

**Submission
No 55**

**IMPACTS OF THE WATER AMENDMENT (RESTORING OUR RIVERS) ACT
2023 ON NSW REGIONAL COMMUNITIES**

Name: Mr Adrian Milne

Date Received: 14 April 2025

This information is being submitted on behalf of Lachlan Shire Council. The information in this submission has previously been raised with Mr Butler and the Murray Darling Basin Commission.

During drought and periods of low General Security water allocation, Lachlan Shire Council experiences difficulties in operating Gum Bend Lake. This is a recreational Lake 3km west of Condobolin, the water within the lake is extracted from the Lachlan River using a combination of General and High security allocations. When General Security Water allocations are cut, Lachlan Shire Council is often forced to shut the lake to recreational users and the lake eventually dries out.

Gum Bend Lake is vitally important for the Lachlan Shire Council community during periods of drought. The recreational space provides a refuge against the negative impacts of drought, providing mental health benefits for the community, generating an economic benefit for the local businesses and a low-cost recreational space for disadvantaged members of the community.

Previously, when Lachlan Shire Council has requested a special water allocation to allow Gum Bend Lake to continue to operate, the bureaucratic response has been to purchase an allocation from the water market. This simply does not reflect a sensible economic argument, when Council must compete with commercial farming operations, who have an opportunity to receive a financial return for the purchase of such a water allocation, whereas Council does not have an opportunity to receive a financial return for providing such a mental health and recreation refuge for the community.

Council has requested that it be granted an entitlement for Community water allocation for the express purpose of providing such community facility during periods of drought. Lachlan Shire Council would support amendments to legislation to enable this change.