



Media Release

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

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PUBLIC CROWN LAND, PUBLIC ACCESS, LIKE A CAMPFIRE WHILE CAMPING ON PUBLIC LAND MUST NEVER BE EXTINGUISHED

VRFish, the recreational fishing peak body that represents over one million recreational fishers, will never support draconian regulations that permit a privileged licence holder of Crown Land to dictate who, when or where fishers can enjoy fishing and camping with their families and friends.

VRFish Chairperson, Mr. Rob Loats, said "The current *Land Amendment (Accessing Licenced Water Frontages) Bill 2022* must be viewed as a direct and draconian attack on recreational users and other public land users. The current bill removes the current statutory protections that rightly maintains public access to our public land to licenced water frontages and grazing licences, now and for decades to come."

Recreational fishing contributes in excess of \$7.5 billion dollars to Victoria's economy annually. Further to this, a recent survey conducted by VRFish identifies over 70% of fishers are land based. This clearly demonstrates the value recreational fishing contributes while fishing beside a stream, river or creek.

"The *Crown Land Act* is clear and precise when it comes to the public right to access this land and attempting to change this reciprocal right into private hands is basically selling the community of Victoria completely out to private landholders who are extremely privileged to be granted a grazing licence and access to water for a pittance fee."

"Currently, recreational users are losing access at an alarming rate by being locked out of public roads and public access points that lead to both licenced and public Crown Land. VRFish calls on all sides of government to address this issue as a matter of urgency."

"The current Victorian Government have moved to address this situation, but it's clear far more access opportunities must be opened for camping, recreational activities, and vehicle access."

"The question being asked on many occasions by fishers is, "Why do livestock take precedence over the public" after all this is public Crown land for public enjoyment and purposes."

VRFish has written to all Upper House Members urging them to reject the current *Land Amendment Bill* and directly urged recreational fishers and organisations to do the same.

"It's clearly in the interests of the public good that this bill must be defeated."

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