



Department of Planning and Environment

# Riparian project management – piece of cake? Or not.....

Tales from the frontline....



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## Project overview

- Upper floodplain location
- Iron rich soils, and floodplain drainage
- Some natives, but SO MANY WEEDS
- Poor Ecohealth score – D minus
- Water quality very poor
- Riparian condition also very poor
- Old growth camphor across large areas of site



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**Some before and after shots...**

**George Street, Tintenbar – December 2019**



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**George Street Tintenbar – May 2021**



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**More before and after shots...**

**Old Bangalow Road, Tintenbar – December 2019**



**Old Bangalow Road Tintenbar – May 2021**



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### So what worked well...?

- Each contractor had a large portion of site to manage over the 3 years of the grant. This worked exceptionally well for all concerned in two out of three cases.
- The bank stabilisation work, including rootballs, has withstood 2021 and 2022 flood cycles really well.
- Work has been extended by Ozfish Unlimited and NCLLS and one private landholder. So now we have about 3 kilometres regenerating on both sides, in various stages of progress (except for one landholder).
- Most community engagement was really positive (except for one notable exception). The community, as a rule, is very supportive and the work has generated interest from others in also re-establishing riparian vegetation.



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### And what didn't work so well...?



- Droughts and then flooding rains impacted establishment, weeding and ongoing site management.
- We had a couple of neighbour issues (angry neighbours, neighbours who didn't understand native vegetation values).
- Cost of camphor laurel management in public parks and roads was substantial.
- Crown Lands licence took 11 months to arrive which meant we nearly lost our grant.
- MEMS work began without Council knowing about it or being consulted.
- Mystery problems with one section of the works. And still we can't be sure what the problem is in this location. Contractor? Soils? Aliens?

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## Takeaway messages

- Talk to people. Agencies, local government, Landcare, neighbours, the villages or towns, farmers and landholders nearby. They are all just people. Talk to them.
- Work with people. Build on the talking. Listen to their thoughts, respond where you can. Meet them halfway.
- If you administer grants, allow for nature. The people delivering the project have no more control over the weather than you do. They may not control the actions of others either. Try to allow for flexibility. You'll know if people are talking BS. If they are, then take action. That's fair to all. If it is genuine, you can find a way through.
- If you review these projects, remember they may not be being delivered in the same environment (social, cultural, natural, economic) that you work in. Assume the best intent, behaviour and delivery.

