

**Written submissions received during the 60-day public consultation period on the  
draft Corner Inlet Fishery Management Plan**

1. *Marked as confidential*

2. *Marked as confidential*

3. Matthew Gladman

I am an annual permit holder at yanakie caravan park, I've been fishing down there for more than 10 years now and have noticed that especially since more netters have been let in, the harder it has become to find whitting, I understand that there might be a dollar in it for netters and government but I defeats the purpose of having a nation park if you are going to let netters catch fish anywhere near them. I see many small species of fish including several types of baby sharks every year. It is very obvious that it is grounds that the juveniles use and possibly breeding grounds even, elephant fish I am sure go in for breeding in there every year too. We need to know how much by catch the professionals discard etc etc. just some of my thoughts about a place a love and don't want to see end up like port Phillip bay. Thanks for listening from *Matthew gladman*.

4. Russell Allardice

Last year VR FISH brought to the attention of recreational anglers Commonwealth Managed Trawlers targeting spawning aggregations of King George Whiting off Wilson's Promontory in Eastern Victoria. If factual, and left unremedied, it is difficult to deny the adverse impact this would have on the standard of Whiting fishing in Eastern Victoria, and potentially within all Victorian waters. I would like to be assured that the matter has been considered in terms of it's impact on the Management Plan. As attachments I have included a copy of a letter I sent to the Assistant Minister for Forestry and Fisheries, Canberra. and the response I received thereto. Best regards, *Russell Allardice*

5. Michael Barnsley

I have read parts of the above captioned plan and am concerned by the lack of information concerning bycatch that the plan is based on. There is essentially no information concerning current bycatch management or species numbers. The most recent study of the effects of seine netting was completed nearly twenty years ago, while there is no information on mesh netting practices, quantities and species. I have substantial nature properties around Charles Hall Road, and Winkarlin Drive, Yanakie, and have watched the variations in fish species that I see along the shoreline in that area over a period of 25 years. There has been a massive decline in porcupine fish during that period. This year I saw one, dead, with a hole in it, and one alive swimming along the shoreline at high tide, where there used to be many. Many years ago, say twenty, I went out on a commercial fishing boat driven by a son of Alan Cripps (now departed). They netted many whiting and also porcupine fish. They used a hook to puncture the puffed up fish and toss them back into the sea. I believe that this killed them, and was then and am now still shocked. This was standard practice I learnt at the time, and does not jibe with the information in the proposed plan which reports "no mortality of bycatch". I mention also that on a recent visit to the beach at the end of Charles Hall Road, there were two dead seals, one somewhat decomposed and the other, not decomposed but with its neck severed. I do not think enough is being done to protect the general biodiversity of the corner inlet fish. The focus is on edible species. I think this is short-sighted; species interact in very complicated ways. Two things could be done: more careful monitoring of fishing practices and increasing the no-go areas. *Michael Barnsley*

6. Sharon Ryeland

I totally support the proposed reduction in the amount of cockles that can be collected in the inlet at McLoughlins beach from 5 litres to 2 litres(unshuced). As a resident I have great concerns about the impact that this collecting has on the inlet and the escalating numbers of collectors over the last couple of years has been extremely worrying. Lack of signage and adequate policing are a serious problem. Please feel free to contact me Lachlan for any reason. Regards *Sharon Ryeland*.

7. Lynn Borgia

I am the secretary of both McLoughlins Beach Resident & Ratepayers and the McLoughlins Angling Club. On the weekend just past I met fisheries officers at Port Welshpool while fishing with my family. They informed us of have your say on management plan (Corner Inlet). I immediately contacted the community relating to the plan. Most of this community were concerned because Corner Inlet usually mean down Wilson Prom area not up our way. So we have not had the chance to have our say. We are grateful that the draft of Corner Inlet management plan has included McLoughlins Beach. I have been trying to access the draft of Nooramunga Marine Coastal management plan. Is this the same plan? The expression of interest from the community over the weekend and through this week to me is very pleasing so can you please let people have their say a little long due to the name difference in the Management Plan. It is not on your website any longer and or no link to access. I look forward to your response, to our on going concerns here at McLoughlins Beach with the over harvesting of the Blood Cockles and destruction of all marine species to near depletion in this area. Thanking You. *Lynn Borgia*

8. Gary Cripps

As a Corner Inlet Fishery Access Holder, I am writing to comment on the Draft Fisheries Notice 2022. I am in agreeance with the draft notice that is designed to simply replicate the arrangements in the existing notice. I would however, like to see the implementation of a further regulation in the Management plan. I have for some time, been advocating for the implementation of a regulation relating to the amount of time that set nets (mesh nets) are permitted to be left to “soak” with a mesh net shot. I believe that these nets should not be permitted to be left in the water for a period longer than 6 hours. The longer the nets are left to “soak”, the higher the likelihood of damaged fish, reduced quality of the catch & wastage related to water temperature, sea lice & crab damage. When nets are left for a long period of time, it is also a “bad look” & can cause disharmony from the amateur fishing sector. As you are no doubt aware, the number of amateur vessels & anglers enjoying Corner Inlet, has increased significantly over the past few years, especially since the introduction of the State Governments “Target One Million” initiative. I am hopeful that serious consideration will be given to putting a maximum limit on the time that set nets are left in the water, for the benefit of everyone enjoying the resources of Corner Inlet. Regards, *Gary Cripps*

9. Gary Cripps

As a Corner Inlet Fishery Access Holder, I am writing to comment on the Draft Fisheries Notice 2022. I have made a submission previously, but I would like to add another comment on what I would like to see implemented into the Corner Inlet Fishery Management plan & regulations. When set nets are put in the water overnight, they need to be marked by a flashing light on the buoys. There is a risk that other fishers when boating can get tangled up in the nets which could result in damage to the outboard motor and would result in significant costs. It could also cause injury, if a boat is pulled up suddenly if entangled, casing an operator to fall. The cost for attaching lights would only be approximately \$60 and would mitigate the risk of running into the mesh nets left at night which at present are a navigational hazard. I wonder who would be held responsible if a mishap or damage did occur if another vessel (be it Professional or Amateur ) were to become caught in unseen nets? Regards *Gary Cripps*

10. Nick Williams

I write to accept the invitation of the VFA’s invitation to comment on the Corner Inlet Management Plan 2021.

By way of background, I am a recreational fisher who has fished Corner Inlet consistently for some 25 years targeting King George Whiting almost exclusively. I have enjoyed sustained success in my fishing endeavours over the years but have noticed significant decline in catch rates over the last 3 -5 years. I have passed that off as a natural cycle or a decline in skill levels on my part until I took a good look at the Management Plan Report of 2021 and compared it to the previous report of about 2016 (I think – the report doesn’t appear to be dated but includes data for 2015).

The 2021 report is comprehensive and detailed and full of commendable ideals but, in my opinion, falls well short of developing a true management strategy for managing the sustainability of the fishery. That the fishery has been sustainable over many decades is obvious and the commercial fishing fraternity has done a sterling job of ensuring that that is the case under its own voluntary and self

regulated “plan”. If the data in your reports is to be believed then the years 2000 to 2015 saw an average commercial catch of KGW of approximately 54 tonnes per annum. A few stand out years are found within that time line, notably 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2015. The total catch of KGW for those years was approximately 870 tonnes.

My concern is that the self regulated plan appears, of latter years to have gone awry. As I read your 2021 report the average take of KGW has risen astronomically, averaging over 120 tonnes per annum over the period 2018 to 2020 inclusive, with 2015 also being a year of exceptional tonnage.

Given that the 50 odd tonne catch average of the previous 15 to 20 years proved sustainable and given the voluntary commercial catch plan was so successful, I find it a stretch to characterise the later catch rates as sustainable at over double that of previous decades.

What has gone wrong with the previous “plan”? Why have the catch rates risen so dramatically and what science is behind your claim that this catch rate is sustainable? Where is the actual plan to ensure there is ongoing and meaningful monitoring and regulation of the catch, both commercial and recreational?

Could it be that there are operators within the system now who do not adhere to the long standing practices of the multi generational commercial cohort that has been so successful?

I note that you plan to introduce various measures such as electronic logs to monitor the catch rates and I consider that to be commendable but I wonder if that addresses what I consider to be the problem – that of the ongoing sustainability of the fishery. If the self regulation of the fishery no longer works perhaps a plan with teeth might be a step forward. I can see no such proposals contained within this plan and perhaps, if the fishery is having difficulty with managing itself in the face of new technologies (and new entrants??) it is time to introduce some form of enforceable external regulation. At the very least I believe there should be a committee of management established that includes all stakeholders commercial, recreational, indigenous and official to ensure that the fishery remains sustainable for all interested parties.

I’m afraid that the plan as it stands is no more than a bureaucratic exercise in box ticking and does nothing to address the core issues within Corner Inlet. Yours Sincerely. *Nick Williams*.

PS On another important matter, I have written to Jon Duniam and Russell Broadbent among others expressing my concern at the issue of Commonwealth managed large trawlers targeting potentially spawning aggregations of mature KGW off Wilsons Prom all to no avail. Perhaps VFA might like to take up the cause?

#### 11. Grant Leeworthy

My comment on the Corner Inlet Fishery Management Plan is this: I support the move to a management plan. This should have been completed years ago under the Fisheries Act 1995. I do not support the redistribution of wealth through the action of government policy. This has occurred through two means: 1. The movement of fishermen from Port Phillip Bay and the Gippsland Lakes fishery to Corner Inlet seeing an uptake in effort outside of the lifecycle of the firm. 2. The removed ability to mesh net and seine at the same time. This was hard work but was our way of working. This reduces our efficiency of operation and also impacts quality of life for fishermen. No compensation has been offered to Adam Leeworthy or Lucas and Wayne Cripps for these impacts of Government policy. We don’t have legal redress and you obviously do not care about fishermen. The recent decisions in Port Phillip Bay demonstrate your lack of care. Congruence and integrity matters. Carl Spicer’s job matters. Nathan Coomber’s job matters. If you don’t know who these people are, why are you in your role? Best regards, Grant Leeworthy

#### 12. Donald Henderson

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Corner Inlet Fishery Management Plan, I have read through the plan and generally agree with it, there’s just a few comments I would like to make, more about factual errors than management objectives. In section 2.1.1, paragraph 5, “Tidal variance can be as much as 2 meters”, tidal predictions for Port Welshpool show a 2.7 meter tide in May this year, I have personally observed a 10 feet (3+meters) at Port Franklin. I expect Gippsland Ports would be able to provide accurate information, they have a tide gauge at Port Welshpool. In section 2.2.2, paragraph 6, Calamari probably should be included in species targeted by boat based anglers. In Appendix 4, the graph labeled “Rock Flathead Mesh Net”, has “Catch per unit effort rock flathead by seinenet” in the explanation paragraph below. Thanks, regards, *Donald Henderson*, Port Franklin

## Commercial

### 13. Peter Asmussen

Some 20 years ago I was required to buy an all waters fishing licence. The main driver to soften the blow on recreational fishers pockets was that it would be used to buy out all commercial fishing licences in Victoria. Well here we are twenty odd years later still not done, who's responsible? Don't get the wrong idea I'm not about smashing commercial fishers, the buy back should have included training /relocation into aquaculture farming for these people or other training of their choice. Once you farm a species for commercial purposes the natural supply will replenish itself naturally. Mother Nature is a great thing. The other part of the equation is that people stopped freshwater fishing as there were buggar all fish to be caught, clearing of land near waterways fish food habitat and building water storage's on our rivers interrupting natural water flows as well as poor stocking programs suitable for fish growth. As a result people turned to the sea a once free place to go and cast a line off the beach with the kids. My skin color determines I must pay a fee to fish if I want to be a law abiding citizen, even though my family have been Australian hunter gatherers for 7 generations now and I just want the same rights as indigenous hunters as we are now included as indigenous as 7 generations this is our home land that we have fought for in ww1 and ww2 protecting our land. Shouldn't we have the same rights? The fees have seen better fishing ramps etc, better and bigger parking will be required going forward and up keep of facilities. Freshwater stocking improving slowly. I recall my first fish caught on my 10th birthday on a cane rod with my brother in a dam in a gully, the excitement was that every child in this world should experience and as a result I ridding corner inlet and all inland estuaries of commercial fisherman will help achieve this. Thank you for your time and hope you can achieve a great outcome for your children grandchildren and leave this earth a little better than we found it. Thanks, *Peter Asmussen*.

### 14. Ben Asmussen

I have read the Corner inlet fishery management plan (FMP) and FAQ that is available on the VRFish website. As a recreational fisher that lives in south gippsland the corner inlet and mcloughlin's beach area is where I spend most of my fishing time. After reading the FMP and FAQ I have some feedback from my perspective which aligns with the objectives of the FMP as outlined below.

What are the objectives for the fishery?

The draft management plan sets out the following objectives:

- Objective 1: Ensure sustainability of the Corner Inlet fishery resource
- Objective 2: Maintain the ecological integrity of the fishery ecosystem
- Objective 3: Ensure fishing practices are ethical, responsible and respectful and promote harmony amongst stakeholders
- Objective 4: Ensure optimal economic utilisation of the Corner Inlet resource
- Objective 5: Cost-effective and participatory management

1. The use of long lines is not ethical in catching target species & needs to stop. (The use of long lines does not align with objective 3) It is not a selective process to catch the desired fish and at times would catch undersized fish and species that are not commercially valued. (The bycatch that is not sold and is returned to the ocean dead)

2. I suggest that commercial fishing should be banned from estuary waters such as the corner inlet fishery. Estuaries are the breeding grounds for aquatic species. If commercial fishing is required in order for people that don't catch fish can eat seafood it should relocate to fisheries offshore. If the cost of seafood was to increase due to a reduction in supply this could be subsidized by recreational licences to reduce the cost of seafood to people that can't fish. With the cessation of commercial fishing the number of fish available to recreational fishers will increase. (This has been proven in Port Phillip bay) This will promote tourism and commercial activities in the local area. More accommodation & caravan / camping. Hook and line charters could take tourists out to catch fish in a more ethical way. This satisfies objective 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5. (The south gippsland shire has a poor record of promoting tourism and commercial activities around corner inlet. The poor management of long jetty caravan park is one example. It would be great to see a focused approach to enable the growth of eco friendly tourism thrive in this beautiful nature marine environment)

The commercial fishers need to be reimbursed loss of earnings if commercial fishing using current methods were to stop. Aquaculture infrastructure and training could be a possible solution for commercial fishers along with opportunities to be part of the tourism solution. Many industries in gippsland are going through a massive change in the move towards more ethical methods. For example the electricity generators will be gone within 20 years. Most employed in the power industry will lose their jobs within the next 6 years. Losing jobs when industries evolve isn't a new phenomenon. Training the employees in the new technologies and ensuring that they have employment and a future is socially responsible and must happen if current commercial fishing methods are to cease or even change.

Transitioning old outdated fishing methods to a more ethical, reliable, cheaper and environmentally responsible industry could also be included in the FMP.

Other observations:

The fact that port phillip bay and western port bay are now commercial fishing free and gippsland is not stinks of political bias. Part of the license fees paid by recreational fishers was meant to buy back commercial fishing licenses. Why has this process stopped when it comes to corner inlet?

Recreational fishers should not have to pay a license fee to fish in a jurisdiction that is shared with commercial fishers. (After long days of catching nothing in corner inlet and seeing the large number of commercial operators pulling their full nets I've often wondered what hope have I got and what is the point.)

Yours sincerely  
*Ben Asmussen*

15. Bruce Collis

A Two Shot Seine Netting Concerns. I write to advise of recent concerns shared by my colleagues and I about the Seine netting practices by one operator in the Corner Inlet fishery. This concern relates to the practice of one operator who holds more than one licence but applies additional licensing to create the ability to undertake more than two shots per day from the one vessel.

Whilst the impact on the fishery may be negligible in terms of actual volume taken, the practice does significant damage to the public perception of the commercial fishing industry in that recreational stakeholders and others see a commercial fishing vessel having four shots per day when most know that the limit is two. This could be further exacerbated where an operator might have three licences and having six shots per day but still staying under the two shots limit per licence. Over more than the past 30 years, the code of practice always prescribed that only one operator and crew would operate on one vessel only and be limited to two Seine shots per day. This manner of operation should be upheld. In other words – for multiple licence holders, each licence should operate on different vessels and with different crews and operator. Not only will this assist in enhancing the public perception of the industry, it would also assist in creating additional employment in an area of South Gippsland that is in need of such opportunities. Such a practice would also assist fisheries officers in monitoring compliance with the regulations and would ensure that all licence holders operate under the same regime. I would like to thank the Department for its assistance in the past in helping to create an ethical and sustainable commercial fishery in Corner Inlet and I look forward to your consideration and action in addressing the concerns raised at this time. *Bruce Collis*

16. Nick Anedda

Two Shot Seine Netting Concerns. I would like to put forward my concerns about the Seine netting practices by one operator in the Corner Inlet fishery. This concern relates to the practice of one operator who holds more than one licence but applies additional licensing to create the ability to undertake more than two shots per day from the one vessel. I feel this practice should be classed as team fishing (one operator, one boat, two shots) otherwise he should have a second boat and operator to carry out four seine shots. Whilst the impact on the fishery may be negligible in terms of actual volume taken, the practice does significant damage to the public perception of the commercial fishing industry in that recreational stakeholders and others see a commercial fishing vessel having four shots per day when most know that the limit is two. This could be further exacerbated where an operator might have three licences and having six shots per day but still staying under the two shots limit per

licence. Over more than the past 30 years, the code of practice always prescribed that only one operator and crew would operate on one vessel only and be limited to two Seine shots per day. This manner of operation should be upheld. In other words – for multiple licence holders, each licence should operate on different vessels and with different crews and operator. Not only will this assist in enhancing the public perception of the industry, it would also assist in creating additional employment in an area of South Gippsland that is in need of such opportunities. Such a practice would also assist fisheries officers in monitoring compliance with the regulations and would ensure that all licence holders operate under the same regime. I would like to thank the Department for its assistance in the past in helping to create an ethical and sustainable commercial fishery in Corner Inlet and I look forward to your consideration and action in addressing the concerns raised at this time. *Nick Anedda*

17. Louis Hatzimihalis

I agree with the management plan, but I want to add this letter also. Two Shot Seine Netting Concerns. I write to advise of recent concerns shared by my colleagues and I about the Seine netting practices by one operator in the Corner Inlet fishery. This concern relates to the practice of one operator who holds more than one licence but applies additional licensing to create the ability to undertake more than two shots per day from the one vessel. Whilst the impact on the fishery may be negligible in terms of actual volume taken, the practice does significant damage to the public perception of the commercial fishing industry in that recreational stakeholders and others see a commercial fishing vessel having four shots per day when most know that the limit is two. This could be further exacerbated where an operator might have three licences and having six shots per day but still staying under the two shots limit per licence. Over more than the past 30 years, the code of practice always prescribed that only one operator and crew would operate on one vessel only and be limited to two Seine shots per day. This manner of operation should be upheld. In other words – for multiple licence holders, each licence should operate on different vessels and with different crews and operator. Not only will this assist in enhancing the public perception of the industry, it would also assist in creating additional employment in an area of South Gippsland that is in need of such opportunities. Such a practice would also assist fisheries officers in monitoring compliance with the regulations and would ensure that all licence holders operate under the same regime. I would like to thank the Department for its assistance in the past in helping to create an ethical and sustainable commercial fishery in Corner Inlet and I look forward to your consideration and action in addressing the concerns raised at this time. Best regards *louis hatzimihalis*, ausfish enterprises.