



MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE
VRFISH OFFICE
FEBRUARY 2006

Welcome to the new Monthly Report from the VRFish Office.

2006 is going to be a big year for VRFish. This publication is the first step in improving communications to our members and their associations and club members on a regular basis. Please distribute this widely. Jane and David welcome feedback on this publication, as we seek to improve communications to you, the recreational fisher.

- **Communication with Fisheries Victoria**- The Chairman and Executive Officer have established monthly communication meetings with Peter Appleford (Executive Director, Fisheries Victoria) and John Presser (Director, Fisheries Management) recently. These meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of each month and are open for Board members to attend if they wish to join us. Any members wishing to have issues raised at this level are welcome to contact David Kramer anytime to have any issue put on the agenda for these meetings. So far, they have been very open, honest and valuable discussions.
- **Communication with Fisheries Co-Management Council**- Monthly communication meetings have also been established with the Executive Officer, Fisheries Co-Management Council (FCC). For your information, Nik Phizaklea has recently left FCC after a long career in Fisheries management. We wish Nik all the best on his retirement and look forward to working with the new EO of the FCC. Again, if anyone has any issues that concern the FCC, please let David know and the issues will be discussed at the monthly meeting.
- **Fisheries Management Plans** (FMP's) are a hot topic at the moment. Currently, there are 5 FMP's under way. The Glenelg Hopkins and Andersons Inlet FMP are near completion. These 2 plans' steering committees have had representation by Rob Loats, Geoff Cramer and Max Fletcher. The Mallacoota plan is well underway, while the Lake Tyers and North East plans have only just begun. Future plans, for Fisheries Victoria, are to complete 10 inland FMP's using the CMA boundaries as FMP boundaries. As each of the new plans commence, VRFish will be asked to nominate 2 members to each steering committee. FYI... Stafford Simpson and Norm Jones are on the North East plan, Pat Washington is on the Mallacoota plan and Graeme Evans is on the Lake Tyers plan.
- **Marine Safety Victoria** recently announced the \$5.1m worth of projects that are funded by your Boat registration and Boat licence fees. Communication of successful projects has been poor, however a list of projects can be viewed on the website <http://www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au/>
- **VRFish Board Workshop**- Towards the end of January, the Board set off for Marysville and locked themselves away for 2 days of intense work on the VRFish direction and Business Plan for the future. The results of this workshop will be published shortly in a revised business plan.

- **New Recreational Fishery**- Minister John Thwaites has recently announced that Devilbend Reservoir will be handed over to Parks Victoria, to be managed as a recreational reserve. Recreational fishing has been listed as an activity to be included in the new park. We are working closely with Parks Vic to ensure the park is set up to accommodate recreational fishing, including suitable stocking, access and facilities.
- **Positive Radio Coverage**- VRFish is getting a fair amount of positive radio coverage these days. The following shows have regular updates on what is happening at VRFish:
 - 3SER 97.7FM 7am – 9am Friday mornings
 - Sport 927AM (with Steve Cooper) 4:30am – 6:30am Saturday mornings (VRFish news at 6:15am)
 - 3AW 1278AM (with Rex Hunt) 7:00pm – 8:00pm Friday nights until footy season (VRFish news at 7:30pm)
 - Pulse FM 94.7FM 6:00am – 9:00am Saturday mornings
- The **annual consultation (CONS) meetings** have been occurring throughout Victoria, during February and March, with the last meeting being held this week in Traralgon. The meetings have brought mixed news for fish stocking. The North East and Melbourne meetings have seen many new waters being stocked for the first time. In the North West and South West, there are numerous areas where there is no water. We have a commitment from Fisheries to reassess water levels later in the year and discuss stocking of these waters. A full summary of the stocking for Victoria will be distributed when received.
- **Next year's budget** has just been endorsed by the recently formed finance committee. This will be presented to the Minister and the FRAC very shortly. We are very close to agreement on a funding model that secures future allocation of funds from RFL revenue. We hope to be able to announce the details at the next State Council meeting.
- **Upcoming events**-
 - 6/3 – Budget presentation to the Minister
 - 6/3 – Meeting with the Harbour Master re Port Phillip shipping transit zone
 - 8/3 – Bob Pearce and Geoff Craige meeting with the Chair and EO of the Fisheries Co-management Council
 - 8/3 – Traralgon CONS meeting
 - 14/3 - Workshop with Victorian Abalone Dive Association (VADA)
 - 22/3 – Present budget to the FRAC
 - 27 & 28/3 – R&D committee attending the Fisheries Co-Management Council R&D workshop, Queenscliff