

Total Allowable Commercial Catch for the Victorian Banded Morwong Fishery 2023/24

Consultation on the 2023/24 Total Allowable Commercial Catches (TACC) was undertaken in February/March 2023 in accordance with section 3A of the **Fisheries Act 1995**.

A weight of evidence approach has been used in setting for the 2023/24 fishing season. This included consideration of factors such as biological characteristics, stock status, fishery management arrangements (including a 3-month closed season and slot limit of 40-50cm), recent catch and effort analysis and consideration of stakeholder views. The following points are also noted:

- 1) There is not currently a reliable biomass estimate for the Victorian banded morwong fishery.
- 2) There was a significant undercatch of the TACC in 2022/23 fishing season and a significant increase in fishing effort, with a historic low standardised CPUE for the fishery of 6.34 fish/hour in 2021/22
- 3) The fishery's annual standardised catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) has declined year-on-year over 6 financial years since 2015/16.
- 4) 76% of the fish retained over the past 3 years have been caught at only 5 area codes raising concerns of potential localised depletion.
- 5) A TACC of 2044 fish would apply a precautionary approach to management of this data-limited fishery and potentially vulnerable long-lived species by reducing the current TACC of 2920 fish by 30%.

In considering the available evidence, I have set the Banded Morwong Fishery TACC at 2044 fish for the 2023/24 season.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Travis Dowling".

Travis Dowling
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Fisheries Authority

22/ 03 / 2023