

Amelia Grant
Fishery Manager
Victorian Fisheries Authority
By email: amelia.grant@vfa.vic.gov.au

Dear Amelia,

VRFISH RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT FISHERIES (RAY PROTECTION) NOTICE 2018

Thank you for providing VRFish the opportunity to comment on the proposed Fisheries (Ray Protection) Notice 2019 ("Ray Fisheries Notice") on behalf of Victoria's recreational fishing community.

VRFish is a strong advocate for humane treatment towards all species by our recreational fishers.

VRFish will continue to advocate that an educative approach backed up by an effective compliance program will generate a greater level of positive behavioural and attitudinal change in the long-term. Additionally, we note some confusion in our sector that the Fishery Notice was issued in response to a sustainability issue.

We are cautious of over-regulation in our sector, especially in situations where a very small minority of fishers are thought to be causing the problem. Ironically, regulations already existed to protect the maltreatment of rays and other 'unwanted' species.

Arising from VRFish's consultation of recreational fishers in 2017, we learnt that less than 50% of recreational fishers we surveyed do not have the confidence to handle and release rays correctly. I can report VRFish are co-investigators in a FRDC funded project led by Monash University and project partners Victorian Fisheries Authority to improve shark and ray interactions by fishers. Meaningful and practical advice for recreational fishers will be developed in 2020 to support enhanced fish welfare outcomes for sharks and rays.

Yours sincerely,



Rob Loats
Chair
Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body

16 September 2018

**Let's make fishing
better, for everyone.**