



MONTHLY REPORT FROM THE
VRFISH OFFICE
JUNE 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

- **Boat Show Edition** – This is VRFish's first time promoting ourselves at the Melbourne Boat Show, and we are very pleased to be participating. Recreational fishing has very close synergies with boating activities and we expect many of our constituents to be present at the show. For a long time VRFish, along with the Boating Industry Association of Victoria, has been lobbying the Government for improvements to our boating facilities and infrastructure. This battle is still raging, but we feel the message is starting to get through. If you are at the show, don't forget to come over and say hello.
- **They're Finished!** – It's been a long time coming but we have finally completed the bag and size limit review. VRFish has greatly appreciated everyone's comments. The VRFish Recommendations have been submitted along with our submission to the 'Review of Fisheries Regulations 1998 – Discussion Paper on Key Issues for Consultation'. Check out our submission at <http://www.vrfish.com.au/Submissions.htm>. However the review of the Fisheries Regulations is not complete yet. Next stage is the release of the Regulatory Impact Statement which is due out in August 2007.
- **Panel Hearing** – As you are aware submissions have closed for the Port of Melbourne Channel Deepening Project Supplementary Environmental Effects Statement. VRFish has made a submission and have been elected to be heard Thursday 19 July 2007. VRFish will be represented by Bob Pearce and Doug Evers-Buckland.
- **Westernport Update** – Since the 2006 Election, many of you have been wondering about the Labour Governments' announcement about the creation of a new 'Recreational Fishing Haven' in Westernport Bay by banning all commercial netting. Here is an update on the progress on this electoral promise for your information – negotiations are currently happening with the commercial fishers. It is anticipated



that Cabinet approval will be sought in August 2007, with the whole process completed and new regulations in place by 1 April 2008 (which coincides with the new commercial fishing licence year).

- **Virus is Spreading** – VRFish has received reports that the *ganglioneuritis* virus has now spread into the Central Zone. A recent report has advised that the virus has spread to Childers Cove about 15km east of Warrnambool. This is concerning news to recreational divers, as it was thought that the virus was only heading west. Should you wish to learn more about the Abalone Disease or about the biosecurity protocols check out www.dpi.vic.gov.au/fishing.



- **Devilbend Update** – Parks Victoria have finally confirmed that VRFish nominee, Tom Camp will be participating on the Devilbend Reserve Advisory Group, with the first meeting to occur in mid July. This is an exciting stage in the planning process. If you are interested in keeping informed on the progress of the Devilbend Reserve, contact Parks Victoria on 13 19 63 and register for their mailing list.
- **River Red Gum Forests Investigation** – It's been some time since we last reported on the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council's (VEAC) Investigation into River Red Gum Forests; however the draft proposals paper is to be released on 19 July. VEAC will be running a series of community forums in the Murray district – if you are interested in attending, details of venues will be made available on www.veac.vic.gov.au. VEAC will be calling for submissions to the proposals paper.

- **It's Open** – well after five years of being closed, the Lake Tyers entrance is open! The recent rains in East Gippsland has resulted in a natural opening of the sand bar, some reports have said the opening is 200m wide. It's amazing what a little rain can do.



- **Desalination Plant** – Recently it was announced that the proposed Victorian desalination plant would be built in the Wonthaggi area. VRFish had concerns about the location of the desalination plant in either Port Phillip or Westernport Bays having negative impacts on fish stocks but this possibility now seems to be ruled out. It would appear that the desalination plant will be modelled on the 45 gigalitre Kwinana plant currently operating 45 km south of Perth. There is anecdotal information available that the Perth plant is having few negative effects on recreational fishers in the area. Whilst this is of some comfort VRFish will be conducting a watching brief on this proposal to ensure that international best practice is followed to minimise impacts on fish stocks.
- **Upcoming events** -
 - 5-9/7 – Melbourne Boat Show
 - 6/7 – VRFish Board Meeting @ Marine House, South Melbourne
 - 7/7 – VRFish State Council Meeting @ Marine House, South Melbourne