

2000 kilometres of the Murray River paddled

Many people have taken on the allure of the quest to paddle the longest river in Australia, the Murray River, however never before, someone with quadriplegia.

If you haven't been following the two and half month long Murray River Paddle Wheel kayaking expedition prepare to be in awe. The expedition two years in the planning, is the brainchild of Dave Jacka.

This year, on March 1, Dave set out to paddle the length of the Murray River. This week, Dave and his support crew passed

an amazing milestone, Dave has paddled over 2000km and is just over 200 km from the final destination where the river joins the sea in South Australia. Dave has quadriplegia, which for his injury means only six per cent physical function - has no finger function, limited arm function, is unable to move anything from his armpits down and no temperature control.

Dave has faced many challenges and has designed and developed adaptations for his kayak to enable him to paddle independently. He also has a dedicated support team for his expedition. Dave has seen the landscape of the Murray River change over 2000kms and is now enjoying the iconic scenery of the South Australian stretch of the river with the well-known cliffs, sunsets and the generous hospitality of river front landholders.

Dave says South Australian riverfront landholders have been very welcoming of him and his support crew, providing great landing spots, an overnight campsite and firewood.

"I have a diverse team supporting me including a ground crew, a support kayaker, support boat driver, back-up boat driver and a carer," he said. Not satisfied with being the first quadriplegic to fly solo around Australia, amongst other outstanding achievements, Dave says he is undertaking this journey as a personal challenge and

to see where his limits lay both physically and mentally. "I believe our true potential is limited only by what we think we can do, not a disability or any other obstacle that we may feel is holding us back. It's about giving things a go and being open to where the journey takes you" he said. On starting this expedition Dave had some challenges to overcome and didn't know what would happen, however he has smashed those challenges and continues to live life to the full defying disability stereotypes. Keep an eye out for the Murray River Paddle Wheel Expedition as it nears the final destination of the Murray Mouth - if you have a kayak, don't be afraid to paddle along.



Dave Jacka wearing his paddlers' beard. (photo courtesy of Trevor Worsley)