



VRFish Strategic Planning Workshop
Saturday 3 March 2007
Primary Industries Research Victoria, Snobs Creek Facility

Participants: Ron Lewis, Les Penrose, Priya Cardinaletti, Christopher Collins, Alison Cobbledick, Rod Booker, Pat Sheridan, Mike Edwards, Bob Pearce, Rob Loats, Doug Evers-Buckland, Alan Digby, Steven Relf, Stafford Simpson, Russell Conway, Stephen Douglass, John Hotchin, Tony Matthews, Kathy Matthews, Geoff Churcher, Merv McGuire, Robert Caune, Ron Cain, Nick Thorne, Brett Moyes, Doug MacIntire, June MacIntire, Pat Washington, Gordon Howlett, Trevor Buck, Bill Richards, Tony Hyatt, Bill Davey, Cr. Chris Healey, Jeff Willey, Richard Maxwell, Kevin Williams, Keith Ridsdale, Cr. Leanne Pleash, Bob Elkington, John Simmonds, Cr. Janet Gilmore, Andrew Sharp, Tony Leen, John Willis, Clive Bustard, Lindsay Grenfell, Tony Cahill, Franz Grasser, Joe Helper – Minister for Agriculture, Rob Mitchell, Peter Appleford – Executive Director Fisheries Victoria.

Agenda

| Time | Session |
|--------------------|---|
| 11:30 – 11:35 | Bob Pearce - Introduction |
| 11:35 – 12:30 | Christopher Collins and Mike Edwards - Facilitators Setting the Scene:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of 2005-2008 Business Plan • Evaluation of 2006-2007 Business Plan • Presentation of points from Fishing Show • Presentation of points from Brand Survey |
| 12:30 – 1:00 | Joe Helper, Minister for Agriculture Vision for Recreational Fishing |
| 1:00 – 2:00 | Lunch – Sponsored by the Murrindindi Shire Council |
| 1:30 – 1:45 | Evaluation of Minister's Vision |
| 1:45 – 2:45 | Butcher's Paper Session:- Suggestions from the Floor |
| 2:45 – 3:15 | Afternoon Tea |
| 3:15 – 4:15 | Prioritisation:- Work through suggestions from the floor |
| 4:15 – 4:20 | Bob Pearce - Concluding Speech |

The Objectives for Workshop were to review progress on the 2002 Strategic Workshop; refer **Attachment 1** - 5 Year Vision, get input from the Minister for Agriculture's vision for recreational fishing and to confirm the strategic focus for the next 5 years.

The 2002 Strategic Planning Workshop identified four key areas concerning recreational fishers:

- managing fisheries on a sustainable basis;
- recreational fishing access and infrastructure;
- water conservation and fish habitat improvement;
- educational and promotional programs.

The 2002 Workshop identified 51 areas for improvement within these four areas. A review of this Vision was agreed to occur in late 2006.

Christopher Collins, VRFish Executive Officer provided an analysis of Business Plans that were developed during this five year time frame.

The 2005-2008 Business Plan, developed by a consultant, identified five goal areas; refer **Attachment 2:**

- Goal A: Services - Deliver proactive policy directions and outcomes which improve recreational fishing
- Goal B: Volunteers - Productive pool of active volunteers staffing our projects
- Goal C: Recreational Fishers - An active well informed membership drawn from diverse experiences
- Goal D: Financials - A well resourced peak body capable of delivering its mission
- Goal E: Brand Management - When there is a recreational fishing issue we are the first port of call

Although this Plan timeframe is not complete, VRFish will continue to strive toward achieving the outlined Goals.

In January 2006, the VRFish Board help a workshop in Marysville, this workshop assisted the development the 2006-2007 Business Plan and four key areas were identified; refer **Attachment 3:**

- Key Area 1 – Representation and Advocacy
- Key Area 2 – Preserving and enhancing the fish resource, infrastructure, access and the experience
- Key Area 3 – Develop a broader, more effective communications profile
- Key Area 4 – Corporate Governance

It was interesting to note that similar issues have been raised by recreational fishers at Fishing Shows and also during the recent Brand Survey. Through further analysis of these issues, it was identified that these issues also align with the five year vision, demonstrating that VRFish is heading in the right direction. The top five areas were:

- More water allocation for environmental purposes - comment featured strongly from the rural communities
- More fish stocking
- Better and more boat ramps - comment featured strongly from the Port Phillip & Westernport area
- Better access
- Ban commercial netting - comments featured from the Port Phillip & Westernport and estuarine areas

Joe Helper, Minister for Agriculture, will invest \$12 million in new recreational fishing projects. The Labor Government believes in giving families more opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors and outlined his plan for investing in new family fishing programs during the school holidays, stocking small lakes with large, ready-to-catch trout to help younger fishers.

Minister Helper expanded on the Labor Government Electoral Policy; refer **Attachment 4** – Policy for the 2006 Victorian Election, which including points on:

- Family Friendly Fishing
- Fish Cleaning Tables
- Trial artificial reefs
- Habitat improvement program
- Improving angler access
- Boosting fish stocks

Following consideration of the day's presentations the workshop re-evaluated the five year visions' four key areas. These were expanded into the:-

2007 Strategic Areas moving forward

- pro-actively managing fisheries by ecosystem based fisheries management;
- improve and maintain recreational fishing access and infrastructure;
- environmental sustainability (climate change) water conservation and fish habitat improvement;
- coordination and communication between key fishing stakeholders (public relations) - educational and promotional programs;
- security of VRFish funding arrangements.

Following finalisation of the key areas, participants were broken into groups to brainstorm strategies to address the five key areas.

Pro-actively managing fisheries by ecosystem based fisheries management

- Develop our requirements for what will constitute a health fishery
- Enhance cooperation and gain inter-agency licence to ensure that strategies are delivering value to recreational fishers
- Develop areas of influence
- Take back into our area of influence issues that affect recreational fisheries experience
- Identify key people in agencies of influence that we can work with and promote their success and recognition internally and externally
- Identify and develop a network of skilled people (both within VRFish and the wider community) that are willing to assist us 'pro bono' on targeted issues
- Need to develop a means of measuring output (results) using eco-system based sustainable practices

Improve and maintain recreational fishing access and infrastructure

- Parks Victoria must include VRFish automatically in future, build better relationships for boating and fishing
- Identify all other statutory bodies with influence over access and infrastructure
- Devise process to prioritise projects and actions to target funding programs
- Identify threats to access and infrastructure
- Identify like minded groups for added strength in projects
- Gain support from tourism industry for access and infrastructure
- Access to information – communication / legislation?

Environmental sustainability (climate change) water conservation and fish habitat improvement

VRFish will seek ways to engage with all relevant authorities with a view to implementing these policies:

- Investigate potential changes to fish resources as a result of climate change

- Evaluate proposed initiative government/industry etc to respond to climate change WRT recreational fishing
- Work with authorities to identify suitable (saltwater) fish species including mixed species fisheries adaptable to possible climate change

Coordination and communication between key fishing stakeholders (public relations) – educational and promotional programs

- Improve ‘one-on-one’ relationships with government agencies
- Promote who and what does VRFish do
- Include mailing register on website (make website more interactive)
- Develop promotional packs for ‘kids come and try fishing’ days
- Need paid advertising in Fishing Lines magazine
- Fishing Lines needs to promote achievements and advertise representation
- Investigate signage at key access points (boat ramps) stickers
- Participate in fishing and boat shows
- Use all media types – radio/newspapers/magazines/rec fish guide/internet advertising/emails

The above dot points are an expansion on the VRFish Communications Plan

Security of VRFish funding arrangement

Strengths

- RFL Funding Commitment (\$1.70/RFL 1 year equivalent = \$300k)
- Allowed to Seek Funding
- VRFish recognised by government as Peak Body
- Having a model does give some security moving forward

Weaknesses

- No government funding
- Minister decides who is Peak Body
- Insufficient
- As only funding – organisation is beholden to government
- Insecurity in strategic forecast
- Cannot secure quality staff though yearly funding

Opportunity

- Commitment that funding of VRFish will benefit the government
- Review of Fisheries Act – secure fund through the Act
- Funding form corporate
- Significant monies within RFL trust (possibly)
- External funding will release the governments control on us
- Broaden the application of the RFL

Threats

- Forming of another Body recognised by the Minister/government
- Minister approves FRAC funding received
- EO FRAC – Robert Krix advises Minister
- *Non transparent decision making on funding*
- Change of government
- *Irrelevant through lack of public recognition
- *Focus on national control of waterways

- VRFish was established by the opposition
- NETT funding issue

Strategic Focus

- Secure long term funding from government, based on % of revenue in the Act
- Minister publicly recognises that funding VRFish is in the best interest of government
- Need ensure transparency of decision making
- Change current funding model
- Seek register of interest in financing from external sources (industry / federal)

VRFish will analyse the outcomes from the breakout sessions and develop its direction for the next five years. VRFish will develop a business plan to accompany this document.

VRFish would like to thank all who attended the workshop and contributed to a successful day. Special thanks to the Murrindindi Shire Council, Primary Industries Research Victoria and Minister Joe Helper.