

SOUTH WEST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION INC.

Incorporating Angling Clubs of the Riverina District of New South Wales



South West Anglers Association Inc.
PO Box 9
Walbundrie NSW 2642

Victorian Environmental Assessment Council
PO Box 500
East Melbourne Victoria 3002

Dear Sir/Madam,

South West Anglers Association Inc. (SWAA) would like to comment on the Statewide Assessment of Public Land being conducted by the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC)

SWAA is a major recreational angling association comprising some 30 recreational angling clubs in the Riverina and South West regions of NSW as well as a number of clubs in the North East region of Victoria. Members of our Association are not only anglers but are involved in all outdoor activities which include travelling to and camping in many of the areas in question.

Access to waterways via public land.

Possibly the main concern expressed by our members on matters relating to Public Land is the fear that any review will result in reduced access to our waterways.

While freedom of access on our waterways is open and acceptable in most cases, the land access to those waterways is increasingly diminishing.

Fear of litigation has caused many landowners to restrict, or eliminate access through private property and the limitations imposed on many public access points are creating a “log jam” at many of those points.

Trailer boat ownership is at an all-time high and participation in recreational fishing is also increasing each year. These participation levels cannot be sustained unless there is adequate access to the waterways and that includes parking and camping considerations.

Recreational fishing is an important social activity in many regional centers and also is a major contributor to the economies of those communities.

An example might be the recent estimates that suggest that up to \$500,000 annually is injected into the Nagambie economy by recreational fishing interests. The direct spend by recreational fishers in the state exceeds \$2.5 billion and generates many thousands of jobs. These figures are

increasing each and every year and cannot continue unless access to this valuable resource is maintained if not increased.

Recommendation of this Association is that access for both day fishers as well as those that enjoy the camping experience be increased for recreational fishers and other recreational users of our waterways.

Weed and feral animals in public land.

It is unfortunate that the rules that apply to private landowners, and we as recreational users do not apply to public land managers with regard to feral pests and weed infestations.

There are estimated to be over 1000 species of weeds occurring on public land in Victoria, of particular concern to many fishers is the Blackberry infestations that occur along many of the streams. Blackberry is a highly invasive weed and while it impacts on the growth of native plant species it also provides harbor for other pest animals such as rabbits, foxes and the ever increasing wild dog population.

Blackberry can restrict access to and along waterways which in turn affects recreational activities such as fishing. Its habit of tangling and arching over the stream, together with the strong prickles make it an impenetrable barrier once it becomes established.

Many recreational fishers do attempt to wade the streams but given the sometimes limited access to the bank they are in many instances in a narrow and slippery stream conditions with little or no escape if they were to sustain injury.

While the approach seems to be one of “management” of these problems it is the view of this Association that more resources be applied to reducing the problem if not eradicating it altogether.

The South West Anglers Association would appreciate being informed of the progress of the investigation so as to keep our members aware of the happenings.

Regards
Terry Maloney.
Secretary
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