

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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FISHING LICENCE TRUST MARKS 20 YEARS OF IMPROVING FISHING

The Fishing Licence Trust celebrates its twentieth birthday this month, having substantially improved fishing opportunities through hundreds of projects delivered by fishing clubs, community groups and government agencies.

The Recreational Fishing Licence (RFL) Trust Account has made a significant difference to fishing in Victoria since its establishment on 1 April 2001 through a range of programs across the state.

Victoria became the first Australian state to introduce a recreational fishing licence in 1999, and the following year the *Fisheries Act 1995* was amended to establish the Trust Account in order to collect and distribute revenue from fishing licences.

Fishing licence fees raise \$8.5 million annually. This money is then reinvested into fish production at Snobs Creek hatchery and the state-wide stocking program, better facilities and more fish habitat through the Recreational Fishing Grants programs, advocacy on behalf of recreational fishers through VRFish, extra Fisheries Officers and a range of educational initiatives.

Landmark projects funded by fishing licence fees over the 20 years include developing Lake Eildon into a premier Murray cod fishery, buying back commercial fishing licences in inland waters and Gippsland estuaries, deploying recreational fishing reefs in Port Phillip, Gippsland and near Torquay, establishing a Wild Trout Management Program and funding more fisheries officer positions.

More than \$7.3 million in research and science projects have also been made possible by the contribution of recreational fishers, from tagging whiting in Port Phillip to mulloway in south-west Victoria, tracking golden perch in Lake Eildon and collecting more information on the movement and distribution of shortfin mako sharks.

Since 2019 the addition of digital licences has made buying a licence even easier and provided an administrative cost saving of more than \$425,000, allowing for even more projects to improve fishing.

The Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Advisory Committee, which consists mostly of volunteer fishers, guides the investment of funds each year to ensure licence fees are put to work on projects that matter most.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

“Over the 20 years of the Trust, fishing in Victoria has gone from strength-to-strength thanks to the contribution of fishers through buying a licence.”

“Victoria is the envy of others states with a licensing system that funds vitally important work so recreational fishing is even better in years to come.”

Quote attributable to CEO of FutureFish Foundation CEO David Kramer

“For 20 years, recreational fishers have had an investment in their pastime. And with the protection of the RFL Trust Account, the return on that investment has been guaranteed to improve recreational fishing.”

Quote attributable to Chair of VR Fish Rob Loats

“Over 20 years this investment has made a significant difference for all recreational fishers, and licence fees continue to improve fishing for all Victorians no matter what species they’re chasing or where they’re wetting a line.”

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