

MURRAY RIVER COUNTRY

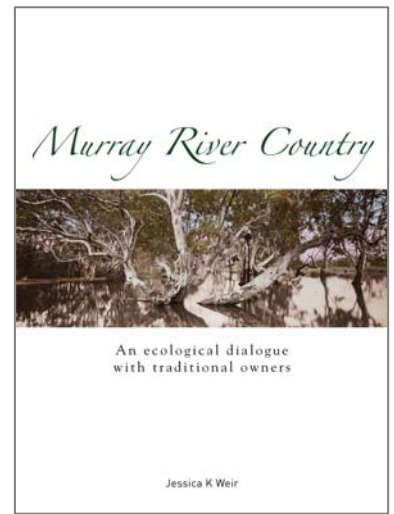
An ecological dialogue with traditional owners

By Jessica K. Weir

Published by Aboriginal Studies Press, September 2009, \$34.95

“Murray River Country speaks to the potential for creating a new dialogue between the First Nations and new Australians in coming to terms with and understanding each other. This dialogue is reliant on being honest to the devastation past theories have had on our water and the river system and in changing false concepts and practices, as this is essential for not only the continuance of the Murray River system but of life itself.”

- Monica Morgan, Yorta Yorta Woman



The crisis of the Murray Darling River system, Australia's agricultural heartland, is in the media almost daily, however this is the first detailed evaluation that brings Indigenous voices into the debate. In MURRAY RIVER COUNTRY Jessica Weir challenges us to move beyond the current arguments and inaction to create strategies for change that incorporate both western and Indigenous knowledge traditions.

This timely book demands that something fundamental changes in our water philosophies. After all, if we've been managing the Murray River water, how did we get into such an unmanageable state? Weir also demands that in looking to the future of the way we are to live, we open the discussion to the past.

Research for the book began in 2003, when Weir attended meetings with the Murray-Darling Basin traditional owners who have formed an alliance: the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN). She details the development of Indigenous engagement with the future of these vital river systems.

Weir reveals how including Indigenous knowledge traditions can be part of building a more ethical relationship with water in Australia, and that ecology and the economy cannot continue in an oppositional relationship.

Her inclusion of the intimate stories of love and loss of the river country's first nations people brings a unique and poignant perspective to an argument usually framed as one of economics, agriculture and states' rights. In MURRAY RIVER COUNTRY they share their profound understanding of what we are all losing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Dr Jessica Weir is a Research Fellow in the Native Title Research Unit at AIATSIS. She is a geographer whose research focuses on ecological and social issues in Australia, particularly water and ecological devastation. With ten years experience working in native title research, she has also worked in the non-government sector with local communities on environment and livelihood issues in Bangladesh and Thailand. She is a member of the Ecological Humanities, a group who foster research that traverses the great divides between the sciences and the humanities, including theories, research and methodologies on the artificial separation of nature/culture.

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