

Representing Victorian Recreational Fishers



A voice for recreational fishers

Michael Burgess, Executive Officer

E-Flows and fishers

- ▶ We want to continue to improve our fishing opportunities.
- ▶ We are interested in environmental water and know that it has the potential to deliver better outcomes for fish
 - ▶ High flows - trigger fish breeding and enable fish passage
 - ▶ Low flows - maintain fish refuges and connect habitats.
- ▶ Its complex! Many different competing stakeholders.
- ▶ What's good for the river, is good for fish.
- ▶ There are negative connotations and concerns with e-flows - real and perceived.



'Generalised' concerns from fishers about e-flows

- ▶ Timing of environmental water
- ▶ Too much water at inappropriate times of the year, or at times that do not coincide with fish migration and breeding
- ▶ Environmental water deliveries were not enough to benefit fish
- ▶ Confusion between environmental watering events versus other flow events
- ▶ Perception e-water caused or made black water events and fish kills worse
- ▶ Cold water pollution
- ▶ Carp are benefiting more than native fish.

Our expectations

- ▶ We want to contribute to discussions and involved in decision-making processes about e-flows for fish and events that impact our fishing.
- ▶ We need a formal recreational fisher engagement program - fishers trust and listen to other fishers
- ▶ Catchment and water managers will listen to our concerns and respond
- ▶ We want to work together and share information with others if it will improve outcomes for fish and our fish.
- ▶ We want to be informed about the timing of environmental flows for an area where we fish so that we can make decisions about when and where to go fishing.



Looking after our fishery

- ▶ E-flows is one tool in the tool-box
- ▶ Fish need in-stream habitat
- ▶ Fish need healthy riparian vegetation
- ▶ We need to improve fish passage
- ▶ Reduce fish loss through irrigation channel and pump screens
- ▶ Smarter fish stocking
- ▶ Controlling carp

...and

working in partnership



Blackwater

- ▶ Blackwater is natural
- ▶ Many of our native freshwater fish have evolved their reproductive biology linked to flooding events - boom and bust
- ▶ E-flows can be used to help dilute blackwater and provide refuge for our fish
- ▶ Sedentary species such as crayfish and blackfish are most affected by low dissolved oxygen conditions
- ▶ Less floods mean we will get more serious blackwater events when we get a big flood.