

Scott Hanger
Fishery Manager
By email: scott.hanger@vfa.vic.gov.au

Dear Scott,

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 2018 ("Ray Fisheries Notice") on behalf of Victoria's recreational fishing community.

As an advocate for respectful and humane treatment towards all species of fish, and taking an educative approach towards improved knowledge of fisheries regulations and positive behavioural change, VRFish stands by the response provided to the 2017 Ray Fisheries Notice.

The key points raised in our previous submission which we would like to reiterate, and which were formed through an evidence-based and representative approach, include:

- Fishers are not adequately aware of current regulations and there needs to be more resourcing and focus towards increased awareness, education and compliance (including increased penalties), rather than increased regulation. This includes the need to review the wording in the Victorian Recreational Fishing Guide for consistency and clarity;
- As a large proportion of recreational fishers don't have the confidence and knowledge to handle and release rays unharmed (44.4% of respondents to the VRFish 2017 survey), an education and awareness campaign to promote improved, best practice handling is required. This is particularly necessitated to support the successful and humane release of larger rays;
- Improved, multi-lingual signage at problem 'hotspots' is required;
- A reduction in the bag limit does not contribute towards improved handling or sustainable fisheries outcomes as evidence suggests that fishers are currently not catching their bag limit and the stocks of rays are currently considered to be sustainable.

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



- Prohibiting take of rays from within 400-metres of man-made structures is inequitable and unfair and disadvantages a whole sub-group of fishers.

Given the points highlighted, VRFish is unable to support the continuation of the Ray Fisheries Notice in its current form.

Moving forward, and to enable a more rigorous review of the impact of increased regulation under the Ray Fisheries Notice, VRFish would like to kindly request the VFA to provide compliance statistics that relate to rays, skates and guitarfish since the gazettal of the 2017 Rays Fisheries Notice.

VRFish invites contact if you like to discuss our submission further.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Loats', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rob Loats
Chair
Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body

14 September 2018