

MEDIA RELEASE

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QUEENSLAND
MURRAY-
DARLING
COMMITTEE



Fish passage eased on Condamine River

Native fish now have improved passage along more than 70km of the Condamine River thanks to the dedicated work of a landholder and a host of experts.

Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Water and Wetlands Regional Coordinator Paul Webb said the Reilly family were keen to upgrade a weir on their property 30km south-west of Condamine to allow fish and turtles passage and the Reilly's Weir fishway would now be launched on-site on Friday, March 26.

"The weir on 'Lenniebrae' was built by the family in the 1930s and while it's an admirable piece of infrastructure, the addition of the fishway is a great boon for the native species that currently have limited passage along more than 70km of the Condamine River," Mr Webb said.

"The weir itself, strengthened to ensure stability, now has a cutting edge fishway attached with special poly cones developed by Fisheries Queensland specifically for fishways in more inaccessible areas or where minimising on-site construction time was a priority. This means the fish now have passage along the full 70km stretch, including the ability to swim upstream into the Reilly's Weir pool during small flows for spawning and access to a fisheries habitat reserve stretching for 14km upstream."

"It's wonderful to work with enthusiastic landholders such as Geoff and Sue Reilly; they have made a significant contribution in terms of time and machinery to allow this to happen," Mr Webb said.

"It was also excellent to have so many local partners and businesses involved in the project as this clearly demonstrates the depth of the skill pool available in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin."

The Reilly's Weir fishway is a joint project between the Reilly family, Queensland Murray-Darling Committee (QMDC) and the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI). This initiative is supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Recreational Fishing Community Grants program. The project has also been supported by the Western Downs Regional Council, Maranoa-Balonne Catchment Management Association, RED Industrial and GHD.

However, Mr Webb said QMDC's work in the area was not complete.

"Other works being investigated on the Condamine River include riverine habitat and off-stream wetland habitat protection and the modification of other weirs to include fishways," he said.

"There are many barriers to fish movements in our major river systems that prevent fish from swimming upstream to their spawning sites or to find alternative food sources in all but major flood events.

"In the Murray-Darling Basin, it is estimated our native species make up only 10% of the fish stocks present in pre-European times. Works such as the Reilly's Weir fishway that help to open up further river stretches are vital for the protection and re-establishment of healthy native fish populations. Monitoring in March 2010 has revealed that many fish species are using the fishway including, Yellowbelly, Catfish, Bony Bream, Smelt and Spangled Perch.

"Anyone keen to help improve the condition of their local waters, contribute to fishways or other association natural resource management works should contact QMDC."

For more information about the launch, contact Paul Webb on 0429 644 421. If the area does receive rain this week, the event may be moved to the Condamine Sports Club.

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