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# Australian Government

## Australian Fisheries Management Authority

AFMADMW-1932364602-90603

Minutes

Meeting	South East Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC)		
Meeting Number	58	Dates	12 November 2025
Location	Online	Time	9:30 AM
Members	<p>Mr Clayton Nelson, Chair</p> <p>Ms Anissa Lawrence, Environment member</p> <p>Ms Sally Weekes, Senior Manager, AFMA</p> <p>Dr Sarah Jennings, Economics member</p> <p>Dr Paul McShane, Scientific member</p> <p>Mr Simon Boag, Industry member</p> <p>Mr Kyri Toumazos, Industry member</p> <p>Mr Will Mure, Industry member</p> <p>Mr Daniel Hogan, Industry member</p> <p>Ms Danielle Ghosn, Recreational member</p>		
Apologies	<p>Mr John Cull, Invited participant</p> <p>Daniel Hogan, Industry member</p>		
Invited Participants	Mr John Cull, SSJF Industry		

Agenda Item	Title/Topic/Issue	Notes, Action & Recommendations
1.	Preliminaries	Welcome and apologies

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	<p>The Chair, Mr Clayton Nelson opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed participants. Meeting participants were informed that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of assisting the preparation of meeting minutes.</p> <p><b>Adoption of agenda</b></p> <p>The revised agenda was adopted as final.</p> <p><b>Minutes of previous meeting</b></p> <p>AFMA noted that the minutes from SEMAC meeting held on 17 July 2025 are available on the <a href="#">AFMA website</a>.</p> <p><b>Declarations of interests</b></p> <p>The Committee reviewed and confirmed declarations of interest as outlined in Table 1 of the Preliminary's paper. Members with pecuniary interests in specific agenda items were advised they would be asked to leave the meeting during deliberations on those items. This approach aligns with <a href="#">Fisheries Management Paper 1 – Consultative Committees</a> and was supported by the Committee. Declared interests are recorded in the register of interest at <a href="#">Attachment B</a>.</p> <p><b>Actions arising from previous meetings</b></p> <p>SEMAC noted the status of action items from previous meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Pink Ling Regionalisation:</b> AFMA confirmed that the \$60,000 required to scope regionalisation is not available in the current financial year and would need to be budgeted the following year. SEMAC agreed this remains a priority.</li><li>• <b>Dogfish Closure Directions:</b> AFMA advised revisions to align closures with marine park boundaries are in progress and undergoing final clearance.</li><li>• <b>Electronic Monitoring (EM) Updates:</b> Annual reporting commitment noted. First update expected mid-2026. Discussion highlighted industry concerns about EM implementation costs and transparency of the \$10M rollout budget. AFMA undertook to provide a breakdown of expenditure as part of the annual EM report.</li><li>• <b>Trip Limits for Bugs &amp; EM Data:</b> Yet to start, but preliminary discussions have commenced. AFMA will report outcomes at the next meeting.</li><li>• <b>Jack Mackerel DEPM Survey Review: Underway.</b> Final report received and under review; completion expected before December SPF RAG meeting.</li></ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. AFMA to include a detailed cost breakdown of expenditure related to the Electronic Monitoring rollout in the annual EM report, to be delivered by July 2026.</li></ol>
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2	Managers Update	<p>SEMAC received updates from AFMA regarding current management arrangements and activities in the Commonwealth Trawl and Gillnet, Hook and Trap Sectors (CTS and GHaT, respectively), of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF), and also the Small Pelagic Fishery (SPF) and Southern Squid Jig Fishery (SSJF).</p> <p>Members noted the Ministerial Correspondence on Productivity and Ministerial Statement of Expectations and the Climate Risk Framework (CRF) that has been endorsed by AFMA Commission and published.</p> <p>Industry expressed concern that AFMA's risk appetite is overly cautious, resulting in inefficiencies and delays, and suggested leveraging the government's productivity agenda to drive strategic change. In response, AFMA acknowledge the concern but reaffirmed that AFMA has made significant efforts that demonstrate flexibility and efficiency such as permitting fishing in dogfish closures with monitoring, considering a TAC for Western Orange Roughy without a full rebuild assessment, and exploring innovations like auto-longlining in Bass Strait, processing at sea, and trap use noting that the main constraint is resourcing rather than risk appetite. Industry acknowledged AFMA's progress in some areas but noted ongoing frustrations, such as with school shark management.</p>
3	Industry Update	<p><b>SEMAC noted:</b></p> <p><b>Auto-Line Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry raised escalating seal depredation issues impacting ling catches and profitability, with potential implications for stock assessments and AFMA advised that it does not regulate deterrents and would follow up with a contact in South Australia and the Commonwealth Environment Department with a contact.</li> </ul> <p><b>South East Trawl</b></p> <p><b>Electronic Monitoring (EM):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFMA confirmed to provide an annual EM report including any efficiency gains, cost savings, and red tape reduction outcomes that have been achieved.</li> </ul> <p><b>Western Orange Roughy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry raised the issue with the current research catch allowance for Western Orange Roughy and that setting a small TAC under ITQ system may be a better option to avoid potential waste.</li> <li>AFMA acknowledged the proposal noting that it will be considered as part of the TAC-setting process in 2026.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SEMAC supported the proposal.</li></ul> <p><b>Deepwater Bugs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Current OCS interpretation restricts landing SA-caught bugs into Victoria (10 kg limit), causing waste and industry want AFMA to consider a proposal to amend regs to allow landing SA-caught bugs in Vic ports; supported by EM verification.</li><li>AFMA advised amendment to the regs would likely be required. It was noted that the regulations are scheduled to sunset in 2029, and as part of that process, a review is expected to commence around 2027. AFMA will explore an interim option.</li></ul> <p><b>Southern Shark Industry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Industry expressed concern over school shark management, noting significant stock rebuild evident on water but slow scientific response.</li><li>Current TAC settings result in high discards despite total mortality allowance (316 tonnes) enabling rebuild.</li><li>Industry and conservation representatives agreed discarding is wasteful and undermines sustainability goals.</li><li>Close-kin assessment update expected at upcoming RAG meetings; uncertainty remains.</li><li>AFMA acknowledged frustration, noting complexity due to harvest strategy policy and stock assessment method.</li><li>The Chair indicated his intention to discuss current policy blockages and to discuss school shark strategy with the SharkRAG Chairs' (both former and present) and requested that the EO provide the relevant contact details to facilitate this engagement.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Actions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide contact details and guidance to industry for engaging with state authorities on seal deterrent permits.</li><li>Review OCS regulations for bugs; report feasibility of earlier amendment to Regs.</li><li>Executive Officer (EO) to provide the relevant contact details for the former and current SharkRAG Chairs.</li></ol> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consider global best practices for depredation mitigation and acoustic deterrents (pingers) as a research priority</li><li>SEMAC support consideration of establishing a small TAC for Western Orange Roughy in place of the existing research allowance.</li></ol>

4.	<p>SSJF 2025 Fishing Season (TAE)</p> <p>Presenter: Yvette Lamont Weekes (AFMA)</p>	<p>The purpose of this item was for SEMAC to consider SquidRAG's advice and provide a recommendation to the AFMA Commission on the TAE for the 2026 SSJF fishing year.</p> <p>SEMAC noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch and effort for the 2025 SSJF season reached the lower trigger threshold under the Harvest Strategy, prompting SquidRAG to review catch, effort, CPUE, and climate data.</li> <li>• All other triggers remained below threshold, no sustainability concerns were identified, and industry feedback confirmed stable fishing conditions despite lower catch volumes, with higher prices driven by improved grading and strong market demand.</li> <li>• SquidRAG's advice that there was no compelling biological, economic, or climate related reason to alter the current settings.</li> <li>• SEMAC noted that John Cull Industry (absent day of meeting) verbally supported maintaining the TAE at 550 standard squid jig machines for the 2026 fishing year to ensure precautionary management while retaining flexibility for market and environmental variability.</li> <li>• There were no dissenting views.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SEMAC supported SquidRAG's recommendation to maintain the SSJF TAE at 550 standard squid jig machines for the 2026 fishing year commencing 1 January 2026.</li> </ol>
5	<p>Research Project Proposals for funding in 2026-27</p>	<p>The purpose of this item was for SEMAC to provide advice on research proposals submitting to the AFMA Research Committee (ARC) for potential funding in the 2026–27 financial year.</p> <p>SEMAC was provided with an overview of the research proposals and their relevance to identified priorities.</p> <p><b>Research Process Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFMA Research Committee issued a call for proposals in September/October following priorities identified by MACs and RAGs.</li> <li>• Five priorities were published; four proposals received (one pending for SESSF stock assessment).</li> <li>• Proposals under consideration: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Redbait DEPM Survey (Small Pelagic Fishery) – \$675,000 over two years.</li> <li>2. Fish Ageing Services (SESSF Tier 1 species) – approx. \$900,000 over three years.</li> <li>2. Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs) for SESSF sectors – \$190,000 over two years.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

		<p>3. School Shark Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) – \$370,000 over three years.</p> <p><b>Discussion Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was frustration over lengthy timelines for school shark research; strong calls for faster delivery of stock status outputs.</li> <li>• Suggestions were made to set firm timeframes in contracts and consider global expertise if current providers cannot meet deadlines.</li> <li>• The ongoing need for competitive tendering and transparency to avoid anti-competitive practices for research contracts.</li> </ul> <p>SEMAC supported all four proposals in principle, noting their strategic importance for fisheries management and made the following recommendation noting members agreed to provide any further comments out of session using the provided review form noting comments are due by 21/11/2025.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>4. <b>SEMAC supported</b> the concept of all four proposals noting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The need for stop/go points in Daily Egg Production Method survey contracts to reduce the risk of finalising a project if it becomes evident that critical data has not been able to be collected and will result in results that cannot be used for management.</li> <li>b. Importance of maintaining open and competitive research processes.</li> <li>c. Flexibility in fish ageing project to change species prioritisation as required.</li> <li>d. For the school shark MSE project, timeframes should be revised to deliver stock status outputs by January 2027 to inform TAC setting for 2027–28.</li> </ol>
6.	Other Business	The conservation member provided an update on the ‘End-of-Life Fishing Gear Recovery Program’.
7.	Review of action items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Executive Officer presented the action items and recommendations from the meeting and revised them after addressing the committee’s comments.</li> <li>• Action items and recommendations arising from this meeting are outlined in <a href="#">Attachment C</a>.</li> </ul>

8.	Next Meeting/Meeting Close	The next meeting was scheduled for February 11-12, 2026. This meeting will be in person and held in Melbourne.
	Close of meeting	The Chair closed the meeting at 12.25pm.

## Attachment A – Adopted agenda

**Day 1:** Wednesday 12 November 2025

**Time (AEDT):** 9:30

**Location:** Virtual

**Chair:** Mr Clayton Nelson

November 2025 / 09:30-11:55

Time	Item	Purpose	Presenter
09:30	1. Preliminaries 1.1. Acknowledgement of Country, welcome and apologies Declarations of interest 1.2. Adoption of Agenda 1.3. Minutes from previous meetings 1.4. Actions arising from previous meeting	For Noting	Chair / Rebecca Jol (15 min) 09:30-09:45
09:45	2. Managers Update (taken as read)	Noting/questions	Sally Weekes (15 mins) 09:45-10:00
10:00	3. Industry Updates	Noting/questions	Industry All (30 mins) 10:00-10:30
10:30	4. SSJF 2025 Fishing Season (TAE)	For Advice	AFMA (30 mins) 10:30-11:00
11:00	<i>Break 15 mins</i>		
11:15	5. Research Project Proposals for funding in 2026-27	For Advice	AFMA (30 mins) 11:15 – 11:45
11:45	6. Other Business	Noting/Questions	(10 mins) 11:45 – 11:55
11:55	7. Review of action items	For Advice	EO (10 mins) 11:55 – 12:05
12:05	8. Next Meeting/Meeting Close	For Noting	Chair (5 mins) 12:05 -12:10
12:10	<i>End of Day</i>		

## Attachment B – Register of interests

Name	MAC position / organisation	Declared interests	Relevant agenda item(s)
Mr Clayton Nelson	Chair	Chair Member of Seafood Industry Australia Independent consultant Incoming Chair of Australian Council of Prawn Fisher (ACPF)	
Ms Anissa Lawrence	Environment member	No pecuniary interest Director of TierraMar Ltd Independent consultant Undertakes contracts for a number of Conservation NGOs, government <a href="https://www.afma.gov.au/reporting-and-accountability/fisheries-management-policies/operation-management-advisory-committees">https://www.afma.gov.au/reporting-and-accountability/fisheries-management-policies/operation-management-advisory-committees</a> departments, non-government agencies and the private sector on a range of fishery related matters Conservation member on SharkRAG, SPFRAG, SEMAC, Spencer Gulf Prawn RSC and the South Australian Rock Lobster MAC Chair of Ocean Future Fund Inc.	
Daniel Hogan	Industry member	Managing director - Toberfish Pty Ltd Owner/Operator – FV Zeehaan CTS Trawl Licence & Quota Holder Non-Beneficiary Director – SETFIA Industry member for SERAG	
Mr Will Mure	Industry member	Sole Director of Mures Fishing P/L Commonwealth fish receiver permit Tasmania fish processing licence Scalefish hook boat SFR, SEQ Quota Holding Permits, Auto longline fishing permit High Seas permit Blue eye trevalla SFRs, Ling SFRs, Ribaldo ITP Mixed species Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) and SFRs Member of various fishing related associations including Seafood Industry Australia (SIA), South East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA), Southern Shark Industry Alliance (SSIA), Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) Industry member on SERAG	
Dr Paul McShane	Scientific member	Chair of SERAG and a member of SEMAC and SESSFrag. No pecuniary interest in the SESSF. Principal of Global Marine Resource Management Pty Ltd.	

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		Adjunct Professor (Fisheries and Aquaculture) College of Science and Engineering, James Cook University.	
Dr Sarah Jennings	Economic member	<p>Economics member on SESSFRA.</p> <p>Member of AFMA Economics Working Group.</p> <p>Independent economics consultant.</p> <p>No pecuniary or other interest in the SESSF</p>	
Ms Danielle Ghosn	Recreational member	<p>Recreational member of SEMAC &amp; SPFRA</p> <p>Independent Consultant and Scientific Officer of the NSW Game Fish Tournament Monitoring Program.</p>	
Mr Simon Boag	Industry member	<p>Industry member on SERA.</p> <p>Executive Officers to SETFIA, SSIA, SPFIA, Commonwealth Scallop and Eastern zone Rock lobster.</p> <p>SETFIA and SSIA receives funding from AFMA to complete projects under co-management agreements.</p> <p>Undertakes contracts as an independent consultant.</p> <p>Member of the investment committee for the Australian fisheries investment trust</p> <p>SSIA is engaged by AFMA to collect shark industry biological data.</p> <p>Atlantis undertakes work to assist shared marine space developers (wind, oil etc) understand the fishing industry.</p> <p>Atlantis undertakes other work within the fishing industry from time to time including on MSC assessments.</p> <p>SETFIA is the PI on the orange roughy east AOS.</p> <p>SETFIA is engaged by participants within the W ORS research fishery to collect biological samples.</p> <p>SETFIA is engaged by AFMA under co-management to undertake a variety of tasks including snapper management, ling management, future industry data collection and consultation.</p> <p>Investment committee member of a large fund that owns fishing rights including SBT, ling and flathead.</p>	
Mr Kyriakos Toumazos	Industry member	<p>Chief Executive Officer (South Australian Northern Zone Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association Inc.);</p> <p>Director of Southern Sea Eagles Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Director of Southern Fisheries Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Director Health Balance Pharmacies Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Member South Australian Boating Facility Board;</p> <p>Member of Shark Resource Assessment Group (AFMA);</p> <p>Member of South East Management Advisory Committee;</p> <p>Member of AMSA Regional Safety Committee;</p> <p>Director Southern Shark Industry Alliance;</p> <p>Director PACK Investments Pty Ltd;</p> <p>Director Cruickshank's Corner Developments Pty Ltd;</p>	

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		Director Cruickshank's Corner Commercial Pty Ltd; Director Seafood Industry Australia;	
Mr Keith Rowling	GABIA	<p>Owner – Bluefin Consulting</p> <p>Associate – NMAC(SA) Pty Ltd</p> <p>Executive support of the Great Australian Bight Industry Association (GABIA)</p> <p>Executive officer of Charter Boat Association of South Australia (CBASA)</p> <p>Executive officer of Southern Fishermen's Association (SFA)</p> <p>Executive support of Saint Vincent Gulf Prawn Boat Owner's Association (SCGPBOA)</p> <p>Executive support of Marine Scale Net Fishers Association (MSNFA)</p> <p>Executive support of South Australian Professional Fishers Association (SAPFA)</p> <p>Marine Scalefish Fishery Management Advisory Committee (MSFMAC) – CBASA member</p> <p>Allocation Review Committee – Commercial fishing representative</p>	

## Attachment C - Summary of Actions and Recommendations

Agenda Item	No.	Action	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
1.	1.	AFMA to include a detailed cost breakdown of expenditure related to the Electronic Monitoring rollout in the annual EM report, to be delivered by July 2026.	AFMA	July, 2026
3.	2.	AFMA to provide contact details and guidance to industry for engaging with state authorities on seal deterrent permits.	AFMA	As soon as possible
	3.	AFMA to review OCS regulations for bugs; report feasibility of earlier amendment to Regs	SEMAC EO	As soon as possible
	4.	Executive Officer (EO) to provide the relevant contact details for the former and current SharkRAG Chairs.	AFMA	Next Meeting
		<b>Recommendation</b>		
3	1	SEMAC support consideration of establishing a TAC for Western Orange Roughy in place of the existing research allowance.		
	2	Consider global best practices for depredation mitigation and acoustic deterrents (pingers) as a research priority.		
4	3	SEMAC supported SquidRAG's recommendation to maintain the SSJF TAE at 550 standard squid jig machines for the 2026 fishing year commencing 1 January 2026.		
5	4	SEMAC supported the concept of all four proposals noting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The need for stop/go points in Daily Egg Production Method survey contracts to reduce the risk of finalising a project if it becomes evident that critical data has not been able to be collected and will result in results that can not be used for management.</li> <li>Importance of maintaining open and competitive research processes.</li> <li>Flexibility in fish ageing project to change species prioritisation as required.</li> </ol>		

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		d. For the school shark MSE project, timeframes should be revised to deliver stock status outputs by January 2027 to inform TAC setting for 2027–28.
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