

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Regional Development

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council



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LABOR GOVERNMENT TO END NETTING IN PORT PHILLIP BAY

Legislation to end commercial netting in Port Phillip Bay will be introduced into Parliament today, delivering on a key element of the Andrews Labor Government's plan to boost recreational fishing.

The introduction of the *Fisheries Amendment Bill 2015* will commence the process to phase out commercial net fishing over the next seven years to improve recreational fishing opportunities.

The commitment to phase out commercial netting in Port Phillip Bay is the centrepiece of the Labor Government's *Target One Million* plan to get more people fishing, more often.

The removal of netting will increase catch rates and the size of fish for recreational anglers.

The Bill will:

- Specify a clear pathway for phasing out nets from Port Phillip Bay by 2022, including the closure of Corio Bay to netting by 1 April, 2018
- Specify how compensation payments will be determined for the 43 licence holders who will be affected by this decision
- Provide for a limited non-net commercial fishery of up to 8 licence holders to operate in Port Phillip Bay from 1 April, 2022
- Provide for the first licences to be surrendered from 1 April, 2016

The Labor Government recognises that this decision impacts on the livelihood of 43 commercial licence holders, many of whom are multi-generational fishers with a strong family connection to the industry.

That's why, following consultation with commercial fishers and their representative body, Seafood Industry Victoria, the Bill includes a revised package of up to \$27 million to compensate affected licence holders.

This honours the Labor Government's commitment to offer a clear and fair exit strategy for licence holders. This will provide proper recognition of individual investment and loss of income to licensees, and will offer compensation payments in the first year from \$350,000 up to \$1.6 million, depending on catch histories.

These payments will reduce over the seven year period to encourage early departure.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford

"Phasing out commercial net fishing in Port Phillip Bay is the flagship commitment of our Target One Million plan. It will get more people fishing, more often, right here on Melbourne's doorstep."

"Removing netting from Port Phillip Bay will help attract more visitors to this prime fishing destination, boosting local economies and supporting local businesses."

"We have listened to affected commercial licence holders and this compensation package appropriately recognises individual investment, while giving commercial fishers certainty."

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