

21 September 2026

The Hon. Ben Carroll MP
Premier of Victoria
Office of the Premier
1 Treasury Place
Melbourne VIC 3002
(via email: ben.carroll@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Re; VRFish – The peak body for recreational fishing in Victoria

Dear Premier,

For 31 years, VRFish has been the government recognised peak body representing and advocating for improving recreational fishing in Victoria. We represent over 1 million recreational fishers and have a long history of working collaboratively with government to achieve excellent outcomes for recreational fishers and the environment.

Economically, recreational fishing directly injects more than \$2.2 billion annually into the Victorian economy. That's more than the entire AFL fixture and Australian Open tennis combined. Our sector also supports around 33,000 full-time jobs making it a significant employer throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Recently we were disappointed to hear you announce, without any consultation with us, that you have cancelled the *Little Angler Kits* program, as part of a cost savings drive by the Victorian Government. This program is not funded by taxpayer dollars. It is a VRFish initiative, funded by fishing licence fees held in the Victorian Recreational Fishing Licence Trust Account.

Further to this, we are disappointed that for the first time in 12 years we do not have a lead minister overseeing the fishing portfolio. It has now been two months since announcing changes to your cabinet and six weeks since passing legislation to establish Fishing Hunting and Outdoor Victoria, yet we have not received any correspondence from the government about the changes or a direction moving forward.

As a result of this lack of consultation, you would not be aware that Victoria is the envy of all other states and territories when it comes to recreational fishing. The South Australian and New South Wales state Labor governments recently ran successful election campaigns modelled closely on previous Victorian initiatives. We proudly boast Australia's biggest fish stocking program, and we've made the bold and highly successful decision to end commercial netting and dredging in Port Phillip Bay and the Gippsland Lakes, among many other highly acclaimed initiatives.

You should also be informed that Victoria is the international benchmark for a fishing licence program and trust fund, which invests directly into our programs, habitat improvements, trout and native fish stocking, restoring endangered species, fish stock management, infrastructure projects including boat ramps and funds 13 fisheries officer positions.

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

Since Labor took power in 2012, Victoria has become the best place in Australia to be a recreational fisher and we are regularly cited as world leaders in the space. In Victoria, recreational fishers have a well-established social licence to operate, and fishing is universally accepted and practiced by all classes, sexes, nationalities, religions, cultures and across the board political spectrum. Fishing is part of Australia's indigenous and post-colonial cultures and provides proven health and wellbeing benefits, whilst creating lifelong stewards for the environment.

In 2027, Victoria will host the National Recreational Fishing Forum, which will bring together all state and federal government agencies, media personalities, the trade sector, environmental sector and the anglers themselves, to hear from the best and brightest minds and showcase Victoria's world leading achievements.

We urge you to consider Victoria's one million plus recreational fishers and to engage with VRFish. We seek your support by providing your governments endorsement to our 2026 state election priority list. <https://vrfish.com.au/2026-state-election/>

Our list was developed following extensive consultation with recreational fishers in Victoria and represents excellent value for money, whilst providing major benefits to the environment, endangered species and having an exceptionally positive impact on recreational fishing in Victoria over the next term of government. Our priorities have been universally endorsed across the sector and adopted by the Australian Fishing Tackle Association (AFTA). VRFish also supports and endorses the additional outcomes listed in the AFTA state election manifesto.

We welcome a meeting with you or your representatives to reestablish mutually beneficial communication lines with your government, and we welcome frank and fearless discussion regarding recreational fishing.

Please feel free to reach out to our Executive Officer, Anthony McGrath via phone; 0448 353 370, or email; anthony@vrfish.com.au

Yours Faithfully

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

Robert Loats
Chairperson
VRFish – Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body
PO Box 4574, Geelong VIC 3220

Cc: Danny O'Brien MP, Melina Bath MP, Jeff Bourman MP, Ellen Sandell MP, Warren Pickering