



Media Release

FROM THE OFFICE OF VRFISH - VICTORIA'S
RECREATIONAL FISHING PEAK BODY

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SOLUTION TO DARTMOUTH ACCESS SAGA

VRFish, the peak body representing 838,000 recreational fishers in Victoria, is elated that recreational fishers have regained land-based access to Dartmouth Pondage (Lake Banimboola) in the State's North East.

Minister for Water Lisa Neville announced on Tuesday night, fishers will finally be allowed to throw a line in from 1 May this year, after land access was unceremoniously prohibited in 2012.

VRFish board member and North-East Angling Association representative Joy Sloan says, "This is a huge step forward in achieving the local community's aim of having the Dartmouth Pondage recognised and revered as a key family fishing area."

Perceived risks concerning the "rapid" rate of rise and fall of water levels from hydro power generation, exposure to cold water, risk to infrastructure as a result of increased visitation eventually led to the stripping of fishing access and cessation of the trout stocking program in 2013.

From 2012 to 2018 VRFish has been advocating on behalf of recreational fishers with Government, Goulburn-Murray Water (GMW) and energy provider AGL to move the issue forward and negotiate a positive outcome.

"We have received incredible support by the Dartmouth community, who never gave up in their belief that fishing would return to Dartmouth Pondage", she said.

Continued campaigning by VRFish resulted in the establishment of a multi-agency Advisory Committee led by DELWP in 2017 to investigate risks and identify mitigation actions related to recreational fishing on the pondage.

"The announcement will boost the local economy as the survival of the local hotel, motel and caravan park all depend upon the dollar driven by recreational fishing tourism," she said.

"VRFish congratulates the Victorian Government for their continued support and promotion of recreational fishing", added VRFish Chairman Rob Loats.



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