

# Proposed Native Fish Hatchery



## Arcadia native fish farm newsletter (September 2020)

Hi and welcome to the Victorian Fisheries Authority's (VFA) first newsletter which aims to keep local communities informed of plans and progress in the development of a native fish hatchery at Arcadia. Further updates will be provided in the future.



*An artist's impression of VFA's native fish hatchery concept plan (Stage 1)*

### Some background

The State Government has committed \$7 million to build a new native fish hatchery in northern Victoria as part of its Target One Million plan to get more people fishing, more often. The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) is delivering this project. In December, after an exhaustive search, the VFA purchased a property at 200 Ross Road, Arcadia. The property is ideal for fish farming because it has high quality groundwater and surface water, channel water, plenty of clay for building ponds, a large header dam and two houses.

The hatchery will help us breed, millions of threatened native fish each year including, Murray cod, golden perch and freshwater catfish that will be stocked in more than one-hundred Victorian public waterways. This will help us recover native fish populations and, build exciting recreational fisheries for families to enjoy. The hatchery at Arcadia will reduce our reliance on purchasing native fish from private hatcheries in New South Wales. Our hatchery will 'future proof' the recovery of native fish in Victoria.

At full capacity the hatchery will create up to 20 jobs (onsite and offsite) and, many more during construction. To support indigenous employment, capacity building and training, the VFA has established a 50% indigenous employment target for the hatchery. We are working with Go TAFE Shepparton to establish a traineeship program that will provide career pathways for staff who work on site.

## Our plans

Our plans for Stage 1 include the construction of 32 ponds, most of which measure 30 metres x 60 metres. Twenty of these ponds will be used to “growout” newly hatched fry to the fingerling stage (40 mm). While in these ponds, juvenile fish feed on zooplankton for about 8 weeks. They are then harvested, salt treated and loaded into fish transport vehicles, ready for stocking. The remaining 12 ponds will be used to hold large Murray cod and golden perch broodfish which will be fed on a diet of carp, other fish and yabbies. We’ve been busy collecting and holding hundreds of large Murray cod and golden perch to use at the hatchery as future broodfish.

We also plan to erect several low-profile buildings at the property that will be used to hatch fish, hold broodstock, and to store equipment, cool rooms and freezers. Stage 2 would essentially double the number of ponds and increase fish production to more than 3 million fish each year.

The design of our native fish hatchery is based on leading eco-friendly fish farming technology and, will re-use of water by filtering it through a wetland full of native aquatic plants. No waste water will be discharge to surrounding waterways. We are investigating the use of solar power on the farm and, are developing plans to restoring the property’s flood plain to its original condition. Through the hatchery, we have a special opportunity to rebuild threatened native fish populations of the Goulburn River. We place a high value on ensuring the farm is managed to a high level of environmentally sustainability that the community can be proud of.





## Progress to date

Since acquiring the site, we've been busy doing surveys, repairing fences, assessing buildings, installing video surveillance, signs, maintaining the gardens, removing rubbish and, replacing pumps and pipes. We recently engaged engineering expertise to help us finalise the hatchery design and work through the approvals processes. We are also undertaking a cultural heritage due diligence assessment with input from representatives of the Yorta Yorta community. We have applied for a bore construction licence which will require a period of public consultation and advertisement in local newspapers.

Subject to those approvals, we hope to start earthworks for pond construction in late spring or early summer. If all goes to plan, we're aiming to have the hatchery (earthworks and buildings) completed by October 2021.

## How can you find out more about the native fish hatchery?

Due to COVID-19 social distance restrictions, our plans to host a series of information sessions for the local community at our hatchery site, have been postponed. When COVID restriction allow, we plan to revisit these plans and will send out invitations through this email network.

## Webpage information

For more background and to view frequently asked questions, you can visit our web page at: <https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/targetonemillion2/new-native-fish-hatchery>

## Direct contact

If you would like to discuss VFA plans for the hatchery, please feel free to contact Anthony Forster, Project Director, Native fish hatchery project on 0419 871 096 or email on [anthony.forster@vfa.vic.gov.au](mailto:anthony.forster@vfa.vic.gov.au)

If you would like to discuss planning and approvals processes, please contact Karl Mathers at the Wedge group on 0423 378 803 or email [karl.mathers@thewedgegroup.com.au](mailto:karl.mathers@thewedgegroup.com.au)

We look forward to sharing with you, our plans for this exciting new project.

Regards



**Anthony Forster**

Project Director, Native fish hatchery project  
Victorian Fisheries Authority