



# Media Release

DATE: March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007

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

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## CHANNEL DEEPENING PROJECT....

VRFish Chairman Bob Pearce today expressed serious concerns about the ecological consequences for Port Phillip Bay.

“What VRFish has been able to ascertain about the damage to the bay’s ecology is alarming and much worse than we had previously anticipated. VRFish has been concerned from the outset about the dumping of spoil in Port Phillip Bay, especially the highly toxic spoil being removed from the Yarra River. Mr Pearce said

“VRFish notes that the spoil that is planned to be dumped in the bay is too toxic to be dumped in Bass Strait, so it does not make sense that this same spoil can be safely dumped into Port Phillip Bay.”

VRFish is seriously concerned at the proposed sites for dumping of spoil, as they are in areas that attract fish and other marine life. These areas will be seriously damaged by the proposed dumping of toxic spoil. VRFish is especially concerned about the sensitive environment that exists at Port Phillip Heads. This is a diving mecca that is renowned throughout the world and will clearly be seriously damaged by channel deepening works.

Recreational fishing generates billions of dollars to the Victorian economy every year, especially in the manufacturing sector.

The Supplementary Environmental Effects Statement (SEES) does not take account of the damage to this sector of the economy, plus a range of other economic sectors that are supported by Recreational fishing, for example Tourism. When compared to a projected return of \$2.2 billion over 28 years, it seems a paltry amount compared to what is generated by recreational fishing every year.

VRFish’s comments are based on what we have read or heard in the news, as the Victorian Government has not seen fit to provide us with a copy of the SEES.

VRFish calls on the Minister for Roads and Ports, Tim Pallas, to urgently enter into a dialogue with VRFish so that we may raise with him our concerns about this project.

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