



# Media Release

DATE: March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007

---

FROM THE OFFICE OF VRFISH – VICTORIAS' RECREATIONAL FISHING PEAK BODY

---

## ABALONE VIRUS....

VRFish looks into recent statements published about the abalone virus – *ganglioneuritis*.

The Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body has been receiving calls from recreational fishers who are concerned that the abalone virus that has occurred near Port Fairy may result in the closure of boat ramps along the West Coast of Victoria.

VRFish Chairman, Bob Pearce, today stated that there is no ban on recreational fishing in the affected areas and none was contemplated. “VRFish would not support any moves to restrict fishing in the area, nor would we support the closure of any boat ramps”.

Fisheries Victoria has issued a Fisheries Notice banning the taking of abalone or other shell fish in the affected area. There is no current ban on recreational diving, however.

The temporary Abalone Closure was put in place to protect vulnerable and accessible abalone stocks close to Port Fairy from fishing pressure that have been impacted by the disease *ganglioneuritis*.

The current Closure extends from the high water mark 1 km west of The Craggs car park to the Killarney Beach car park.



The Temporary Abalone Closure area off Port Fairy.

The Fisheries Notice prohibits the:

- Taking of abalone, other shellfish and sea urchins,
- Use of commercial abalone fishing equipment,
- Collection of any substrate.

Vessels may move through and anchor within the area. Line fishing from the shore or boats is also permitted, as are surfing, swimming, diving (including for rock lobster) and walking along the shore/rocks.

The Fisheries Notice expires on 31 March 2007.

Biosecurity protocols have been developed for the recreational, commercial and aquaculture fishing sectors.

The Recreational Biosecurity Protocol was developed for waters inside and outside of the Temporary Abalone Closure to further minimise the risk of spreading the disease. These controls require the:

- **Decontamination** of vessels, wetsuits, dive equipment, catch bags, boxes and people who come into contact with abalone with soapy freshwater,
- Appropriate **disposal** of abalone shell, meat and gut.

There is still relatively little known about the transmission of the virus between reef structures.

Victorian Abalone Divers Association (VADA) Chief Executive Officer, Vin Gannon said that VADA wants to work with Fisheries Victoria and VRFish to increase the awareness of the recreational diving and fishing community of the seriousness and biosecurity measures needed to try and contain the current virus outbreak.

Until further information is known about the virus and its transmission, VRFish will continue to support the Fisheries Notice to protect vulnerable and accessible abalone stocks, but will not support banning of fishing in the area nor the closure of boat ramps.

Anyone requiring further information regarding the virus, decontamination and disposal, may check out the DPI website –

<http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/nrenfaq.nsf/LinkView/C5360C2028FA31E2CA2572330021C4BED45F5C300E5D2ED54A2567D700236463>

**VRFish – Victoria's Recreational Fishing Peak Body**  
Marine House, Ground Floor, 24 York Street, South Melbourne Vic 3205  
Telephone: 9686 7077 Facsimile: 9682 1066 [www.vrfish.com.au](http://www.vrfish.com.au)