

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

Dear Scott,

VRFISH RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSED FISHERIES (RECREATIONAL ABALONE DAYS) NOTICE

Thank you for providing VRFish an opportunity to comment on the proposed Fisheries (Recreational Abalone Days) Notice 2018 (“Abalone Fisheries Notice”) on behalf of Victoria’s recreational fishing community.

Given that the Abalone Fisheries Notice remains unchanged from previous years and is not responsive to the evolving needs and expectations of Victoria’s recreational abalone fishers, VRFish would like to reiterate the points raised in our previous years’ submissions.

As previously noted, VRFish is unable to support the Abalone Fisheries Notice in its current form.

VRFish does not believe the Fisheries Notice is reflective of the realities of daily life of recreational fishers and the community in general, and the way and times in which the fishing community pursues its recreational and fishing activities. It is widely recognised that community are increasingly becoming time poor and working flexible schedules and arrangements, and as a result are choosing to pursue their fishing and time with their friends and family on weekdays outside of the standard weekend timeslot. The recreational days proposed for abalone fishing within the Fisheries Notice are not responsive to this reality.

Furthermore, the Fisheries Notice is not representative of best practice, adaptive fisheries management. The nominated 60 days to accommodate recreational abalone fishing has not changed for at least a decade. The proposed abalone days have not evolved in response to the Andrews Government’s current *Target One Million* plan. Given the commitment to increase people fishing to one million by 2020, confining abalone fishing to the same days as those prior to *Target One Million* is a recipe for conflict over a limited resource on a confined number of days. Retaining the status quo abalone days certainly does nothing to promote and support the Government’s aim to get “more Victorians fishing, more **often**”.

VRFish therefore proposes that the recreational abalone days be increased to 120 days, with abalone days during the week and at peak time to accommodate the needs of recreational,

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better, for everyone.**

to mitigate any potential for on the water conflict and as a positive step towards getting people fishing more often.

With the review of the Victorian Fisheries Regulations 2009 flagged to commence in 2019, VRFish would expect based on the principles of good governance and transparency, that the Abalone Fisheries Notice be transitioned into regulation. As part of this process, it is anticipated that the regulatory review be subject to extensive consultation and examined for their impact and ability to deliver on their intended objectives and expectations of the community.

VRFish invites contact if you like to discuss our submission or our proposal 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