

# Victorian Indigenous Fishing Policies



# Victorian Fisheries Act 1995

- Established the Fisheries Advisory Council
  - This requires at least one of the 14 members be an *Aboriginal person who, in the opinion of the Minister, has knowledge and experience of Aboriginal fishing and represents the interests of the Aboriginal community*

# Victorian Fisheries Regulations 1995

- Exemption from requirement to hold recreational fishery licence for someone that *identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person*
- Specified bodies and persons to which confidential documents or information may be given
  - the National Native Title Tribunal within the meaning of the Native Title Act 1993 of the Commonwealth

# Victorian Fisheries Authority Act 2016

- Established a Board of Directors for the VFA
  - In appointing a Board of Directors, the Minister must, so far as is practicable, ensure that collectively have skills, knowledge or experience in relation to, among others, *Aboriginal culture and identity as it relates to fishing and fisheries*

# Aboriginal Fishing Strategy

- Key outcomes
  - Recognition of Aboriginal customary fishing rights for Recognised Traditional Owner Groups,
  - Better economic opportunities for all Aboriginal people in fishing and related industries, and
  - Sustainable fisheries management in collaboration with Traditional Owner Groups.
- Vision
  - Culturally informed, sustainable fisheries management that contributes to improving the wealth, capacity and wellbeing of Aboriginal people and communities in Victoria

# Aboriginal Fishing Strategy

- Sets out 26 actions to achieve the outcomes covering
  - Recognition
    - Access to noncommercial, customary fishing
    - Increase Indigenous fishing knowledge of VFA staff
    - Better integrate Aboriginal culture and traditional ecological knowledge into Victorian Fisheries Authority education programs
  - Economic Development
    - Increasing employment opportunities
    - Capacity building
    - Facilitate funding for commercial fishing and aquaculture projects
  - Collaborative Management & Participation
    - Meaningful engagement between stakeholders
    - Sharing knowledge and management practices between stakeholders
    - Build wider community awareness about the unique fishing interests and activities of TOs
    - Participation in research, data collection, reporting, restocking and contributing knowledge

# Traditional Owner access to fish

- Members of Traditional Owner groups who have native title can:
  - take fish within their area of native title without a recreational fishing licence
  - take fish not constrained by recreational fishing rules (except for prohibited species and closed areas)
- General exception for Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders to fish without a Recreational Fishing Licence, BUT
  - Must comply with recreational fishing rules

# Agreements with Traditional Owners

- Agreements are in place with the following TO groups
  - Gunaikurnai Settlement Agreement
  - Gunditjmara Settlement Agreement
  - Dja Dja Wurrung Recognition and Settlement Agreement
  - Taungurung Settlement Agreement
  - Wimmera Settlement Agreement
  - Yorta Yorta Agreements
- Agreements requirements include
  - Exemptions from recreational fishing licence
  - Involvement in management programs, plans and other policy
  - Notification of licence or permit that could extinguish native title rights





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