



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Premier of Victoria

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VICTORIA'S FISHERS BACKED BY BRUMBY GOVERNMENT

More than 700,000 Victorian recreational fishers will have better access to fishing spots, more opportunities to catch fish in more waterways and benefit from improved boating safety conditions under a re-elected Brumby Government.

At Bostock reservoir, Mr Brumby announced that a Labor Government would invest \$46.8 million to boost fishing opportunities for Victorians through more fish stocking, improved fishing infrastructure and new technology to crack down on fish poachers.

"We know that recreational fishing is one of Victoria's most popular pursuits and we know how important it is to tourism in many of our regional and rural areas," Mr Brumby said.

"That's why if re-elected, a Labor Government will make major new investments to create an even better fishing experience for Victorians.

"Our Government has a strong record in supporting recreational fishing – we've surpassed our commitment to increase fish stocking by 30 per cent and started construction on a new native fish hatchery.

"We've also invested more than \$13 million through our successful Enhanced Recreational Fishing Program and developed several new fisheries.

"But we can always do more. That's why we will build on our strong support for recreational fishing by creating many more opportunities for families to participate and build new infrastructure to ensure they have access to the best facilities."

Over the next four years a re-elected Labor Government will commit \$46.8 million to expand our Enhanced Recreational Fishing program which includes:

- Creating a new \$1.3 million 'Go Fishing in Victoria' initiative to develop new fishing opportunities for Victorian families;
- Providing \$200,000 over four years to support the costs incurred by the fishing community to participate in the decision-making process for fishing in Victoria;
- Providing an additional \$1.3 million over four years to further grow fish stocking numbers across Victoria including opening new recreational Trout cod fisheries at Lake Kerford and Lake Sambell;
- Providing a \$200,000 grants program for registered fishing clubs so they can directly apply for grants to promote membership and upgrade facilities;
- Undertaking a \$200,000 carp eradication program and introduce a carp bounty to encourage anglers to catch and remove noxious carp from Victorian waters;
- Installing recovery plans for Silver Perch, Freshwater Catfish, River Blackfish and Australian Bass;
- Cracking down on fish poachers with support for the 13-FISH hotline and introducing state-of-the-art unmanned aerial vehicles to detect offenders as part of a \$2.2 million commitment to combat fish poaching;
- Providing \$150,000 over four years towards the 'Victorian Trout Opening Festival' to be staged across three major trout fishery locations in Victoria;

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- Establishing a \$200,000 marine stocking program to boost recreational fishing opportunities in Victoria's estuaries;
- Investing \$200,000 for new fish cleaning tables across the state; and
- Investing \$800,000 in developing more off-shore recreational fishing reefs;

Mr Brumby said that in addition, a re-elected Labor Government would provide a further \$20 million to continue the successful Boating Safety and Facilities Program over the next four years to develop new fishing access points through new boat launching ramps and to expand or upgrade existing ramps.

"An additional \$20 million will be committed to continuing the recreational fishing licence grants program in grants to directly improve fishing infrastructure across the state, invest in fisheries related research and targeted fish stocking activities," he said.

Minister Responsible for Fisheries Joe Helper said the recreational fishing industry contributed to more than 5000 jobs across Victoria and was the lifeblood of many regional communities.

"Victoria has strong, sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries with strict bag and size limits and licensing requirements so we believe we've got the balance right between environmental protection and recreational use," Mr Helper said.

To strengthen Victoria's recreational fishing industry Mr Helper said a re-elected Labor Government would:

- Commit to not create any further marine parks in Victorian waters or expand existing parks;
- Create a body called Fisheries and Game Victoria to report directly to the Minister responsible for Primary Industries with an aim to develop reciprocal fishing licence arrangements with New South Wales to reduce the regulatory burden on anglers;
- Introduce a minimum size limit for trout to ensure this great recreational fishing species is able to be better utilised; and
- Expand Fisheries Officers' powers to enable them to detect and prosecute individuals who are recreational fishers but are taking fish to sale to commercial premises.