



Healthy Rivers Dubbo

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## Media Release

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### **Saving Rivers, Saving Fish: Fair Water Rules for the Central West**

Healthy Rivers Dubbo, a leading local community group providing a strong voice for our local rivers, is backing new water rules that will protect our rivers and the people and wildlife that depend on them.

The NSW Government is proposing new water pumping rules that will in many cases stop small creeks and rivers from being pumped until they stop flowing. Two of the eleven water courses being considered are the Bogan River and the Cudgegong River in the Macquarie/Wambuul catchment.

"During the 2019 drought, some of our members camped at Gulgong to watch over drying pools. Working with NSW Fisheries, we helped track down some Olive Perchlet, a tiny endangered native fish clinging to survival in shrinking waterholes.

"It's proof that current rules that let the rivers be pumped until they stop flowing leave rivers and the species they support on the brink." Said Mel Gray, Convenor of Healthy Rivers Dubbo.

The proposed cease-to-pump rules, based on gauge readings, will change that. Clear, fair and transparent, they stop the guesswork and keep enough water in the system to protect life when flows run low.

While there will be impacts to the number of days irrigators can draw water, Healthy Rivers Dubbo says the modelling significantly overstates the impacts because it measures flows already depressed by pumping.

"The reality is these rules will mean steadier base flows, healthier rivers and more reliable water for everyone downstream, including irrigators" said Ms Gray.

Healthy Rivers Dubbo says the reforms are about fairness and survival:

- Fair rules everyone can trust.
- Protection for endangered fish like the Olive Perchlet.
- Stronger rivers to support farming, fishing, tourism and culture.

“These changes are about giving our rivers and our communities a fighting chance,” said Ms Gray.

#### Media Contact

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