Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

AFMADMW-1932364602-91013

Minutes

Meeting	Scallop Resource Assessment Group		
Meeting Number	46	Dates	19 June 2025
Location	Online	Time	09:30-16.30
Members	Brendan Kelaher		Chair
	Ryan Day		Interim Scientific member
	Don Bromhead		Scientific member
	Stuart Richey		Industry member
	John Cull		Industry member
	Caleb Gardener		Economic Member
	Yvette Lamont		AFMA member
	Alannah Wood		Executive officer
Apologies	Jayson Semmens		Scientific member
Invited Participants	Matt Koopman		Fishwell Consulting
	Brad Milic		Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group
	Robert Curtotti		ABARES
	Natalie Couchman		AFMA
	Steph Brodie		CSIRO
	Andrew Penney		Consultant
Observers	Sally Weekes		AFMA
	Stephanie Blake		ABARES
	Ian Dutton		Commission
	Connor Clayton		ABARES
	Rebecca Jol		AFMA
	James Parkinson		NRE TAS

Agenda Item	Title/Topic/Issue	Notes, Action & Recommendations
1.	Preliminaries	1.1 Welcome and apologies The Chair, Brendan Kelaher, opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed participants. The Chair also facilitated the introduction of meeting participants and noted apologies, which is recorded in the table above. Meeting participants were informed that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of assisting the preparation of meeting minutes. 1.2 Declarations of interests The Scallop RAG noted, in line with Section 15 of *Fisheries Management Paper 1 – Consultative Committees* (FMP1), the requirement for all meeting participants to declare relevant interests, not limited to pecuniary gain, regarding all agenda items proposed for ScallopRAG 45. Meeting participants discussed and agreed how declared interest would be managed. Declared interests and how they were managed at ScallopRAG 45 are recorded in the register of interest at **Attachment A**. 1.3 Adoption of agenda The agenda was adopted as final (see **Attachment B**). 1.4 Minutes of previous meeting AFMA noted that the minutes from ScallopRAG 44 meeting held on 6 June 2024 were distributed to ScallopRAG members for feedback prior to finalisation and are available on the AFMA website. ScallopRAG noted the new template and format of the minutes, including a reduction of the overall length and complexity. ScallopRAG acknowledged the benefits of brevity in minute taking, while also highlighting the importance of maintaining sufficient detail to accurately record differing views among members and record key discussions following presentations. This is particularly important where observations or views on research findings are not captured in the papers themselves. Such discussions are important to record. 1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings ScallopRAG noted the status of action items from previous meetings. • The Population Dynamics project remains pending further progress on MSE and harvest strategy testing. • The Economic Conditions Index is being updated annually. • Work on high-risk species from the ERA is ongoing and will be discussed further under Agenda Item 8. • Results from the seismic survey project are not yet finalised and will be presented at a future meeting. A summary of actions and recommendations from ScallopRAG 45 are at **Attachment C**.

2	Fishery Update	ScallopRAG noted updates from AFMA and industry regarding current management arrangements and activities in the BSCZSF Updates from other relevant jurisdictions were also provided. 2.1 AFMA Management • AFMA advised that a recruitment process is underway for the Manager of Squid, Scallop, and Small Pelagic Fisheries. Alannah Wood will conclude her contract at the end of June. • The Fish Receiver Portal was closed from 27 May 2025 for two months to allow backend maintenance. During this period, industry has been given leeway before transitioning to mandatory electronic logbooks (e-logs) and catch disposal records (e-CDRs). • The 2024 season catch was 1,014.7 tonnes (26% of the TAC), a significant decline from 1,983 tonnes (51% of TAC) in 2023. Most catch (61%) came from waters northeast of King Island. Eight vessels were active in 2024, with one vessel accounting for 39% of the total catch. 2.2 Industry • Industry reported a severe outbreak of Eleven-Arm seastars (*Coscinasterias muricata*), which are rapidly spreading and preying on scallop beds. • It was described as the worst they have ever seen, with seastars wiping out surveyed areas and threatening the viability of the fishery this season. • Concerns were raised about the potential collapse of the fishery for coming years due to seastar predation on scallops, with operators shifting to a “get what you can” approach. • Industry noted the importance of transparency when reporting on the predicted biomass decline from this fishing season. The impact on biomass from natural mortality vs fishing mortality should be clearly stated. 2.3 Other Jurisdictions • **Tasmania:** The fishery opened on 14 June 2025 with a 1,000-tonne TAC in the Northwest and a pending 1,000-tonne TAC in the Lower East (Marion Bay), subject to further surveys. A potential additional 1,000 tonnes may be added based on exploratory surveys in the Northeast. A significant biomass decline (80%) was observed in the Northwest and was attributed to seastar predation, while the southeast did not appear to be impacted by seastar predation. • **Victoria:** Previous closures on the Tarwhine and Clonmel beds have been lifted. The 2025–26 quota remains at 132 tonnes (1.5 tonnes per licence) to support exploratory fishing. No recent surveys have been conducted. 2.4 Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Update • Brad Milic provided an update on MSC accreditation: • Audit three is scheduled for 5 September 2025. • The Population Dynamics Project will support progress toward meeting principle 1 conditions; however, its findings may mean there is a need to vary condition 2 due to the updated timeline of associated projects, and regular ongoing biomass surveys are anticipated to remain a necessary component.

		• Good progress has been made on principle 2 conditions, the revised harvest control rules and bycatch with fishery dependent and independent monitoring of bycatch and habitat being undertaken and assessed. 2.5 Economic • Noted significant national progress on harvest strategies, with a specific project upcoming for this fishery. • Emphasised the critical role of economics in setting effective harvest strategy targets. • Highlighted the unique challenges and opportunities of this fishery, encouraging consideration of refined targets for fishing effort (F). 2.6 Research • ABARES assisted AFMA in connecting with echinoderm experts who assisted with further residual risk assessment under the ERA • DAFF Fisheries Policy branch are finalising the summary documents for the Harvest Strategy and Bycatch Policy reviews. Processes towards drafting revisions, if required, will commence in the second half of the year.

3	FOR ADVICE
	
	Climate Change
		AFMA presented its Climate Adaptation Program and the draft Climate and Ecosystem Status Report for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF), developed by CSIRO. The report is part of a broader initiative to integrate climate considerations into fisheries management and decision-making.
		
		AFMA Climate Adaptation Program
		
		• AFMA is implementing a multi-faceted Climate Adaptation Program to address climate risks across Commonwealth fisheries.
		• Key tools include:
		  ○ **Climate and Ecosystem Status Reports** – contextual environmental summaries to inform RAG and MAC advice.
		  ○ **Climate Risk Framework (CRF)** – a structured risk assessment tool currently being trialled across six fisheries.
		  ○ **Climate Adaptation Handbook** – a guide for identifying and implementing adaptation strategies.
		  ○ **Research collaborations** – including the FRDC's Futures of Seafood project and the Fish Soup initiative (fine-scale oceanographic data from fishing vessels).
		
		Presentation of the Climate and Ecosystem Status Report
		
		Dr. Steph Brodie (CSIRO) presented the draft report, highlighting:
		
		• **Environmental Conditions:**
		  ○ 2023–2024 saw record-high global and regional sea surface temperatures.
		  ○ Bass Strait experienced persistent above-average surface and bottom temperatures.
		  ○ Chlorophyll-a levels showed variability, with some long-term increases noted off Maria Island.

		• **Climate Drivers:**
		  ○ ENSO conditions were neutral during the reporting period.
		  ○ The Southern Annular Mode (SAM) showed variability.
		• **Forecasts:**
		  ○ Warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures are expected to continue through late 2025.
		
		Discussion Points
		• Members acknowledged the value of the report and its relevance to management decisions.
		• Suggestions included:
		  ○ Incorporating sub-regional breakdowns (e.g. Apollo Bay, West, East) for key indicators like SST and chlorophyll.
		  ○ Including scallop-specific findings from previous climate risk assessments in future reports.
		  ○ Exploring the development of species-specific or ecosystem indices to better link physical changes to biological responses.
		• Concerns were raised about the potential misuse of climate change as a justification for less precautionary management. AFMA reaffirmed that any changes to reference points must be evidence-based.
		• It was requested that at a future meeting AFMA present on the climate risk framework to provide ScallopRAG with a good understanding of the parameters being built into management responses around uncertainties related to climate impacts.
		• Ryan Day shared preliminary findings from the "Boom and Bust" project, indicating that temperature alone may not be the primary driver of scallop condition, with food availability and environmental variability likely playing larger roles.
		
		Recommendations and Actions
		• ScallopRAG noted the draft Climate and Ecosystem Status Report.
		• Members provided advice on additional observations (e.g. seastar outbreak, biomass decline) for inclusion in the final report and recommended that AFMA and CSIRO include sub-regional environmental trends (e.g. Flinders Island beds area, Kind Island beds area and Apollo Bay) and summaries of scallop-specific climate risk findings (e.g. from past research including Beth Fulton's work) in future iterations.

4	For noting
	
	Economics condition index
		ABARES presented the first iteration of the Economic Conditions Index (ECI) for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF), developed in response to previous ScallopRAG requests. The ECI is designed to track economic performance over time and support management decisions.
		Key Components of the ECI
		• The ECI measures economic conditions relative to a reference period (2008–09 to 2024–25).
		• It integrates three main components:
		  ○ **Fish Price Index**
		  ○ **Catch Rate Index**

		○ **Composite Cost Index** (including fuel, labour, repairs, and other operational costs) • The index is benchmarked to 100, with values above indicating better-than-average conditions and below indicating worse-than-average. **Findings** • Economic conditions were above average in 2023–24 and 2024–25, following a dip in 2022–23 due to high fuel prices and low catch rates. • The 2022–23 season was particularly challenging, with elevated costs across all categories. • The ECI is expected to decline in 2025–26 due to the impact of the Eleven-Arm seastar outbreak and potential increases in fuel prices. **Data Sources** • Catch and effort data from AFMA (CDRs and logbooks) • Fuel prices from the Australian Petroleum Institute and ATO • Labour costs based on visa wage requirements and superannuation • Repairs and maintenance estimated as a percentage of GVP • Vessel characteristics and trip data from AFMA **Discussion Points** • The economic member suggested incorporating: ○ A measure of overall stock availability, as high biomass allows selective fishing and improves economic outcomes even with low catch. ○ Average meat weight data from processors to refine the catch rate index. ○ Quota lease prices as a proxy for net economic returns (NER), which AFMA has begun collecting. • Robert Curtotti acknowledged these suggestions and noted they would enhance the robustness of the index. **Next Steps** • Expand the ECI to include Tasmanian and Victorian data, pending access to trip-level data. • Improve the accuracy of cost structure estimates, particularly for non-fuel costs. • Integrate additional indicators such as meat weight and lease price data. • Continue refining the model and updating the index annually.
5	For noting 2025 biomass survey results	Fishwell Consulting presented the results of the 2025 pre-season biomass survey for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF). The survey aimed to estimate biomass, assess size distribution, record bycatch and habitat data, and inform management decisions under the BSCZSF Harvest Strategy. **Survey Design and Methodology**

		• 11 beds were surveyed across Flinders Island, King Island, and Apollo Bay regions.
		• Survey design included known and exploratory beds, with 25 tows per bed.
		• Biomass estimates were calculated using a 33% dredge efficiency and included both total biomass and biomass of scallops ≥85 mm.
		• Bycatch, discard rates, and habitat-forming benthos were recorded.
		
		Key Findings
		
		• **Total estimated biomass**: 33,518 tonnes
		• **Biomass ≥85 mm**: ~30,437 tonnes
		• **Highest biomass beds:**
		  ○ King Island 11 (8,810 t)
		  ○ Three Hummocks SE (6,462 t)
		  ○ King Island, Lavinia East (6,335 t).
		
		• **Notable recruitment**: Observed in Flinders Island South, North of Babel and King Island 10
		• **Low biomass**: Apollo Bay (41 t), Flinders Island 5 (251 t), King Island Blue Dot Extended (845 t)
		• **Notable increases in biomass:** King Island 6 (6,441 t), Flinders Island 1 (2,202 t) and Flinders Islander North of Babel (579 t)
		• **Notable decreases in biomass:** King Island Lavinia North (13,287 t), King Island 12 (6,752 t) and Apollo Bay - The Hills (3,263 t).
		*Note that comparing beds between years is not necessarily accurate as bed boundaries/sizes can change between survey years.
		
		Starfish Outbreak
		
		• Significant increase in Eleven-Arm Seastar (Coscinasterias muricata) observed across multiple beds, particularly:
		  ○ King Island 12 (26% of catch),
		  ○ King Island 11 (14%),
		  ○ King Island, Lavinia North (5%)
		  ○ King Island – 3 Hammocks SE (3%)
		• Normally *C.muricata* comprises less than 3% of catch
		
		• Starfish presence was widespread, raising concerns about predation and potential stock collapse.
		
		Discussion Points
		
		• Members noted total survey biomass estimate is the lowest for some years and some significant beds have declined. Members noted the extensive scale and rapid spread of the starfish outbreak.
		• Caleb Gardner proposed analysing the ratio of starfish to scallops to identify potential tipping points for bed collapse.
		• Don Bromhead highlighted the value of comparing current starfish data with historical survey records to quantify the anomaly.
		• The RAG discussed the implications for bed closures and the need to balance precautionary management with operational flexibility for industry.

		• The RAG noted that to potentially assist the resilience of stock against starfish outbreak it may be worth seeking to close all or part of one bed in each region that had lower starfish abundance (noting no beds were completely free) and hoping they stay low in numbers, to potentially provide a source of future recruitment and assist recovery of the stock. **Recommendations and Actions** • ScallopRAG noted the 2025 biomass survey results and the associated bycatch and habitat data. • The survey data informed subsequent discussions on TAC setting and bed closures under Agenda Item 6. • Fishwell Consulting to consider incorporating density-scaled length frequency plots and starfish-to-scallop ratios in future reports.

6	For advice
	
	TAC recommendation
		ScallopRAG undertook a comprehensive discussion to determine the management settings for the 2025 Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery (BSCZSF) season. The conversation was shaped by the results of the 2025 biomass survey, which identified ~33,500 tonnes of total biomass and ~30,400 tonnes of scallops ≥85 mm, and the emerging ecological threat posed by a widespread outbreak of Eleven-Arm seastar (*Coscinasterias muricata*).
		
		Total Allowable Catch (TAC)
		
		• The RAG supported maintaining the TAC at 4,000 tonnes, consistent with previous years.
		• This decision was informed by:
		  ○ The presence of substantial biomass despite a decline from 2024.
		  ○ The need for precaution due to ecological uncertainty.
		  ○ The expectation that actual catch would be well below the TAC due to reduced fleet size and operational constraints.
		• Industry emphasized the importance of flexibility, noting that a lower TAC could force operators to lease quota unnecessarily, increasing costs.
		Doughboy Scallops
		
		• The default TAC of **100 tonnes** was retained.
		• Members noted that doughboy scallops are not actively targeted and have not been landed in recent seasons.
		• The TAC serves as a contingency and does not impact broader management decisions.
		
		Spatial Closures
		The RAG aimed to satisfy Tier 2 harvest strategy requirements (≥3,000 t of scallops ≥85 mm at high density), while balancing ecological protection and operational flexibility.
		Closures endorsed:
		1. **Flinders Island 1** – Full closure:
		  ○ Long-standing time series site with consistent recruitment.

- Industry supported closure, noting the area's unpredictable dynamics and limited commercial interest.

2. **King Island, Three Hummocks SE** – Northern half (above 40.01°S):
   - High density and biomass.
   - Considered a strong candidate for closure to protect spawning stock, included due to relatively low seastar counts
3. **King Island, Lavinia North** – Partial closure (39.6°S to 39.65°S):
   - Provided spatial representation in the northern part of the fishery.
   - Moderate seastar presence and signs of clappers (dead scallops) noted.

Table 1. *Commercial scallop beds suggested for closures in 2024 with biomass (tonnes ≥ 85 mm in size) and density(individual/m²) of scallops. AB= Apollo Bay, FI= Flinders Island and KI= King Island*

Scallop bed	Estimated biomass ≥85mm (t)	Density (individual/m²)
FI 1	2923	0.42
KI Three Hummocks South east (Partial)	2965	3.47
KI Lavinia North (Partial)	916	0.39
Total	**6,804**	-

Additional Considerations:

- KI 10 was proposed by the scientific member as a potential closure due to low starfish presence and signs of recruitment. Following discussion by ScallopRAG - it was left open to preserve industry access.
- Members debated more generally whether to close areas with low starfish presence to protect potential refugia and future recruitment. While this approach was supported by the scientific member, Industry cautioned against what they considered speculative closures, emphasizing the need to maintain access in a challenging season.
- The RAG acknowledged that closures must be based on surveyed beds and meet density thresholds (>0.2 ind/m²) to qualify under the harvest strategy.

Season Dates

- **Opening Date:** Saturday, 12 July 2025
  - Selected to allow sufficient time for AFMA to complete administrative preparations.
  - Industry supported the date, noting alignment with processing facilities.
- **Closing Date:** 31 December 2025
  - Consistent with previous years and designed to protect settling spat.

Seastar Outbreak Considerations

- The presence of Eleven-Arm Seastars was a major theme throughout the discussion.
- Industry reported unprecedented densities and rapid movement of seastars across surveyed beds.
- Members considered two contrasting management approaches:
    - **"Fish before they're eaten"** – Maximize harvest before starfish predation.
    - **"Protect what remains"** – Close areas to preserve potential recruitment sources.
- Ultimately, the RAG opted for a balanced approach, selecting closures that met biological criteria while preserving operational flexibility.

Climate Change

- The ScallopRAG 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.
- ScallopRAG considered that the annual biomass survey and TAC setting process enable AFMA to respond quickly to changes in the fishery and that the recommended TAC is for the 2025 season is sufficiently precautionary to account for any potential risks posed by climate change.

Declared Conflicts

- After members with declared conflicts of interest—specifically Stewart Richey, John Cull, and Brad Milic left the room, the Scallop Resource Assessment Group (RAG) proceeded to finalize several key decisions for the upcoming season.

Recommendations

Noting the advice above, the ScallopRAG made the following recommendations to the MAC and the AFMA Commission regarding arrangements for the BSCZSF 2025 fishing season:

Recommendation 1: Consistent with arrangements in 2024, 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 doughboy scallop TAC be set at 100 tonnes and the commercial scallop TAC be set at 4,000 tonnes (less the RCA)

Recommendation 3: The following areas be closed

- Flinders Island 1, (estimated biomass ≥85 mm 2923 tonnes, 0.42 ind/m2)
- King Island Three Hummocks southeast, partial closure above -40.01 degrees, (estimated biomass ≥85 mm 2965 tonnes, 3.47 ind/m2)
- King Island Lavina North, partial closure between -39.6 and -39.65 degrees (estimated biomass ≥85 mm 916 tonnes, 0.39 ind/m2)

		Recommendation 4: the fishing season open on or as soon thereafter 12 of July 2025 and close on 31 December 2025.
7	For advice Bycatch and discard workplan	ScallopRAG 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. **Key Points of Discussion** **1. ERA and High-Risk Species** • The ERA, completed in 2023 using 2017–2021 data, identified 17 high-risk species. • Expert input was sought to reassess residual risk scores, particularly for echinoderms. • While some attribute scores were clarified (e.g. fecundity), most ratings remained unchanged. • The expert commentary has been incorporated into the revised workplan and will be shared with CSIRO for potential future updates. **2. Bycatch and Discard Workplan** • The workplan, last updated in 2015, has been revised to: ○ Reflect ERA outcomes ○ Incorporate new observer and biomass survey data ○ Address habitat and ecological community impacts • ScallopRAG endorsed the revised workplan, noting it supports MSC certification requirements and aligns with the Bycatch Policy. **3. Observer and Survey Data** • Observer coverage (5%) was introduced in 2024, with two trips completed. • Data showed low bycatch volumes, consistent with survey data. • Fishwell Consulting presented time-series analyses of key bycatch species (e.g. Eleven-Arm Seastar, sponges, sea pens), grouped by ecological regions. • These data will support long-term monitoring and trend analysis. **4. Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs)** • No formal VMEs were identified in the ERA. • Members discussed the lack of a clear VME definition in the fishery and noted that sponge gardens may be the only potentially vulnerable habitat. • It was agreed that further clarification and alignment with legislative definitions may be needed. **Recommendations and Actions** • The RAG supported continued development of bycatch indicators and long-term monitoring using survey and observer data.

		• Members agreed to revisit VME definitions and consider incorporating relevant thresholds or habitat classifications in future updates. **Recommendation 5:** ScallopRAG formally endorsed the updated Ecological risk assessment. **Recommendation 6:** ScallopRAG formally endorsed the revised Bycatch and Discard Workplan.

8	For advice
	
	Annual research priorities
		ScallopRAG 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. This advice will inform the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) funding processes.
		
		Key Research Priorities Discussed
		1. Annual Biomass Survey
		• **Status:** Ongoing and essential
		• **Priority:** High
		• **Feasibility:** High
		• **Cost:** Low (noting significant in-kind industry contribution)
		• **RAG Advice:** Strong support to retain this as a core research activity. Members noted the survey's critical role in informing TACs and closures, and its potential to be adjusted in frequency pending outcomes of the harvest strategy review.
		2. Review and Refinement of the Harvest Strategy
		• **Status:** Project proposal endorsed by ScallopRAG
		• **Lead:** Tim Ward (SARDI)
		• **Scope:** Replace the previously proposed MSE project with a more practical simulation-based approach, informed by Andrew Penney's population dynamics work.
		• **Objectives:**
		  ○ Define reference points and harvest control rules (HCRs)
		  ○ Incorporate variability in natural mortality
		  ○ Establish rules for survey frequency and bed prioritisation
		  ○ Align with MSC certification requirements
		• **RAG Advice:** Endorsed as a funded project commencing 1 July 2025, with strong support for early stakeholder engagement and clear scoping.
		3. Eleven-Arm Seastar (*Coscinasterias muricata*) Research
		• **Status:** New proposed FRDC priority
		• **Scope:** Investigate predation dynamics, population biology, and potential management responses to outbreaks
		• **Priority:** Essential
		• **Feasibility:** High
		• **Cost:** Medium (estimated $100,000–$200,000)
		• **RAG Advice:** Supported as a significant issue for the fishery. Suggested focus areas include:

		○ Predation thresholds and tipping points ○ Movement and energetics ○ Potential mitigation strategies ○ Integration with observer and survey data ○ Impact on scallop recruitment and fishery resilience ○ Opportunity for Industry contribution **4. Scallop Ageing Techniques** • **Status:** Previously listed priority • **RAG Advice:** Recommended for removal from the 2026–27 list due to limited relevance to current management needs and low feasibility. May be reconsidered in future if required. **Additional Notes** • The RAG supported including in-kind industry contributions in project descriptions to reflect the full value of research efforts. • Members emphasized the importance of aligning research priorities with emerging ecological risks and management needs, particularly in light of the seastar outbreak. **Declared Conflicts** • 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 and Caleb Gardener left the room while the Scallop Resource Assessment Group (RAG) proceeded to endorse research priorities.
9	For noting	**9.1 Harvest Strategy Working Group (HSWG) Membership** • AFMA requested ScallopRAG to confirm the current membership of the HSWG for the duration of the harvest strategy review project. • The proposed core membership includes: ○ AFMA representative (currently Yvette Lamont) ○ Economic member (Caleb Gardner) ○ Scientific member (Don Bromhead) ○ Biomass survey lead (Matt Koopman or Fishwell Consulting) ○ Industry members (Stuart Richey and John Cull) ○ Chair of ScallopRAG (Brendan Kelaher) – newly added • The RAG endorsed the updated membership, including the Chair's participation, noting the importance of continuity and experience during the review process. • It was also agreed that state representatives (e.g. Tasmania and Victoria) would be invited to participate as observers or contributors to ensure alignment across jurisdictions. **Closing Remarks** • The Chair thanked all members, presenters, and observers for their contributions to a productive meeting. • Special thanks were extended to Alannah Wood for her work as Executive Officer, noting this was her final ScallopRAG meeting. • The meeting concluded with appreciation for the collaborative and constructive discussions, particularly around the harvest strategy, seastar outbreak, and research priorities.

Close of meeting		The Chair closed the meeting at 15:48

Attachment A – Register of interests

Name	RAG/MAC position / organisation	Declared interests	Relevant agenda item(s) and how they will be managed
Brendan Kelaher	Chair	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	
Ryan Day	Interim Scientific member	Scallop Research Group Leader, Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopRAG	Will leave the meeting during decisions on research priorities involving IMAS (Agenda Item 8).
Don Bromhead	Scientific member	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	
Stuart Richey	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State fishing concessions, Commonwealth fish receiver permit and State processing licences.	Will leave the meeting during decisions on TAC and closures (Agenda Item 6).
John Cull	Industry member	Holds Commonwealth and State concessions.	Will leave the meeting during decisions on TAC and closures (Agenda Item 6).
Caleb Gardner	Economic Member	Employee of IMAS, UTAS. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopRAG.	Will not participate in decisions involving IMAS proposals.
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.	
Andrew Penney/Matt Koopman	Invited participant, Fishwell Consulting	Fishwell Consulting employee. Fishwell have undertaken the BSCZSF survey since 2015. Fishwell also submit research	Will leave the meeting during decisions on research priorities or projects involving Fishwell (Agenda Item 8).

		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.	
Brad Milic	Invited participant, Atlantis Fisheries Consulting Group	Contracted by Atlantis Consulting, representing industry clients.	Declared additional contracts during the meeting. Will leave for decisions where a conflict may arise.
Sally Weekes	Observer	AFMA employee. No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise.	
Ryan Day	Observer	Employee of IMAS, UTAS. Organisation is known to submit research funding applications for consideration by ScallopRAG.	

Attachment B – Adopted agenda

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
9:30 (20 min)	**Agenda item 1. Preliminaries**		
	1.1 Welcome and apologies	For noting	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
9:50 (45 min)	**Agenda item 2. Fishery update**		
	2.1 AFMA Management	For noting	AFMA
	2.2 Industry		Industry members
	2.3 State update		Atlantis Consulting
	2.4 MSC Update		State observers
	2.5 Economic		Economic member
	2.6 Research		Scientific member
10:35 (10 mins)	**Morning Tea**		
10:45 (25 min)	**Agenda item 3. Climate change**	For advice	AFMA
11:10 (30 min)	**Agenda item 4. Economic condition index**	For noting	ABARES
11:40 (50 min)	**Agenda item 5. 2025 pre-season survey**	For noting	Fishwell
12:30 (50 min)	**Agenda item 6. 2025 season recommendations**	For advice	AFMA
	6.1 TAC (commercial and doughboy)		
	6.2 Closures		
	6.3 Season dates		
13:20 (30 min)	**Lunch**		
13:50 (45 min)	**Agenda item 7. Bycatch & Discard Workplan**	For noting	AFMA
	7.1 BSCZSF ERA update		
	7.2 Bycatch and discard (from survey and logbooks)		
	7.3 Review bycatch and discard workplan		

Approximate time	Item	Purpose	Lead presenter
14:35 (10 min)	**Afternoon Tea**		
14:45 (60 min)	**Agenda item 8. Research priorities**		
	8.1 Population Dynamics presentation	For discussion	Andrew Penney
	8.2 Recommendation on Harvest Strategy Review project proposal	For advice	Tim Ward
	8.3 Advice on future research priorities	For advice	Members
15:45 (15 min)	**Agenda item 9. Other business** 9.1 HSWG membership (duration of HS review for providing advice)	For noting	AFMA
16:00	**End of meeting**		

Attachment C - Summary of Actions and Recommendations

Recommendations from meeting 46

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
3	1	AFMA and CSIRO to consider future inclusion of sub-regional environmental trends and scallop-specific climate risk findings in future iterations.	AFMA	
5	1	Fishwell Consulting to consider incorporating density-scaled length frequency plots and starfish-to-scallop ratios in future reports.	Fishwell Consulting	
6	1	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 (consistent with arrangements in 2024).	AFMA	Season opening 2025
6	2	The doughboy scallop TAC be set at 100 tonnes and the commercial scallop TAC be set at 4,000 tonnes (less the RCA)	AFMA	Season opening 2025
6	3	The following areas be closed • Flinders Island, (estimated biomass ≥85 mm 2923 tonnes, 0.42 ind/m2) • King Island Three Hummocks southeast partial closure above -40.01 degrees, (estimated biomass ≥85 mm 2965 tonnes, 3.47 ind/m2) • King Island Lavina North partial closure between -39.6 and -39.65 degrees (estimated biomass ≥85 mm 916 tonnes, 0.39 ind/m2)		5 July 2025
6	4	That the fishing season open on or as soon thereafter 12 of July 2025 and close on 31 December 2025.	AFMA	5 July 2025
6	5	ScallopRAG formally endorsed the updated Ecological risk assessment.		

6	6	ScallopRAG formally endorsed the revised Bycatch and Discard Workplan.		