



MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE
VRFISH OFFICE
JANUARY 2007

Welcome to the Monthly Report from the VRFish Office.

This newsletter should be sent on to all clubs and members of associations that you represent. Anyone wishing to receive this newsletter directly can e-mail Alison at alison@vrfish.com.au or phone (03) 9686 7077 to be added to the distribution list. If you have any difficulty reading or receiving this Report, this month's edition is also now on our website at http://www.vrfish.com.au/news_index.htm

- **New Executive Officer** – VRFish is pleased to announce the appointment of Christopher Collins to the position of Executive Officer. Christopher is well known on the recreational fishing scene, apart from being involved with VRFish since inception. Christopher is actively involved with the Council of Victorian Fly Fishing Clubs and Field & Game Australia. This wealth of experience in advocacy on behalf of recreational fishers makes Christopher well placed to deliver an effective and immediate contribution to the operations of VRFish. Welcome to the team Christopher!
- **Helpers Vision** – The Responsible Minister for Fisheries, Joe Helper will present his vision for recreational fishing at the next VRFish State Council Meeting, Saturday 3 March 2007 at the DPI Facility, Snobs Creek. With the 2006 Election over and the Labor Government successful for another term. The Labor Fishing and Boating Policy will come into play 1 July 2007. VRFish is keen to hear the Minister's presentation on what this means for recreational fishing and what Labor's future plans are. This presentation will lead into VRFish's Strategic Planning Workshop, which will outline VRFish's focus for the next 12-months and beyond. For a full copy of the Labor Policy, check out <http://www.vrfish.com.au/structure.htm>
- **Bag and Size Limit Review** – VRFish is seeking input to the Bag and Size Limit Review. There has been a strong indication that fishers would like to see simple regulations in place. A snapshot of submissions received to date - an increase in size limit of 30cm be applied to Snapper, Bream, King George Whiting and a increase in bag limits for rock lobster. The recreational fishing community still have an opportunity to participate in this review, submissions are due to VRFish by Monday 19 February 2007 – email your comments to fishregs@vrfish.com.au. So go on – have your say!
- **South Australian Murray Cod Moratorium** – In the last edition of the Monthly Report, VRFish reported that Primary Industries Research South Australia (PIRSA) was contemplating a moratorium on the recreational take of Murray cod in South Australia. The Hon. Rory McEwen, SA Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries has since responded to VRFish's concerns and advised that he has requested that the South Australian Research and Development Institute prepare a report on the status of Murray cod by March 2007. The Minister will then review the management arrangements for the fishery following receipt of the

report and consideration of its findings. VRFish intends to follow up the findings of this report when it becomes available.

- **Health Advice Issued by EPA** – A fish study undertaken by EPA Victoria in the lower Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers has confirmed the findings of an initial pilot study undertaken in 2005 and has led to the Department of Human Services issuing further advice for recreational fishers in the area. The fish study looked at a large range of contaminants in fish and eels, including heavy metals such as mercury, arsenic, pesticides, hydrocarbons, dioxins and other compounds. It found that none of the contaminants were above the relevant standards and no additional health advice was required. While it is safe to eat fish caught from these rivers, it is recommended that people limit themselves to one serve a week. For women of child-bearing age and children it is advised they should limit fish consumption to one serve a month and they should not eat eels caught in these rivers. For full details, check out www.epa.vic.gov.au.
- **Boat Launching Facilities** – As reported in the last edition of the Monthly Report, VRFish met with Minister Pallas on 23 January 2007 to discuss the current situation of boat launching facilities around Victoria. Such issues discussed were long delays to launch and retrieve boats; inadequate parking causing facilities to close down at times; and a variety of safety issues. The need for urgent attention to the matter being given was represented strongly. Items especially singled out for urgent attention included Walkerville, Torquay, Bastion Point and most of the Port Phillip Bay and Western Port facilities, all of which are inadequate at times. Minister Pallas agreed to have the issues raised by VRFish and the BIA reviewed and we anticipate further discussions in the near future. This visit has been followed up with a letter to the Minister, for a copy check out <http://www.vrfish.com.au/FishingShow.htm>. As Minister Pallas is also the Minister responsible for the proposed Port Phillip Bay Channel Deepening Project, this issue was also discussed and some of VRFish's concerns about the project were raised, especially the issue of spoil dumping and the rock fall at Port Phillip Heads.
- **Chairman's Meeting with Minister Joe Helper** - On 30th January, VRFish Chairman, Bob Pearce, met with new Minister for Agriculture, Joe Helper. During the meeting Bob explained details of VRFish's membership structure and that VRFish has been operating successfully for some twelve years now. In particular, Bob explained how representative VRFish is of Unaffiliated Recreational Fishers. VRFish has every reason to be concerned that we are being portrayed as being representative of Recreational fishing clubs only. It was, therefore, an opportunity for Bob to explain the Kindred Interest Group category of membership as well as the fact that VRFish has always had an active unaffiliated recreational fishing component within our membership and on the VRFish Board also. Bob is also an active unaffiliated recreational fisher. Review of the FRAC was also discussed and the Minister agreed that no changes would be made to the FRAC without prior consultation with VRFish.
- **Artificial Opening of Glenelg River @ Nelson** – The Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA) has artificially opened the Glenelg river mouth @ Nelson. VRFish does not support artificial openings of river mouths and has expressed this to GHCMA. VRFish is aware that little to no consultation occurred prior to the opening. This lack of consultation does not comply with the GHCMA Regional Catchment Strategy, which identifies partnerships as a high priority. For a full copy of VRFish's letter to GHCMA, check out <http://www.vrfish.com.au/Submissions.htm>
- **Tour of Werribee Regional Park** – VRFish, along with representatives from the local fishing clubs, Werribee & District Angling Club and Werribee South Angling Club, and Boating Victoria, toured the new site of the

Werribee Regional Park with Parks Victoria. The Park, originally part of the Western Treatment Plant, will span eight kilometres from the mouth of the Werribee River to the Maltby Bypass. It is also proposed that the northern side of the river will also be opened up for public access, as it will form part of the expanded Bay Trail. VRFish will work with Parks Victoria, and the local fishing clubs, over the next couple of years to assist in developing suitable sites for land-based fishing (boat-based fishing of course will still be allowed). The draft management plan is still able to be viewed at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

- **Jobs in Boating** – The Boating Industry Association (BIA) of Victoria is managing ‘Jobs for Victorians in the Boating Industry’, a major recruitment and training program to fill gaps in industry skills locally instead of by importing skilled workers. This program is funded by a State Government Workforce Participation Partnership (WPP) Grant. BIA project manager Christopher Keegan is co-ordinating the placement of job seekers into sustainable long-term employment across the industry. If you know of any unemployed people who are passionate about boating and are keen to get work get them to make contact with BIA Victoria on (03) 8696 5600 or email ck@biavic.com.au.
- **Fish Kill in the Glenelg River Estuary** – there has been an unfortunate incident of a fish kill in the upper area of the Glenelg River Estuary. Due to the heavy rains, a large flow of freshwater, brought a lot of organic matter and black water into the estuary, resulting in a lot of small fish, such as bream, (who could not escape the water flow) perish. EPA Victoria, Parks Victoria and Glenelg Hopkins CMA have been monitoring the site and have already indicated that the oxygen levels are already starting to improve.
- **Upcoming events** -
 - 14/2 – North West CONS meeting @ DPI/DSE Bendigo, Epsom
 - 21/2 – Port Phillip CONS meeting @ DPI Geelong (please note change of venue)
 - 28/2 – South West CONS meeting @ Camperdown
 - 28/2 – Closing date for submissions to the Recreational Fishing Grants Programme
 - 2/3 – VRFish Board Meeting @ Snobs Creek
 - 3/3 – VRFish State Council Meeting @ Snobs Creek
 - 7/3 – Gippsland CONS meeting @ DPI Traralgon, 71 Hotham Street