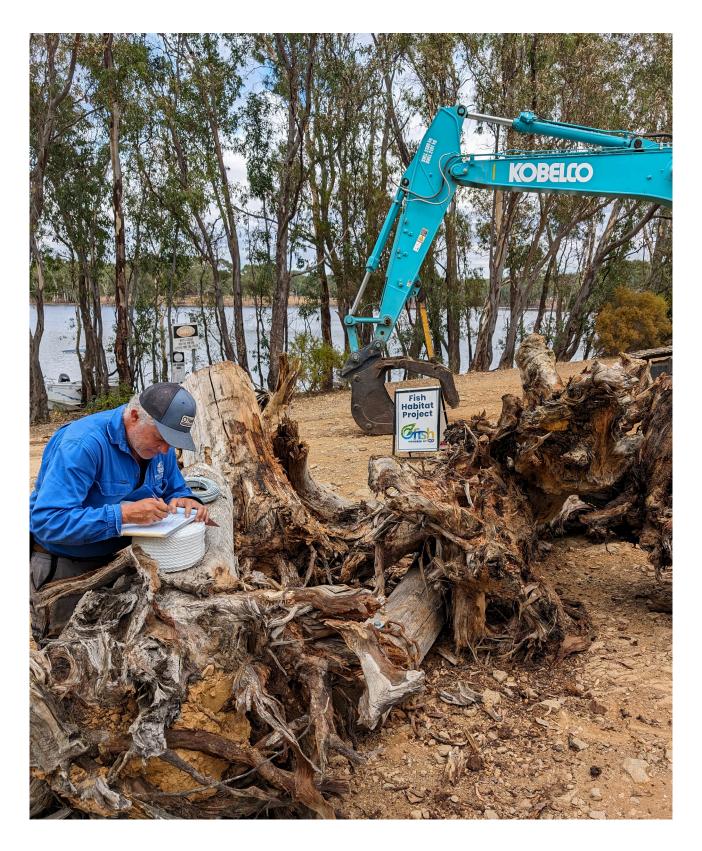


Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence **Fisheries** Trust Account 2023-24

A report to each House of Parliament on the disbursement of Recreational Fishing Licence Revenue







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Cover image: Over 50 large woody habitats were installed by OzFish Unlimited at Lake Eppalock. The additional habitat helps safeguard the future of native fish stocks therefore creating greater opportunity for anglers to catch good quality fish. The habitats were sourced and provided by Bushfire Victoria after bushfire and storm clean-up efforts.

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Foreword

A report to each House of Parliament on the disbursement of Recreational Fishing Licence Revenue from the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account, 2023-24

Each year the Victorian Government utilises revenue from the sale of recreational fishing licences to fund an extensive range of programs and projects to create endless opportunities and benefits for Victoria's recreational fisheries.

As the Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Fisheries Authority, I recognise the significant contribution that recreational fishing makes to the State's economy and the social wellbeing it brings to people who enjoy fishing.

I would like to thank the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Advisory Committee, who provide valuable and timely advice on how licence funds should be disbursed through the Recreational Fishing Grants Program.

The 2023-24 round of the Large Grants Program will see over \$953,483 allocated to 13 new projects. These projects include surveys of key native recreational fisheries, fish habitat restoration in East Gippsland, a trial waterway litter prevention program in the Sunraysia district, construction of a new fish weighing gantry at Warrnambool and installation of fishing platforms and pontoons across the state.

A further \$447,313 was allocated via the Commissioning Grants Program; \$278,013 to produce a range of popular education and communication products that assist recreational anglers to understand and comply with fishing regulations, and \$169,300 for the monitoring of recreational fisheries at key locations in Port Phillip Bay, Western Port, the Gippsland Lakes, Corner Inlet, and the coastal Lakes Entrance fishery.

In addition, three Intermediate Grant applications were also approved. This included a grant of \$50,000 to the Nhill Lake Reserve Committee of Management to establish a reliable water supply to Nhill Lake, and a grant of \$22,808 to Horsham Angling Club to manage carp populations in Toolondo Reservoir.

The Small Grants Program saw over \$32,987 provided to angling clubs to run events and activities. This program has funded over 455 projects worth more than \$1.2 million since its inception in 2010.

In 2023-24 trust funds contributed to the delivery of two key election commitments. The Little Angler Kit program received \$1,500,000 to provide kits to 95,000 grade 5 students across Victoria. A further \$300,606 was provided to 32 angling clubs through the Stronger Fishing Clubs grant program to boost club participation and encourage fishing.

During 2023-24, Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account funds were also committed or disbursed to fund:

- increased fish stocking across Victoria, including iconic native species such as Murray cod, golden perch and Australian bass, and the highly sought brown trout, rainbow trout and chinook salmon.
- the deployment of Fisheries Officers to boost enforcement and education and protect our valuable fisheries.
- programs to get more Victorians fishing, which has included even more fish stocking as well as the staging of the
 Hooked on Festivals and the Vic Fish Kids events at various locations across the state.
- VRFish, which advocates recreational fishers' views to the Government to inform fisheries management.
- the Victorian Fishcare program, which delivers responsible fishing education and events to the community, and
- the costs incurred in the administration of the Recreational Fishing Licence and Grants Program.

Across the state recreational fishers are continually benefiting from the improvements that are made possible by contributing their fishing license fees to creating sustainable recreational fisheries for all generations to enjoy.

It is with great satisfaction that I provide each House of Parliament this report on the receipts and disbursements from the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account for 2023-24.

Travis Dowling

Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Fisheries Authority

25/10/2024

Fisheries Act 1995

Pursuant to Section 151B(4) of the *Fisheries Act 1995*, the responsible Minister must cause a report on how amounts paid into the Recreational Fishing Licence (RFL) Trust Account were disbursed:

- (a) to be prepared by 1 October each year; and
- (b) to be laid before each House of Parliament on or before the seventh sitting day of that House after the report has been prepared.

For the information of Honourable Members, the RFL Trust Account came into effect on 1 April 2001.

The role of the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) is to administer the Recreational Fishing Licence Program and manage the amounts determined by the Minister for Outdoor Recreation for the purpose of improving recreational fishing.

The VFA also administers the Recreational Fishing Grants Program and provides support to the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Advisory Committee which provides advice to the Minister for Outdoor Recreation on how funds from the sale of licences should be spent to improve recreational fishing in Victoria.

The 2023-24 financial year is the twenty third full year of the RFL Trust Account's operation.

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office has audited the receipts received, and disbursements made from the RFL Trust Account in 2023-24.

Enforcement & Education

In 2023-24, RFL Trust Account receipts contributed \$1,978,746 to the VFA's compliance budget.

RFL Trust Account receipts, when added to ongoing recurrent funding of fisheries compliance (education and enforcement) activities, contributes substantially to the delivery of recreational fisheries compliance services in Victorian coastal and inland locations.

Fisheries Officers have continued to have good contact with recreational fishers in the field during the last year. Table 1 summarises yearly totals for contacts in the recreational fishing sector. The work is divided into categories based on species, locations, or other activities. Over 43,877 total contacts were made with recreational fishers (including Marine Safety) by Fisheries Officers during the reporting period.

Compliance contacts (not including Marine Safety only inspections) with Fisheries Officers totalled over 43,325 with Table 1 showing the number of offenders, verbal warnings, official warnings, infringement notices, and briefs of evidence for the year.

In addition, Fisheries officers conducted 6,115 Transport Safety Victoria inspections resulting in 1,275 offenders, 548 verbal warnings, 812 official warnings, 364 Infringement Notices and 0 briefs of evidence.

Fisheries Officers also attended 69 recreational fishing related shows, forums, clinics, and events (including angling club meetings) for over 7667 contacts.

All Fisheries Officers provide services to the recreational fishing sector and interact with recreational fishers through:

- contact with recreational fishers in the field.
- attending angling club meetings.
- attending recreational fishing-related shows, family fishing events, forums, and clinics.
- attending fish stocking events.
- liaising with grant recipients regarding the successful completion of infrastructure projects under the annual Recreational Fishing Grants Program (Large Grants).
- advising fisheries management on issues relating to recreational fishing.
- assisting Fisheries Management, Policy, Science and Licencing Branch on matters relating to recreational fishing.
- responding to recreational fishing issues raised from the 13FISH Offence Reporting Line.
- producing recreational fishing-related media releases/distributing booklets and pamphlets.
- investigating recreational fishing-related offences and prosecuting where necessary.
- collecting intelligence related to recreational fishing offences.
- participating in recreational fishing-related educational activities with school groups and the broader recreational fishing community; and
- engaging with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The VFA in conjunction with the recreational fishing community strives to achieve high levels of voluntary compliance amongst recreational fishers. By working collaboratively and by continuing to promote responsible and ethical fishing, we are better positioned to ensure both fish for now and fish for the future.

Table 1.

Recreational	Contacts with recreational fishers	Number of offenders	Verbal warnings issued	Official warnings issued	Infringement notices issued	Briefs of evidence compiled
Abalone Central Waters	1,435	200	32	131	149	11
Abalone (intertidal zone)	248	145	26	164	164	4
Abalone (other waters)	291	42	6	30	24	2
Bass yabbies	107	9	0	4	5	0
Bay & Inlet - other	1,681	89	14	27	35	0
Bay & Inlet - Gippsland Lakes	1,206	61	13	8	35	0
Bay & Inlet - Lakes Tyers	1,477	78	17	10	44	0
Bay & Inlet - Snowy River	166	12	3	1	3	1
Bay & Inlet - Port Phillip	14,810	1025	272	455	352	2
Bay & Inlet - Western Port	2,757	167	26	89	40	0
Corner Inlet	893	40	18	8	12	0
Estuary	2,982	208	62	92	57	1
Freshwater	4944	309	97	109	90	3
Golden perch	1,794	66	16	27	19	1
Intertidal - other	199	58	13	32	25	0
Intertidal - pipis	263	11	7	1	3	0
Intertidal - Port Phillip	305	157	29	109	73	0
Intertidal - red shore crab	178	39	2	28	14	0
Marine Parks	318	197	42	74	104	1
Murray cod	1,426	86	32	27	30	0
Ocean	6,112	447	118	176	166	2
Rock lobster	334	30	8	23	18	0
Salmonids	2,330	192	56	65	69	4
Sand crabs	547	26	5	7	21	0
Scallops	41	1	0	0	1	0
Spearfishing	675	38	8	19	9	0
Spider crab	1	0	0	0	0	0
Spiny Cray	472	54	16	22	28	0
Squid - cephalopods	834	14	2	4	4	3
Tourism Operators	19	1	0	0	1	0
Trout cod	20	2	1	1	0	0
Tuna	636	18	4	4	7	0
Yabbies - freshwater	317	24	3	14	6	0
Totals	N/A	4,930	1,531	2,616	1,969	35

Fish Production and Stocking

In 2023-24, RFL Trust Account receipts contributed \$2,067,322 to the VFA's fish production and stocking budget. This includes \$1,128,162 of the base amount (approved by the Recreational Fishing Grants Working Group in May 2012, ongoing) to support fish production and stocking from Snobs Creek and Arcadia, and \$939,160 from the RFL component of the Go Fishing Victoria initiative. These funds along with state government funds enabled the VFA to stock a record 11.54 million fish in 2023-24. Details of what species of fish were stocked by region is shown in Table 2.

RFL Trust Account receipts, when added to state government funding of fish stocking and production activities, contributes significantly to the delivery of recreational fisheries state-wide stocking program.

The combined funds are used to operate the fish hatchery at Snobs Creek, meet costs associated with the delivery of fish across the state and for the purchase of additional fish.

In 2023-24 the VFA (Snobs Creek and Arcadia) grew 1,863,300 native fish and 1,975,939 salmonid fish that were stocked into public waters. In addition to these fish the VFA purchased 7,703,687 mixed species of fish that were picked up and delivered to various locations across the state.

During 2023-24 VFA staff associated with the production and delivery of fish carried out activities such as:

- management of broodstock across all species.
- · harvesting of eggs from all species.
- · feeding fish of all ages.
- · careful movement of fish as they develop.
- · animal health monitoring and management; and
- our stocking vehicles travelled 228,125 kilometres which took 561 person days to undertake.

The VFA works closely with anglers and other key stakeholders to coordinate the successful breeding and delivery of fish across the state.

A list of all waters stocked can be found at https://vfa.vic.gov.au/stockingdatabase

Table 2.

Species	Barwon South West	Gippsland	Grampians	Hume	Loddon Mallee	Port Phillip	Grand Total
Australian Bass	20,000	435,000	-	-	-	5,000	460,000
Dusky Flathead	-	21,100	-	-	-	-	21,100
Estuary Perch	84,000	138,000	-	-	-	33,000	255,000
Golden Perch	483,400	-	539,900	1,497,900	1,734,500	21,200	4,276,900
Macquarie Perch	-	-	-	78,800	-	-	78,800
Murray Cod	499,200	-	117,400	1,083,400	1,877,500	36,400	3,613,900
Silver Perch	-	-	77,800	103,100	471,500	136,100	788,500
Trout Cod	-	-	-	44,900	-	-	44,900
Natives Total	1,086,600	594,100	735,100	2,808,100	4,083,500	231,700	9,539,100
Brown Trout	500,505	39,500	87,727	445,645	75,000	4,605	1,152,982
Chinook Salmon	182,700	-	-	-	-		182,700
Rainbow Trout	201,050	101,700	165,520	92,474	43,300	64,100	668,144
Tiger Trout	0	-	-	-	-	-	0
Salmonids Total	884,255	141,200	253,247	538,119	118,300	68,705	2,003,826
Total	1,970,855	735,300	988,347	3,346,219	4,201,800	300,405	11,542,926

Go Fishing Victoria

In 2023-24, RFL Trust Account receipts contributed \$1,535,955 towards the VFA's implementation of the Go Fishing Victoria initiative to grow participation and provide more fishing opportunities.

RFL Trust Account receipts, when added to state government funding, contribute significantly to the delivery of the Go Fishing Victoria initiative. The State Government has extended its commitment with Phase 3 of the Go Fishing Victoria initiative, which will see a further \$96 million invested to grow participation and fishing opportunities around the state.

The RFL investment has contributed significantly to several aspects of the plan including improved access and facilities for anglers, fish stocking, and events and other community engagement activities. A summary of achievements in each of those areas is presented below.

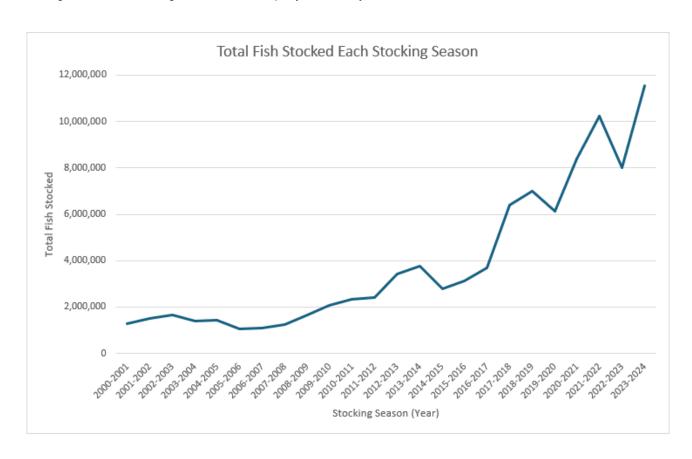
Improved Access and Facilities for Anglers

A total of \$134,517 has been spent on improving infrastructure and access in 2023-24. Projects which received funding included: the installation and maintenance of fish aggregating devices offshore from Torquay, construction of a kayak fishing reef in Hobsons Bay by Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club in partnership with the VFA, maintenance of the Lake Banimboola fishing area by the Dartmouth Progress Association, the development of a new fishing pontoon at Lake Boga by the Lake Boga Sports Fishing Club and improvements at the Patterson river fish cleaning facility, including installation of surface drainage to take surface water away from the area and improve the surrounding amenity.

Fish Stocking

The 2023-24 season has been very successful for the VFA's native fish stocking program, with impressive numbers of native fish being produced at the Arcadia Native Fish Hatchery and Snobs Creek, including Murray cod, Macquarie perch, trout cod and golden perch. It has also been a great year for salmonid production at the Snobs Creek Hatchery with excellent numbers of trout and salmon being stocked as a result.

The VFA has also been able to source good numbers of native fish from other private fish production farms which has resulted in the VFA stocking a record 11.54 million fish across more than 220 waters in 2023-24 and putting the VFA well on target to stock an average of 10 million fish per year over 5 years.



Events and Engagement

The 2023-24 period continued to see a return of events around the state celebrating the joys of fishing, with a Go Fishing Victoria RFL investment of \$400,946. There were many highlights including:

- Hooked on events Events were held in Portland, Portarlington and Lakes Entrance to showcase celebrations of seafood and fishing in key tourism destinations, attracting between 2,000 and 5,000 people at each event.
- **Trout Season Opening Events** The Ballarat and Goulburn Fishing Festivals were staged on the same day to celebrate the trout season opening attracting 3000 and 1000 people respectively.
- Vic Fish Kids Clinics were held at Eildon, Ballarat, San Remo, Newport, Portland, Lakes, Portarlington, Port Campbell, Arcadia and Lillydale Lake, in partnership with local communities, VFA Ambassadors and Fishcare volunteers.
- Local Forums A series of 12 community networking events were presented by the VFA at Mildura, Kyabram, Wangaratta, Shepparton, Albert Park, Mitcham, Charlton, Ballarat, Horsham, Warrnambool, Leongatha and Nicholson.
- All Abilities Clinics at Lillydale Lake Clincs were delivered in partnership with Fishcare, to provide a bespoke
 experience for 20 disabled fishers.
- Arcadia Open Day Attracted over 1100 people with guided tours exploring the new native fish hatchery, kids
 fishing clinics at the fishout pond, casting clinics, kids activities, information stalls, fishing personalities sharing tips
 and tricks, cooking demos featuring Murray cod.
- **Snobs Creek Open Day** Attracted over 700 people with guided tours and a focus on the soon to be built Conservation Hatchery, in conjunction with the Arthur Rylah Institute.

Women in Recreational Fishing and Boating (WIRFAB) Network

An updated strategy has been developed to guide the network through to 2030, with objectives focusing on increasing participation, education, community building, advocacy, consultation and gathering data for female anglers and boaters.

The WIRFAB website and social media channels (Facebook and Instagram) are gaining momentum and continue to build a collection of valuable materials to enhance fishing and boating experiences.

The online community now has over 4,500 members, with over 300 women involved in the WIRFAB Locals community program. Over 40 women have participated in the WIRFAB Leadership Program, with six new leaders joining in 2024. WIRFAB leaders represented the VFA at various events like the Melbourne Boat Show, Hooked on events and many more. International Women's Day saw 'learn to fish' clinics run at three different locations. Multiple community events were also run through the WIRFAB Locals program, including women's tackle nights, casting clinics and skills-based fishing and boating sessions.

Little Angler Kits

In 2023-24, RFL Trust Account receipts contributed \$1,500,000 towards the VFA's implementation of the Little Angler Kit program, which saw 95,000 kits provided to grade 5 primary school students across Victoria. All schools in Victoria were given the opportunity to receive a free Little Angler Kit, including, government, independent, catholic, homeschool, language and specialist schools across regional and metropolitan areas.

Distribution of Little Angler Kits began in late 2023 and was complete by February 2024. Each kit included a rod, reel with line, tackle tray, some basic tackle, and information on how students can successfully use the kit to catch a fish. Other helpful information and instructional videos on how to correctly use the kits can be found on the VFA website in the Little Angler hub.

This disbursement of funds from the RFL Trust Account has allowed the fulfilment of the 2022 state election commitment to deliver Little Angler Kits to grade 5 students across 1,900 schools, including homeschooled students throughout Victoria.

The VFA has received a lot of positive feedback from both students and parents about the Little Angler Kits. Anecdotes of recipients detailed how the Little Angler Kits had a profound effect on the student's health and wellbeing by getting them involved in an outdoor activity and how children were able to participate in a fun activity even when coming from low socioeconomic areas. The Little Angler Kits also enabled community connection as fisheries officers were able to have contact with children not only using their Little Angler Kit but also catching fish.

The RFL investment has contributed significantly to inclusivity in recreational fishing and has encouraged children from diverse backgrounds to enjoy being outdoors by the water. The statewide implementation of the Little Angler Kits has provided an educational opportunity to primary school students who otherwise would not have participated in recreational fishing.

The VFA is committed to increasing participation in recreational fishing by primary school aged children. By working with schools across Victoria to educate children on marine life and the positive impact recreational fishing has on mental health and wellbeing we can ensure the development of an inclusive and diverse environment that allows everyone the opportunity to fish.

The Victorian Government is proactive in encouraging all Victorians to fish, specifically focusing on the involvement of women, children and people from diverse backgrounds. We educate fishers and the community about responsible fishing practices and promote stewardship of our precious resource.

Stronger Fishing Clubs Grant Program

In 2023-24, RFL Trust Account receipts contributed \$300,606 to the VFA's Stronger Fishing Clubs (SFC) grant program which aims to assist fishing clubs across Victoria to attract new members and encourage participation by improving their facilities and what their club can offer to the local community.

Round 1 of the SFC grant program saw a total of 32 clubs each receive funding of up to \$10,000 for eligible projects to improve and strengthen their club. Descriptions of projects that were funded through Round 1 can be found in Table 3.

RFL Trust Account receipts, when added to state government funding, allow the VFA to collaborate with the community to not only promote fishing, but to foster meaningful relationships with Victorian anglers. The SFC grant program is assisting recreational fishing clubs to facilitate education, connection and promotion of their club and fishing to the local community.

The VFA continues to work closely with fishing clubs to assist them on how they can best utilise funding opportunities to encourage their local communities to get involved in recreational fishing.

Table 3.

Organisation	Project	Amount
Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club	Installation of fish finders and GPS on club owned hire boats and kayaks, supplied all members with fish measurement mats and upgrade of clubhouse access system software.	\$10,000
Australian Trout Foundation	Drone and video equipment to extend marketing and promotional reach, gazebo with signage and work wear for volunteer members.	\$9,850
Bairnsdale Fly Fishers Club	Replacement of solar equipment, construction of machinery and mower shed and website upgrade.	\$9,889
Bannockburn Angling Club	Club polo shirts, catering for club functions, trophies for junior and senior members and supply the club with a computer, printer and stationery.	\$10,000
Bendigo & District Fly Fishers	Fishing equipment for come and try days, including fly fishing rods, reels and fly line, and equipment for fly tying. Guest speaker, website update and training, St. Johns Ambulance Outdoor & Snake Bite kits, TV and video camera accessories.	\$9,025
Black Dog Creek Fishing Club	Advertising, guest speaker and catering to promote the club and host 'come and try' days. Fishing equipment and sun safe hats with club logo. New concrete slab to upgrade BBQ area to increase accessibility.	\$9,535
Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club	Uniform, IT, software and printing equipment to develop club merchandise and advertising.	\$10,000
Clunes Angling Club	Uniform for members, laptop and club equipment. Club kitchen upgrade with a food handling course for members.	\$10,000
Danglers Fishing Club	Website and app development to promote club competitions. Club uniform and merchandise.	\$9,093
Didyabringyarodalong Angling Club	Advertising of club across tv, newspaper and social media platforms. New club uniforms, laptops and purchase and installation of a club honour board.	\$9,887
Dunlop Bayswater Angling Club and Fish Protection Society	Installation of a water tank and bunks to encourage members to utilise the facilities more frequently especially during the summer months.	\$10,000
Geelong & District Anglers Club and Fish Protection Society	Replacement of roof on the club rooms.	\$10,000
Geelong Sport and Game Fishing Club	Uniform and IT upgrades to advertise and promote club membership.	\$5,800
Lake Purrumbete Angling Club	Purchase of a BBQ for events and an air conditioner for the club room.	\$10,000
Lakeside Anglers Club	New club uniforms, portable toilet hire for events, junior member start up packs, laptops and website design and maintenance.	\$10,000

Meredith Angling Club	Purchase and installation of an air conditioner, club room equipment, lawn mower, gardening tools, security door, BBQ and club branded uniform.	\$9,959
Mitcham Angling Club and Fish Protection Society	Purchase large screen TV and supporting AV upgrades. Update internal amenities.	\$10,000
Mitta Valley Angling Club	Club branded gazebo, uniforms and merchandise. Fishing equipment, foldable tables, storage boxes, tents, sleeping bags, camp stove, kitchen cutlery and enamel dish sets.	\$9,426
Mordialloc Boating and Angling Club	Landscaping upgrades, picnic table and 3 phase pressure washer.	\$10,000
Mornington Peninsula Fly Fishers	Fly fishing equipment, advertising for come and try days, club merchandise and presentation equipment.	\$10,000
Nathalia Angling Club	Replacing damaged floor with new concrete base with a non-slip surface.	\$10,000
Ocean Grove Angling Club	Club uniform, advertising, marquee, display and cooking equipment for community market stall.	\$7,240
Omeo Angling Club	Mobile signal booster, POS system and repairs to windows and roof.	\$7,400
Port Albert Fishing Club	Club room kitchen upgrades.	\$10,000
Preston and Northcote Angling Club	Fish measurement mats, PFD's, club uniform, guest speaker promotions, upgrade to IT systems, family and council community days.	\$10,000
Southern Fly Fishes Australia	Purchase, delivery and assembly of 50X chairs and 7X tables.	\$9,201
Tatong Anglers Group	First aid training for 10X members, fishing equipment, BBQ, club uniforms and a gazebo.	\$9,989
The Goulburn Murray Fly Fishers	First aid training for 15X club members, Club uniforms, defibrillator and Zoleo tracking device.	\$9,510
The Red Tag Fly Fisher's Club	Customised gazebo, club uniform, advertising materials, software membership package, club laptop with high velocity scanner, fishing and fly-tying equipment.	\$10,000
The Toorak Angling Club and South Eastern Anglers	Clubroom upgrade, create new meeting room and install internet.	\$10,000
Top Pub Fishing Club	Club uniform and fishing equipment.	\$5,000
Wonthaggi Angling Club	Recladding external walls of club room building.	\$9,801

Financial Report

Report concerning how amounts paid into the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account were disbursed in 2023-24 financial year

\$	
8,650,894	Total receipts excludes 6% commission paid to online agents processed through Service Victoria. In 2023-24, 6,062 RFL licences were sold via RFL online agent portal.
147,749	Fisheries Act 1995, S. 151B(5) enables money standing to the credit of the Account to be invested in any manner in which funds may be invested under the <i>Trustee Act 1958</i> .

Disbursements 2023-24	\$	
Recreational Fishing Grants Program and other projects	\$1,220,229	Payments to 48 projects - see Note 2.
Go Fishing Victoria Implementation	1,535,955	
Fisheries Enforcement & Education Branch	1,978,746	
Little Angler Kits Program	1,500,000	
Fish Stocking	1,128,162	
The purchase and stocking of native and salmonid fish.		
VRFish	\$518,504	
Fishcare Victoria Inc.	\$319,323	
Stronger Fishing Clubs Grant Program	\$300,606	
Community Information Recreational Fishing Grants Program/Recreational Fishing	51,405	
Licence disbursement reporting related advertising & publicity. Recreational Fishing Licence (RFL) 6% sales commissions Applicable to sales commissions incurred during 2022-23, paid in 2023-24 financial year.	4,174	
Costs and expenses incurred in the administration of RFLs		
Salaries and business, corporate & other levies.	685,402	
Professional and contract services (includes printing and distribution of plastic licences, storage of communication products).	166,615	
Postal expenses, parking, vehicle hire, accommodation, printing, stationery, telephones, banking charges, office equipment, external learning and IT assistance.	28,945	
Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Advisory Committee Sitting fees, sustenance, accommodation, vehicle hire, and venue hire.	19,824	
Snobs Creek Advisory Board Sitting fees, sustenance, accommodation, vehicle hire and venue hire.	4,655	
Total RFL expenses for 2023-24	9,462,545	
Net cash inflow/(outflow)	(663,902)	
Cash as at 1 July 2023	9,634,394	
Cash as at 30 June 2024	8,970,492	Provision to fund previously approved Recreational Fishing Grants Program projects extending into 2024-25 and beyond as applicable and other items totalling \$1,062,806 - see Note 3.
		Cash balance includes \$8,654,284 which has been invested – see Note 4.

Amounts are net of applicable GST

Notes to the Financial Report

These notes form part of and should be read in conjunction with the financial report of the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account.

Note 1 - Statement of Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation

This special purpose financial report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Fisheries Act 1995.

The Recreational Fishing Licence Trust operates under section 151B of the *Fisheries Act 1995* to distribute revenue derived from the sale of Recreational Fishing Licences to projects that will further improve recreational fishing opportunities in Victoria, and to fund costs incurred in the administration of recreational fishing licences.

Funds received by the Trust include:

- all levies and fees in respect of recreational fishing licences.
- all income from the investment of funds within the Trust; and
- any other money authorised to be paid to the Trust by the Minister.

These are reported as receipts in the Financial Report.

Disbursements from the Trust include improvements to recreational fishing as determined and the costs incurred to administer the recreational fishing licences.

The report has been prepared on a cash basis to report on how levies and application fees received in respect of recreational fishing licences have been disbursed from the Trust Account.

Note 2 - Payments to Recreational Fishing Grants Program and other projects during 2023-24

Projects initially announced in 2019-20		
Commissioning Grants Program		
Informing sustainable management of Victoria's wild catch fisheries. Partial Year One funding. Total project funding of \$163,000.	\$52,008	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Sub-Total	\$52,008	
Large Grants Program		
Waranga Basin Fish Habitat Installation Project. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$100,000	\$10,000	Goulburn Valley Association of Angling Clubs Inc.
Increasing fish habitat in the Little Murray River - Phase Three. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$37,265.	\$3,726	North Central Catchment Management Authority
Increasing fish habitat in Pyramid Creek near Hird and Johnson Swamp. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$31,385.	\$3,139	North Central Catchment Management Authority
Sub-Total	\$16,865	
Projects initially announced in 2020-21		
Large Grants Program		
Victorian Wild Trout Fisheries Management Program and the Victorian Wild Trout Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025. Balance of funding. Total project funding of \$73,850	\$7,385	Australian Trout Foundation
Sub-Total	\$7,385	
Projects initially announced in 2021-22		
Commissioning Grants Program		
2022-23 Communication and Compliance Products. Partial Year One funding. Total project funding of \$257,450	\$152,425	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Sub-Total	\$152,425	
Large Grants Program		
Understanding residency and movement of Yellowtail Kingfish (Seriola lalandi) in Victorian waters using acoustic and satellite tracking. 90% instalment of year two funding. Total project funding of \$196,572.	\$69,270	Deakin University
Gippsland Lakes Habitat Restoration project. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$100,000.	\$10,000	East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
Sub-Total	\$79,270	
Projects initially announced in 2022-23		
Commissioning Grants Program		
Informing sustainable management of Victoria's wild catch fisheries. Partial Year One funding. Total project funding of \$127,180.	\$124,961	Victorian Fisheries Authority
2023-24 Communication and Compliance Products. Partial Year One funding. Total project funding of \$276,512	\$45,503	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Sub-Total Sub-Total	\$170,464	
Large Grants Program		
Gippsland Lakes Habitat Restoration (Jones Bay and Nicholson River). 90% instalment of year one funding. Total project funding of \$100,000.	\$90,000	East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
Increasing fish habitat and access at Kennington Reservoir 90% instalment of year one funding. Total project funding of \$99,999.	\$89,999	City of Greater Bendigo
Gunbower Weir Fishway Upgrade. 90% instalment of year one funding. Total project funding of \$267,045.	\$89,182	North Central Catchment Management Authority
Rejuvenating Port Phillip's reef ball infrastructure. 90% instalment of year one funding. Total project funding of \$288,650.	\$86,940	OzFish Unlimited
Cracking the Code on Captive Breeding of Macquarie perch. Total project funding of \$150,000	\$50,000	Victorian Fisheries Authority
Assessing the status of Murray crayfish populations across north-eastern Victoria. 90% instalment of year one funding plus 10% balance of funding.	\$45,000	Arthur Rylah Institute

Cairn Curran - Picnic Point - All abilities amenity block. 90% instalment of year one funding. Total project funding of \$45,455.	\$40,909	Goulburn-Murray Rural Water Corporation
Karkarook Lake submersible bore pump. 90% instalment of year one funding. Total project funding of \$43,091.	\$38,782	Parks Victoria
Multilingual recreational fishing campaigns in Melbourne. 90% instalment of year one funding. Total project funding of \$34,909.	\$31,418	3ZZZ
OzFish Unlimited native fish roadshow: 90% instalment of year one funding. Raising the profile of fish habitat in Northern Victoria. Total project funding of \$60,909.	\$27,409	OzFish Unlimited
Sub-Total	\$589,639	
Intermediate Grants Program		
Establishment of Nhill Lake water supply	\$45,000	Nhill Lake Reserve Committee of Management
Managing Lake Toolondo carp populations	\$20,925	Horsham Angling Club
Catering Trailer for Australian Trout Foundation program and events	\$16,364	Australian Trout Foundation
Sub-Total	\$82,289	
Small Grants Program		
Casting for Recovery Victoria Fly Fishing Retreat	\$5,000	Mending Casts
Angler Engagement Series	\$5,000	Mitcham Angling Club
2024 Ovens River Challenge	\$5,000	Native Fish Australia
Solar lighting on boat ramp pontoons at Lake Bullen Merri	\$4,620	South Beach Committee of Management
Lure Learning and Casting at Cairn Curran	\$4,452	Midland & North Central Angling Association
School Holiday Fishing Workshops	\$4,005	Hindmarsh Shire Council
Strengthen our club through increased participation in recreational fishing	\$3,950	Mornington Peninsula Fly Fishers
Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club Launch	\$3,763	Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club
Get Hooked on Fishing event at Arcadia Pondage	\$3,727	Salvation Army (Shepparton Branch)
Learn to Fly Fish Workshop	\$3,420	Ballarat Fly Fishers Club
Reels & Wheels Fishing Program	\$2,750	Muscular Dystrophy Australia
Kids/All Abilities Day	\$2,425	Gippsland Lakes Fishing Club
Cone Try Fly Fishing Program	\$2,200	Yarra Valley Fly Fishers
Green Hill Lake Community Fishing Day	\$2,182	Green Hill Lake Development Board
Lake Burrumbeet Clean Up	\$2,149	Friends of Lake Burrumbeet Inc
Kids Fishing Weekend	\$2,038	Dunlop Bayswater Angling Club
Come Try Fishing Event	\$2,000	Kyabram Angling Club
Dungula Maniga Banga Club Launch and Come and Try Fishing	\$1,986	Dungula Maniga Banga Inc
Fly Fishing Promotions	\$1,861	Red Tag Fly Fisher's Club
Fishing Education and Instruction Talk Night	\$1,590	Corinella Boating & Angling Club
Community Fishing Day	\$1,450	Murtoa Angling Club
Family Fishing Day	\$1,400	Kyneton Angling Club
Rochester 'Fish Catch' Community Fishing Day	\$1,200	Strathallan Family Landcare Group
Gone Fishing Day - Wimmera River	\$886	VRFish
Promoting Safe and Sustainable Fishing to Kids	\$830	Dargo and District Angling Club
Sub-Total	\$69,884	
Disbursements net of GST	\$1,220,229	

Note 3 - Proposal to fund approved Recreational Fishing Grant Program projects, and other items in 2024-25 and beyond as applicable

Proposal to fund previously approved Recreational Fishing Grants Program projects extending into 2024-25 financial year and beyond as applicable, and other items

Project No.	Region	Project category	Proponent	Project site	Type of waters	Project duration	Proposal	Funding (Exclusive GST)	Other contributions/comments
CG22232	State-wide	Commissioning Grant	Victorian Fisheries Authority	State-wide	State-wide	1yr	2023-24 Communication and Compliance Products. Total project funding of \$276,512.	\$226,009	VFA in-kind project management.
LG2314	Port Phillip & Western Port	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	OzFish Unlimited	Port Phillip Bay	Marine	3yrs	Rejuvenating Port Phillip's reef ball infrastructure. Balance of 2 nd and 3 rd year funding. Total project funding of \$288,650.	\$201,710	\$99,415 in-kind.
LG2306	Northern	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	North Central Catchment Management Authority	Gunbower	Inland	3yrs	Gunbower Weir Fishway Upgrade. Balance of 2 nd and 3 rd year funding. Total project funding of \$267,045.	\$177,864	\$124,773 Concept design, detailed design and construction documentation. \$4,000 in-kind.
CG21221	State-wide	Commissioning Grant	Victorian Fisheries Authority	State-wide	State-wide		2022-23 Communication and Compliance Products. Total project funding of \$257,450.	\$105,025	VFA in-kind project management.
LG2315	State-wide	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	Victorian Fisheries Authority	State-wide	State-wide	3yrs	Cracking the Code on Captive Breeding of Macquarie perch. Total project funding of \$150,000.	\$100,000	Financial: \$1,154,000 In-kind: \$2,417,277
LG21222	State-wide	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	Victorian Fisheries Authority	State-wide	Inland	2yr	Report cards for key native recreational fisheries. Balance of 2 nd Year funding. Total project funding of \$85,000.	\$42,500	VFA in-kind \$80,000 DELWP in-kind \$80,000
LG212211	State-wide	Research	Deakin University	State-wide	State-wide	3yr	Understanding residency and movement of Yellowtail Kingfish (<i>Seriola lalandi</i>) in Victorian waters using acoustic and satellite tracking. Balance of 3 rd Year funding. Total project funding of \$196,572.	\$39,378	Total in-kind = \$729,886
LG2311	Northern	Education, Information and Training	OzFish Unlimited	Swan Hill, Echuca, Bendigo.	Inland	2yrs	OzFish Unlimited native fish roadshow: Raising the profile of fish habitat in Northern Victoria. Balance of 2 nd Year funding. Total project funding of \$60,909.	\$33,500	\$80,250 in-kind.
LG2309	Gippsland	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	Gippsland Lakes	Estuarine	1yr	Gippsland Lakes Habitat Restoration (Jones Bay and Nicholson River). Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$100,000.	\$10,000	Annual works to improve waterway health (\$5M/year).
LG212222	Northern	Access & Facilities	Ouyen Inc	Northern	Inland	1yr	Ouyen Lake Floating Fishing Pontoon and Walkway Project. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$100,000.	\$10,000	Ouyen Lake Committee - \$25,000 in-kind

Project No.	Region	Project category	Proponent	Project site	Type of waters	Project duration	Proposal	Funding (Exclusive GST)	Other contributions/comments
LG2308	Northern	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	City of Greater Bendigo	Kennington Reservoir	Inland	1yr	Increasing fish habitat and access at Kennington Reservoir Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$99,999.	\$9,999	\$90,000 in-kind.
LG212223	Northern	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	Australian Trout Foundation	Northern	Inland	1yr	Victorian Wild Trout Fisheries Management Program and The Victorian Wild Trout Strategy 2022 - 2023. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$73,763.	\$7,376	ATF: 4,300 in-kind hours @ \$25 per hour = \$107,500
LG212225	Northern	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	Ozfish unlimited	Northern	Inland	1yr	Increasing fish habitat in Lake Eppalock. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$72,727.	\$7,273	Total in-kind (Ozfish, NCCMA, Goulburn Murray Water = \$73,464.40
LG21224	Gippsland	Access & Facilities	Gippsland Ports Committee of Management	Gippsland	Estuarine	1yr	Improve the Kalimna Jetty at Metung. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$72,273.	\$7,227	\$19,500 in associated works and \$8,000 in project management.
LG21225	Northern	Access & Facilities	Gannawarra Shire Council	Northern	Inland	1yr	Upgrade of the boat ramp and jetty at Kangaroo Lake. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$63,636.	\$6,364	Gannawarra Shire Council - \$20,000
LG212215	State-wide	Research	University of Melbourne	State-wide	Inland	1yr	Fish stock assessments in key waterways. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$53,614.	\$5,361	Total in-kind contribution of \$438.7K.
IG35	Northern	Intermediate Grant	Nhill Lake Committee of Management	Nhill Lake	Inland	1yr	Nhill Lake Water Supply. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$50,000.	\$5,000	
IG34	Northern	Intermediate Grant	Ouyen Inc.	Ouyen	Inland	1yr	Ouyen Lake Floating Fishing Pontoon and Walkway Project (Stage Two). Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$50,000.	\$5,000	
IG24	Southwest	Intermediate Grant	Association of Geelong and District Angling Clubs	Aireys Inlet	Estuarine	1yr	Painkalac Creek Fishing Platform. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$47,150	\$4,715	
LG2305	Northern	Access & Facilities	Goulburn- Murray Rural Water Corporation	Cairn Curran Reservoir	Inland	1yr	Cairn Curran - Picnic Point - All abilities amenity block. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$45,455.	\$4,545	\$20,510 plus in-kind project management.
LG2303	Port Phillip & Western Port	Access & Facilities	Parks Victoria	Karkarook Lake	Inland	1yr	Karkarook Lake submersible bore pump. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$43,091.	\$4,309	In-kind project management.

Project No.	Region	Project category	Proponent	Project site	Type of waters	Project duration	Proposal	Funding (Exclusive GST)	Other contributions/comments
IG23	Northern	Intermediate Grant	Alpine Fly Fishers Inc.	Bright	Inland	1yr	Ovens River Habitat Improvements. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$38,402.	\$3,840	
LG2304	Port Phillip & Western Port	Education, Information and Training	3ZZZ	Port Phillip & Western Port	State-wide	1yr	Multilingual recreational fishing campaigns in Melbourne. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$34,909.	\$3,490	\$20,000 financial, \$10,000 in- kind.
2021LG18	Northern	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority	Northern	Inland	1yr	Eildon Waters (Mitchelton) Habitat Enhancement. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$28,365.	\$2,837	
2021LG28	Northern	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority	Northern	Inland	1yr	Lower Goulburn River Habitat Enhancement - Wyuna. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$25,249.	\$2,525	
LG21227	Northern	Sustainability & Habitat Improvement	North Central Catchment Management Authority	Northern	Inland	1yr	Increasing fish habitat for river blackfish in the Tullaroop Catchment. Balance of 10% funding. Total project funding of \$23,673.	\$2,367	Tullaroop Catchment Restoration Project - 3-year state funded project (\$918,000)
CG22231	State-wide	Commissioning Grant	Victorian Fisheries Authority	State-wide	State-wide	1yr	Informing sustainable management of Victoria's wild catch fisheries. Total project funding of \$127,180.	\$2,219	VFA in-kind project management.
							Sub-total	\$1,030,433	

Other items

Project No.	Region	Project category	Proponent	Project site	Type of waters	Project duration	Proposal	Funding (Exclusive GST)	Other contributions/comments
Not applicable	State-wide	Not applicable	Fishcare Victoria Inc.	State-wide	State-wide	1yr	2023-24 Base funding. Total project funding of \$320,631. Balance of 10% funding.	\$32,063	Nil financial contributions.
							Sub-total	\$32,063	
							Sub-total	\$1,062,496	

Proposal to fund RFL sales commission not claimed

Proposal	Funding (Exclusive GST)	
	\$310	Excludes RFL sales commission receipts not submitted by licence sellers.
Sub-total	\$310	
Sub-total	\$1,062,806	

Note 4 - Cash assets
Cash as at 30 June 2024 of \$8,970,492 shown in the financial statement includes \$8,654,284 which has been invested pursuant to Section 151B(5) <i>Fisheries Act 1995.</i>

Statutory Certification

I certify the attached Financial Report for the Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account has been prepared in accordance with the *Fisheries Act 1995*.

I further state that, in my opinion, the information set out in the Receipts and Disbursements Report and notes to the financial report, presents fairly the financial transactions during the year ended 30 June 2024.

At the time of signing, we are not aware of any circumstance which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

Travis Dowling

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Chief Executive Officer Victorian Fisheries Authority

25/10/2024

Tim Ada

Secretary

Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

25/10/2024

Independent Audit Report from Auditor-General



Independent Auditor's Report

To the Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

Opinion

I have audited the special purpose financial report of the Recreational Fishing License Trust Account (the trust) which comprises the:

- financial report as at 30 June 2024
- notes to the financial report for the year then ended
- statutory certification.

In my opinion the special purpose financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the receipts and disbursements from the Recreational Fishing License Trust account for the year ended 30 June 2024 in accordance with the *Fisheries Act 1995*.

Basis for opinion

I have conducted my audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* which incorporates the Australian Auditing Standards. I further describe my responsibilities under that Act and those standards in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report.

My independence is established by the *Constitution Act 1975*. My staff and I are independent of the trust in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Victoria. My staff and I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of matter - Basis of accounting for financial report

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 1 *Statement of Accounting Policies*, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the financial reporting obligations under the *Fisheries Act 1995*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Other information

The Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions is responsible for the other information, which comprises the information in the trust's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024 but does not include the financial report and my auditor's report thereon.

My opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion on the other information. However, in connection with my audit of the financial report, my responsibility is to read the other information and in doing so, consider whether it is materially inconsistent with the financial report or the knowledge I obtained during the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude there is a material misstatement of the other information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

The Secretary's responsibilities for the financial report The Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the *Fisheries Act 1995*, and for such internal control as the Secretary determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions has determined that the financial report is appropriate to the needs of the Minister for Outdoor Recreation.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, my responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on the audit. My objectives for the audit are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, | exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. | also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether
 due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks,
 and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my
 opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is
 higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery,
 intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the trust's internal control
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Secretary
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Secretary regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

MELBOURNE 29 October 2024 Timothy Maxfield as delegate for the Auditor-General of Victoria

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