



VRFISH MULLOWAY SURVEY RESULTS

Proposed Mulloway Improvement Program and Changes to Mulloway Regulations

Over a two-week period from 15 July 2026 to 30 July 2026, recreational fishers were asked to have their say on the Victorian Fisheries Authority's proposed *Mulloway Improvement Program* which includes changes to mulloway regulations.

A total of **502** respondents participated in the survey. The survey was distributed via three key methods: (1) email invitation sent to VRFish members, subscribers and recreational fishing licence holders; (2) survey link distributed via social media; (3) survey link on the VRFish website.

The feedback from the survey will be used to form a VRFish submission to the Victorian Fisheries Authority's public consultation on the proposed *Mulloway Improvement Program* which includes changes to mulloway regulations.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey consisted of nine questions including:

1. Do you recreationally fish for mulloway in Victoria?
2. How many days a year do you fish for mulloway?
3. Do you support the proposal to change the Victorian recreational fishing bag limit for mulloway from 5 to 2 fish per person per day?
4. Do you support the proposal to increase the Victorian recreational fishing size limit for mulloway from 60cm to 70cm?
5. Do you support the proposal to restart a mulloway tagging program in Victoria?
6. Do you support the proposal to introduce a mulloway stocking program in Victoria?
7. Should mulloway be a recreational only species?
8. Do you have any other comments you'd like to make?
9. What is your postcode?

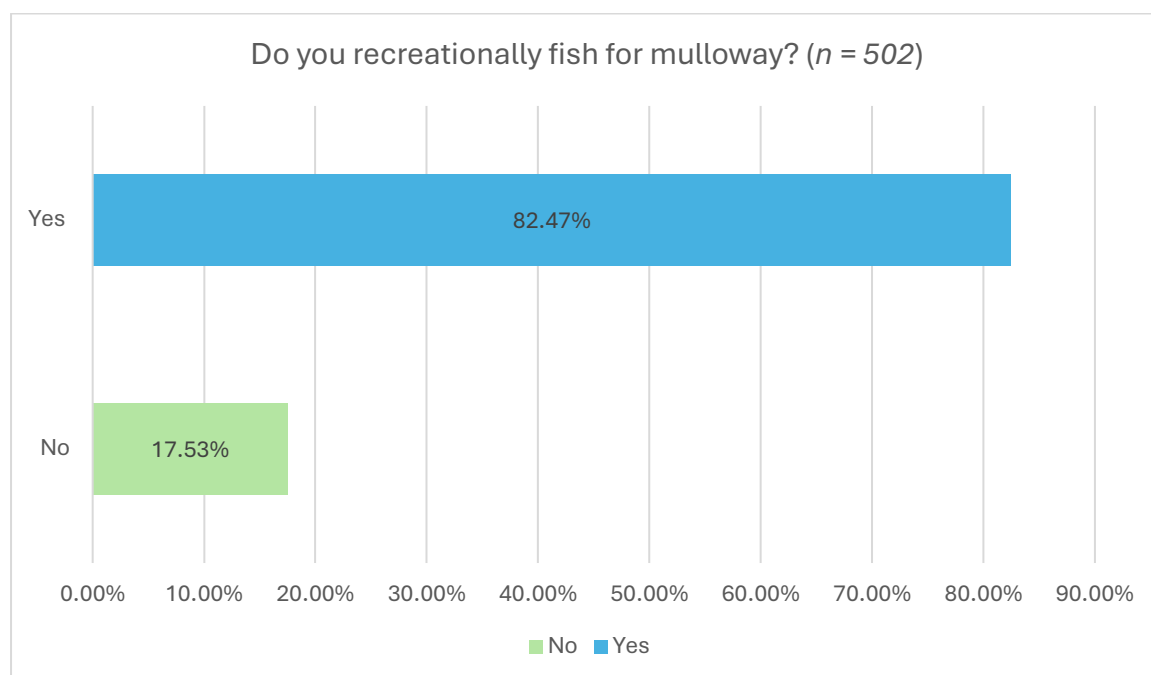
SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the survey can be viewed below.

QUESTION 1

Do you recreationally fish for mulloway in Victoria? [Yes/No]

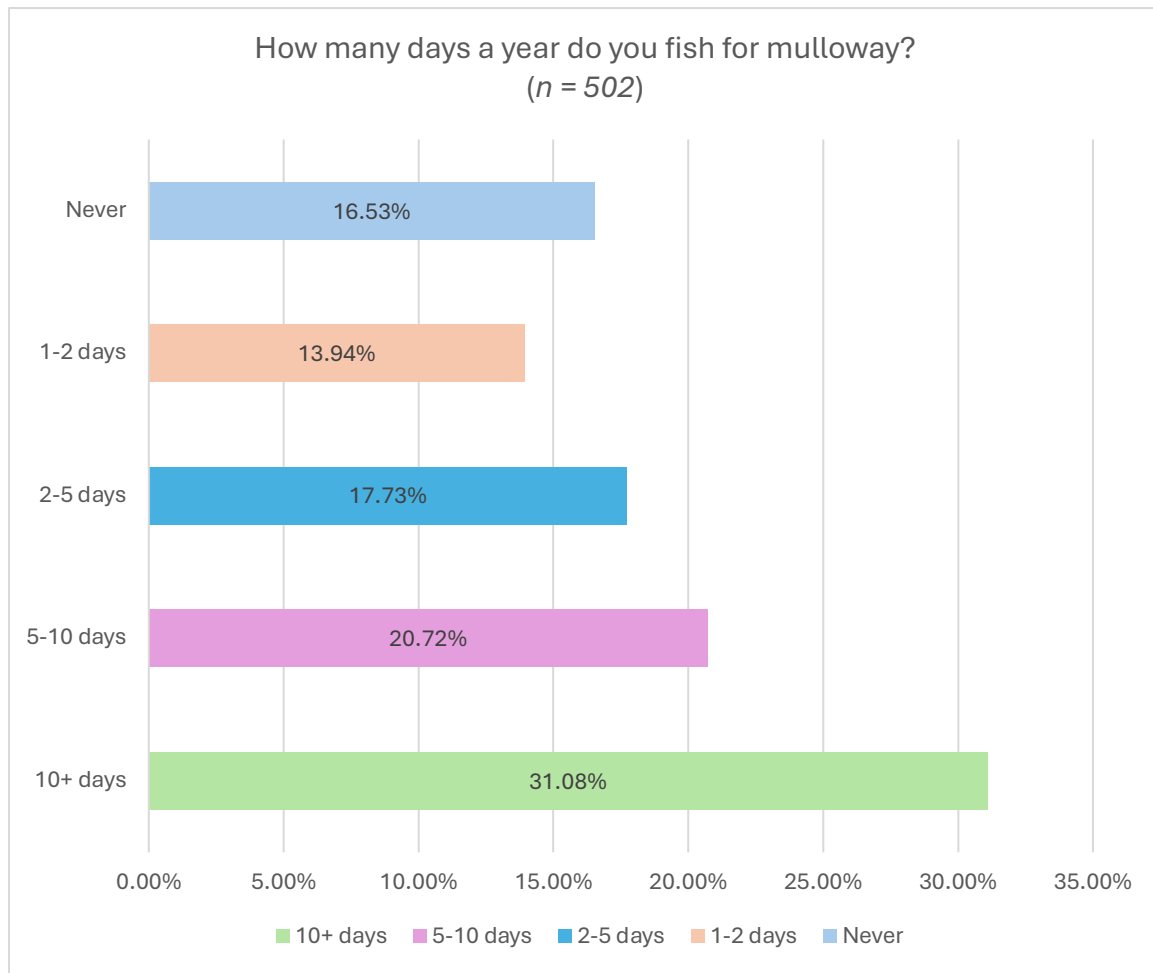
Answered 502, Skipped 0



QUESTION 2

How many days a year do you fish for mullo way? [Never, 1-2 days, 2-5 days, 5-10 days, 10+ days]

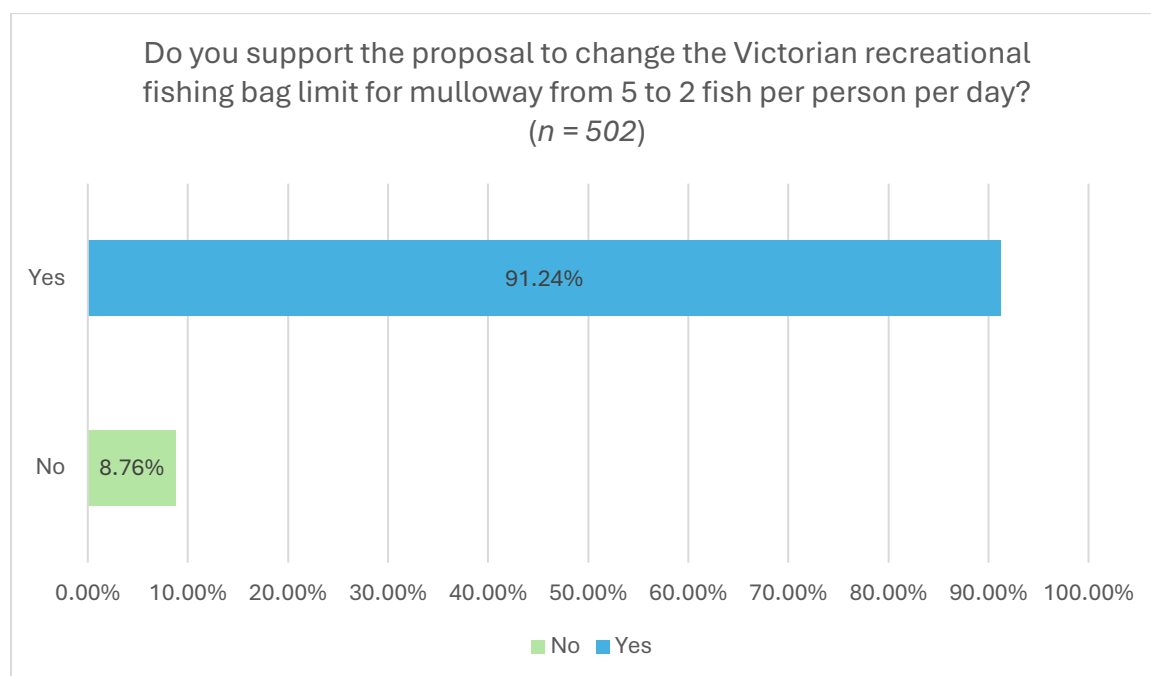
Answered 502, Skipped 0



QUESTION 3

Do you support the proposal to change the Victorian recreational fishing bag limit for mulloway from 5 to 2 fish per person per day?

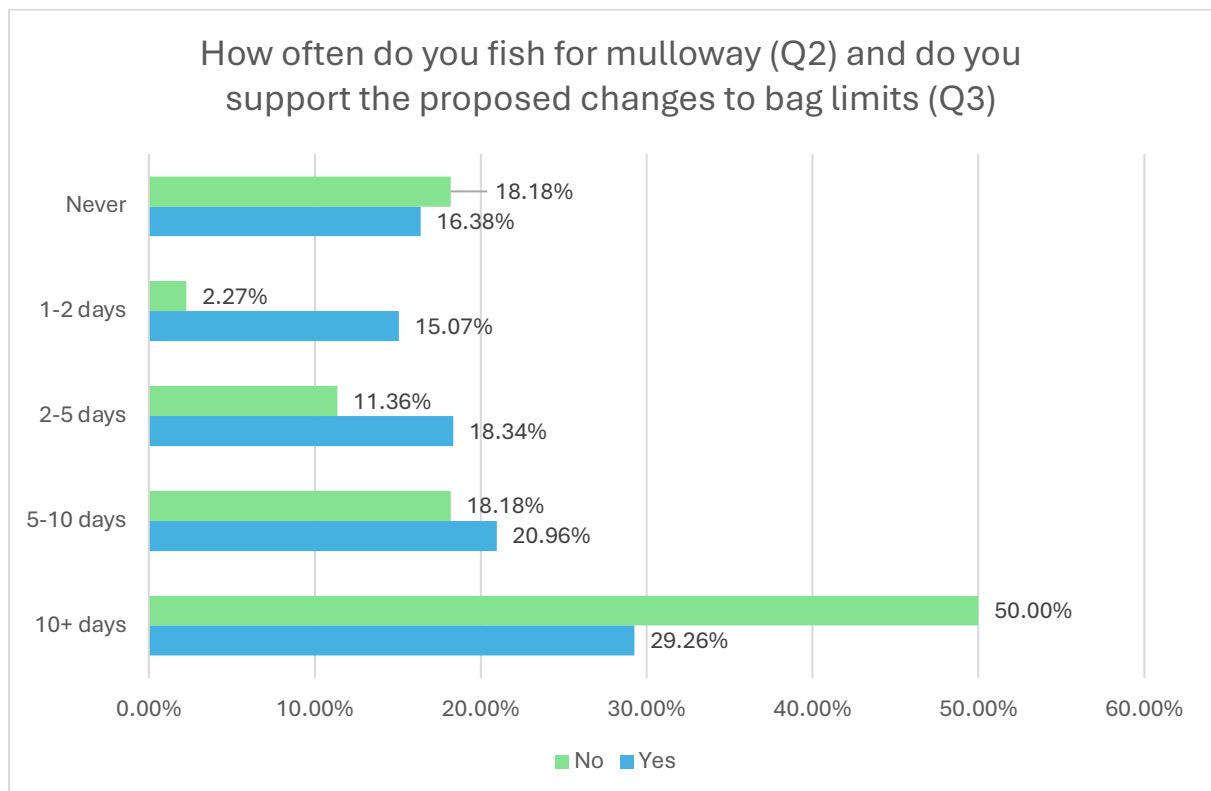
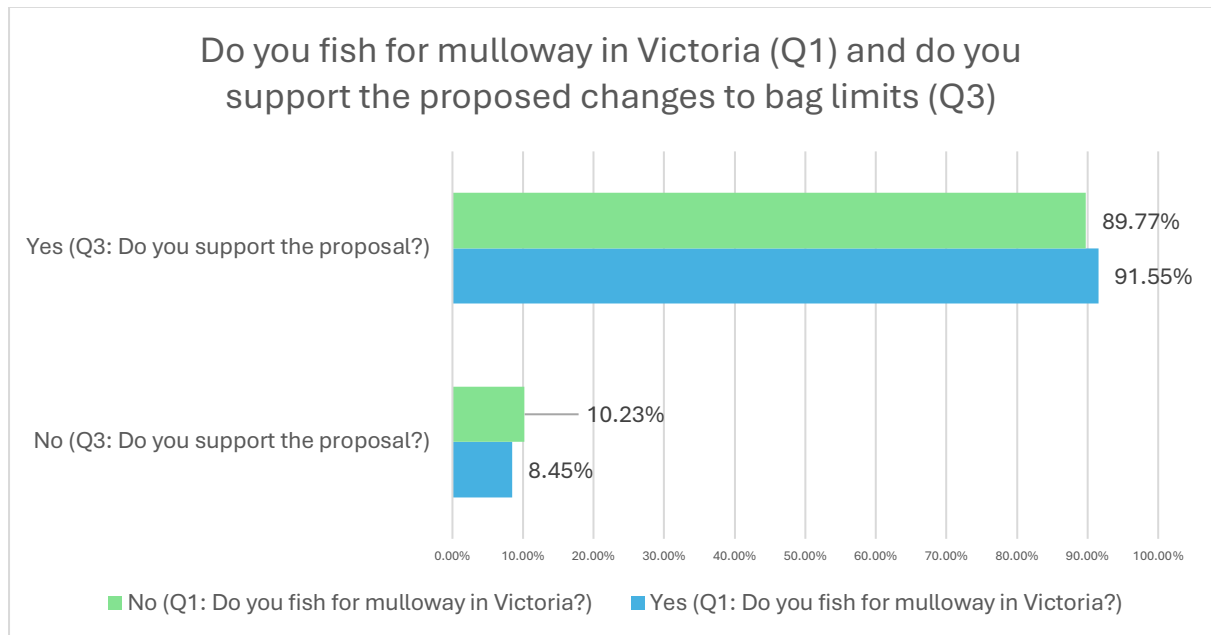
Answered 502, Skipped 0



Further Analysis of Question 3

- When filtering the responses to only include those who fish recreationally for mulloway [responded 'Yes' to Q1 (n=414)], we found that **91.55%** support the proposed changes to mulloway bag limits [responded 'Yes' to Q3].
- When filtering the responses to only include responses who answered **yes** to Q3 (n=458), respondents who fish **10+ days** per year for mulloway were most supportive of the proposed changes to bag limits [29.26%]. Followed by 5-10 days [20.96%], 2-5 days [18.34%], Never [16.38%], and 1-2 days [15.07%].
- When filtering the responses to only include responses who answered **no** to Q3 (n=44), respondents who fish **10+ days** per year for mulloway were least supportive of the proposed changes to bag limits [50%]. Followed by Never and 5-10 days [18.18%], 2-5 days [11.36%] and 1-2 days [2.27%]

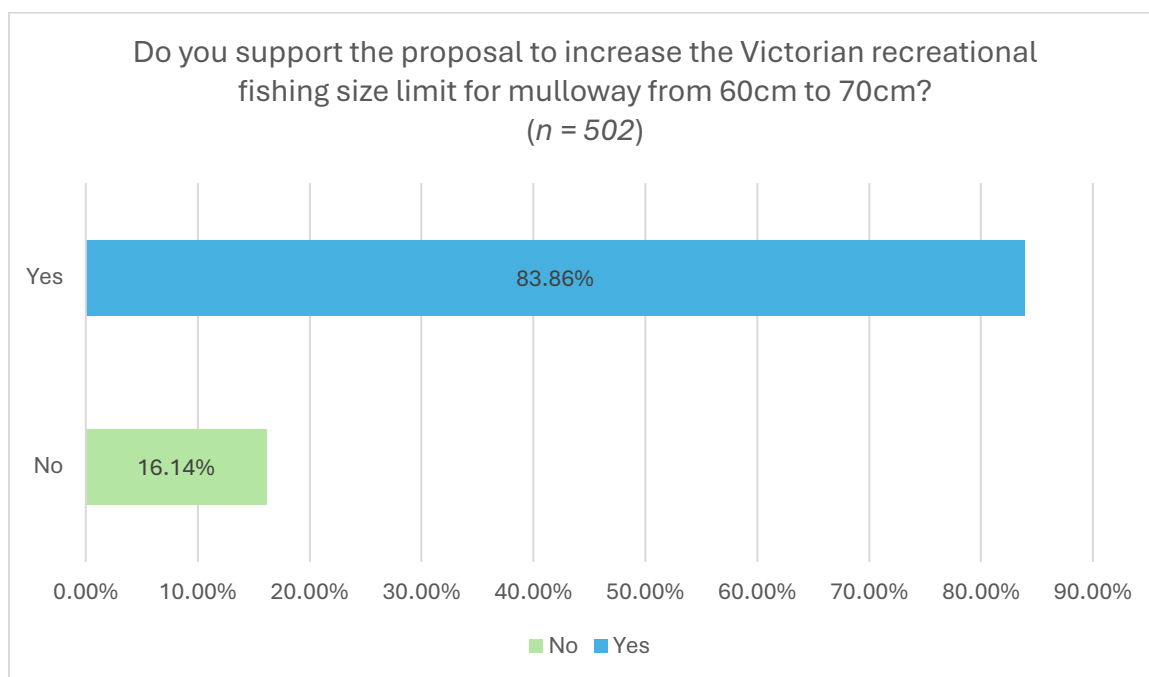
Further Analysis of Question 3 continued:



QUESTION 4

Do you support the proposal to increase the Victorian recreational fishing size limit for mullet from 60cm to 70cm?

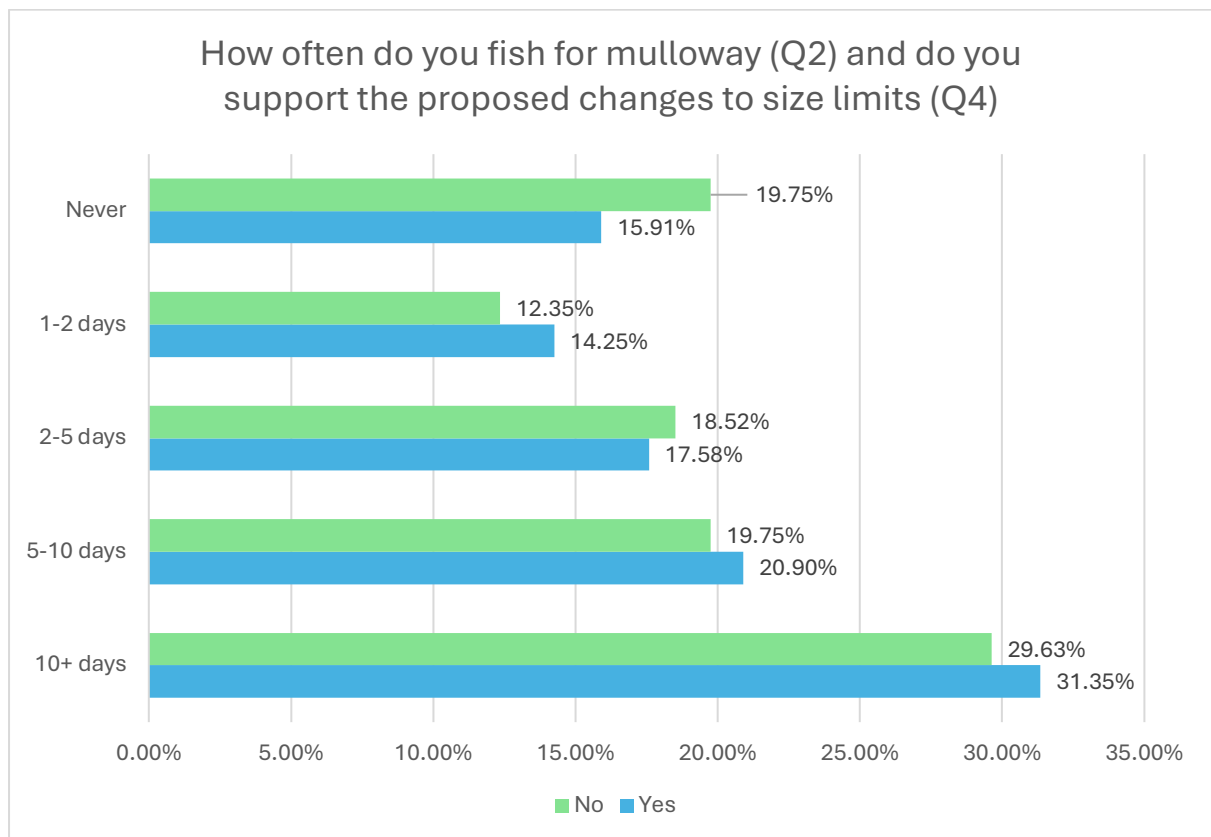
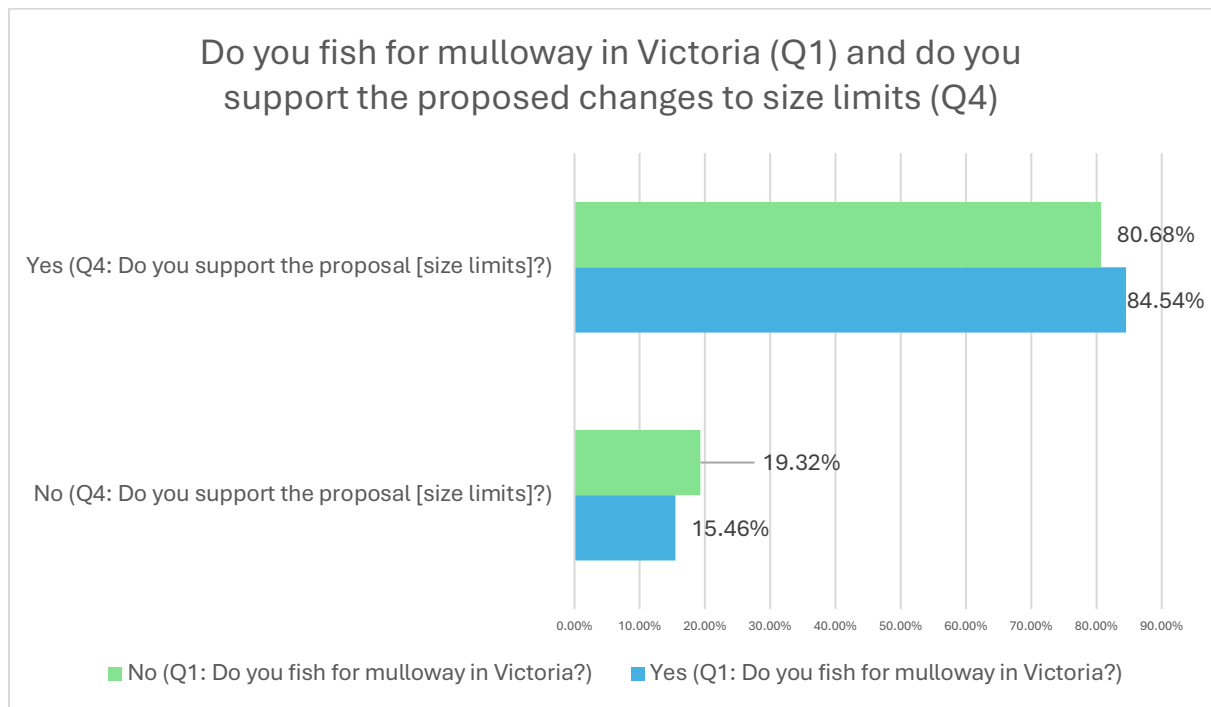
Answered 502, Skipped 0



Further Analysis of Question 4:

- When filtering the responses to only include those who fish recreationally for mullet [responded 'Yes' to Q1 (n=414)], we found that **84.54%** support the proposed changes to mullet size limit [responded 'Yes' to Q4 (n=350)].
- When filtering the responses to only include responses who answered **yes** to Q4 (n=421), respondents who fish **10+ days** per year for mullet were most supportive of the proposed change to size limits [31.35%]. Followed by 5-10 days [20.9%], 2-5 days [17.58%], Never [15.91%] and 1-2 days [14.25%].
- When filtering the responses to only include responses who answered **no** to Q4 (n=81), respondents who fish 10+ days per year for mullet were least supportive of the proposed change to size limits [29.63%]. Followed by Never and 5-10 days [both, 19.75%], 2-5 days [18.52%] and 1-2 days [12.35%].

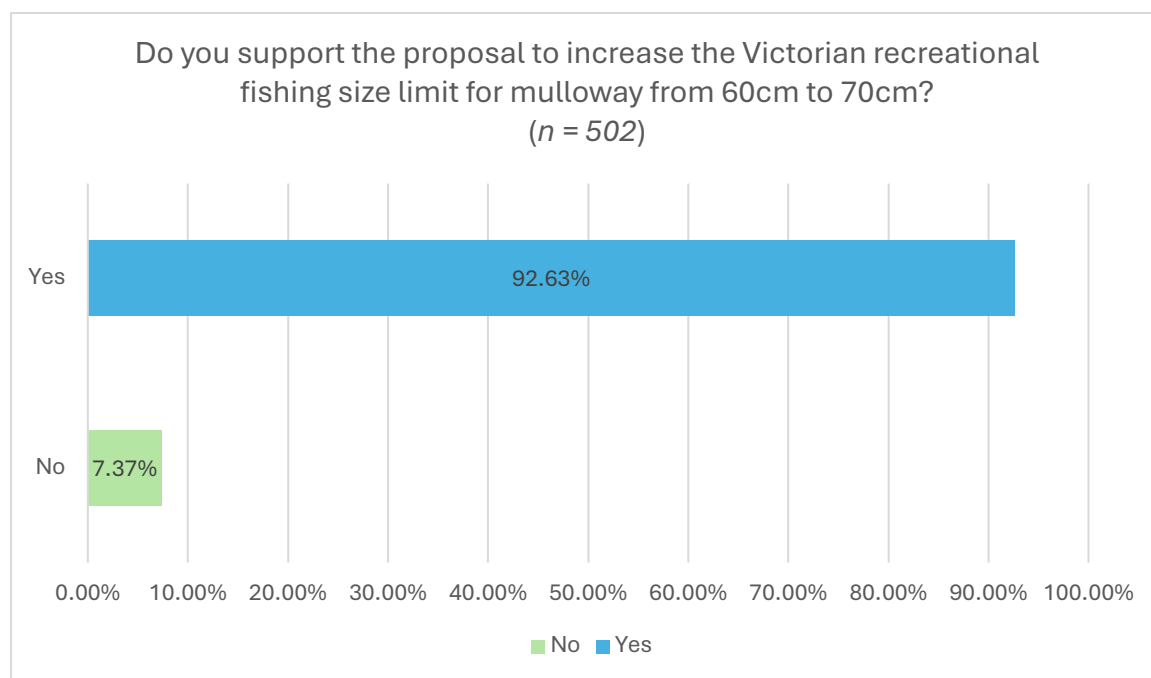
Further Analysis of Question 4 continued:



QUESTION 5

Do you support the proposal to restart a mulloway tagging program in Victoria?

Answered 502, Skipped 0



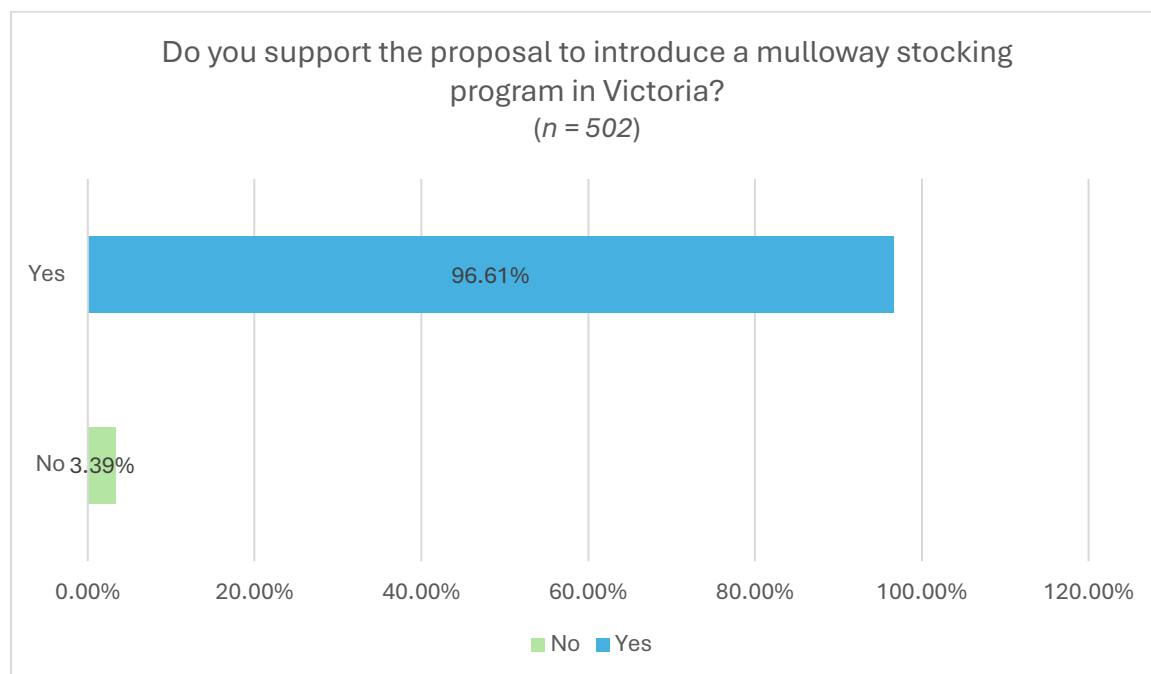
Further Analysis of Question 5:

When filtering the responses to only include those who fish recreationally for mulloway [responded 'Yes' to Q1 (n=414)], we found that **93.96%** support the proposal to restart a mulloway tagging program in Victoria [responded 'Yes' to Q5 (n=389)].

QUESTION 6

Do you support the proposal to introduce a mulloway stocking program in Victoria?

Answered 502, Skipped 0



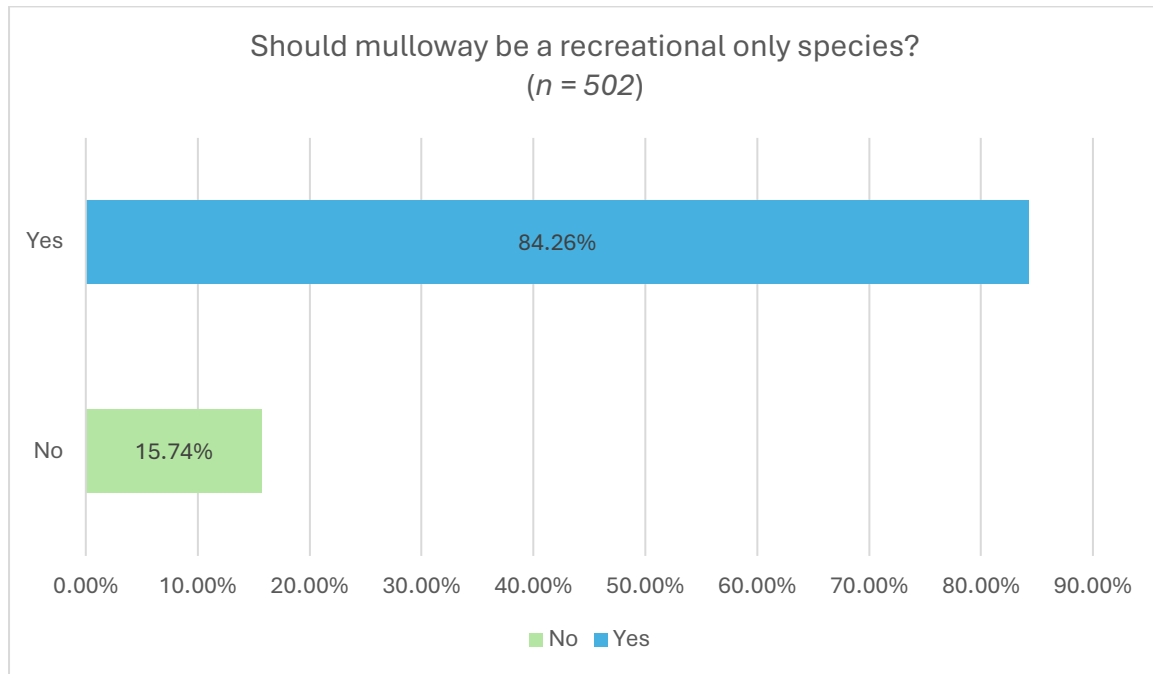
Further Analysis of Question 6:

When filtering the responses to only include those who fish recreationally for mulloway [responded 'Yes' to Q1 ($n=414$)], we found that **97.10%** support the proposal to introduce a mulloway stocking program in Victoria [responded 'Yes' to Q6 ($n=402$)].

QUESTION 7

Should mullo way be a recreational only species?

Answered 502, Skipped 0



Further Analysis of Question 7:

When filtering the responses to only include those who fish recreationally for mullo way [responded 'Yes' to Q1(n=414)], we found that **86.96%** support making mullo way a recreational only species [responded 'Yes' to Q7 (n=360)].

QUESTION 8

Do you have any other comments you'd like to make?

Answered 232, Skipped 0

Key themes throughout the additional comments that were left by respondents included:

- **A substantial number of responses were broadly supportive of the proposed management actions including the regulation changes, restarting a tagging program and trialling a stocking program for the species.**
 - *"I support all of these changes and suggest [working] with SA... 2 fish per person is plenty."*
 - *"Mulloway are an incredibly precious resource & every possible measure to protect them & allow their numbers to increase should be made, starting with reducing the bag limit, implementing a slot limit & ending commercial fishing for them."*
 - *"I would love to see our mulloway fishery bounce back to what it was like for the old timers."*
 - *"I am fully supportive of research programs and a marine hatchery in Victoria, particularly for mulloway."*
 - *"... assistance to improve their stocks would be welcomed..."*
 - *"The proposed Mulloway management plan is a practical, science-based approach that will help ensure a healthy and sustainable fishery for future generations. Reducing the bag limit from five to two fish and increasing the minimum size limit to 70 cm gives more fish the opportunity to reach maturity and spawn before being harvested. Combined with improved scientific monitoring and angler tagging, these measures will provide better data to support future management decisions. A sustainable fishery benefits everyone by protecting the breeding population while still allowing recreational anglers to enjoy targeting this iconic species for years to come. We also need to change the Laws and Regulations in South Australia to reflect the same principles."*
 - *"Please raise the size limit so they have a chance to breed."*
- **Respondents supported reducing the mulloway bag limit, with repeated calls for a further reduction to one fish per day.**
 - *"I believe it should be one per person and up the size to 70cm. At this size, there is plenty of meat on the fish and make it 2x fish per boat."*

- *"I'd be happier to follow NSW fisheries and make it one per person, two fish per boat."*
- **Some respondents suggested increasing the minimum size limit for mulloway beyond the proposed 70cm, with suggestions ranging from 75-90+ cm and/or introducing a slot limit to protect large breeding fish.**
 - *"I support all of these changes and suggest [working] with SA and make the size limit 80cm so the fish have at least one season to have the chance to breed."*
 - *"Slot limit so fish over 1 metre released."*
 - *"I would suggest a slot limit, 70 - 100, so as to return the larger breeding stock."*
- **Concerns were raised about the proposed minimum size limit with some considering it as too low. Noted that mulloway reach breeding size mid-70s, so some respondents suggested a higher minimum size to allow at least one breeding season for the fish.**
 - *"The reason I don't like the size limit is because they don't reach sexual maturity until around 74cm. Every fish should be able to breed at least once before being harvested. This would improve the genetic diversity and improve the quality of the fishery as well as mean more stock replenishment each season. I would rather see a size limit of 75-80cm instead. Better yet I would happily approve of a slot limit which would put our fishery in a better position to absorb the inevitable increase in pressure as our population continues to grow and participation increases."*
 - *"The size limit should be even higher. It's 82cm in South Australia which research shows allows at least one breeding cycle prior to being legal catch size."*
- **As an additional measure, boat limits were also suggested by some respondents.**
 - *"Should reduce bag to 1 and have a boat limit."*
 - *"Make it 2x fish per boat."*
 - *"... make it one per person, two fish per boat."*
- **Respondents commonly described mulloway as rare, declining or difficult to catch.**
 - *"Mulloway are hard to find to catch."*
 - *"Should just have 1 daily limit, as the fish quite rare in Victoria nowadays."*
 - *"They are difficult to catch."*

- *“[This] species are extremely difficult and cunning predators to catch. I am a keen angler of over 43 years and have never experienced such a challenge to try and catch one of these silver ghosts. I have been unsuccessful as yet here in Victoria... In saying that, I have not given up on Victoria as yet and I would be willing to take part and volunteer my help if you guys decided to go ahead with these programs in the Maribyrnong and Yarra River areas, as I am very local to the area and fish these rivers very often.”*
- *“Have noticed a decline in fish size and populations.”*
- *“Overdue reform – the quality of the fishery is noticeably declining.”*
- *“The quantity and size of fish have declined over the last 10-15 years in Melbourne Metropolitan rivers from my experience.”*
- **Some respondents suggested introducing a closed season.**
 - *“Introduce a closed season.”*
 - *“A "no take" season if it is proven they have a particular spawning time could be a good move, so they get an uninterrupted spawning window.”*
- **Some comments showed support for other measures for charter operators such as boat limits and/or specific bag limits.**
 - *“Charters should have boat limits and bag limits reduced severely, also.”*
 - *“Charter boat operators should be restricted to only 1 fish per customer and a max boat limit of 4 fish per 24 hours regardless of how many customers they can take.”*
 - *“Not allowing them to be the target of charter operators.”*
- **Some respondents raised concerns about commercial fishing and bycatch.**
 - *“They should not be commercially fished.”*
 - *“Given the migratory behaviour of mulloway, limits and practices around commercial fishing should be consistent across states.”*
 - *“I understand there is [an] almost non-existent... commercial fishery for Mulloway in Victoria but in answering yes to question seven I think it needs to be considered what impacts the commercial fishery across other states have on the reduction of large breeding fish. New South Wales & SA areas. If appropriate measures need to be taken in the commercial sector separate to that of the recreational changes. Both considerations would be proactive in maintaining sustainability of this species. This particular species may just require joint consultation between states, especially as previous tracking shows these fish have a large migration pattern.”*

- **Due to the migratory nature of mulloway, the need for consistent management across Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales was also raised by respondents.**
 - *“Changes need to be in consultation with other states, particularly SA and NSW to reduce their limits as well.”*
 - *“I’ve read that it’s believed the mulloway in [southwest] Victoria spawn in South Australia. If this is the case, the current commercial fishing and recreational limit of juvenile mulloway a day in the Coorong [South Australia] must be having a strong, negative impact on Victorian mulloway. Also, the targeting of mulloway by commercial beach hauling in NSW must have a negative impact on eastern Victorian stocks. Something must be done at a national level to protect this iconic species.”*
- **Many respondents shared their personal experiences, including areas fished, observed changes in their experiences targeting mulloway, local declines or recent catches of smaller fish.**
 - *“[I] have helped Lauren Brown [Nature Glenelg Trust] early on in the tagging of mulloway. I have chased these fish... in the Glenelg River... Coorong and the far west coast of SA... but have definitely seen the decline over the last few years in Vic and the lower south-east of SA.”*
- **Those who opposed the proposed regulation changes noted a range of reasons for opposing the changes including cost of living pressures, reduced access to fish for food, lower bag limits making travel efforts less worthwhile, already facing difficulty catching mulloway and concerns about over-regulation.**
 - *“The fishing public need less restrictions not more. Especially with the cost of living there needs to be [an] incentive to go fishing and make the effort (plus cost) a worthwhile exercise.”*
 - *“I think if you have a good night and catch 5 good on you. I have to travel a long way to go for these fish. You give up catching so many other fish when you go for... mulloway. If the bag limits on fish keep dropping I’ll just continue to fish for the species I can catch easier and won’t waste my time on the ones that take a lot more time and effort...”*
- **A minor theme within the comments included implementing only one change to mulloway regulations – eg. reduce bag limit and no change to size limit.**
 - *“I caught my first Mulloway in 2023, and 5 more since then, not one of them was over 70 cm. 2 of them were under 60 cm and were returned to the water. A few of weeks ago I caught 2, one at 65 cm and the other at 63 cm. The one 63 cm was returned to the water. I would recommend that*

the bag limit be reduced to 1 fish and leave the size limit at 60 cm for now and maybe relook at the size limit in a couple of years. My reasoning for this is that 70 cm + fish are rare, the Gippsland lakes are still recovering since the commercial fishers have gone, I think that there are some people who take undersize fish now, and if the size limit goes to 70, this would only lead to more undersize fish being taken.”

QUESTION 9

What is your postcode?

Answered 502, Skipped 0

The top 20 postcodes provided in Question 9 were:

Postcode	Area	Number of responses
3280	Warrnambool, Dennington	16
3305	Allestree, Bolwarra, Cape Bridgewater, Cashmore, Dutton Way, Gorae, Gorae West, Heathmere, Mount Richmond, Portland, Portland North, Portland West	13
3216	Belmont, Grovedale, Highton, Marshall, Wandana Heights, Waurn Ponds	11
3844	Blackwarry, Callignee, Callignee North, Callignee South, Carrajung, Carrajung Lower, Carrajung South, Flynn, Flynn's Creek, Koornalla, Loy Yang, Mount Tassie, Traralgon, Traralgon East, Traralgon South, Tyers	10
5290	Mount Gambier (<i>South Australia</i>)	10
3226	Ocean Grove	8
3875	Bairnsdale, Banksia Peninsula, Bengworden, Broadlands, Bullumwaal, Calulu, Clifton Creek, Deptford, East Bairnsdale, Eastwood, Ellaswood, Fairy Dell, Flaggy Creek, Forge Creek, Goon Nure, Granite Rock, Hillside, Iguana Creek, Lindenow South, Lucknow, Marthavale, Melwood, Merrijig, Mount Taylor, Newlands Arm, Ryans, Sarsfield, Tabberabbera, Walpa, Waterholes, Wentworth, Woodglan, Wuk Wuk, Wy Yung	8
3030	Cocoroc, Point Cook (including Sanctuary Lakes), Quandong, Werribee, Werribee South	7
3228	Bellbrae, Bells Beach, Jan Juc, Torquay	7
3021	Albanvale, Kealba, Kings Park, St Albans	6
3805	Fountain Gate, Narre Warren, Narre Warren South	6
3810	Pakenham, Pakenham South, Pakenham Upper, Rythdale	6
3197	Carrum, Patterson Lakes	5
3215	Bell Park, Bell Post Hill, Drumcondra, Geelong North, Hamlyn Heights, North Geelong, Rippleside	4
3223	Bellarine, Indented Head, Portarlington, St Leonards	4
3260	Bookaar, Bostocks Creek, Bungador, Camperdown, Carpendeit, Chocolyn, Gnotuk, Kariah, Koallah, Leslie Manor, Pomborneit, Pomborneit North, Skibo, South Purrumbete, Stonyford, Tandarook, Tesbury, Weerite	4
3284	Orford, Port Fairy	4
3350	Alfredton, Bakery Hill, Ballarat, Ballarat Central, Ballarat East, Ballarat North, Ballarat West, Black Hill, Brown Hill, Canadian, Eureka, Golden Point, Invermay Park, Lake Wendouree, Lucas, Mount Clear, Mount Helen, Mount Pleasant, Nerrina, Newington, Redan, Soldiers Hill	4
3850	Sale, Wurruk	4
3892	Mallacoota	4