

# 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



Friday, 1 April 2022

## END OF COMMERCIAL NETTING SIGNALS NEW ERA FOR BAY FISHERS

It is the dawn of a new era for recreational fishing, with today marking the end of commercial net fishing in Port Phillip Bay.

The Andrews Labor Government promised at the 2014 election to end commercial net fishing in the bay, and that is exactly what we have delivered, as part of a \$71 million investment to improve recreational fishing in Victoria and get more people fishing, more often.

Port Phillip Bay services around half of Victoria's recreational anglers, who will now have access to an additional 600 tonnes of fish per year following the gradual removal of 35 netting licences out of the bay over the last eight years.

In supporting the transition from net fishing, the Labor Government invested \$27 million to transform the bay's commercial fishing industry to a hook and line snapper fishery, with eight professional long line snapper fishers, providing up to 88 tonnes of snapper into the seafood market annually.

This important fishery will complement others like the Corner Inlet commercial fishery in Gippsland and Commonwealth fisheries operating adjacent to Victorian waters. These fisheries will continue providing high value, premium, fresh seafood to Victorian consumers, restaurants and cafes, ensuring supply remains robust.

To assist businesses and their workers impacted by this transition, the Victorian Fisheries Authority is working closely with Jobs Victoria to connect with workers and determine how Government can best support them during this period.

As part of the plan to get more Victorians fishing, the Labor Government has invested significantly in removing nets from the Gippsland Lakes, delivering record fish stocking across Victoria, building a new native fish hatchery at Arcadia, making all boat ramps free and delivering Victoria's largest ever boat ramp revitalisation program.

Recreational fishing is worth over \$3.9 billion to the Victorian economy, supporting 33,000 jobs, with more than 840,000 Victorians on the water each year.

Fish stocks in the bay are in excellent shape with snapper, King George whiting and calamari all abundant, as well as kingfish, tuna and sand flathead, which had their biggest spawning in the bay in 24 years in 2021.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

*"Ending commercial netting in Port Phillip was a promise we made when we were elected eight years ago, and it's a promise we've kept, signalling a bright future for fishing in Victoria."*

*"We have listened to recreational fishers who were seeing fewer fish in Port Phillip Bay as a result of commercial trawling and have worked to maintain the right balance between what that sector wants, while still ensuring a robust alternative supply of fresh seafood for Victorians."*

*"We know how important Port Phillip Bay is to recreational fishers which is why we are also investing in better facilities like fish cleaning tables, boat ramps and trailer parking."*

**Media contact:** Isobel Loschiavo 0431 963 479 | [isobel.loschiavo@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:isobel.loschiavo@minstaff.vic.gov.au)