

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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MORE NET FREE FISHING AT GIPPSLAND RIVER MOUTHS

Migratory fish in the Gippsland Lakes will have more protection at river mouths when exclusion areas for commercial netting are expanded by 50 per cent under new arrangements to be introduced next year by the Andrews Labor Government.

The Labor Government's *Target One Million* plan for improving recreational fishing outlined a ban to commercial net fishing at river mouths within the Gippsland Lakes.

Extensive consultation with 10 licensed commercial fishers in the area over the last 12 months has been undertaken by Mr Craig Ingram, *Target One Million* Coordinator.

The report released today made four key recommendations, all of which have been accepted by government, including expanded exclusion areas at river mouths.

These include iconic rivers such as the Mitchell, Tambo and Nicholson, alongside the Avon-Perry, Latrobe-Thomson, both ends of the McLennan Straits and several inflowing creeks.

Mapping and on-water marking of boundaries was also recommended so that new exclusion zones could be more clearly seen by commercial fishers, recreational anglers and fisheries officers.

Improved marking and visibility of commercial fishing gear, such as nets and buoys, throughout the Gippsland Lakes will also become a requirement.

Lastly, new rules will prohibit the take of Australian bass by commercial netters, which will complement Fisheries Victoria's growing stocking program for the species across Gippsland.

The Government is now planning an event over the Labour Day long weekend at Lakes Entrance to celebrate the contribution of fishing and the fishing industry to Lakes Entrance.

The report is available at www.vic.gov.au/targetonemillion

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford

"This suite of measures provides a sensible change for the Gippsland Lakes commercial fishery and is good news for recreational anglers, whether they fish in the Gippsland Lakes or the inflowing rivers."

"Our Target One Million plan for recreational fishing aims to increase participation to one million anglers by 2020 and get more people fishing, more often."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"We understand that healthy and productive fisheries are good for tourism, which is a major contributor to our great Gippsland Lakes economy."