



# Media Release

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

**10 September 2018**

## **HANDS OFF ENVIRONMENTAL WATER, FUND PUMP SCREENS**

The Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body, VRFish, is calling on all Victorian recreational fishers who love catching Murray cod, golden perch or trout to strongly back the protection of environmental water being sold off to meet political objectives.

Recent alarming commentary by State and Federal politicians during a time of climate drying regarding hiving off environmental water has bewildered VRFish, illustrating environmental water is largely misunderstood and is still being used as scapegoat from causing blackwater events to depriving stakeholders of water.

VRFish Chairman Mr. Rob Loats said, "Governments should be aware that millions of tax payers' dollars have been allocated towards irrigation infrastructure upgrades to assist water use efficiency, and as a trade-off, return water for our thirsty environments," he said.

"The facts are we have a tradeable water system in place with legal allocations for all water users, including the environment. These must be managed without ongoing political interference in both wet and dry years and within the water use legislation and trading rules," he said.

"Without the smart use of environmental water our rivers run the risk of ecological collapse in dry years and our fishers, communities and businesses that rely on fishing have the most to lose," he said.

VRFish is also calling on all governments to provide funding to retrofit irrigation and environmental water delivery pumps with innovative self-cleaning pump screens.

"Irrigation infrastructure upgrades were funded without consideration of the impacts of increased direct pumping from waterways would have on fish populations through hundreds of thousands of freshwater native fish and aquatic fauna (including platypus) being sucked up by pumps and destroyed," he said.

"Fish screens prevent pump blockages, are made in Victoria, employ Victorians, and keep more fish, including the iconic Murray cod, in our rivers to benefit recreational fishers and the environment," he said.

"We are currently stocking millions of fish at a cost to Recreational Fishing Licence holders, yet we continue to allow fish losses through increased direct pumping from our riverine systems," he said.



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VRFish will continue to protect the rights of our fishers and water for the environment and once again highlights the value of having a strong and independent Recreational Fishing Peak Body.

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Figure 1 A pump intake screen manufactured here in Victoria by AWMA Water Control Solutions are designed to exclude debris, native fish and other aquatic flora and fauna. ([www.awmawatercontrol.com.au](http://www.awmawatercontrol.com.au))



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