TARAGO RESERVOIR FISHING REGULATIONS SURVEY

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Over a ten-day period from 22 October to 1 November 2026, recreational fishers were asked to have their say on fishing regulations for Tarago Reservoir ahead of its opening to public access, including recreational fishing and boating, later this year.

Opening Tarago Reservoir provides a unique opportunity to create a special fishery. The reservoir has been closed to the public for decades and its reopening will provide recreational fishers with access to a high-quality water storage close to Melbourne.

In recent years, electro-fishing by the Victorian Fisheries Authority and Arthur Rylah Institute has found that the reservoir holds a strong, self-sustaining population of large brown trout.

As the peak body for Victoria's recreational fishing, VRFish asked recreational fishers to provide their input into how they view the Tarago Reservoir fishery should be managed once it is opened to the public.

The feedback from the survey will be shared publicly by VRFish and provided to the Victorian Fisheries Authority for consideration.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

A total of **789** 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.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

The survey consisted of three key questions including:

1. Which of the following regulations do you support for Tarago Reservoir?
2. Do you support Tarago Reservoir to be managed as an exclusive Brown Trout fishery, with only brown trout to be considered for future stocking programs?
3. Do you have any other comments to add?

SURVEY RESULTS

The results of the survey can be viewed below.

QUESTION 1

The following introduction was included before Question 1:

In Question 1, you'll be asked to identify which of the proposed regulations you support for Tarago Reservoir. This includes (1) the standard trout regulations for lakes and impoundments, (2) the 'trophy trout' waters regulations or (3) an alternate 'Tarago Reservoir' option.

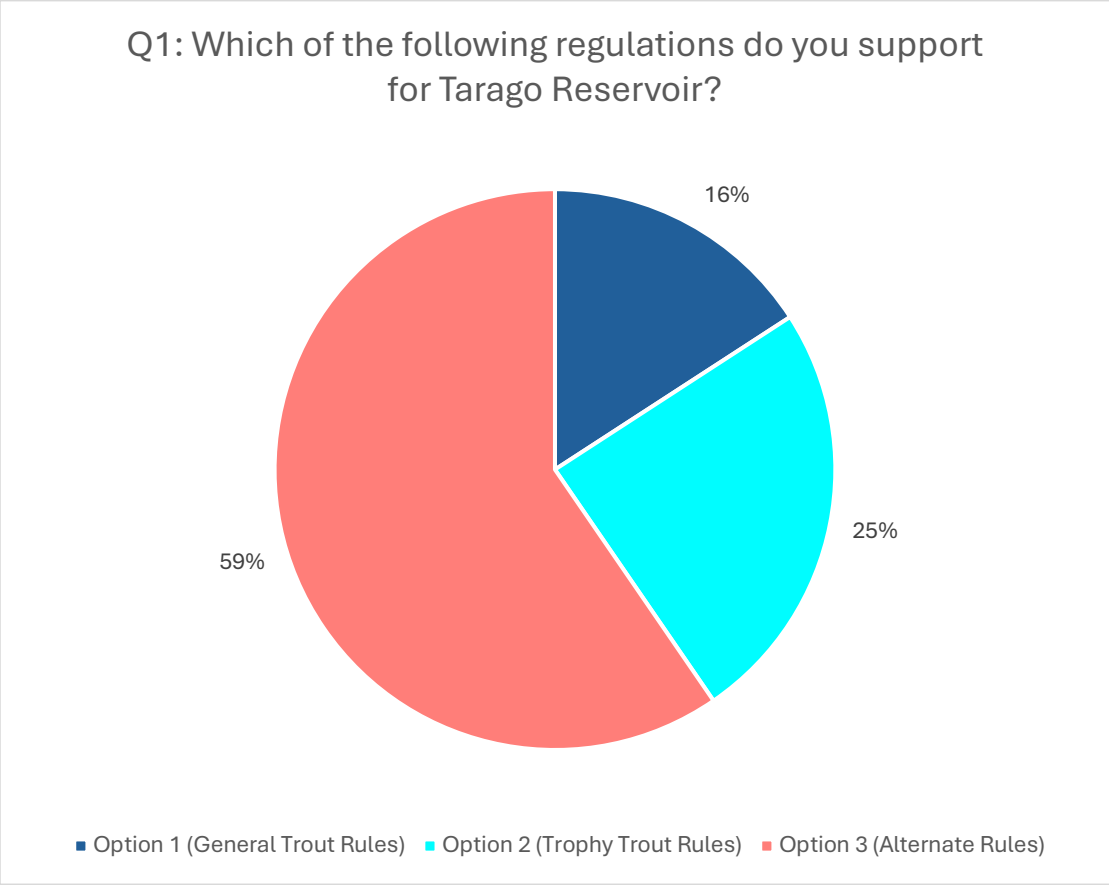
1. *In Victoria, trout and salmon regulations allow a bag limit of 5 fish per person, and no size limit for trout and salmon in lakes and impoundments.*
2. *Trophy trout waters, Hepburn Lagoon and Toolondo Reservoir, maintain a minimum 45cm size limit for brown trout and a bag limit of 3 fish per person.*
3. *An alternative option for Tarago's trout regulations which provides the opportunity for everyone to fish the reservoir with their chosen method and to take a fish for the table, whilst still maintaining a sustainable approach to managing the fishery. This includes a proposed bag limit of 2 fish per person, a minimum size limit of 35cm, one rod per person and no treble hooks (single hooks only).*

The table below provides a summary of the three potential options of fishing regulations for Tarago Reservoir.

	Option 1	**Option 2**	**Option 3**
	General trout rules for lakes and impoundments	*Trophy Trout Lakes*	*Alternate option, specific to Tarago Reservoir*
Bag Limit	5	3	2
Minimum Size Limit	No limit	45cm	35cm
Rod/s per person	2	2	1
Additional Provision/s	Nil	Nil	• No treble hooks (single hooks only) • Signage and information about fish handling to support catch and release

1. Which of the following regulations do you support for Tarago Reservoir? (As shown in above table.)
    - **Option 1:** General trout rules for lakes and impoundments
    - **Option 2:** Trophy Trout Lakes
    - **Option 3:** Alternate option, specific to Tarago Reservoir

Answered **789**, Skipped 0

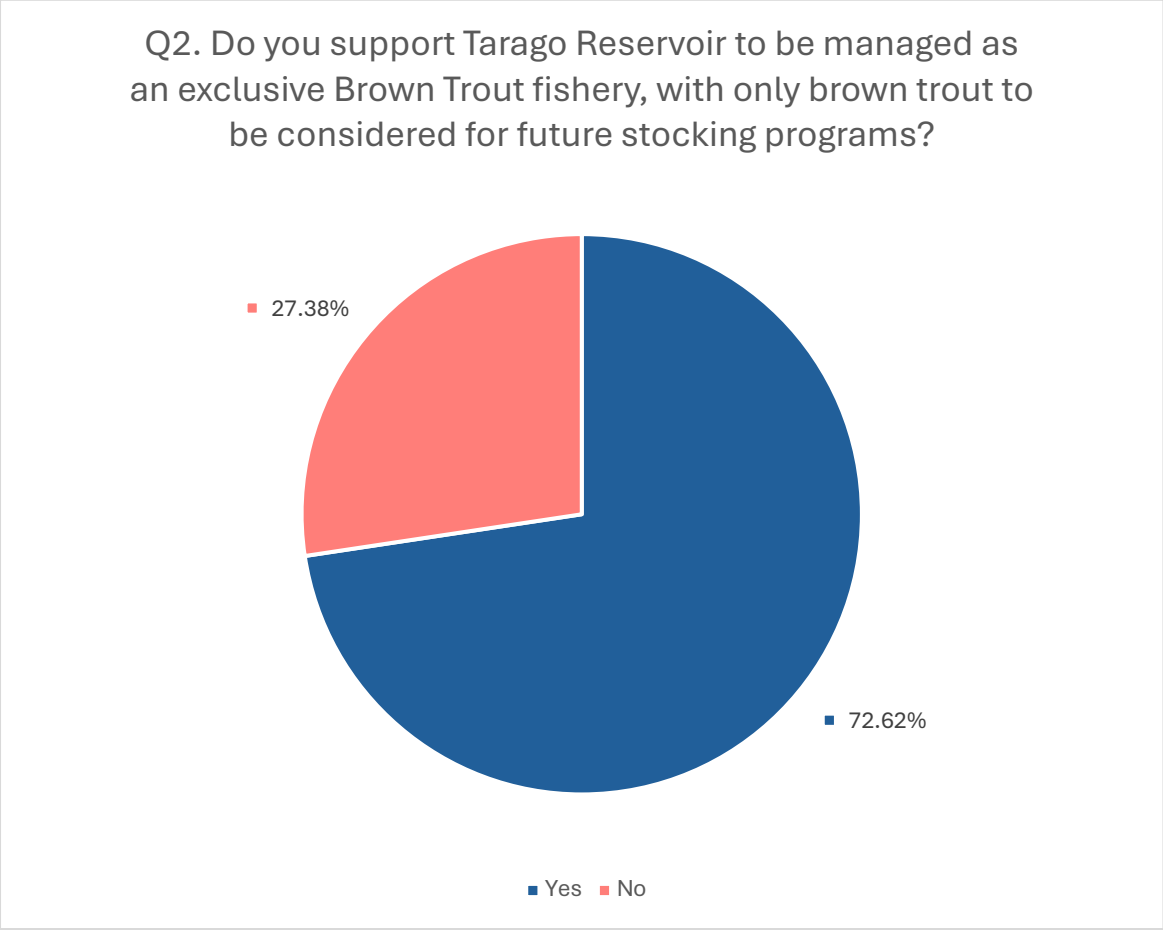


Answer Choices	Percentage	Respondents
Option 1: General trout rules for lakes and impoundments	15.84%	125
Option 2: Trophy Trout Lakes	24.59%	194
Option 3: Alternate option, specific to Tarago Reservoir	59.57%	470
Total		789

QUESTION 2

2. Do you support Tarago Reservoir to be managed as an exclusive Brown Trout fishery, with only brown trout to be considered for future stocking programs?

Answered **789**, Skipped 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Respondents
Yes	72.62%	573
No	27.38%	216
Total		789

QUESTION 3

3. Do you have any other comments to add?

Answered **454**, Skipped **335**

In the final question, respondents were invited to add additional comments.

When evaluating the results, the comments were tagged by key themes that occurred throughout the survey. Comments were tagged by their appropriate theme regardless of positive or negative sentiment. Comments were tagged with any relevant themes included within the comments.

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

Theme	Number of Comments
Access: On water (Boating)	67
Access: Land based	29
Bag Limit	35
Catch and Release	78
Enforcement	39
Fishing Method	84
Fly/Lure/Artificial Only (No Bait)	63
No Stocking	6
Other Suggestions	63
Rod Limit	20
Size Limit	34
Stocking – Natives/Other	39
Stocking - Trout	62

Below are examples of comments left by respondents in question 3.

Q3 Comment Examples:

Catch and Release

There were 78 comments mentioning 'catch and release' including:

- "I would like to see the stocking of rainbow trout as well in the future, with a catch-and-release rule for the first five years after the stocking of rainbow trout, only take browns during this period."
- "Strongly suggest all anglers urged to catch-and-release, a bag limit of 1 per day if they must…"
- "The fishery would be treated best as a catch-and-release fishery only to provide anglers with the opportunity to consistently catch trophy trout…"
- "A strict catch and release policy should be implemented over winter…"
- "This is a unique opportunity to create a very special fishery. Catch and release only should also be considered."
- "I believe it should be catch and release only with single hooks and artificial only. Or potentially a bag limit of 1 fish over 50cm."

- “Catch and release. Making it a zero take fishery. Also giving anglers more [information] and education on how to safely release fish.”
- “Prefer it remain wild trout fishery. [Catch and release regulations] would mean no stocking is needed.”
- “One fish bag limit or catch and release.”
- “… Low bag limits, if not catch and release would be a nice change.”
- “it should be a unique, no-take fishery to support trophy status.”

Stocking

There were a range of comments regarding stocking preferences for Tarago Reservoir, including:

No stocking:

- “… Stocking should only be considered if catch rates are low. It appears the system has strong natural recruitment.”
- “Would be nice to have a lake where it isn’t reliant on stocking…”
- “Catch and release with no stocking at all.”
- “No fish should ever be stocked in this lake. It has been self-supporting wild trophy trout fishery for 30 years.”

Trout-only fishery/stocking:

- “Prefer it remain wild trout fishery.”
- “… consider investigating the impact of introducing of other species of trout.”
- “Exclusive trout fishery only but allow stocking of rainbow and brook as well as non-breeding hybrid trout.”
- “Include rainbow trout too.”
- “When it was last open, regular stocking of rainbows complimented the resident browns very well.”

Mixed/Native stocking:

- “Rainbow trout and native fish should be stocked as well.”
- “Consider Australian bass stocking as well.”
- “Stock with natives and rainbow [trout].”
- “Trout should be the lowest priority…. [we] need more bass lakes.”
- “Should stock it with bass or estuary perch so it becomes a mixed fishery of trout, bass and blackfish.”
- “Stock rainbow [trout] and yellowbelly.”
- “There should be other fish, not just brown trout. Other fish that live comfortably with brown trout.”
- “… stock some type of native fish, not more trout.”
- “Add golden perch as well…”
- “Stock with native species.”

Access: Land based

There were 29 comments regarding land-based access to Tarago Reservoir, including:

- “I would like to see bank fishing areas set up to enable families to have access to this fishery. Otherwise the local area will not have access to the financial gains that tourism can offer. The benefits are strong for both the fishery and the local community to get a strong tourism support.”
- “Bank fishing access in some suitable locations, no wading, if possible.”

- “Why not bank fishing…”
- “Must have land-based fishing.”
- “More land-based fishing access.”
- “I believe there will be limited land-based fishing this is very disappointing. Please allow more land based options…”

Fishing Method

There were a range of comments regarding preferred fishing methods at Tarago Reservoir, including:

Artificial/Fly/Lure Only (No Bait)

- “Artificial only should also be considered.”
- “Consider lure and fly only.”
- “… using artificial fly and lure only.”
- “No bait fishing”
- “Should be made a no bait fishery…”
- “Perhaps the lake should be a designated fly only water to facilitate more efficient catch and release strategies.”

Other

- “Single hooks would be a bit of a pain as a lot of trout lures are pre rigged with trebles.”
- “No trebles but … single hooks on a hardbody lure.”
- “Single hooks only…”
- “… barbless hooks only…”
- “Drop the single hook rule.”
- “Lure and fly only on barbless hooks, no treble hooks permitted…”

Other Suggestions

There were 63 comments which provided other suggestions. These included:

- “Limit of no more than 3 fish per vehicle”
- “No digging on the banks.”
- “[Free] Daily permit for maximum amount of boats on water at any one time.”
- “Will require rubbish bins.”
- “Closing it every second year to give the place a rest…”
- “Needs constant checking and maintenance of car park area.”

Enforcement

There were 39 comments related to enforcement and regulations, including:

- “I do not support any further catch restrictions. People need incentive not more restrictions.”
- “Patrols will need to be regularly conducted… [so the reservoir] does not become a dumping ground for rubbish…”
- “It must be supervised and enforced…”
- “I like option 3 but have serious concerns about who is going to regulate this.”
- “We ought to protect our unique fisheries for the future, any regulations that support this I am in favour of.”