

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Ports and Freight
Minister for Fishing and Boating



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MORE REEFS FOR HEALTHIER FISHERIES IN CORIO BAY

Two major fishing reef projects near Geelong are complete, creating more homes for fish and enabling recreational fishers to reap the rewards from land and sea.

Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne said the reefs will get more people fishing as part the Andrews Labor Government's \$35 million investment, including \$2.5 million for extra reefs in Port Phillip.

The first project has delivered three reefs at Outer Harbour, St Helens and Kirk Point, each named with help from the community.

The trio of reefs were constructed with 2,000 tonnes of basalt as a base, sourced from the nearby Cherry Creek juvenile justice facility with help from VRFish and topped with 100 tonnes of limestone. This combination provided the perfect substrate upon which to seed 400,000 native flat oysters and 10 tonnes of blue mussels.

Oysters were sourced from the Victorian Shellfish Hatchery at Queenscliff and the mussels came from a local grower, Advanced Mussel Supply. Oysters and mussels will improve water quality, create diversity in sea floor fish habitats and boost productivity for fish and invertebrates.

The second project was led by The Nature Conservancy with an investment from Target One Million and restored shellfish reefs at 9ft Bank in the Geelong Arm by deploying 100 cubic metres of recycled shells from restaurants and the seafood industry.

It also included new reefs at Wilson Spit in Geelong Arm, Margaret's Reef near St Kilda and in Dromana Bay. These 3.5 hectares of new reefs were seeded with approximately 3 million oysters and 6 tonnes of blue mussels, which will attract a diversity of fish and aquatic life.

The Outer Harbour reef will be called Moolap, that being the Indigenous name of Point Henry. Moolap recognises the cultural significance of the sea country to Wadawurrung people and means a place of men fishing with spears.

The reef at St Helens is Merv's Reef, named after the late Merv McGuire, former head of Future Fish and VRFish. It is ideal for land-based fishers because it's 62 metres from the break wall.

At Kirk Point the reef will be called Wilson Reef, honouring Geelong fishing writer and identity Geoff Wilson.

The project was delivered by the Victorian Fishing Authority. Reef locations were selected following consultation with key recreational fishing stakeholders and Geelong fishing club members. The new reefs are accessible, known for good fishing and away from areas important for other marine uses, such as shipping channels and spoil grounds.

For more information visit www.vfa.vic.gov.au/rockyreefs.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

"Projects like these not only allow for more fishing, it brings people to regional communities, supporting local jobs."

"These new reefs will improve fishing opportunities for thousands of Victorians on the doorstep of the state's second biggest city and are a welcome addition following the end of commercial net fishing in Corio Bay in 2018."

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

"The rocky reefs will have benefits for both boat and land-based fishers, with Merv's Reef within casting distance of the rock wall at St Helens."

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Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

“By improving water quality and diversity in sea floor habitats, the completion of these projects represents a major win for recreational fishers in Geelong.”

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

“By providing homes for fish, these reefs will promote fishing at Corio Bay and get more people fishing more often.”

Quote attributable to Member for South Barwon Darren Cheeseman

“These reefs will give even more local fishers the opportunity to chase key species like snapper, whiting and calamari, making Corio Bay’s fishing even better.”