

Comments on the

Draft

Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

“Building better recreational fisheries”

Submitted by Russell Bate OAM

March 21st. 2018

Anthony,

The following pages outline my thoughts on the draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan. You will be familiar with a number of them from previous meetings.

Overall I believe the plan has some very sound recommendations however, like many freshwater anglers and particularly those who enjoy fishing for trout, I believe that some of the traditional assumptions about the reasons for the decline in fish numbers are just that.

Overall the recommendation for a partnership approach, joining with angling communities to help address the issues faced, is a very good one. Our own local experience has demonstrated how much can be achieved with the support and involvement of local angling clubs like the Mansfield and District Fly Fishers Club.

I understand that the club is making their own submission however my own travel and other commitments have prevented me from having any input to their response. Hopefully there will be many points on which we agree.

Once again my congratulations on the work completed over the last few years and on the draft plan.

Feel free to contact me at any time on any of the points raised.

Regards,

Russ Bate.

Victoria's freshwater recreational fisheries.

- **1.4 Para 3.-**

Giving these three influences an equal weighting is misleading – especially in the case of cod. I would suggest that habitat degradation and over fishing (much of it commercial in earlier years) have had a far greater influence on the decline in native fish than introduced species.

- **1.5 “Barriers to fish passage”** (and elsewhere in the document).

I continue to find the galaxiids issue over-stated. While I have no doubt that there has been some predation, given that we have had trout in our rivers and streams for more than a century and yet we still have galaxiids, the trout have clearly been failing in this task.

- **1.5 “Riparian habitat degradation”**

This should also include ...*and the wholesale “clear felling” and removal of willows has left many river banks without shade and flood prone.*

- **1.5 “Introduced fish”**

“Redfin perch and trout have been implicated” is a far cry from having been proven. Is this another example of the established bias against any non-native species among many government and land management bodies?

- **1.5 “Over fishing and illegal fishing”**

Having spent considerable time fishing in New Zealand and the US I can only say that the culture of those two countries is years ahead of ours with a focus on bag and size limits and catch and release. Over fishing is a real problem among Australian anglers and the earlier century of commercial fishing in our rivers was a major contributor to the reduction in fish abundance.

- **1.5 “Climate change”**

This has become hard to ignore – especially in East-West flowing rivers like the Jamieson. Management of the riparian environment to ensure maximum shade has become a critical factor in offsetting the impact of climate change.

2. Framework for managing Victoria's recreational fisheries

- **2.2 “Vision”**

A sound approach that not only utilises local knowledge and resources but engages with the community and ensures a better visibility for these programs and their necessity.

- **2.3 “Guiding principles”** A good list that, if followed, will be the basis of a successful program.

3. Healthy recreational fisheries.

- **3.1 “Environment rehabilitation through partnerships” and 3.2 “Managing water for recreational fisheries outcomes”**

The priorities outlined are very real and largely deliverable through the partnerships outlined here and previously. The availability of water for the environment will always be a political football but is critical to any long term improvement of fishing stocks.

- **3.3 “Expanding and getting the best out of fish stocking”**

Priority: Expanding and improving the effectiveness of fish stocking to recover threatened species and improve recreational fisheries.

“Snobs Creek Hatchery has been in operation for more than 70 years. Here, Victorian Fisheries Authority staff produce and grow salmonids and native fish ... which are sourced from commercial hatcheries).”

I believe that, while stocking from Snobs Creek has historically provided a short term solution and has a role to play going forward it is, in fact, part of the longer term problem.

As US studies, including the University of Oregon research referenced below, the continued use of hatchery fish as a source of brood stock and eggs has a significant and negative effect on the ability of hatchery bred fish to perform in a natural environment.

This would indicate that, if we are to continue to utilise a hatchery approach we should move to catching up breeding stock from the wild and/or, as I understand happens in New Zealand and elsewhere in Australia, stripping wild fish for eggs and milt.

Oregon State University. "Salmon And Trout Hatcheries Cause 'Stunning' Loss Of Reproduction." ScienceDaily, 5 October 2007.
www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/10/071004143128.htm.

Summary:

The rearing of steelhead trout in hatcheries causes a dramatic and unexpectedly fast drop in their ability to reproduce in the wild, a new study shows, and raises serious questions about the wisdom of historic hatchery practices.

Fish reared in a hatchery for two generations had around half the reproductive fitness of

fish reared for a single generation. The effects appear to be genetic, scientists said, and probably result from evolutionary pressures that quickly select for characteristics that are favored in the safe, placid world of the hatchery, but not in the comparatively hostile natural environment.

"Among other things, this study proves with no doubt that wild fish and hatchery fish are not the same, despite their appearances," said Michael Blouin, an OSU associate professor of zoology. "Some have suggested that hatchery and wild fish are equivalent, but these data really put the final nail in the coffin of that argument."

Even a few generations of domestication may have significant negative effects, and repeated use of captive-reared parents to supplement wild populations "should be carefully reconsidered," the scientists said in their report.

Traditionally, salmon and steelhead hatcheries obtained their brood stock and eggs from fish that were repeatedly bred in hatcheries -- they tended to be more docile, adapted well to surface feeding, and they thrived and survived at an 85-95 percent level in the safe hatchery environment.

Earlier work by researchers from OSU and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife had suggested that first-generation hatchery fish from wild brood stock probably were not a concern, and indeed could provide a short-term boost to a wild population. But the newest findings call even that conclusion into question, he said.

"The problem is in the second and subsequent generations," Blouin said. "There is now no question that using fish of hatchery ancestry to produce more hatchery fish quickly results in stocks that perform poorly in nature."

4. A deeper understanding of our recreational fisheries

Recreational fishers, scientists and resource managers using the best available information to manage fisheries

All good points however the one key issue that should be covered as part of developing an understanding of our recreational fisheries is the economics of the area.

Providing an up-to-date picture of the overall value of recreational fishing to the state, and equally important, to the local government areas, is critical to the ongoing justification of these programs.

6. Improving recreational fishing experiences

6.3 "Promoting fishing destinations"

Priority: Promoting Victoria's premier recreational fishing destinations to encourage fishing participation and regional tourism.

Recreational fishing makes a strong contribution to local economies through supporting regional tourism and employment. There is scope to profile and better promote Victorian fishing opportunities in collaboration with other stakeholders, particularly Tourism Victoria, Visit Victoria, **regional Tourism Boards, local councils** and VRFish.

Effective engagement with these bodies, especially regional tourism boards and local government, requires a better understanding of the economic contribution to their areas (as mentioned above). To the best of my knowledge, there have been no recent studies of the economic contribution to the regions involved.

7. Responsible recreational fishing

7.1 "Environmental stewardship and volunteerism"

Priority: Supporting and encouraging opportunities for angler environmental stewardship and volunteerism.

Projects over the past few years have demonstrated that anglers are willing to become involved in the improvement of the state's fisheries and in particular, in the improvement of the associated environment.

Recognition of their contribution is an important contributor to ensuring continued and increased involvement. Feedback on volunteer participation including the successes and the value are important to the participants and to the government.

Measurement of participation should not be difficult, especially if organised through clubs and groups, and will be of very real value to a strategy that is largely based on partnerships with the angling community.

7.2 "Encouraging recreational fisher participation"

Priority: Continuing to encourage people to participate in recreational fishing in Victoria.

Recruitment is important. The simple reality is that governments direct funding to projects that meet the needs and desires of the greatest percentage of voters. The more anglers, the greater the evidence of their economic contribution and the greater the number of projects that demonstrate partnership with the angling community the greater government support.

7.4 "Promoting stewardship of fisheries resources"

Priority: Encouraging recreational fishers to adopt responsible recreational fishing practices.

and...

7.5 "Fisheries compliance"

Priority: Communicating and enforcing fishing regulations related to sustainable and responsible fishing.

Over more than ten years of fishing the trout rivers of Montana (the Missouri, the Bitterroot and the Blackfoot) I have noted that compliance is largely enforced by the anglers themselves. The value placed on that fishery by the anglers and their guides alike ensures that bad practices and non-compliance are readily "called out" and if need be, reported.

While I don't foresee that level of involvement being possible in the short term, it is a culture that we need to develop. Fishing magazines and TV programs have a role to play here. Not just through lip service, but by explaining the impact of over-fishing and other unacceptable behaviours.

Improved compliance can only be ensured by a culture shift on the part of our fishing community. That, in turn, can only be achieved as they understand the impact of bad practice on fish numbers.

8. Delivering the Plan

8.1 "Implementing the Plan through partnerships" and 8.2 "Evaluating the Plan"

The points raised in these two sections are important to the overall success of the plan.

I especially agree an evaluation on the basis of "A key measure of the success of this Plan will be the extent to which its priorities are supported and implemented by the Victorian Fisheries Authority, recreational fishers".

As noted in the comments on 7.2 above, the plan assumes the involvement of and cooperation by Victoria's fishing community. The measurement and publication of their involvement will be a key part of this process.

There have been and will be many good stories and once again there are many opportunities to promote these through the fishing media.

15 March 2018

Anthony Forster
anthony.forster@vfa.vic.gov.au

Dear Anthony

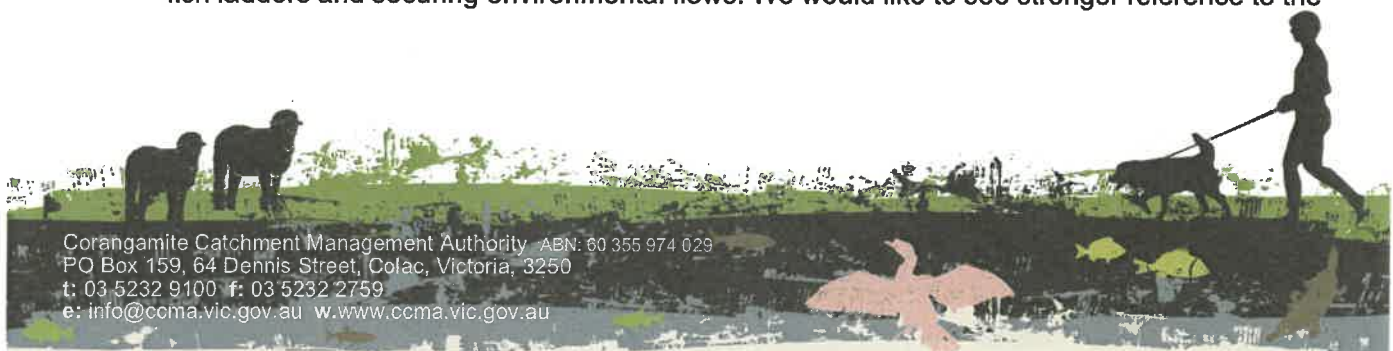
Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

Thank-you for providing the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA) an opportunity to comment on the Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan.

The Corangamite CMA commends the Victorian Fisheries Authority for developing a Plan that recognises a clear integrated management approach to managing our waterways for multiple benefits including freshwater recreational fisheries.

In review of the draft Plan, the Corangamite CMA provides the following comments:

- **Partnerships** – there is strong alignment between the draft Plan and the Corangamite CMA's strategic direction to work with agencies and community, including Traditional Owners, to achieve positive land, water and biodiversity outcomes. We believe that the Plan presents a real opportunity to strengthen the partnership between the VFA and CCMA. In our opinion, specific opportunities for partnerships relate to environmental water entitlements, implementing programs and recovery plans for threatened native fish species, improving instream habitat and riparian condition as well as research and monitoring. This is discussed in more detail beneath. In short, we appreciate the existing references to work in partnerships with CMAs and welcome any further references to build and strengthen this relationship.
- In light of the partnerships comment above the **Vision** could be expanded slightly to acknowledge that it will be achieved through work between the Authority, community and partnering agencies, rather than just the Authority and communities. This then provides a clear and consistent linkage with the strong partnership statements throughout the document.
- **Environmental water** – securing water entitlements for environmental flows is an important focus for CMAs. We believe this is an area that presents significant opportunities for the CMA and VFA to work collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes for both recreational fisheries and biodiversity more broadly. We appreciate the reference to work more closely with CMAs in the area of environmental watering (pg. 17).
- **Protecting 'at risk' native fish species** – Section 3.4 provides detail on protecting and recovering listed threatened fish species. The CMA plays a key role in undertaking works to protect important fish habitat, such as providing in-stream habitat, removing barriers, installing fish ladders and securing environmental flows. We would like to see stronger reference to the



significant role that CMAs play in this area, and the opportunity to work in partnership to address key threats and protect threatened species.

- **Condition monitoring and results of our investment** – Section 4.1 refers to monitoring the health of recreational fish populations. There is opportunity to complement and build on existing research and monitoring, for example the Index of Stream Condition, expansion of the citizen science programs. Also, the more recent establishment by DELWP and CMAs to establish intervention performance monitoring in flagship waterways across the State. The potential to build upon existing research and share research findings across agencies could be reflected in the text on pg. 27, as well as the partnership opportunities it presents with CMAs across the state.
- **Plan layout** – To assist the flow and readability of the Plan, it would be useful to see the 18 priorities at the beginning of the document (e.g. in Section 2) and how they relate to each of the five objectives (rather than being referenced in the appendices). A simple logic diagram or tabular representation that clearly aligns priorities with objectives and the vision could assist this.

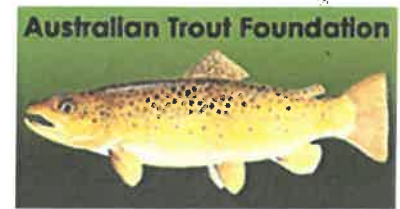
If you have any queries in relation to our feedback, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Jayden Woolley, Strategy and Planning Manager on (03) 5232 9100.

Yours sincerely



Helen Watts
Strategy and Planning Services General Manager





21st March 2018

Mr Anthony Forster
Manager, Inland Fisheries
Victorian Fisheries Authority
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Dear Anthony

RE: DRAFT FRESHWATER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan.

After due consideration, we do believe that overall it is an informative and meaningful document.

However, notwithstanding the above, it largely portrays itself as a Marketing Publication vs. a Strategic Management Plan for addressing any concerns, and is devoid of content related to Action Plans or Next Steps; which we believe should be included in any deliverable of this intended type.

Thus we think the focus of the publication misses the intended point as there is no defined follow through as to what comes next.

Yours sincerely

Terry George
President

21 March 2018

The Inland Fisheries Manager
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**GOULBURN
BROKEN**

CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY

www.gbcma.vic.gov.au

Dear Anthony

Re Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan.

The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority supports the integrated approach of managing fish, water and land together, combined with the emphasis of undertaking this in a collaborative approach.

We particularly note and support the following priorities;

- Rehabilitating river habitat and improving connectivity to support healthier fish populations.
- Ensuring recreational fishing values are considered in water management policy.
- Developing a harvest strategy for selected freshwater fisheries using information from fish populations health monitoring and recreational fisher feedback
- Monitoring and assessing the response of fish populations to management interventions
- Expanding consultation and looking for opportunities to partner with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to deliver shared benefits
- Supporting and encouraging opportunities for angler environmental stewardship and volunteerism

We look forward to continuing to work together with all parties in maintaining and improving the health of waterways and wetlands in the Goulburn Broken region, and therefore threatened species populations and recreation fishing opportunities.

If you would like to discuss this or any other matters with us please contact Mark Turner, River and Wetland Health Program Management on (03) 5822 7705 or markt@gbcma.vic.gov.au

Yours Sincerely

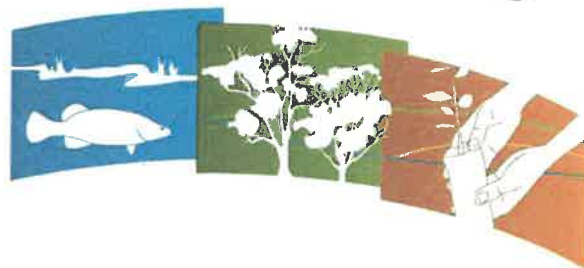
Chris Norman
Chief Executive Officer
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2



Ref: NCCMA-63-63528

22 March 2018

Anthony Forster
Inland Fisheries Manager
Victorian Fisheries Authority
PO Box 4509, Melbourne, Victoria, 3001

Dear Anthony,

Subject: Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan – North Central CMA comments

Thank you for your invitation to comment on the draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan. As you are aware, the North Central Catchment Management Authority (CMA) is the Statutory waterway manager under the *Water Act 1989* in north central Victoria. The major waterways in our region include the Campaspe, Loddon, Avoca and the Avon-Richardson rivers and their associated streams. We acknowledge the recreational fishing values of these waterways and the important link between community use and community action to protect them. We are keen to partner with the Victorian Fisheries Authority in facilitating this community input.

	<i>Relevant section in the Plan</i>	<i>North Central CMA comment</i>
1	1.5 - Key Threats	There are a number of threats to native fish populations that have not been considered in the draft management plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish entrainment in irrigation offtake channels• Interaction with irrigation pumps• Cold water pollution• Loss of lateral connectivity to floodplain wetlands
2	2.1 - Scope	The draft management plan includes Redfin perch as one of fourteen key recreational species that will be sustainably managed through the plan. Redfin perch are noted throughout the document as being implicated in the decline of many small and large bodied native fish species. While we acknowledge that Redfin is a popular angling species, we would like to see careful consideration of the threat posed to native fish species when prescribing management actions.
3	Overall	Overall the plan is lacking in detail of proposed targets, objectives or management actions for each of the priorities described. We note that section 2.1 outlines that the Plan is a strategic document and that an implementation plan is proposed, however, it would be useful to articulate targets clearly in the management plan to then inform the implementation plan.

Additionally, we note that Section 8 of the plan refers to the establishment of a working group to guide the delivery of the plan in Victoria. We are very interested in being a member of this group.

If you wish to discuss any of the above in more detail, please contact me on 5440 1902 or via email louissa.rogers@nccma.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. Rogers', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Louissa Rogers
Manager Environmental Water



Wimmera CMA

Our Ref: (I:\greg\wimmera cma submission to draft freshwater fisheries management plan march 2018.docx)
Contact: Greg Fletcher
Date: 13 March 2018

7

Mr Travis Dowling
Chief Executive Officer
Victorian Fisheries Authority
1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3001

Dear Travis,

SUBMISSION TO DRAFT FRESHWATER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Wimmera CMA welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to inform the development of the *Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan*. Many of the Wimmera CMA's activities such as riparian fencing, erosion control and environmental watering will lead to benefits for native fish communities. The marked improvement in local native fish populations through enhanced environmental conditions and stocking activities has been a fantastic outcome for the community.

Whilst the plan does not include any specific actions, a number of statements within the draft plan lend themselves to being actions. It is suggested that the plan include actions and timelines to both improve the effectiveness of the plan and to more easily evaluate its progress over time.

Following are a number of specific comments on the draft plan for the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) to consider when finalising the plan. Wimmera CMA looks forward to working with the VFA to build upon the recent work across regional waterways to the benefit of all Victorians.

Should you require any further information or assistance regarding this submission please don't hesitate to contact Tony Baker, Manager Statutory and Strategy this office.

Yours sincerely

DAVID BRENNAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

2.1 Scope

Whilst the plan is focussed on recreational fisheries, there could be some discussion around the future of freshwater commercial fishing in Victoria given its potential impacts (i.e. although there are none currently, is there potential for licences to be issued in the future). Furthermore the plan could also inform readers where to find information around freshwater aquaculture policies.

2.2 Vision

Inclusion of "environmental values" could be considered with the other values listed, especially given some of the activities associated with threatened fish breeding and environmental stewardship.

2.6 Working Together

It would be useful to include Water Corporations and Parks Victoria in the list of partners in this section given the importance of the reservoirs and waterways that they manage.

3.2 Managing water for recreational fishing outcomes

Wimmera CMA supports the consideration of recreation values in water management. There is also an opportunity to improve outcomes if partners improve their understanding on water management decisions by other organisations through the sharing of information and alignment of strategies.

For example the final plan could include reference to regional waterway strategies as guiding documents for environmental water management and other activities that provide outcomes for native fisheries and they would provide additional context to interested readers.

The example of the management of environmental water in the Horsham Weir Pool for the Horsham Fishing Competition would also present a good case study for the final plan.

3.3 Expanding and getting the best out of fish stocking

Given the significant public expenditure in fish stocking, Wimmera CMA encourages VFA to bolster resources in monitoring the effectiveness of fish stocking. Given the Wimmera River is stocked with Golden and Silver Perch and these species are only sustained through stocking (rarely, if ever successfully recruiting), it presents a prime example for determining the success of stocking activities.

The final plan could also consider how to better determine the impact of fish stocking on other species (such as small-bodied native fish) this would, in part, address some of the recommendations made by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office regarding the management of freshwater fisheries (VAGO, 2013).

Also a review of translocation policies and protocols could be recommended as part of the final plan to improve transparency and governance (including consultation) whilst facilitating positive outcomes for recreational and other fish species. Many anglers have a profound understanding of various waterways and what species are appropriate for the conditions to facilitate a productive fishery, however others believe stocking as many species as possible is the way to go. Improving the processes and science behind stocking decisions is critical to enable responsible decision making and provide the necessary justification to the community.

3.4 Recovering 'at-risk' species

River Blackfish numbers have declined drastically across the Wimmera due to a number of factor suchs as drought and habitat loss. Climate change is a major risk to the species' long-term survival in the region. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this trend is not isolated to the Wimmera and consideration should be made for nomination for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* to ramp up conservation efforts. The behaviour traits of River Blackfish such as those outlined in the draft plan around their limited migration mean that extra interventions are required to reverse current declines and through environmental water recovery, there are opportunities to restore populations that have been previously lost.



Improved translocation processes that facilitate the introduction of 'at-risk' species to locations of suitable habitat beyond their range provided there are no negative impacts to other species would also expedite their recovery.

3.4 Dealing with noxious fish

The final plan could include more information about using education and enforcement to prevent noxious species from being introduced into new areas. Currently there are only small areas of the Wimmera catchment that remain carp-free and so their values are at risk should carp be released into them. The very recent discovery of Roach for the first time in the Wimmera River is an unfortunate example that illegal translocations are occurring.

4.1 Monitoring fish population health

Lake Charlegrark could be considered as a reference lake given the Murray Cod stocking.

VFA could utilise CMA fish monitoring data and other local information sources to complement monitoring activities.

Environmental DNA has been successfully used as a technique by Wimmera CMA and others in conjunction with volunteers (see Figure 1) and VFA could consider integrating this in future monitoring projects.

Technology helps anglers, researchers

A new project between the Wimmera Anglers Association and Wimmera Catchment Management Authority is helping anglers find the best fishing spots while giving researchers insight into how fish are responding to environmental flows.

Volunteers from the anglers association, a strong fishing advocate for the region for several decades, are taking samples along the Wimmera River for its sensitivity to fish using the latest eDNA or genetic technology.

So far the project has produced some initial results and anglers are at high numbers, and will continue to monitor population to measure the impact of environmental water.

The eDNA technology was pioneered in the Wimmera for flycatcher research in 2015.

Wimmera CMA is now using it to track a growing number of fish species including carp, yellowtail and catfish in the river.

The work is part of a project funded by the Victorian Environmental Water Holder.

Wimmera CMA secretary Greg Fletcher said this was one of several examples of the valuable contribution citizens can make to monitoring environmental data.

"The Wimmera has benefited

from certain science for many years, with one of the oldest Waterwatch groups in Victoria starting in 1991 more than 21 years ago," he said. "This has further expanded, particularly in the last six months, with people using the new playpopsAPP app for playpops sightings and taking photo-year images and tagging us on social media to help us monitor changes along the river."

"We're really excited to be working with the anglers association. It not only provides an valuable resource to help monitor a larger area, it gives us another opportunity to hear from the community about the changes that are important to them."

Appreciation
Wimmera Anglers Association president Martin Robinson said the group was excited to be involved in a project using the latest technology.

He said the technology, as well as educating anglers, had given him a new appreciation and understanding of environmental flows and the work Wimmera CMA did to improve the health of the river.

"Working with the CMA means we have more information we can share with our members," he said.

"By us being involved, it could also help the region access more government funding for projects that benefit fishing."

Mr Robinson said monitoring

voluntary Terry Williams have so far taken samples from a 1.5 kilometre section of the lower Wimmera River and this month plan to do more.

They took their samples from a boat, which means they were able to cover more area in a shorter amount of time.

"It's like the river itself, well, as it was logical for us to go in the boat and do the sampling," he said. "It's really interesting. You can give the CMA 100 millions of water and what they can get out of that sample with this eDNA is mind-blowing."

Mr Robinson said the association welcomed more volunteers for future monitoring.

"It's a great day out and you're making a big contribution to getting a better understanding of our river," he said.

"I didn't really understand why they were taking environmental flows down the river but I can see now how they work and how they are benefiting the river."

The flow helped look after pools with fish in them during the dry and now we have had rain it's just looking so good. Anything that helps make fishing in the Wimmera more sustainable, we want to be part of it."

Jack Griffiths from Melbourne-based environmental research company Ecor has provided sample collection training for the anglers.



PARTNERSHIP: Wimmera CMA waterway project officer Greg Fletcher and northern Angling Club's Martin Robinson retrieve a water sample from the Wimmera River. Picture: PAUL CARRACHER

FIVE-DAY forecast

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
30°	27°	21°	21°	25°
Mostly cloudy	Mostly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly

Getting in touch with THE WEEKLY ADVERTISER

For more info on the Wimmera CMA waterway project, contact: Greg Fletcher, 0427 253 253, greg.fletcher@wimmera.cma.vic.gov.au

For more info on the Wimmera CMA waterway project, contact: Martin Robinson, 0427 253 253, martin@wimmera.cma.vic.gov.au

For more info on the Wimmera CMA waterway project, contact: Jack Griffiths, 0427 253 253, jack@wimmera.cma.vic.gov.au

Figure 1: Article from Weekly Advertiser, 15 February 2017 re. anglers conducting e-DNA monitoring for recreational fishing and environmental water management outcomes.

4.2 Tracking the performance of recreational fisheries

VFA could consider taking advantage of new technology such as developing a smartphone app that enables anglers to log catch data by location and it could provide a useful conduit on gaining other data (e.g. visitation rates and economic contribution) subject to privacy considerations. Furthermore other agencies could provide relevant information to anglers via the app such as CMAs regarding environmental flows or SES regarding floods.

4.3. Towards a harvest strategy

A key factor regarding fish population health is water availability and so any harvest strategy should consider factors around climatic conditions similar to the seasonally adaptive approach described in waterway management and sustainable water strategies.



4.4 Evaluating fishery interventions

There appears to be an error in the title for this section and it should say 'interventions' rather than 'inventions'.

It would be worth flagging in this section that the VFA could work with a number of these partners on this priority given the common interests held by CMAs and Victorian Environmental Water Holder regarding fish outcomes resulting from onground actions.

5.2 Legal rights and policies

There might be opportunities for VFA and other agencies to work with Barengi Gadjin Land Council to develop aquaculture opportunities near Dimboola. This could provide multiple outcomes including boosts for 'at-risk' and recreational fish species.

6.1 Facilitating fishing access

Wimmera CMA has been working with anglers, VFA staff and other stakeholder to improve access to waterways across the region through formalising tracks and boat ramps through the Our Catchments, Our Communities program. It is a win-win for anglers and the environment and could be promoted in the final plan as an example of what is trying to be achieved.

Key issues to address regarding facilitating fisher access relate to land tenure and responsible behaviour. There is a belief amongst some anglers that all riparian land is Crown land and publically accessible. This is not the case. Potentially there could be technologies used such as smartphone apps to enable users to determine whether or not they are on Crown land or are in fact trespassing on freehold land. Crown land licensees often try to restrict access to frontage when people have been not acting responsibly for example dumping rubbish or leaving smouldering campfires. Education and enforcement are therefore important for both licencees and anglers who want to access Crown frontage so there is a role for VFA, DELWP Public Land, CMAs and others in this.

6.2 Connecting with recreational fishers

VFA should continue to look at new and innovative ways to connect with anglers. If an implementation plan is developed following the final plan then this can be progressed in more detail with anglers and stakeholders.

6.3 Promoting fishing destinations

Wimmera CMA strongly encourages VFA to promote waterways in the Wimmera as key recreational fishing tourism destinations. No Wimmera waterways are listed in Table 2 which seemingly focuses on the state's east and south. The Wimmera River injected \$4.75 million into the local economy in 2017, through recreational activities, especially via fishing competitions (Street Ryan, 2018). There were also substantial physical and mental health benefits associated with river users. Wimmera CMA would be happy to provide additional information regarding this landmark research to VFA to help inform the final plan.

7. Responsible recreational fishing

Wimmera CMA is keen to support VFA in implementing the priorities 7.1 to 7.3 in this chapter given they align with both organisations' objectives.

References:

Street Ryan (2018) *Socio-Economic Value of Environmental Water: Wimmera River Sites, 2016-17*, Street Ryan, Gisborne.

Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) (2013) *Management of Freshwater Fisheries*, Report 2012-13:24, VAGO, Melbourne.

The Inland Fisheries Manager
PO Box 4509
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Dear Mr Foster,

Re: Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

I would like to commend you and your team on the current draft strategy and in particular the consideration and indeed prominence given to restoring fish habitat.

If possible I would ask that consideration be given to a) recognizing the National Fish Habitat Strategy and b) adopting some elements of the National Fish Habitat Strategy not currently outlined in the plan. There are four elements of this Strategy as outlined below;

1. Achieve fish habitat conservation results by restoring natural processes and preventing decline
2. Broaden recreational fishing community support for habitat action.
3. Carry out Research and Development to support fish habitat action
4. Communicate fish habitat outcomes and issues to the general community.

The Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan clearly responds to Actions 1, 2 and 3 but some particular actions in the National Strategy are recommended for consideration;

- Develop and support "champions" – highly visible fishers willing and able to talk about fish habitat issues.
- Seek support from businesses aligned with recreational fishing for improved fish habitat management.
- Develop citizen science initiatives for recreational fishers to support and report on fish populations and habitat actions.

We consider that Action 4 is as least as important as the other Actions given that contributions from an engaged recreational fishing sector will require constant attention. The following activities are therefore also recommended for consideration;



Australia's new way to fish

- Create and distribute information on fish habitat and recreational fishing outcomes (including oral histories).
- Tell recreational fishers' stories of positive change.
- Support social and other non-fishing related media platforms to promote habitat issues and action by recreational fishers.
- Synthesize and simplify existing fish and fish habitat science/status for distribution to recreational fishers

Again, congratulations on the Plan and please call me on 0419185538 if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Copeland", followed by a long horizontal line.

Craig Copeland
Chief Executive Officer
OzFish Unlimited

19 March 2018



Anthony Forster
Inland Fisheries Manager
Victorian Fisheries Authority
By email: Anthony.Forster@vfa.vic.gov.au

DRAFT FRESHWATER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Dear Anthony,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan on behalf of Victoria's recreational fishing sector.

As you know, VRFish along with the Australian Trout Federation and Native Fish Australia (Victoria) has made a substantial contribution to the Draft Plan through membership on the Stakeholder Reference Group.

In terms of additional feedback on the Draft Plan it is fair to say we have had limited responses. Despite efforts to design the plan for dual appeal for Government and recreational fishers we propose that strategic nature of the plan has presented somewhat of a barrier. Also, recreational fishers are passionate about their favourite fishing spots or waterways that they hold dear. It does demonstrate the importance of involving leaders in the recreational fishing sector to help guide and shape the plan. Overall, the intent of the plan has been well received, however enthusiasm and interest from recreational fishers is squarely focused on implementation.

We have taken the opportunity to review the results of a survey of almost 1,900 recreational fishers conducted by VRFish in the latter half of 2017. Data has been analysed and extrapolated to reveal trends and preferences of freshwater fishers. The survey, of which approximately 56% of respondents fish in freshwater, highlights:

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



- Restoring fish habitat followed by increasing fish numbers and were the highest ranked priorities for improving recreational fisheries in Victoria (ranked consistently across all ecosystem types, whether freshwater or marine).
- In terms of priority actions (detailed actions under each priority area), the five highest ranked actions included:
 - (1) controlling pest fish and plant species;
 - (2) research on how to rebuild declining fish populations;
 - (3) restoring and improving fish habitat;
 - (4) improving water condition, flow and levels; and
 - (5) teaching children about how to fish and good fishing practices.
- For those fishers that mostly fish inland, the regions fished most frequently (in order) included the North East, Port Phillip and Westernport, Gippsland, North West and South West.
- Trout, redfin, Murray cod and golden perch were listed as the most targeted species by freshwater fishers.
- Overall, respondents listed experiential (non-catch related) motivations as the most important motives for going fishing, with "to be outdoors", "to relax" and "to be with friends and family" the highest ranked motives.

Guiding Principles:

- An overarching and important principle advocated in the Plan is that of stakeholders working in partnership – working together to benefit our freshwater fisheries. VRFish is highly supportive of this principle and employs a collaborative approach in all the work it does. The statement needs to be explored in more detail including delineation of roles and responsibilities to avoid confusion and ensure actions and outcomes are efficiently and effectively delivered. Recreational fishers not only want to be informed and involved, they also want to lead and implement.
- An integration of management actions is required so that resources available are used efficiently, without duplication and where possible value-added. Recreational fishers do express frustrations and confusion at the number of Government agencies that operate or have an interest in our freshwater fisheries. VRFish believes the plan will make a substantial contribution towards better coordination and maximize benefits to fishers from investment.

3.1 Environment rehabilitation through partnerships:

Considering the immense job to restore and improve fish habitat and a demonstrated support by recreational fishers, we recommend that a specific fish habitat funding scheme is established to expedite on-ground works. Funds could be contributed from the Recreational Fishing Trust and matched by Government. On-ground works should to be undertaken in a strategic approach and considering a Statewide perspective. Therefore, rather than a competitive grant structure, funds should be directed where it will result in the biggest benefit to fishers our fish.

Critical to the success of rehabilitating our waterways is empowering and building capacity of recreational fishers to participate in and lead this work. While our sector is committed to working in partnership with Government we also need the resources to grow our sector. This will enable more work to be undertaken, increased ownership and connection with our waterway and involvement in other aspects of sustainable and responsible fishing.

4. A deeper understanding of our recreational fisheries

Although it may not be practical or monitor each Victorian waterway from a traditional scientific perspective, the surge of interest in citizen science and value it can provide should not be overlooked. What is important to Government may not align directly with what is important to fishers. Therefore, it is important to provide our fishers with tools to collect data and acknowledge a range of both scientific and social benefits.

6.1 Facilitating fishing access

VRFish aspires to 100% access to our inland waterways yet there is complexity in land tenure, licensing arrangements and public liability concerns. Approaching this in a case-by-case basis is likely to be highly resource intensive and we would recommend Government focus on working to remove red tape and develop tools and options for recreational fishers to implement at the local level.

A reform of boating infrastructure governance is urgently required in Victoria, including the return of boating fees and licensing funds for infrastructure. An array of community, Government and industry organisations have been vested, often voluntarily to maintain boat ramps.

We are also experiencing increased conflict with other water users such as rowers, canoers, jetskis and motorboats and this needs to be addressed and planned for.

6.2 Connecting with recreational fishers

Changes are underway in VRFish and therefore a rewording is suggested to make this reference more general, including:

- remove reference to number of organisations that have VRFish representation
- remove reference to unaffiliated
- remove “hold regular board and state council meetings” to “consults and engages with Victoria’s recreational fishing community to gather their views and feedback, to create opportunities for empowerment, participation and involvement, and to share information”.

Fishcare Victoria also connects with communities and schools and this program could be further expanded to benefit our inland fisheries.

7.1 Environmental stewardship and volunteerism

VRFish recognizes and encourages the voluntary participation of recreational fishers to improve fishing and the environment our fish rely upon. However, volunteerism requires resources to operate effectively. A general decline in volunteerism in the community must be noted and planned for.

Given the interest in recreational fishing and demonstrated economic and social benefit to all Victorians, VRFish recommends recreational license funds should be directed to building capacity of our sector and strengthening recreational fishing groups. Globally, recreational fishers are emerging as Non-Government organisations that perform a natural resource management function or act as delegated authority. Therefore, volunteerism is just one aspect of recreational fisher involvement.

General comments:

- Recommend that the document be retitled as a “Strategy” rather than “Plan” as it lacks the detailed actions one would expect to see in a plan – rather is a high level strategic framework.
- Data collection framework to inform harvest strategy in Year 5.

- Listed threats and Section 3.5 should include introduced flora in addition to introduced fish – recommend changing threat description to on which is more general, such as “Introduced species” or “Aquatic pests”.
- 3.4 At-risk recreational fish species – recommend change of focus to all at-risk species (not just those that are of recreational value) – it should be an ecosystems based approach given ESD is a key objective of the Fisheries Act.
- There is no mention of fish irrigation and pump screening of interventions to prevent wild and stocked fish from being lost from the system.

Yours sincerely,

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

22 March 2018



Re: Exciting New Freshwater Fisheries Plan
 Cc: Anthony.Forster, dallas.dsilva
 History: This message has been replied to.

Hi all

I note consultation on the Plan closed yesterday, are there any issues or further comments that you needed from me for inclusion of commercial fishing in this plan? Could I please get an update on the status, and how commercial fishing has been included?

Thanks in advance, and hope to hear from you soon.

Regards
 JD



Johnathon Davey
 Website: www.siv.com.au
 phone: 03 9601 0000 mobile: 0411 000 000
 fax: 03 9601 0000 email: johnd@siv.com.au
 Office 12, 133 Kensington Road, West Melbourne
 VICTORIA 3207

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On 23 Jan 2018, at 10:40 am, Travis.Dowling@vfa.vic.gov.au wrote:

Good pick up JD.

We will modify and make sure commercial Eel, Yabby, bait, carp fishing is recognised in the final plan.

Cheers Trav

Sent from my iPhone

On 23 Jan 2018, at 10:36 am, Johnathon Davey <johnd@siv.com.au> wrote:

Hi Anthony

As the contact for this new Freshwater Fisheries Plan, I am slightly concerned that there has been NO engagement with SIV or the commercial industry.

As you are well aware, this sort of plan interacts with our new Eel Fishery Management Plan and the Eel Fishery, Inland Aquaculture, commercial yabby harvesters, and others... yet no consultation or engagement until it becomes a public process.

I have this morning read the plan, and there is not much in there that we would not be supporting, however as a 'FRESHWATER' Fisheries plan, this must surely include commercial activities as well and not just be focussed at recreational activities.

They are shared waters and some of the resources in this document are shared resources, and I do not believe it is the VFA's mandate to promote one user above the other.

In fact, the Objectives of the VFA are:

- (a) to promote sustainability and responsibility in fishing and fishing-related activities in Victoria; and
- (b) to optimise the social, cultural and economic benefits of the fisheries sectors; and
- (c) to support the development of recreational fishing; and
- (d) to support the development of commercial fishing and aquaculture; and
- (e) to work cooperatively with fisheries management bodies in other States, in Territories and the Commonwealth; and
- (f) to perform its functions and exercise its powers in any manner it considers best achieves its objectives.

Therefore, I would welcome at the earliest opportunity, a discussion on the inclusion of commercial operations in this Strategy/Plan, as Freshwater fisheries do include more than just recreational fishing.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Regards
 Johnathon

<unknown.png>

Begin forwarded message:

From: Victorian Government Media Releases <noreply@premier.vic.gov.au>
Subject: Exciting New Freshwater Fisheries Plan
Date: 22 January 2018 at 3:11:16 pm AEDT
To: johnd@siv.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Exciting New Freshwater Fisheries Plan

22nd Jan 2018

The Andrews Labor Government has released its blueprint for boosting freshwater fishing across Victoria with record fish stockings, partnerships for better fish habitat and an actively engaged recreational fishing community.

Acting Minister for Agriculture Ben Carroll released Victoria's draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan for public consultation today.

The draft plan sets out a new, statewide approach to build better recreational fisheries by bringing together fish, water and land management.

It is the first Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan for Victoria that considers the sustainable management of the state's most popular recreational fish – including trout, redfin, Murray cod, golden perch and bass.

The plan was developed collaboratively by fishers, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders.

Its key elements include:



Melbourne Water response to Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan, March 2018.pdfTim Wood to: Anthony.Forster@vfa.vic.gov.au 22/03/2018 03:26 PM

1 Attachment



Melbourne Water response to Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan, March 2018.pdf

Good afternoon Anthony,

Please find attached Melbourne Water's response to the Victoria's first Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan.

Melbourne Water would like to congratulate the Victorian Fisheries Authority in pursuing this initiative. We look forward to working with you collaboratively to deliver the final strategy.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me or Vix Penko directly.

Regards,

Tim Wood | General Manager, Waterways and Land Group | **Melbourne Water** T: (03) 9679 7161 | M: 0417 056 602 | 900 Latrobe St, Docklands | PO Box 4342 Melbourne VIC 3001 | melbournewater.com.au

[View Melbourne Water's 2016/17 Achievements Video](#)

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Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

Melbourne Water Response, 21 March 2018

Chapter 1, Victoria's freshwater recreational fisheries

Section	Comment
1.2	<p>The section states that "all aquatic species are important components of Victoria's biodiversity and environmental health". While we understand the intent of the statement, invasive species, such as carp, are actually extremely detrimental to waterway health and can be directly linked to ecological decline. This is recognised in section 1.5, under 'introduced fish'.</p> <p>It is worth noting in this section that some endangered recreational freshwater fish, such as Australian grayling (not mentioned) are protected species and that taking, or attempting to take (including catch and release) is prohibited. The Victorian Recreation fishing community should be congratulated for adhering to these rules and encouraged to continue its support of endangered species in this way.</p> <p>This message could be repeated in section 1.5, in the 'Overfishing and Illegal fishing' section.</p>
1.5	<p>We would ask that you include urbanisation and land developments (which are tangibly linked to stormwater impacts) as key threatening processes to freshwater fisheries.</p>

Chapter 2, Framework for managing Victoria's recreational fisheries.

Section	Comment
2.4	<p>In Victoria, Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) and Melbourne Water are the statutory waterway management authorities in rivers and streams used as freshwater fisheries. To support our accountability as waterway managers and encourage community understanding of how fisheries are cared for, we feel it is important to properly explain this as part of the Framework.</p> <p>Melbourne Water manages the health of Melbourne's rivers, creeks and wetlands and urban lakes across the Port Phillip and Westernport region. Our river health and stormwater management programs help protect and improve the condition of the region's waterways and bays and also improve habitats for plants and animals that live there. We do this by restoring vegetation, creating new habitat, delivering water for the environment and managing a network of wetland and stormwater treatment</p>

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Section	Comment
	<p>systems.</p> <p>Melbourne Water is currently renewing its <i>Healthy Waterway Strategy</i>, a ten year plan to ensure the region's waterways are healthy, liveable and accessible for generations to come. In developing this, we are undertaking comprehensive community engagement, proactively seeking input into the strategy vision, goals and targets. We are also seeking community experiences and insights into how local people connect with their waterways.¹</p> <p>Melbourne Water also develops a Seasonal Watering Proposal, annually, in collaboration with the Victorian Environmental Water Holder. This Proposal guides how water for the environment may be used to protect and support fish and other animals, provide healthy vegetation and habitat and improve water quality.</p> <p>Additionally, Melbourne Water is leading the development of the Yarra Strategic Plan, which will give effect to the community's long-term vision for the Yarra and provide the basis for the future planning of the river corridor and each of its reaches.</p> <p>In summary, our waterway work thoroughly supports recreational fishing in the Werribee, Maribyrnong, Yarra, Dandenong and Westernport catchments.</p>
2.6	Melbourne Water would encourage recognition in the strategy and the actions of MW and of its strong relationship with the Victorian Fisheries Authority.

Chapter 3, Healthy recreational fisheries

Section	Comment
3.2	<p>Environmental Water can be a critical support for fish and other animals within waterways, particularly with the prediction of a drier future under climate change.</p> <p>However, competition for water resources means insufficient environmental water entitlements and allocations to meet all objectives in all catchments. Unfortunately, limits on environmental water availability – and constraints in delivering it – mean that we cannot provide ideal natural flow regimes (the right size of flow, at the right time of the year) in all systems.</p> <p>In its <i>System Strategy</i>², Melbourne Water considers measures that can increase the volume of water available for the whole system. For example, harvesting water from alternative sources. A greater range of water sources can potentially mitigate the impacts of environmental water shortfalls.</p> <p>In some cases, delivery infrastructure constrains our ability to achieve environmental objectives. As you will be aware, weirs and dams are barriers to fish passage and can prevent fish from moving along streams to feed and breed.</p> <p>In a drier future, with projected lower inflows into our catchments and waterways,</p>

¹ <https://yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/healthy-waterways>

² Melbourne Water (2017) *Melbourne Water System Strategy*, Melbourne Water.

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Section	Comment
	<p>and with lower allocations to environmental entitlements, water for the environment will need to become even more efficient and targeted.</p> <p>Melbourne Water would emphasise that managing the impacts of urbanisation and stormwater on waterways in the context of a changing and variable climate is another effective way to care for fish and fish habitat.</p> <p>Stormwater run-off pollution, excess nutrients and altered flow regimes from urban areas can have significant impacts on waterway health and fish health, habitat and breeding.</p>
3.3	Melbourne Water fully commends the Victorian Fisheries Authority's (VFA) stocking of native fish in waterways. To better support this, we would like to understand more about the fish stocking decision making process, including information needed to determine where stocking should take place, and the science underpinning it. This would be a welcome addition to the strategy.
3.4	We commend the strategy priority of 'developing and implementing state wide recovery plans for 'at risk' recreational fish species'. We recommend that overfishing be highlighted as a risk and refer to our later comments relating to Macquarie perch in the Appendix.
3.5	In addition to dealing with noxious fish, such as carp, Melbourne Water also manages noxious aquatic weed species. The draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan has not yet addressed issue.

Chapter 4, A deeper understanding of our recreational fisheries

Section	Comment
4.1	<p>Melbourne Water recognises that there are limits to the information that may be available to inform waterway management. We also understand that it may not be practical or cost effective to monitor all fisheries. The 32 reference waters listed, however, do not reflect all of the management challenges and opportunities of other smaller rivers and creeks.</p> <p>There are opportunities to gather information from other organisations, such as CMAs and Melbourne Water. This data could be accessed through Victoria's Applied Aquatic Ecology Research Hub (Action 3.9, <i>Water for Victoria</i>). The Hub aims to support more coordinated, strategic research and monitoring, both within the Department of Land Water and Planning and across relevant government stakeholders and partners. It also provides mechanism for independent science oversight and knowledge brokering.</p>
4.3	<p>Melbourne Water supports the development of a harvest strategy for selected freshwater fisheries, supported by actions to limit fishing on at-risk species using the information from fish population health monitoring and recreational fisher feedback. We would share concerns that it may take five years of implementing the plan to have sufficient data to allow the development of harvest strategies for key recreational fisheries. This is particularly risky given the ten year frequency of the review of fisheries rules and regulations.</p>

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Section	Comment
	We request that alternative review processes be considered, such as from waterway manager data (see 4.2 above), to trigger more timely harvest strategies and immediate interventions if needed.

Chapter 5, Working with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians

Section	Comment
5.2	Melbourne Water fully supports the VFA's priority of expanding consultation and looking for opportunities to partner with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to deliver shared benefits.

Chapter 6, Improving recreational fishing experiences

Section	Comment
6.1	Melbourne Water is looking to improve safe and sustainable access to waterways outside of protected water catchments, and welcomes further discussions with the VFA on this issue.

Chapter 7, Responsible recreational fishing

Section	Comment
7	We applaud the principles of this chapter, particularly promotion of stewardship of fisheries resources (7.4).

Chapter 8, Delivering the Plan

Section	Comment
8.1	Melbourne Water looks forward to participating in the development of a strategy work program and would ask to be represented on the working group alongside CMAs to support VFA in achieving the positive outcomes from the Plan. We look forward to hearing about the progress of this work through the Victorian Waterway Managers forum.

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Appendix

Comment

Discussion in the appendix refers to the prior establishment of a self-sustaining population of Macquarie Perch in the Yarra River. However, recent research in the Yarra River suggests there is a decline which may be attributed to overfishing (see Tonkin et al, 2017, *An assessment of Macquarie perch population dynamics in the Yarra River*, Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research).

Further comment follows.

Over the past 10 years, Melbourne Water has been investing substantially into trying to understand the distribution, abundance and ecology of nationally endangered Macquarie perch (*Macquaria australasica*) in the Yarra River. In particular, we've had a focus on the links between environmental flows, spawning and recruitment to help refine the way water for the environment is used in the Upper Yarra. This research, led by the Arthur Rylah Institute, has greatly improved our knowledge of the status of Macquarie perch in the Yarra and their environmental flow requirements. In addition to significant investment by Melbourne Water to protect and improve water quality and habitat in the Yarra River system as part of our river health program, every year since 2012, we have also undertaken targeted releases of between 7-10 GL of water to benefit Macquarie perch.

Although the Yarra River Macquarie perch population has previously been considered one of the more stable and abundant populations across their current distribution, the most recent report from ARI (see attached) based on surveys between 2007-2017 indicates an alarming downward trend in the abundance of large adults (>300 mm in length) since 2013. Importantly, this trend was not observed in the other study waterways (i.e. Hollands, Hughes, King Parrot and Sevens creeks) whose adult stocks have been relatively stable over the same period. Using a Macquarie perch population model, the analysis by ARI suggests that it is *'highly likely that increased recreational fishing pressure is a major mechanism driving the decline in adult fish in the Yarra River'*.

Given the findings from the most recent ARI report and the significance of the Macquarie perch population, including its importance as a founder stock for recovery of populations elsewhere in its range, Melbourne Water is very concerned about the observed decline in the adult population.

Melbourne Water has been discussing this decline with Victorian Fisheries Authority and will continue to work with you to address this issue.

Submission contact:

Victoria Penko, Manager, Government Affairs and Policy,
Melbourne Water Corporation
Victoria.penko@melbournewater.com.au

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22 March 2018

**The Inland Fisheries Manager
PO Box 4509
MELBOURNE VIC 3001**

Dear Anthony,

Congratulations on the development of the Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan. Overall Glenelg Hopkins CMA is pleased with the scope and objectives of the Plan. We are particularly encouraged by the focus on the following: environmental water; in-stream habitat establishment; importance of improving water quality; removal of fish barriers; establishing riparian vegetation; improving fishing access; controlling introduced fish such as carp; acknowledging the role of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians and also acknowledging the impacts of climate change on river health and fish populations. The objectives are also in line with policy direction under Water for Victoria. An important direction we look for in this high level plan is to point toward, clarify the interaction of, and enable the subordinate plans that sit beneath it such as the Victorian Eel Fishery Management Plan and others.

Minor considerations to note:

- Consider key legislation on pg 12 to note the *Native Title Act* in this section.
- The document refers to 'fish' throughout the document, yet key recreational fish species in the document include invertebrates such as Common Yabby and the Murray Spiny Crayfish.
- Section 4.4 Evaluating fishery 'inventions' should read 'interventions'

Whilst page 8 documents the issue around inappropriate fish stocking, the document is currently unclear on how this threat is to be appropriately addressed. We believe section 3.3 would be improved by documenting an enhanced consultation process with relevant agencies for fish translocations that would be considered controversial, high risk and/or not in line with translocation protocols. A relevant action here is evaluating fishery interventions under section 4.4. Whilst the monitoring and assessing of the response of fish populations to management interventions such as stocking has been noted, there is no reference to the commitment to monitor the health of other fish species that may be at risk from stocked fish. As a risk mitigation measure, it would be prudent to have a monitoring program over several years, to monitor any impact over the different life stages of stocked fish. It is also unclear from this document what actions would be taken in the event that stocked fish were found to be impacting on threatened fish and other species. Although such approaches can be site and species dependent, some high-level acknowledgement of the process in this Strategy would be an advantage.

Glenelg Hopkins



A: PO Box 502, Hamilton Vic 3300 **T:** 03 5571 2526 **F:** 03 5571 2935 **E:** ghcma@ghcma.vic.gov.au **W:** www.ghcma.vic.gov.au
ABN: 55 218 240 014

Objective 2 highlights the importance of a deeper understanding of our recreational fisheries utilizing the best available information from anglers, scientist and resource managers. This is an encouraging approach, however this does not currently always occur in practice. Our experience at regional stocking meetings is that a greater emphasis is placed on the knowledge of anglers. Stocking decisions would be enhanced by placing a greater emphasize on best available science including the knowledge and data held by natural resource managers and researchers who have knowledge about the carrying capacity of regional lakes, rivers and impoundments and knowledge of potential impacts on other species. This approach will optimize stocking outcomes and reduce the risk of future stocking failures.

Whilst the scope of the document does not include estuaries we hope that there is also a focus for Fisheries Victoria to consider implementing similar objectives and funding programs in these environments. Estuaries are highly valued environments and are popular recreational fishing destinations across Victoria. They play an important role in delivering on the State Government's 'Target One Million' program and can benefit from management activities including habitat enhancement, improved water quality and protection of fish stocks through appropriate regulations.

We would consider that a necessary step after the completion of this plan is the development of an implementation plan that highlights how the strategy will be funded and delivered along with who will be responsible for delivering on the key components.

Glenelg Hopkins CMA looks forward to working in partnership with Fisheries Victoria and other relevant agencies to help implement relevant components of the plan and maximise benefits to recreational anglers and the health of our waterways.

If you require any further clarification to our response, please don't hesitate to get in contact with me.

Yours Sincerely



Adam Bester
CEO

Glenelg Hopkins



CMA



Native Fish
Australia
Wimmera



Dear Anthony,

Native Fish Australia (Wimmera) Submission – Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Victorian Fisheries Authority's (VFA) *Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan*. Native Fish Australia (NFA) Wimmera consists of a small group of members who are passionate about the protection and enhancement of native fish populations in the Wimmera.

NFA Wimmera would like to comment on two aspects of the draft plan, translocation policies and protocols and 'at-risk' species.

Translocation

The policies and protocols regarding the translocation of species are in need of updating and improving. There is a lack of transparency and consultation regarding stocking of new species into waterways. A clear example is the decision to stock Lake Bellfield with Chinhook Salmon which poses a substantial risk to small-bodied native fish species in Fyans Creek, already under substantial threat in the Wimmera due to drought and habitat loss. The Victorian Government's Auditor-General has previously provided recommendations for Fisheries as it was then known to improve the understanding of the effect of stocking decisions on environmental values. Although the recommendation was ignored at the time, NFA Wimmera echoes the Auditor-General's recommendation.

Conversely the translocation policies and protocols could be revised to improve the ability of NFA Wimmera and other conservation-focussed groups and agencies to undertake translocations to protect or improve native fish communities. This could include removing fish from drying pools, into more suitable refuge pools or undertaking native fish recovery projects for threatened species.

'At-risk' species

Clearly actions like the stocking of salmonids are impacting on small-bodied native fish populations. NFA Wimmera and other local groups are keen to boost the numbers of small-bodied native fish, in particular threatened species. If VFA was to present opportunities for agencies and community groups to undertake threatened species recovery projects, then this would in-part offset stocking impacts and also healthy small-bodied fish populations will also lead to better outcomes for angling species. NFA Wimmera is also very concerned at the current state of the River Blackfish population and encourages VFA to undertake work to reverse this trend as an urgent priority.

Please contact me via email (mcinnesb@wcma.vic.gov.au) if you have any queries.

Regards,

Bruce McInnes
President NFA Wimmera



20th February 2018

The Inland Fisheries Manager
Po Box 4509
Melbourne, Victoria 3001
anthony.forster@vfa.vic.goc.au

Dear Anthony

Re: Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan. The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority supports the integrated and collaborative approach to the management of fish, land and water.

We particularly note and support the following priorities:

- Rehabilitating river habitat and improving connectivity to support biodiversity and healthier fish populations;
- Ensuring recreational fishing values are considered in water management policy;
- Developing a harvest strategy for selected freshwater fisheries using information from fish populations health monitoring and recreational fisher feedback;
- Monitoring and assessing the response of fish populations to management interventions;
- Expanding consultation and looking for opportunities to partner with Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians to deliver shared benefits; and
- Supporting and encouraging opportunities for angler environmental stewardship and volunteerism.

We look forward to continuing to work together with all parties in maintaining and improving the health of waterways and wetlands in the West Gippsland region, and therefore threatened species populations and recreation fishing opportunities.

If you would like to discuss this or any other matters further with us please contact Dan Garlick, Catchment Planning and Delivery Manager on 1300 094 262 or dang@wgcm.vic.gov.au.

Yours Sincerely



Martin Fuller
Chief Executive Officer

44

DRAFT FRESHWATER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Trevor Hawkins

Generally, I think this draft goes a long way to co-ordinating a combined effort to halt the decline of, and improve the recreational freshwater fishing in Victoria.

What I'm more concerned with is the intricacies and local details that often get overlooked in these 'motherhood' statements.

Below is a list of what I see as potential problems and possible answers for things that I feel are causing harm or can be done differently regarding our freshwater fish and their environment.

OWNERSHIP and COMPLIANCE

One of the greatest human threats I continuously see on many of our rivers is the degradation of the riparian habitat by anglers and the public accessing river reserves. While millions are being spent trying to rehabilitate areas, the wanton destruction by cutting down trees, leaving rubbish strewn about and people going to the toilet close to the river without even digging holes. In my opinion this situation is becoming worse and I wonder if some of it isn't a direct result of the effort to get more people into the bush and camping and fishing etc?

SOLUTIONS

We need to put more importance on club membership in my opinion. It is in these environments where beginners are taught about responsible behaviour and shown by older members the right and wrong of being a responsible angler.

I think clubs and new members could be rewarded perhaps with lower angling licence fees for the first year of and continual club membership?

Engage angling clubs to take up stewardship of their local rivers and establish some type of system where long term club members can report illegal fishing or perhaps more importantly, bad behaviour regards the riparian areas.

Consider fencing off some heavily degraded camp areas with fencing to keep cars and people back a greater distance from the river in heavily populated camps and river access areas.

In areas where there are many access points in close proximity to each other, consider closing every second or third one perhaps and installing drop toilets or better facilities in the left open areas so that people hopefully respond with better behaviour.

COMMERCIAL FISH FARMS

The seemingly wanton release of salmonids into rivers by trout farms (and private anglers) is becoming a standing joke amongst the recreational fishing community.

This bad and illegal behaviour should be jumped on quickly and strenuously by the VFA. It makes a mockery of your non-stocking of trout into natural recruitment rivers.

STOCKING IMPOUNDMENTS and COSTS

At present there is a mentality of stock any and every water it seems with as many fish as possible to meet predetermined figures that don't necessarily relate to good fishery management.

A lot of money goes into stocking fish, and I'm of the opinion that possibly a considerable amount of this money could be directed to more meaningful areas such as angler access etc if only proven longterm and recognised lakes were stocked.

Wasting money on stocking exotic natives into recreational lakes should be reconsidered in my opinion and the money saved spent elsewhere such as on rehabilitating rivers or threatened species research.

HOT WATER

If warming waters are a major concern, which I do agree with. Perhaps a more systematic approach to keeping waters colder for longer would be to start at the headwaters and move downstream, replenishing riparian and instream structure as we go, rather than piecemeal spot rehabilitation projects that appeal for publicity sake, but may be too little too late after the water has already warmed.

INVASIVE WEEDS

It's a standing joke for bush users that you know where national or state park boundaries are, because that's where the blackberries are thickest. I could nominate numerous wild trout streams where the blackberries are so thick that even getting into the river is a major issue.

Of course these weeds may indeed offer a lot of protection for fish and the stream, similarly to what willows offer. But I personally think it is time for the problem of these stream chocking weeds to be addressed.

File ref: AD/06/3443

19 March 2018

The Inland Fisheries Manager
PO Box 4509
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Dear Mr ^{Anthony}Forster,

DRAFT FRESHWATER FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Victorian Fisheries Authority's (VFA) *Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan*. The Victorian Environmental Water Holder (VEWH) is supportive of the plan and welcomes the approach to improving recreational fisheries through integrated fish, water and land management.

Water for the environment managed by VEWB and our program partners is essential for maintaining the health of waterways in Victoria. In many cases environmental flows are delivered to improve conditions for native fish which in turn provides shared benefits for recreation and the economy by improving opportunities for angling. The VEWB supports the proposal under section 3.2 of the draft plan for us to continue working with VFA and our program partners to ensure that water for the environment continues to improve habitat, river connectivity and fishery productivity.

Please note a minor point of clarification in the case study 'Making every drop count...twice!' which claims that "The Native Fish Recovery Plan provides *more* environmental water to rivers, wetlands and floodplains...". The Native Fish Recovery Plan (NFRP) is not a mechanism for recovering water for the environment and care should be taken to emphasise that under the NFRP it is increased water use efficiency that is the significant management tool that improves outcomes for native fish.

It is essential that threats to native fish populations, including predation from stocked fish, are adequately managed to maximise the outcomes that can be achieved with water for the environment. The VEWB strongly supports the proposal that all fish translocations thoroughly satisfy the criteria within the Victorian Government's fish translocation policy, under section 3.3 of the draft plan.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss the VEWB's submission or VEWB's involvement in the implementation group to be convened by VFA when the management plan is finalised.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Sarina Loo

Sarina Loo and Beth Ashworth
Co-Executive Officers
Victorian Environmental Water Holder

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Lake Purrumbete Angling Club Inc.

[A-0005289V]
(Est. 1928)
PO Box 138
CAMPERDOWN 3260
email : robhems@bigpond.com

Mr. Anthony Forster
Inland Fisheries Manager
Victorian Fisheries Authority
1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3001

March 15th, 2018

Copy to:
Taylor Hunt
Renae Ayres
Rob Loats
Mike Burgess
Terry George

Re: Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

Dear Anthony,

On behalf of the Lake Purrumbete Angling Club, we greatly appreciate the opportunity to review the draft plan and provide comment on it, as follows:

1. Great to see the representation of recreational fishers from VRFish, the Australian Trout Foundation and the members of Inland Fisheries department on the Steering Committee.
2. **Section 3: Healthy recreational fisheries** – great to read plans in part 3.4 **Recovering 'at-risk' species** application to small bodied threatened native fish, which have probably been overlooked for far too long.
3. Good to see part 3.5 **Dealing with noxious fish**, however we feel the focus is too limited and preferably should include a separate part which deals with the management of aquatic pests.
4. Overall, the draft plan is an excellent document and this club is pleased to give it our support.

Congratulations to all members of the Steering Committee for their contribution to this important publication.

Sincerely,

Rob Hems,
Secretary



Freshwater fisheries plan Young, Andy to: anthony.forster@vfa.vic.gov.au 13/03/2018
03:15 PM
History: This message has been replied to.

Anthony

Never done this before.

How would I go about getting metropolitan fisheries included in the plan ?

It would be great to be able to wet a line for an hour or two after work without the need to travel.

I have two large dams close to home, Frankston Reservoir and the old Leisureland fair dam both remain unstocked, I'm sure there would be many more examples across Melbourne Metro area that could be stocked.

Any advice would be great.

Regards

Andy

Kind regards,

Andy Young

ADSL Migrations SME

National Networks Integration Group

Networks Delivery, Telstra Operations



P 03 8542 4901

M 0409 166 024

E Andy.R.Young@team.telstra.com

W www.telstra.com or internal Networks Delivery



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Freshwater Fisheries Management Planbank angler to: anthony.forster 10/03/2018 03:00 AM

Good afternoon Anthony,

I am the owner of Bank Angler Australia and have a real interest in growing Bank angling as a sport.

The styles of fishing I hope to establish and grow in Australia are effective to catch a whole host of species but are predominately used for carp fishing. I see that Carp was left off the list of most popular recreational species. There is no doubt that carp numbers need to be controlled but to ignore the well documented facts about the specie's social and economic potential is only to the detriment of the people in Victoria. The international popularity of carp as sportfish is far greater than any of the native and non-native species you have listed. Yes there are many people who hate carp but there also is an increasing number who enjoy catching them. Forcing people to hate and kill carp have no effect on the biomass of the species, only a negative impact on the number of people who want to fish for them. Carp is most likely to be in our waters forever, we can choose to forever go down the completely ineffective and costly road of forcing recreational anglers to hate and kill carp or we can focus on more effective ways to control carp numbers and allow the various styles of carp fishing to grow and at least make a contribution to society. Allowing the sport to grow will not lead to more carp in our waters, it will only lead to more anglers and their families spending more time in our beautiful outdoors, what can be so wrong about that?

If we already know that forcing recreational anglers to kill carp have no effect on their biomass, why don't you consider allowing those who want to release them to do so. Those who want to kill them can obviously continue to kill them. The only results from allowing catch and release will be that those people who enjoy catching carp can do so in the same relaxed and enjoyable environment as Trout, Artificial lure and Sea anglers. Growing the the various styles of carp fishing may well also take some of the pressure of our native species.

Financial benefits:

Carp forms the foundation of Conventional, Pole, Wagglers, Feeder and Specimen fishing. Each one of these styles have a massive amount of specialized fishing equipment, terminal tackle, accessories, apparel, camping equipment, boats, remote control devices etc. Enough to build another BCF next to the existing one and fill it to the roof. Opening up new fishing opportunities will offer existing Brands to expand and new ones to invest in Australia. This will ultimately create more jobs and will benefit both city and regional businesses. The following are some catalogs, what you see in them is just the tip of the iceberg.

Korda: https://issuu.com/sportcarp/docs/korda_215

Preston innovations: https://issuu.com/prestoninnovations/docs/uk_preston_consumer_guide_2017

Tackle box: <https://issuu.com/tigerbay/docs/the-tackle-box-catalogue-2016>

Carp Spirit: https://issuu.com/shimanoeuropefishing/docs/carpspirit_2017_germanconsumer_issu

Nash: https://issuu.com/nashitalia/docs/catalogo_nash_2018_2eb082e007bdbe

Tourism:

There are thousands of Carp anglers who tour around the world every year. Carp / Coarse angling is by far the most popular form of angling in many European countries. Tourists from the UK alone is the largest tourist group visiting Western Australia as well as South Australia and account for a very large number in Victoria. Your biggest tourist groups from China, India and Indonesia actually also have a very favorable view of the species. There are tourist operators who specialize in Carp fishing tours, adding "Wild Carp tours" to their list of options will without a doubt get the attention of many carp tourists.

World Carp Classic Qualifier Australasia:

I am currently in the process of organizing the above competition. It serves as a qualifier for the World Carp Classic Finals which will take place later in the year at Lac De Madine in France. Our plan is to repeat it every year and to add more National competitions to the calendar. Details of the competition is available on:

Website <https://www.bankangler.com.au/wccqa---about.html>

Facebook page: World Carp Classic Qualifier Australasia

The following links provide some info of the Final event in France:

<https://youtu.be/F7NwKVcB9N8>

<https://youtu.be/Ncfuaj71KWc>

Carp Control:

We as sport fishermen who obviously enjoy catching all types of fish, are very supportive of many projects aimed at increasing native fish populations. It doesn't mean that because we enjoy the sport of Carp fishing we somehow hate native fish and don't care about their wellbeing. On the contrary, looking well after all the fish we catch and not wanting to harm them is the biggest reason most of us do not want to kill any of the fish we catch, including carp. There will always be stubborn people on both sides of a discussion but most of us understand the need to have a better balance between carp and native species and therefor support various initiatives focused on reducing excessive carp biomass. I am however not a supporter of the Koi Herpes Virus and find that a growing number of citizens as well as local and International scientists are starting to question the effectiveness and wisdom of pushing for the release. America for example already have KHV but do not deliberately spread it any further, their scientists even say that our scientists are "pushing the envelope" and they will first sit back and see what happen in Australia. Not one of the 33 countries who currently have KHV introduced it deliberately, many of them are actually spending money on research to find a cure or methods to prevent it from spreading any further. Recreational Carp fishing and Carp control are two very different things and should be focused on separately. Having said this, there are some cases on smaller water bodies where recreational fishing can have an effect on the biomass and I would like to discuss some ideas of how Bank Angler clubs can play a role to improve the fishing experience for both Native fish and carp anglers.

Target One Million:

You already spend a significant amount of time and millions of dollars on research, advertising and restocking campaigns to reach your target of 1 million anglers by 2020. I'm not asking for any of this assistance, all I'm asking for is to allow those who want to practice Catch and Release the privilege to do so. I am also working on increasing the number of anglers in Australia by setting up Bank Angler Angling Clubs in NSW, ACT and WA. I would like to do the same in Victoria and allowing the Catch and Release privilege to registered members of the club may well be a good way to measure the short and long term potential of the sport.

My website explain all the above in much more detail and I will appreciate it if you can put some time aside and familiarize yourself with the contents. You'll see that we are not only focused on fishing, as club we also intend to be a good public citizen by supporting various causes and also use the club for fundraising.

Link to website:

Angling clubs: <https://www.bankangler.com.au/angling-clubs---about.html>

Angling Styles: <https://www.bankangler.com.au/angling-styles.html>

There are a lot more I can say on the topic and am more than happy to discuss it with you over the phone or via Skype.

I will appreciate it if you can consider my proposal as a whole and will also be grateful if you can let me know about the possibility to allow Catch and Release for registered Bank Angler Club Members.

. Thank you for your time and i look forward to hear from you.

Best regards,
Frans Burger
Contact number: 0401241954



Freshwater fish management planAlan Dye to: anthony.forster 31/01/2018 05:43 PM

I would like to submit that the Dartmouth Dam needs to be included in any part of this process. I have been fishing this dam for 30 years and have noticed a remarkable decline in Macquarie Perch numbers and also trout numbers. In the past 5 years trout numbers have declined to the point where I now only fish this water way once a year. I hope your program includes restocking this dam as the local community of Dartmouth would surely benefit from the increased number of fisher persons visiting the area. Also nearby towns of Omeo, Swifts Creek and Benambra. Your sincerely Alan DYE.



SURF-N-FISH

The Great Ocean Road, Apollo Bay, Australia

The Inland Fisheries Manager
PO Box 4509
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Dear Sir,

I write to you to provide some input into the new Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan.

Supplying bait and tackle to "recreational fishers" is a large part of our business here in Apollo Bay, and as such we often get feedback from them with regards to the state of the local fisheries. By far the most repeated comments are in relation to the apparent low populations of Brown Trout and Estuary Perch in the local streams and rivers.

There is no stocking of Brown Trout in any of the local streams and rivers so population levels are reliant on natural breeding in the wild which has been noticeably decreasing in the 14 years I have been living here.

I am told that the Barham and Aire Rivers were once stocked but are now suffering from reduced numbers of Brown Trout. The Aire River is probably one of the more popular rivers in the region for Brown Trout but has had no stocking since the early 1980s.

Studies of Brown Trout in the upper reaches of the Aire River show good numbers of small Brown Trout less than 20cm in length, but it is the trophy Brown trout which were once caught in the lower reaches of the Aire River that attract the avid trout fishers.

I would suggest that the reintroduction of Brown Trout stocking for both the Barham and Aire Rivers will lift population numbers and the size of fish available for recreational anglers to catch. Both these rivers have a sustainable habitat for Brown Trout and that there is sufficient food resources in them to produce quality trout for recreational anglers to catch. This would bring more recreational trout anglers into the Apollo Bay area and certainly boost local tourism.

PO Box 164, Apollo Bay, Victoria, 3233
Tel/Fax: (03) 52376426
E-mail: surfnfish@bigpond.com

Equally, I believe that we could benefit from the stocking of Estuary Perch in the Barham and Aire Rivers to boost the numbers that are currently in both these rivers.

It is infrequent that I hear of Estuary Perch being caught regularly in the Aire and Barham Rivers. They only have small populations of Estuary Perch now, which I was told was due to heavy netting by poachers in the 1980s and 1990s and these populations have just not recovered. The introduction of stocking would certainly boost these populations to a level where they could be sustainable.

Another suggestion to improve the local fisheries and fishing tourism is to include the West Barwon Dam at Forrest in the list of "Family Fishing Lakes" that are stocked prior to school holidays.

I realize that the West Barwon Dam is currently being stocked with both Brown Trout and Rainbow Trout fairly regularly with small trout, but if "ready to catch" fish, this would certainly increase the numbers of recreational anglers that visit the area,

Thankyou

Kind regards,

Wayne A. Diffey
Owner/Manager

PO Box 164, Apollo Bay, Victoria, 3233
Tel/Fax: (03) 52376426
E-mail: surfnfish@bigpond.com

BAIRNSDALE FLY FISHERS INC.

Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan.

Comments.

As a general overall strategy this document proposes some very interesting and important objectives, but nowhere in the text is there any reference as to how these objectives are to be achieved. This so called plan is no different to the myriad of fisheries plans that have preceded it and it will probably finish up in the same filing cabinet as its predecessors.

One of the commonalities that this document has with all of its predecessors is the minimal mention of the major recreational freshwater fishery in Victoria, which has been shown, on all previous surveys to be for Brown and Rainbow trout. In general terms trout are referred to as a nuisance rather than a valuable recreational resource to be managed for the value they provide to both the recreational angler and the regional communities that they support.

The document in general terms could be described as a motherhood statement, long on generalities and short on specific remedies. It will be interesting to see the action items, with implementation dates, when (if) they are ever produced.

The mention of commercial operations on P 12 is also strange and a little worrying as this is a freshwater strategy and does not include lakes, as there are no commercial operations in any of the rivers, with the exception of off stream trout farms one is forced to wonder what is being planned here.

P.2. It is a given that there needs to be an integration of land and freshwater management to allow for the efficient management of fisheries, but nowhere in this document is there any suggestions as to how this giant step is to be realised. Having been involved in discussions previously that came up against this brick wall every time we seemed to be making progress, I feel that the current bureaucracy will continue to be obstructionist to anything that appears to impinge on their departmental fiefdoms.

P 14. Angler riparian Partnerships.

This segment goes into great detail about the effects of climate change and the clearing of streamside vegetation, nowhere does it mention that the clearing of streamside vegetation was a programme instituted and encouraged by the Government through the CMA and the water management authorities.

3.3 P 19. Fish Stocking.

Para 3 seems to discriminate against trout as they are the only species mentioned as a danger to small bodied and other native fish species. All sports fish, whether Native or introduced a.k.a Salmonids, predate on smaller fish species. The criteria for stocking should be the same regardless of the species,

P 31. Evaluating Fishery "Inventions"

I assume that this should read Fishery **interventions**.

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The Inland Fisheries Manager

PO Box 4509

Melbourne, Victoria 3001

Andrew Orchard

Apollo Bay Fishing Group

P.O.Box 162

Apollo Bay

Vic 3233

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you to provide input into the new Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan.

Firstly I would like to congratulate Fisheries Victoria in being so proactive with improvements to recreational fishing in freshwater habitats around Victoria.

Brown trout:

Sadly for us in the Apollo Bay/Otways region we do not seem to benefit much from these improvements particularly in regard to Brown Trout and Estuary Perch.

There is no stocking of Brown Trout in our rivers at all with reliance on the wild population which has been noticeably decreasing over the last 20 years.

In particular the Barham and Aire Rivers which were once stocked are now suffering from reduced numbers of Brown Trout.

Notably the Aire River is listed as a Heritage waterway for Brown Trout but has had no stocking since the early 1980s.

All studies of Brown Trout that have been conducted in the Aire River have been done well upstream which is in the heart of the Otways near Beech Forest and shows good numbers of Brown Trout less than 20cm in length which are of little recreational fishing value due to their size.

The trophy Brown trout which were once caught in the lower reaches of the Aire River have all but gone.

So what has changed? The Aire River has not changed dramatically over the last 20 years but there is now no Brown Trout stocking.

The Hopkins and Merri Rivers in Warrnambool have both benefited from Brown Trout stocking and this has resulted in large Brown Trout being caught regularly by recreational anglers.

I am proposing Brown Trout stocking for both the Barham and Aire Rivers to lift population numbers and the size of fish available for recreational anglers to catch.

I believe that both these rivers are sustainable habitat for Brown Trout and that there is enough food resources in them to produce quality trout for recreational anglers to catch.

This would be a great boost to Tourism in the area in bringing more recreational trout anglers into the Apollo Bay area.

Estuary Perch:

I believe that we could also benefit from the stocking of Estuary Perch into the Barham and Aire Rivers to boost the numbers that are currently in both these rivers.

I was disappointed to hear of the huge loss of Estuary Perch which were stocked into Lake Bolac a few years ago. These Estuary Perch would have been much better utilised by stocking them into local rivers in the Sothwest.

These perch are of the same genetic makeup as the perch in the Aire and Barham River as tested by CSIRO in the 1980s and so are well suited to be stocked into these rivers.

The Aire and Barham Rivers only hold small populations of Estuary Perch now due to heavy netting by poachers in the 1980s and 1990s and these populations have not recovered to the levels that they once were. Stocking would boost these populations to a level where they could be sustainable.

It's time that the Otways were considered for Brown Trout and Estuary Perch stocking programs to enhance recreational angler satisfaction and boost Tourism to the area.

Thankyou



Andrew Orchard

Apollo Bay Fishing Group

Ph. 0431624030

Email andrewo2@hotmail.com

**Fwd: Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan**

Greg Woodward to: Anthony Forster

29/03/2018 02:29 PM

8 attachments



Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan - CWCT response.xlsx

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0.345E.gif0.3992.gif



0.3F48.gif0.44F8.gif0.4A2A.gif0.4F62.gif

Hi Anthony,

Please find attached below comments from DELWP Catchments, Waterways, Cities and Towns Division on the draft fisheries management pla. As discussed Apologies for the late submission.

Thanks

Greg Woodward

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

Our Ref: F17/17

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council
Level 3, 3 Treasury Place
East Melbourne VIC 3002
Tel: 03 9651 2643
vahc@dpc.vic.gov.au

25

27 March 2018

The Inland Fisheries Manager
PO Box 4509
Melbourne, VIC 3001

Dear Inland Fisheries Manager

The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council's (Council) submission on the Draft Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan (the Draft Plan)

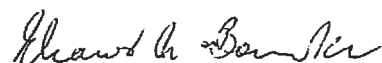
The Council is a statutory body established under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (the Act). It comprises of Traditional Owners with one of its key responsibilities to promote awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage (Attachment 1). Therefore Council welcomes the opportunity to provide the following brief comment on the Draft Plan.

Given the cultural, spiritual and economic importance of waterways, the land and the sea for Aboriginal people, the Council is pleased that the Draft Plan was prepared in consultation with The Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporation. Council also notes that, the Draft Plan is intended for engagement with Traditional Owners including Registered Aboriginal Parties.

The Draft Plan focuses on achieving three outcomes: i. Recognition of Aboriginal customary fishing rights for Traditional Owner groups ii. Better economic opportunities for all Aboriginal people in fishing and related industries, and iii. sustainable fisheries management in collaboration with Traditional Owner groups. The Victorian Fisheries Authority's (VFA) employment of an Aboriginal Project Officer and secured funding for an Aboriginal Customary Fishing program are important steps towards achieving these outcomes.

The Draft Plan refers to the Council's role in the promotion of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. However given Aboriginal Ancestral Remains are buried alongside rivers, lakes, swamps and coasts, the Draft Plan would be improved by a comprehensive understanding of the statutory rights & responsibilities of the Council to manage these Ancestral Remains. All Ancestral Remains located *in situ* on private or public land must be reported immediately to the Council (Attachment 2). If you have any questions about Council's submission, please contact the Office of the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council on 03 8392 5390 or via email vahc@dpc.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Eleanor A. Bourke

Chair

Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council

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