

MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release**21st April 2022****VRFish Condemns Response to Curdies River Fish and Cattle Deaths**

Victoria's recreational fishing peak body today condemned the lack of detailed response from State Government managed agencies to the disaster unfolding in the Curdies River.

The Curdies River is one of Victoria's premier Black Bream and Estuary Perch recreational fisheries, with a long history of competitive and recreational fishing. Recreational fishers have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars of their fishing and marine licence fees on improved access, fish stocking and fish habitat improvement.

VRFish Chair Rob Loats said "The current handpassing of blame between State government agencies, including the EPA, will not fix this issue. Nor will putting heads in the sand. This type of response is utterly unacceptable to Victoria's recreational fishing community.

"VRFish, as the recognised Recreational Fishing Peak Body expects to receive a full and comprehensive report detailing the cause of this catastrophe and what remedial action is being taken.

"We're watching thousands of native fish go belly up and now dead cattle floating down the river. This is not a small, limited fish kill as stated by DELWP or a natural event as stated by the Corangamite CMA. This is an unmitigated disaster, that was foreseen decades ago in risk assessments and catchment strategies ever since.

"If taxpayer funded agencies cannot respond in an appropriate manner, then it's time for the current Government to direct funding to agencies that can. The Victorian community deserves better than a premier fishing destination being turned into a drain with shrugged shoulders as the response.

"The Minister responsible for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio must intervene and give this issue due diligence. I can only suggest that instead of signing off on new parks that lock recreational fishers out of waterways, that the Minister direct her attention to this disastrous environmental issue that she has a legislative obligation to remedy, let alone prevent" Mr Loats said.

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better, for everyone.***