



GUNDITJ MIRRORING

Traditional Owners
Aboriginal Corporation
RNTBC

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Ms Amelia Grant
Fishery Manager
Victorian Fisheries Authority
2A Bellarine Hwy
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COMMENT: DRAFT FISHERIES (VICTORIAN PIPi) NOTICE 2019

Dear Ms Grant

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the draft Fisheries (Victorian Pipi) Notice 2019. Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (GMTOAC) has a number of concerns about the current practices by some of the existing licensees.

We have serious concerns about the behaviour of some of the commercial fishers and it appears that the VFA is supporting (or at least ignoring) illegal activities from them. I refer to vehicles on beaches and cutting tracks through culturally sensitive areas as two examples. It has been brought to my notice that they are also intimidating and threatening PV staff and at least one of them claim (ridiculously) that they are Traditional Owners.

I am aware that some of the commercial pipi fishers are consistently using quad bikes, side by side ATVs and small 4 wheel drive vehicles to access the beaches within the licenced area. I have also been advised that there have been at least two vehicle access tracks cut through the Coastal Park dunes from private properties.

As stated in a previous submission (2017) we know that they have breached the Land Conservation (Vehicle Control) Regulations and some National Park regulations and appear to act as if these regulations do not apply to them. When they ride over registered Aboriginal sites they also are breaching the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. This blatant disregard of the Victorian legislation by some of the fishers has been escalating over the past two years and increased allegations of illegal vehicle access, threats, intimidation and assault of Parks staff are before the courts at present.

The VFA must work with other State agencies to ensure that Victorian laws are enforced. I refer to the Pipi Steering Committee Ministerial Guidelines that state;

“The Fishery Management Plan will take into account existing regulations and legislation relating to access to coastal parks.”

I expect that the VFA would ensure that any licences issued would respect the views and concerns of traditional owners. As a Traditional Owner group we expect that commercial fishers also respect our rich cultural heritage and ensure that they do not damage important cultural sites.

GMTOAC expects that the VFA should ensure that licence conditions must restrict vehicle access to hand pulled trolleys only and that if there are continuing breaches in relation to motor vehicle access then a cancellation of the licence must be considered.

Thanks

Denis Rose
Project Officer
Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corp.
13 September 2019