

From Danggali to Riverland: experiences from the Bookmark Biosphere Reserve, South Australia

Duncan Mackenzie and James Fitzsimons



Introduction

The ~900 000 ha Riverland Biosphere Reserve (formerly Bookmark Biosphere Reserve) is located in the semi-arid Murray Mallee region of South Australia, adjoining the Victorian and New South Wales borders (Figure 7.1). It includes riverine and floodplain ecosystems associated with the River Murray, including River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) and Black Box (*Eucalyptus largiflorens*) woodlands, chenopod shrublands, and extensive areas of long-unburnt mallee in the semi-arid zone. Renmark and Berri are the major regional population centres.

The 253 000 ha Danggali Conservation Park was one of nine Australian protected areas to be designated as a Biosphere Reserve under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Program in 1977. At that time, the Danggali Conservation Park had itself only recently been declared (in 1975), with Commonwealth Government funds having been made available to facilitate the purchase of four pastoral properties (DENR 1995) (Figure 7.1). In 1993, the Biosphere Reserve changed its name to Bookmark to reflect an expansion of sites (see below). The primary reason for the declaration of the Bookmark Biosphere Reserve was to halt livestock grazing to allow the native vegetation to regenerate, control the feral animal population and to manage native wildlife, such as kangaroos and emus, in a sustainable manner (Bookmark Biosphere Trust 1995). The region contains important areas of long-unburnt mallee (Bennett *et al.* 2010), which are crucial for species such as the endangered Black-eared Miner (*Manorina melanotis*), as well as other ecosystems that are not well represented in the reserve system (Fitzsimons and Wescott 2008a). The reserve was, at the