



Healthy Rivers Dubbo

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Media Release

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Dubbo turns out in support of the Macquarie River.

A public meeting was held on Wednesday night in Dubbo on the topic of the proposed Gin Gin dam. The 100 people who turned out exceeded expectations, seats filled fast and there was standing room only.

"The questions from the crowd showed the level of interest and concern for the Gin Gin proposal and other issues" said Ms Di Clifford, Vice President of the Dubbo Environment Group.

It was a rare opportunity to hear from a range of experts and experienced locals with decades of knowledge about the valley.

Trangie local Mr Tony Lees spoke passionately about his connection with the river and the popular camp site at Gin Gin. Everything is connected, he reminded us.

Professor Richard Kingsford's expertise covers river ecology, wetland ecology, waterbirds, river policy, and dam building effects. His presentation explained the significant impacts that dams have on rivers and wetlands. Professor Kingsford also explained how water management in NSW is letting us down, and how Government 'models' aren't reflecting what water is actually in the rivers.

Beverley Smiles is the president of the Inland Rivers Network and has been involved in environmental water management in the Macquarie since 1991. As Ms Smiles explained, native fish would be significantly impacted by the Gin Gin structure, losing over 32km of habitat.

Populations of threatened Murray Cod are struggling to build up after the catastrophic 2017-19 drought when the river was cut off at Warren. The last thing they need is a massive dam destroying their habitat and allowing even more water to be taken out of the river.

Mr Garry Hall is a private Ramsar Wetland manager from the Macquarie Marshes. Mr Hall spoke of the poor state of the complex wetland system, and emphasised that the Gin Gin dam would have a devastating impact on his community.

"The NSW Deputy Secretary of Water, Dr Jim Bentley, wrote to WaterNSW last year saying the plans he saw did not represent efficient, effective, prudent use of public funds, and he's right, this plan is a dud." Says Mel Gray, convenor of Healthy Rivers Dubbo and facilitator on the night.

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