

## Goulburn River: Your Story Rob Asplin, River Country Adventours



**“Many thanks for the wonderful holiday. We are all rejuvenated by the experience. The canoeing was great, and we were deeply impressed by the beauty of the river.”**

The feedback section of River Country Adventours' web site is full of praise for operators Rob and Joan Asplin. The couple love to share their knowledge of the Goulburn's history and biology and extend their generous hospitality to people from around the world.

Erlie came all the way from Hungary, determined to catch a fish in the Goulburn. Despite the language barrier Rob managed to teach Erlie the basics of fishing. “He got off to a bad start,” recalls Rob, “By casting directly into a group of swimmers. In the end he managed to pull in a big Murray cod!” Rob was amazed – he has been fishing the area for 35 years and has never caught a single one of these iconic fish.

Another favourite story is that of Barlow the eagle. An English family rescued this wedge-tail eagle from certain death, whilst enjoying one of the Asplin's self-guided 'canoeing safaris.' With its distinctive markings, the bird has been spotted around the river many times since. “He appears to have an affinity with canoes and the people in them,” says Rob, “Perhaps he just wants to say thanks for his freedom.”

Rob's love of rivers started with the Hopkins, which ran through the property he grew up on in Victoria's western district. Rob came to Kyabram in the 1960s to play footy, and liked the region so much he never left.

“The Goulburn is ideal for canoeing, camping, bush walking and fishing. Between Shepparton and Echuca, where we offer our adventures, it flows through remote pristine bushland, in the southern region of the magnificent Barmah Forest.”



*Kayaking on a billabong near Wyuna*

Rob enjoys imagining life in the days when the region had a prosperous commercial fishing industry, supplying the markets in Melbourne. “It would have been a very romantic place back in the 1880s, when there were paddle steamers on the river.”

Although Rob appreciates recent improvements in his part of the river, he knows more needs to be done, especially in the upper reaches.

“It's our own backyard and we need to keep it as good as we can. Rivers, in my experience, bring out the best or worst of people. It's a battle sometimes, but we are tolerant. We all want more water down the river but how do you do that without compromising productivity? There needs to be a balance.”

