting group James Parkinson, DNRET Ryan Day, IMAS Andrew Penney, Consultant Natalie Couchman, AFMA Tim Ward, UTAS		
Observers	Ms Sally Weekes, AFMA Andrew Zapantis, Industry Sally Troy, Commission Ian Dutton, Commission Rebecca Jol AFMA		

Agenda Item	Title/Topic/Issue	Notes, Action & Recommendations
1.	Preliminaries	<p>The ScallopMAC convened for its 40th meeting on 20 June 2025. The Chair, Daryl McPhee, opened proceedings with an Acknowledgement of Country, recognising Australia's Traditional Custodians and their enduring connection to land, waters, and community.</p> <p><b>1.1 Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed members, invited participants, and observers, noting that the meeting would be recorded to assist with minute preparation. Apologies were received from Bob Lister, with Ryan Day as a proxy for Jayson Semmens who was unable to attend.</p> <p><b>1.2 Declaration of Interests</b></p> <p>The Committee reviewed and confirmed declarations of interest as outlined in Table 1 of the meeting papers. Members with pecuniary interests in specific agenda items (e.g. season recommendations and research proposals) were advised they would be asked to leave the meeting during deliberations on those items. This approach aligns with Fisheries Management Paper 1 – Consultative Committees and was supported by the Committee.</p> <p><b>1.3 Adoption of Agenda</b></p> <p>The Committee adopted the agenda with one modification to the research item which was moved to immediately after morning tea. No additional items were raised for discussion.</p> <p><b>1.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The Committee noted that the minutes of ScallopMAC 39 (5 June 2024) had been finalised and published on the AFMA website.</p> <p><b>1.5 Action Items</b></p> <p>The Committee reviewed the action items from ScallopMAC 39 and noted that there were no outstanding action items from previous meetings. The MAC noted the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Season Start Date Review:</b> AFMA had not progressed the action to explore an earlier season start date due to delays in meetings and survey timing.</li> <li>• <b>Harvest Strategy Co-development:</b> The economic member's engagement with state representatives is underway. A presentation on the revised harvest strategy proposal is scheduled later in the meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Economic Index Presentation:</b> ABARES has completed the development of the Economic Contribution Index (ECI), with findings to be presented during the meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Observer and Electronic Monitoring (EM) Trial:</b> AFMA has partially progressed this item, with an observer deployed at the end of the previous season. Concerns were raised by Industry regarding the cost and impact of observer coverage on industry viability. AFMA clarified that observer costs would be covered through levies and that the trial aimed to validate low-risk assumptions about bycatch. Sally Weekes</li> </ul>

		confirmed that no decision had been made on ongoing monitoring and that the trial was intended to support data credibility.
2.	<b>Fishery Updates</b>	<p>The Committee received updates from AFMA, industry, state fisheries, MSC consultant, environmental, economic, and scientific representatives on the status and developments in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF).</p> <p><b>Key Discussion Points:</b></p> <p>AFMA provided updates on staffing, electronic logbooks, and the 2024 season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A recruitment round is underway for the Manager of Squid, Scallop, and SPF fisheries.</li> <li>• The Fish Receiver Portal is undergoing maintenance until late July 2025.</li> <li>• E-logbooks will become mandatory across all Commonwealth fisheries.</li> <li>• The 2024 season catch was 1,014.7 tonnes (26% of the TAC), down from 1,983 tonnes (51% of TAC) in 2023. Eight boats were active, with one vessel accounting for 39% of the total catch.</li> </ul> <p>Industry members raised concerns about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observer costs and their impact on viability.</li> <li>• Bycatch reporting and the need for better integration of existing data.</li> <li>• High-density scallop beds leading to poor growth and die-offs, with anecdotal evidence supporting recent environmental research findings.</li> </ul> <p>Tasmanian Fishery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fishery opened on 14 June 2025.</li> <li>• Biomass in the Northwest area declined by ~80%, prompting a 1,000-tonne cap.</li> <li>• Lower East area also capped at 1,000 tonnes, with potential expansion to the Northeast pending further surveys.</li> <li>• Biotxin concerns in the Lower East region are being monitored, with mixed results from scallop testing.</li> </ul> <p>Victorian Fishery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAC remains at 132 tonnes (1.5 tonnes per licence) for exploratory fishing.</li> <li>• Beds previously closed due to die-off have been reopened following industry requests.</li> <li>• Minimal catch reported in recent years.</li> </ul> <p>Marine Stewardship Council (MSC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brad Milic (Atlantis Consulting) provided an update on progress toward maintaining MSC accreditation, including ongoing work to address conditions related to stock status, bycatch, and habitat impacts.</li> <li>• Improvements in logbook discard reporting and survey data analysis are helping meet MSC conditions.</li> </ul>

		<p>Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sylvia Zukowski (NGT) referenced a recent international paper that raised concerns about the potential negative reproductive impacts of extreme high-density beds, noting that this differs from our fishery where high-density beds play an important role in recruitment.</li> <li>Discussion included potential links to food availability and broader climate-related disturbances.</li> </ul> <p>Economic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caleb Gardner (IMAS) noted the need to clarify the economic objectives of the fishery, particularly in relation to under-caught TACs and the implications for harvest strategy development.</li> <li>These considerations are central to revising the harvest strategy and setting appropriate target reference points.</li> </ul> <p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brendan Kelaher (ScallopRAG Chair) highlighted the value of the Fishwell report on scallop bed dynamics and the need to capture data on the emerging Eleven-Arm Seastar issue.</li> </ul> <p>Main Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry raised concerns about the cost and necessity of observer coverage, particularly in light of economic pressures and the perceived low risk of the fishery.</li> <li>AFMA clarified that observer data is needed to validate low bycatch levels and support external assessments, including MSC certification.</li> <li>The Eleven-Arm Seastar outbreak was identified as a significant ecological and economic concern, with calls for targeted research and potential mitigation strategies.</li> <li>The economic member emphasised the importance of aligning harvest strategy targets with the fishery's actual economic performance and objectives.</li> </ul> <div> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain engagement with MSC auditors to ensure alignment of data collection with certification requirements.</li> <li>Continue efforts to improve logbook reporting of bycatch and discards.</li> <li>Support further research into the ecological impacts of high-density beds and seastar predation.</li> </ol> </div> <div> <p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFMA to clarify the status and cost recovery arrangements for observer coverage.</li> <li>AFMA and Fishwell to ensure observer data is reviewed and integrated into bycatch assessments.</li> </ol> </div>
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		<p>3. Consideration to be given to a research project on the Eleven-Arm Seastar outbreak and its implications for scallop stocks.</p> <p>4. AFMA to monitor the implementation of mandatory e-logbooks and provide support to operators during the transition.</p>
3	<p><b>Climate Change</b></p> <p><b>For Advice</b></p> <p><b>Lead Presenter:</b> Natalie Couchman (AFMA)</p>	<p>The Committee considered the draft Climate and Ecosystem Status Report for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF), prepared by CSIRO, and discussed broader climate-related risks and adaptation strategies relevant to the fishery.</p> <p><b>Presentation Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFMA presented the draft Climate and Ecosystem Status Report for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF), prepared by CSIRO.</li> <li>• The report includes indicators and forecasts of environmental variables relevant to the fishery, intended to provide context for stock assessments and TAC recommendations.</li> <li>• The report is preliminary and will be refined based on feedback from ScallopMAC and ScallopRAG.</li> <li>• AFMA outlined its broader Climate Adaptation Program (CAP), which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Climate Risk Framework (CRF) currently under trial.</li> <li>○ Regional and fishery summaries available on the AFMA website.</li> <li>○ The Climate Adaptation Handbook (2021), developed with CSIRO.</li> <li>○ Ongoing research collaborations with CSIRO and FRDC, including the Futures of Seafood project.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Main Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report highlighted a trend of warming sea surface temperatures, particularly in the southeast of Australia.</li> <li>• Chlorophyll concentrations and seasonal cold-water upwelling along Tasmania's west coast were discussed as potential influences on scallop productivity and seastar outbreaks.</li> <li>• Members noted the importance of understanding environmental drivers such as temperature, nutrient availability, and predator dynamics (e.g., Eleven-Arm Seastar).</li> <li>• ScallopRAG requested finer-scale data aligned with the three main biomass survey regions.</li> <li>• The need to compile existing literature on climate risks specific to scallops was identified.</li> <li>• Members discussed the potential for climate-driven changes in recruitment and mortality, referencing recent die-offs and unusual settlement patterns.</li> </ul>

		<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ScallopMAC noted the draft Climate and Ecosystem Status Report and supported its continued refinement.</li> <li>2. Members advised that future versions should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finer spatial resolution of environmental data.</li> <li>○ Integration of observed ecological disturbances (e.g., seastar outbreaks).</li> <li>○ Consideration of climate-related changes in scallop reproductive timing and growth.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
		<p><b>Action Items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AFMA to compile and provide a summary of existing literature on climate risks to scallops at a future meeting.</li> <li>2. AFMA and CSIRO to explore the feasibility of aligning environmental indicators with biomass survey regions.</li> <li>3. AFMA to provide the MAC with updates on the Climate Risk Framework trial, with outcomes to be considered by the AFMA Commission in September 2025.</li> </ol>
4.	<p><b>Economic Condition Index</b></p> <p><a href="#">For Advice</a></p> <p><b>Lead Presenter:</b> Robert Curtotti (ABARES)</p>	<p>The Committee received a presentation from Robert Curtotti (ABARES) on the development and application of an Economic Condition Index (ECI) for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF), designed to provide a proxy measure of net economic returns (NER) using publicly available data.</p> <p><b>Presentation Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ECI was developed following a request from ScallopMAC and ScallopRAG, based on a similar model used in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery.</li> <li>• The index compares current economic conditions against a reference period (2008–09 to 2024–25), with a base value of 100.</li> <li>• The ECI is composed of three key drivers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fish price index</li> <li>○ Catch rate index (CPUE)</li> <li>○ Composite cost index (including fuel, labour, repairs, and other costs).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Data sources included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AFMA logbooks and vessel data</li> <li>○ ABARES price collections</li> <li>○ Australian Petroleum Institute (fuel prices)</li> <li>○ ATO (fuel rebate)</li> <li>○ Wage benchmarks for visa-holding crew</li> <li>○ Historical ABARES surveys (for repairs and maintenance estimates)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Main Discussion Points:</b></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2022–23 season was identified as economically challenging, with high fuel costs and low catch rates offsetting higher-than-average prices.</li> <li>The 2024–25 season showed moderate improvement, with fuel prices stabilising and catch rates recovering slightly.</li> <li>The ECI does not currently include Tasmanian or Victorian data due to limitations in trip-level reporting and vessel characteristics.</li> <li>Members noted that the exclusion of state catches significantly limits the accuracy of the index, especially given the integrated nature of the fishery.</li> <li>Repairs and maintenance costs were estimated at 3% of GVP, which industry members argued was unrealistically low—suggesting 10–12% would be more accurate.</li> <li>The need to refine cost structures and include capital costs was acknowledged.</li> <li>Exchange rates were shown to correlate strongly with domestic beach prices, highlighting the influence of imports on market dynamics.</li> </ul> <div> <b>Recommendations:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ScallopMAC NOTED the presentation and acknowledged the ECI as a useful contextual tool for understanding fishery economics.</li> <li>ScallopRAG recommended that ABARES continue refining the model, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving cost structure accuracy</li> <li>Incorporating state-level data</li> <li>Enhancing estimates for repairs, maintenance, and capital costs</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </div>
5.	<b>2025 Pre-Season survey</b>  For Noting  <b>Lead Presenter:</b> Matt Koopman (Fishwell Consulting)	<p>The Committee reviewed the results of the 2025 biomass survey conducted by Fishwell Consulting across eleven scallop beds in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF). The survey aimed to estimate biomass, assess size distribution, and evaluate bycatch composition to inform management decisions for the upcoming season.</p> <p><b>Presentation Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fishwell Consulting presented the results of the 2025 pre-season biomass survey, conducted across 11 beds in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF).</li> <li>The survey aimed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estimate scallop biomass and size distribution to assess commercial catch potential.</li> <li>Inform assessments of fishery impacts on bycatch.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The survey was conducted by five selected vessels, chosen via an expression of interest process coordinated by AFMA.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey bed selection was informed by previous survey data, recent commercial catch locations, and exploratory marks recommended by industry.</li> <li>The survey identified several beds with high-density scallops above the 85 mm threshold, meeting the criteria under the Harvest Strategy for setting a TAC above 150 tonnes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Main Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The total surveyed biomass was approximately 30,000 tonnes, a decrease of 13,000 tonnes from the previous year.</li> <li>The three Hummocks SE (k1-3) and King Island-11 (K1-11) regions showed particularly high densities, with recordings of 2.61 and 1.90 individuals per square metre, respectively.</li> <li>The Flinders Island region showed signs of consistent recruitment, with one bed (Flinders Island 1) demonstrating stable biomass and size distribution over multiple years.</li> <li>The Apollo Bay region showed minimal biomass and was not considered viable for commercial fishing.</li> <li>The presence of Eleven-Arm Seastar was noted across all surveyed beds, with record-high densities in several areas, raising concerns about predation and future stock impacts.</li> <li>Dead shell and habitat-forming benthos (e.g., sponge, oysters) were also recorded, contributing to bycatch data for MSC and AFMA assessments.</li> </ul> <p>ScallopMAC noted the survey's critical role in informing TAC decisions, spatial closures, and ecological monitoring. The results provided a robust foundation for subsequent discussions on the 2025 season settings.</p>
6.	<p><b>2025 Season Recommendations</b></p> <p><a href="#">For Advice</a></p> <p><b>Lead Presenter:</b> Brendan Kelaher (ScallopRAG Chair)</p>	<p>The Committee considered the outcomes of the 2025 biomass survey and the advice provided by ScallopRAG to determine the management arrangements for the 2025 Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF) season. This included recommendations on total allowable catches (TACs), spatial closures, and season dates.</p> <p><b>Presentation Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ScallopRAG met on 19 June 2025 to consider the results of the 2025 biomass survey and provide advice on TACs, spatial closures, and season dates for the 2025 Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF) season.</li> <li>The estimated biomass of scallops <math>\geq 85</math> mm was 30,437 tonnes, down 13,748 tonnes from 2024. This decline is attributed to predation by Eleven-arm Seastars, which were prevalent across surveyed beds.</li> <li>The biomass survey results are not directly comparable year-to-year due to changes in surveyed beds and spatial modifications.</li> </ul>



		<p><b>Main Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fishery continues to operate under Tier 2 of the Harvest Strategy, which allows for a TAC above 150 tonnes if beds with <math>\geq 1,500</math> tonnes of high-density scallops <math>\geq 85</math> mm are identified.</li> <li>• Industry expressed concern about the operational impacts of sea star predation, weather conditions, and processing capacity.</li> <li>• The Flinders Island bed was highlighted for its consistent recruitment and relatively low sea star impact, making it a priority for closure to protect spawning biomass.</li> <li>• Partial closures were proposed for Three Hummocks Southeast and King Island Lavinia North to balance protection and fishing access.</li> <li>• The doughboy scallop TAC was recommended to remain at 100 tonnes to allow exploration and market development.</li> <li>• The commercial scallop TAC was recommended to remain at 4,000 tonnes, consistent with previous years and precautionary given operational constraints and ecological uncertainty.</li> </ul> <p><b>Declared Conflicts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After members and participants with declared conflicts of interest—specifically Andrew Watts, Stuart Richey, John Hammond, John Cull, Steven Mantzaris, Andrew Zapantis and Brad Milic left the room, the Scallop Management Advisory Committee (MAC) proceeded to finalise several key decisions for the upcoming season.</li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>ScallopRAG recommended the following for the 2025 season:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Commercial Scallop TAC:</b> 4,000 tonnes (less research catch allowance).</li> <li>2. <b>Doughboy Scallop TAC:</b> 100 tonnes.</li> <li>3. <b>Spatial Closures:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Flinders Island (<math>\geq 85</math> mm biomass: 2,923 tonnes; density: 0.42 ind/m<sup>2</sup>).</li> <li>○ Three Hummocks Southeast – partial closure above <math>-40.01^\circ</math> (<math>\geq 85</math> mm biomass: 2,965 tonnes; density: 3.47 ind/m<sup>2</sup>).</li> <li>○ King Island Lavinia North – partial closure between <math>-39.6^\circ</math> and <math>-39.65^\circ</math> (<math>\geq 85</math> mm biomass: 916 tonnes; density: 0.39 ind/m<sup>2</sup>).</li> <li>○ Total closed biomass <math>\geq 85</math> mm: 6,804 tonnes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. <b>Season Dates:</b> Open on or as soon after 12 July 2025; close on 31 December 2025.</li> </ol> </div>
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7.	<p><b>Bycatch and Discard Workplan</b></p> <p>For Advice</p>	<p>ScallopMAC was asked to review and endorse the updated Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) and the revised Bycatch and Discard Workplan for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF). The workplan incorporates recent ERA outcomes, observer and survey data, and aligns with the Commonwealth Fisheries Bycatch Policy, which is currently under review.</p> <p><b>Key Points of Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ScallopMAC noted that only one of the 17 high-risk species identified in the ERA (Black and White Sea Star) was observed during the 2025 biomass survey.</li> <li>• Members discussed the limitations of survey-based bycatch data, which may not reflect commercial fishing conditions due to the randomised nature of survey tows.</li> <li>• Industry members highlighted the importance of distinguishing between live bycatch and dead shell and raised concerns about the practicality of recording non-living material in logbooks.</li> <li>• Improvements in logbook reporting were acknowledged, particularly among MSC client vessels following targeted education efforts.</li> <li>• The presence of Eleven-Arm Seastars was discussed extensively, with members noting their ecological impact and the need for further research into their biology and management options.</li> <li>• The Workplan now incorporates habitat and ecological community data from the ERA and biomass survey for the first time</li> </ul> <div> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ScallopMAC endorsed the updated ERA and revised Bycatch and Discard Workplan.</li> <li>• Members supported continued refinement of bycatch reporting practices and encouraged further integration of habitat data into ecological assessments.</li> </ul> </div> <div> <p><b>Action items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFMA to provide CSIRO with updated evidence to support refinement of residual risk assessments for high-risk species.</li> <li>• AFMA to clarify reporting requirements for dead shell and habitat-forming benthos in logbooks.</li> <li>• AFMA to monitor the outcomes of the Commonwealth Bycatch Policy review and incorporate relevant changes into future iterations of the Workplan.</li> <li>• ScallopMAC to review progress on Workplan actions annually and conduct a full review after five years or upon ERA update.</li> </ul> </div>
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8.	<p><b>2026–27 Annual Research Priorities</b></p> <p><b>For Advice</b></p> <p><b>Lead Presenters:</b> Tim Ward (UTAS), Andrew Penney (Consultant)</p>	<p>ScallopMAC was asked to review and provide advice on research priorities for inclusion in the Draft 2026–27 Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF) Annual Research Statement noting that this advice will inform the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) funding processes.</p> <p><b>Presentation Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations were delivered on two key projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Population Biology and Bed Dynamics</b> (Andrew Penney): Synthesised eight years of biomass survey data to understand scallop recruitment, mortality, and bed connectivity. Findings highlighted the unpredictability of scallop dynamics and the limitations of traditional stock-recruitment models.</li> <li>○ <b>Review and Refinement of the Harvest Strategy</b> (Tim Ward): Proposed a revised project scope to replace the previously planned Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE), which was deemed unsuitable due to the high variability in scallop population dynamics.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Main Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The revised harvest strategy project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Define reference points and harvest control rules (HCRs) to adjust TACs in response to biomass changes.</li> <li>○ Account for variability in natural mortality and recruitment.</li> <li>○ Provide guidance on survey frequency and bed prioritisation.</li> <li>○ Align with MSC certification requirements.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Harvest Strategy Working Group (HSWG) met in May 2025 to refine the project scope and recommended empirical testing using historical fishery data.</li> <li>• The AFMA Research Committee (ARC) has received the revised proposal and is awaiting MAC/RAG feedback before formal assessment.</li> <li>• The MAC supported the continuation of the annual biomass survey, citing its value for both management and ecological understanding.</li> <li>• The MAC also recommended a new research project focused on the ecological impact of the Eleven-Arm Seastar, given its increasing prevalence and potential to disrupt scallop beds.</li> </ul> <p><b>Declared Conflicts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure impartiality during research related decision making, members and participants with declared conflicts of interest—specifically Matt Koopman, Ryan Day, Andrew Penney, Timothy Ward</li> </ul>
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		<p>and Caleb Gardener left the room while the Scallop Resource Assessment Group (RAG) proceeded to endorse research priorities</p> <div> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ScallopMAC endorsed the revised scope for the harvest strategy review project.</li> <li>ScallopMAC supported the continuation of the biomass survey as a high-priority, cost-effective research activity.</li> <li>ScallopMAC recommended the inclusion of a project on Eleven-Arm Seastar impacts in the Annual Research Statement.</li> </ul> </div> <div> <p><b>Action items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFMA to circulate research scopes for new priorities (e.g., seastar impact study) to ScallopMAC for out-of-session review.</li> </ol> </div>
9.	<p><b>Co-Management Committee Membership</b></p> <p><i>For Advice</i></p> <p><b>Lead Presenter:</b> AFMA</p>	<p>ScallopMAC was asked to review and provide advice on the membership of the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF) Industry Management Committee, referred to as the Co-Management Committee.</p> <p><b>Main Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MAC previously reviewed the Co-Management Committee membership in June 2024 and recommended no changes.</li> <li>The current membership was reaffirmed, with no objections raised during the meeting.</li> </ul> <div> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>ScallopMAC endorsed the continuation of the current Co-Management Committee membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Johnathan Hammond – Chair and Tasmanian representative</li> <li>John Richey – Tasmanian representative</li> <li>Dusty Cull – Victorian representative</li> <li>Jake Watts – Victorian representative</li> <li>Brad Milic – Atlantis Consulting (industry observer)</li> <li>Bob Lister – Scallop Fisherman’s Association of Tasmania (observer)</li> </ul> </div>
10.	<b>Other business</b>	<p>ScallopMAC members reiterated concerns about the ecological and economic impact of the Eleven-Arm Seastar outbreak, which has severely affected scallop beds. Suggestions included exploring research into mitigation strategies and investigating potential uses for sea stars (e.g., organic fertiliser). Members emphasised the need for clear public communication</p>

		<p>that the decline in scallop stocks is due to environmental factors, not fishing activity.</p> <p>No other business was raised.</p>
Close of meeting		<p>The Chair thanked all members, presenters, and observers for their contributions to a productive meeting.</p> <p>Special thanks were extended to Alannah Wood for her work as Executive Officer, noting this was her final ScallopRAG meeting.</p> <p>The meeting concluded with appreciation for the collaborative and constructive discussions, particularly around the harvest strategy, seastar outbreak, and research priorities.</p> <p>The Chair closed the meeting at 14:23 pm.</p>

## Attachment A – Adopted agenda



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

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

#### Meeting 40 – 20 June 2025

##### Agenda

Time (AEDT): 09:30 – 15:35

Location: Online

Chair Name: Darryl McPhee

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
9:30 (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
10:00 (30 min)	<b>Agenda item 2. Fishery update</b>		
	2.1 AFMA Management	For noting	AFMA
	2.2 Industry		Industry members
	2.3 State fisheries		Atlantis Consulting
	2.4 MSC		State managers
	2.5 Environment		Environment member
	2.6 Economic		Economic member
	2.7 Research		Scientific member
10:30 (10 min)	Morning Tea		AFMA/CSIRO
10:40 (10 min)	<b>Agenda item 3. Climate Change</b>	For noting	
10:50 (30min)	<b>Agenda item 4. Economic condition index</b>	For advice	ABARES
11:15 (60 min)	<b>Agenda item 5. 2025 pre-season survey</b>	For noting	Fishwell
12:15 (30 min)	<b>Agenda item 6. 2025 season recommendations</b>	For advice	AFMA
	5.1 TAC (commercial and doughboy scallop)		
	5.2 Closures		
	5.3 Season dates		
12:45 (30 min)	Lunch		

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## Attachment B – Register of interests

Name	RAG/MAC position / organisation	Declared interests	Relevant agenda item(s) and how they will be managed
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	Agenda 6  Members with a perceived interest could participate in discussions but were excluded from final recommendations.
Stuart Richey	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State fishing concessions, Commonwealth fish receiver permit and State processing licences. Chair CFA.	Agenda 6  Members with a perceived interest could participate in discussions but were excluded from final recommendations.

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John Hammond	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.	Agenda 6  Members with a perceived interest could participate in discussions but were excluded from final recommendations.
John Cull	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions	Agenda 6  Members with a perceived interest could participate in discussions but were excluded from final recommendations.
Steven Mantzaris	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions	Agenda 6  Members with a perceived interest could participate in discussions but were excluded from final recommendations.

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Caleb Gardner	Economic member	Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopMAC	Agenda 8  Members with a perceived interest could participate in discussions but were excluded from final recommendations.
Sylvia Zukowski	Environment Member	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise	
Yvette Lamont	AFMA Member	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	
Alannah Wood	Executive Officer	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	
Matt Koopman	Invited participant, Fishwell Consulting	Fishwell Consulting employee. Fishwell have undertaken the BSCZSF survey since 2015. Fishwell 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 includes catch and effort data from the BSCZSF. No other interest in any commercial fisheries.	Agenda 8  Members with a perceived interest could participate in discussions but were excluded from final recommendations.
Brad Milic	Observer, Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group	Employed by Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group, representing industry clients.	

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		Also employed by Australian Longline Fishing which holds various fishing rights in, and operates vessels in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic fisheries and New and Exploratory fisheries under the jurisdiction of CCAMLR.	
James Parkinson	Invited participant, NRE Tasmania	NRE Tasmania employee, no interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	
Ryan Day	UTAS	Scallop Researcher, Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopRAG.	
Andrew Penney	Consultant	Fishwell Consulting employee. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopRAG.	
Tim Ward	IMAS	Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopRAG.	
Natalie Couchman	AFMA	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.	
Andrew Zapantis	Industry	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions	
Sally Troy	AFMA Commission	AFMA Commissioner. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	
Ian Dutton	AFMA Commission	AFMA Commissioner. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	

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Rebecca Jol	AFMA	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	
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## Attachment C - Summary of Actions and Recommendations

Agenda Item	No.	Action	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
2	1	AFMA to clarify the status and cost recovery arrangements for observer coverage.	AFMA	ScallopMAC 41
2	2	AFMA and Fishwell to ensure observer data is reviewed and integrated into bycatch assessments.	AFMA and Fishwell	ScallopMAC 41
2	3	Consideration to be given to a research project on the Eleven-Arm Seastar outbreak and its implications for scallop stocks.	AFMA	As soon as possible
2	4	AFMA to monitor the implementation of mandatory e-logbooks and provide support to operators during the transition.	AFMA	
3	1	AFMA to compile and provide a summary of existing literature on climate risks to scallops at a future meeting.	AFMA	As soon as practical
3	2	AFMA and CSIRO to explore the feasibility of aligning environmental indicators with biomass survey regions.	AFMA & CSIRO	
3	3	AFMA to provide the MAC with updates on the Climate Risk Framework trial, with outcomes to be considered by the AFMA Commission in September 2025	AFMA	ScallopMAC 41
7	1	AFMA to provide CSIRO with updated evidence to support refinement of residual risk assessments for high-risk species.	AFMA	
7	2	AFMA to clarify reporting requirements for dead shell and habitat-forming benthos in logbooks.	AFMA	
7	3	AFMA to monitor the outcomes of the Commonwealth Bycatch Policy review and incorporate relevant changes into future iterations of the Workplan.	AFMA	
7	4	ScallopMAC to review progress on Bycatch and Discard Workplan actions annually and conduct a full review after five years or upon ERA update.	AFMA	Annually

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8	1	AFMA to circulate research scopes for new priorities (e.g., seastar impact study) to ScallopRAG for out-of-session review.	AFMA	
Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
2	1	Maintain engagement with MSC auditors to ensure alignment of data collection with certification requirements.	AFMA	
2	2	Continue efforts to improve logbook reporting of bycatch and discards.	AFMA	
2	3	Support further research into the ecological impacts of high-density beds and seastar predation.	AFMA	
3	1	ScallopMAC noted the draft Climate and Ecosystem Status Report and supported its continued refinement.		
3	2	Members advised that future versions of the Climate and Ecosystem Status Report for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF) should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finer spatial resolution of environmental data.</li> <li>○ Integration of observed ecological disturbances (e.g., seastar outbreaks).</li> <li>○ Consideration of climate-related changes in scallop reproductive timing and growth.</li> </ul>		
4	1	ScallopMAC NOTED the presentation and acknowledged the ECI as a useful contextual tool for understanding fishery economics.		
4	2	ABARES TO CONTINUE refining the model, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improving cost structure accuracy</li> <li>○ Incorporating state-level data</li> <li>○ Enhancing estimates for repairs, maintenance, and capital costs</li> </ul>		
6	1	ScallopRAG recommended the following for the 2025 season: <b>Commercial Scallop TAC:</b> 4,000 tonnes (less research catch allowance).		

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		<p><b>Doughboy Scallop TAC:</b> 100 tonnes.</p> <p><b>Spatial Closures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Flinders Island (≥85 mm biomass: 2,923 tonnes; density: 0.42 ind/m<sup>2</sup>).</li> <li>○ Three Hummocks Southeast – partial closure above -40.01° (≥85 mm biomass: 2,965 tonnes; density: 3.47 ind/m<sup>2</sup>).</li> <li>○ King Island Lavinia North – partial closure between -39.6° and -39.65° (≥85 mm biomass: 916 tonnes; density: 0.39 ind/m<sup>2</sup>).</li> <li>○ Total closed biomass ≥85 mm: 6,804 tonnes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Season Dates:</b> Open on or as soon after 12 July 2025; close on 31 December 2025.</p>		
7	1	ScallopMAC endorsed the updated ERA and revised Bycatch and Discard Workplan		
7	2	ScallopMac supported continued refinement of bycatch reporting practices and encouraged further integration of habitat data into ecological assessments.		
8	1	ScallopMAC endorsed the revised scope for the harvest strategy review project.		
8	2	ScallopMAC supported the continuation of the biomass survey as a high-priority, cost-effective research activity.		
8	3	ScallopMAC recommended the inclusion of a project on 11-arm sea star impacts in the Annual Research Statement.		
9	1	<p>ScallopMAC endorsed the continuation of the current Co-Management Committee membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Johnathan Hammond – Chair and Tasmanian representative</li> <li>• John Richey – Tasmanian representative</li> <li>• Dusty Cull – Victorian representative</li> <li>• Jake Watts – Victorian representative</li> <li>• Brad Milic – Atlantis Consulting (industry observer)</li> </ul>		

		Bob Lister – Scallop Fisherman’s Association of Tasmania (observer)		
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