

# Media Release

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



Tuesday, 18 April 2023

## RECORD FISH STOCKING BOOSTS RECREATIONAL FISHING

Recreational fishing in the Gippsland Lakes has an even brighter future thanks to the Andrews Labor Government's record stocking of dusky flathead fingerlings in recent weeks.

Minister for Outdoor Recreation Sonya Kilkenny said the three-year stocking trial by the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) aims to boost the population of the highly regarded recreational fishing species.

The last of 46,100 dusky flatheads have now been released into the Gippsland Lakes at Kalimna and Lakes Entrance with help from members of the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, complementing the more than 78,000 fish stocked since 2021.

The Bemm River was also stocked with 5,000 dusky flathead fingerlings, matching the stocking received in 2021.

The stocking trial is a key part of the VFA's *Gippsland Lakes Recreational Fishery Plan* to return the iconic waterway to a fishing mecca for recreational anglers.

The plan was released following the end of commercial net fishing in the Lakes in 2020, which delivered on a commitment of the Labor Government's \$35 million *Go Fishing* plan to get more people recreational fishing, more often.

The Government is investing a further \$96 million to continue to improve fishing, boating piers and aquaculture. This includes \$2.5 million in habitat improvements to preserve marine, estuarine and freshwater fisheries, and support Victoria's first indigenous-run oyster farm – with a \$250,000 grant for the farm in Lakes Entrance, also being led by the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.

With help from 15 volunteer anglers in January of this year, the dusky flathead were caught at Mallacoota and Lake Tyers and transported to a marine hatchery where they grew to fingerling size for release.

This investment in recreational fishing in Gippsland Lakes is supported by the Better Boating Victoria's (BBV) construction program – the biggest ever boat ramp upgrade in Victoria's history. The program is supporting boat ramp upgrades, jetty repairs, redeveloped boating facilities and plans are underway for an all-abilities pontoon

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Outdoor Recreation Sonya Kilkenny

*"The third year of this trial and a record stocking of dusky flathead will boost the recovery of the Gippsland Lakes to their former glory as a recreational fishing mecca."*

*"Locals and tourists can get excited about even better fishing in the Gippsland Lakes for dusky flathead in the years ahead."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh

*"The Gippsland Lakes are a world-class tourist attraction and fishing is an important part of the experience so it's wonderful to see such a dedicated effort going into their recovery and this iconic species."*

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