Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

AFMANOR-928984018-139220

Minutes

Meeting	**Northern Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee (NORMAC)**		
Meeting Number	91	**Dates**	1 August 2025
Location	Microsoft Teams	**Time**	10:00am
Members	Geoff Richardson (Chair) Kelvin Montanaro (Executive Officer) Gregory Albert (Industry Member) Michael O'Brien (Industry Member) Phil Robson (Industry Member) Bryan van Wyk (Industry Member) Geoffrey Muldoon (Environment/Conservation Member) Denham Parker (Scientific Member)		
Apologies	Brodie Macdonald (AFMA Member) Ian Knuckey (Scientific Member) Ian Boot (Industry Member)		
Invited Participants	Annie Jarrett (NPFI)		
Observers	Brandon Meteyard (NPFI) Natalie Couchman (AFMA) Daniel Corrie (AFMA) Anna Willock (AFMA) Wez Norris (AFMA) Sally Troy (AFMA) Scott Spencer (AFMA) Brett McCallum (AFMA) Tamre Sarhan (AFMA) Lachlan Baker (AFMA) Eva Plaganyi-Lloyd (CSIRO) Rob Kenyon (CSIRO) Trent Timmis (ABARES) David Carter (Austral Fisheries) Andy Prendergast (Austral Fisheries) Stuart Nisbet (Austral Fisheries) Ken Hartley (Raptis Fisheries)		

Agenda Item	Title/Topic/Issue	Notes, Action & Recommendations
1.	Preliminaries	**1.1 Welcome and apologies** The Chair, Mr Geoff Richardson, opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of Country and welcomed participants. The Chair also facilitated the introduction of meeting participants and noted apologies, which are 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** NORMAC noted, in line with Section 3.4.3.1 of *Fisheries Management Paper 1 – Management Advisory Committees* (FMP1), the requirement for all meeting participants to declare relevant interests, not limited to pecuniary gain, regarding all agenda items proposed for NORMAC 91. Meeting participants discussed and agreed how declared interest would be managed. Declared interests and how they were managed at NORMAC 91 are recorded in the register of interest at **Attachment B**. NORMAC noted that there was an industry conflict of interest for agenda item 3 (EM in the NPF). Industry members, invited participants, and observers left the room. NORMAC agreed that industry members could be present for discussion of agenda item 3 but not for the recommendation to the AFMA Commission. Industry was advised of the arrangement once they returned to the meeting. NORMAC noted a potential conflict for scientific members and observers for agenda item 6 (2026/27 Annual Research Statement). Scientific members and observers left the room. NORMAC agreed that scientific members and observers could be present for discussion of agenda item 6 and the NORMAC recommendation so long as no new proposals were made. Scientific members and observers were advised of this arrangement once they returned to the meeting. **1.3 Adoption of agenda** The agenda was adopted as final (see **Attachment A**).
2	MSC Conditions Update/NPF Sawfish Plan	**NPF MSC condition progress and the NPF Sawfish Plan 2024-2026** NORMAC noted an update from Northern Prawn Fishery Industry (NPFI) on progress against Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) conditions, with the first annual surveillance audit passed in January 2025 under the current MSC certification. **NPFI Sawfish Research Projects** NORMAC noted that two recently completed major Sawfish projects: • *Investigating potential for fishing gear, technology and management measures to reduce sawfish and sea snake interactions in Australia's Northern Prawn Fishery.* • *Mitigating Sawfish Interactions in the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF).*

		NORMAC noted the two NPFI presentations outlining the key outcomes from the Crew Member Observer (CMO) program and Sawfish gear modification trials.
		
		CMO Program Presentation
		
		• The CMO Program has delivered a total of 57,000 trawls monitored for ETP/species of interest interactions.
		• 13 ETP and 'at risk' species can be monitored for population levels changes through catch rate trend analysis.
		• 11 of 13 ETP species are statistically comparable between CMO, AFMA observer and prawn population survey data, with little to no evidence of under-reporting by the CMO program.
		• The percentage of the NPF fleet reporting ETP species in logbooks has increased significantly since 2014, with 96% of vessels reporting ETP interactions in 2024.
		
		Sawfish Gear Trials Presentation
		
		• Sawfish are considered the NPF's most significant environmental challenge and highest fishery priority, with over $5 million invested in sawfish research to date.
		• Intended outcomes of the projects include improved escapement and knowledge and sustainability of sawfish populations.
		• Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) and MSC conditions both have conditions related to Sawfish, with the development of a Sawfish Mitigation Strategy for the NPF required by 30 June 2026.
		• NPF operators have recently been undertaking gear modification trials, with the objective to '*identify practical gear mitigation solutions to reduce impacts on sawfish in the NPF*'.
		• Key outcomes of the gear trials to date were:
		  ○ Smaller bar spacing in turtle excluder devices (TEDs) reduced interactions with sawfish and other animals.
		  ○ Shots with grey magnet mesh in the throat of the net had zero sawfish interactions, suggesting the material may be effective in reducing entanglement.
		  ○ Limited underwater footage of the composite fabric material (FloMo) patches in the net warranted further investigation.
		• GLM Analysis was undertaken to compare sea snake interactions prior to and since the adoption of the Tom's Fisheye BRD in 2020. This concluded on average, a 17% reduction in sea snake interactions when this BRD was used. Based on raw catch data, there was a nominal 40% reduction in over the same period.
		
		NORMAC expressed its appreciation for the quality of work undertaken and noted that all the Sawfish research outcomes and available mitigation options will be considered by relevant stakeholders at a Sawfish workshop scheduled just prior to the Northern Prawn Resource Assessment Group (NPRAG) meeting in November.

3	EM in the NPF	**EM in the NPF presentation**
		
		Ms Anna Willock provided a presentation on electronic monitoring (EM) implementation in the NPF, with NORMAC noting the following key points:
		
		Data and Monitoring Working Group (DMWG) feedback
		
		• The DMWG provided the following feedback on the NPF EM trial report at its 18 July meeting:
		  ○ Additional context/clarification is required for the sections referring to 'unusable footage' and the periods the trial was active.
		  ○ Concerns around the conclusions drawn from comparing compiled interaction rates between trial and non-trial vessels, noting this doesn't adjust for differences in temporal and spatial variations.
		  ○ Accurate species identification of ETP species is essential for the bycatch monitoring program and MSC assessment.
		  ○ Lack of recognition for the importance of the NPFI-led CMO program.
		  ○ That the preliminary alternative data collection options provided (CMO program sampling, AFMA port sampling, and a dedicated targeted project) require further development. As some components of these options couldn't be accurately costed, these are likely to be an underestimate.
		  ○ Biological data collection by the CMO Program isn't a viable option, as they don't have the required expertise or capacity to increase workloads beyond current requirements.
		
		Revised ABARES analysis
		
		• Revised results, correcting errors in the analysis identified prior to the July NORMAC meeting, indicated:
		  ○ Higher congruence between EM and observer data compared with either source compared with logbook data for sea snakes.
		  ○ That EM and observer data had higher congruence for sawfish than either source compared with logbook data, with slightly more interactions reported in logbooks than by EM/observer data.
		
		Updated EM trial report
		
		• Based on stakeholder feedback, the NPF EM trial report was updated to include:
		  ○ Additional option of a Hybrid Model (with lower EM review and retaining a reduced level of observer coverage).
		  ○ Additional clarity around the species ID review undertaken during trial analysis.
		  ○ Additional background information on CMO program coverage.
		  ○ Detailed costings on alternative biological sampling options.
		  ○ Updated figures from the ABARES analysis.
		
		Advantages of EM
		
		• Cost effective data collection and data validation that is scalable (i.e. increasing review levels wouldn't result in equivalent level of cost increase).
		• Improved management decisions, environmental outcomes and transparency and accountability with stakeholders.

		• More consistent coverage across the fishery compared to on-board observers, removing any on-board observer effect on fishing behaviour (i.e. the 'observer effect').
		• Review costs are likely to reduce over time with incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) technology.
		• Reduced work health and safety risks (and costs) to AFMA.
		• Improved compliance outcomes and individual accountability (i.e. focus management action on higher risk operators).
		
		Disadvantages of EM
		
		• EM can easily detect interactions with larger ETP species although currently cannot detect or identify smaller ETP species (based on the NPF EM trial).
		• Inability to collect biological or bycatch composition data.
		• Bycatch data reported to a higher taxonomic level, with potential impacts for Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs).
		• Viability of alternative data collection scenarios to satisfy all current data needs.
		• Technological solutions still require development and will come at an additional cost to industry.
		
		AFMA recommendation
		
		AFMA Management is recommending the implementation of EM in the NPF vessels from 1 July 2026.
		
		NORMAC discussion
		
		Noting the AFMA presentation, NORMAC discussed the implementation of EM in the NPF. Considering all available information presented, NORMAC discussed the following key points:
		
		• Some key information gaps remain, that should be addressed before an informed decision on EM implementation in the NPF can be made. These included:
		  ○ EM replacement of some existing data sources EM would impact continuity of some key datasets that support existing NPF research and management.
		  ○ Supplementary data collection programs are still required with EM in place, to support the current NPF stock assessments, MSC certification and ERAs.
		  ○ While EM can capture later ETP species interactions, the trial didn't demonstrate capacity to capture interactions with small ETP species (e.g. Syngnathids).
		  ○ Whether EM could provide equivalent levels/accuracy of ETP interactions compared with the current NPF CMO/observer programs, which is especially important in tropical ecosystems, noting the current programs provide close to 100% species level ID following expert CSIRO review.
		  ○ The comparisons made about interaction reporting between NPF trial vs. non-trial vessels, noting this didn't adequately account for spatial and temporal variability.
		  ○ EM costings provided to date aren't sufficiently robust, with some key elements excluded (i.e. CPI increases, additional sampling programs excluded).

		○ The predicted 5-year lifespan of EM equipment is too short. • The potential for AI to reduce costs in the future was acknowledged, although concerns were raised that significant further development was required before these cost savings would be soon. • AFMA noted some certain AI functions that would reduce costs could be rolled out in the near future (i.e. detecting fishing events), however, the more AI complex functions require footage/data to be collected before they can be developed. • Industry considered CMO monitoring for ETP interactions as high-quality, extensive and directly supporting NPF management, although acknowledged these weren't considered and 'independent' data source. • NPFI questioned the rationale behind expected increases in demand for independent monitoring and suggested that EM may even put the fishery in a worse position for reaccreditation. • AFMA suggested that the same amount of scrutiny being paid to EM has not been applied to status quo data collection in the NPF, with disparities in sawfish reporting noted throughout the fishing fleet. • Industry proposed that the small number of vessels that require reporting improvements do not justify the increased costs of EM. • Camera cleaning and system set-up were considered the key contributor to data loss, with procedures requiring further improvements. • Members advised they were not opposed to EM as a monitoring tool, acknowledging it was likely inevitable in the future, although did not want to rush an EM rollout without fully understanding the limitations of data derived from EM and subsequent implications on management of the NPF. NORMAC members provided the following overall advice on EM implementation: • Frustration with the rushed process, with insufficient information available to make an informed decision. • That the NPF EM trial did not meet its initial purpose due to its inability to conclusively determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of EM implementation in the NPF. • Noting the extensive NPF data collection and monitoring program, which directly supports the current NPF research and management, EM hasn't demonstrated it's a cost-effective option to replace some of the key elements of the current program. It was suggested that improvements to the current NPF program would be more effective than EM in addressing future data needs. • Of the options presented, non-industry members advised the hybrid approach would be preferred, although they noted that they could not speak to any associated financial implications. • NPFI raised significant concerns that a hybrid EM and observer option would increase costs to the NPF by $1.2 million over 10 years, especially in the context of already poor economic conditions. • The scientific and environment and conservation members noted that with the ongoing adoption of EM programs in fisheries worldwide, the NPF would invariably adopt EM in some form in future. • The environment and conservation member suggested that the broader conservation community did not support EM implementation in the NPF

		at this time due to a lack of confidence that EM could provide the same or improved monitoring outcomes. • Based on the currently available information, members felt that currently the disadvantages of implementing EM in the NPF outweighed benefits. • Overall, the NPF EM trial did not meet its initial purpose due to its inability to conclusively determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of EM implementation in the NPF. **Recommendation 1:** That EM is not implemented as proposed by AFMA through a direction for all NPF vessels from 1 July 2026. Specific sector views are identified below: *Industry* Industry is currently opposed to the introduction of EM as proposed by AFMA, due to insufficient evidence to conclusively determine the capacity of EM to deliver at least an equivalent data quality compared with the current NPF data collection and monitoring program. Furthermore, the EM implementation would result in increased costs to industry, noting that required alternative biological data collection options have not yet been fully costed. NPFI raised significant concerns that the hybrid EM/on-board observer option would increase annual costs to the levy by around $100,000 ($1.2 million over 10 years), which is not considered feasible in the context of current poor economic conditions. *Science* The scientific member registered concerns that EM implementation, should it replace on-board observers, would impact some of the key data inputs currently used for ongoing NPF research projects that inform management decisions. If the decision was made to implement EM in the NPF, a hybrid option using EM and on-board observers would ensure some level of data collection continuity (noting that the cost implications of this option were not commented on). *Environment and Conservation* The conservation member, while supportive of EM more generally, echoed concerns that there was currently inadequate information to conclusively demonstrate that EM could be an effective monitoring tool in the NPF compared with the current NPF data collection and monitoring program. Overall, the NORMAC scientific, conservation and industry members expressed support for the future EM implementation, following further, more strategic, consideration of the current EM limitations and development of required alternative data collection programs. *AFMA Management* AFMA Management recommended EM implementation for NPF vessels from 1 July 2026.
4	Climate adaptation	**4.1 Risk Framework Species Assessment**

		Ms Natalie Couchman (AFMA) provided an update on AFMA's Climate Adaptation Program and Climate Risk Framework (CRF), with NORMAC noting the following key points:
		• The AFMA Commission would decide on broader implementation of the CRF at its September or November 2025 meetings.
		• The CRF Working Group met with industry representatives, management, and scientific stakeholders at a meeting in early November 2024 to consider the trial application of the CRF to brown tiger prawn, grooved tiger prawn, and blue endeavour prawn.
		• NPRAG provided advice on the CRF at its May 2025 meeting, including:
		  ○ Outcomes of the Tiger MICE Project should be incorporated prior to climate risk assessment finalisation in the NPF.
		  ○ Further consideration should be made to cross-jurisdictional information, fishery level assessments, and public release of assessment results.
		
		NORMAC discussed the AFMA CRF and Species Assessment, noting the following key points:
		• It is essential to ensure that the timing of climate risk assessments considers any critical research projects underway. Ms Couchman identified that, should the CRF be rolled out, the NPF assessments would not be finalised until the key research outputs were available.
		• The CRF could be important in assisting fishing businesses when modelling/considering future investment decisions and may be relied upon by investors in publicly traded fishing companies.
		• Fisheries management action alone may no longer be sufficient to recover some species, and therefore alternative considerations to determine the 'sustainability' of species/stocks may be required (particularly in multi-species fisheries).
		• Noting this issue, AFMA is proactively interacting with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), and the Minister's Office to review current policy settings which limit responses to climate change impacts on marine ecosystems.
		• Industry raised concerns about impacts on the NPF, should non-fishing factors result in sustainability concerns for certain species.
		
		4.2 Tiger MICE Project
		
		NORMAC noted a presentation from Dr Éva Plagányi about the FRDC project *Methods to account for climate impacts in fisheries models and management: Case study example of environmental contributors that affect Tiger Prawn population dynamics* (Tiger MICE Project), including the following key points:
		• The Tiger MICE Project aims to identify key environmental drivers for tiger prawn populations in the NPF (e.g. spatial and temporal patterns in rainfall, temperature, and water extraction).
		• Preliminary results suggest that brown tiger prawns stocks are likely to be the most vulnerable to impacts from climate change of all prawn species harvested in the NPF.
		• The key next steps for the project include:

		○ Continued collation of environmental data for incorporation into the MICE model and analysis of data from the recent juvenile seagrass-tiger prawn surveys. ○ Finalisation of the MICE model, including input of the latest environmental and survey data. ○ Communications and outreach through project publications, presentations, and a final report. ○ Exploring the utility of applying the MICE model on the NPF under future proposed water resource development and potential application in other fisheries.
5	Ecological Risk Assessment	NORMAC noted the redleg banana prawn ERA process to date and considered the final ERA report and draft NPF ecological risk management (ERM) response. Key discussion points included: • Four high risk species of sawfish were identified in the redleg banana prawn ERA, consistent with the results of the tiger and banana prawn sub-fisheries. • As the high-risk species were consistent across the NPF sub-fisheries, an ERM response was developed to apply to the entire NPF (not just the redleg banana prawn sub-fishery). • The ERM response outlines the broader management and monitoring arrangements in the fishery, although to avoid repetition, refers to the NPF Sawfish Plan 2024-2026 (finalised in late 2024) which outlines the current management approach response for sawfish. • NPRAG endorsed the final redleg banana prawn ERA report and NPF ERM response at its May 2025 meeting. **Recommendation 2:** NORMAC **NOTED** the final redleg banana prawn ERA report and **ENDORSED** the NPF ERM response with no changes.
6	2026/27 Annual Research Statement	NORMAC noted the update provided by Darci Wallis (AFMA) on the broader AFMA Research Council (ARC) process, including the following points: • NPRAG endorsed the draft NPF 2026/27 Annual Research Statement at its May meeting. • No new research scopes had been proposed for funding in the 2026/27 NPF Annual Research Statement, as there is limited funding in the 2026/27 AFMA research budget for new projects and industry currently can't financially support additional research due to continued poor economics in the fishery. **Recommendation 3:** NORMAC **ENDORSED** the NPF 2026/27 Annual Research Statement
7	Research Project Update	**7.1 Integrated Fishery-Independent Data Program** NORMAC noted an update from Mr Rob Kenyon (CSIRO) on the Integrated Fishery-Independent Data Program, including the following key points: • Recent banana prawn indices have been weak across the fishery, excluding Weipa, consistent with below average rainfall in all Gulf of Carpentaria catchments except northern Cape York. • Grooved tiger prawn recruitment indices have been below four prawns per hectare in 6 years since 2003, with 5 occurring in the last decade.

		• The brown tiger and blue endeavour prawn abundance indices were the 2nd lowest and lowest of the series respectively. • The regional Vanderlins indices for both grooved and brown tiger prawns were the lowest of the series. Higher numbers of year-old mature grooved tiger prawns (2024 recruits, 2.3 ha^{-1}) were caught at Vanderlins than 2025 recruits (1.9 ha^{-1}); whereas historically the ratio has been at least 30:70, with a dominance of "most recent" recruits. • Mornington recruitment indices decreased for brown and grooved tiger and blue endeavour prawns in 2025, to lowest or near lowest of the series. Karumba brown tiger prawn indices slightly increased in 2025, but remained very low. **7.2 Bycatch Monitoring Project** NORMAC noted the written update on the Bycatch Monitoring Project provided, with AFMA advising that the project milestones had been revised for this project, with data processing and analysis undertaken annually. CSIRO recently provided a Bycatch Monitoring Project report for 2025, which included an updated trend analysis, incorporating data up until the 2023. The next project milestone is due in November 2025, which requires the processing of the 2024 CMO data and update of the trend analysis.
8	Other business/next meeting	NORMAC noted that the next meeting will likely be held in early 2026, with exact timings dependent on outcomes of the sawfish workshop to be held in November.
Close of meeting		The Chair closed the meeting at 2:42pm.

Attachment A – Adopted agenda

Agenda

Time (AEST): 10:00 to 14:50
Location: Virtual (Microsoft Teams)
Chair Name: Geoff Richardson

Time	Item	Purpose	Presenter
10:00 (15 min)	**Agenda item 1. Preliminaries**		
	1.1 Welcome and apologies	For noting/action	Chair/EO
	1.2 Declaration of interests		
	1.3 Adoption of agenda		
10:15 (30 min)	**Agenda item 2. MSC Conditions Update / NPF Sawfish Plan**	For information	NPFI
10:45 (1.5 hr)	**Agenda item 3. EM in the NPF**	For recommendation	AFMA
12:15 (30 min)	***Break***		
12:45 (1 hr)	**Agenda item 4. Climate adaptation**		
	4.1 Risk Framework Species Assessment	For discussion	AFMA
	4.2 Tiger MICE Project	For information	CSIRO
13:45 (30 min)	**Agenda item 5. Ecological Risk Assessment**		
	5.1 Redleg Banana Prawn ERA	For endorsement	AFMA
	5.1 NPF ERM Response		
14:15 (15 min)	**Agenda Item 6. 2026/27 Annual Research Statement**	For endorsement	AFMA
14:30 (15 min)	**Agenda item 7. Research Project Update**		
	7.1 Integrated Fishery-Independent Data Program	For information	CSIRO
	7.2 Bycatch Monitoring Project		CSIRO
14:45 (5 min)	**Agenda item 8. Other business/Next meeting**	For information	AFMA
14:50	**Meeting Close**		

Attachment B – Register of interests

Name	RAG/MAC position / organisation	Declared interests
Mr Geoff Richardson	Chair	Mr Richardson is the Chair of the Northern Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee (NORMAC) and Sub-Antarctic Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (SouthMAC). Mr Richardson has no interests pecuniary or otherwise.
Mr Bryan van Wyk	Industry Member	Industry member – NPRAG Employed by Austral Fisheries, a company with SFR holdings in the fishery.
Mr Gregory Albert	Industry Member	NPF Statutory Fishing Right (SFR) holder
Dr Denham Parker	Scientific Member	Scientific member – NPRAG & NORMAC Employed by the CSIRO and through the organisation has in the past, and may in the future, receive funding for research related to the fishery. Research provider involved particularly in stock assessment research in NPF.
Mr Phillip Robson	Industry Member	Industry member – NPRAG Employee of A Raptis and Sons, responsible for managing NPF vessels & an NT demersal fish trawler. Has provided charter for scientific surveys in NPF in the past and may in future.
Mr Michael O'Brien	Industry Member	Commercial fishing licence holder in the NT Demersal Fishery. General Manager, Australia Bay Seafoods Pty Ltd FRDC Seafood Industry Safety Initiative (SISI), Member.

		Stay A Float trusted Advocate.
Dr Geoffrey Muldoon	Environment/ Conservation Member	Employed by Global Fishing Watch, Senior Manager, Blue Foods. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Ms Annie Jarrett	NPFI	CEO – NPFI Commonwealth Fisheries Association Director Chair – Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries (ACPF) Member of the FRDC selection panel. Invited participant - NORMAC No pecuniary interests Represents the interests of industry
Brandon Meteyard	NPFI	Employed by NPFI. No pecuniary interests. Represents the interests of industry.
Darci Wallis	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Wez Norris	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Anna Willock	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Scott Spencer	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Sally Troy	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Brett McCallum	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Natalie Couchman	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
Tamre Sarhan	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.

Lachlan Baker	AFMA	Employed by AFMA. No interest, pecuniary or otherwise.
David Carter	Austral Fisheries	Austral Fisheries CEO a company with SFR holdings in the fishery. No pecuniary interests.
Stuart Nesbit	Austral Fisheries	Austral Fisheries Chief Financial Officer a company with SFR holdings in the fishery. No pecuniary interests.
Andy Prendergast	Austral Fisheries	Employed by Austral Fisheries, a company with SFR holdings in the fishery. No pecuniary interests.
Ken Hartley	A Raptis and Sons	A Raptis and Sons CEO, a company with SFR holdings in the fishery. No pecuniary interests.

Attachment C - Summary of Actions and Recommendations

Agenda Item	No.	Recommendation	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
3	1	That EM is not implemented as proposed by AFMA through a direction for all NPF vessels from 1 July 2026. Specific sector views are identified below: *Industry* Industry is currently opposed to the introduction of EM as proposed by AFMA, due to insufficient evidence to conclusively determine the capacity of EM to deliver at least an equivalent data quality compared with the current NPF data collection and monitoring program. Furthermore, the EM implementation would result in increased costs to industry, noting that required alternative biological data collection options have not yet been fully costed. NPFI raised significant concerns that the hybrid EM/on-board observer option would increase annual costs to the levy by around $100,000 ($1.2 million over 10 years), which is not considered feasible in the context of current poor economic conditions. *Science* The scientific member registered concerns that EM implementation, should it replace on-board observers, would impact some of the key data inputs currently used for ongoing NPF research projects that inform management decisions. If the decision was made to implement EM in the NPF, a hybrid option using EM and on-board observers would ensure some level of data collection continuity (noting that the cost implications of this option were not commented on). *Environment and Conservation* The conservation member, while supportive of EM more generally, echoed concerns that there was currently inadequate information to conclusively demonstrate that EM could be an	AFMA	EM implementation in the NPF will be decided by the AFMA at its 12-13 September 2025 meeting.

		effective monitoring tool in the NPF compared with the current NPF data collection and monitoring program. Overall, the NORMAC scientific, conservation and industry members expressed support for the future EM implementation, following further, more strategic, consideration of the current EM limitations and development of required alternative data collection programs. *AFMA Management* AFMA Management recommended EM implementation the NPF vessels from 1 July 2026.		
5	2	NORMAC **NOTED** the final redleg banana prawn ERA report and **ENDORSED** the NPF ERM response with no changes.	AFMA	To be published to the AFMA website.
6	3	NORMAC **ENDORSED** the NPF 2026/27 Annual Research Statement	AFMA	To be provided to the ARC for consideration at its next meeting.