



# REVOLUTIONISING

Inland Fish Production and Stocking in Victoria

*"WE GROW YOUR FISH"*

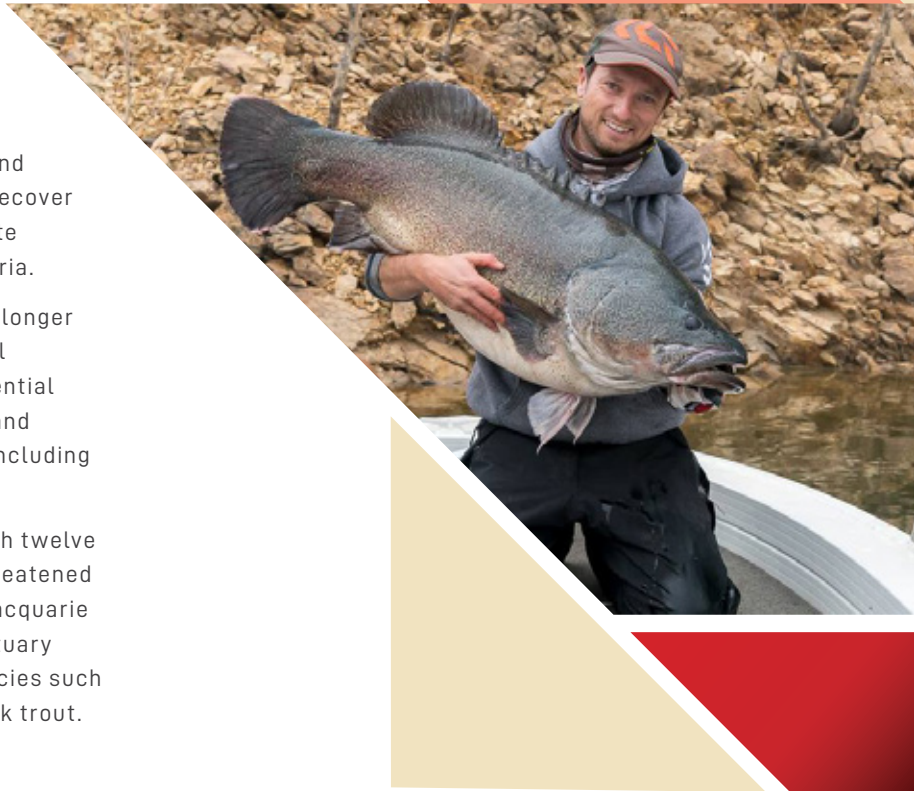


# Introduction

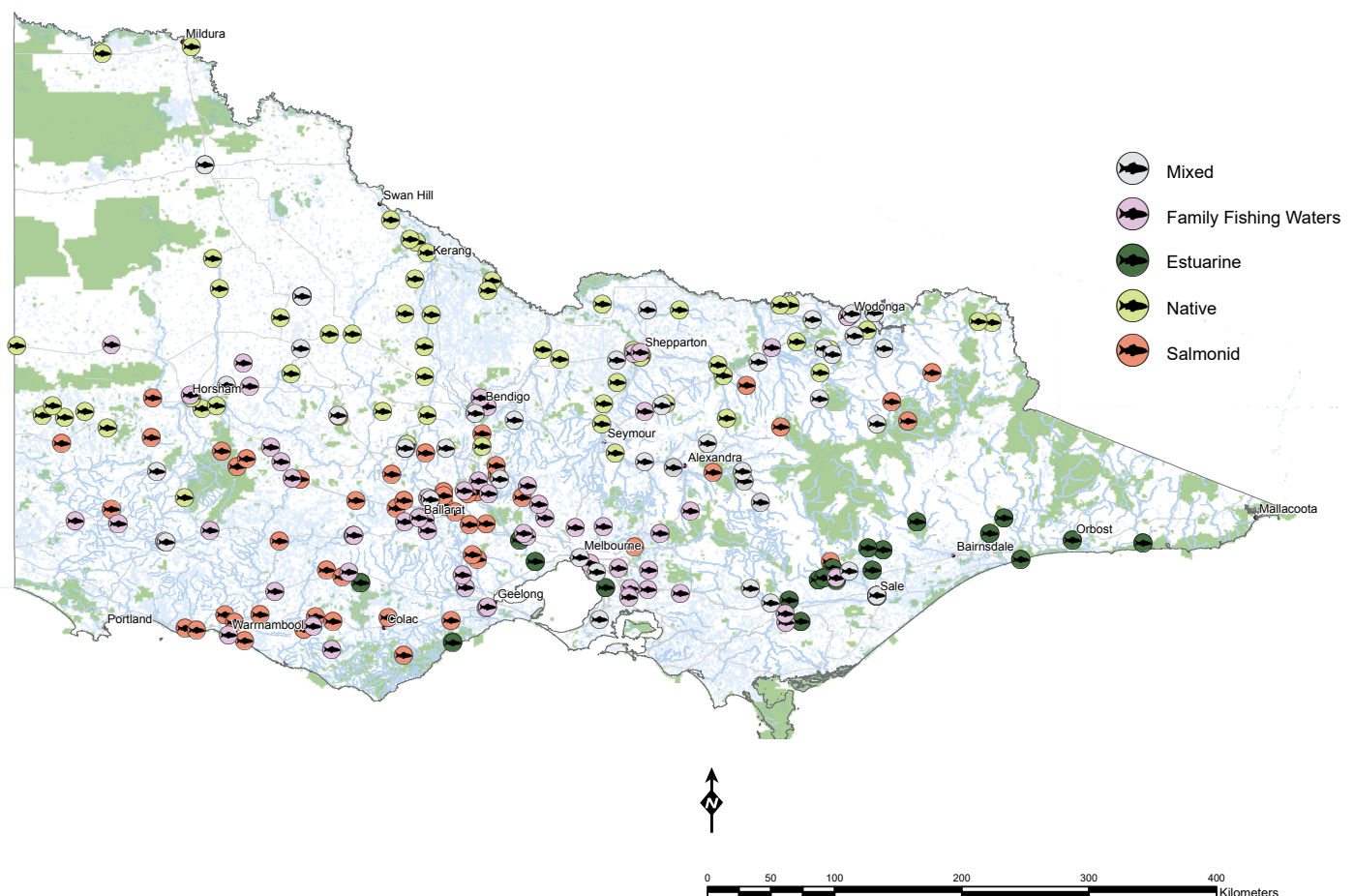
The Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) has a long and successful history of growing and stocking fish to recover threatened species, build fish populations and create fantastic recreational fishing opportunities in Victoria.

Most of our waterways are heavily modified and no longer consistently provide conditions that support natural breeding for fish. Therefore, fish stocking is an essential and powerful tool for maintaining fish populations and good fishing, alongside river restoration activities including habitat rehabilitation and environmental flows.

In Victoria over 200 waters are stocked annually with twelve different fish species. These include both native threatened fish such as Murray cod, golden perch, trout cod, Macquarie perch, silver perch, catfish, Australian bass, and estuary perch, and popular introduced recreational fish species such as brown trout, rainbow trout, chinook salmon, brook trout.



## Current fish stocking in Victoria



# Why we need a fish production and stocking plan

For over 70 years, Victoria's Snobs Creek Fish Hatchery has lead the way in freshwater fish production and stocking.

Our Snobs Creek Hatchery helped pioneer the breeding of threatened native fish such as Murray cod, trout cod and Macquarie perch, helped recover key native fish populations and created wonderful fisheries across the state such as in Lake Eildon (golden perch and Murray cod), Lake Toolondo (brown trout) and the Crater lakes (Chinook salmon, brown and rainbow trout).

In 2018, a record six million fish were stocked in Victoria, of which 1.8 million were grown at Snobs Creek Hatchery, and the remainder purchased from private fish hatcheries, largely in New South Wales.

Fish production at Snobs Creek Hatchery is now operating at full capacity. We have challenges in securing the supply of native fish from private hatcheries, due to increased demand from overseas to purchase our native fish and for local aquaculture consumption.

It's important that Victoria becomes self-reliant and has access to quality fish for stocking to continue the significant work of rebuilding fish populations and creating great fishing for us all.

## Snobs Creek Fish Production Advisory Board

The Snobs Creek Fish Production Advisory Board was established in 2014 to ensure transparency, accountability, efficiency, best practice and best value in our fish production and stocking activities that align with the expectations of recreational fishers.

The Advisory Board has prepared this plan which provides a high level strategic vision, key goals and priorities for fish production and stocking for the next decade. The plan aims to secure the supply of stocked fish and guide investment in fish production and stocking.



## How the plan connects

### Freshwater Fisheries Management Plan

State-wide overarching strategic plan for the management of Victoria's freshwater fisheries. Includes a key priority to expand and improve the effectiveness of fish stocking to recover threatened species and improve recreational fishers.

### Target One Million

State Government 2015 - 2019 initiative to improve fishing and get more people fishing more often. Including a commitment to **increase fish stocking from 3 to 5 million fish**, which was achieved in April 2018 with 6 million fish stocked in the previous 12 months.

### Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2037

State Government plan on protecting Victoria's environment and conserving biodiversity. Recognises that stocking waterways with native fish for recreational fishing is a valued activity in biodiversity conservation.

### Fish Production and Stocking Plan

Provides the vision, key goals and priorities for fish and stocking for the next decade.

### Vic Fish Stock

Annual regional consultation forums between representative recreational anglers, VFA and partner government agencies to develop fish stocking plans. A summary report is produced annually.

### Snobs Creek Operational Plan

Internal plan for the day-to-day operational management of Snobs Creek Fish Hatchery.

# The **Vision**

*Creating great inland fisheries and rebuilding threatened species by securing, expanding and effective use of quality stocked fish.*

## Key **Priorities**

1

### **Safeguard the supply of stocked fish**

- Establish a new state-of-the-art northern native fish hatchery to expand production of warm water native fish including; Murray cod, golden perch, silver perch, catfish etc.
- Revamp redundant infrastructure and rebuild fit-for-purpose fish production facilities at Snobs Creek Hatchery to enhance threatened species and salmonid production.



2

### **Recover threatened fish species**

- Develop a shared vision and investment partners\* to expand breeding efforts for threatened species, including small bodied, locally extinct fish species.
- Expand Macquarie perch and trout cod production and stocking.
- Restart freshwater catfish and blackfish production and stocking.
- Develop methods to breed and stock threatened small bodied native fish.



3

### **Grow more fish and create more fishing opportunities**

- Create a smorgasbord of recreational fishing opportunities across the state with diversity in species and fishing experiences.
- Create more recreational fisheries in urban centres, particularly for native fish species.



4

### **Smarter stocking**

- Build fish stocking capacity through evaluation and angler feedback e.g. via new Diary Angler App.
- Maintain responsible fish stocking approach to fish stocking including evidence based decision making, informed by key stakeholder consultation processes to manage risks.



5

### **Recreational fisher engagement**

- Review Vic Fish Stock consultative process to increase recreational fisher input and prioritise development of priority stocked fisheries.
- Expand and modernise the Angler Diary Program to harness recreational fisher catch and effort data for our key recreational fisheries.



\*Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP), Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA), Victorian and Commonwealth environmental water holders, catchment management authorities (CMA's), water authorities, local shires and councils, non-government organisations, community stakeholder groups and private individuals.

# Stocking goals **over the next decade**



## **Murray cod and golden perch**

- 3 million Murray cod stocked per year
- 4 million golden perch stocked per year
- Create Mega fisheries at Lake Eildon, Rocklands Reservoir, Cairn Curran Reservoir, Lake Eppalock, Kerang Lakes, Nagambie Lakes, Waranga Basin, Lindsay/ Mullaroo and Wimmera Rivers.



## **Brown trout and rainbow trout**

- Create mega fisheries at Toolondo, Coliban, Malmsbury, Lauriston and Tullaroop Reservoirs and Goulburn and Mitta Mitta Rivers
- Create five trophy fisheries that are drought proof
- Stock Tarago and Tullaroop Reservoirs and open to electric powered boats



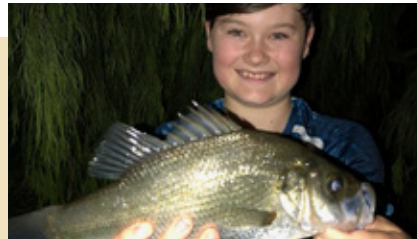
## **Trout cod and Macquarie perch**

- 500,000 trout cod and Macquarie perch produced and stocked per year
- Stock 20 new waterways to create new populations
- Open new trout cod fishery in the Ovens River by 2022



## **Chinook salmon and brook trout**

- 100,000 Chinook salmon stocked into the Crater Lakes each year – Lake Purumbete and Bullen Merri
- Establish five new fisheries for brook trout and hybrid trout (tiger and cheetah trout)



## **Australian bass and estuary perch**

- 500,000 Australian bass stocked across Gippsland
- 200,000 estuary perch stocked across southern Victoria to rebuild estuary populations
- Create Mega fisheries at Devilbend Reservoir, Werribee River, Blue Rock Lake and Lake Glenmaggie



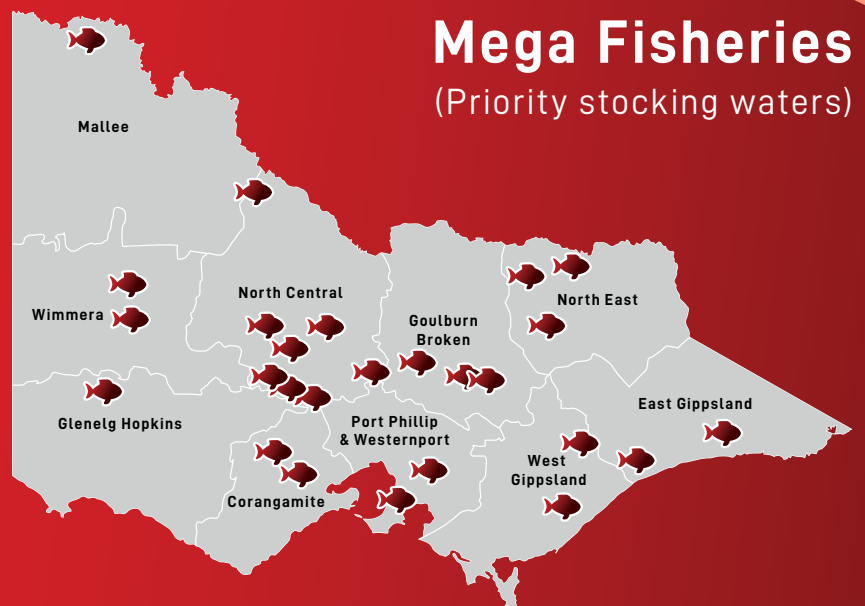
## **Silver perch, catfish and blackfish**

- 500,000 silver perch stocked per year, including in 30 new urban waters
- 50,000 catfish stocked per year to rebuild two fisheries
- 50,000 blackfish stocked per year to recover remnant populations



## **Threatened small bodied native fish species**

- Develop breeding techniques for small bodied threatened native fish species
- Stock and establish new populations in locally extinct areas
- Lead Australia in the production, stocking and recovery of small bodied native fish species





To find out more about fishing production and stocking in Victoria and the Snobs Creek Fish Production Advisory Board, please visit:

<https://vfa.vic.gov.au/recreational-fishing/fish-stocking/snobs-creek-fish-production-advisory-board>

**Target One Million**

*More Victorians fishing, more often*

