Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

AFMADMW-1932364602-93791

Minutes

Meeting	South East Resource Assessment Group (SERAG)		
Meeting	Meeting 2	Dates	18-20th November 2025
Location	Melbourne/Online	Time	9am- 4.15pm Tuesday 18th 9am – 4.45 pm Wednesday 19th 9 am – 12 pm Thursday 20th
Members	Dr Cathy Dichmont, Interim Chair Ms Sally Weekes, Senior Manager, Interim AFMA Member Mr Ross Winstanley, Recreational Member Mr Daniel Hogan, Industry Member Mr Will Mure, Industry Member Mr Simon Boag, Industry Member Dr Jeremy Lyle, Scientific Member Dr Ian Knuckey, Scientific Member Dr Steven Rust, Economics Member Dr Paul Burch, CSIRO, Scientific Member Dr Jonathan Smart, Scientific Member		
Apologies	Dr Paul McShane Dr Mark Grubert, AFMA Member Mr Keith Rowling, Industry Member		
Invited Participants	Neil MacDonald, GABIA		

	Dr Geoff Tuck, CSIRO Dr Pia Bessell-Browne, CSIRO Dr Miriana Sporcic, CSIRO Ms Kristin Privitera-Johnson, CSIRO Ms Rikki Taylor, CSIRO Dr Robin Thomson, CSIRO Dr Gretta Pecl, University of Tasmania Dr John Morrongiello, University of Melbourne Ms Natalie Couchman, AFMA Mr Dan Corrie, AFMA Dr Lianos Triantafillos, AFMA Ms Jennifer Power-Geary Mr Anthony Coggan, AFMA Ms Michelle Henriksen, AFMA Ms Anna Willock, Deputy CEO AFMA
Observers	Dr Daniel Wright, ABARES Dr Tim Emery, ABARES Mr Ross Bromley, ATLANTIS Dr Ashley Fowler, NSW DPIRD
EO	Ms Audrey Kent

Agenda Item	Title/Topic/Issue	Notes, Action & Recommendations
1.	Preliminaries	1.1 Welcome and apologies The Chair, Cathy Dichmont, 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 RAG followed the procedure outlined in Fisheries Administration Paper 12 for managing potential conflicts of interest, with the declarations in relation to specific agenda items, and the RAGs decision regarding the relevant member's participation, outlined in Attachment B. 1.3 Adoption of agenda The agenda was adopted as final (see **Attachment A**). 1.4 Minutes of previous meeting AFMA noted that the minutes from SERAG meeting held in October 2025 are undergoing internal review and will be distributed to members for comment. Once finalised, the minutes will be published on the AFMA website. 1.5 Actions arising from previous meetings The minutes from previous meetings were endorsed, and actions arising were reviewed. Key updates regarding actions included: SERAG stressed the importance of prioritising and updating the depredation fields in electronic logs for Blue-eye trevalla.
2	Blue Grenadier – RBC Advice	Presentation Highlights: • The Tier 1 stock assessment for Blue Grenadier was updated using data up to 2023 (CPUE, discards, length composition) and 2024 (acoustic surveys, catch, age data). • No structural changes were made from SERAG 1; however, three port-based length compositions from 2021–2023 were removed due to small sample sizes (n<100). • The tuned base case (BC2) estimated virgin female spawning biomass (B_0) at 42,605 t, compared to 35,680 t in the 2022 assessment. • The projected 2026 spawning biomass is 99.5% of B_0, down from 124% in 2023 from the 2022 assessment, reflecting reduced CPUE and increased catches. • The Recommended Biological Catch (RBC) for 2026 under the 20:35:48 harvest control rule: is 17,744 t (including 218 t discards). • The long-term RBC is expected to decline to ~8,300 t as the stock approaches the 48% biomass target. • Retrospective analysis revealed patterns linked to recent recruitment estimates (2019) and acoustic data, suggesting potential model sensitivity to data conflicts. • Model diagnostics showed good fits to age and length data, reasonable fits to acoustic surveys, but poor fits to the early CPUE series. Discussion:

- Members expressed concern about retrospective patterns and uncertainty in B_0 estimates, noting large shifts in virgin biomass between assessments.
- Discussion on whether to retain Base Case 2 (final recruitment year 2019) or revert to Base Case 3 (2018) to address retrospective issues.
- Exploration showed removing the 2019 recruitment estimate eliminated retrospective pattern, but members agreed this would be unusual and may discard valid data.
- Discussion highlighted that the addition of the 2023 and 2024 acoustic biomass indices that are of similar magnitude to those of 220 and 2021, combined with high recent catches, may explain the model estimating a large 2019 recruitment and increase in estimated virgin biomass. This may explain the retrospective behavior in virgin biomass.
- Industry stressed the economic importance of Blue Grenadier and supported a precautionary approach given uncertainty and potential impact on fishery viability.
- Concerns were raised about conducting a Tier 1 assessment in a non-data-processing year; recommendation to align future assessments with full data availability.
- Consideration of Tier 2 classification due to uncertainty; discussion on applying discount factors and implications for harvest strategy.
- Members noted that the harvest control rule does not currently account for uncertainty in the assessment, reinforcing the need for review of precautionary settings.
- Members raised a concern about the difference in selectivity curves for males and females in the acoustic survey shown in the assessment outputs, but it was clarified that the curves do not represent gear selectivity alone (as applied to spawning/non-spawning fleets) but also availability by sex on the spawning ground, which differs between males and females.
- Analysis confirmed the saw-tooth pattern in Blue Grenadier length composition was a binning/measurement artifact rather than biological; using 3 cm bins instead of 2 cm removed the pattern, indicating rounding effects during DSL-to-STL conversion where some length classes had very few records, creating uneven distribution in finer bins—larger bins smooth these gaps, especially in mid-length ranges where sample density is highest; no management concern identified.
- SERAG reiterated the importance of considering stock assessment scheduling to align with data processing years.

Recommendations:

SERAG accepted the blue grenadier Base Case 2 scenario (and not the Base Case 3 scenario). Retrospective patterns were large but behaved as expected given the data. The RAG noted the uncertainty means it can no longer be classified as a Tier 1 assessment and moves to Tier 2, SERAG recommends a minimum 5% buffer (as per the interim harvest strategy).

SERAG recommended either a 3-year step-down RBC or a 3-year average RBC, subject to the application of a discount factor of at least 5%.

3-year step-down RBC	3-year average RBC

		26-27: 17,744 t 27-28: 15,459 t 28-29: 13,727 t	15,643 t

ACTION: Future assessments on Blue Grenadier should investigate whether growth deviations correlate with recent recruitment and the impact of this correlation on projections.

ACTION: In 2026 explore the high autocorrelation demonstrated by the Runs test of the fits to the length data for Blue Grenadier.

ACTION: CSIRO to present to Intersessional assessment review Working Group on the impact on the MSY catch to investigate the implications of the large fluctuations of absolute B0 observed between assessments on the estimated productivity of the stock.

3	Eastern Orange Roughy – RBC Advice	Presentation Highlights: • Objective of the 2025 assessment was to update biological parameters (growth, maturity, length-weight relationship) and review treatment of age data while retaining the stock structure and natural mortality assumptions from 2021. • Four candidate models considered: (1) Updated 2021 base case with revised data, (2) Sex- and time-invariant growth estimated from data, (3) Sex-specific, time-invariant growth (selected as base case), (4) Sex-specific, time-varying growth (issues noted with reference points and productivity). • Sex-specific growth improved residual patterns, particularly recruitment residuals, compared to previous single-sex growth models. • Assessment outcomes: Current stock status estimated at ~33–34% B_o (MPD vs MCMC); stock projected to remain near plateau for 10–15 years under harvest control rule (HCR). • Diagnostics: Fits to acoustic surveys reasonable except for 2012–2013 and 2024 surveys; age data fits show persistent pattern—females older than males, underrepresentation of older males. • Retrospective analysis shows slight decline in productivity with additional data, consistent with previous assessments; uncertainty remains high with wide range in biomass and RBC estimates despite similar outcomes across models. • Addressed pre-meeting queries: explained why acoustic survey biomass (~50–60,000 t) differs from assessment estimate (~13,000 t female spawning biomass) due to catchability and survey interpretation; confirmed density-dependent fecundity is not explicitly modelled but considered via stock-recruit relationship; noted skip spawning is accounted for indirectly through catchability parameter; clarified recruitment dip reflects observed age structure, not forecast assumption. Discussion: • Concern about persistent poor fits for male age data; suggestion that sex-specific natural mortality may need investigation. • Questions raised as to differences between recent acoustic survey estimates and model projections with implications for uncertainty and RBC advice.

		• Debate on whether the acoustic survey time series represents one consistent index or two different series with implications for assessment validity. • Discussion on skip spawning and potential density-dependent changes in productivity; noted risk of bias if skip spawning proportion changes over time. • Agreement that uncertainty in maturity curves and selectivity (not reaching 100%) needs checking; one scientific member raised concern about maturity curve plateauing below full maturity. • Recognition that current model improvements (sex-specific growth) help but do not resolve all issues; implications for rebuilding trajectory under HCR. • Consensus that further work is needed before final recommendations: overnight analysis to test splitting acoustic series, check maturity and selectivity curves, and review duplicated sensitivity runs. • Research priorities identified: investigate skip spawning variability and its effect on catchability; explore sex-specific natural mortality; consider environmental or density-dependent linkages in future assessments. Eastern Orange Roughy tier 1 assessment was reviewed following extra work conducted on the current assessment. New findings included: • Acoustic platform changes do not warrant separate series (pers. comm. Haris Kunnath); time-blocking catchability had negligible impact; sex-specific M improved age data fit slightly but changed absolute biomass estimates significantly; maturity ogive anomaly persists. Discussion: • Members agreed that the assessment required more work before they would consider accepting it. • Concerns: poor fit to age structure in recent years, maturity ogive anomaly, and potential selectivity changes over time. • Suggested refinements: retain single acoustic series as base case; run sensitivity with time-blocked q; explore sex-specific selectivity alongside sex-specific M; investigate other plausible methods to improve fits; check maturity ogive coding. • Consider historical gear changes and selectivity shifts; seek input from industry and past observers. • Intersessional working group to meet in December to select final base case; revised model to be presented at out-of-session SERAG meeting in late January for consideration. • Should the 2025 assessment be rejected, SERAG recommend going back to the previous accepted assessment (2021) with possible discount applied due to age. SERAG stressed the importance of documenting the procedure for handling rejected assessments. • MCMC projections will be run for chosen base case only. Recommendations: SERAG recommended further changes to the base case assessment for investigation. These changes to be presented to an intersessional working group to agree upon a new base case scenario.

		CSIRO provide RBC estimates from MCMC analysis projecting the SESSF HCR and fixed catch scenarios from 800–2,000 t. If the 2025 assessment were to be rejected, SERAG recommended that RBC advice be based on the outcomes of the most recently accepted assessment (from 2021) and an appropriate discount factor applied. **ACTION:** SERAG asked Paul Burch to confirm with the CSIRO acoustics team how the towed-body surveys have changed over time, particularly pre- and post-2010. To be discussed with the RAG prior to acceptance of the RBC and provide this update to SERAG 2 day 3 2025. **ACTION:** SERAG noted that the acoustic index may represent two different technological systems pre- and post-2010. SERAG asked that Paul Burch Time Block the catchability parameter for the towed-body survey pre- and post-2010 to explore the sensitivity of the assessment to treating the towed-body survey as a single time series and provide this update to SERAG 2 day 3 2025. **ACTION:** SERAG request the following changes to the base case assessment for investigation via the intersessional working group: • The base case will treat the towed-body survey as a single timeseries with a sensitivity that separates the series pre and post 2010. • Investigate two methods to try and improve the fits to age frequency data i) sex specific natural mortality and (ii) sex specific selectivity. Additional methods may also be considered. • The maturity ogive to be checked in all cases to ensure it reaches 1. **ACTION:** Industry to provide advice to CSIRO on whether there have been any changes to selectivity over time in this fishery prior to the intersessional working group.
6	Guidance on the estimation of natural mortality for Tier 1 stocks	Presentation Highlights: • Kristin Privitera-Johnson presented findings from a research project aimed at developing best practice guidelines for estimating natural mortality (M) in Tier 1 stock assessments undertaken by Dr Andre Punt. • Dr Punt reviewed historical treatment of M across SESSF assessments and tested three main approaches: (1) pre-specification based on indirect methods, (2) estimation within the assessment without a prior, and (3) estimation within the assessment with a prior. • Dr Punt re-ran recent assessments for ten SESSF stocks using these approaches and evaluated outcomes via diagnostics including model fit, retrospective analysis, and predictive skill. • Key findings: While no single method performs best in all cases; estimation with a prior should be the default unless diagnostics indicate substantial model misspecification.

		• Proposed guidelines: Ideally estimate M within the assessment without a prior (rarely feasible); if a prior is needed, use longevity-based methods (e.g., Hamel-Amax) for robustness. • Continue using likelihood profiles to assess information content for M and apply sensitivity analyses and decision tables when M is pre-specified. • Simulation experiments confirmed challenges with unconstrained estimation and supported use of priors when model mis-specification risk exists. • The manuscript is in a second round of peer review; SESSFRAG will consider adopting the proposed guidelines if and when it is published. Discussion: • Members acknowledged the need for consistency across Tier 1 assessments to avoid ad-hoc decisions and institutional inertia. • Emphasised that biology and stock structure hypotheses should remain central when applying defaults; deviations should be justified and documented. • Clarified that adopting best practice would not have changed past management decisions but could slightly alter stock status trajectories for some species. • Discussion on composite M weighting methods and whether they align with proposed guidelines; noted as future work. • SERAG agreed that once published, the guidelines paper should be reviewed and considered for adoption at a future meeting. • Highlighted importance of documenting reasons for any departure from default approach and ensuring transparency in assessment methodology. **ACTION:** Update current action item to include "AFMA to distribute final report to SERAG members and SESSFRAG should then discuss if this then becomes the standard approach for the SESSF integrated assessments."
4	SeaChange Programme	Presentation Highlights: • Prof. Gretta Pecl presented an overview of the Sea Change Australia Programme, endorsed under the UN Decade of Ocean Science (FishSCORE2030) and supported by FRDC. • Programme aims to strengthen climate resilience in Australia's seafood sector through knowledge exchange and co-development of adaptation strategies. • Context: Climate change impacts on fisheries and aquaculture are accelerating, with ocean heatwaves affecting ~56% of global oceans in 2024 and rising carbon emissions. • Seafood is a low-carbon protein source when compared to other proteins but faces increasing risks from climate change and social license challenges. • Programme pillars: (1) Improving knowledge exchange via online climate toolbox, report cards, webinars, and adaptation stories; (2) Understanding sector needs and knowledge gaps through Q&A platform and database; (3) Co-developing practical adaptation options via 12 case studies and policy analysis.

		• Engagement opportunities include registering as experts, sharing adaptation stories, and contributing to climate-related questions and observations. Discussion: • Members acknowledged the importance of positioning seafood as part of a low-carbon future and improving public perception of Australian fisheries. • Questions raised on how risk assessment frameworks will be curated and whether guidance will be provided for selecting appropriate tools. • Discussion on consumer awareness and social license challenges; need for consistent messaging across agencies to promote seafood's low environmental impact. • Clarification provided that seafood remains a low-carbon protein source, even for trawl fisheries. • Concerns noted about long-term sustainability of the SeaChange programme beyond initial funding; current funding is ~$1.8M over three years plus in-kind contributions. • Members expressed interest in contributing expertise and promoting engagement through their networks.
15	Stock assessment forward planning/discussion	Presentation Highlights: • SERAG reviewed the current SESSF stock assessment schedule (last updated September 2025) and considered forward planning for the next three-year contract period. • Key points noted: 2025 is the final year of the current contract; the next contract is expected to span three calendar years. • Silver Warehou Tier 1 assessment was rejected in 2024; SERAG previously recommended revisiting in 2026. SESSFRAG suggested considering a Weight of Evidence approach similar to Western Australia. • Orange Roughy – Western Zone data-limited assessment originally scheduled for 2025 requires more work and is proposed for 2026. • SERAG was asked to advise on placement of Silver Warehou and Orange Roughy assessments and any other changes to the schedule. Discussion: • Members agreed to move Orange Roughy – Western Zone assessment to 2026 due to data limitations. • SERAG supported revisiting Silver Warehou in 2026 using a Weight of Evidence approach as a test case. • Scheduling constraints discussed: 2027 intended as a blank year for model development and database upgrades; Blue Grenadier Tier 1 confirmed for 2028. • Consideration of rescheduling Gummy Shark Tier 1 to 2028 to balance workload; other assessments (Blue-eye Trevalla, John Dory) also considered for 2028. • Highlighted challenges of conducting Tier 1 assessments in non-data-processing years; need to align assessments with data availability. • AFMA and CSIRO are working toward database improvements to reduce processing time and enable annual updates; interim approach may involve processing only species scheduled for Tier 1 assessment. • Discussion on trigger-based review strategy: current harvest strategy includes periodic reviews but does not yet incorporate time-based trigger reductions; may be considered in future revisions.

		• Industry raised concerns about capacity and prioritisation; SERAG agreed to maintain flexibility and revisit scheduling as system improvements progress. Recommendations: • SERAG recommended that the Silver Warehou Weight of Evidence assessment methodology be presented at the 2026 SESSFRAG data meeting for subsequent consideration by SERAG. • Supported moving the Orange Roughy Western Zone assessment to 2026. • AFMA and CSRIO report back on database improvements and implications for annual data processing to the SESSFRAG Chairs Meeting in 2026. **ACTION:** SERAG to provide advice on any additional changes to the stock assessment schedule before finalising schedule for next contract period.
7	Multi Species Harvest Strategy project	Presentation Highlights: • Dan Corrie and Pia Bessell-Browne presented an overview of the multi-species harvest strategy project. • Purpose: Seek SERAG advice on three design elements within the modular framework: integration of spatial closures, testing climate resilience via MSE, and multi-species management architecture. • Framework structure: Modular design with Foundational (objectives, species categorisation, decision rules), Operational (implementation), and Adaptive (review and adjustment) components. • Emphasis on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to test robustness under scenarios such as climate change and spatial closures. • Key challenges highlighted: balancing innovation with affordability, managing uncertainty for lower-tier species, addressing choke species and rebuilding requirements, and aligning with Harvest Strategy Policy. • A comprehensive workshop is scheduled for May 2026 for the Multi Species Harvest Strategy. Discussion: Group 1 Integrating Closures: Strong support for recognising spatial closures in harvest strategy settings, especially for low-mobility species. Key considerations included species categorisation (protected, partially protected, unprotected), data challenges (movement patterns, mixing rates), and operational complexity (two-area models may oversimplify; hotspots and nursery grounds need nuanced treatment). Economic implications noted for adjusting targets in open areas. Next steps: Use MSE to test scenarios and develop guidance on translating closure benefits into reference points and buffers.

		Group 2 – Testing Climate Resilience: Broad agreement that climate resilience must be built into the harvest strategy. Candidate mechanisms include climate buffers, exceptional circumstance clauses, and trigger-based adjustments. Challenges include limited expertise for MSE and climate modelling, and data needs (environmental indicators, recruitment trends, spatial shifts). Implementation challenges noted, with risk–cost–catch trade-offs expected. Next steps: Define performance metrics for climate robustness and prioritise vulnerable species for initial testing. Group 3 – Multi-Species Architecture: Widely supported as essential for managing technical interactions and reducing assessment burden. Recommended fewer, larger métier groupings to keep complexity manageable. Compliance issues flagged, with preference for behavioral approaches and post-hoc performance reviews over blunt instruments like trip limits. Trigger and indicator species approaches supported but required robust pairings and clear thresholds. Data needs to include reliable métier-level catch ratios and CPUE correlations. Next steps: Consolidate métiers into practical groupings, develop worked examples, and test architecture through MSE. Common themes across three groups: All concepts considered valid and necessary for a modern, adaptive harvest strategy. Challenges include data limitations and complexity vs. practicality trade-offs. Strong support for phased implementation and alignment with Harvest Strategy Policy. Additional discussion: CPUE standardisation flagged as critical for future assessments; recommendation to embed modern CPUE methods into the multi-species harvest strategy project and MSE testing framework.
8	Interim Harvest Strategy	Presentation Highlights: • Michelle Henriksen (AFMA) presented updates to the Interim SESSF Harvest Strategy Framework (HSF), which will remain in place until the new Multi-Species Harvest Strategy (MSHS) is implemented (~2029). • Purpose of updates: improve clarity on uncertainty, apply precautionary measures, and incorporate trigger species into the tier structure. • Key changes introduced: reintroduction of Tier 2 assessments (same modelling approach as Tier 1 but classified separately due to reduced robustness and subject to a 5% buffer); expanded Tier 3 definition to include data-limited integrated assessments with some ageing data and simple surplus production models; revised buffers applied to tiers (Tier 1: 0%, Tier 2: 5%, Tier 3: 10%, Tier 4: 15%, Tier 5: 20%, trigger species effectively 25% buffer via TAC trigger mechanism). • Updated TAC-setting guidelines for scenarios where an assessment is rejected, multi-year RBC periods are extended, or TACs must constrain catch of companion species to protect depleted stocks. • Buffers aim to account for uncertainty and will be tested under MSE as part of the MSHS project; trigger species remain under current rules (75% TAC trigger and six-year review).

		• Companion species TAC constraints will use métier-based analysis rather than generic buffers. • AFMA proposed that the 2022 Bight Redfish assessment be categorised as a Tier 2 assessment. • The Interim SESSF HSF will be considered by the AFMA Commission at its March 2026 meeting. Discussion: • Members supported the intent of the proposed changes and noted the importance of clarity on Tier 2 classification and guidance for determining when an assessment should be downgraded. • Questions on interaction between trigger species rules and buffers; clarified that trigger thresholds do not add extra precaution beyond existing buffers. • Debate on whether time-based buffers (e.g., annual 10% reductions) should apply to trigger species; confirmed current approach uses six-year review, with further testing under MSHS. • Industry requested clearer explanation of 'calculated constraint' for companion species TACs; confirmed this refers to quantified adjustments based on métier analysis. • Members agreed that uncertainty should (ideally) determine the magnitude of the buffer, and acknowledged that the current approach will use fixed, tier-based buffers until MSE results are available. • SERAG agreed to establish an intersessional assessment review working group to provide guidance on determining Tier 1 vs Tier 2 classification. Recommendations: SERAG recommends expanding and providing more detail on the term 'calculated constraint' in the interim harvest strategy. SERAG endorsed the proposed changes to the interim Harvest Strategy Framework for the SESSF. **ACTION:** Intersessional assessment review working group to discuss and provide guidance on the process in determining if a stock assessment is a Tier 1 or Tier 2. **ACTION**: CSIRO will present the current Bight Redfish assessment for the Working Group to develop Tier Advice to be taken to the next appropriate RAG meeting.
10	Update on the development of a Blue-eye Trevalla assessment	Presentation Highlights: • Stage 1 objectives: review available data and preliminary model structures in 2025; decide on full Tier 1 assessment in 2026. • Data updates: ~1,400 new age samples processed (2020–2025); ~8,000 historical samples available for future work. Length and age composition explored by gear type, zone, and season; noted potential seamount vs slope misclassification. • Discards estimated using existing methods (minimal amounts of discarding).

		• Proposed model structure: start simple and add complexity incrementally; fleet structure options include non-trawl vs trawl or auto-line, drop-line, and trawl. • Biological assumptions: natural mortality pre-specified (0.08–0.2), steepness pre-specified at 0.75, growth parameters estimated within Stock Synthesis, length at maturity ~65–72 cm, age at maturity ~12 years. • Selectivity assumed to be constant over time; logistic for hook gear. • Next steps: SERAG to advise whether to proceed with Tier 1 development for presentation at the 2026 SESSFRAG Chairs' meeting. Discussion: • Members supported the development of a Tier 1 assessment for Blue-eye Trevalla (slope). • Advice provided on assigning historical catches to fleets (auto-line vs drop-line vs trawl) and handling unknown gear types. • Clarified historical gear usage (e.g., midwater trawl in early 1990s, drop-line dominance in 1970s–1990s). • Suggested verifying large fish observations and potential seamount misclassification. • Confirmed minimal discarding; the approach to add discards to landed catch was endorsed. • Emphasised the importance of continuing intersessional collaboration and working group support for resolving fleet structure and data issues. • Biological assumptions (natural mortality, steepness, growth) considered reasonable for initial model runs. Recommendations: SERAG supported the development of candidate integrated assessment models for Blue-eye Trevalla (slope) for consideration by SESSFRAG in May 2026. **ACTION:** CSIRO to convene a Blue-eye Trevalla and John Dory working group to provide advice on data inputs and assessment structure.
9	Developing and validating novel methods to estimate age-and-size-at-maturity in SE Australian fisheries	Presentation Highlights: • Associate Professor John Morrongiello (University of Melbourne) provided an update on the FRDC-funded project aimed at developing novel approaches to estimate age and size at maturity for key SESSF species. • Rationale: Age and size at maturity are critical life-history traits influencing stock size, recruitment, and assessment accuracy. Current parameters are outdated or uncertain; traditional methods (gonad examination) are costly and rarely updated. • Project goals: Develop otolith-based biochemical assays to detect reproductive proteins and reconstruct maturity histories from archived otoliths; provide scalable, cost-effective tools integrated into ageing workflows. • Progress: Identified reproductive proteins (e.g., vitellogenin) and validated proof-of-concept using fluorescent antibody tagging. Initial

		success in visualising reproductive signals; detected plausible maturity ages (e.g., Tiger Flathead ~3–5 years). • Challenges resolved: Reproducibility issues addressed by optimising antibody soak times (14 days minimum). Exploring gold-tagging for quantification of protein expression to assess reproductive investment. • Current cost: ~$220 per otolith due to imaging time; aiming to reduce costs and integrate with Fish Ageing Services workflow. • Additional innovation: Developing a statistical model using otolith growth increments (jerk index approach) to estimate age at maturity without biochemistry; preliminary results for NZ species and Tiger Flathead show plausible estimates. • Next steps: Finalise and peer-review biochemical method; decide whether to apply method to one species for detailed time series (Option 1) or multiple species for coarse before/after comparison (Option 2); continue development of statistical model and explore broader funding opportunities (e.g., ARC linkage for snapper). Discussion: • Importance of updated maturity parameters for SESSF species given environmental change and productivity shifts. • Support for integrating biochemical assays into existing ageing workflows to minimise cost and complexity. • Interest in leveraging archived otolith collections to reconstruct historical maturity trends. • Discussion on cost implications and scalability; suggested targeting species with known productivity shifts (e.g., Tiger Flathead, Blue Grenadier, Jackass Morwong). • Consideration of Option 2 (multiple species, coarse time blocks) as a practical approach if resources are limited. • Highlighted potential to combine biochemical methods with back-calculation for length-at-maturity estimates. • Encouraged exploration of recreationally significant species (e.g., snapper) for broader funding and applicability. • Members noted the importance of validating statistical model outputs against biochemical results before operational use.
11	PhD Project Update	Presentation Highlights: • Rikki Taylor (PhD candidate) presented progress on developing an integrated stock assessment for John Dory (*Zeus faber*). • Current status: John Dory is a byproduct species with a 60 t incidental TAC; the 2021 Tier 4 assessment indicated the stock was below the limit reference point. While a Tier 3, age-based catch curve analysis undertaken in 2017 suggested the stock was sustainably harvested, SESSFRAG rejected the Tier 3 approach in 2019 because it had failed MSE testing. • Recent evidence of southward distribution shift and gear changes prompted need for integrated assessment. • Key data insights: Catch peaked ~400 t in 1980s, now concentrated in southern zones; trawl dominant but Danish seine increasing; length composition stable; discard samples smaller than retained fish. • New age data available (2010–2016, 2021–2024); biological parameters: length at maturity ~64 cm, age at maturity ~3–5 years, natural mortality ~0.33–0.36.

		• Next steps: Develop standardised CPUE (including spatial modeling), explore fleet structure and selectivity assumptions, and establish intersessional working group for guidance. Discussion: • Members supported the development of an integrated assessment and emphasised starting with simple fleet structure (trawl vs Danish seine) and refining if data indicate spatial or biological differences. • Consider exploratory analysis to validate need for north–south splits or additional fleets. • Selectivity: Logistic selectivity considered appropriate initially; dome-shaped selectivity may be tested later. • Importance of accounting for management changes (e.g., Danish seine mesh size changes in 2009 and 2013). • Suggested using spatial CPUE modeling (sdmTMB approach) to capture distributional shifts. • Biological parameters and ageing data appear robust; growth differences between sexes noted, suggesting the need for a two-sex model. • Agreed to establish intersessional working group to support new integrated assessments for John Dory and Blue-eye Trevalla. Recommendations: SERAG supported the development of candidate integrated assessment models for John Dory for consideration by SESSFRAG in May 2026.
12	Rebuilding Species Review and TAC advice	Presentation Highlights: SERAG reviewed available information for depleted species and provided advice on bycatch TACs for the 2026–27 SESSF season. No updated métier analysis since May 2023 due to closures, gear restrictions, and buyback of trawl SFRs. Electronic Monitoring (EM) implementation in CTS scheduled for July 2026 to improve discard estimates. Flathead TAC constrained to 2,333 t since 2023 to reduce jackass morwong mortality; questions raised whether constraint should continue given closures and structural adjustment. Climate Risk Framework assessments indicate Extreme risk for Jackass Morwong East and John Dory; WTO conditions require improved discard data and alternative indices for some species. Species summaries: Jackass Morwong (50 t) – high discard uncertainty (73% in 2022); John Dory (60 t) – discards low (~10%), SEA-MES catch rates 15% higher than 1990s; Blue Warehou (30 t) – landed catch very low, discard estimates high; Redfish (30 t) – declining catches, significant discards; Eastern Gemfish (100 t) – catch rates tripled vs 1990s, catches well below TAC; Orange Roughy zones – minimal catches, negligible discards, research ongoing for Western Zone. Research Catch Allowance proposal of 200 t for Orange Roughy Albany and Esperance.

		Discussion: • Members agreed that the current TACs should be maintained for all rebuilding species due to lack of new information. • Flathead TAC constraint should remain until discard data post-closure is available (expected 2026). • EM implementation is critical for improving discard estimates. • Climate risk assessments reinforce need for rebuilding strategies for eastern Jackass Morwong and John Dory. • Concerns raised about practicality of EM for minor species discards and reliance on improved logbook compliance. • Potential market and economic effects if TACs for companion species (e.g., Flathead) are increased prematurely. • Need for research on recreational catch impacts for some species (e.g., Jackass Morwong in eastern Tasmania). • Members note that in the 2024-25 season there was minimal catch of the Orange Roughy Albany and Esperance Research Catch Allowance (RCA). Recommendations: It was noted that there is insufficient information to justify changing the current bycatch TACs for the depleted species/stocks under consideration and SERAG recommended maintaining them at existing levels. The RAG recommended that the Flathead TAC remains constrained at its current level of 2,333 t due to previous concerns around discard rates of eastern Jackass Morwong (and associated uncertainty of total mortality) prior to closure implementation and. SERAG recommended reviewing the constraint on Flathead in 2026 following the updated assessment. SERAG considered a proposal from Industry to change a portion of RCA allowance to quota in regard to the management of the research program in Western Zone Orange Roughy, and advised that it would support such a proposal subject to the TAC remaining conservative and that the new arrangements retained the catch limits and research components of WORDaC. SERAG recommended a 200 t RCA for Orange Roughy Albany and Esperance for the 2026-27 SESSF season.
13	ERA discussion	Presentation Highlights: • Dr Miriana Sporcic provided an update on changes to the Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA) methodology. • ERAEF (Ecological Risk Assessment for the Effects of Fishing) supports ecosystem-based fisheries management and assesses risks to commercial species, byproduct, bycatch, protected species, and habitats. • Change in Level 2 Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) calculation to use geometric mean for susceptibility attributes (availability, encounterability, selectivity, post-capture mortality), replacing previous theoretical score. • Implications: More conservative scoring; likely increase in species classified as medium or high risk; productivity attributes unchanged unless new data is available.

		• Next ERA schedule for the SESSF: Planned for 2026–27 financial year using most recent data (up to 2025). Discussion: • Members noted the change improves proportional scaling and reduces false negatives. • Expect some species previously assessed as low/medium risk to move to medium/high risk categories. • Importance of transparency: suggested retrospective analysis to show impact of formula change on previous ERA results. • Discussion on feasibility of producing a bridging analysis using existing data and updated formula. Recommendations: SERAG recommended the latest completed ERA's in the SESSF be updated with the new ERA formula prior to SESSFRAG data meeting 2026, in order to see the impacts of the methodological change on the ERA process.
14	SESSF Research Statement	Presentation Highlights: SERAG to provide advice on research priorities for inclusion in the SESSF Annual Research Statement 2027–28 and evaluate proposals for 2026–27 funding. Draft priorities for 2027–28: • Review of Tier 1 assessments; • Survey of protected dogfish in 60-mile closure; • AI-enabled EM for discard/bycatch monitoring; • Calibration of new Modular Acoustic Optical Survey (M-AOS) unit for Orange Roughy; • Otolith morphometric methods for ageing; and • Skip spawning investigation for Orange Roughy. Proposals for 2026–27: 1) Ageing of SESSF quota species (3-year project, approx. $891K); 2) ERAs for selected sectors (2-year project, approx. $190K); and 3) stock assessment/data services proposal pending clearance. Discussion: High priority: AI-enabled EM for discards/bycatch monitoring (cost-effective, broader applicability) and calibration of new M-AOS unit (critical for Orange Roughy surveys). Dogfish survey: Mixed views; acknowledged that the GAB dogfish survey was initially part of a broader survey that was subsequently narrowed. The cost of a standalone GAB survey is high (~$400K) and SERAG suggested that it be deferred or integrated with next broad-scale dogfish survey. GABIA emphasised that it remained a high priority for GABTF.

		Tier 1 reviews: Committee prefers strategic approach – compile list of Tier 1 assessments, last review dates, and management significance before prioritising. New suggested projects: • Skip spawning in Orange Roughy important for understanding spawning biomass trends; feasibility and cost need scoping. Otolith morphometric approach potentially cost-effective for ageing backlog; pilot study recommended. • CPUE standardisation update: Proposal to modernise methods to account for spatial closures; suggested as pilot alongside 2026 Flathead assessment and possibly integrated with multi-species harvest strategy project. Research proposals (2026–27): Ageing proposal considered essential; cost increase noted. ERA proposal supported with a recommendation to incorporate RAG feedback in the final report. Research proposals to be reviewed out of session. General points: Emphasis on cost-effectiveness and leveraging synergies with existing projects; some priorities (AI EM, CPUE modernisation) may have cross-fishery relevance – potential for collaboration. SERAG did not support the other priorities listed in the Research Statement and requested that they be reviewed prior to consideration at the SESSRAG Chairs meeting in 2026. Recommendations: SERAG supported the following research priorities to be included in the 2027-28 SESSF Research Statement: • Survey of protected dogfishes in the 60-mile dogfish closure. SERAG considered this work a medium priority, noting that the GAB Industry representative considered it High priority. • Detection and estimation of discards and bycatch mitigation using AI-enabled Electronic Monitoring. SERAG considered this work a High priority, noting its application expands across fisheries outside of the SESSF and recommended other fisheries be approached to broaden the scope of the project. **ACTION**: AFMA and Cathy Dichmont to work together to list tier 1 assessments and their most recent information in order to provide the RAG with a strategic view of assessing priority of stock assessment reviews in the fishery. This work is to be presented at the 2026 SESSFRAG Chairs' meeting. **ACTION**: AFMA to invite the ABARES economic team that is working on the SESSF vessel profitability, market trends and price elasticity in southern Australia and present an update on their work to the 2026 SESSFRAG Chairs' meeting. **ACTION**: AFMA and FAS to provide an indication of the scope and price of the estimates of age from otolith morphometrics project for Orange Roughy and report back to SESSFRAG.

		ACTION: CSIRO will lead correspondence between Jonathan Smart, John Morrongiello, Paul Burch, Jeremy Lyle with New Zealand scientist to scope feasibility of estimating skip spawning in Orange Roughy and report to SESSFRAG in 2026. **ACTION:** AFMA and CSIRO to investigate if there is a low cost way to test use of spatial temporal models to standardise CPUE series for SESSF stocks and report to SESSFRAG in 2026. **ACTION:** AFMA to clarify with AOS acoustic team on the background of process of calibration method, cost, costing distribution and timing of project, and present results to SESSFRAG Chairs' meeting 2026. **ACTION:** AFMA to distribute Research Proposal for ARC funding in 2026-27 to SERAG members for out of session comments.
16	Other business	No other business.
Close of meeting		The Chair closed the meeting at 12.41pm

Attachment A – Adopted agenda

SERAG 1 Meeting (15–16 October 2025)

Day 1: Tuesday 18th November 2025

Start (Duration)	Item	Purpose	Presenter/s
9:00 (30 min)	**1. Preliminaries**		
	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
9:30 (1hr)	2. Blue Grenadier – RBC Advice	For ADVICE	Geoff Tuck
10:30 (15 min)	**Morning Tea**		
10:45 (30 min)	2. Blue Grenadier – RBC Advice (cont.)	For ADVICE	Geoff Tuck
11:15 (1hr)	3. Eastern Orange Roughy – RBC Advice	For ADVICE	Paul Burch
12:15 (15 min)	Finalise session actions and recommendations		Members
12:30 (45 min)	**Lunch**		
13:15 (30 min)	3. Eastern Orange Roughy – RBC Advice (cont.)	For ADVICE	Paul Burch
13:45 (45 min)	4. SeaChange programme	For NOTING	Gretta Pecl
14:30 (15 min)	Finalise session actions and recommendations		Members
14:45 (15 min)	**Afternoon Tea**		
15:00 (30 min)	5. Weight of Evidence assessment of Silver Warehou REMOVED	For ADVICE	AFMA
15:30 (30 min)	6. Guidance on the estimation of natural mortality for Tier 1 stocks	For NOTING	Kristin Privitera Johnson/Paul Burch
16:00 (15 min)	Finalise session actions and recommendations		Members
16:15	**End of Day 1**		

Day 2: Wednesday 19th November 2025

Start (Duration)	Item	Purpose	Presenter/s
9:00 (1.5 hr)	7. Multi Species Harvest Strategy	For ADVICE	Dan Corrie
10:30 (15 min)	Finalise session actions and recommendations		Members
10:45 (15 min)	**Morning Tea**		
11:00 (45 min)	8. Interim Harvest Strategy	For ADVICE	AFMA
11:45 (45 min)	9. Developing and validating novel methods to estimate age- and size-at-maturity in SE Australian fisheries	For NOTING	John Morrongiello
12:30 (15 min)	Finalise session actions and recommendations		Members
12:45 (45 min)	**Lunch**		
13:30 (45 min)	10. Update on the development of a Blue-eye Trevalla assessment	For ADVICE	Kristin Privitera Johnson
14:15 (45 min)	11. PhD Project update	For ADVICE	Rikki Taylor
15:00 (15 min)	**Afternoon Tea**		
15:15 (45 min)	12. Rebuilding Species Review and TAC advice	For ADVICE	AFMA
16:00 (45 min)	13. ERA discussion	For NOTING	Miriana Sporcic
16:45	**Meeting close**		

Day 3: Thursday 20th November 2025

Start (Duration)	Item	Purpose	Presenter/s
9:00 (1.5 hr)	14. SESSF Research Statement a) Evaluation of research proposals for 2026-27 b) Development of priorities for 2027-28	For ADVICE	AFMA
10:30 (15 min)	Finalise session actions and recommendations		Members
10:45 (15 min)	**Morning Tea**		
11:00 (30 min)	15. Stock assessment forward planning/discussion	For ADVICE	AFMA
11:30 (15 min)	16. Other Business	For ADVICE	Members
11:45 (15 min)	Finalise session actions and recommendations		Members
12:00	**Meeting close**		

Attachment B – Register of interests

Name	RAG/MAC position / organisation	Declared interests
Dr Cathy Dichmont	Chair	
Ms Sally Weekes	Interim AFMA Member	Employed by AFMA, Senior Manager of the Demersal and Midwater. No pecuniary or other interest.
Dr Steven Rust	Economics Member	No interest in the fishery pecuniary or otherwise. Employed as a Marine Resource Economist with the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies at the University of Tasmania.
Dr Paul Burch	Scientific Member	Employed by CSIRO, assessment scientist. Acquiring funding for research purposes. Principle investigator on the SESSF stock assessment project.
Dr Ian Knuckey	Scientific Member	<u>Positions:</u> Director Fishwell Pty Ltd Director Olrac Australia (Electronic logbooks) Chair Northern Prawn Fishery Resource Assessment Group Chair Tropical Rock Lobster Resource Assessment Group Chair Victorian Rock Lobster and Giant Crab Assessment Group Chair Gulf of St Vincent's Prawn Fishery MAC Research Scientific Committee

		Chair Spencer Gulf & West Coast Prawn Association Inc. Economic Optimisation Sub-committee Scientific Member Northern Prawn Management Advisory Committee Scientific Member Gulf of St Vincent's Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee Scientific Member Tropical Tuna Resource Assessment Group Scientific Member SESSF Resource Assessment Group Member The Geelong Agri Collective <u>Current Projects:</u> AFMA - Annual monitoring, reporting and assessment of the Small Pelagic Fishery AFMA - Bass Strait Scallop Fishery surveys – 2025-2028 AFMA - Torres Strait Tropical Rock Lobster – surveys, assessments and catch determination 2025-2028 Traffic International - Shark Product Traceability QLD Sea Cucumber Ass. - Design and implementation of various sea cucumber dive surveys QLD QCCFG-2023-033 - Dive logger trials QLD QCCFG-2025 - Spanner Crab fishery – industry data collection Tasmanian Seafoods - Design and implementation of NT Sandfish sea cucumber dive surveys

		Australia Bay Seafoods - Queensland Gulf of Carpentaria Developmental Fin Fish Trawl Fishery EM Observing and on-board observing, scientific advice IMOS / SIMS - FishSOOP Ocean Monitoring Program Seafood Industry SA - Benchmarking of SARDI science delivery Seafood Industry Victoria - Qualitative assessment of the potential impacts of seismic survey activity on Victorian managed fisheries of commercial and recreational importance.
Dr Jeremy Lyle	Scientific Member	Adjunct Associate Professor (Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies) Steering Committee Chair, RecFishing Research Coordination Program (FRDC) Scientific Board Member for the Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing (TARFish) - peak body for recreational fishing in Tasmania.
Mr Ross Winstanley	Recreational Member	No pecuniary interest in the SESSF.
Mr Daniel Hogan	Industry Member	Owner operator of trawler Zeehaan out of Portland, Vic. Commonwealth Trawl Sector boat and quota SFR holder. Industry member on SEMAC Non-beneficiary director of SETFIA, and a director Toberfish PTY LTD
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)
Mr Simon Boag	Industry Member	EO SETFIA (trawl) EO SSIA (sharks) EO SPFIA (SPF) Industry member on both SERAG and SEMAC. SSIA is engaged by AFMA to collect shark industry biological data. Atlantis undertakes work to assist shared marine space developers (wind, oil etc) understand the fishing industry. Atlantis undertakes other work within the fishing industry from time to time including on MSC assessments. SETFIA is the PI on the orange roughy east AOS. SETFIA is engaged by participants within the W ORS research fishery to collect biological samples.

		SETFIA is engaged by AFMA under co-management to undertake a variety of tasks including snapper management, ling management, industry data collection and consultation. Investment committee member of a large fund that owns fishing rights including SBT, ling and flathead.
Dr Jonathan Smart	Scientific Member	Independent fisheries scientist operating as Smarter Fisheries Scientific Consulting Affiliate Associate Professor – Flinders University Adjunct Senior Research Fellow – James Cook University Scientific member PZJA HCRAG Researcher involved with stock assessment research, often in collaboration with State and Territory Governments Independent scientific advisor to Western Australian Pilbara Demersal Scalefish Resource (PDSR) Stakeholders No pecuniary interest in the SESSF
Ms Audrey Kent	Executive Officer AFMA	Employed by AFMA, Senior Management Support Officer. Executive Officer (EO) of SERAG. No pecuniary or other interest.
Mr Neil MacDonald	GABIA	Director NMAC(SA) P/L ORGANISATION SUPPORT • Executive officer Great Australian Bight Industry Association (GABIA) • Executive officer Charter Boat Association South Australia (CBASA)

		• Executive officer Southern Fishermen's Association (SFA) • Executive officer Saint Vincent Gulf Prawn Boat Owner's Association (SCGPBOA) • Support services South Australian Professional Fishers Association COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP • Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery Management Advisory Committee (SVGPBOA) - Member • Gulf St Vincent Prawn Fishery Research SubCommittee (SVGPBOA) - Member • Lakes & Coorong Fishery Management Advisory Committee (LCFMAC) – Member • Australian Council of Prawn Fisheries – Director / Chair New South Wales Wild Harvest Fisheries – Director / Chair
Dr Robin Thomson	CSIRO	CSIRO Assessment Scientist. Acquiring funding for research purposes. Principal Investigator (PI) for close kin project for school shark. PI on close kin scoping study for blue-eye trevalla.
Dr Miriana Sporcic	CSIRO	CSIRO Assessment Scientist. Acquiring funding for research purposes. Project leader CSIRO Ecological Risk Assessments
Dr Geoff Tuck	CSIRO	CSIRO Assessment Scientist. Acquiring funding for research purposes.

		Project leader CSIRO Marine Visual Technologies project team on automated catch detection and species identification.
Dr Pia Bessell-Browne	CSIRO	CSIRO Assessment Scientist. Acquiring funding for research purposes. PI on FRDC project: Developing a harvest control rule to use in situations where depletion can no longer be calculated relative to unfished levels.
Ms Kristin Privitera-Johnson	CSIRO	CSIRO Assessment Scientist. Acquiring funding for research purposes.
Ms Rikki Taylor	CSIRO / University of Tasmanian	PhD student through University of Tasmania and CSIRO. No pecuniary or other interest. Any future interests in projects or research will be declared as required.
Dr Gretta Pecl		Employed by University of Tasmania, no interest, pecuniary or otherwise
Dr John Morrongiello		Employed by University of Melbourne, no interest, pecuniary or otherwise
Dr Lianos Triantafillos	AFMA	Employed by AFMA, no interest, pecuniary or otherwise
Ms Michelle Henriksen	AFMA	Employed by AFMA, no interest, pecuniary or otherwise
Ms Jennfier Power-Geary	AFMA	Employed by AFMA, no interest, pecuniary or otherwise

Ms Natalaie Couchman	AFMA	Employed by AFMA, no interest, pecuniary or otherwise
Mr Dan Corrie	AFMA	Employed by AFMA, no interest, pecuniary or otherwise
Mr Anthony Coggan	AFMA	Employed by AFMA, no interest, pecuniary or otherwise
Dr Tim Emery	ABARES	Employed by ABARES. No pecuniary interest in the fishery. Any future projects will be declared as required.
Dr Daniel Wright	ABARES	Employed by ABARES. No pecuniary interest in the fishery. Any future projects will be declared as required.
Mr Ross Bromley	Girella Fisheries	Girella Fisheries Services is currently engaged by Atlantis Advisory to assist clients with Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accreditation and audits across several Commonwealth fisheries, including: - The Eastern Orange Roughy Fishery - The Royal Red Prawn Fishery - The Winter Blue Grenadier Fishery - The Small Pelagic Fishery South-East Trawl Fishing Industry Association (SETFIA) to manage the Western Orange Roughy Data Collection program (WORDaC) and by Southern Shark Industry Alliance to manage the Shark Industry Data Collection program (SIDaC).

Attachment C – Actions and Recommendations arising from this meeting

Agenda Item	No.	Action	Agency/Person Responsible	Timeframe
2	1	Future assessments on Blue Grenadier should investigate whether growth deviations correlate with recent recruitment and the impact of this correlation on projections.	CSIRO	2028
2	2	In 2026 explore the high autocorrelation demonstrated by the Runs test of the fits to the length data for Blue Grenadier.	CSIRO	2026
2	3	CSIRO to present to Intersessional assessment review Working Group on the impact on the MSY catch to investigate the implications of the large fluctuations of absolute B0 observed between assessments on the estimated productivity of the stock.	CSIRO	Dec 2025
3	4	SERAG asked Paul Burch to confirm with the CSIRO acoustics team how the towed-body surveys have changed over time, particularly pre- and post-2010. To be discussed with the RAG prior to acceptance of the RBC and provide this update to SERAG 2 day 3 2025.	CSIRO	Dec 2025
3	5	SERAG noted that the acoustic index may represent two different technological systems pre- and post-2010. SERAG asked that Paul Burch Time Block the catchability parameter for the towed-body survey pre- and post-2010 to explore the sensitivity of the assessment to treating the towed-body survey as a single time series and provide this update to SERAG 2 day 3 2025.	CSIRO	Dec 2025
3	6	SERAG request the following changes to the base case assessment for investigation via the intersessional working group: • The base case will treat the towed-body survey as a single timeseries with a sensitivity that separates the series pre and post 2010. • Investigate two methods to try and improve the fits to age frequency data i) sex specific natural mortality and (ii) sex specific selectivity. Additional methods may also be considered. • The maturity ogive to be checked in all cases to ensure it reaches 1.	CSIRO	Dec 2025

3	7	Industry to provide advice to CSIRO on whether there have been any changes to selectivity over time in this fishery prior to the intersessional working group.	Industry	Dec 2025
6	8	AFMA to update the current action item to include “AFMA to distribute final report to SERAG members. SESSFRAG should then discuss if this then becomes the standard approach for SESSF integrated assessments.”.	AFMA	SERAG 1 2026
8	9	Intersessional assessment review working group to discuss and provide guidance on the process in determining if a stock assessment is a Tier 1 or Tier 2.	AFMA/CSIRO	Dec 2025
8	10	CSIRO present the current Bight Redfish assessment for the Working Group to develop Tier Advice to be taken to the next appropriate RAG meeting.	CSIRO	Dec 2025
10 & 11	11	CSIRO to convene a Blue-eye Trevalla and John Dory working group to provide advice on data inputs and assessment structure.	CSIRO	SESSFRAG Chairs 2026
14	12	AFMA and Cathy Dichmont to work together to list Tier 1 assessments and their most recent information in order to provide the RAG with a strategic view of assessing priority of stock assessment reviews in the fishery. This work is to be presented to the 2026 SESSFRAG Chairs’ meeting.	AFMA	SESSFRAG Chairs 2026
14	13	AFMA invite the ABARES economic team that is working on the SESSF vessel profitability, market trends and price elasticity in southern Australia and present an update on their work to the 2026 SESSFRAG Chairs’ meeting.	AFMA	SESSFRAG Chairs 2026
14	14	AFMA and FAS to provide an indication of the scope and price of the estimates of age from otolith morphometrics project for Orange Roughy and report back to SESSFRAG.	AFMA/FAS	SESSFRAG Chairs 2026
14	15	Jonathan Smart, John Morrongiello, Paul Burch, Jeremy Lyle to correspond with New Zealand scientist to scope feasibility of estimating skip spawning in Orange Roughy and report to SESSFRAG in 2026.	CSIRO	SESSFRAG Chairs 2026
14	16	AFMA and CSIRO to investigate if there is a low cost way to test use of spatial temporal models to standardise CPUE series for SESSF stocks and report to SESSFRAG in 2026.	AFMA/CSIRO	SESSFRAG Chairs 2026

14	17	AFMA clarify with AOS acoustic team on the background of process of calibration method, cost, costing distribution and timing of project, and present results to SESSFRAG Chairs' meeting 2026	AFMA	SESSFRAG Chairs 2026
14	18	AFMA to distribute Research Proposal for ARC funding in 2026-27 to SERAG members for out of session comments.	AFMA	Dec 2025
15	19	SERAG to provide advice on any additional changes to the stock assessment schedule before finalising schedule for next contract period.	AFMA	SESSFRAG Chairs 2026

<table>
<tr><th>Agenda Item</th><th>No.</th><th>Recommendation</th></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>1,2</td><td>SERAG accepted the blue grenadier Base Case 2 scenario, but did not accept the Base Case 3 scenario. Retrospective patterns were large but behavedas expected given the data. The RAG noted the uncertainty means it can no longer be classified as a tier 1 assessment and moves to tier 2, SERAG recommends a minimum 5% buffer (as per the interim harvest strategy).

SERAG recommended either a 3-year step-down RBC or a 3-year average RBC, subject to the application of a minimum 5% discount factor.
<table>
<tr><th>3-year step-down RBC values:</th><th>3-year average RBC:</th></tr>
<tr><td>26-27: 17,744 t
27-28: 15,459 t
28-29: 13,727 t</td><td>15,643 t</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>3,4,5</td><td>SERAG recommended further changes to the base case assessment for investigation. These changes to be presented to an intersessional working group to agree upon a new base case scenario.

CSIRO to provide RBC estimates from MCMC analysis projecting the SESSF HCR and fixed catch scenarios from 800–2,000 t.</td></tr>
</table>

		If the 2025 assessment were to be rejected, SERAG recommended that RBC advice be based on the outcomes of the most recently accepted assessment (from 2021) and an appropriate discount factor applied.
8	6,7	SERAG recommends expanding and providing more detail on the term 'calculated constraint' in the interim harvest strategy. SERAG endorsed the proposed changes to the interim Harvest Strategy Framework for the SESSF.
10	8	SERAG supported the development of candidate integrated assessment models for Blue-eye Trevalla for consideration by SESSFRAG.
11	9	SERAG supported the development of candidate integrated assessment models for John Dory for consideration by SESSFRAG.
12	10,11,12,13	It was noted that there is insufficient information to justify changing the current bycatch TACs for the depleted species/stocks under consideration and SERAG recommended maintaining them at existing levels. The RAG recommended that the Flathead TAC remains constrained at its current level of 2,333 t due to previous concerns around discard rates of eastern Jackass Morwong (and associated uncertainty of total mortality) prior to closure implementation and. SERAG recommended reviewing the constraint on Flathead in 2026 following the updated assessment. SERAG considered a proposal from Industry to change a portion of RCA allowance to quota in regard to the management of the research program in Western Zone Orange Roughy, and advised that it would support such a proposal subject to the TAC remaining conservative and that the new arrangements retained the catch limits and research components of WORDaC. SERAG recommended a 200 t RCA for Orange Roughy Albany and Esperance for the 2026-27 SESSF season.
13	14	SERAG recommended the latest completed ERA's in the SESSF be updated with the new ERA formula prior to SESSFRAG data meeting 2026, in order to see the impacts of the methodological change on the ERA process.

14	15	SERAG supported the following research priorities to be included in the 2027-28 SESSF Research Statement: • Survey of protected dogfishes in the 60-mile dogfish closure. SERAG considered this work a medium priority, noting that the GAB Industry representative considered it High priority. • Detection and estimation of discards and bycatch mitigation using AI-enabled Electronic Monitoring. SERAG considered this work a High priority, noting its application expands across fisheries outside of the SESSF and recommended other fisheries be approached to broaden the scope of the project.
15	16,17,18	SERAG recommended that the Silver Warehou Weight of Evidence assessment methodology should be presented at the 2026 SESSFRAG data meeting for subsequent consideration by SERAG. Moving the Orange Roughy Western Zone assessment to 2026. AFMA and CSRIO report back on database improvements and implications for annual data processing to the SESSFRAG Chairs Meeting in 2026.