



Media Release

FROM THE OFFICE OF VRFISH - VICTORIA'S
RECREATIONAL FISHING PEAK BODY

15 OCTOBER 2026

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT BREAKS PROMISE OF NO NEW MARINE PARKS

VRFish, the Victorian recreational fishing peak body, is outraged that the Victorian Government has backflipped on a decades long promise that no new marine parks will be introduced or extended in Victoria.

Minister for Ports and Freight, Minister Horne, made the announcement on Wednesday that if re-elected she will expand the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary in Port Phillip, doubling the size of the existing area and locking recreational fishers out.

VRFish Chair, Mr. Rob Loats, said "Victoria's more than one-million recreational fishers have been blindsided by the decision. There has been no consultation with VRFish or any of the fishing clubs located in Williamstown, Newport and Altona, or spearfishing groups who have respectfully accessed the area for over 100 years."

The announcement by Minister Horne, a former Minister for Fishing and Boating, breaks long-standing Labor policy supported by successive Premiers, Agriculture and Environment Ministers for more than a decade.

"Since 2014, the Victorian Labor Government has explicitly emphasised its policy to not introduce any new marine parks in Victoria, nor expand existing ones. Labor Ministers have gone to great lengths to communicate this policy directly with fishers."

If the marine park is expanded, recreational fishers will lose access to a popular fishery as marine parks prohibit recreational fishing of any kind.

"Make no mistake – this is a new marine park and there's no guarantee there won't be more to come under this government. How can fishers trust a government who takes away our Minister, breaks its strongest promises and won't consult with impacted user groups?"

We call upon our political parties and the current Victorian Government to consult with VRFish, the peak body representing Victoria's recreational fishing, as recreational fishing contributes more to the Victorian economy than the entire AFL fixture and Australian Open Tennis – combined.

This latest announcement comes as another attack on Victoria's right to fish. Premier Ben Carroll recently axed the ministerial portfolio for fishing and announced that he has cancelled the recreational fishing licence funded *Little Anglers Program*, leaving the door open to diverting fisher licence fees to filling potholes.



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"We've seen no action on public land managers banning kids from fishing in urban waters as the government continues to concede to pressure from minor parties like the Greens and Animal Justice Party."

Recreational fishers have contributed strongly to the health of Port Phillip over recent years through building and restoring more than 15 hectares of shellfish reefs. Much of this work is funded by recreational fishing licence fees and fundraising by fishing clubs.

"VRFish is seeking a \$2.5m election commitment from all political parties ahead of November's election to support important habitat projects such as continuing to build and restore shellfish reefs in the Bay."

"This is one of the items included in our Election Priority List, but we have not received any correspondence from the Premier."

View the full list of VRFish State Election Priorities on the [VRFish website](#).



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