



Toby Jeavons  
Fishery Manager  
Victorian Fisheries Authority  
**By email: [toby.jeavons@vfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:toby.jeavons@vfa.vic.gov.au)**

Dear Toby,

**RE: PROPOSED FISHERIES (RECREATIONAL ABALONE DAYS) NOTICE 2017**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Fisheries (Recreational Abalone Days) Notice 2017 (“Abalone Fisheries Notice”).

In preparing this submission, VRFish has sought input from key stakeholders, including the Scuba Divers Federation of Victoria and other members including State Council members with an interest in abalone.

Regrettably, VRFish cannot extent it’s support for the proposed Abalone Fisheries Notice.

VRFish does not believe the Fisheries Notice is reflective of the preferences of the recreational fishing community and the way and times in which fishers pursue fishing opportunities. It is widely recognised that the community is increasingly becoming time poor and working flexible schedules and arrangements, and as a result are choosing to pursue fishing on weekdays and outside of the standard weekend timeslot. The recreational days proposed for abalone fishing within the Fisheries Notice are not responsive to this reality and do nothing to support the *Fisheries Act 1995* objective of promoting quality recreational fishing opportunities. Worth noting also as a major concern is Victoria’s boating infrastructure and capacity. By restricting abalone days to peak recreational times, fishers are increasingly struggling to launch their boats and find parking.

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

The Victorian Wild Harvest Abalone Fishery Management Plan contains the action to “quantify recreational fishing participation and harvest”. VRFish, as a listed key partner, would like to know what progress has been made on this action to date. This data is crucial to facilitate the sustainable management of the fishery into the future in accord with the community’s expectations.

VRFish proposes that the recreational abalone days be increased to 120 days, with abalone days during the week and other peak times in order to be more equitable and accommodate the needs of the recreational fishing community, to mitigate any potential for on-the-water conflict and as a positive step towards the Government’s commitment of getting people fishing more often.

It is well overdue for stakeholders to look at the future management arrangements for abalone in order to safeguard the fishery for future generations and maximize benefits from the fishery. VRFish welcomes contact to further discuss our submission, our proposal and the management of the fishery moving forward.

Kind regards,

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

Rob Loats  
Chair  
**Victorian Recreational Fishing Peak Body**  
16 October 2017