

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation  
Minister for Ports and Freight  
Minister for Fishing and Boating



Thursday, 11 February 2021

## LOCAL CONTRACTORS BUILDING VICTORIAN FISHING FUTURE

A local Shepparton company, APEX Earthworks, has been awarded the contract to start construction of a new \$7 million native fish hatchery at Arcadia, on the banks of the Goulburn River.

Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne said the earthworks contract will involve the construction of 32 ponds and employ up to 20 people on and off site.

The new hatchery is a key part of the Andrews Labor Government's \$35 million investment into getting more people fishing, more often in more places, and will boost the supply of popular freshwater species for stocking. The Labor Government's investment will support 20 jobs.

The 32 ponds include 20 plankton ponds to grow newly hatched native fish larvae that feed on microscopic creatures called zooplankton. After about 10 weeks, the fish reach one gram and are ready for stocking into public waters. The remaining 12 ponds will hold large Murray cod and golden perch breeding fish.

Most of the ponds measure 30 x 60 metres each. This is the first major construction on site, after a bore was sunk to source ground water for the ponds in November.

Once complete, the new hatchery will produce around 1.6 million native fish annually including Murray cod and golden perch initially, and potentially freshwater catfish and silver perch in the future.

This year, the Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) will stock a record eight million fish, including almost six million Murray cod and golden perch into rivers including the Goulburn, Broken, Loddon, Campaspe and Ovens, and lakes Eildon, Rocklands, Cairn Curran, Eppalock, Nillahcootie and Taylors, which are all booming native fisheries.

The ponds are being constructed on the 170-hectare property, now owned by the VFA and chosen for its warm climate, elevation, high quality ground and surface water and clay soils, perfect for pond building. The property also boasts two houses and 130 hectares of land ideal for fish farming.

Further to the construction of the ponds, the VFA plans to build several low-profile buildings at the property to be used to hatch and rear fish, hold brood stock and store equipment, cool rooms and freezers. Pond construction will be complete by May and the hatchery operational by November 2021.

The VFA has an Indigenous employment target for Arcadia of 50 per cent and has also funded the Burnanga Indigenous Fishing Club to build a community-events trailer to promote fishing and help connect Indigenous youth to country. Burnanga means Murray cod in Yorta Yorta and the club is one of the first Indigenous recreational fishing clubs in Australia, based in Shepparton.

### Quote attributable to Minister for Fishing and Boating Melissa Horne

*"Whether it's delivering better access to Crown land river frontage, record fish stocking or the removal of commercial net fishing in Port Phillip and Gippsland lakes – we're supporting more people than ever before, boosting local economies throughout Victoria."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp

*"This new hatchery at Arcadia will complement the one at Snobs Creek, near Eildon, which has a long history of growing fish to improve recreational fishing in our lakes and rivers."*

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