



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Keeping Our Fish In The River**

A project to prevent pest fish species and native fish species from entering the Little Forest when environmental water is being pumped from the Murray River is to be undertaken by the Western Murray Land Improvement Group (WMLIG).

The project is aimed at preventing the pest species from outcompeting native fish and damaging the natural ecosystem functions.

Currently, when environmental water is pumped into the Little Forest, so too are the fish, but the destination is a terminal ephemeral floodplain that has no connectivity back to their natural environment in the Murray River.

WMLIG Executive Officer, Roger Knight, said the fish screens would be installed on two private pump intakes from the river. “These sites will be used as local demonstration sites to illustrate how the fish screens work to other irrigation businesses, especially private diverters from river systems”, Mr Knight said. “Where fish screens have been installed in other regions, there has been positive operator feedback, especially as there is a reduction in maintenance downtime from system blockages – a win-win outcome”.

It has been estimated that up to 80% of fish larvae and adult fish are currently extracted from the Murray Darling Basin system via irrigation water diversions. It is anticipated that the health of aquatic native flora and fauna in the Little Forest will be improved as a result of the project.

The NSW Department of Primary industries (Fisheries) have been working with landholders, irrigation trusts and companies to incentivise the installation of fish screen technology. It is anticipated that there will be financial support for uptake in the local region.

Fish screens will be purchased from AWMA Water Control Solutions, a local manufacturing company, which will support employment and economic stimulus in the area.

This project is supported by Western Murray Land Improvement Group, through funding from the Australian Government's Murray–Darling Healthy Rivers Program – an Australian Government initiative.

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AWMA Self-cleaning Fish Protection Screen on a submersible pontoon. Pictured in the raised position, it is ready to be lowered to the riverbed for operation.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Climate Change, Energy,  
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