



# Media Release

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

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## GIPPSLAND LAKES FISHERY ONE STEP CLOSER TO RECOVERY

VRFish, the peak body representing Victoria's 838,000 recreational fishers, welcomes the introduction of important legislation to commence the buy-out of commercial nets in the Gippsland Lakes.

VRFish Chairman, Mr. Rob Loats, said, "Our iconic Gippsland Lakes fishery is in crisis with the status of black bream stocks classified as depleting and recreational fishers observing an ongoing decline over many years. This legislation means the fishery is one step closer to recovery."

The new legislation, *Marine and Fisheries Legislation Amendment Bill 2019*, will provide the current licence holders with the opportunity to exit on 1 April 2020, with all licences to be phased out by 1 April 2021.

VRFish advocated for a strong fish recovery plan to improve the quality of recreational fishing, increase fish stocks, boost jobs and the local economy, and to help protect the fishing future of the Gippsland Lakes.

"Removing the nets is the first step to re-building the iconic Lakes fishery. The recreational fishing sector is enthusiastic for a stocking program including some local species such as black bream, dusky flathead and estuary perch."

This legislation enacts VRFish's call for a fair and respectful buy-out of the commercial Gippsland Lakes net fishery, a review of recreational fishing management arrangements, habitat restoration and restocking programs.

Recreational fishers have shown an overwhelming commitment to become greater stewards of the fishery through calling for a review of recreational fishing management arrangements and participate in fish habitat restoration.



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