

Hon. Lisa Neville
Minister for Water
Level 17, 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne, VIC 3002
By email: lisa.neville@parliament.vic.gov.au

BOATING ACCESS TO COLIBAN WATER RESERVOIRS

Dear Minister,

VRFish, the Victorian recreational fishing Peak Body, would like to bring to your attention issues that have arisen from the arrangements with Coliban Water that permits on-water access to four of their managed water storage reservoirs.

As you would be aware, VRFish has advocated for increased on-water access to reservoirs and has widely applauded the Andrews Labor Government's outstanding initiative to allow on-water access for electric motored boats, kayaks and canoes to six water storage reservoirs in Victoria.

While we congratulate the Government on delivering on-water access by 1 August 2019 we are now discovering the arrangements that have been implemented by Coliban Water in our view are not consistent with the election commitment.

Recreational fishers are feeling they have been 'short-changed' as the expectation was, they would have access to the water's edge with a vehicle to launch a boat with an electric motor. In contrast, Tullaroop Reservoir managed by Goulburn-Murray Water, on-water access has been a huge success with the provision of an upgraded public boat ramp to service the needs and demands of recreational fishers.

VRFish is disappointed to learn none of the four Coliban Water managed reservoirs has public boat launching facilities, nor are we aware of any desire or plans to upgrade these areas to meet this demand.

As a result, recreational fishers are now forced to carry a small boat from a car park to the water's edge. I am sure you would agree this is unacceptable, not sustainable and unsafe in many instances.

To overcome this impractical situation some fishers have elected to use inflatable boats which weigh substantially less and are somewhat easier to transport. To our dismay, we understand Coliban Water has turned our recreational fishers away and have stated that all inflatable boats are banned and not permitted to be used.

***Let's make fishing
better, for everyone.***

VRFish has received widespread support from recreational fishers to allow boating access to be enjoyed on these reservoirs. Any assistance you can provide to resolve the issue would be appreciated.

In addition, in recognition of a high level of interest by recreational fishers in water management, can I please request that meeting with VRFish is arranged with you and your staff in the near future. VRFish's Executive Officer, Michael Burgess can be contacted on (03) 5221 1104 or ceo@vrfish.com.au to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Loats', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rob Loats
Chair
Victorian Recreational Fishing
Peak Body

29 August 2019