

Pursuing the Great Outdoors



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**2010 VICTORIAN
ELECTION POLICY**



Victorian
Labor



A message from the Premier

The Victorian Government strongly supports regional communities and regional economies.

One of the best ways to grow regional Victoria is through recreational tourism.

Labor has a proud history of supporting recreational fishing, hunting and four wheel driving.

We're proud to have grown recreational fishing in Victoria and provided great new sustainable fishing opportunities across the State.

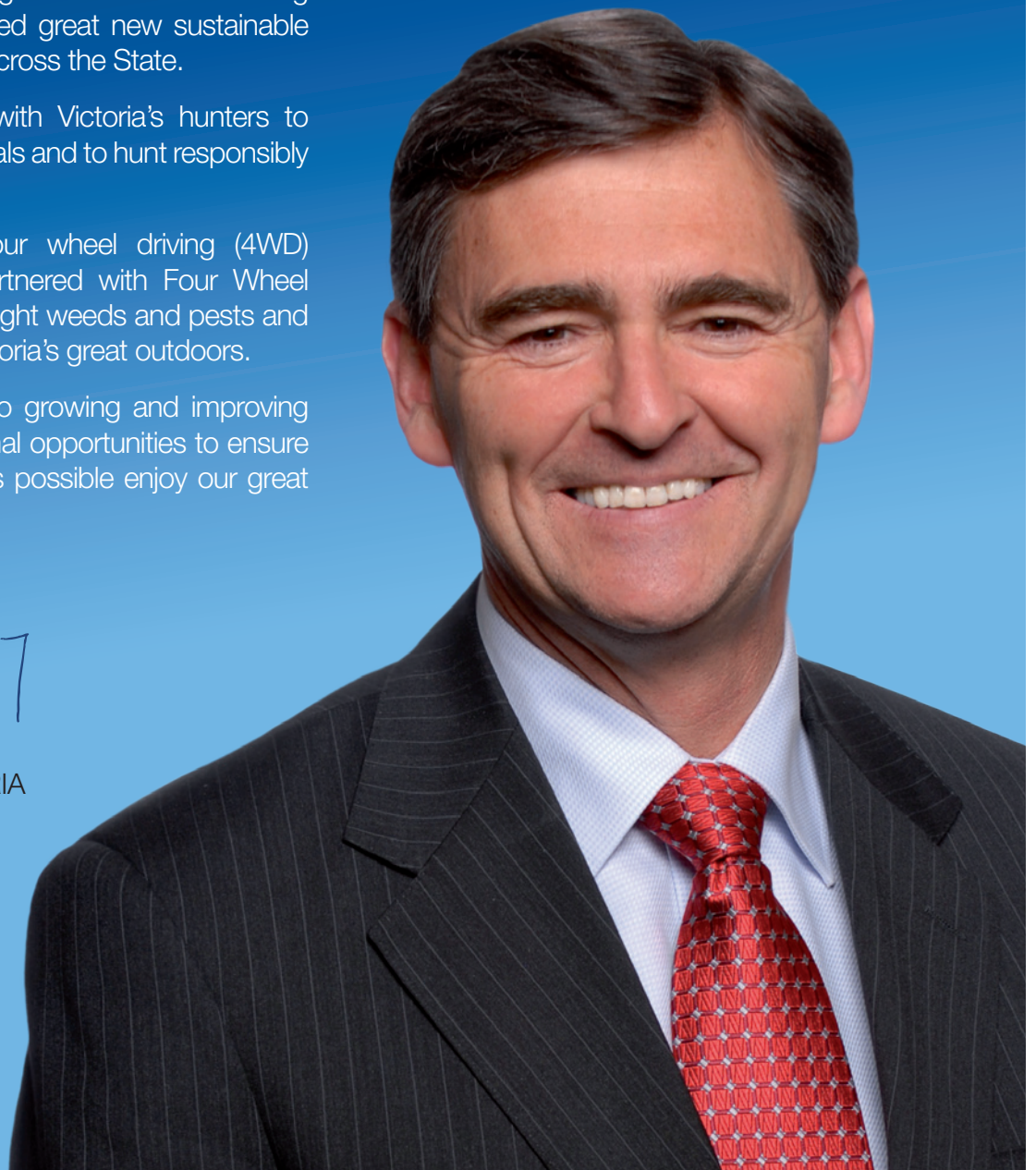
We have partnered with Victoria's hunters to help control feral animals and to hunt responsibly across the State.

Labor has grown four wheel driving (4WD) opportunities and partnered with Four Wheel Drive Victoria to help fight weeds and pests and provide access to Victoria's great outdoors.

Labor is committed to growing and improving our regional recreational opportunities to ensure as many Victorians as possible enjoy our great outdoors.



JOHN BRUMBY
PREMIER OF VICTORIA



What this policy means for you.

A Government that supports open access to public land to enjoy great recreational pursuits including fishing and four wheel driving.

Over the next four years we will deliver over \$54 million in better fishing, four wheel driving and hunting opportunities.

The new *Fisheries and Game Victoria*, established to promote and improve recreational fishing and hunting in Victoria.

New four wheel drive opportunities across the State.

Better resourced fishing, 4WD and hunting clubs to ensure the growth of these popular recreational activities.

ACTION:

- Create *Fisheries and Game Victoria* uniting fishing and game management and reporting to the Minister for responsible for Primary Industries.
- A commitment not to create any further marine parks in Victorian waters or expand existing parks.
- Commit to the ongoing funding of VRFish as the key recreational representative fishing body in Victoria.
- Deliver a new multi-million dollar Enhanced Recreational Fishing Program.
- Develop reciprocal fishing licence arrangements with NSW 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.
- Partner with the Australian Fishing Trade Association in promoting the development and use of environmentally friendly fishing gear, including biodegradable fishing line and bait packaging.
- Expand Fisheries Officers' powers to enable Fisheries Officers to detect and prosecute individuals who are recreational fishers but are taking fish for sale to commercial premises.
- Establish new and improve existing boat ramps through \$20 million in Boating Safety and Facilities Grants.
- Establish an Annual 4WD Clean Up the Alps Day at a cost of \$600,000.
- Commit \$300,000 to expand the successful track maintenance partnership with 4WD Victoria and to continue the Classification for Management Vehicle Only (MVO) tracks program.
- Extend the important work of the 4WD volunteer program in weed and willow eradication, with \$200,000 committed for another four years.
- Commit \$4 million over the next four years for 4WD Track maintenance carried out by Parks Victoria.
- Allocate \$600,000 to create a Man from Snowy River Adventure Tourist Drive.
- Legislate to recognise the important role of the Victorian Firearms Consultative Council.
- Ensure recreational opportunities, including hunting, are able to continue in the new Red Gum Murray Parks and that licensed shooters can engage in a feral management program within the Red Gum National Parks. Hunting and shooting clubs will be actively involved in the management of these activities and will help ensure firearm safety.
- Commit to an ongoing sustainable duck season.
- The Adaptive Harvest Management Program will underpin the decision making process for each duck season.
- Provide \$400,000 over four years to hunting and shooting clubs to promote game management and biodiversity protection by Victoria's hunting community.
- Increase deer hunting areas by 30 per cent over four years to help control deer population numbers and provide improved hunting opportunities.

Labor and the Great Outdoors

We believe as many Victorians as possible should be able to enjoy our great outdoors.

The Brumby Labor Government understands the healthy, positive recreational and family time it offers.

We are very proud of the support we receive from recreational stakeholders for supporting their important pastimes.

“...in Victoria, this state government is building up a record of achievement in the area of fisheries management that has opened my eyes.”

(Jim Harmon, editor Freshwater Fishing)

“Well, I can only heap praise on the current Fisheries people and indeed the Minister, Joe Helper, for supporting their efforts to improve recreational angling in this State.”

(Bill Classon, Freshwater Fishing, November/December 2010)

“There is much I like about the approach and attitude of Fisheries Victoria ...”

(Steve Cooper, Weekly Times, Nov 2009)

Labor is making sure our great outdoors are accessible and available for all Victorians to enjoy.

The Brumby Labor Government has a strong track record in growing recreational fishing, four wheel driving and hunting in this State.

We are committed to striking the right balance between protecting our healthy environment and improving access for recreational users to enjoy it.

Many anglers have their favourite spots, which is why we re-invest fishing licence fees on projects that improve fishing access, target fish stocking activities and support the peak body representing Victoria’s recreational fishing industry

In 2010, we stocked over two million fish into Victorian waters, and have committed to an additional one million Murray cod into Lake Eildon – and invested \$1.3 million to build a native fish hatchery at Snobs Creek.

We are in the process of putting a further 100,000 fish into drought affected lakes in Western and Northern Victoria. We’ve also improved access to places like the Jamieson, Howqua, Delatite and Goulburn rivers and Lake Purrumbete; and installed 20 fish cleaning tables across Victoria.

We know how important it is to have safe, good quality boating facilities and systems. That’s why we’ve also provided over 940 projects that have helped to make boating safer for all Victorians.

Fishing is a wonderful way for families to spend time together. That is why we hold our hugely successful Go Fishing in Victoria initiative, which has already attracted over 5,000 first-time fishers and families to this enjoyable pastime.

It’s important that we protect the sustainability of the industry and protect it from the few illegal fishers who spoil it for all. To do that, we have introduced a new 13FISH reporting hotline to reduce illegal fishing activity and ensure there are great fishing opportunities for all recreational anglers.

We’re also proud of the partnerships we’ve made with the recreational fishing industry and the new consultation arrangements to give anglers a say in the future of Victoria’s fisheries – including holding regular fishing roundtable meetings and forums; ensuring the future of VRFish; and surveying thousands of anglers about options to support and grow the industry.

To encourage even more people to go fishing, we have created recreational fishing havens in Western Port and installed three new artificial reefs in Port Phillip Bay.

It is important to provide accessible opportunities for all Victorians to enjoy the great outdoors. That’s why we’ve established six iconic 4WD adventures across the State to suit the novice driver through to the most experienced. Routes take in the best of Victoria’s unique and exciting natural environment including the spectacular Grampians, Otways Drive, High Country and Snowy River country.

At the same time, we will also continue to support a well-managed and sustainable hunting Industry.

We have already made a commitment of over \$12 million towards a new state-of-the-art Multi-discipline State Shooting Centre in Victoria; worked closely with the industry to expand the feral animal hunting program; and assisted in the delivery of pest animal control programs.

Challenges

Many Victorians enjoy the great outdoors and as our population grows, we expect even more families to get involved in recreational pursuits.

Activities like fishing and four wheel driving are ways for families to spend more time together or unwind from their busy lives.

They are also important to regional communities, as they boost local economies, create jobs and bring visitors to the area.

There are now more people fishing recreationally than ever before – and the industry generates over \$800 million in economic activity each year.

We believe that revenue raised through fishing licence fees should go back to directly improve recreational fishing in Victoria.

We've made real progress, but we know there's more to be done and we remain committed to ensuring even more Victorians can enjoy Victoria's great outdoors.

Contrast with other parties

The Liberal National Coalition

When it was last in Government, the Liberal Party failed the fishing, hunting and four wheel driving industry miserably, by:

- Failing to consult with the licensed firearms community on key areas of policy.
- Abolishing the Hunting Advisory Committee – removing any voice hunters had with Government.
- Stripping resources from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment's game management area.
- Stripping funding from agencies that administer public land access, shutting down four wheel drive track maintenance.
- Slashing trout fishing opportunities for all Victorians by outsourcing trout supply for waterway stocking.

If returned to government, the Liberals would again slash resources from government departments. This would mean the end of the successful Enhanced Recreational Fishing Program in Victoria; an end to improved access for four wheel driving and funding to help 4WD clubs and their members participate in 'clean up the bush' weekends; and an end to the hunters' feral animal control program, no game management officers and no improved shooting facilities.

They say they support recreational fishing, but the Liberals opposed the establishment of 'recreational fishing only zones' in Mallacoota Inlet and Lake Tyres. Similarly, the Nationals opposed the new recreational fishing haven in Westernport Bay.

The Liberal National Coalition have failed to commit to continue the Brumby Labor Government's 13FISH fisheries offences

reporting line, which would be axed if they are elected. The Liberal Party's Ted Baillieu does not understand that the 13FISH line has proved highly successful in reducing fisheries crime and protecting our fish stocks for our children and beyond. The Liberal National Coalition also failed to support the Brumby Labor Government's Enhanced Recreational Fishing Program, which has delivered new and exciting opportunities for all Victorians to enjoy recreational fishing.

The Liberal National Coalition has also failed to support the popular 'Go Fishing' initiative.

The Greens Political Party

The Greens Political Party has extreme views on outdoor recreation policies.

They make extreme promises, like a ban on all sporting shooters, or committing to change animals' status in law to place unnecessarily heavy burdens on people who keep pets or livestock.

The Greens Political Party continues to take an extreme position on fishing which is out of touch with the vast majority of all Victorians. Their extremist approach is to support the closure of many Victorian waterways for families and remove the opportunities for Victorians to enjoy safe and sustainable fishing opportunities.

The Greens Political Party wants to lock up parks and reserves, denying access to many average Victorians who currently enjoy them. They want to lock up hundreds of kilometres more of our coast in new marine parks – decimating the fisheries industry, when Victoria already has strong measures in place to protect the diversity and sustainability of our marine environments.

Supporting Recreational Fishing

Recreational fishing is one of Victoria's most popular recreational pursuits.

Over 700,000 people now recreationally fish every year in the wonderful fresh, estuarine and marine waters of Victoria – up from previous estimates of 500,000.

To reflect the importance of recreational fishing in Victoria, we will create a new Fisheries and Game Victoria reporting to the Minister responsible for Primary Industries. Fisheries and Game Victoria will bring together Fisheries Victoria and the Game Management Group from the Department of Sustainability and Environment to promote and grow fishing and game management in Victoria.

Victoria has strong, sustainable recreational and commercial fisheries with strict bag and size limits and licensing requirements. We've got the balance right in Victoria between environmental protection and recreational/commercial use. There will therefore be no new marine parks or the expansion of existing parks under a future Brumby Labor Government.

VRFish is a key representative body in Victoria and funded through the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust. VRFish has provided a very strong representative role for fishers and we will commit to secure and ongoing funding for VRFish to allow it to continue to help grow recreational fishing in Victoria.

A Brumby Labor Government will also boost our highly successful Enhanced Recreational Fishing Program, with initiatives including:

- Creating a new 'Go Fishing in Victoria' program of \$1.3 million over the next four years to develop new fishing opportunities for families in Victoria's marine waters.
- Providing assistance of \$200,000 over four years to support the fishing community to cover the costs borne by individuals and organisations in participating in the decision making process for fishing in Victoria.
- An additional \$1.3 million over four years to boost fish stocking numbers including opening new recreational Trout cod fisheries at Lakes Kerferd and Sambell.
- \$200,000 in grants of up to \$3,000 for registered fishing clubs to help promote membership and upgrade their club facilities to attract members.
- Undertake a \$200,000 carp eradication program, with a 'carp bounty' to encourage anglers to remove noxious carp from Victoria's waterways.

- A program to re-open piers, jetties, roads fenced off access points and maintain and re-open access for recreational fishers.
- Recovery plans for Silver Perch, Freshwater Catfish, River Blackfish and Australian Bass.
- 'Mobile Squads' of Fisheries Officers to deter illegal fishing activity.
- \$150,000 over four years towards the 'Victorian Trout Opening Festival' to be staged across three major trout fishery locations in Victoria.
- Establish a Marine Stocking Program to boost recreational fishing opportunities in Victoria's estuaries.
- \$200,000 over three years for new fish cleaning tables.
- Invest \$2 million over four years to crack down on fish poaching with our 13FISH dob-in-a-poacher hotline and introduce state-of-the-art unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to detect offenders
- Develop new offshore Recreational Fishing Reefs.
- Continue the Recreational Fishing Licence Grants program to provide improved fishing opportunities for Victorians.

Recreational anglers in Victoria have indicated overwhelmingly that they would like to be able to use their fishing licence in both Victorian and New South Wales waters, rather than carrying around two different pieces of paper. The new Fisheries and Game Victoria will work together with NSW Fisheries to develop one fishing licence. This will not reduce the amount of fishing revenue available for both states and will be an option for recreational anglers when they buy their licence. This reciprocal arrangement with NSW will reduce the regulatory burden on anglers.

Trout are a great recreational fishing species in Victoria and are highly regarded by many anglers. Fisheries Victoria stocks almost 500,000 trout in Victoria's waterways each year. We will introduce a minimum size limit for trout, so they can provide more fishing opportunities for anglers into the future.

We will also work with the Australian Fishing Trade Association and recreational anglers to reduce the amount of discarded fishing tackle entering Victoria's waterways and to support the growing use of biodegradable tackle.

A future Brumby Labor Government will remain strongly committed to stamping out illegal fishing activities, to ease

the pressure on fish stocks for future generations. There are a small number of people who use recreational fishing rules to cheat and then 'harvest' fish for sale. We will expand Fisheries Officers' powers to enable them to detect and prosecute individuals who are recreational fishers, but are taking fish for sale to commercial premises. These new powers will allow Fisheries Officers to be able to prosecute both illegal fishers

and the businesses that receive illegally caught fish.

A future Brumby Labor Government will invest \$20 million to continue the highly successful Boating Safety and Facilities Program over the next four years. This will help develop new access points through new boat launching ramps and expand or upgrade existing ramps.

ACTION:

- Create Fisheries and Game Victoria reporting to the Minister responsible for Primary Industries.
- A commitment to not create any further marine parks in Victorian waters or expand existing parks.
- Commit to the ongoing funding of VRFish as the key recreational representative fishing body in Victoria.
- Develop reciprocal fishing licence arrangements with NSW 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.
- Invest and partner with the Australian Fishing Trade Association in promoting the development and use of environmentally friendly fishing gear, including biodegradable fishing line and bait packaging.
- Expand Fisheries Officers' powers to enable Fisheries Officers to detect and prosecute individuals who are recreational fishers but are taking fish for sale to commercial premises.
- Establish new and improve existing boat ramps through \$20 million in Boating Safety and Facilities Grants.

A partnership with Four Wheel Driving

The Brumby Labor Government has an established history of working with the four wheel drive community to provide safe, sustainable recreational opportunities.

A future Brumby Government will work with Four Wheel Drive Victoria to deliver a major clean up event each year across the Victorian High Country aimed at removing accumulated rubbish, but also at changing behaviour of visitors and improving the condition of our environment.

4WD volunteers have partnered with Parks Victoria over the last four years delivering substantial programs aimed at helping Weed and Willow eradication, and clean up after fire and flood. This partnership has helped protect our precious environment while providing new volunteering opportunities for Victoria's four wheel drivers. Building on this successful partnership, a future Brumby Labor Government will fund 4WD Victoria to expand this volunteer program.

In Victoria, we are fortunate that every year, 4WD Victoria volunteers help maintain our great network of tracks. In recognition of this crucial work, volunteers are provided with keys to access MVO (management vehicle only) tracks to use. A future Brumby Labor Government will build on this program, in partnership with 4WD Victoria, to improve the safety for all visitors to our parks.

The Brumby Labor Government is committed to the good maintenance of off road tracks throughout Victoria and recognises the importance of properly maintained tracks in protecting the environment, allowing fire access and recreational activity. A future Brumby Labor Government will, as a minimum, recommit to another \$4 million over 4 years for 4WD track maintenance and will consider adding to this amount as it responds and adapts to fire management issues in the years ahead.

A future Brumby Labor Government will bring Victoria's heritage alive with a new self-drive adventure tourist route that will explore the heritage and history of the Man from Snowy River legend. The Man from Snowy River drive will meander through hundreds of kilometres of Victoria's spectacular high country and East Gippsland towns such as Corryong, Omeo, Buchan and Orbost allowing experienced drivers the

opportunity to explore remote areas linked to the Man from Snowy River legend. Interpretive material will be developed to help stimulate debate and discussion around the legend of The Man from Snowy River while new signage and marketing material will be produced to enhance tourism opportunities along the route.

ACTION:

- Establish an Annual 4WD Clean up the Alps Day at a cost of \$600,000.
- Commit \$300,000 to expand the successful track maintenance partnership with 4WD Victoria and to continue the Management Vehicle Only (MVO) tracks classification program.
- Extend the important work of the 4WD volunteer program in weed and willow eradication with \$200,000 committed for another four years.
- Commit \$4 million over the next four years for 4WD Track maintenance carried out by Parks Victoria.
- Allocate \$600,000 to create a Man from Snowy River Adventure Tourist Drive.

Centralised, consistent public access to public land

Apiarists, hunters, anglers, bush walkers and four wheel drivers have all expressed frustration from time to time about different approaches to public land access within government agencies.

The government will establish a Public Land Access Advocate (PLAA) who will bring consistency and clarity to decisions made by government agencies in relation to access to public land.

So that decisions are consistent, any new decision by a government agency to restrict access will be reviewed by the office of the PLAA and any existing decision may be reviewed by the PLAA at the request of a member of the public.

The PLAA will report directly to the Minister responsible for the public land and will have the power to recommend that a

decision be revoked if it is inconsistent with the Government's overall approach to improve outdoor access or is not in the public interest.

Example 1: The PLAA could review a decision to close a track on safety or environmental grounds to ensure that the decision has been made on the basis of a proper risk assessment and if not, recommend overturning it.

Example 2: Access to bee sites within State forests could be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent across the State rather than subject to informal policies that have not been publicised to stakeholders.

The PLAA's recommendations will be publicly available and the PLAA will also publish guidelines for public access for local authorities and departments to follow.

ACTION:

- Create a Public Land Access Advocate to ensure that users of public land have consistent and reasonable access to public land across the State.

Improving Sustainable Hunting in Victoria

The Brumby Labor Government has a strong record in supporting a balanced and responsible approach to hunting in Victoria.

We are committed to improving hunting opportunities and utilising Victorian hunters to assist in the control of pest animals in Victoria.

Deer numbers have been on the increase in recent years and are encroaching on private and public land, therefore the

Government is committed to increase deer hunting areas by 30 per cent over four years to help control deer population numbers and provide further hunting opportunities.

The new Fisheries and Game Victoria will support and administer sustainable hunting in Victoria, providing new opportunities, and giving hunters a clear interface with Government.

ACTION:

- Task the new Fisheries and Game Victoria, with supporting and administering sustainable hunting in Victoria and giving hunters a clear interface with Government.
- Legislate to recognise the important role of the Victorian Firearms Consultative Council.
- Ensure recreational opportunities, including hunting, are able to continue in the new Red Gum Murray Parks and that licensed shooters can engage in a feral management program within the Red Gum National Parks. Hunting and shooting clubs will be actively involved in the management of these activities and will help ensure firearm safety.
- Commit to an ongoing sustainable duck season.
- The Adaptive Harvest Management Program will underpin the decision making process for each duck season.
- Provide \$400,000 over four years to hunting and shooting clubs to promote game management and biodiversity protection by Victoria's hunting community.
- Increase deer hunting areas by 30 per cent over the four years to help control deer population numbers and provide further hunting opportunities.



Funding

RECURRENT INITIATIVES	2010-11 \$m	2011-12 \$m	2012-13 \$m	2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Mobile squads of Fisheries Officers		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.2
Victorian Trout Opening Festival		0.038	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.15
Grants program for fishing clubs		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.2
Marine Stocking Program in estuaries.		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.2
Carp Eradication Program & carp bounty		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.2
Fish cleaning tables		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.2
13FISH & Unmanned Aerial Vehicles		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.0
Increased fish stocking		0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	1.3
Offshore Recreational Fishing Reefs		0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.8
Supporting fishing public consultation		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.2
Go Fishing in Victoria marine program		0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	1.3
Fishing Licence Grants Program and ongoing funding of VRFish		5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	20.0
Public Land Access Advocate		0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1.1
Annual 4WD Clean up the Alps		0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.6
Weed and Willows eradication		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.2
Track maintenance and MVO Track Classification programs		0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.3
Man from Snowy River Adventure Drive		0.5	0.1			0.6
Promotion of Game Management by hunting clubs in Victoria		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4
Boating Safety and Facilities Program		5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	20.0
4wd track maintenance		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.0
TOTAL RECURRENT FUNDING		13.8	13.4	13.3	13.3	54

*totals may not add up due to rounding.

OFFSETS	2010-11 \$m	2011-12 \$m	2012-13 \$m	2013-14 \$m	2014-15 \$m	TOTAL \$m
Boating Safety and Facilities Program – licence revenue		-5.0	-5.0	-5.0	-5.0	-20.0
Recreational Fishing Grants Program		-5.0	-5.0	-5.0	-5.0	-20.0
Parks Victoria Works program budget		-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0	-4.0
TOTAL IMPACT ON OPERATING SURPLUS		2.8	2.4	2.3	2.3	10