

FISHERIES OFFICERS

Fisheries Officers are employed by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to protect our fisheries. One of their roles is to ensure compliance with fishing regulations. Fisheries Officers do not always wear a uniform, however, should you be approached by an officer, he/she will display official identification to you.

Officers have extensive powers of search and entry and may stop any boat, or vehicle, in order to carry out inspections. They may also seize any fish, fishing gear or other equipment, including boats and vehicles, that has been used in an alleged offence against the *Fisheries Act 1995*.

FINES AND PENALTIES

Should you be found allegedly offending against the *Fisheries Act 1995* you are obliged by law to provide your correct name and address. Failure to do so may result in your arrest.

Minor offences are usually handled by an Infringement Notice (on-the-spot fine). More serious offences are processed through the court system.

REPORTING OFFENCES

DPI welcomes reports of suspected illegal fishing activities anywhere in Victoria. Please call 13 FISH (13 3474).

- This number will be answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- You will be asked to leave your telephone number and name.
- The officer on duty will be paged and will return your call.
- All information will be treated in strict confidence.

Helpful information includes:

- Time, date and location.
- Descriptions of people involved.
- Vehicle/boat registration.
- Type of activity.
- Equipment used.

Although an immediate field response is not always possible, the information received will be recorded and will assist in planning future fisheries patrols and special operations.

OFFENCE REPORTING SERVICE

Since the launch of 13 FISH (13 3474) in September 2003 more than 8,846 phone calls have been received. As a direct result of information provided by callers:

- more than 451 Infringement Notices have been issued;
- 1125 intelligence reports generated;
- a number of significant investigations have been undertaken;
- at least 86 prosecutions have been successfully achieved.

Some offences prosecuted include:

- exceeding catch limits;
- taking undersized fish;
- angling for spawning trout in restricted waters.

As a result some offenders have been issued fines and/or had their equipment seized.

The 13 FISH Offence Reporting Service is supported by strong legislation which includes indictable offences for trafficking in abalone and rock lobster, larger fines and tougher jail sentences for offenders and enhanced search and arrest powers for DPI Fisheries Officers.

Please remember that general fisheries telephone enquiries should always be directed to the DPI Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Boating safety and facilities program

The Boating Safety and Facilities Program (BSFP) is a State government funding program that plays an important role in making boating safer and more accessible for all Victorians.

The BSFP is funded by re-investing funds from recreational boat operator licensing fees and vessel registration revenue.

It allocates funds to individual grant-based projects initiated by community, agency or stakeholder groups and to State-wide programs initiated by Marine Safety Victoria.

The BSFP is divided into the following project categories:

- Boating Facilities and Community Harbours
- Search and Rescue
- Aids to Navigation
- Education and Training
- Marine Communications

Over the past eight years, the BSFP has contributed over \$36 million to projects initiated by boating, fishing and community groups, search and rescue organisations, local waterway authorities, government agencies and committees of management.

Of this contribution, in excess of \$15 million has been directed into the development and upgrading of boat ramps and their associated infrastructure, including jetties, floating

pontoons, trailer parking, lighting, navigation aids and signage, dredging and webcams.

The table below details the funding provided to the various waterways across the State. This funding has contributed to improving fishing access to waterways across Victoria.

| Waterway Type | Funding provided |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Waranga Basin | \$106,600 |
| Port Phillip Bay | \$3,184,023 |
| Western Port Bay | \$1,348,085 |
| Corio Bay | \$457,675 |
| Lady Bay | \$170,400 |
| Coast | \$322,176 |
| Lake | \$4,137,434 |
| Creek | \$25,000 |
| Estuary | \$59,000 |
| Inlet | \$415,463 |
| Reservoir | \$65,714 |
| Rivers | \$3,422,376 |
| Bass Strait | \$1,349,760 |
| Total | \$15,063,706 |

The Brumby Government is committed to investing in boating safety and facilities. For more information about the BSFP please contact the Grants Administration Team on freecall 1800 337 222 or by email msv.grants@transport.vic.gov.au or visit our website www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au

Boating Safety Is No Accident

Before you head out to enjoy a day on the water, follow these simple steps to keep you, and your crew, safe:

⚠️ **Weather:**

Check the marine weather report and make sure you understand what conditions you are likely to experience.

⚠️ **Vessel Maintenance:**

Check to make sure your battery is not flat and that you have enough fuel for your entire journey.

⚠️ **Safety Equipment:**

Make sure there is a PFD Type 1 for everyone on board and that you're carrying the right safety equipment.

When you are out on the water enjoying the fishing, always remember to:

⚠️ **Keep a good look out:**

Be aware of other boaters, environmental changes and structures in the water as we don't want you to be our catch of the day.

⚠️ **Communicate:**

In case of emergency make sure you communicate in some way – a phone call, a radio mayday or even igniting a flare.

⚠️ **Stay with your boat:**

If something does go wrong, remember to stay with your boat – it will be easier to spot by emergency services.



For your free 'I've gone boating' fridge magnet and further safety information, contact Marine Safety Victoria on 1800 223 022 or visit www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au