

*Australian Geographer, Vol. 37, No. 2,
pp. 131-145, July 2006*

Knowing Your Place: an Australasian perspective on catchment-framed approaches to river repair

GARY BRIERLEY, MICK HILLMAN & KIRSTIE FRYIRS,

University of Auckland, New Zealand; Macquarie University, Australia;
Macquarie University, Australia

ABSTRACT

Australia and New Zealand have been at the forefront of many advances in river management through policy and legislative initiatives and the introduction of participatory frameworks. In part this leadership role is a response to the pervasive extent and impact of post-colonial societies on Australasian environments. Core geographical concepts have contributed significantly to the increased recognition of a 'sense of place' in management practice. Grounded and authentic applications recognise explicitly the complexity of interactions across an array of biophysical and social scales. The contribution of geography to river management is particularly significant in the implementation of catchment-framed programmes, the development of generic scientific tools that can be used on a catchment-by-catchment basis, and the application of adaptive management principles that are operationalised within participatory frameworks. Failing to acknowledge geographical concepts can lead to a placeless universalism in river management that is unsustainable and unacceptable in biophysical and social terms.

KEY WORDS

River management; river condition; recovery potential; catchment; river health; River Styles