

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**  
Minister for Roads  
Minister for Road Safety and the TAC  
Minister for Fishing and Boating



Friday, 12 June 2020

## PORT PHILLIP PARTNERSHIP TO DOUBLE SHELLFISH REEFS

The Andrews Labor Government and The Nature Conservancy will continue their partnership approach to revitalising shellfish reefs in Port Phillip Bay by investing \$1.1 million to build three hectares of new native oyster reef.

Minister for Fishing and Boating Jaala Pulford said the Labor Government's \$500,000 contribution to further restore lost shellfish reefs in the bay helps deliver on a key fish habitat commitment in its *Target One Million* plan to get more people fishing, more often.

Shellfish reefs boost fish numbers, clean water and enhance marine biodiversity, which is good news for the environment and recreational fishers who wet a line in Victoria's biggest recreational fishery, Port Phillip Bay. The bay is home to a vibrant snapper, whiting, calamari and flathead fishery.

The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) \$600,000 investment into the project comes courtesy of \$300,000 from the Ross Trust for a new reef off of the Mornington Peninsula and \$300,000 from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation for a reef at 9ft Bank, off Geelong.

The partnership will more than double the area of restored oyster reef in the bay from 2.5 to 5.5 hectares by installing the equivalent of twelve 250m<sup>2</sup> shellfish reefs with five million oysters across three sites, including continued restoration of reefs near St Kilda and Geelong.

A new restoration technique not attempted before in Australia will be trialled at 9ft Bank, which is a degraded shellfish reef and the closest TNC has found to a surviving reef in Victoria.

The technique involves deploying at least 500m<sup>2</sup> of recycled shells from restaurants and the seafood industry to provide new substrate on the seafloor for remnant oysters in the area to colonise.

This will reduce organic waste to landfill by turning rubbish into new reefs. The project will also utilise 50 citizen scientists to help monitor the new reefs, assist with hatchery preparations and deliver community education to improve awareness.

The GPS locations of the previously completed shellfish reefs are online at [www.vfa.vic.gov.au/shellfishreefs](http://www.vfa.vic.gov.au/shellfishreefs).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Jaala Pulford

*"We're partnering with the Nature Conservancy to continue our work to improve the water quality and fish habitat in Port Phillip Bay."*

*"The Australian first restoration technique will not only reduce organic waste to landfill but also encourage more people to get fishing in our fantastic waters."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

*"I am excited to see this new technique for 9ft Bank increase local shellfish numbers and revitalise our lost shellfish reefs."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Nepean Chris Brayne

*"The prospect of a new reef off side of the bay is incredibly exciting and a win for local fishers and the environment."*

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