



VRFISH FISH HABITAT AND WATER REFERENCE GROUP

Terms of Reference

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these Terms of Reference (“TOR”) for the Fish Habitat and Water Reference Group (“the Reference Group”) are to outline the roles, membership, and key tasks and responsibilities of the Reference Group, including meetings and reporting requirements.

2. ROLE STATEMENT

The role of the Reference Group is to provide advice to the VRFish Board on recreational fishing related fish habitat and water management issues.

The role of the Reference Group will be reviewed annually, at the beginning of each financial year or at the discretion of the VRFish Board.

3. KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The key tasks and responsibilities of the Reference Group will be to:

- Provide advice on matters relevant to water management as it impacts on recreational fishing in Victoria, including:
 - a. recreational water management and allocation;
 - b. environmental flows;
 - c. water quality standards and impacts;
 - d. climate change impacts and mitigation;
 - e. waterway management;
 - f. recreational fisher participation in water management decisions and
 - g. barriers to fish migration and recruitment.
- Provide advice on the protection, restoration and rehabilitation of fish habitat for recreational fish species, including:
 - a. riparian management;
 - b. instream habitat;
 - c. estuarine and marine habitat;
 - d. artificial habitat enhancement structures
 - e. recreational fisher participation in habitat improvements; and
 - f. Barriers to fish migration.

- Participate in the formulation of VRFish state-wide policy positions on recreational fishing related fish habitat and water management; and
- Provide advice on the contribution of VRFish to Government strategies, policies and plans, including stakeholder forums.

4. CHAIR

The Chair of the Reference Group will be appointed by the VRFish Board.

The Chair shall hold office for up to two (2) years and shall be eligible for reappointment by the Board.

The core responsibilities of the Reference Group Chair will be to:

- Prepare and distribute Agendas of Reference Group meetings (with support of VRFish staff);
- Facilitate Reference Group discussions; and
- Present the findings, feedback and minutes of meetings of the Reference to the Board for consideration.

5. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Reference Group will be comprised of up to ten (10) members. These members will be appointed through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process advertised and open to all Victorian recreational fishers. Members will comprise of a cross section of interests, expertise and experience. The final decision as to membership on the Reference Group will reside with the VRFish Board.

The VRFish Board reserves the right to appoint members from outside the organisation to the Reference Group in circumstances where member numbers are lacking or where there is a gap in relevant expertise or experience in the membership.

Members of the Reference Group will hold office for a maximum term of two (2) years and shall be eligible to reapply for membership the conclusion of this period. Members are bound to VRFish's Code of Conduct and other relevant policies.

6. MEETINGS

The Reference Group will meet at least twice annually and otherwise as required to successfully achieve the goals and objectives. It is expected that Reference Group meetings will take place online or via teleconference in order to facilitate the participation of a geographically dispersed and regional membership.

Meeting agendas will be prepared by the Chair in consultation with the Executive Officer. The Chair will distribute an agenda at least one (1) week prior to each scheduled meeting.

Members shall have the opportunity to include items on the agenda by providing at least four (4) days notice to the Chair.

Minutes will be taken at each meeting. Members shall be nominated by the Chair on a rotating basis at the commencement of each meeting to take minutes. Minutes shall be finalised and provided to the Chair no more than one (1) week following each meeting. The minutes will be distributed by the Chair to the VRFish office and Board.

Out of session advice and discussion will be sought from the group and members are expected to respond to communications within designated timeframes.

7. GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING

It is expected that the Reference Group will report directly to the VRFish Board and Executive Officer.

7.1. Consultation Process

It is expected that all activities and actions undertaken by the Reference Group first receive prior direction, approval and support from the Board and Executive Officer. This includes involvement in stakeholder consultation and engagement processes.

Consultation can take the form of:

- Submissions and input into formal stakeholder engagement and consultation processes overseen by Government bodies and industry (e.g. resource management plans and policies);
- Participation and membership on stakeholder bodies, committees, steering groups, workshops or similar; and
- Any other related communications.

In all instances and without exception, Reference groups members will be required to seek the approval of the Board via the Executive Officer prior to involvement in any of the above consultation processes.

8. REMUNERATION

Members will not be remunerated, however, travel costs incurred to attend formal meetings or other activities (subject to prior written agreement by the VRFish Office) will be reimbursed.

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