

Media Release

The Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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NETWORK RAMPS UP BOATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

The number of women in recreational fishing has increased rapidly in the five years since the Andrews Labor Government established an award-winning network for female fishers, which will now be expanded to include recreational boating.

Minister for Outdoor Recreation Sonya Kilkenny today joined Member for Cranbourne Pauline Richards to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Women in Recreational Fishing Network, which will become Women in Recreational Fishing and Boating (WIRFAB).

Since being established on International Women's Day in 2018 the network has grown rapidly to include more than 4,100 members from around Victoria, Australia and abroad. This includes 20 leaders promoting the network and advocating for women in fishing.

The network's success was recently recognised on the global stage at the 10th World Recreational Fishing Conference, scoring an award for excellence in promoting inclusive participation in recreational fishing.

The network includes beginners to experts and provides a welcoming place to share stories, experiences and tips. This will now extend to recreational boating and will cover a range of topics from professional development opportunities to practical skills-based events such as trailer reversing clinics.

Several leaders and members have gone on to land careers in the industry, including Bendigo-based tackle store manager Karen Rees and Australian Fishing Network presenter Michelle Brittain.

Others also feature on fishing TV and radio shows or podcasts and several have joined advisory boards and committees including the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Advisory Committee, which guides the reinvestment of Victorian fishing licence fees.

The network offers opportunities to build connections in the industry through major events and through the development of the WIRF Locals program, which includes more than 300 women participating in regular skills-based sessions to build their fishing knowledge.

To find out more about the network visit www.vfa.vic.gov.au/WIRFAB.

Quote attributable to Minister for Outdoor Recreation Sonya Kilkenny

"It's wonderful to see more women getting involved in the industry and the WIRFAB Network provides an inclusive, inspiring environment for female fishers and boaters to foster their passion."

Quote attributable to Member for Cranbourne Pauline Richards

"It is important to have women prominent at every level of the fishing and boating scene to ensure these great activities are welcoming for everyone."

Quote attributable to Women in Recreational Fishing and Boating Network leader Michelle Brittain

"I've always had a passion for fishing and the network has helped me harness it and turn it into a career. Now I'm able to use what I've learned to give back to other women hoping to forge their own path in fishing and boating."

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