

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Monday, 21 February 2022

PARTNERSHIP UNTANGLES THREATS TO AQUATIC WILDLIFE

Users of Victoria's precious waterways can now better protect aquatic birds, mammals and fish, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio today announced the expansion of a partnership between the Victorian Fishing Authority and Zoos Victoria, which will see bins for discarded fishing gear installed at 84 family friendly fishing lakes across the state.

Under the existing Seal the Loop program bins are installed along waterways throughout Victoria and monitored by bin custodians committed to reducing fishing litter in the environment.

There are currently more than 300 bins installed across Victoria, with more planned for family fishing lakes thanks to the partnership. Family fishing lakes are locations identified by the VFA as having good access and facilities for families. They are stocked with fish at least once a year, including catchable-size rainbow trout.

Seal the Loop bins are made from recycled plastic and have collected an estimated 70km of fishing line and tens of thousands of fishing hooks since being introduced by Zoos Victoria in 2010.

The VFA is working to ensure healthy and sustainable fisheries for all Victorians for years to come. Through the Labor Government's \$35 million Go Fishing Victoria plan, the VFA is building new fish cleaning tables so fishers can clean their catch away from the water and aquatic wildlife and responsibly dispose of any scraps.

Each year, hundreds of aquatic birds, mammals and fish are killed or injured by discarded fishing gear. Zoos Victoria's Marine Response Unit provides veterinary care for hundreds of marine wildlife entanglements every year. If you come across injured aquatic wildlife, please call the Marine Response Unit on 1300 245 678.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"Victoria's waterways are home to amazing animal species that we all have a responsibility to protect. Seal the Loop bins will help ensure the animals in our waterways avoid getting tangled up in fishing gear."

"Since 2014 the Andrews Labor Government has committed \$76.7 million to protecting the state's marine environment and coasts."

Quote attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

"Most recreational fishers do the right thing and take their tackle home or place it in bins. This partnership will make it easier for more fishers to responsibly dispose of their unwanted gear."

Quote attributable to Melbourne Zoo Marine Response Unit Coordinator Mark Keenan

"The Marine Response Unit sees firsthand the impact that discarded fishing items and rubbish has on wildlife, which is preventable."