



[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

To: [REDACTED]

Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning  
PO Box 500  
East Melbourne 8002

Via Email: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**RE: Submission - the Goulburn Murray Trade Rule Review**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Australian Trout Foundation Vic (ATFV) to request you to consider the contents of this letter in the abovementioned review.

The ATFV is an environmental and conservation foundation dedicated to enhancing the health of our waterways and fisheries, both trout and native. We have an alliance with Native Fish Australia (NFA) entitled "Victorian Inland Fisheries Alliance" and work together on Habitat restoration projects.

**Habitat**

Working together with CMA's, VFA, VFFH&F, ARI, NFA, Angling Clubs & Landcare Groups, the ATFV and it's "Habitat Army" of volunteers have recently been involved in habitat restoration projects on the Buckland, Ovens, Rubicon, Steavenson, Delatite, Howqua, Jamieson, Mitta Mitta, Macalister and Goulburn Rivers and Nariel Creek.

Together with VFFH&F, ARI & VFA, we have completed "Habitat Workshops" at Myrtleford, Heidelberg and Traralgon and have had to postpone a further workshop scheduled for Glenelg Hopkins CMA due to COVID 19. Resulting from these workshops, we still have approx. 80 potential projects listed for investigation.

In January & February this year, together with Renae Ayres (VFFH&F/ARI), we initiated follow up meetings with NECMA & GBCMA, and yesterday had a teleconference meeting with WGCMA's Matt Bowler. We now have more than enough habitat projects listed for this year, some of which have been delayed due to COVID 19.

We trust that the above brief summary qualifies the ATFV as being an active environmental and conservation foundation.

## The Precious Waterways of Victoria - badly abused since 1788

Our precious and valuable mountain streams that start off in the high country are the lifeblood of Victoria. However, these streams have been used and abused for more than 200 years. Although they commence their journey with clear sparkling waters, the water quality deteriorates as they flow through the occupied regions on their passage to the sea.

Where can we direct the blame for the horrific devastation of our once pristine waterways? Our first people looked after the environment very well indeed for thousands of years; but what has happened since 1788?

The main incriminating factor is "human intervention"; all the damaging practices we humans have inflicted upon the waterway environment over the past 200+ years. Let us consider some of those practices that have adversely affected our streams, **then hopefully all stakeholders can band together to develop a strategic plan to rectify the damage and restore our waterways to their former glory.** This would result in healthier and better-quality water for all Victorians, and importantly, a cleaner and safer living environment for all our water creatures.

Some damaging human intervention practices:

- Mining practices - catchments turned upside down by dredging and alluvial sluicing;
- Logging - particularly clear fell logging in our catchments;
- Willows & Blackberries encroaching on streams, bankside and riparian land;
- De-snagging;
- Stock damage - domestic stock and feral animals;
- Dams & Weirs obstructing flows and causing siltation;
- Illegal alterations to natural river courses;
- Illegal water usage.

## The Effects of higher and colder flows on the Lower Goulburn River

We are not learned scientists, but based on the written and photographic evidence we have recently accessed, it would be appreciated if you would consider our conclusions on the effects that the high and colder flows have had on the following items, which we believe requires no additional explanation from ourselves:

| <b>Item</b>   | <b>Effect</b> |
|---|---------------|
| 1. The iconic Goulburn River                        | Disastrous    |
| 2. The banks of the Goulburn River                  | Disastrous    |
| 3. The riparian vegetation                          | Disastrous    |
| 4. The waterway environment                         | Disastrous    |
| 5. The spawning beds and abundance of Murray Cod    | Disastrous    |
| 6. The spawning beds and abundance of Golden Perch  | Disastrous    |
| 7. The population of the endangered Silver Perch    | Disastrous    |
| 8. The population of the endangered Macquarie Perch | Disastrous    |
| 9. The population of the endangered Trout Cod       | Disastrous    |
| 10. The population of other water creatures         | Disastrous    |
| 11. Recreational Anglers                            | Disastrous    |
| 12. The local community                             | Negative      |
| 13. The regional economy                            | Negative      |
| 14. The State of Victoria economy                   | Negative      |
| 15. Goulburn Murray Water - sales proceeds          | Positive      |
| 16. Irrigators purchasing the water – production    | Positive      |

We acknowledge and appreciate that DELWP has applied an interim maximum cap of 50GL/month for the 2019/20 season.

Notwithstanding the above, as responsible environmentalists and conservationists, we would like to propose a moratorium on future sales of excess water, until a delivery system satisfactory to relevant stakeholders, and not harmful to the environment or fish populations, can be delivered.

Yours sincerely

Terry George  
President, Australian Trout Foundation Vic

