

Media Release

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



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REEF RENAMED IN HONOUR OF BUDDING FISHER

A popular recreational fishing reef in Port Phillip has been renamed to pay tribute to a passionate, local fisher.

Minister for Outdoor Recreation Sonya Kilkenny was joined by Member for Mordialloc Tim Richardson today to officially announce that Rec Reef has been renamed Rhys Reef, in honour of Rhys Gillard.

An Aspendale local and keen recreational fisher, Rhys Gillard enjoyed the reef as his favourite spot to wet a line. Rhys sadly passed away in May 2021 when he was just 17, and his ashes were laid to rest over the reef.

Rhys Reef is one of many reefs built across Port Phillip to be enjoyed by local and visiting recreational fishers. In 2009, the Victorian Fisheries Authority installed three reefs on the eastern side of Port Phillip – with Seaford and Frankston home to similar structures.

These reefs provide a habitat for snapper, calamari and other popular recreational species, and are located two kilometres offshore in 11 metres of water. An additional three reefs were installed near Frankston, Portarlington and Altona Pier in 2012 – boosting fishing opportunities and supporting marine biodiversity.

The Andrews Labor Government has partnered with global non-profit, non-government organisation The Nature Conservancy on a number of projects to restore shellfish reefs at St Kilda, Dromana and near Geelong.

In 2021, a series of rocky reef modules were installed in and around Corio Bay to increase fish habitat and last year 16 reef modules were deployed off Point Nepean to attract prized catches of yellowtail kingfish and encourage boaters away from potentially dangerous waters at Port Phillip Heads.

The reefs provide even better recreational fishing opportunities in the now net-free Port Phillip, meaning there's more snapper, King George whiting, flathead, calamari and kingfish for families to catch and take home to enjoy.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Outdoor Recreation Sonya Kilkenny

"It is incredibly special to be able to name this reef after Rhys. Today, we acknowledge the loss of this young life, and we honour Rhys as a passionate recreational fisher who enjoyed nothing more than spending time in the great outdoors with family and friends."

"Stories like this highlight how much our great pastime means to people, which is why we invest in fishing, boating and piers across the state."

Quote attributable to Member for Mordialloc Tim Richardson

"Hearing from Rhys's family about his passion for fishing really shows investing in more fishing opportunities is vital, so people of all ages and experience levels can make lasting memories."