

Improving the recognition and integration of Traditional Owner customary fishing and ecological knowledge in the management of Victoria's fisheries.

Mike J. Gilby

August 2021

FRDC Project No 2014-226

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Indigenous Fishing Subprogram: Improving the recognition and integration of Traditional Owner customary fishing and ecological knowledge in the management of Victoria's fisheries.

2014-226

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In submitting this report, the researcher has agreed to FRDC publishing this material in its edited form.

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Acknowledgments

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as Australia's first peoples, and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which we work and live. We recognise the strength of Aboriginal people and communities and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal people and communities to Victorian life, through their daily work and at key events, and how this enriches us all.

We recognise all Aboriginal cultures and communities are diverse and, should be celebrated. We acknowledge that the land is of spiritual, cultural and economic importance to Aboriginal people. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation: guaranteeing equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.

Note: throughout this document the term "Aboriginal" is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the terms "Koori", "Koorie" and "Indigenous" are retained in the names of some programs and initiatives, and, unless noted otherwise, are inclusive of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Disclaimer: *This project is about improving stakeholder groups' understanding of customary fishing, with an understanding there are data security issues which relate to cultural sensitivities around data collection and, the distribution of sensitive materials which will need to be managed carefully.*

Abbreviations

AFS	Aboriginal Fishing Strategy
AIP	Aboriginal Inclusion Plan
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DEPI	Department of Environment and Primary Industries
FRDC	Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
FSR	Free Standing Right
IRG	Indigenous Reference Group
RSA	Recognition and Settlement Agreement
TORP	Traditional Owner Recognition Permit
TOS	Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic)
VFA	Victorian Fisheries Authority
VicFRAB	Victorian Fisheries Research Advisory Body
VicRAC	Victorian Research Advisory Committee
VRFish	Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body
WTO	Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation
YYNAC	Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation

Executive Summary

Background

Victoria has legally recognised Traditional Owner groups across approximately 75% of the State and this figure is set to grow as native title claims are resolved over the next decade (Aboriginal Victoria 2021). The interests of Traditional Owner groups are formally recognised in a Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) under the Traditional Owner Settlement (TOS) Act 2010 (Vic), and/or a registered native title body corporate determined under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth).

There is strong and growing interest from within Victorian Traditional Owner community to actively participate in the management of Victoria's fisheries. This interest is an expression of Caring for Country responsibilities and knowledge retention programs and would meet aspirations to achieve meaningful participation. Despite these strongly held aspirations by Aboriginal Victorians there are only a small number of Aboriginal people involved in Victoria's prosperous fishing industries.

Aims/Objectives

The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), in partnership with the Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC), have undertaken this project to increase the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of Victoria's fisheries resources and to address the information gap regarding understanding the nature and extent of customary fishing activities across Victoria.

Objectives:

1. To improve government and key stakeholder groups' understanding of customary fishing through documenting Traditional Owner customary fishing practices across parts of Victoria.
2. To improve Victoria's Traditional Owner's participation in the management of Victoria's fisheries by developing a structured approach to engagement with Victoria's Traditional Owner community.

Methodology

This project was led by Mike Gilby (from the VFA Aboriginal Projects and Stakeholder Engagement program) and was conducted alongside VFA efforts to engage with Aboriginal Victorians on matters relating to the fisheries. The project team undertook a desktop review, consulted with a broad range of stakeholders and conducted workshops with Traditional Owner groups across Victoria, including Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Gunaikurnai and Wadawurung.

Results/key findings

- Various customary fishing practices and priorities of Traditional Owner groups in Victoria have been acknowledged, documented and shared.
- Government agencies, recreational and commercial fishing groups have been presented with findings from this project and now have an improved understanding of customary fishing in Victoria.
- Connections and trust have begun to be developed between VFA and Traditional Owner groups across Victoria.
- A strategy for effective engagement between Fisheries Victoria and Aboriginal Victorians has been developed by the project team.

Implications for relevant stakeholders

The challenges faced by Victoria are similar for other jurisdictions that are currently moving towards greater recognition of Traditional Owner rights to natural resources. It is helpful to consider these challenges separately for fisheries agencies, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders.

This project has shown that future RD&E projects with a particular focus on customary fisheries could provide mutual benefits and positive outcomes for eco-cultural tourism, recreation fishing and restoration of fish habitats on-Country.

Keywords

Indigenous fishing, Victorian fisheries, Customary fishing, Aboriginal Victoria.

Introduction

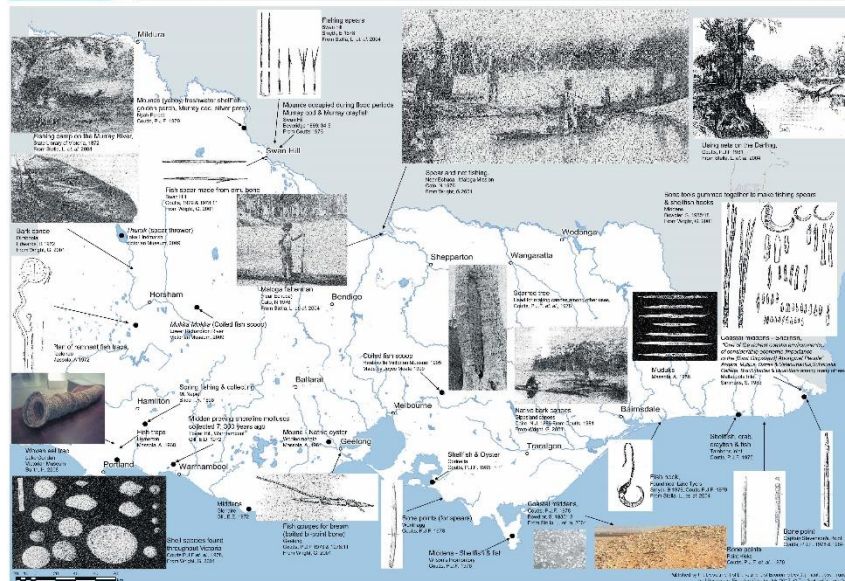
Over many thousands of years Aboriginal Victorians have sustained strong economic and cultural relationships with aquatic resources. This is demonstrated throughout Victorian Aboriginal communities – from the Gunditjmara people in southwest Victoria, who engineered a complex system of drainage channels, weirs and fish-traps to harvest migrating eels, to the Murray River clans who exploited Murray Cod as a major food source. In Gippsland the Gunaikurnai people also relied heavily on marine and freshwater fish for their food, often fishing with elaborate equipment from bark canoes (see Figure 1). Today many Aboriginal groups continue to maintain their strong cultural connections to fisheries resources; with fish species often featuring as a central animal in mythology and fishing activities found throughout contemporary cultural practices and creation stories.

For Traditional Owner groups, management of land, natural resources, water and cultural heritage values are frequently a priority when engaging with government agencies. Therefore, managing these aspects of Country often creates a significant opportunity to partner with government.

State agencies across Australia have historically devoted few operational resources towards equipping Traditional Owners to manage their natural resources. However, directions for customary fishing in Victoria are changing with a desire to recognise Aboriginal fishing as unique and separate to recreational fishing. These changes are occurring by amending legislation to define Aboriginal customary fishing as a separate sector to recreational and commercial fishing and integrating Aboriginal fishing into resource sharing arrangements that provide for a greater recognition of customary fishing. Fisheries agencies are also beginning to establish dedicated staff positions or advisory bodies to support the development and implementation of Indigenous fishing strategies.

Traditional Owners are increasingly “operationalising” their Free-Standing Rights (FSR) by developing their own on-Country plans and strategies which they then use to leverage partnerships to manage and monitor the natural resources to which they have statutory rights. Much of the funding and technical support for these Traditional Owner-led initiatives currently comes from Commonwealth government programs (such as Caring for Country, Working on Country and the Indigenous Protected Area Program), though increasingly State and Territory agencies are also supporting these initiatives.

Archaeological examples of Aboriginal fishing in Victoria



Fisheries Victoria



Figure 1: Archaeological examples of fishing in Victoria (VFA archives).

This project delivers on Traditional Owner engagement regarding on-Country activities as they relate to fisheries. Led by Mike Gilby (Aboriginal Projects and Stakeholder Engagement program) from the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), this project has brought together knowledge holders, recognised Traditional Owners, stakeholders from across Victoria’s diverse natural resources and fishing industry representatives to promote participation and partnerships between Traditional Owner groups, government agencies and the fishing industry in Victoria.

By inviting Traditional Owner inputs from Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, Gunaikurnai and, Wadawurung to various VFA workshops, this project has begun to open dialogue and document Traditional Owner customary fishing practices across select parts of Victoria to help inform ongoing knowledge transfer within Traditional Owner groups. The project team worked with Traditional Owners and industry stakeholders to deliver on the Victorian Governments self-determination framework. They have also engaged with the FRDC Indigenous priorities statement more broadly, which is designed to drive improvements in Indigenous employment and connection to culture and country.

By making connections with Traditional Owners across the State, the project team has also been able to draft a structured approach for future engagement with Traditional Owners in Victoria.

Objectives

VFA is committed to investigating new ways of increasing Aboriginal Victorians participation in fisheries management processes, including building the capability of people to take up opportunities. This project is in keeping with the VFA Aboriginal Fishing Strategy (AFS), which commits to partnering with Aboriginal Victorians to further reconciliation and play a part in a national effort to 'close the gap'.

In partnership with the FRDC, the VFA has undertaken this project to increase the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of Victoria's fisheries resources and to address the information gap regarding understanding the nature and extent of customary fishing activities across Victoria.

Objectives:

1. To improve government and key stakeholder groups' understanding of customary fishing through documenting Traditional Owner customary fishing practices across parts of Victoria.
2. To improve Victoria's Traditional Owner's participation in the management of Victoria's fisheries by developing a structured approach to engagement with Victoria's Traditional Owner community.
3. To improve Aboriginal employment targets through applied learning and on the job opportunities at the Arcadia Fish Hatchery, near Shepparton and the Snobs Creek facility at Eildon under a partnership arrangement with GoTafe.

Method

In conjunction with the work VFA is doing in connecting with Aboriginal Victorian's, this project has sought to better understand traditional fishing activities by:

- Collecting information about Aboriginal customary fishing to allow better recognition of this information into fisheries policy and management plans. This will further assist in implementing the recent regulatory amendments in Victoria to recognise customary fishing as a distinct activity.
- Working with Traditional Owners, and Aboriginal knowledge holders to produce culturally specific fisheries education products, and materials of relevance to Aboriginal people, using Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wadawurrung Traditional Owners as case studies.
- Developing a mechanism for government and other agencies to engage Aboriginal people in the management of fisheries resources and extension-based programs.
- Contributing to the employment of Aboriginal people in natural resource management through participation in data collection.

An internal focus group was set up for the project to oversee the following functions and tasks:

- Review existing planning work and project delivery to inform planning of on Country workshops.
- Guide implementation of project development phase outputs and milestones including services planning.
- Ensure the alignment of funding sources and investment opportunities for shared education resources.
- Agree an implementation strategy for investment and delivery to provide support to all parties to successfully deliver an integrated customary fishing project.
- Provide a senior stakeholder network to address and resolve key issues as required.

The following partnerships were also vital to integrate Victoria's unique Aboriginal knowledge, structures of Aboriginal representation, and it's strong connection to fishing:

- Catchment Management Authorities (Indigenous Workforce).
- Department of Environment, Planning and Industry (Indigenous Workforce).
- Fisheries Managers.
- Fisheries Scientists.
- Koorie Heritage Trust Inc
- Melbourne Museum 'Bunjilaka'
- Recreation Fishers, and
- Traditional Owners.

Desktop study

In reviewing the available literature, the desktop study for this project aimed to provide a broad overview of the importance and diversity of Aboriginal fishing in Victoria as well as fishing policy. It was not intended to present an exhaustive review and does not seek to provide commentary or analysis of the information. The desktop study also acknowledges the contribution of previous literature reviews which have investigated fishing in significant portions of the State, and discusses some of their findings.

Broad stakeholder engagement

Information collected through stakeholder consultation on the development of the Victorian Aboriginal Fishing Strategy has been a central part of this project. The project team engaged various stakeholders through the life of this project:

- Traditional Owners were involved in workshops and provided key inputs into the project.
- FRDC Indigenous Reference Group who had a key role in reviewing content and providing advice on direction of the project.
- Victorian Fisheries Research Advisory Board (VicFRAB) were invited to attend on-Country workshops and were provided with regular updates at VicFRAB meetings.
- Victorian National Parks Association were invited to attend on-Country workshops and informed on the progress of the project.
- Seafood Industries Victoria.
- Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body (VRFish). Engagement with VRFish has led to the advancement of Aboriginal Victorians' participation in recreational fishing across Victoria and funded initiatives on-Country through the Victorian Recreational Fishing License Trust Fund.
- Fisheries management were invited to attend on-Country workshops and were kept informed on the progress of the project. This led to direct inputs of Traditional Owners into the development of the Victorian Inland Fisheries Management Plan policy context, and on-Country fishing stocking programs.

On-country workshops



Figure 2: Taungurung workshop presentation

The project team held a series of on-Country collaborative workshops and face-to-face meetings with select Traditional Owner groups to help record and map fishing practices and clearly defined species of special significance (see Figure 2). The Victorian Corporation for Aboriginal Languages were also engaged to match fish species with the appropriate language family.

The project team sought input from Traditional Owner groups to advise on project outcomes and outputs aligned with Victorian Traditional Owner aspirations. These groups extend to include:

- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.
- First people of Millewa-Mallee Traditional Owners.

- Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.
- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.
- Yorta Yorta Traditional Owners.

Interview Techniques

In interviewing participants, the project team began with questions to 'break the ice', including asking about the background of the individual, i.e. Where were you born? What is your knowledge of Victorian Aboriginal fishing practices? They also focused on immediate life experience rather than random historical questions which may have led to dead end answers. It is important to remember that participants may not necessarily have as much information or understanding as the interviewer so follow up questions be asked.

The project team avoided closed ended questions, for example: Did you undertake cultural fishing at? Instead, questions were open ended, for example: What were your experiences when fishing with uncle/aunty? The project team also avoided scatter gun questions, for example: Tell me your name, place of birth and about the town you grew up in? In this case the interviewee would likely only answer the last part of the question. Neutral questions were also used in interviews with participants. For example, rather than asking: You must have been outraged to have to possess a recreational fishing licence? The project team was careful to structure the question in a neutral tone, for example: How did you feel when Traditional Owner recognition was afforded to you?

Results and discussion

This project has endeavoured to increase the involvement of Aboriginal Victorians in the management of Victoria's fisheries resources and to address the information gap regarding understanding the nature and extent of customary fishing activities across Victoria. This has been undertaken through a flexible methodology and in doing so the project has begun the process of addressing the following objectives:

1. To improve government and key stakeholder groups' understanding of customary fishing through documenting Traditional Owner customary fishing practices across parts of Victoria.
2. To improve Victoria's Traditional Owner's participation in the management of Victoria's fisheries by developing a structured approach to engagement with Victoria's Traditional Owner community.

This section will explore some of the key findings that came through the desktop review, broad stakeholder engagement and on-Country workshops. It is structured around Victoria's fisheries policy context as well as the case studies with Traditional Owner groups across Victoria. It also outlines eight engagement protocols for working with Aboriginal Victorians (currently being drafted titled *Eight Ways*) and the challenges that have arisen throughout the life of the project.

The Victorian fisheries policy context

Connection to Country

The desktop study undertaken for this project provides an insight into the archaeological and historical use of natural resources by Aboriginal Victorian groups (see Figure 3). In 2004, the research unit of National Native Title Tribunal produced a summary of Indigenous use of the Murray River system in the north-west of Victoria (Stella et al. 2004). The study gives an overview of its research findings from the available published materials, which establish the following:

- *Indigenous people have been diving for freshwater shellfish for over 10,000 years.*
- *Molluscs, crustaceans, fish, birds and land animals have been exploited for about 20,000 – 30,000 years.*
- *Fish were selectively gill-netted for over 20,000 years.*
- *Locally abundant riverine food allowed large gatherings of people.*
- *Over 1,000 earthen mounds along the Murray reveal evidence of regular use as ovens, gathering sites and/or burial sites for between 1,000-7,000 years.*
- *Earthen mounds including those in the Nyah Forest, Vinifer Forest, at Lakes Boga, Mannaor, and Baker provide evidence of the semi-sedentary lifestyles of those who built and used them.*
- *The remains of Murray cod, golden perch and silver perch have been uncovered on the Mallee dunes.*
- *The mounds demonstrate a co-operative use of labour, and higher population densities about 7,000 B.P.*
- *Cemeteries, as a main cultural feature of the River Murray corridor, demonstrate occupation by territorially based groups and corporate ownership of that territory.*

In addition to summarizing these important findings, the report also constructs a picture of Aboriginal fishing activities based on numerous historical accounts from early European observers. Drawing a few fundamental conclusions from these accounts:

Fish were speared while diving, or from canoes, or caught with lines and hooks, and weirs and traps were built; poison was sometimes used to catch fish. Mussels and crustaceans (yabbies or crayfish),

turtles and frogs were gathered; waterbirds as well as fish were netted.. Trees, rushes, reeds and other items such as clay and ochre were used for making tools, implements [spears].... The most valuable or most abundant of these items were... also used as items of exchange at special gatherings with neighbours.

The Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* has already recognised FSR for Traditional Owners to access and use natural resources in Victoria. The *Charter* states that the distinct cultural rights of Aboriginal people and their communities “must not be denied”, including the right to:

...maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs (s.19(2)).

The Victorian government recognizes that Aboriginal people have a strong connection to country that is central to their culture, both traditionally and today. For Aboriginal people, cultural values are intertwined around traditional uses, spiritual connection, ancestral ties and respect for waterways, land, sea and the resources these provide. Culture is essential for the spiritual, emotional and social growth and maintenance of all people. For Aboriginal people, culture is their ‘spear and shield’, their ‘resistance and resilience’. A key challenge tightly aligned to this project is the recognition of ‘cultural Load’ culturally based forms of identity, belonging, stability and participation from within Aboriginal communities, in addition to addressing the processes which disempower Aboriginal people and disable their voice and, abilities to practice self-determination.

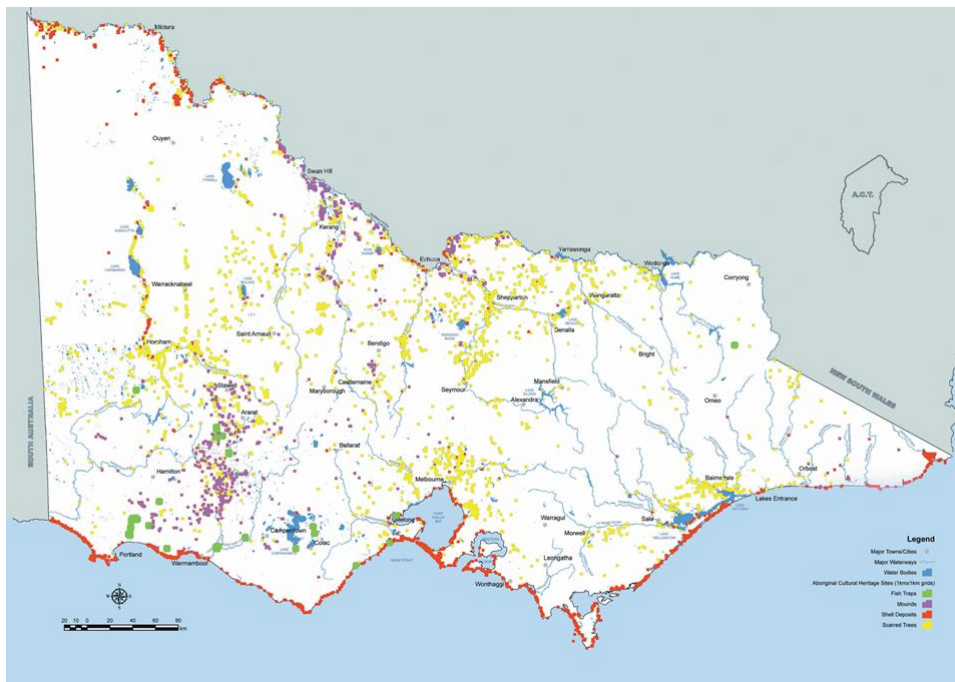


Figure 3: Archaeological examples of Aboriginal fishing in Victoria (VFA archives).

Victoria has legally recognised Traditional Owner groups across approximately 75% of the State and this figure is set to grow as the final native title claims are resolved over the next decade. The interests of recognised Traditional Owner groups are formally recognised in a Recognition and Settlement Agreement (RSA) under the Traditional Owner Settlement (TOS) Act 2010 (Vic), and/or a registered native title body corporate determined under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth).

There is strong and growing interest from within Victorian Traditional Owner community to actively participate in the management of Victoria's fisheries on-Country. This interest is an expression of Caring for Country responsibilities and knowledge retention programs and would meet aspirations to achieve meaningful participation. Despite these strongly held aspirations by Aboriginal Victorians there are only a small number of Aboriginal people involved in Victoria's prosperous fishing industries.

Indigenous people have a vast knowledge of, and capacity for developing innovative practices and products from their environments. Indigenous knowledge is the rights of Indigenous people to govern the creation, collection, ownership and application of their knowledge, that:

- Exercise control of the knowledge ecosystem including creation, development, stewardship, analysis, dissemination and infrastructure.
- Indigenous ecological knowledge is relevant and, empowers sustainable self-determination and affective self-governance.
- Makes use of structures that are accountable to Indigenous people and First Nations.
- Protects and respects individual and collective interests.

There are currently no statutory provisions in any Victorian legislation or associated regulations that specifically provide Traditional Owners with free access to and use of natural resources. There are, however, several provisions that enable Traditional Owners to use natural resources either as Aboriginal people or as citizens of Victoria if they comply with the requirements of permit of licence regimes. (Smyth, Isherwood & Schnierer, 2010).

Customary fishing is facing long-term environmental, social and economic challenges (see Figure 4) which are, arguably, placing more pressure than ever before on the need to record such practices that support traditional knowledge between generations. These challenges arise from a range of sources (ie; Traditional Owner settlement agreements, natural resource agreements and traditional owner on-Country planning) and require an efficient and agile platform to ensure customary fishing practices in Victoria remain viable, and support the knowledge transfer (across generations) and language retention on country.

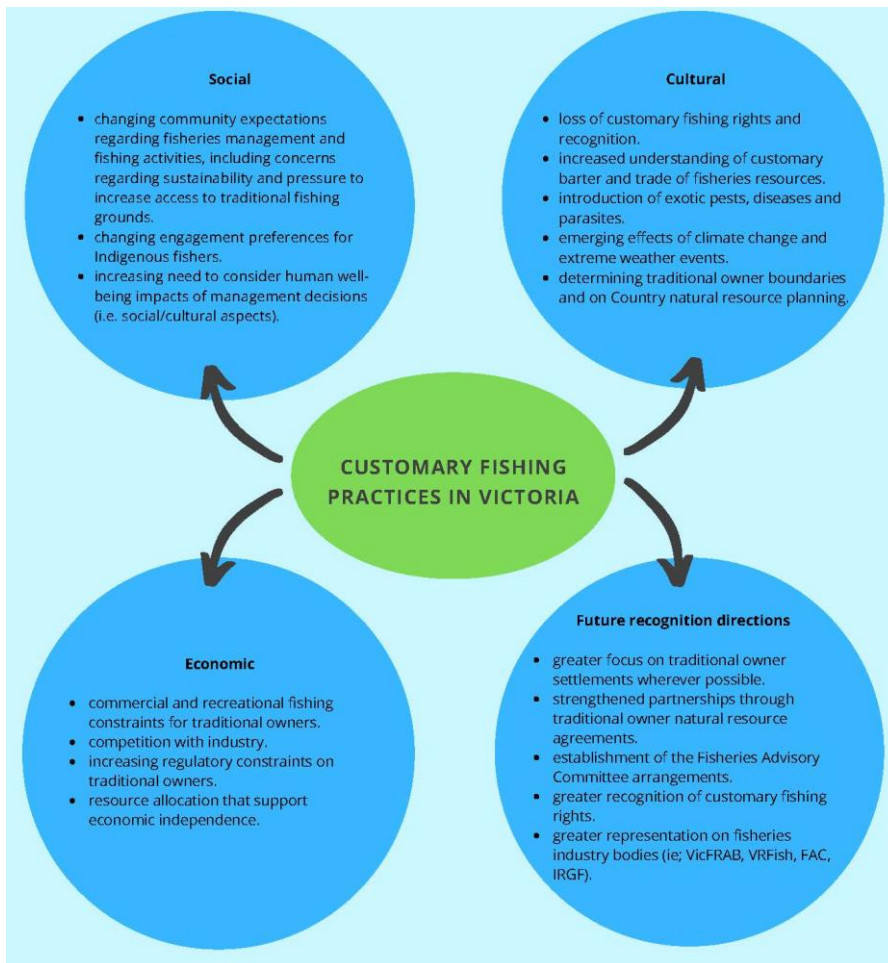


Figure 4: Challenges facing customary fishing in Victoria.

Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA)

As Victoria's lead fisheries management department, the Victorian Fisheries Authority plays a central role in encouraging Traditional Owners to be active and valued contributors in sustainable fisheries management. This role is demonstrated through native title settlements, the creation of a Fisheries Advisory Council to deliver on the government's commitment to ensuring that effective and proactive consultation with all fishing sectors on fisheries management is achieved, and customary fishing representation on the VicFRAB. There is also growing recognition of a need to remove inconsistencies between the *Fisheries Act* of Victoria and the *Commonwealth Native Title Act* (i.e. that Native Title holders are not required to hold a licence to fish for personal, domestic or non-commercial communal needs) to enable the implementation of the *Victorian Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010* as committed to by the Victorian government.

The VFA has actively begun incorporating the rights, interests, and culture of Aboriginal Victorians into both what they do and how they work (see Figure 5). To do this well will take time and, needs to be done in a way that also respects third party interests in accessing the community's fisheries resources. To make sure that Victoria is moving in the right direction the VFA recognises the need to talk to Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Victorians and, knowledge holders about customary and traditional fishing practices, and Aboriginal interests in Victorian fisheries.

VFA is committed to improving relationships with Traditional Owner groups and, Aboriginal Victorians more broadly and, aims to:

- a. Advocate the need to produce culturally significant materials of relevance to Aboriginal people.
- b. Embed traditional owner 'Welcome to Country' at strategic fisheries events.
- c. developing Aboriginal Victorians participation in scientific research and, rehabilitation of marine and freshwater fisheries.
- d. Depict the rich and varied cultures of Aboriginal Victorians customary fishing and places of significances.
- e. Develop Kings Billabong nature reserve and Maribryngong River native fish revival through fish stock planning, improved access, wayfinding signage and better fishing facilities.
- f. Develop improved Fisheries Management Plans that better recognise traditional owner fishing in Victoria.
- g. Develop opportunities for Aboriginal Victorians in seafood and aquaculture industries.



Figure 5: How VFA is connecting with Aboriginal Victoria.

The Victorian Aboriginal Fishing Strategy (AFS)

In August 2012 the Victorian government released an Aboriginal Fishing Strategy (AFS), which seeks to shape Victoria's approach to addressing Native Title, customary fishing, economic development opportunities and increasing Aboriginal participation in fisheries management. The AFS has been developed on the basis of discussions with Traditional Owner groups, Aboriginal community groups, government agencies, Fisheries Victoria staff and fisheries stakeholders. It is a guiding policy document and has no statutory powers.

The AFS will help shape VFA's approach to Native Title, customary fishing, economic development opportunities, and increase Indigenous participation in fisheries management. This is a State-wide effort that will involve working with the Victorian Traditional Owner community, government agencies and fisheries stakeholders. The AFS applies to all Aboriginal Victorians interested in the

utilisation of fisheries resources, including Native Title holders. The AFS aims to better recognise Indigenous culture, traditions and rights by:

- Defining what customary fishing means to Aboriginal Victorians.
- Recognising the customary fishing sector to enable mechanisms under the Victorian Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010.
- Establishing more effective communication with Traditional Owner communities.
- Better utilising Indigenous knowledge in fisheries management.

The AFS contains several proposals to recognise Aboriginal customary fishing rights, improve economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in the fishing industry, and increase Aboriginal participation in fisheries management. It ensures culturally informed, sustainable fisheries management that contribute to improving the wealth, capacity and wellbeing of Aboriginal people and communities in Victoria. The AFS is being applied across the State with the following set of guiding principles:

- Work in partnership with Victorian Traditional Owner groups as the first custodians of our saltwater and freshwater environments.
- Recognise that all parties involved have a mutual commitment to sustainability.
- Recognise the need to develop and draw upon structures of representation across Victorian Aboriginal communities to better inform the management of fisheries.
- Recognise that outcomes that benefit Aboriginal communities are best achieved through active participation.
- Commit to working with openness, fairness and trust.
- Engage with Aboriginal Victorians in appropriate and meaningful ways.
- Promote economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in fishing and related businesses.
- Improve Aboriginal access to employment and training opportunities within the Department of Primary Industries, Agriculture and Fisheries Services, and the wider fishing sectors.
- Ensure that this work is aligned with other relevant programs to improve partnerships with Aboriginal communities, industries and other Government agencies.
- Recognise that this work will take time, and a willingness to learn and adopt new approaches that will work best with the Victorian Aboriginal community.

There are now several agreements in place between Victorian Government and Traditional Owner groups which make it timely to review and, refresh the Victorian AFS to make it consistent with the intent of the Traditional Owner Settlement Act. The refreshed AFS will be aligned with the intent of the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework and, agreements established under the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 and the Victorian Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010. The review will be undertaken in close consultation with Traditional Owners on country with the intent to develop closer relationships and collaboration that leads to greater participation in natural resource management, reconciliation, self-determination and economic independence.

The AFS applies to all Aboriginal Victorians and focuses on achieving three key outcomes:

1. Recognition:

Traditional Owner Groups' rights to engage in non-commercial, customary fishing in Victoria are able to be recognised under the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth) and the more recent Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic). Victoria's fisheries legislation currently recognises the recreational and commercial fishing sectors. There is now an obligation to better define customary fishing and amend the Fisheries Act 1995 and Fisheries Regulations 2009 (Vic), to recognise this sector in line with the Native Title and Traditional Owner settlement legislation.

2. Better Economic Opportunities:

Traditional Owner and Aboriginal community groups across Victoria have identified the need for sustainable economic development as a key strategy for achieving greater self-determination and better social outcomes, particularly via increasing employment opportunities.

The Strategy aims to facilitate economic opportunities for Aboriginal people through participation in the fishing industry.

Fisheries Victoria will work with other State and Commonwealth Government agencies, the commercial and recreational fishing industries and Traditional Owners to facilitate economic development.

3. Sustainable Fisheries Management in Collaboration with Traditional Owners:

Meaningful engagement between Fisheries Victoria, the Victorian commercial and recreational fishing sectors, and Traditional Owner Groups is central to recognising the rights and interests of, and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people. Establishing engagement practices that encourage productive discussions and draw on existing structures of representation will build trusting effective partnerships.

Sharing knowledge and management practices between customary and commercial and recreational fishing sectors will provide the mutual benefit of building knowledge of Aboriginal culture in other sectors, and improving Traditional Owners' understanding of fisheries management approaches in commercial and recreational fisheries.

Meerreeng Wanga

The former Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI), now Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) has an evolving and distinct relationship with Victoria's Aboriginal communities. In the last 20 years, recognition of Aboriginal people's role in caring for country has improved. In addition, a strong interest from some Aboriginal communities has emerged to provide commercial fishing as a contemporary expression of economic and cultural sustainability.

This project is consistent with DEDJTR's Aboriginal Inclusion Plan (AIP) 'Meerreeng Wanga' to improve service delivery capability and accountability. Meerreeng Wanga has been developed to meet the government's objective to improve Aboriginal economic participation and well-being. It builds on the strategies and activities of the former DEPI. Meerreeng Wanga is structured around three guiding principles.

Principle 1- Respect and Recognition

Strong cultural identity is fundamental to the well-being of Aboriginal people. Strong culture helps to sustain healthy lives. Supporting Aboriginal culture is an investment in the future of all Victorians. The Government has a role in enabling and supporting communities in the continuance and strengthening of their culture.

Principle 2- Caring for Country

Many Aboriginal Victorians have a clear connection with land through their ancestral association with a particular place and through membership of a decent group or clan. As such they have a custodial role in caring for country where this association is identified. DEPI acknowledges the fundamental importance to Aboriginal people caring for country.

Principle 3- Working Together

A collaborative approach will help realise inclusion. As stakeholders for DEPI, the level of inclusion for both Victoria's Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal communities will be fundamental in how we demonstrate leadership and respect. A focus on working together to deliver the AIP will extend across the department. This will maximise the benefits of our activity for Aboriginal communities.

Meerreeng Wanga brings together both current and future DEPI initiatives for Aboriginal communities. It commits to undertake actions that contribute to three outcomes:

1. Recognition of Aboriginal cultural and customary interests in land and natural resources
2. Development and growth in Aboriginal NRM and primary industries businesses, and
3. Access by Aboriginal Australians to training and employment in NRM, primary industries and DEPI.

These principles support DEPI's vision of strong Aboriginal culture and prosperity through caring for country and natural resource management and primary industry enterprises.

On-country workshops with Traditional Owners

Through the life of the project, the VFA have sought input from Traditional Owner groups to advise on project outcomes and outputs aligned with Victorian Traditional Owner aspirations. These groups include:

- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.
- First people of Millewa-Mallee Traditional Owners.
- Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation.
- Wadawurrung Traditional Owners.
- Yorta Yorta Traditional Owners.

The project team held a series of on-Country collaborative workshops and face-to-face meetings with Traditional Owner groups to help record and map fishing practices and clearly defined species of special significance (much of this is withheld from this report due to culturally sensitive information). The Victorian Corporation for Aboriginal Languages were also engaged to match fish species with the appropriate language family

Through these consultations the VFA has been able to make connections with Traditional Owners across Victoria and begin the important process of building trust and sharing knowledge with Aboriginal communities. In turn, there have been considerable leaps in the relationships built between government agencies, industry groups and Traditional Owner groups in Victoria.

First People of Millewa-Mallee Traditional Owners

Indigenous people's of the Millewa Mallee region have enjoyed the billabong's healthy and productive wetland for thousands of years with shell middens and scar trees indicating a lifestyle celebrated on its banks. (First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation chairperson Janine Wilson)

In 2015, the project team began taking part in discussions with Traditional Owners of the Millewa Mallee region about fisheries management and customary use of fisheries resources throughout the area. Kings Billabong (see Figure 6) is situated eight kilometers from Mildura and is popular with nature lovers including bushwalkers, birdwatchers, canoeists, campers, Traditional Owners and in years to come, hopefully anglers. Kings Billabong near Mildura was stocked for the first time in February 2018 with 50,000 silver perch, 60,000 Murray Cod and, 30,000 golden perch to improve freshwater family friendly fishing opportunities and get more people fishing, more often.

A grant of \$90,000 was also awarded to the Mallee Catchment Management Authority to install two new fishing platforms that extend beyond the dense Cumbungi vegetation that currently makes fishing access difficult. The two new fishing platforms will help develop it as a premier family fishing destination and, will allow families to more easily access the billabong to catch native freshwater fish. The two new fishing platforms are part of a larger project between the Mallee CMA, Parks Victoria, Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), Lower Murray Water, and Traditional Owners that will also include the construction of two new canoe launches, car parking facilities and wayfinding signage.



Figure 6: Kings Billabong.

VFA, in partnership with Traditional Owners, the Mallee Catchment Management Authority and recreational fishers is also undertaking a pilot stocking trial within the Wallpolla (Horseshoe Lagoon) in northwest Victoria that explores utilization of natural managed ephemeral off-stream water bodies as nursery ponds for native fish' to determine feasibility (see Figure 7). This approach is promoted as being less resource intensive and can be managed by local community groups. The work will include:

- Designing a simple, non-replicated trial.
- Determining golden perch and/or silver perch for stocking density. This will be based on full surface area of the lagoon and will be at a level suitable for extended rearing (up to 12 months).
- Based on pond and dam stocking rates for fingerlings and adjusting as required.
- Designing a simple monitoring plan (sampling parameters and sampling frequency) for water quality, plankton, and fish.

There is 200 megaliters of environmental water guaranteed to be delivered each season (1,000 megaliters in total) to Wallpolla Lagoons (120 ha high value wetland). This initiative will undertake operations aligned with Regional Catchment Strategies to deliver environmental water and maximize the associated environmental outcomes at the high value site, to enhance native fish populations within the iconic Lindsay Wallpolla sites in North-West Victoria.



Figure 7: Wallpolla (Horseshoe Lagoon).

Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation

Taungurung country stretches from Kilmore (west of Victoria) to Wangaratta (north of Victoria), eastwards to Mount Beauty and south to the top of the Great Dividing Range. In 2016, a retreat was held on Taungurung Country to begin a process of connecting to culture and country. An aspect of connecting to culture was through the process of fishing together, meeting fisheries managers and simply bringing people together to talk about fishing (see Figure 8). The retreat aimed to document information, including the medicinal value of aquatic plant life, how local people kept pools fresh in times of drought and how important fishing was for subsistence.

Multimedia communications have also been developed through workshops with Taungurung Traditional Owners, for example mapping customary fishing practices on Taungurung Country.



Figure 8: Shane Monk (Taungurung)

Wadawurrung Traditional Owners

VFA have consulted broadly with key recreational fishing stakeholder representatives from VRFish, to define significance of customary fishing and site location of Balla-wein (Bellarine Peninsula) the Wadawurrung people. Workshops undertaken with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners identified species of significance and traditional fishing techniques on-Country. Massola (1956) notes that, to his knowledge there is only one record of a fishhook being used in Victoria. The hook, fashioned out of mammalian bone, is part of a collection in the National Museum and originated from the Aboriginal peoples of Gippsland at Lake Tyers.

Catching fish by the hook and line was not practised by all the natives of Victoria. In Gippsland, however, they used hooks made of bone... [Aboriginal people] if not in the western district, most assuredly on the eastern seaboard were accustomed to making fishing hooks and lines...

VFA showcases Indigenous fishing culture at their Marine and Freshwater Discovery Centre. The Centre's outdoor Balla-wein education space illuminates the fishing culture of Traditional Owners of the Balla-wein (Bellarine Peninsula) the Wadawurrung people. VFA is also discussing potential student monitoring projects with Deakin University Marine Science Faculty, Institute of Koorie Education and Wadawurrung to enable integrating Aboriginal culture and ecological knowledge into Fisheries education programs.

Yorta Yorta Traditional Owner Group

The Victorian Government is supporting Aboriginal training and employment near Shepperton, with the VFA's new northern native fish hatchery which is currently under development (see Figure 9). This initiative is set to employ Aboriginal people for up to half of the workforce. Up to six Aboriginal identified positions will represent half the hatchery's workforce, providing local employment opportunities for people keen on a career growing Murray Cod (Ponde or Burnanga), golden perch, silver perch and freshwater catfish.

The program is the result of a commitment by the Victorian Government and VFA to the whole of Government approach to closing the gap in employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians by increasing opportunities for public sector employment. The aim of the program will be to achieve

'Job Ready' status for recruits through a two-year dedicated employment and mentor support program providing graduates with Certificate III in Agriculture (AHC30116) of Applied Science (Aquaculture). The course will provide students with the key knowledge and skills, required to successfully work in a fish production and natural resource environment.



Figure 9: Northern native fish hatchery

VFA will provide applied learning and on the job development opportunities at the Snobs Creek facility, near Eildon and the marine research facility at Queenscliff and the new northern fish hatchery under a partnership arrangement with GoTafe Shepparton. Delivery will be a combination of formal structured training and structured workplace experience or 'on-the-job' training, and field-based excursions and training sessions located on Yorta Yorta Country near Barmah, or Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area located within the extraordinary Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, a site of continuous significance to Gunditjmarra people that contains the remnants of one of the world's largest and oldest aquaculture systems.

Activities may include; fish and shellfish husbandry skills development, fish stocking and liberation approaches, assist in coordinating public/stakeholder fishery events, fish population monitoring and in-stream and riparian river restoration initiatives, and traditional fishing practices unique to Victoria that re-connects students back to country. Activities will extend to include field base excursions, geographic information systems for marine environments, research and communication for Country and, intangible heritage (ie; considerations for the dimensions of cultural heritage places).

An important aspect of this program is the opportunity for Aboriginal recruits to develop their own networks and support systems to enable them to build personal confidence and enhance prospects for on-going employment in the public and industry sectors.

Building social capacity through targeted activation...

- a. Interaction between all people of ages, gender and cultural backgrounds.
- b. Activities that are accessible and tangible for example: educational workshops, events, farmers markets, sport and recreation.
- c. Building knowledge of deep time/history creates an inclusive community atmosphere."
- d. A strong cohesive identity, connecting complex history, unique landscapes.
- e. Facilitate pathways to deliver outcomes directly aligned with Traditional Owner Land Use Agreements.

Workshop outcomes

Through the development of this project, the VFA has actively begun engaging with Traditional Owners in research and monitoring of fisheries resources (see Figure 10). Traditional Owners have expressed an interest in direct participation in fisheries management actions through collecting specimens, reporting information or contributing knowledge for scientific, management or compliance purposes. These activities are a method through which Traditional Owners can contribute to ensuring the sustainability of fish resources and have the potential to provide some economic benefits to Traditional Owner groups through contracts for data collection.



Figure 10: Northwest Traditional Owners / NRM Team.

The VFA is now in the process of working with Traditional Owners throughout the State to allow collaborative management of fisheries resources on traditional owner country. Victorian Traditional Owners have developed complex 'On-Country Management Plans' and seek to integrate customary fishing agreements between Traditional Owner groups and VFA over the management of cultural and traditional fishing on a Traditional Owner group's country. The content of the agreement would cover arrangements including (but not limited to): any unique types of fishing gear to be used (ie; fish traps, netting, etc), rules relating to customary catch of certain fish or in certain areas. A customary fishing agreement could be incorporated within a Native Title agreement but will not be limited to Traditional Owner groups with Native Title recognition.

Through initial discussions between representatives of participating Traditional Owner groups it was agreed that knowledge exchange between VFA staff and representatives of industry groups would be optimised through presenting at industry/community meetings. Information collected has been made accessible in the form of presentations. Collecting information about Aboriginal customary fishing has allowed the incorporation of this information into fisheries policy and management plans. This has led to implementation of Victoria's Aboriginal Fishing Strategy and policy amendments to

support the implementation of the Traditional Owner Settlement Act, 2010. This information will also further assist in implementing the recent regulatory amendments in Victoria to recognise customary fishing as a distinct activity.

Eight ways: Effective engagement between Fisheries Victoria and Aboriginal Victorians

The second objective of this project was to improve Victoria's Traditional Owner's participation in the management of Victoria's fisheries by developing a structured approach to engagement with Victoria's Traditional Owner community. The collaborative workshops undertaken as part of this project were an avenue to talk to Traditional Owners about appropriate engagement methods. In turn, eight engagement protocols have been adopted and refined through this project for fisheries and other natural resource management agencies to guide ongoing discussions between government and Traditional Owner groups in Victoria.

The engagement framework (which is currently being drafted) has been developed in order to bring a new dimension to Victoria's already diverse fishing industry by promoting participation and partnerships that will integrate Victoria's unique Aboriginal intellectual knowledge, and its strong connection to fishing.

The framework has been developed around the following themes:

1. Aboriginal perspectives
2. Community conscious
3. Strategic
4. Two-way capacity building
5. Clear and authentic
6. Taking time
7. Culturally safe
8. The right metrics

The framework contains guidance on engagement with Aboriginal people and community, including:

1. Oral History Guidelines (tips on introductions and appropriate language for talking with different people in the Aboriginal community (ie; Elders, community groups, youth, formal events).
2. Right people for Country (ie; appropriate Traditional Owners groups, organisations or other contacts in different locations around Victoria) with established relationships.
3. Guidance to VFA and their stakeholders on when a 'Welcome to Country' or 'Acknowledgement of Country' is appropriate and the appropriate wording and protocols.

A key challenge tightly aligned to this project is the recognition of 'cultural Load' culturally-based forms of identity, belonging, stability and participation from within Indigenous communities. There is a fundamental need for people to feel culturally safe in their place of work or learning. Every person needs to feel that their sense of self and identity is valued in some way by the people and environments that surround them. Although cultural safety is attempted to be embedded in project deliverables, specific funding is not always allocated or available to support Aboriginal participation and, exposure across industry beyond the initial consultation phase.

It should be noted that there are often data security issues which relate to cultural sensitivities around data collection and, the distribution of sensitive materials. Complexities also arose through

the development of this project due to participant withdrawals and the inability to record some interviews. All these issues were carefully managed by the project team during the life of the project, and all played a part in the design and development of the *Eight ways framework*.

Conclusion

This project has provided a safe and welcoming platform for showcasing culture, building social inclusion and provided education and learning pathways to sustainable management of Victoria's fisheries. Its flexible methodology included a combination of desk-top research as well as workshops on-Country across Victoria. Through this methodology the project team have begun and ongoing knowledge transfer and open dialogue with Traditional Owner groups across the State.

This projects' success can be measured through the way its objectives have been addressed. The first objective aimed to improve government and key stakeholder groups' understanding of customary fishing through documenting Traditional Owner customary fishing practices across parts of Victoria. Through workshops, presentations and educational materials, the project team has been able to successfully increase government and other key stakeholders (including commercial and recreational fishers) understanding of customary fishing and improve the connections between government agencies, industry and Traditional Owner groups across Victoria. These connections are a significant part of the future of Victoria's fisheries management and relations between government agencies and Aboriginal Victorians. A selected number of customary fishing practices have also been documented across parts of Victoria, providing an invaluable historical resource for future generations.

The project's second objective was to improve Victoria's Traditional Owner's participation in the management of Victoria's fisheries by developing a structured approach to engagement with Victoria's Traditional Owner community. The project team have developed the *Eight Ways* engagement strategy as a framework for engagement and communication between Fisheries Victoria and Aboriginal Victorians.

The project has successfully helped to build connections, trust and to highlight a strong and growing interest from within Victorian Traditional Owner communities to actively participate in the management of Victoria's fisheries. This interest is an expression of Caring for Country responsibilities and knowledge retention programs and, would meet aspirations to achieve meaningful participation.

Through the life of this project, the VFA and Traditional Owners across the State have successfully begun the process of:

- Improving agencies' understanding of the nature and extent of customary fishing activities across Victoria.
- Promoting and increasing cultural awareness of customary fishing among commercial and recreational fishing sectors.
- Strengthening relationships between DEPI, Traditional Owners and industry and improving engagement mechanisms for ongoing discussions around the management of fisheries resources.
- Informing agencies about how to improve participation of Traditional Owners in the management of Victoria's fisheries.
- Developing a structured approach to engage with Traditional Owners.
- Supporting knowledge transfer within Traditional Owner groups relating to "Telling-our-stories" about fisheries resources on Traditional Owner Country.
- Documenting Traditional Owner customary fishing practices across select parts of Victoria.
- Unlocking VFA aquaculture facilities to help develop Traditional Owner capability.
- Improving Traditional Owners contribution to ensuring the sustainability of fish resources.

To ensure that government agencies are moving in the right direction in future, Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Victorians and knowledge holders need to continue to be part of the conversation around fisheries management in Victoria.

Implications

The challenges faced by Victoria are the same faced by other jurisdictions, all of which either have or are currently moving towards greater recognition of Traditional Owner rights to natural resources. It is helpful to consider these challenges separately for fisheries agencies, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders.

This project has shown that future RD&E projects with a particular focus on customary fisheries could provide mutual benefits and positive outcomes for eco-cultural tourism, recreation fishing and restoration of fish habitats on-Country, particularly in the following areas:

1. Research, development on-Country.
2. Aquaculture stewardship.
3. Cultural harvest strategies.
4. Cultural fishing events.
5. Habitat restoration initiatives.
6. Wayfinding, signage and access protocols.

Recommendations

The recommendations in this section are based on findings from the workshops that were undertaken with Traditional Owners across Victoria as part of this project. These recommendations are intended to provide guidance towards potential next steps, activities and investigations that would be useful in future work in the fisheries with Traditional Owners in Victoria.

1. Traditional Owners have voiced their aspirations for the creation of a Traditional Owner Recognition Permit (TORP). Their concerns were specifically about the definition of customary fishing and changes in the use of equipment, targeted species and quantities of aquatic resources that may better reflect traditional practices and that is separate to current recreation fishing rules. Further investigation into the potential creation of a TORP, how these agreements have worked in other jurisdictions, and internationally and its importance to Aboriginal Victorian communities may be useful for the future management of the Victorian fisheries.
2. Traditional Owners also raised the need for management agencies to consider the ways in which the definition of customary fishing may include traditional barter and exchange of fish resources within and between Aboriginal communities. Further exploration into the specific details of how barter and exchange have and continue to be important aspects across Aboriginal communities may be useful in understanding the importance of these matters to Indigenous groups, as well as furthering dialogue between State agencies and Traditional Owner groups.
3. Findings from this project have emphasised a great potential in linking Aboriginal Victorian groups with aquaculture, habitat rehabilitation and infrastructure projects within the Victorian fisheries. In order to progress on these matters, the project team recommends the VFA continue their progress in interweaving Aboriginal fishing and culture into their education programs as well as furthering the on-Country delivery of cultural awareness and learning exchange programs.

Further development

There is growing interest from Victorian Aboriginal communities to provide commercial fishing and aquaculture as a contemporary expression of economic and cultural sustainability. Workshop findings suggest that recognising Aboriginal customary fishing as a separate sector to recreational and commercial fishing enables a need to integrate Aboriginal fishing into resource sharing arrangements that provide for a greater recognition and economic sustainability.

Extension and Adoption

Through conducting workshops with Traditional Owners and project beneficiaries, the project team has produced communications and culturally specific fisheries education products, and materials of relevance to Aboriginal people, that:

- Recognise Aboriginal customary fishing rights for recognised Traditional Owner groups.
- Improve government and key stakeholder groups' understanding of customary fishing through documenting Traditional Owner customary fishing practices across parts of Victoria.
- Improve Victoria's Traditional Owner's participation in the management of Victoria's fisheries by developing a structured approach to engagement with Victoria's Traditional Owner community.
- Improve sustainable fisheries management in collaboration with Traditional Owner groups.

The project team has presented findings of this project to agencies and among commercial and recreational fishing groups, some of which also had representatives that attended workshops on-Country. This has led to a greater community understanding and engagement in customary fishing practices in Victoria, which may also allow for better informed policy development, compliance and fisheries assessments with reference to customary fishing practices and allocation processes. It should be noted that commercial and recreational fishers were broadly supportive of this initiative.

The following activities are also being undertaken by VFA:

- The VFA aquaculture team is working with the Federation of Victorian Traditional Owners Corporation (FVTOC) to further their aquaculture aspirations. Attending the Dja Dja Wurrung led delivery of on-Country cultural learning program enabling an improved understanding of the aquaculture opportunities for native fish and yabby farming and its potential in helping develop culturally based programs on traditional owner Country.
- The VFA is also working with the Gunditjmara Traditional Owner group to facilitate an aquaponics project near their Lake Condor eel facility in the Portland region. This project will provide training and employment in fish farming while enhancing water use.
- The VFA is exploring opportunities with VRFish and regional angling clubs supporting traditional owner groups in northwest Victoria near Mildura to help develop culturally based community fishing programs on traditional owner country.
- Framework for appropriate engagement techniques related to Indigenous fishing related projects called *Eight ways: Effective engagement between VFA and Aboriginal Victorians*. This framework will be extended to fisheries managers and other stakeholders wishing to engage with Aboriginal Victorians.
- In documenting stories and recording knowledge, this project has also helped Traditional Owners to build a repository of information for future generations.

Project materials developed

If the project creates any products such as books, scientific papers, factsheets, images these should be outlined in this section outline and attach them where possible.

- Fact Sheet (Appendix 3)
- Bark Canoe (Traditional Watercraft)
- Traditional Fishing Gear (ie; nets)
- Power Point presentations
- Oral History Guidelines
- Guidelines supporting Engaging with Aboriginal Victorians (currently in draft format).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Taungurung cultural fishing retreat program



TAUNGURUNG CULTURAL FISHING RETREAT

'Unlocking customary fishing practice on Taungurung Country'

PROGRAM

20-21 February 2016; 10.00am – 4.00pm
Holmesglen Institute of TAFE, 92 Moore Road – Eildon

DAY 1 – Saturday 20th February:

ITEM	CONTENT	LEAD
1. Setting the Scene	<i>Opening:</i>	Taungurung Elder
	• Welcome to Country.	
	• House Keeping.	Lawrence Moser Trish Terry
	• Official project launch.	Allison Webb
	<i>Background:</i>	Mike Gilby Brett Ingram
	• Purpose, priorities, and processes;	
	- FRDC IRG objectives / outcomes.	
	- Links to the Victorian Aboriginal Fishing Strategy.	
10.00am: Morning Tea		
2. Fishing Event	Taungurung 'Community Fishing Event' (mini-competition) Goulburn River or Lake Eildon Pondage (TBC).	Mike Gilby Brett Ingram Lawrence Moser
12.30pm: Lunch – (Fully Catered BBQ)		
3. Presentations	• Freshwater fisheries management.	Anthony Forster
	- <i>With reference to examples on Taungurung Country.</i>	
	• Canadian examples of Indigenous fisheries management.	Allison Webb
	• Cultural based fisheries; examples from Cambodia experience.	Brett Ingram
3.00pm: Afternoon Tea		
4. Yarning Circle	<i>'Unlocking customary fishing practice on Taungurung Country'</i>	Men/Women facilitated yarning sessions
	"Men & Women" - Talk Customary Fishing;	
	• Identifying fish species and cultural fishing practice on Taungurung Country.	Lawrence Moser Trish Terry
	- <i>Recording fishing stories of significance to</i>	



Aboriginal Fishing Strategy

1





3. Yarning Circle	<p><i>'Unlocking customary fishing practice on Taungurung Country'</i></p> <p>Multimedia communications;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recording fish stories of significance to Taungurung. - Mapping of customary fishing practice on Taungurung Country. - Review images, drawings, photographs that depict customary fishing on Taungurung Country. - MCLA animation stories. <p>Cultural Activity:</p>	<p>Open / facilitated discussion</p> <p>Lawrence Moser Trish Terry</p> <hr/> <p>Monash University</p> <hr/> <p>Tania Mote?</p>
12.30pm Lunch		
4. Working Together	<p>Integrating traditional ecological knowledge into sustainable fisheries management by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established engagement protocols with traditional owners. - Involve traditional owners in research and monitoring of fisheries resources on Country. - Decisions-making around stocking fish into waters on Taungurung Country. - Identify on-Country related fishing projects that improves sustainable fisheries management. 	<p>Facilitated discussion</p> <p>Gabrielle Brennan</p> <hr/> <p>Brett Ingram</p> <hr/> <p>John Douglas</p> <hr/> <p>Mike Gilby</p>
5. Debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussion for any issues, questions. • Evaluation. • Where to from here. • Planning dates for stage II - May workshop. 	<p>Lawrence Moser Trish Terry Mike Gilby</p>
3.00pm Close - Afternoon Tea		

Invitees:	<p>Project Working Group:</p> <p>Mike Gilby (Aboriginal Project Officer, Fisheries Victoria) – Gabrielle Brennan (Senior Indigenous Policy Analyst, DEDITR) – Brett Ingram (Freshwater Fisheries Scientist) – Lawrence Moser (CEO, Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) – Trish Terry (Project Manager, Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) – Anthony Forster (Senior Manager, Freshwater Fisheries).</p> <hr/> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <p>Karen Adams (Monash University) – Rose Gilby (Monash University) – Shannon Faulkhead</p>
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(Monash University) – **Jo Ruscoe** (FRDC) – **Allison Webb** (Fisheries Victoria) – **James Andrews** (Fisheries Victoria) – **Michelle Wenner** (VRFish) – **Clare O’Kelly** (All In Productions) – **Gaye Sutherland** (Goulburn Broken CMA) – **Neville Atkinson** (Goulburn Broken CMA).

Glossary: **FRDC** (Fisheries Research Development Corporation) – **IRG** (Indigenous Reference Group on Fisheries) – **TBC** (To Be Confirmed).

WHAT TO BRING!

- Yarning Circles:
- Images, drawings, photographs and, stories that depicts Indigenous fishing in Victoria.
-
- Outdoor Activities:
- Comfortable loose fit clothing, closed shoes, hat.
 - Camp chair and fishing gear.
 - Medications (first aid officer will be on-site).

Pre-Event Questionnaire



Appendix 2: Project fact sheet



Fact Sheet:

Improving the recognition and integration of traditional owner customary fishing and ecological knowledge in the management of Victoria's fisheries.

Indigenous Customary Fishing

Fisheries Victoria in partnership with the Australian Government Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC), is taking action to increase the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of Victoria's fisheries resources.

The FRDC funded project will:

In partnership with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and J. Taungurung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, work with traditional owners and Aboriginal knowledge holders to produce culturally specific fisheries education products, and materials of relevance to Aboriginal people, that:

- Recognise Aboriginal customary fishing rights for Recognised traditional owner groups,
- Improve government and key stakeholder groups' understanding of customary fishing through documenting traditional owner customary fishing practices across parts of Victoria,
- Improve Victoria's traditional owner's participation in the management of Victoria's fisheries by developing a structured approach to engagement with Victoria's traditional owner community, and
- Improves sustainable fisheries management in collaboration with traditional owner groups.

To make sure we're moving in the right direction we need to talk to traditional owners, Indigenous Victorians and knowledge holders about customary and traditional fishing practices, and Indigenous interests in Victorian fisheries.

Project Need

- There is an information gap regarding understanding the nature and extent of customary fishing activities across Victoria.
- An improved understanding of traditional fishing practices will help promote an understanding of customary fishing among commercial and recreational fishing sectors.
- A better understanding of traditional fishing practices will inform government agencies of ways to improve participation by traditional owners in the ongoing management of fisheries across the fishing sectors, and
- Recording of information will support the knowledge transfer within traditional owner groups (from one generation to the next) and language retention relating to fisheries resources on traditional owner Country.

Victorian Aboriginal Fishing Strategy

In 2012 Fisheries Victoria launched the Victorian Aboriginal Fishing Strategy to shape our approach to Native Title, customary fishing, economic development opportunities, and increasing Indigenous participation in fisheries management. This is a State-wide effort that will involve working with the Victorian Indigenous community, government agencies and other fisheries stakeholders.

The Aboriginal Fishing Strategy applies to all Indigenous Victorians interested in the utilisation of fisheries resources, including Native Title holders.

Recognition of Indigenous culture, traditions and rights

The Aboriginal Fishing Strategy aims to better recognise Indigenous culture, tradition and rights by:

- Defining what customary fishing means to Indigenous Victorians;
- Recognising the customary fishing sector in management and the Fisheries Act;
- Establishing more effective communication with Indigenous communities; and
- Better utilising Indigenous knowledge in fisheries management.

Increasing Indigenous involvement in fishing and related industries

Fisheries Victoria is committed to investigating ways of increasing Indigenous Victorian's participation in fisheries management processes, including building the ability of people to take up opportunities.

The FRDC project is in keeping with the departments Aboriginal Inclusion Plan "Meerreeng Wanga" that aims to increase the involvement of Aboriginal Victorians in land, water and natural resource management and in food fibre industries to build strong Aboriginal culture and economic prosperity.

Get involved

We're at the beginning of the journey and want to talk to Indigenous Victorians about customary and traditional fishing, and Indigenous interests in Victorian fisheries. Fisheries Victoria will be available to talk to people about the FRDC project during facilitated workshops and face-to-face meetings at locations around East Gippsland and Victorian Central Highlands from November 2014 through end June 2016.

If you would like to meet with the project team or just talk about the FRDC project, contact:

Mike Gilby
Aboriginal Project Officer
Fisheries Victoria
Ph: 03 5051 4558 / 0427 724198
Email: michael.gilby@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Or for more information go to www.depi.vic.gov.au/indigenousfishing

FRDC FINAL REPORT CHECKLIST

Project Title:	<i>Improving the recognition and integration of Traditional Owner customary fishing and ecological knowledge in the management of Victoria's fisheries</i>		
Principal Investigators:	Mike Gilby		
Project Number:	2014-226		
Description:	<p>The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), in partnership with the Fisheries Research Development Corporation (FRDC), have undertaken this project to increase the involvement of Indigenous people in the management of Victoria's fisheries resources and to address the information gap regarding understanding the nature and extent of customary fishing activities across Victoria.</p> <p>The project has taken steps to improve government and key stakeholder groups' understanding of customary fishing through documenting Traditional Owner customary fishing practices across parts of Victoria. The project has also begun the process of improving Victoria's Traditional Owner's participation in the management of Victoria's fisheries by developing a structured approach to engagement with Victoria's Traditional Owner community.</p>		
Published Date:	n/a	Year:	2021
ISBN:	XXXXX (if applicable)	ISSN:	XXXXXXXXXXXXX (if applicable)
Key Words:	Indigenous fishing, Victorian fisheries, Customary fishing, Aboriginal Victoria.		

Please use this checklist to self-assess your report before submitting to FRDC. Checklist should accompany the report.

	Is it included (Y/N)	Comments
Foreword (optional)	N	
Acknowledgments	Y	
Abbreviations	Y	
Executive Summary	Y	
- What the report is about		
- Background – why project was undertaken		
- Aims/objectives – what you wanted to achieve at the beginning		
- Methodology – outline how you did the project		
- Results/key findings – this should outline what you found or key results		
- Implications for relevant stakeholders		
- Recommendations		
Introduction		
Objectives	Y	
Methodology	Y	
Results	Y	
Discussion	Y	

Conclusion	Y	
Implications	Y	
Recommendations	Y	
Further development	Y	
Extension and Adoption	Y	
Project coverage	Y	
Glossary	N	
Project materials developed	Y	
Appendices	Y	
EXTENSION		
Extension plan developed?	Y	
Extension undertaken?	Y	
If extension was undertaken, who was it undertaken with and was it successful? (Detail answer in comments section)	Y	VFA, Traditional Owners, Industry groups, Recreational fishing groups, commercial fishing groups.
If No, then is further extension necessary? With who? How? (detail answer in comments section)		