



MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE VRFISH OFFICE JULY 2006

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 to be added to the distribution list.

- **Introducing Merv McGuire** – VRFish are pleased to introduce our new Executive Officer, Merv McGuire. Merv brings many years of experience from his previous role as Chief Executive Officer of the Rex Hunt Futurefish Foundation. Merv has been appointed on an interim basis to allow VRFish to consider alternative staffing combinations or options. We trust the recreational fishing community will make Merv welcome.
- **Fishing, Safe as Houses** – Medibank Private Safe Sports Report 2006 lists 'Fishing' in the Top 20 Most Popular Sports and Activities in Australia and one of the safest. The report contains statistics about the incidence of sports-related injuries and highlights the physical, economic and emotional 'costs' of injury. Exercise, including fishing, offers huge health and well-being benefits.
- **60 open days released** – Fisheries Victoria have advised of the 60 open days for recreational abalone fishing in Central Victoria Waters for the 2006/07 season. The majority of the 60 open days are concentrated on weekend and public holidays, for a full list of dates see http://www.vrfish.com.au/Angler_Info.htm. VRFish has informally monitored the 60 open days prescribed by Fisheries Victoria during the 2005/06 season. Opportunities to recreationally fish for abalone on the nominated days were hampered by bad weather and related circumstances to such a degree that, in practical terms on average, less than 10 of the nominated fishing days were accessible. This has effectively removed or excluded legitimate recreational abalone fishers from the fishery. VRFish were keen to see an increase in the number of open days in the Central Victorian Waters. Bob Pearce, VRFish Chairman, expressed that "VRFish is concerned that there may be a hidden agenda to eliminate recreational fishers from the right to take abalone. VRFish will never agree to such an eventuation and, for that matter, will not agree to any further restrictions on the rights on recreational fishers to take abalone".
- **Bag Limit Reduction** – Fisheries Victoria have also reduced the recreational abalone daily bag and possession limit from ten to five in the west and east of the State. The objective of the Fisheries Notice is to take precautionary measures to protect stocks of abalone by introducing a stricter recreational fishing catch limit. The new limits come into effect on 1 September 2006.
- **A Heavenly Trial** – resulting from a number of tragedies arising from Rock Fishing in the Punch Bowl area, Coroner Heath Spooner, initiated discussions between a number of key stakeholders including such parties as VRFish, Australian National Sportfishing Association (ANSA), Life Saving Victoria and Victoria Police. After considerable dialog it was agreed that the ANSA NSW

Educational Program spearheaded by ET would be used as the basis for the Victorian Rock Fishing Safety Model. Appropriate warning signs will be installed in the Punch Bowl area as well as a trial project of seven Angel Rings, which are to be installed without further delay. This trial has the endorsement of Minister John Thwaites and Coroner Heather Spooner and all the participants involved. Ongoing planning for a suitable education program aimed at Rock Fishers and further identification of 'high risk' coastal locations is continuing. For more information on the ANSA NSW program, check out <http://www.rfansw.com.au/rock.html>.

- **Dollar for Dollar** – The Honourable Bob Cameron, Victorian Minister for Agriculture, has secured an agreement Senator Eric Abetz, Federal Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, to change the eligibility criteria of the Commonwealth Government's Recreational Fishing Community Grants Programme - <http://www.daff.gov.au/recfishinggrants> - to match contributions from the Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account - <http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fishing>. This is a fantastic opportunity for Victoria's recreational fishers to maximize their grant funding to support projects of benefit to recreational fishing in the State.
- **RFL Funded Projects Announced** – 25 projects and initiatives that will benefit recreational fishing in Victoria have been announced by the Minister responsible for Fisheries, Bob Cameron. The projects in this round are worth more than \$1.2 million. Examples of successful projects include; \$2,200 to extend a fishing platform at Sawtells Inlet, Tooradin; \$20,000 for 10 angler access points along the Broken, Boosey and Nine-mile Creeks; \$1,000 to conduct junior angler development clinics at Cobden; and \$22,000 for signage across the northern fisheries region.
- **Upcoming events** -
 - 9/8 – Club Talk – Goulburn Valley Angling Club
 - 16/8 – Recreational Boating Advisory Group – Melbourne Commercial Vessel Forum
 - 17/8 – Club Talk – Victorian Sub Aqua Group
 - 30/8 – Club Talk – Snapper Point Angling Club