



ATTN: Julie Collins, Federal Fisheries Minister

Email: julie.collins.mp@aph.gov.au

CC:

Johnathon Duniam, Shadow Federal Fisheries Minister

Email: senator.duniam@aph.gov.au

Dear Ministers Collins and Duniam,

I'm reaching out to you as the President of the Albert Park Yachting & Angling Club, the largest fishing club in Australia (2000 full members and approx. 2,500 associate members, as well as a proud member of the VRFish Board (Victoria's Peak Recreational Fishing Body) and an Ambassador for WIRFAB (Women in Recreational Fishing & Boating). These roles give me a deep commitment to our waterways and fisheries, and I feel compelled to write to you about an urgent and growing concern.

Recently, I attended the **Murray Codference** in Shepparton on November 16, 2024, organized by the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA), where I joined about 250 stakeholders to discuss pressing issues facing our environment and fishing in particular. Among the many presentations, one stood out as both urgent and critical to our ongoing work—**carp management**. This invasive species is wreaking havoc in our waterways, and it is something I believe we can no longer ignore.

After the presentation on carp, the attendees were invited to share thoughts on how to tackle the growing problem. Here are some of the key takeaways I'd like to bring to your attention:

- **Post-2022 floods, carp numbers have soared** to an all-time high—there are now more than **300 million carp** in the Murray-Darling Basin alone.
- Carp compete with native species, consume their eggs and larvae, destroy aquatic plants, and degrade water quality. They also contribute to increased erosion and siltation. These impacts are already visible, and it is expected that things will worsen as carp born in 2022 reach maturity and begin breeding.
- Our native fish species are already **threatened**, and the carp plague could push them to the brink of collapse. The situation has escalated to the point where it is now a **national crisis**, and we need a rapid, emergency response.

As you may know, the **National Carp Control Plan (2022)** has completed nearly a decade of research, providing a compelling case for using the **carp virus** to curb this invasive species. However, the previous federal government did not act on this, opting instead to delay the decision further. Despite considerable research already completed, there is still **no clear timeline** for a decision on the release of the virus, and the approvals process has yet to even begin.

As President of the Albert Park Yachting & Angling Club, I want to emphasize that we are **strongly in favor** of the VFA's plan to trial the carp virus in controlled environments. This is a necessary step to measure its effectiveness and to understand how it can reduce carp populations at varying densities.

Our members, who are passionate about protecting both our waterways and the fisheries we love, are deeply concerned that all the progress made in native fish recovery could be undone by the ongoing carp plague. Without prompt action, the gains we've made over the past decades could vanish, leaving a lasting impact on both the ecology and our recreational fishing opportunities.

I ask for **federal leadership** to address this issue with the urgency it demands. We need your immediate action to **advance the approval process** and support the VFA's trial. This is not just an environmental issue—it is a **national fisheries emergency**. We cannot afford to wait any longer.

I look forward to hearing from you and to your commitment to accelerating the approval process for the carp virus. The future of our native fish and our waterways depend on it.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Spyrou

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VRFish Board Member
WIRFAB Ambassador

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