



Annual Report ²¹⁻²²

Beau

“
**Let's Make Fishing Better,
For Everyone!**



Visit our website to learn
more about how we're making
fishing better for everyone.

Contents

Chairman's Report	4
Executive Officer's Report	6
About Us	8
Board Members	10
VRFish Members	14
Member Reports	16
Communication & Engagement	23
Code of Conduct	25
VRFish Advocacy Priorities Survey Results	26
Importance of Urban Lakes Survey Results	28
VRFish Priorities	29
Habitat and Water	30
Access	32
Participation	34
Best Practice	36
Organisational Excellence, Advocacy and Partnerships	48
Strategic Plan	40
VRFish Expenditure	42
Value and Benefits of Fishing	43

Chairman's Report

It is with extreme pleasure to present the Chairman's report this year as our recreational fishing community were finally given the 'green light' to break the shackles of the covid lockdowns and enjoy some excellent fishing, camping and tourism.

VRFish has moved forward from the VRFish review that confirmed state government ministerial support of VRFish as the recreational fishing peak body to represent the recreational fishers of Victoria, now and into the future.

The Board moved very quickly to introduce the changes from the review and surpassed all stipulated changes within one election cycle, not two as promoted by the minister. This is an amazing achievement that included gender equity and multi-cultural representation on the Board. Most importantly, Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club, the only Indigenous fishing club in Victoria is now a member of VRFish and we are looking forward to assisting this extremely important club over the coming years.

This year, Sport and Recreation Victoria have provided significant support of VRFish. Following our achievement of gender equity on our Board, they used VRFish's achievement as a case study to promote for other State Boards to follow by our example.

As always, I must pass my appreciation to all Board Members and staff for their ongoing commitment to ensure our peak body functions as an ASIC

registered company listed by guarantee and complies with the requirements of our recently changed constitution. The Board, as always, has an obligation to consider the views of all our members and the Victorian recreational fishing community. This often includes a multitude of ideas that are promoted to improve the recreational fishing experience.

A huge thanks to all our VRFish members and the fishers of Victoria for their brilliant support throughout the year. VRFish is your recreational fishing peak body and you are encouraged to continue to provide your thoughts and input on all issues associated with recreational fishing.

Our Communications Manager, Holly Amos who has a master's degree in communications, has been instrumental in promoting a recent advocacy survey that was available for all Victorian recreational fishers to provide their considerations on a multitude of issues. This magnificent survey surpassed our expectations and VRFish appreciates the informative results from the fishing community targeted to 'make fishing better for everyone' in Victoria. Of particular importance, VRFish has taken your

valuable thoughts onboard and included them in our 'State Election wish list' and future advocacy planning.

Over the entirety of this year there have been several issues that have taken away our staff time from the normal day to day representation of recreational fishers.

Crown Land Access

The passing of state government legislation to permit camping on licenced crown land waterway frontages has continued to be promoted as a very divisive issue and has been a very time-consuming issue that has often diverted VRFish from other important recreational fishing outcomes. VRFish will always promote public crown land access as a reciprocal right, licenced or otherwise. We currently suggest it is incumbent on all government agencies to support government legislation as promoted and confirmed in parliament.

More Disasters

The previous year had several disasters. Once again, fishers witnessed a terrible environmental disaster in the Curdies River; dead fish, dead cattle and a putrid outbreak of blue green algae. One can only hope management agencies take the necessary action to mitigate this occurring again.

Dead Murray cod and other native fish in the Reedy Third lake was another disaster where fishers viewed it as preventable if management agencies had instigated a far better recovery of these fish while the lake was being drained.

Recreational Water Management

VRFish and recreational users view outcomes with deliberate diversions of water from recreational lakes with high regional tourism benefits must, as a matter of high priority, include proper stakeholder consultation prior to even considering draining recreational lakes. Many of these waters drained were also stocked by the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) on an annual basis with valuable fish species.

Another prime recreational water issue is associated with the Wimmera Mallee Pipeline Project where it was clearly agreed the twelve recreational lakes would receive a high security of piped water supply equal to stock and domestic water. Every one of these recreational lakes are stocked by the VFA with fish species and are providing magnificent fishing plus recreation and tourism opportunities.

Port Phillip Bay Commercial Fishing Bycatch

VRFish provided extra strong representation to ensure the past buyout of commercial fishing in Port Phillip Bay was not reintroduced with a huge longline bycatch fishing quota. The government allocated millions of dollars for the commercial licence buyout to ensure commercial fishers received adequate compensation. VRFish with support from the recreational fishers of Victoria moved forward very quickly and strongly to ensure the bay did not fall victim of a double jeopardy reintroduced commercial fishery.

Arcadia Fish Hatchery

VRFish had been promoting for several years that Victoria needed a new high quality native fish hatchery due to it becoming apparent that our source of native fish for stocking did not have a secure outcome. With thanks from bipartisan government support during the last election, a new hatchery is now a reality. Everyone that has had the pleasure of visiting this new and ultra-modern designed native fish hatchery is delighted with its progress that has been completed during stage one. It is very clear the management by the VFA staff in designing and assisting the construction of this modern native fish hatchery has been first class.

As always, VRFish is promoting to government political parties during the current Victorian election cycle that it is imperative to extend stage one and fund stage two to fully complete the original design.

The above is only a very small example of a few issues that VRFish deals with on a day-to-day activity. Our EO, Ben Scullin, who is a great advocate of recreational fishing can only achieve so much and must prioritise accordingly. Our Operations Manager and Company Secretary, Amanda Szabo, provides excellent supporting service. This together with Holly Amos, our Communications Manager, they all must be commended for all their valuable input over the past year.

Yes, we need more staff to represent over million Victorian anglers and we will continue to promote an adequate funding regime to further enhance the great representation we currently provide for the recreational fishing fraternity.

Please take care,



Rob Loats



VRFish will always promote public crown land access as a reciprocal right, licenced or otherwise.

Executive Officer's Report



My first, full year as Executive Officer and what a year it was. Restricted operations, rapid organisational change and an 'all hands on deck' advocacy effort tackling some of the most important issues of our time and all on top of the plethora of representative requirements across our 5 pillars of advocacy - Habitat, Access, Water, Participation and Promotion.

It wasn't until I looked for pictures to go with this report that I saw my Gone Fishing Day post from October 2021. I realised that we were still under a crushing Covid Lockdown 6. However, you can't wipe off a fishing induced smile.

VRFish Operations

During the 2021-22 financial year, VRFish operations and staffing received a real boost with Amanda Szabo taking on the role of office manager and immediately freeing up the VRFish advocacy and representation effort. Communications Manager, Holly Amos, took maternity leave and delivered a new recreational fisher, with the role filled by Chloe Henderson until Holly's return. Our amazing staff play such an integral and excellent part in VRFish achieving our vision of making fishing better for everyone.

Post VRFish review, organisational change was overwhelmingly supported by our members and our ministerial KPI's were achieved 12 months early. This is an outstanding outcome and is being noticed by our stakeholders and government.

VRFish operations, and especially advocacy, were held back by the time, effort and especially cost imposition attached to the State grant funding agreement, though even this didn't take the polish off our key strengths. The grant funding agreement was ultimately varied to allow VRFish more opportunity to concentrate on priority advocacy and representation during the last year of our current funding agreement.

Financially, VRFish are in a strong position as we move into the new financial year. This is a credit to an organisation that supports such a large volunteer and advocacy effort, with limited resources. The expertise and prudent approach provided to VRFish by our Finance and Risk Management committee headed by Steven Relf, will be assuring to our members. VRFish will continue as the voice for recreational fishing for many terms to come.

The VRFish representative structure further proved itself through a series of member delegate forums across the state that were well attended and provided VRFish with vital feedback for fine tuning policy development and identifying priority issues for advocacy. The VRFish advocacy priorities survey was also a key policy driver, with a record 5000 recreational fishers providing advice.

Neither Covid, nor Christmas stopped VRFish advocacy and representation. Strong VRFish advocacy in the legislative, fishery management and public arenas was required during the year to ensure recreational fisher aspirations, current practice and access requirements were well represented. A summary of some key issues is provided below.

Lastly, the leadership of VRFish Chair Rob Loats and Deputy Chair Steven Relf has been a blessing for VRFish. Our diverse, inclusive, and expert board of directors are an amazing group of volunteers, who consistently deliver above and beyond for our members, recreational fishers and stakeholders.

The confidence this inspired in me as a new Executive Officer cannot be overstated, nor how thankful and honoured I am to have this opportunity to serve recreational fishing in a leadership role. The world will be watching in 2023!

Ben Scullin

Executive Officer



***Ben Scullin VRFish &
Ben Cleveland OzFish***

About Us

Our Mission Statement

Let's make fishing better, for everyone.

Who We Are

Established as the Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body, VRFish, is your not-for-profit, independent voice representing Victoria's recreational fishers since 1995. We are proud to be part of a huge and diverse community of 1,114,000 fishers that injects \$2.99 billion each year in economic contribution to the Victorian economy.

We are not the government. We are fishers that want to make fishing better for everyone. Whether it's fish habitat, water security and quality, fishing access and infrastructure or best practice, we aim to work in partnership to make sure Victoria's fishing experiences continue to improve, be sustainable and more enjoyable for all generations of Victorians.

To get the job done, we leverage the skills and passion of our membership and employ a small team of professional staff. The more support we have from Victorian fishers, the stronger voice we have to stand up and protect our fishing future.

What We Do

VRFish needs to be the voice of our fish. Threats to fishing are becoming more complex than ever before as we strive to look after the environment that our fish depend on and tackle issues such as pollution, water management, industrial development, diminishing fishing access, litter and illegal fishing.

VRFish works to raise the profile of fishing as a recreational activity with significant social, cultural and economic benefits. At the same time, we are protecting our fishing lifestyle so that you can get outdoors, connect with nature, relax and enjoy quality time with your family and friends.

We are passionate about supporting you to fish for the future by fostering the adoption of responsible fishing practices and behaviours. The next generation of fishers need our support so that they are given the same opportunities to get outdoors and get hooked on fishing as when we were growing up.



Our Priorities



Habitat

Improving our vital fish habitats through protection, restoration and enhancement.



Promote

Promoting fishing in Victoria, creating new and vibrant fisheries and supporting the next generation of fishers.



Best Practice

Supporting our fishers to take a lead role in the stewardship of our fish and waterways, fish responsibly and promote fish for the future.



Water

Keeping our rivers flowing and defending recreational and environmental water allocations.



Access

Fixing our boat ramps and defending your fishing rights to access our waterways.



VR Fish Member Forum -
Geelong

Our Board Members



Rob Loats, Chairperson

Rob is a primary production business manager from rural Victoria. He has extensive experience of issues associated with natural resource and water management and skills associated with government and non-government state agency inputs and outputs.

Rob has provided long term representation for his local club as president and secretary, long term representation of two local angling associations as president and is a past member of the state Fisheries Co-Management Council. He has been on the Fisheries Revenue Allocation Committee (FRAC), is a past Chairman and member of the Recreational Fishing Licence Working Group, member of the Murray Darling Basin Murray Cod Fishery Advisory Group, the North Central Catchment Management Authority Community Leaders Group, Chair of the Northcentral CMA Gunbower, Lower Loddon Native Fish Recovery Plan and a current member of the Snobs Creek Fish Hatchery and Liberation Governance Board. He is a current member of the DELWP Riparian Forum Advisory Group and Life Member of the Mid Northern and Wimmera Angling Associations and Donald Angling Club. Rob's efforts have also earned him the National Mal Ramsay Lifetime Achievement Award 2012. Rob has always been interested in water quality and has recently completed 25 years of voluntary water monitoring with the North Central CMA Waterwatch Program.



Steven Relf, Deputy Chair

Steven brings a wealth of experience to the Board of VRFish and is experienced in dealing with a variety of complex issues, adding value to the organisation in an ever-changing environment.

Now retired Steven has had over 26 years experience as a senior manager in local government. A member of the Dunlop Bayswater Angling Club (39 years) and Club President for the last 20 years, Steven has a strong commitment to our rivers and streams and a desire to see them returned to their natural condition. Steven is the Former President of the Howqua Association Angling Clubs, and has been a delegate of VRFish for the last 20 years. Steven is the current deputy chair of VRFish and chair of the finance and access committee's.

Steven believes fishers need a strong peak body who can advocate on their behalf and provide a voice back to the VFA and government

As a VRFish representative he is able to give back to the sport he has enjoyed for many years.



Franz Grasser

Franz spent his career in various management roles in the energy sector. During this career, Franz commenced a journey of advocacy for the clean energy sector as a board member of a number of Sustainable Energy Industry organisations that were the precursor organisations of the present Clean Energy Council.

The skills Franz brings to VRFish are based on this business and advocacy experience as well as his lifelong fishing experience.

This knowledge of advocacy and leadership includes decades of experience as a board member of advocacy organisations.

As an unaffiliated member of VRFish, Franz connects with fishers who are not part of formal fishing organisations. Franz joined VRFish and stood for election to the Board because of his love of fishing and the prospect that his input can make a positive contribution to sustaining recreational fishing into the future. In recent years Franz has been the Chair of the VRFish Access and Infrastructure Reference Group and has been heavily involved in the successful advocacy for improved funding and management of boating infrastructure.



Neville Dance

Neville has been an avid fisherperson since he was 6 years old and fishing in the Hopkins and Curdies Rivers with his father.

Around the age of 18, Neville developed a strong urge to start saltwater fishing. This passion encouraged Neville to join the Warrnambool Offshore & Light Game Fishing Club and the Game Fishing Association of Victoria. He is now a life member of both clubs.

Neville previously served as Vice-President of the Game Fishing Association of Victoria and still remains on their committee.

He has also served as a member of the Recreational Fishing Licence Grants Committee. He currently represents the Game Fishing Association of Victoria to VRFish.



Rita Caulfield

Rita currently works in the fishing tackle industry and is a familiar face on the tackle/boat/camping industry show circuit.

Rita's passion for recreational fishing, small business acumen and massive Cod smashing ability will serve recreational fishers well.

Rita was appointed to replace retired Board member and environmental warrior, Kris Leckie. Within the rec fishing community, she's known as 'Metre Rita' after reeling in 2x metre barramundi on consecutive casts.

As one of the of top ranked Murray cod lure fishers in Australia, Rita has more 'metre cod' under her belt than the VRFish Board and Executive combined.



Skye Kirne

Appointed September 2021

Skye was born in the Murray Cod region of northern Australia and now runs a successful travel agency – Skye Travel. The agency enables Skye to combine all of her passions – fishing, scuba diving & travelling.

When Skye is in Victoria, you'll find her in Port Phillip Bay, either in her tinnie fishing for anything on the bite or under the water scuba diving. Skye's an active member of the Albert Park Yachting & Angling Club and often jokes around with her fishing companions.

In 2018, she joined the Victorian Fisheries Authority's Women in Recreational Fishing program as a leader to engage, share and excite women about fishing. Skye has also been a member of the Victorian Fisheries Authority's Statewide Recreational Fishing Roundtable for the past few years.

Skye has an active background in fishing all around Australia. While Skye was fishing for barramundi in NT, she was invited to join the VRFish Board, and accepted the role energetically.



Hilary Ingram

Elected November 2021

Hilary Ingram is a keen Melbourne born fisher who has travelled throughout Victoria to fish or scuba dive over the last 40 years.

Though he has never been a member of a fishing club, he is a frequent flyer to areas like Lake Bullen Merri, Lake Purrumbete, Malmesbury Reservoir, Goulburn River and the Upper Coliban Reservoir.

In the last 20 years, Hilary has been dabbling in the world of scuba diving, completing approximately 1,000 recreational dives, mostly along the coastline of south-eastern Australia.

Hilary has been working in finance as an auditor for almost 40 years and continues to work full time specialising in auditing small to medium sized companies to ensure the fundamentals are in line with the financiers' requirements.

Over the last 2 years, Hilary has gained increased exposure to regular fisheries meetings and attended as an observer to a number of Victorian Fisheries Authority Abalone and Rock Lobster meetings held in Queenscliff and Hastings.

Hilary has a strong belief that the interests of recreational fishers need to have a voice to help maintain sustainable and viable recreational fisheries for the current period and for future generations.



Lydia Cahill

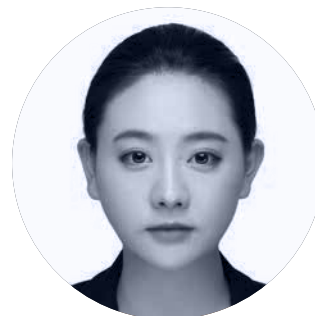
Appointed February 2022

Lydia is a highly experienced Senior Business Analyst and Project Manager contracting in the private sector, who brings a unique set of skills spanning across Aged Care, Health Insurance, Engineering and Infrastructure, Fast Moving Consumer Goods and Information Technology.

From humble beginnings bait fishing for snapper and King George whiting, Lydia's fishing passion developed into more specialised genres and is better known as an avid topwater / lure angler. Lydia fishes across Victoria for Southern bluefin tuna, yellowtail kingfish and occasionally Murray cod. Where possible, Lydia travels to a range of Australian and international destinations primarily in the pursuit of the mighty giant trevally.

She brings to VRFish an understanding of the needs and concerns of recreational fishers, combined with industry knowledge as a brand ambassador, Tuna Champions ambassador and Women in Recreational Fishing mentor.

Passionate about infrastructure meeting the needs of fishers as well as a strong conservation and sustainable fishing mindset, Lydia's business skills will ensure that recreational fishers needs will be strongly represented.



Jingjing Nan

Appointed November 2021

Jing Jing is currently the Vice President of the Victorian Chinese Angling Association and founder of Nan International Media. She is deftly experienced in marketing and event planning and is also skilled in business management.

Jingjing's passions are fishing and scuba diving. She really loves the sea and believes that the marine world is full of mystery and fun. Her goals for 2022 include exploring the beautiful ocean world more and calling on more people to participate and fall in love with fishing.

Jingjing says "As a new member to the board of VRFish. I will try my best to assist the organisation in promotional work, and plan more interesting activities and projects to bring more vitality to VRFish."

Joy Sloan

Resigned August 2021

Russell Conway

Term ended November 2021

John Hotchin

Term ended November 2021

Halley Xu

Term ended November 2021



Jason Taylor
@acejasee



Cooper Wilson
@Cooper_Wilson32



Jordan Xuereb
@caughtcoasting



**We are not the government.
We are fishers that want to make
fishing better for everyone.**

VRFish Members



Fishing Clubs and Associations

- Albert Park Yachting & Angling Club
- Altona Boating Angling Club
- Anderson Inlet Angling Club Inverloch Inc.
- Bairnsdale Flyfishers Club Inc
- Bairnsdale RSL Fishing Club
- Balmoral & District Angling Club
- Barham Angling Club
- Bass Strait Game Fishing Club
- Beaumaris Motor Yacht Squadron
- Bellarine Pirates Angling Club
- Bendigo & District Fly Fishers Inc
- Bendigo Legion Angling Club Inc
- Bentleigh RSL Angling Club
- Berwick Angling Club
- Black Dog Creek Fishing Club
- Blackrock Under Water Dive Group
- Blind Bight Fishing Club
- Blue Rock Angling Club
- Brighton Central Angling Club
- Brunswick City Anglers Club
- Burrenbeet Anglers Club
- Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club Inc
- Camperdown Angling Club Inc
- Casterton Angling Society Inc
- Central Vic Lure Casters
- Charlton Angling Club Inc
- Clayton RSL Angling Club
- Cobden Angling Club Inc
- Corinella Boating and Angling Club
- Corio Bay Anglers Club
- Craigieburn Angling Club Inc
- Dandenong Club Sports Fishing Clubs
- Dartmoor Angling Club
- Derrinallum Anglers Club
- Didyabringyarodalong Angling Club Inc
- Donald Angling Club
- Dunlop Bayswater Angling Club
- Elwood Angling Club
- Fairfield-Alphington Fish Protection Society & Angling Club
- Geelong & District Anglers Club and Fish Protection Society
- Geelong Freedivers
- Geelong Gun and Rod Association Inc
- Geelong Western Beach Fishing Club
- Greensborough & District Angling Club
- Greenvale Sport and Game Fishing Club
- Healesville Angling & Fish Protection Society Inc
- Hobsons Bay Sport and Game Fishing Club Inc
- Horsham Angling Club Inc
- Jingellic-Walwa Fishing Club
- Keysborough Angling Club Inc
- Kiewa Valley Fishing Club
- King River and District Fishing Club
- Knox Boat Fishing Club

- Knox Club Sportfishing Club
- Kyneton Angling Club
- La Trobe Valley Scuba Club inc.
- Lake Boga Sports Fishing Club
- Lake Mulwala Angling Club
- Lake Purrumbete Angling Club
- Lake Tyers Beach Angling Club Inc
- Leongatha Angling Club Inc
- Leopold Angling and Aquatic Club
- Loch Sport Fishing Association Inc
- Longwarry Angling Club Inc
- Lorne Aquatic and Angling Club
- Lowhead Road Fishing Club Inc
- Loy Yang Recreational Angling Club Inc
- Maffra & District Angling Club
- Maldon Angling and Outdoors Club Inc.
- Maryborough Angling Club Inc
- McLoughlins Beach Angling Club
- Mitcham Angling Club
- Mordialloc Boating & Angling Club
- Mornington Peninsula Fly Fishers Inc
- Myrtleford & District Sportfishing Club
- Nagambie Angling Club Inc.
- Nangiloc Fishing Club
- Nicholson Angling Club
- Noble Park RSL Anglers Club
- Oakdale Angling Club & Fish Protection Society
- Omeo Angling Club
- Ormond Angling Club & FPS
- Pakenham Angling Club
- Port Albert Light Game & Sports Fishing Club Inc
- Port Campbell Boating Club
- Port Fairy Angling Club
- Portland Sport Fishing Club
- Preston Northcote Angling Club
- Red Tag Flyfishers
- Ringwood and District Angling Club Inc
- Rochester & District Angling Club
- Rosebud RSL Angling Club
- Rowvillian Angling Club
- Sandringham Anglers Club
- Snapper Point Angling Club
- Southern Boat Fishing Club
- Southern Fly Fishers (Aust) Inc
- Southern Peninsula Angling Club
- Stawell and District Angling Club Incorporated
- St Arnaud Angling Club
- Sunbury Angling Club Inc
- Sunshine Fly Casting Club
- Tatong Anglers Group
- Thorpdale and District Angling Club
- Toolamba Fishing Club Inc
- Tooradin Angling Club
- Torquay Angling Club
- Undera Angling Club
- Upper Yarra Angling Club
- Upwey Angling Club Inc
- Venus Bay Angling Club

- Victoria Police Angling Club Inc.
- Victorian Game Fishing Club
- Wangaratta Fly Fishing Club Inc.
- Warrnambool & District Anglers Club
- Warrnambool Fly Fishers Club Inc
- Warrnambool Offshore & LG Fishing Club
- Waverley and District Anglers
- Werribee and District Anglers Club
- Westernport Angling Club
- Williamstown Sportfishing & Game Club
- Wimmera Offshore Sport & Gamefishing Club
- Wonthaggi Angling Club
- Wy-Yung Angling Club
- Yaringa Fishing Club
- Yarra Valley Fly Fishers
- Yinnar Angling Club Inc.
- Association of Geelong and District Angling Clubs
- Australian Anglers Association (Victoria)
- Australian National Sportsfishing Association (Victoria)
- Ballarat & District Anglers Association
- Council of Victorian Fly Fishing Clubs
- Game Fishing Association of Victoria
- Gippsland Angling Clubs Association
- Goulburn Valley Association of Angling Clubs
- Howqua Angling Clubs Association
- Metropolitan Anglers Association
- Mid Northern Association of Angling Clubs
- Midland & North Central Angling Association
- SCUBA Divers Federation of Victoria
- Victoria Chinese Angling Association Inc.
- Victorian Piscatorial Council Inc.

Affiliated Organisations

- Boating Industry Association of Victoria
- Dive Industry of Victoria Association
- Fishcare Victoria
- OzFish Unlimited
- OzFish Unlimited [Bayside Chapter]
- OzFish Unlimited [South West Chapter]
- Professional Fishing Instructors and Guides Association
- Tangaroa Blue
- That's The Thing About Fishing
- Victorian Fishing Charter Association

Member Reports

Albert Park Yachting and Angling Club (APYAC)

Bob Pearce

113 Years of Fishing and Community Service

Just after the turn of the century, ten anglers and yachtsmen in the Albert Park area decided to form a club and build a clubhouse. Early talks were held in the old bandstand, which was located close to where the clubhouse now stands. The formal opening of APYAC, the only angling club between St. Kilda and Williamstown, took place on October 9th, 1909 and about 2000 spectators attended. The first meeting held on Thursday night, 27th March 1909, was attended by The Mayor and Councillors. For more than 100 years of the club's existence, APYAC has established itself in Victoria's heritage. It has been home to many generations of families. The club has taught many people how to fish (many being junior anglers), supported families in distress and helped one another in times of need.

Having some 2,000 members and a waiting list to join, APYAC is probably the biggest angling club in Victoria and would be one of the biggest angling clubs in Australia.

Situated on Hobsons Bay foreshore (Kerferd Road and Beaconsfield Parade), our clubrooms enjoy unparalleled views and boat access to the bay.

APYAC is a long-term affiliate member of the Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body (VRFish) and also the Metropolitan Anglers' Association (MAA).

The club premises, houses 64 boats downstairs with gantry access directly onto the water. Upstairs facilities include Banquet Hall, Pool Table, licensed Bar and Dining Facilities. Members and visitors can enjoy magnificent bay views on the balcony, while enjoying a very pleasant lunch or dinner. The club regularly runs a variety of social functions, most of which are quickly booked out.

In addition to the numerous fishing and social activities that are run for our members, APYAC also has a culture of making contributions to the community generally. Our desire to naturally rehabilitate lost shellfish reefs within Port Phillip Bay is an example of this, as the beneficiaries will be much wider than simply APYAC members. Our club has contributed \$350,000 (appr) to the project.

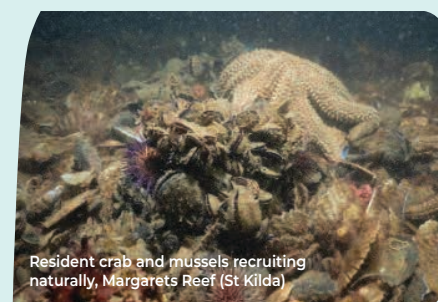
The shellfish reef restoration project has become a \$50 million project nationally and was initiated by APYAC. This is an initiative that the club will always be proud of.

Numerous other examples could be given about our club's community service ethos, one in particular being our campaign to save the Kerferd Road Pier. Due to rotting timbers, the pier was condemned some years ago (circa 1980) and was going to be dismantled. The club ran a (successful) campaign to restore the pier and we raised substantial funds to contribute towards the costs of its reinstatement.

APYAC is proud of the fact that we have, to a great extent, 'de-bloked.' Many of our club leaders are women and some of our keenest anglers are also women. We have benefited greatly from encouraging our female members to become involved in both the fishing and the running of the club. Indeed, the biggest snapper weighed in last year was caught by Lee Spyrou, who is also our Boathouse Captain



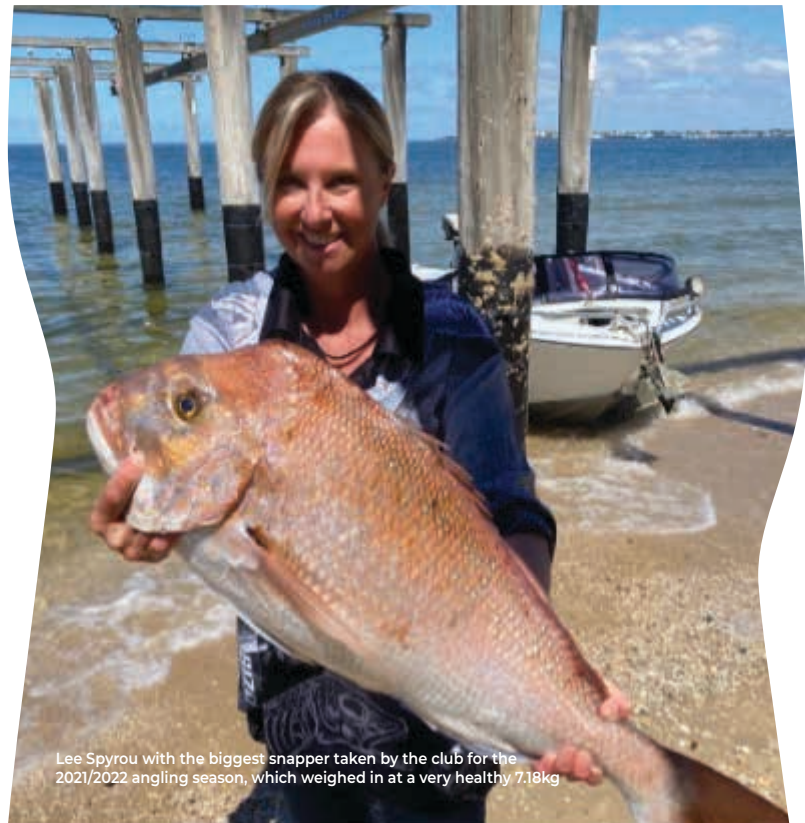
Native starfish, Margarets Reef (St Kilda)



Resident crab and mussels recruiting naturally, Margarets Reef (St Kilda)

We are active with Women in Recreational Fishing (WIRF), junior fishing and with local schools, where we recently donated a clinker boat for restoration by woodwork students. We have also commenced a project to assist land-based anglers and are planning to reintroduce a new shellfish reef in Hobsons Bay. More community service projects are also planned by the club.

APYAC is extending reciprocal arrangements to other angling clubs. Any club interested in enquiring about this should contact us on 96905530 or by e-mail: info@apyac.org.au



Lee Spyrou with the biggest snapper taken by the club for the 2021/2022 angling season, which weighed in at a very healthy 7.18kg



APYAC also has a culture of making contributions to the community generally.

Ballarat Fish Acclimatisation Society (Member of the Ballarat and District Anglers Association)

Geoffrey Cramer

The Ballarat Fish Acclimatisation Society (BFAS) operate the Ballarat Fish Hatchery in Gillies Street, Ballarat adjacent to Lake Wendouree.

The BFAS was formed on the 15 August 1870 at a public meeting at Craig's Royal Hotel with the objective to "introduce Trout, Perch and other English fish into Ballarat district waters".

A consignment of 1000 Brown Trout ova was obtained from Plenty in Tasmania and hatched at Ercildoune Homestead just west of Ballarat. After several challenges these fish were bred up and the hatchery transferred to a site in Ballarat's Botanical Gardens.

This hatchery was later expanded at its current site in Gillies Street and operations expanded to provide trout for stocking throughout Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. Some trout were sent to New Guinea and trout milt to South Africa in the war years.

Rainbow trout ova was sourced from Otago in New Zealand in the early 1900 to supplement the Brown Trout.

Such was the interest and demand for trout that the hatchery were incubating up to 1.5 million ova to meet the demand.

Ultimately the Victorian Government set up Snobb's Creek Hatchery near Eildon and took over responsibility for the production and distribution of trout around Victoria.

Ballarat Hatchery still produces up to 250,000 Brown and Rainbow trout annually with these fish being sold to farmers, aquaculture operators, private fisheries, angling clubs and the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

The Society also donates 6,000 Brown Trout yearly to the City of Ballarat to stock Lake Wendouree.

The Society is a "Not for Profit" organisation and entirely run by volunteers. Currently we have about 33 active volunteers. Some locals refer to the Hatchery as an original "Men's Shed", however we welcome anyone who wants to help out.

The Hatchery provides tours for school groups, community organisations and education facilities.

While the BFAS is run by volunteers we very much appreciate the support we get from the City of Ballarat, Victorian Fisheries Authority and local community groups and businesses.



The Society is a "Not for Profit" organisation and entirely run by volunteers.

Midland and North Central Angling Association Inc.

Greg Hellsten, Secretary and VRFish Delegate



The members of the Midland and North Central Angling Association have been working hard to improve the value of clubs to fishers and encourage the contribution by our clubs towards improving local fisheries. By attending our meetings club leaders and members have been able to raise their concerns with a view to obtaining support for their initiatives and solutions to problems, either through VRFish or directly with community groups and government authorities to improve fisheries and the environment.

It is recognized that clubs are struggling to survive with declining membership numbers and the loss of volunteers having the skill sets and experience to get things done. The ability of clubs to organize events to bring people together remains crucial to club survival.

Fishers may obtain information on skills and techniques through internet and social media sources but it is the sharing of experiences in an inclusive group environment which will engage local fishers, develop their skills and provide the sense of community which will support efforts to improve social and environmental value.

M&NCAA again hosted the annual Midland Shield competition in 2021 as clubs struggled through issues from the effects of COVID19. The event at Cairn Curran was well attended and successful due to the management of M&NCAA president Sean Crombie and the discipline of competing anglers towards COVID safe settings.

The Campaspe Loddon chapter of OzFish Unlimited was formed on 1st July 2021 largely due to the efforts of John Condliffe and Greg Hellsten, M&NCAA treasurer and secretary respectively, with Kyneton AC holding its Cod Opening event at Bridgewater in conjunction with OzFish. A "Water Bug Blitz" was held by the chapter in the Kyneton Gardens and the 2022 Clean Up Australia Day event was jointly conducted by Kyneton AC and OzFish at Upper Coliban reservoir.

M&NCAA thanks Dr Sophie Pryor for her efforts and many achievements as OzFish senior project officer in our region, notably her involvement in the Eppalock Fish Habit Enhancement Project and for involving M&NCAA in OzFish presentations to community groups in Bendigo.

In addition to contributing to VRFish and VFA forums, M&NCAA's VRFish delegates have been diligent with their involvement in North Central CMA strategic plan development and forums as it is recognized that a good relationship is needed to maintain good water quality and improve habitat needed to sustain our fishery.

An important contribution has been involvement with drafting of the Tullaroop Integrated Catchment Management Plan and its implementation as the Tullaroop Catchment Restoration Project.

A river blackfish habitat restoration project currently awaits RFL trust funding to proceed.

The year to June 2022 concluded leaving positive feelings for the near future of fishing in the Loddon-Campaspe basins, due to abatement of restrictions to manage COVID, good autumn rain following a mild summer, and VFA foresight and commitment to high fish stocking numbers for regional waters.



SCUBA Divers Federation of Victoria (SDFV)

John Hawkins, Secretary



The SCUBA Divers Federation of Victoria (SDFV) is the peak-body affiliation of recreational scuba dive clubs in Victoria. Like many activities, recreational scuba diving was curtailed during the pandemic, and it is only over the last year that the SDFV has been able to re-establish some of our community activities. Scuba divers can fish for rock lobster, abalone and scallops, which are also important commercial fisheries. The SDFV has a long history of advocating and protecting recreational fisher interests in these shared fisheries. Over the last year, the SDFV, through VRFish, has participated as stakeholder in the development of the next rock lobster fishery management plan.

Recreational scuba divers experience and enjoy the underwater environment and Victoria is blessed with some truly remarkable and breathtaking underwater habitat. The SDFV has a mandate to promote diver safety and the health of our underwater environment. We see first-hand the damage toll cause by invasive marine species, and activity participate in efforts to physical remove them.

In the last year, many SDFV clubs have been able to get back to participating in the Great Victorian Fish Count program. Organised by the Victorian National Parks Association, Fish Count is a 17-year-old program to record & monitor the distribution of marine species. Participating members return each year to the same place and conduct the count and so contribute to the knowledge and awareness of changes over time. Recently, our citizen science activities have increased with a program to monitor the size and relative abundance of rock lobster in selected areas of the State.

The last year has also seen the SDFV commission an initiative to have diver-friendly safety ladders installed at popular piers and jetties, and we have recommenced our community education drive reminding all boat operators about the 'diver-below' flag.

See www.sdfv.org.au or contact us at info@sdfv.org.au



The SDFV has a long history of advocating and protecting recreational fisher interests.

The Association of Geelong and District Angling Clubs Inc.

John Hotchin

Once again, the Association of Geelong and District Angling Clubs have been busy in applying for various grants and have been successful in the following:

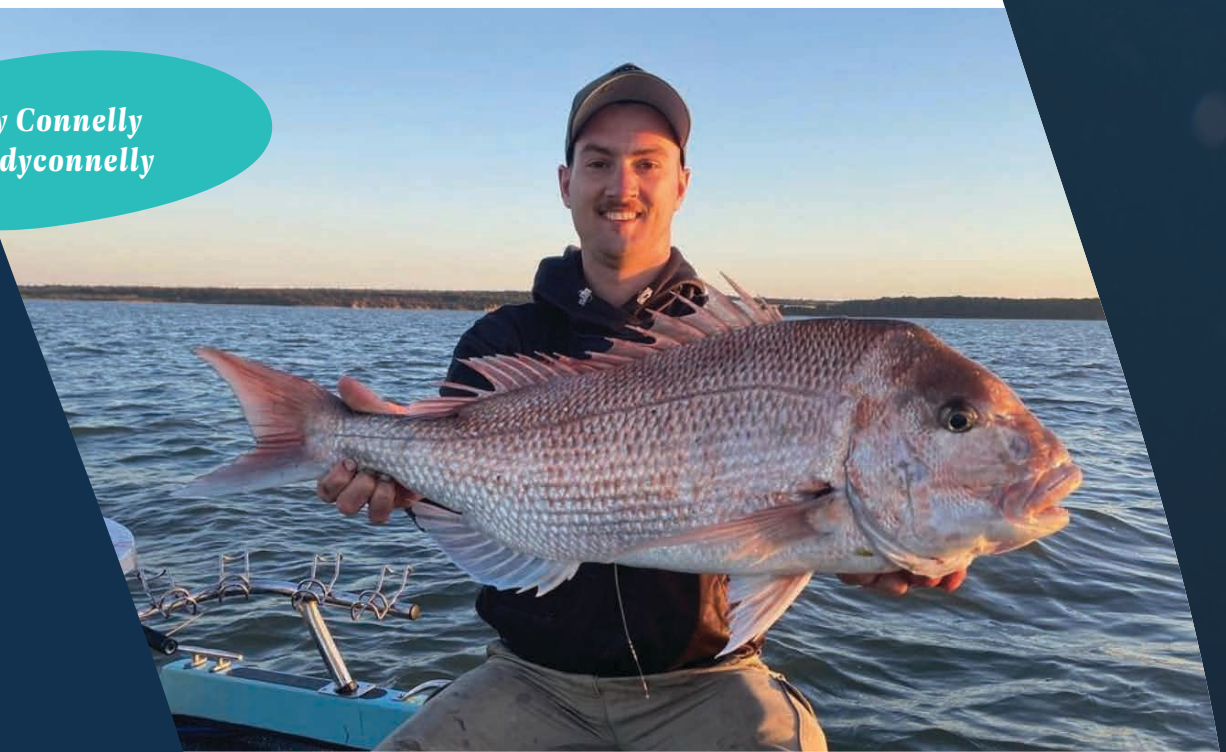
- To open the access track to Point Lillias so that anglers do not have to climb over large boulders.
- Various small grants to assist our member clubs whilst we have been in lockdown.
- We were successful in obtaining a grant to place a further six solar lights along the rock wall at St Helen's to give light were the artificial reef was placed in Corio Bay so that it is easier for fishers at night. The fishing has improved since the artificial reef was built. There are still 5 more lights required to finish the project.
- We have been successful in obtaining a grant for a fishing platform to be built at Airy's Inlet at Butlers Bend waiting for the minister to sign off on it.
- Actively involved in the fish stocking for Victoria.
- We were successful in obtaining a \$50,000 grant to progress the fly-casting pool from the Geelong City Council.



Tiffany Newton
@tiffanynewtonfishing



Brody Connelly
@b_rodyconnelly



**Ben Scullin & VRFish
Members, Greg Hellsten
& John Condiffe.**



Communication & Engagement



Top 10 News Articles

1. - **VRFish condemns response to Curdies River fish and cattle deaths**
2. - **River trout closed season kicks off today**
3. - **New reefs to attract kingfish**
4. - **New lifejacket laws for rock fishing safety**
5. - **Trawlers targeting spawning King George whiting**
6. - **First campsites on Crown land river frontage to open Friday**
7. - **Delivering camping on waterfront licenced Crown land - a golf clap**
8. - **Minister holds the line on bycatch**
9. - **Recovering Maccas in our waterways**
10. - **Abalone disease outbreak still active in Portland**



Garry Dunstan
Donald Angling Club

Communication & Engagement



Website

July 2021 - June 2022

Page views

129,179

Articles published:

90

**VRFish featured
in the media
more than 84
times during
the 2021/2022
year.**

Users

77,470

Media Releases

6



Social Media

July 2021 - June 2022



followers

12,445



followers

2,875



followers

1,239



instagram tags

2,834



subscribers

73,493

Facebook Reach:

814, 769

Facebook Impressions:

995, 007

Facebook Engaged Users:

37,733

Let's make fishing
better, for everyone.



RECREATIONAL FISHING CODE OF CONDUCT

VRFISH HAS DEVELOPED THIS CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RECREATIONAL
BOAT, SHORE, RIVER, STREAM AND JETTY FISHERS IN VICTORIA.

Recreational fishers have a responsibility to look after fisheries resources for the benefit of the environment and future generations of fishers. This Code of Conduct provides guidelines to minimise conflicts on the water, demonstrate best practice for responsible fishing and result in a more enjoyable fishing experience for all.

1

Awareness of and compliance with fishing **REGULATIONS**.



6

Always seek **PERMISSION** when entering private property.



2

RESPECT the rights of other anglers and users.



7

Use **ESTABLISHED** access roads and tracks.



3

PROTECT and restore the environment and fish habitat.



8

ATTEND to your fishing gear and value your catch.



4

Carefully return **UNDERSIZED**, oversized, protected or unwanted catch back to the water.



9

EDUCATION - pass on your knowledge.



5

Fish species and other organisms must not be **RELOCATED**/transferred into other water bodies.



10

Respect Aboriginal sites, **CULTURE** and values.

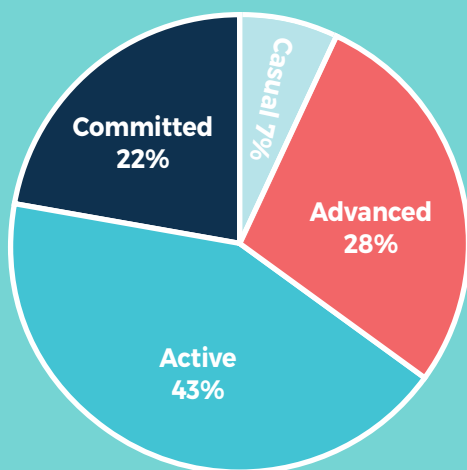


VRFish Advocacy Priorities Survey Results

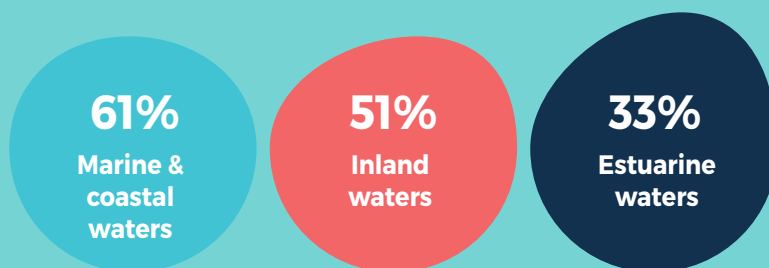
4,858

RECREATIONAL FISHERS RESPONDED

Fisher Type

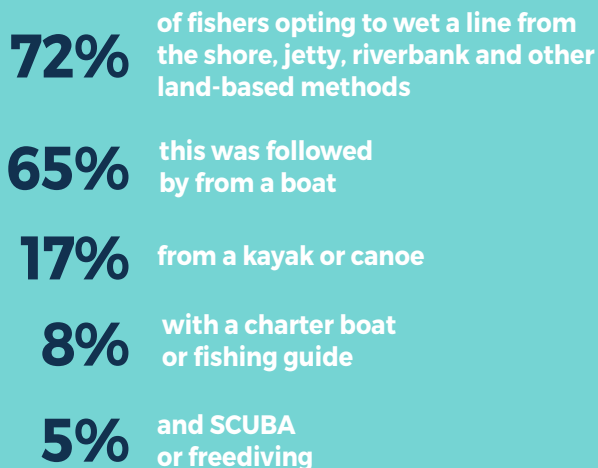


Ecosystem Fished



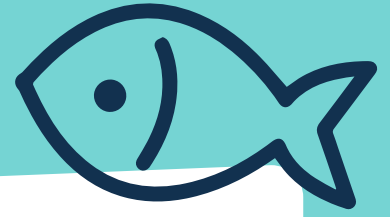
How do you go fishing?

Land-based fishing is the most popular access method



Top 10 Targeted Fish Species:

1. King George Whiting
2. Snapper
3. Flathead (all other species)
4. Rainbow trout
5. Brown trout
6. Dusky flathead
7. Calamari/squid
8. Gummy shark
9. Murray cod
10. Redfin perch



Top 3

Inland Issues

- Habitat restoration to improve our wild trout fisheries.
- Screens on irrigation pumps and channels to prevent the loss of fish from our rivers.
- Funded fish recovery plans for species such as Macquarie perch, blackfish and trout cod.

Top 3

Marine Issues

- Expand restoration of living shellfish reefs in our bays, inlets and estuaries.
- Future-proof our snapper fishery through enhanced management and increased angler stewardship.
- Seagrass mangrove and salt marsh fish habitat restoration.

Top 3

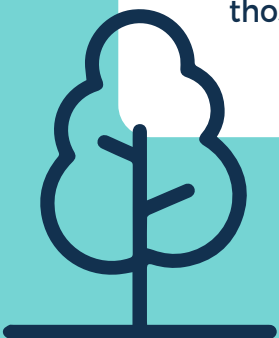
State-wide Issues

- Campaigns to reduce litter and rubbish around waterways.
- Oppose development and activities that negatively impact fish stocks or pollute waters.
- Imposing tougher penalties on those that break the law.

Top 3

Impacts on Fishing Satisfaction & Experiences

- Lack of bins or fishing gear disposal facilities.
- Overcrowding at boat ramps.
- Difficulty catching target species.



Importance of Urban Lakes Survey Results

In June 2022, VRFish asked recreational fishers to share which stocked urban lakes are most important to them in their local area. A total of 1122 recreational fishers responded to the survey.

MELBOURNE

Albert Park Lake

Lilydale Lake

Ferntree Gully Quarry

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS

Victoria Lakes (Ballarat)

Esmond Lake (Ballarat)

Alexandra Lake (Ararat)

BARWON

Saint Augustine's Water Hole (Geelong)

Bannockburn Lagoon

Lethbridge Lake

SOUTH WEST

Pertobe Lake (Warrnambool)

Cobden Lake

Tea Tree Lake (Mortlake)

WESTERN DISTRICT/MALLEE

Police Paddock Dams (Horsham)

Goldfields Reservoir (St Arnaud)

Dunkeld Arboretum

GOULBURN

Jubilee Lake (Daylesford)

Victoria Lake (Shepparton)

Hanging Rock Lake (Woodend)

LODDON-CAMPASPE

Crusoe Reservoir (Bendigo)

Forest Lake (Kangaroo Flat)

Neangar Lake (Eaglehawk)

GIPPSLAND

Guthridge Lake (Sale)

Morwell Kernot Lake

Heyfield Racecourse Lake

NORTH EAST

Eildon Pondage Weir

Marysville Lake

Mount Beauty Pondage

VRFish Priorities



Rita Caulfield



Habitat and Water

Protecting, Restoring & Enhancing Where Fish Live

Our Vision

To improve fish habitat so that our recreational fisheries can thrive, through:

- Habitat protection, restoration and enhancement
- Co-management of natural resources
- Secure water allocations for recreational fishing
- Shared benefits for recreational fishing from environmental flows

Victorian fishers know that improved fish habitat delivers better fishing outcomes. VRFish continues to play a lead role in advocating for investment in fish habitat and promoting the role that all Victorian recreational fishers can play in identifying areas that require attention and leading the implementation of restoration efforts. Across the state, there are many recreational fishing organisations, fishing clubs and volunteers that are undertaking incredible work on behalf of their fishery.

VRFish has continued to promote the importance of recreational water allocations to stocked fishing lakes and the value of environmental water to recreational fishers.

Ben Scullin



2021/22 Highlights

- Partnered with OzFish to develop a state-wide fish habitat strategy.
- Advocated for improved recreational water supply and delivery to ten Wimmera Mallee pipeline lakes.
- VRFish pledged support to the Goulburn Broken Regional Catchment Strategy.
- Following a catastrophic fish kill in the Curdies River caused by a blue-green algae bloom, VRFish advocated for better management by state government agencies, an urgent action plan to tackle the issue including increased funding for the Corangamite CMA and EPA to address nutrification.
- Supported Melbourne Water's Maribyrnong fish revival project which saw 32 new fish habitats installed into eight locations along the lower Maribyrnong River.
- VRFish advocated for a Corner Inlet seagrass habitat restoration project with support from the commercial sector during the Corner Inlet Fishery Management Plan process.
- Formal advice provided to the Water Minister regarding Goulburn River Inter-Valley Trade to avoid further damage to the lower Goulburn River. Supported the Minister's decision to remove the option for 6,000 ML per day pulses in summer.
- Continued support of The Nature Conservancy's shellfish reef restoration projects in Port Phillip Bay and Gippsland and participation on the Technical Advisory Group.
- State-wide and regional advocacy for access and a better share of recreational water.



Access

Ensuring Better Access to Fishing Opportunities

Our Vision

Safe, easy and ongoing access, through:

- Maintaining and extending access to fisheries
- Improved pier and land-based fishing opportunities
- Better boating infrastructure, governance and investment
- Safe harbours for ocean fishing

A significant issue facing Victorian recreational fishers is access. A high priority for VRFish is ensuring better access and appropriate facilities so that all Victorians can enjoy the vast range of fishing opportunities across the state. By providing adequate access, it will allow people of all ages, backgrounds, demographics and ability to enjoy wetting a line.

VRFish and its members spend countless hours advocating for access or maintaining our current level of access.



Josh Read
@josh.read_



Brandon Scott
@gippslandfishing

2021/22 Highlights

- Opposed a proposal to allow an unlimited bycatch limit by commercial longline fishers in Port Phillip Bay which resulted in the Minister continuing to limit commercial fishing bycatch following the end of commercial netting in Port Phillip Bay.
- Supported the Victorian Government's delivery of free camping opportunities on licensed Crown land.
- Advocated for a 'zero trip limit' to be placed on Commonwealth managed trawlers catching King George whiting in waters adjacent to Victoria, off Wilson's Promontory.
- Supported the Gippsland community's movement to save McLoughlin's jetty from being closed and demolished.
- Supported Mitcham Angling Club's proposal to introduce recreational fishing at Blackburn Lake and provide a family-friendly fishing lake in the City of Whitehorse.
- Advocated for improved recreational fisher access to Melton Reservoir.
- Advice provided to Government regarding the Marine and Coastal Strategy incl. Draft Marine Spatial Planning Guidelines & Marine Planning Areas.
- Successfully advocated on behalf of land-based fishers to improve the state of Victoria's piers and jetties. Several coastal piers and jetties received \$18 million in funding for critical works in the Victorian State Budget.
- Represented recreational fishing interests in proposed offshore renewable energy projects off Gippsland and Western Victoria.
- Provided advice on the Corner Inlet Fishery Management Plan process and participated on the Corner Inlet Fishery Management Advisory Committee.
- Advocated for a trout stocking size review (fingerlings vs yearlings) in high predation waters.
- Participated in the Ministerial Boating Roundtable and provided advice on major Better Boating Victoria activities including recreational boating state-wide project assessment, dredging grants assessment panel, Better Boating Fund investment, draft boating behaviour study, Victorian boating facility design guidelines and Victorian recreational boating strategy.
- VRFish participated in the Rock Lobster Fishery Management Plan Steering Committee and Rock Lobster & Giant Crab Resource Assessment Group.



Participation

Increased Participation in Fishing

Our Vision

Increased participation and recognition of the benefits of recreational fishing, through:

- Promoting and growing participation amongst non-fishers, especially youth
- Affordable fishing opportunities
- Quality fishing experiences and catch rates
- Improved recognition and social and economic benefits
- Stronger fishing clubs and associations

VRFish is a membership organisation of people that love fishing. It's only natural our work is aimed at making fishing better for everyone and attracting new people to our wonderful sport. Victoria is blessed to have a diverse range of fishing opportunities and we are cognisant to promote affordable and family-friendly fishing as part of this amazing mix. We know how important recreational fishing is to the economy of Victoria and health and well-being of individuals and communities. Our role is to ensure recreational fishing is recognised for these benefits from members of parliament, the media and the community as a whole.

Fishing clubs and associations are an integral part of our recreational fishing sector, their local communities and VRFish. Our vision is to support clubs to thrive and become stronger.



The VRFish Member Clubs & Associations Health Check survey revealed a support package is essential for club sustainability into the future.



AFC Kids Academy

2021/22 Highlights

- Conducted a survey of nearly 5,000 fishers to determine recreational fisher priorities to make fishing better in Victoria.
- A survey was conducted with more than 1,100 fishers to understand which stocked urban lakes are the most important to Victorian fishers.
- Promoted benefits of joining a fishing club to the broader recreational fishing community.
- Conducted a survey of VRFish fishing club and association members to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on their clubs and how to strengthen fishing clubs.
- Promoted Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation's Gone Fishing Day initiative which focussed on 'fishing for your mental health' in 2021 and encouraged people to go fishing or participate in local events.
- Supported the Victorian Recreational Fishing Tourism Strategy.
- Promoted participation and lure fishing education Australian Fishing Championships (AFC) through the AFC Kids Academy.
- Participated in Victorian Fisheries Authority's events such as their fishing and boating forums and Hooked On events.
- Key-note presentation at the Victorian Fisheries Authority's Murray Codference.
- Participation on the Local Organising Committee for the upcoming World Recreational Fishing Conference.



Best Practice

Promoting Best Practice Fisheries Management & Informed Fishers

Our Vision

Best practice fisheries management and informed fishers, through:

- Adoption of responsible fishing practices and behaviours
- Prioritised fish stocking
- Science-based and responsible fisheries regulation
- Greater investment into research, development and extension
- Legislative recognition of recreational fishing
- Improved aquatic pest management

VRFish are leaders in promoting best practice behaviours and attitudes within our sector, as well as raising awareness and helping the fishing community understand their rights and obligations. Our Code of Conduct is central in fostering greater stewardship within our fishers. Recreational fishers expect sustainably managed fisheries and strive for quality fishing experiences. Recreational fishers know too well the adverse impacts that pest species have on our aquatic ecosystems and our fishing. VRFish provides consolidated and expertise-based advice back to Government in the development of fisheries management plans and when management issues arise.

To make fishing better for all Victorian fishers and regional communities, VRFish and our members play a vital role in shaping the annual inland fish stocking program.





Rob Loats
Arcadia Hatchery

2021/22 Highlights

- Launched the Naturally Vic responsible recreation campaign to promote and educate recreational users on best-practice guidelines to leave the great outdoors how they found it.
- Participated in Vic Fish Stock meetings to shape the annual fish stocking plan and priorities across Victoria.
- Promotion of Shark Mates campaign that promotes best practice guidelines to handling sharks and rays. Campaign and FRDC final report to be presented at the upcoming World Recreational Fishing Conference in 2023.
- Promoted rock fishing safety through VRFish communications to encourage fishers to adopt responsible rock fishing behaviours and gain awareness of new lifejacket laws.
- Raised awareness within the fishing community regarding the outbreak of the abalone virus in the Portland region and supported the community response.
- Advocated for key species research by the Victorian Fisheries Authority to gain more understanding of our southern blue-spotted flathead populations.
- Participated in the Animal Welfare legislation reform process. Following a review of best practice and development history, provided a non-negotiable VRFish position to the new legislation for the Animal Welfare Act.
- Provided advice to Government regarding the Land (Regulated Watercourse Land) Regulations 2021 which impacts access and camping on Crown Land.
- VRFish represents recreational fishers on the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) Recreational Reference Group as part of the public land management reform process.
- Advice provided to Government regarding the Marine Safety and Fees Regulations.
- Promotion of Fisheries Notices that are in place to ensure awareness and compliance amongst the recreational fishing community.
- Successful VRFish advocacy resulted in regulation change via Fisheries (Murray cod) Notice 2022 to open waters within the Wimmera Catchment and Land Protection Region to Murray Cod fishing the whole year with the exclusion of the Wimmera River.



Organisational Excellence, Advocacy and Partnerships

Striving for Organisational Excellence, Advocacy & Building Partnerships

Our Vision

Continually striving for organisational excellence, through:

- Quality governance and organisational processes
- Greater accountability to stakeholders
- Improved recognition and support from recreational fishers
- Strategic and effective communications and engagement
- Strong and constructive relationships with Government and Stakeholders

VRFish strive to be a high performing organisation that has strong foundations through our members and collaborative partnerships with other organisations. With our limited resources, we leverage our success and achievement through the passion and tireless advocacy of our volunteer membership and effective working partnerships with our stakeholders.

As a strong and independent peak body for recreational fishing in Victoria, we continue to be open, transparent and accountable to maintain support from recreational fishers.



Moving VRFish 'onto the front foot' and delivering for recreational fishers in the lead up to a looming State election will be a priority.



2021/22 Highlights

- Endorsement by VRFish members for a new Constitution that committed to Board gender equality and cultural diversity.
- Achieved gender equity and multi-cultural representation on the VRFish Board.
- VRFish regional member forums were held at Geelong, Lakes Entrance and Benalla to report back to VRFish members on our advocacy, the state-wide fish habitat strategy and our Victorian state election agenda.
- VRFish presented at fishing club meetings to engage with our Foundation Members and Fishing Club Supporters.
- Continued to attract new VRFish members including individual adults, juniors, fishing clubs and affiliated organisations.
- Generation of significant VRFish content and messaging through the publishing of 90 website articles and 129,179 website page views, 295 Facebook posts, 150 Instagram posts, 51 EDM news alerts and 6 media releases.
- Increase in followers across all social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter).
- VRFish Dive Fisheries Reference Group continued operations and a VRFish Law and Ethics Reference Group was formed.
- Ongoing relationships with Government stakeholders including the Victorian Fisheries Authority, Better Boating Victoria, Victorian Environmental Water Holder, Catchment Management Authorities, DELWP, Department of Transport, Parks Victoria, Australian Fisheries Management Authority and Water Authorities.
- Working with the Victorian Fisheries Authority to provide representative and expert advice, input into Statutory fisheries management processes, participation in events and forums, grants and joint advocacy efforts.
- Providing representative and expert advice to Better Boating Victoria as a Ministerial boating roundtable member.
- As a recognised sport and recreation body, VRFish works with Sport and Recreation Victoria to promote VRFish and grant funding opportunities for our members.
- Partnership with OzFish Unlimited and working together on a state-wide fish habitat strategy, VRFish member forums and OzFish habitat forums.
- Working with Environment Victoria to advocate for our river health through the Goulburn River Inter-Valley Transfer campaign.
- Promoting participation in recreational fishing through partnership with Australian Fishing Championships (AFC) and their AFC Kids Academy.
- Ongoing relationship with Boating Industry Association of Victoria.

Strategic Plan

2020 – 2024

Key Focus Area:

**As the Peak Body,
this means we will focus on:**

Protecting our fishing future

Engaging our members, recreational fishers and other groups to plan for our future.

Being at the forefront of promoting responsible and ethical fishing and best practice in fisheries management.


Enhancing our fishing experiences

Understanding what impacts our members when they are fishing in order to effectively improve experiences for recreational fishers.

Leading and innovating

Presenting a clear advocacy platform and anchoring our thinking in the future.

Creating best practice and innovation through developing the skills of our staff, board and other.



This will make a difference for you by:

- Keeping you updated on what we are doing and how you can be involved.
- Linking the activities, you love with a new generation of recreational fishers.
- Working to secure access to your fisheries.
- Informing you about the fishing management priorities and policies.

- Giving you information about our plans and solutions to make fishing better.
- Making it easy for you to share information about fishing with us and others.
- Knowing our position statements and having an opportunity to shape them.

- Securing more support for recreational fishing.
- Growing the number of people who share our interests in recreational fishing.
- Developing our ability to fund what is important to recreational fishers.

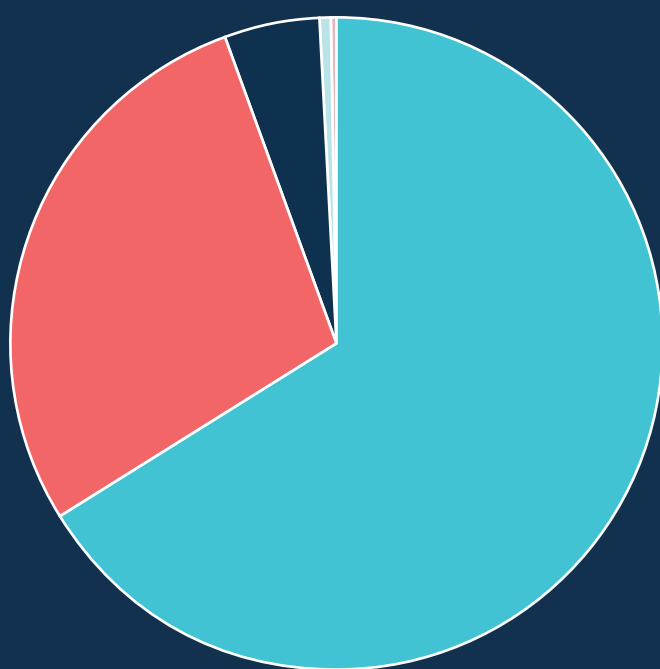
What we will have achieved together by 2024 is:

- No net loss of fisheries and access to recreational fishing.
- Members, recreational fishers and other groups will know the way we do things at VRFish and how we engage with them.
- There are more new recreational fishers of all ages actively involved with VRFish.
- Increased the recognition of the role recreational fishers play in the stewardship and conservation of fish and our waterways.

- Better fishing opportunities, including increased boat launching capacity and quality.
- Marine, freshwater and estuarine habitat restoration and enhancement rolling plans are successfully implemented and activated.
- An effective feedback loop system is place and operating well so we know what is happening and so do you.

- Recreational fishers, the government and the public will be more aware of and informed about our advocacy efforts and will be able to engage to make a stronger voice.
- There will be greater diversity of people who are actively involved in VRFish through membership.
- Multiple revenue streams are in place to ensure we are sustainable and investing in areas of importance.
- We have an effective leadership and governance program in place.
- Our members and partners will feel valued.

VRFish Expenditure 2021/22



- Salary and Wages - \$351,381
- Operating Costs - \$150,091
- Board and Meeting Expenses - \$25,918
- Depreciation - \$2,532
- Membership - \$659



We know how important recreational fishing is to the economy of Victoria and health and well-being of individuals and communities.

THE VALUE & BENEFITS OF FISHING



Average fisher spend

\$338
per trip



On average, each fisher goes fishing **6.8** times per year



55%
prefer bait fishing



Source: The economic value of recreational fishing in Victoria (2020) undertaken by Ernst & Young commissioned by the Victorian Fisheries Authority and Better Boating Victoria.

Health and Wellness Benefits of Fishing:

- 1 Fishing is a great way to spend quality time with family and friends
- 2 Fishing reduces stress and helps you unwind
- 3 Fishing gets you outdoors
- 4 Fishing can improve your cardiovascular health
- 5 Fishing is a healthy lifestyle activity
- 6 Fishing increases your Vitamin D levels
- 7 Fishing promotes patience and self-fulfilment
- 8 Fish are a good source of protein and nutrition
- 9 Fishing lets you unplug from the digital world
- 10 Fishing supports conservation



p: 03 5221 1104
e: info@vrfish.com.au
www.vrfish.com.au

**LET'S MAKE FISHING BETTER,
FOR EVERYONE!**





PO Box 4574
Geelong VIC 3220, Australia
P: 03 5221 1104
E: info@vrfish.com.au



vrfish.com.au