

Healthy Farms, Healthy Creeks: Protecting Perch from the Paddock to the Pool

Gunning District Landcare

Upper Lachlan Shire Council

Funding requested: \$273,000.

Summary: Gunning District Landcare is proposing a landscape-scale restoration project to protect riparian habitats and support the endangered Southern Pygmy Perch in the Gunning–Dalton region. The initiative will engage landholders to implement sustainable farming practices that improve water quality, enhance biodiversity, and increase resilience to drought and flooding. On-ground works will include stock-exclusion fencing, alternative water infrastructure, weed control, native riparian planting, and enhancement of farm dams as drought refuges. The project will be guided by ecological monitoring and supported by long-term landholder agreements. It builds on over a decade of conservation work and aims to connect fragmented habitats, improve farm productivity, and foster community stewardship. Delivered in partnership with the Australian River Restoration Centre, the project will also include citizen science activities and annual field days to promote learning and engagement. This initiative will leave a lasting legacy of healthier landscapes, stronger community ties, and improved outcomes for both people and nature.

Community value: This project will deliver long-term environmental and social benefits by restoring riparian habitats and empowering landholders to adopt sustainable practices. It will protect one of the last remaining populations of the endangered Southern Pygmy Perch in NSW, while improving water quality, farm productivity, and resilience to climate extremes. The initiative fosters community connection through shared conservation goals, hands-on learning, and citizen science activities. Annual field days will provide opportunities for residents to engage with the landscape and each other, promoting mental wellbeing and social inclusion. By demonstrating that conservation and agriculture can work together, the project will inspire broader participation and future investment. It also strengthens local identity and pride, as the Southern Pygmy Perch has become a symbol of regional ecological care. With strong partnerships and a proven delivery model, this project will leave a lasting legacy of healthier creeks, more resilient farms, and a connected, empowered community.



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