

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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SCALLOP BOOM ON THE WAY FOR VICTORIA

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering a boost to Gippsland's scallop industry, lifting the allowable commercial catch for the ocean scallop fishery by more than seven times after new scallop beds were discovered off the east coast.

A survey conducted near the Tarwhine oil and gas fields off Gippsland confirmed a return of harvestable scallop beds in the area - and subsequent consultation with industry bodies and licence holders has resulted in a substantial increase to the total allowable commercial catch (TACC), from 135 to 979 tonnes.

This discovery of healthy scallop beds is welcome news for fishers, who have spent the past decade focusing their efforts in the Commonwealth-managed Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery.

The TACC increase to 979 tonnes will see the return of activity in Victoria under new management arrangements set to ensure the future sustainability of the fishery.

Half of the Tarwhine bed will be closed to commercial fishing to ensure the longevity of the scallop beds, and the commercial catches will be taken from the remaining half still open to fishing.

The estimated size of the Tarwhine bed is 7,876 tonnes. A TACC of 979 tonnes means just 12 per cent of legal sized scallops will be harvested, leaving a biomass of more than 6,000 tonnes to maintain ongoing recruitment to the fishery.

A research levy will be applied to all licences to fund future surveys of scallop stocks to inform TACC setting.

The Victorian ocean scallop fishery extends out from the coastline 20 nautical miles. The management of scallop fisheries is complex and cyclical with repeated 'boom' phases often followed by extended fishery closures.

Quote attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

"The existing industry code of conduct and new precautionary management arrangements will ensure the future sustainability of the fishery."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett

"The discovery of these new scallop beds is welcome news for the commercial scallop industry, which will generate valuable income for fishing families and fishing dependent businesses in Gippsland."