

Media Release



The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Police

Minister for Water

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NEW LAWS TO PROTECT RECREATIONAL AND ABORIGINAL WATER

The Andrews Labor Government is introducing new legislation to enshrine recreational and Aboriginal water values into law for the first time across Victoria.

The Water and Catchment Legislation Amendment Bill will enact key parts of the Labor Government's water plan – *Water for Victoria*.

This includes embedding recreational and Indigenous values into the decision-making of water managers, such as water corporations and Catchment Management Authorities.

The Bill provides:

- greater consideration of the recognition of the recreational value of water for communities
- greater recognition and involvement of Aboriginal Victorians in the management and planning of waterways and catchments
- clear planning for future challenges such as climate change, population growth and changing demands for water

The Bill will ensure recreational water is considered by water authorities in resource planning and require water authorities to report back to the Labor Government on the opportunities they have provided to communities for recreational water.

This will better incorporate recreational water values across the state, recognising how essential rivers, lakes and waterways are to the health and wellbeing of communities in Victoria – supporting activities such as fishing, camping and boating.

Long-term assessments will also be carried out to assess how much water Victoria has for agricultural, industrial and household usage to ensure appropriate allocation of water in the future.

The Labor Government has invested \$584 million to deliver water initiatives in the Plan, including a record \$222 million invested in improving waterway health.

Extensive consultation was carried out in the development of the Bill between Victoria's water corporations and catchment management authorities, Traditional Owners, the agriculture sector and environmental agencies.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Lisa Neville

"These reforms will enshrine Aboriginal water values in law and ensure Indigenous Victorians continue to be recognised and considered when it comes to waterway management."

"Recreational water is critical for the wellbeing of communities – these reforms will ensure the social values of water are enshrined in law to best deliver for local communities."