

# **Demonstration reaches in practice**

A survey of six real and potential demo reaches in the MDB

2004-05

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# **What the survey was about?**

- What is going on in practice?
- Relative strengths of different reaches
- Things that make demo reaches work
- Risks



# How was it conducted?

- Six sites in the MDB with good potential for demo reaches or pipeline demo reach projects- some have since started
- River stakeholders identified
- Structured survey method developed
- Field visits and interviews
- Analysis and reporting

# The reaches

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- Hume to Yarrawonga on the River Murray
- The MacIntyre River in the vicinity of Goondiwindi
- The River Murray in South Australia
- The Darling River in the vicinity of Bourke (Bourke to Brewarrina)
- Old Man Creek, an anabranch of the Murrumbidgee system
- The Broken River in Victoria



# Darling River north of Bourke

Photo by Marie Waschka MDBC 2005



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# MacIntyre River

Photo by Fiona Lynn MDBC 2004



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# Who looks after and uses the river?

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- Riparian land managers
- Regional NRM groups and state agencies
- Local government
- Recreation fishing groups
- Industry groups e.g. irrigators
- Indigenous groups
- Community groups e.g. Landcare
- R&D agencies
- General community



# What we looked for

- A reach that is technically suited
- Technical and scientific knowledge/capacity
- Active engagement by riverine landholders
- Support/engagement from other river users
- General community support and engagement
- Related programs



# What we found

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- 2 up and running demo reaches
- 2 good potential candidates
- 2 candidates with a way to go
- A set of common ingredients for success
- A set of key risks

# **Ingredients for success**

- Active engagement by key stakeholders
- Local river champions
- Strong institutional home and interagency cooperation
- Local scientific and technical capacity
- A long term commitment
- Focus on river education and engagement



# The risks

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- Secure long term funding and agreed cost sharing
- Cost prohibitive restoration work
- Local burn out
- Low information base

	Hume to Yarrawonga	MacIntyre near Gundy	River Murray in SA	Darling near Bourke	Old Man Creek	The Broken
<b>Success factors</b>						
<b>Active engagement by key stakeholders</b>	Cautious support-some potential for confusion/overlap. Engagement of riverine landowners growing steadily but anglers possibly alienated by process	Enthusiastic support/limited financial capacity to engage	Enthusiastic support - the immediate priority is to facilitate a consensus on the best of the several contending sites.	Cautious support/limited financial capacity to engage	General support/limited financial capacity to engage	General support, but the dominant view is that the political risk was too high to associate existing activities with Demo Reach concept
<b>Local river champions</b>	Strong S NRM Groups and agencies	Two strong river champions	Very strong community interest	Strong- Regional NRM Group	Strong- Regional NRM Group and NSW DPI	Strong but fraught
<b>Strong institutional home and interagency cooperation</b>	Strong with more potential for partnership building	Regional NRM Group very enthusiastic Interagency cooperation is growing Some related programs that could be integrated	Regional NRM Groups very enthusiastic Interagency cooperation is growing	Strong- Regional NRM Group and NSW DPI partnership Dedicated demo reach project funded through CMA- limited integration with other programs	Strong- Regional NRM Group and NSW DPI partnership Dedicated demo reach project funded through CMA- limited integration with other programs	Strong history of interagency cooperation



	Hume to Yarrawonga	MacIntyre near Gundy	River Murray in SA	Darling near Bourke	Old Man Creek	The Broken
<b>Success factors</b>						
<b>Local scientific and technical capacity</b>	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Excellent
<b>A long term commitment</b>	There is a long term commitment to the River Murray	Regional NRM Group has long term strategies for river management	There is a long term commitment to the River Murray	Regional NRM Group has long term strategies for river management	Doubtful in this particular reach	Regional NRM Group and State agencies have long term strategies for river management
<b>River education and engagement focus</b>	Core focus of regional NRM Group but broader community is not river focussed	Core focus of regional NRM Group	Core focus of regional NRM Group and the broader community is strongly river focussed. Greater cohesion between the two is still needed	Core focus of regional NRM Group but could be stronger in the community	Core focus of regional NRM group but is not a major component of the current project	Core focus of regional NRM Group and the broader community is strongly river focussed. Nonetheless there is significant disagreement on some points

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<b>Risks</b>						
<b>Secure long term funding and agreed cost sharing</b>	Seen as a risk	Seen as a risk High dependence on national programs	General expectation that this can be managed	Seen as a risk but is being managed	Seen as a risk	This risk is being managed
<b>Cost prohibitive restoration work</b>	Seen as a risk (cold water and logistics of resnagging in main channel)	Seen as a risk (weir rehabilitation)	Divergence of view s there is some prospect that low-cost options could deliver significant gains	Seen as a risk (weir rehabilitation)	The anabranch does not have the major problems of the main channel  There is a question over the long term maintenance of river fences	The decision has been made to proceed in full expectation of significant costs
<b>Local burn out</b>	Some evidence  Several major initiatives underway	Some evidence but not among river champions	Some evidence of individual burn-out  Overwhelming community desire to do positive things for river health	Some evidence but not strong	Some evidence but is being managed through one on one engagement processes	There are tensions to manage, but the willingness to effect change is high
<b>Low information base</b>	Information base is excellent	Some data - would need to be built	Information base is excellent for some sites, but even where low, confidence in ability to generate necessary	Some data- is being built	Is being built through the project  Funds for long term monitoring uncertain	Information base is excellent



# A working demo reach model

Photo □ Old Man Creek by Mark Neeson NSW DPI



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## **Regional NRM group project contracted to agency- (e.g. Bourke to Bree; Old Man Creek)**

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- Specific term
- Specific tasks
- Potential for integration with other regional NRM programs
- Gets bounce from general regional NRM group engagement processes
- Agency dominates in implementation-  
limited wider community involvement



# Sum up

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# Opportunities

- Catalyst/glue
- Potential to integrate related river programs
- Potential to build engagement among a range of river stakeholders
- Attractive concept for education and awareness programs
- Fits well with the Regional NRM Group investment model

# Reservations

- Good concept with optimistic expectations
- High levels of interest difficult to convert to active long term engagement
- Strong technical focus at expense of engagement and education components
- Integration of programs not very strong