



Media Release

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From the Offices of VRFISH, FUTUREFISH FOUNDATION and AFTA

Bracks declares ban on commercial netting in Western Port...

VRFish, Futurefish and AFTA commend the Government's decision to act favorably on behalf of Victoria's recreational fishers.

In a history-making announcement, Premier Bracks confirmed that a re-elected Bracks government will take action to eliminate all commercial netting in Victoria's Western Port. The announcement was the lead item in Labors \$44million *Recreational Fishing and Boating Policy* launched at Torradin on Saturday.

Premier Steve Bracks announced "A re-elected Labor Government will ban commercial netting in Western Port to create a new Recreational Fishing Haven.

"Western Port is a popular destination for recreational anglers and the Bracks Government is moving to ensure its long term sustainability,"

"Labor wants to ensure many of Victoria's much loved recreational fishing destinations continue to yield catches for recreational anglers into the future."

Rex Hunt, founder of the Rex Hunt Futurefish Foundation, said "he was delighted with the Premiers announcement and looks forward to the rebirth of Western Port and the return of the exciting recreational fishing that it was once renowned for."

"This is a great day for Victorian fishing." Hunt said.

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Bob Pearce, Chairman of Victoria's Recreational Fishing Peak Body, VRFish, said "This is a tremendous win for Victoria's recreational fishers and it represents the success of the strong

voice of recreational fishers working together as one to achieve such an excellent outcome. Western Port will again become one of Australia's truly great recreational fisheries as a result of the Bracks Government's decision" he said.

"This decision endorses the Governments appreciation of the many millions of dollars that recreational fishing and boating delivers to the economy of this State. It is a great win for us all" Pearce said.

Merv McGuire, EO of VRFish, also commended the Bracks Government on their decision.

McGuire who spent considerable time working with Rex Hunt and the Futurefish Foundation on the issue, and then with VRFish and AFTA, said "it has been a long and hard battle and one well worth fighting for."

"VRFish, Futurefish and AFTA have spent an immense amounts of time and energy in chasing this outcome and we are ecstatic with the result. I commend Premier Bracks and Minister Cameron for acknowledging this".

"I am particularly pleased that all three organisations worked closely together to achieve the desired result" McGuire said.

"This announcement, along with the previous commercial netting license buyouts, is a major step towards our end goal of the elimination of commercial netting in ALL Victoria's Bays and Inlets... a goal that is getting closer and closer" McGuire concluded.

McGuire also commended Rex Hunt for his commitment and persistence on the commercial netting issue and his lifetime devotion to protecting and making Victorian fishing waters the best this country has to offer; and his endeavor to ensure its sustainability for generations to come.

For further information, please contact -

VRFish	Bob Pearce	0419 568 111
	Merv McGuire	03 9686 7077
Futurefish Foundation	David Cook	03 9725 2291
AFTA	Bill Classon	03 9761 4044

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