

# 2019-2024 Strategic Plan



# Minister's foreword

*I am delighted to endorse the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024.*

This Strategic Plan commits to increasing the number and diversity of people fishing and enjoying Victoria's local seafood, growing healthy and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture sectors and contributing to Victoria's social and economic prosperity.

Every Victorian should have the opportunity to fish, and the VFA is proactive in encouraging people from all different backgrounds to have a go. The State Government has extended its commitment to recreational fishers in Victoria, building on its *Target One Million* plan to grow participation to one million anglers by 2020, getting more Victorians fishing, more often.

This Strategic Plan sets strategies to ensure that, through value adding and innovation, Victoria's fisheries and aquaculture sectors are dynamic and resilient, offering great economic opportunities and career pathways for Victorians.

We want Victoria to be renowned as a great fishing destination. The development of ten high profile fishing destinations across Victoria and the promotion of the fantastic local seafood experience will provide a boost for regional tourism.

This is a time of great opportunity for Victorian fisheries. This Strategic Plan takes advantage of the many great opportunities ahead, describing a clear direction for us all to work towards. The VFA is committed to working with all stakeholders and creating effective partnerships in its implementation.



**The Hon. Jaala Pulford MP**  
Minister for Fishing and Boating

# From the Board

*I am pleased to be able to present the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024.*

This is a plan with bold ambitions designed to clearly reflect our commitment to all stakeholders by setting out the VFA's strategic priorities for the next five years. It identifies many opportunities ahead for all Victorians involved in fisheries. It also looks beyond 2024 as we continue to build the foundation for fantastic fishing and access to locally caught fish in Victoria.

This Strategic Plan supports our vision of **healthy and sustainable fisheries for all Victorians**, by setting out strategic priorities under four high level focus areas:

- Sustainable and healthy fisheries
- Social and economic prosperity
- Effective and innovative authority
- Strong and collaborative relationships

The strategy guides the way we work with our diverse stakeholders to optimise the value of Victoria's fisheries resources now and in the future.

It reflects the VFA's position as a modern fit-for-purpose statutory authority, which services all fisheries and aquaculture sectors and provides advice to government on a range of initiatives and opportunities. It places an emphasis on working closely with our stakeholders and partners.

I want the VFA to be a great place to work and recognised as an employer of choice. This strategy has a focus on delivering excellent fisheries and aquaculture outcomes for Victorians, while also ensuring we are a high performing authority, with staff and community health and wellbeing as its core.

Thank you to the VFA staff and stakeholders who have contributed to the development of this strategy. It is important that we all have a shared understanding of what we are trying to achieve and how we will get there.



**Gail Owen**  
Chairperson  
Victorian Fisheries Authority

# Our important role

## Who we are

*We are a statutory authority with a proud reputation for getting things done.*

We work with government and stakeholders to optimise the social, cultural and economic benefits of Victoria's fisheries and aquaculture industry while promoting sustainable and responsible practices.

We are committed to getting more people fishing and enjoying Victoria's local seafood, growing healthy and sustainable fishing and aquaculture sectors, and contributing to Victoria's social and economic prosperity.

Our vision is **healthy and sustainable fisheries for all Victorians**.

## Getting things done

*We are striving for a bigger and brighter future for Victoria's fisheries.*

We want Victoria's recreational, customary and commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors to grow and find new opportunities.

We educate fishers and the community about responsible fishing practices, and promote stewardship of our precious resource.

We administer grants and carefully manage licences and quotas for recreational and commercial fishing.

We make sure our work and decisions are backed by evidence so Victorians can be confident that decisions we make today will deliver positive results for current and future generations.

We work closely with our partners and stakeholders, to plan and deliver great outcomes for fisheries and the Victorian people.



# Our values

*In everything we do we put safety first, support our people and demonstrate professionalism, leadership and accountability.*



# Our work at a glance

*We are working hard to make sure Victoria's fisheries continue to thrive.*

We have over 170 staff based at 25 locations across Victoria. On these two pages is a snapshot of where you will find us and what we have achieved in our first 12 months as an authority.



Some great things we achieved in our first 12 months:



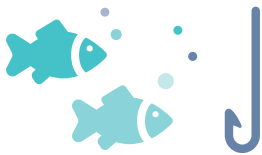
**6 million**

Fish stocked into Victorian waters



**4**

Newly developed fishery management plans and two new Harvest Strategies that promote the sustainable growth and prosperity of the commercial fishing sector.



**\$1.5 million**

Provided in grants to fund recreational fishing projects.



**1,861**

Calls made to 13FISH by community members informing our risk-based enforcement activity.



**258,531**

Recreational Fishing Licences sold generating nearly \$8 million to put back into improving recreational fishing in Victoria.

# Our opportunities

*It is an exciting time for Victoria's fisheries.*

*Recent years have seen significant achievements across customary, recreational and commercial fisheries, and aquaculture.*

*Victoria's fisheries and aquaculture sectors play an important role in our economy, environment and society and support from government and the Victorian people is strong.*

*We believe there has been no better time in our history to build on our strengths and embrace the opportunities before us.*

## Leveraging economic opportunity

Recreational fishing is estimated to contributing around \$2.3 billion\* per year to the Victorian economy. The total annual value of wild catch fisheries in Victoria is estimated to be \$54 million\*\* (as at December 2018), supplying both local and international markets and employing more than 8000 Victorians in either the commercial catch or post harvest industries. Victoria's Aquaculture industry total annual value was estimated at \$39 million\*\* (as at December 2018). Victoria's fisheries are a crucial economic resource that need to be sustainably managed to support industry, jobs and regional development for the benefit of current and future generations.

\* [https://www.vrfish.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Economic-Study-of-Recreational-Fishing-in-Victoria\\_Final\\_06112015.pdf](https://www.vrfish.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Economic-Study-of-Recreational-Fishing-in-Victoria_Final_06112015.pdf)

\*\* [http://www.agriculture.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/abares/publications/AustFishAquacStats\\_2017\\_v1.0.0.pdf](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/abares/publications/AustFishAquacStats_2017_v1.0.0.pdf)



## Optimising cultural and social outcomes

Victorians love fish and fishing. Recreational fishing offers terrific opportunities for people of all ages, skills, abilities and backgrounds to enjoy a fun and healthy activity and build social connections. Our aboriginal heritage is also deeply linked to fishing, with thousands of years of indigenous fishing history in Victoria.

*Target One Million* was developed in recognition of the importance of recreational fishing in Victoria, and the government has extended the commitment with a renewed plan to invest over \$27 million to grow participation to one million anglers by 2020. The Victorian Aboriginal Fishing Strategy looks to evolve how we manage Victoria's fisheries to embed the interests and aspirations of Aboriginal people.

There is enormous opportunity for the VFA to continue to build on the great work underway to optimise health, wellbeing, connectedness and inclusiveness in Victoria.

## Taking care of our environment

Victoria's population is forecast to reach 10 million by 2050, with net international and interstate migration a significant contributor. A larger population will see more people out enjoying the great benefits of fishing and increased demand for Victorian fresh fish and seafood. The VFA will continue to ensure stakeholders are involved in planning and activities to manage our environment into the future.

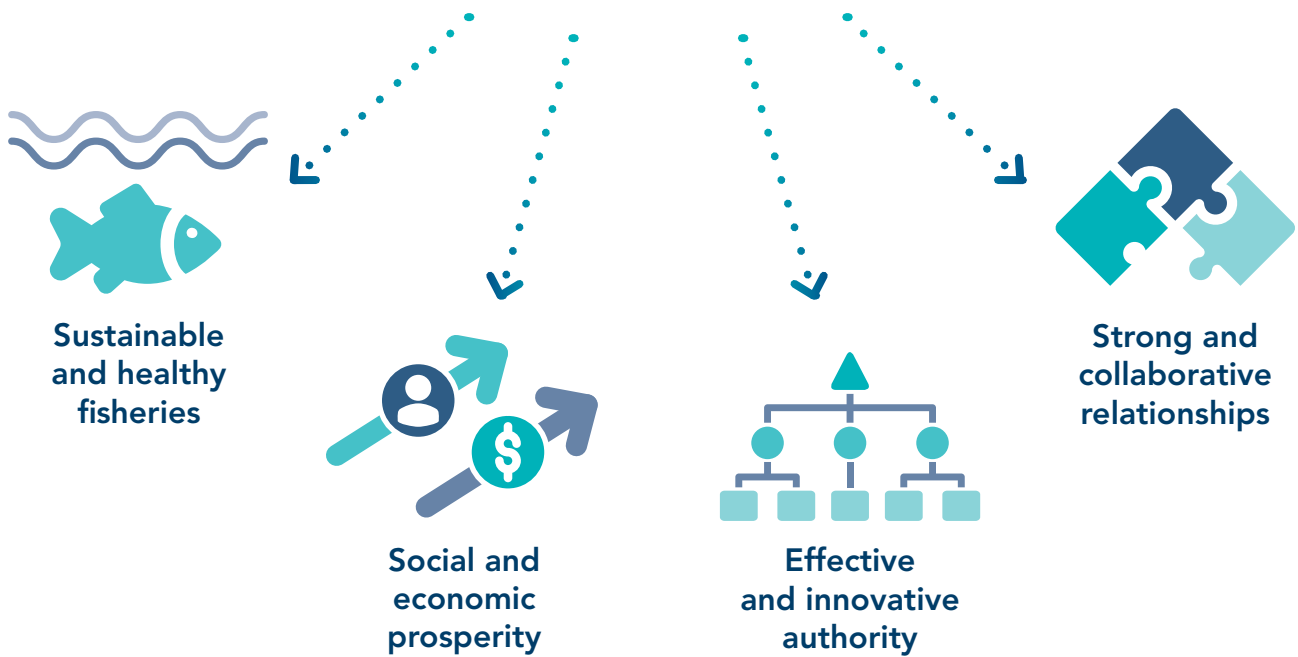
Climate change will also have implications for fisheries, habitats and broader eco-systems in Victoria. We will need an adaptive approach to fisheries management to manage impacts of a changing climate.

The VFA has a critical role to play in bringing together partners and stakeholders to balance the social, economic and environmental outcomes from Victoria's fisheries.

# Our vision

*To achieve our vision of healthy, sustainable fisheries for all Victorians, we have established four high level focus areas.*

## Healthy, sustainable fisheries for all Victorians

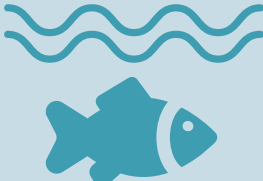

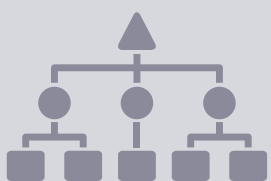



# Our strategic plan overview

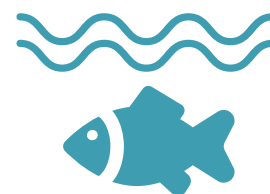
*Our strategic plan is about creating an exciting future for Victoria's fisheries.*

*Each of our four focus areas has a series of priorities, measures and targets described in the following pages.*

*These form the basis for how the VFA will report to the community in the coming years.*

Our vision	Healthy, sustainable fisheries for all Victorians
<b>1. Sustainable and healthy fisheries</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Victorian marine and freshwater fisheries, fish stocks and habitats are healthy and productive.</li><li>• Fisheries management is integrated, considers the interests of all stakeholders and reflects community values.</li><li>• Decision making is transparent, proactive, reflects policy and leverages research, monitoring and evaluation.</li><li>• Ethical, responsible and respectful practices are adopted across the sector.</li></ul>
<b>2. Social and economic prosperity</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Victoria's fisheries sector is dynamic and resilient, offering great economic opportunities and career pathways for Victorians.</li><li>• Recreational, indigenous customary and commercial fishing and aquaculture are all recognised for their contribution to the social and economic prosperity of Victoria.</li><li>• Victoria's high quality fresh fish and seafood products are the first choice for Victorians and recognised around the world.</li><li>• Recreational fishing is widely accessible and enjoyed by a diverse range and growing number of Victorians.</li><li>• Victoria is renowned as a great fishing destination.</li></ul>
<b>3. Effective and innovative authority</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The health and safety of our staff and community comes first.</li><li>• Diversity, inclusion and flexibility are valued and we offer opportunities for our people to develop their skills, and experience rewarding career pathways.</li><li>• We are enabled by strong communication across the organisation and with stakeholders and the Victorian community.</li><li>• Our business processes and systems are fit-for-purpose.</li><li>• We are forward-looking, innovative, consistent, measured and have a proud reputation for getting things done.</li></ul>
<b>4. Strong and collaborative relationships</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective relationships are a cornerstone of how we do business.</li><li>• Structured and clearly defined processes for consultation and co-design underpin broad participation in decision making.</li><li>• Informed and capable stakeholders and representative bodies work closely with us to deliver well planned and coordinated action.</li><li>• We extend our reach and impact through partnerships with a diverse range of organisations.</li><li>• We work closely with Traditional Owners to develop a greater understanding of culturally important matters.</li></ul>

# 1. Sustainable and healthy fisheries



## Statement of Intent

Victoria's fisheries will be managed to ensure long term sustainable populations are maintained with all decisions made on an evidence basis, with risk principles applied. The VFA will work with stakeholders and community partners to ensure ethical fisheries standards are developed and utilised. We will strengthen the participation of community in priority environmental programs that achieve tangible results for Victoria's fisheries.

## Our priorities

Number	Priority	Driver	Measure	10 Year Target
1.1	Victorian marine and freshwater fisheries, fish stocks and habitats are healthy and productive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Compliance with the <i>Fisheries Act 1995</i> and objectives of the VFA under the <i>Victorian Fisheries Authority Act 2016</i>.</li></ul>	Fish stocks managed in line with management plan objectives.	Management Plans are in place for key fisheries, containing strategies for monitoring data and trends, and are actively used in decision making.
1.2	Fisheries management is integrated, considers the interests of all stakeholders and reflects community values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Water for Victoria</i> Water Plan</li><li>Results of the 2018 survey of Victorian recreational fishing licence holders.</li><li>Vision of the declared <i>Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan 2018</i>.</li></ul>	Community and stakeholder surveys conducted 3 yearly. Number of stakeholder meetings conducted.	Evidence of community input into policy and decision making is apparent.
1.3	Decision making is transparent, proactive, reflects policy and leverages research, monitoring and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Our ambition to be a leader in fisheries management.</li><li>Meeting the expectations of, and providing certainty to, our stakeholders.</li></ul>	Management Plans in place for key fisheries and decision making is in line with the management plan objectives. Number of opportunities for stakeholder involvement in decision making.	Management Plans are in place for key fisheries, containing strategies for monitoring data and trends, and are actively used in decision making. Stakeholder involvement in decision making is common practice.
1.4	Ethical, responsible and respectful practices are adopted across the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Compliance with the <i>Fisheries Act 1995</i>.</li><li>Meeting changing community standards.</li></ul>	New fishing practice standards are completed and communicated.	Negligible levels of non-compliance with new standards.

## 2. Social and economic prosperity



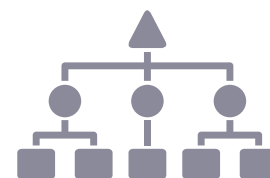
### Statement of Intent

Victoria will double the economic return from its fisheries without impacting resource sustainability. Value adding in Victoria's fisheries will be supported and encouraged. The VFA is committed to increasing the number and diversity of people fishing and enjoying Victoria's local seafood, growing healthy and sustainable fisheries sectors and contributing to Victoria's social and economic prosperity. Every Victorian will have the opportunity to fish. The VFA is proactive in encouraging all Victorians to fish, specifically focusing on the involvement of women, children and people from diverse backgrounds.

### Our priorities

Number	Priority	Driver	Measure	10 Year Target
2.1	Victoria's fisheries sector is dynamic and resilient, offering great economic opportunities and career pathways for Victorians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting our objectives under the <i>Victorian Fisheries Authority Act 2016</i>.</li> <li>State Budget initiatives for creating jobs by building Victoria.</li> <li>Victoria's <i>Regional Statement</i> delivering a louder voice for regional communities.</li> </ul>	Economic returns from value adding in Victoria's fisheries.	Significantly increased economic return from value adding in Victoria's fisheries.
2.2	Recreational, indigenous customary and commercial fishing and aquaculture are all recognised for their contribution to the social and economic prosperity of Victoria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building resilience for Victoria's fishing sectors.</li> <li>In line with Seafood Industry Victoria's strategic plan aspiration for the Victorian seafood experience.</li> </ul>	Community awareness and understanding of the social and economic contribution of fisheries.	Evidence of community recognition of fisheries contribution.
2.3	Victoria's high quality, fresh fish and seafood products are readily accessible at the source and across Victoria, the first choice for Victorians and recognised around the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community expectation for local product.</li> <li>Victorian Government promise to deliver for every corner of Victoria.</li> </ul>	Number of locations with locally caught fish available.	Fresh local seafood is available at all key Victorian fishing ports and local supermarkets.
2.4	Recreational fishing is widely accessible and enjoyed by a diverse range and growing number of Victorians.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition of the important role fishing has in the social and cultural fabric of Victoria.</li> <li>VRFish's 2016-2021 strategic plan priority for increased participation and promotion of benefits.</li> <li>Optimising health and wellbeing benefits.</li> <li>Victoria's <i>10-year mental health plan</i> long-term vision for better mental health and wellbeing for Victorians.</li> </ul>	Recreational fishing participation diversity and rate.	<p>2 million Victorians participate in fishing.</p> <p>Greater diversity in recreational fishing participation.</p>
2.5	Victoria is renowned as a great fishing destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The VFA's ambition to create ten high profile fishing destinations across Victoria.</li> <li>Victorian <i>Visitor Economy Strategy</i> goal to build on the potential of regional and rural Victoria.</li> </ul>	Number of defined fishing destinations.	10 destinations fully developed.

### 3. Effective and innovative authority



#### Statement of Intent

The VFA is an innovative Authority, focussed on improving outcomes from our fisheries for all Victorians. We will be responsive to major changes driven from within or outside our control. The VFA is focused on being a high performing Authority, with staff and community health and wellbeing as our core value. The VFA values diversity and is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

#### Our priorities

Number	Priority	Driver	Measure	10 Year Target
3.1	The health and safety of our staff and community comes first.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Care for our people and our community.</li> <li>Compliance with <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i>.</li> </ul>	Staff perception of effectiveness of safety, health and wellbeing programs measured through the People Matters Survey.	All VFA staff feel safe and valued at work.
3.2	Diversity, inclusion and flexibility are valued and our people can develop their skills, and experience rewarding career pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attracting and retaining the best talent.</li> <li>Our staffing profile reflects the diversity of the Victorian community.</li> <li>Increasing evidence of the benefits of a diverse workplace.</li> <li><i>Department of Premier and Cabinet: LGBTI Inclusion Plan 2017—2018</i>.</li> <li><i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i>.</li> </ul>	A healthy staff retention rate between 85 – 95%. Representation of gender and cultural diversity in the workplace and senior leadership groups.	Recognised as an employer of choice. Staff diversity is reflective of the Victorian community.
3.3	We are enabled by strong communication across the organisation and with stakeholders and the Victorian community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boards expectation of focused communication and engagement with the community.</li> </ul>	Stakeholder Engagement Strategy reviewed annually. Outcomes of People Matter Survey.	Evidence of strong communication is common place.
3.4	Business processes and systems are fit-for-purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Victorian Government's ongoing focus on reducing regulatory burden.</li> <li>Meeting stakeholder expectation for efficiency.</li> </ul>	Progress against VFA Transition Plan.	All business processes and systems are fit-for-purpose.
3.5	We are forward-looking, innovative, consistent, measured and have a proud reputation for getting things done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to be responsive to major changes</li> <li>Our focus on being a high performing authority.</li> </ul>	Outcomes of People Matter and Community and Stakeholder Surveys.	Systems, processes and staff resilient in times of change. Engaged stakeholders.



## 4. Strong and collaborative relationships



### Statement of Intent

Strong relationships with agencies, community groups and individuals are core to achieving improvements in management of our fisheries. We aim to significantly increase the number of groups working together on fisheries related matters. Victoria will be recognised nationwide as a leader in collaborative fisheries management. Evidence of partnerships will be commonplace.

### Our priorities

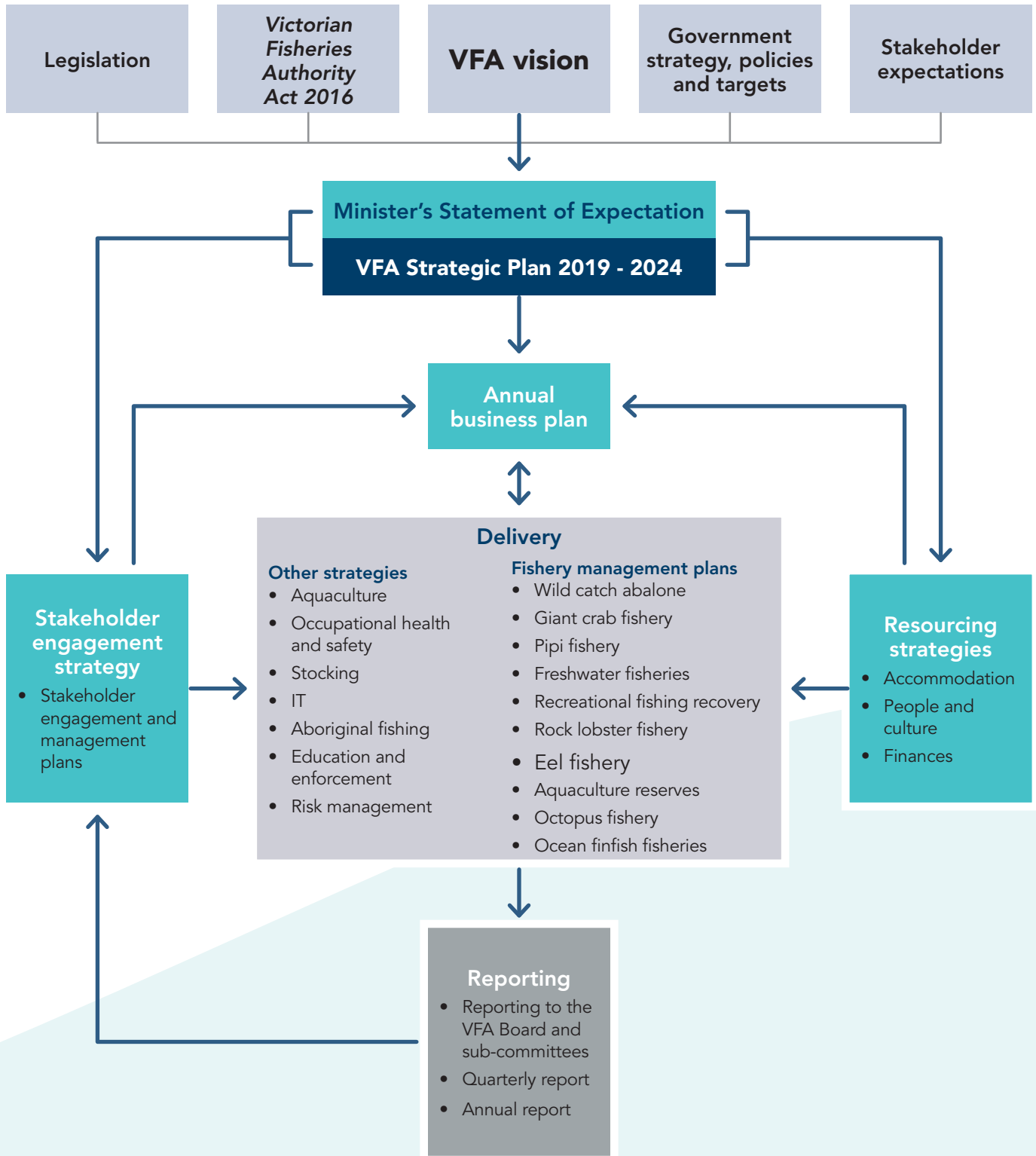
Number	Priority	Driver	Measure	10 Year Target
4.1	Working relationships are a cornerstone of how we do business.	Ability to get more done if everyone works together.	Number and diversity of formal relationships.	Number of formal relationships is doubled.
4.2	Structured and clearly defined processes for consultation and co-management underpin broad participation in decision making.	Results of the 2018 survey of Victorian recreational fishing licence holders. Over 70% of respondents answered that Victorian Fisheries Authority and Victorian natural resource management agencies should work together 'a great deal' or 'a lot' to create better fisheries and habitat in Victoria.	Plans in place for all key partners and stakeholders.	Delivery of Stakeholder Engagement and Management Plans for our key partners and stakeholders.
4.3	Informed and capable stakeholders and representative bodies work closely with us to deliver well planned and coordinated action.	Meeting our objective under the <i>Victorian Fisheries Authority Act 2016</i> to encourage the participation of resource users and the community in fisheries management.	Participation of key stakeholders in the development of plans and actions.	Key Advisory Boards informing plans and actions.
4.4	We extend our reach and impact through partnerships with a diverse range of organisations.	Establishment of the Aquatic Strategic Action Group.	Number of engagement activities with diverse range of organisations and cohorts, including in other jurisdictions.	Number of formal relationships is doubled.
4.5	Work closely with Traditional Owners to develop a greater understanding of culturally important matters.	In line with the focus of the <i>Victorian Aboriginal Fishing Strategy</i>	Traditional Owners engagement plan in place.	Evidence of Traditional Owners participation in development of plans and actions.

# Our planning framework

*The VFA has established a structured approach to planning and delivery.*

*All plans and strategies described inform the annual business plan of the VFA.*

*Outcomes are then reported to parliament in the Annual Report.*



# Our implementation plan

*The priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan are supported by an implementation plan.*

## Implementation stages

### Year 1

#### Consolidate our operations



In Year 1, we will implement the internal policies, processes and systems required to position us for continued success and be a great place to work.

We will work with our stakeholders to identify and plan the actions required to deliver on this Strategic Plan.

We will describe the evidence base to inform our decisions and support sustainable and thriving fisheries.

### Years 2-3

#### Expand our reach



In Years 2 and 3, we will work with stakeholders to baseline our impact and implement well planned and coordinated action to expand our reach.

We will take fisheries management from good to great, working in collaboration with all stakeholders to secure, share and grow our fisheries resource.

We will build greater community awareness of the value of our fisheries and improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians through participation in recreational fishing and access to local fresh fish and seafood.

### Years 4-5

#### Grow our impact



In Years 4 and 5, we will grow the environmental, social and economic contribution from our sectors. We will open up new and exciting opportunities across recreational, customary and commercial fishing, and aquaculture.

We will make Victoria a great fishing destination, taking fishing experiences to the next level.

We will work closely with industry to support innovation, new business opportunities and career pathways.

We will measure our impact through monitoring and evaluation and be a leader in innovation and continuous improvement.

# Our oversight and evaluation

*We will hold ourselves to account and ensure responsibility for oversight, risk management and evaluation are assigned to each executive in the Authority.*

## Oversight

The VFA Board is accountable for ensuring delivery of this plan.

The VFA Executive will lead delivery of the strategic priorities. They will oversee planning and implementation, in close engagement with staff and stakeholders.

The VFA Executive will deliver 6-monthly progress reports to the VFA Board.

The Strategic Plan will be reflected in the Annual Business Plan and all plans within the planning framework to ensure we can consistently monitor and report our progress.

## Risk management framework

In addition to implementation and oversight arrangements, risk associated with the delivery of our Strategic Plan will be managed through VFA's Risk Management Framework.

Our risk management approach is aligned with the Victorian Government Risk Management Framework and international risk management standards overseen by the VFA Board's Audit and Risk Committee.

The VFA Executive report quarterly on risk to the VFA Board's Audit and Risk Committee and the VFA Board.

## Evaluation

The evaluation of the VFA's performance will be directly designed around the priorities and targets of this Strategic Plan.

The VFA Board will report progress against the plan within the Annual report tabled in parliament each year.

The VFA Board will complete a review of the strategic plan every two years.



