



SEAFOOD INDUSTRY VICTORIA

Media release

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Victorian public to miss out on fresh seafood

As of 1st April 2022, 144 tonnes of Port Phillip Bay's fresh fish will not be available to Victorian seafood consumers following an Andrews government decision to slash commercial catch rates.

Iconic and abundant species such as king George Whiting, Flathead, Calamari and Gummy Shark have been targeted for massive reductions in effort by the Andrews government to lure the votes of recreational fishers.

Seafood Industry Victoria Independent Chair, Joanne-Butterworth-Gray, said Victorian seafood is a public resource, and unless you are one of less than 250,000 anglers, the only way our communities can buy fresh Victorian fish is if a commercial fisher catches it for you.

She said the decision represents a major setback for Victorian seafood consumers and is a devastating blow to the 8 fishermen and their families whose livelihoods depend on having access to fresh fish right in Melbourne's back yard.

"The 8 licensed commercial fishers in Port Phillip Bay are generational fishermen who know the waters in which they fish. They want the bay to have good quality fish for generations to come – so they fish sustainably.

They are everyday folk who need to make a living, pay wages, mortgages and cover the cost of running a fishing business that lets Victorian people make the choice to buy locally caught Victorian seafood," said Ms Butterworth-Gray.

Seafood Industry Victoria, the voice of the state's commercial seafood industry, is calling on the government to re consider its decision in the interests of not just the commercial fishers but the fish mongers, restaurants and everyday consumers who depend on the supply of fresh, sustainably caught local seafood.

Ms Butterworth-Gray said there are no upsides to this decision.

"It renders commercial fishers' businesses unviable and will leave Victorian people worse off – locally caught Victorian fish will become scarce, and expensive."

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