

**MARY RIVER CATCHMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
2002 ANNUAL REPORT**

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**2001-2002 MRCCC Office Bearers**

Chair	Jim Buchanan	Horticulture Sector
Vice Chair	Harry Jamieson	Beef Sector
Secretary	Margaret Thompson	Special Member
Treasurer	Peter Dutton	Landcare

**MRCCC Staff**

Project Coordinator	Brad Wedlock	Rivercare
Project Coordinator	Phil Berrill	Waterwatch
Project Officer	Conor Neville	Cabomba Control
Aquatic Nursery Manager	Phillip Moran	Revegetation after Cabomba control
Administration & Project Support	Debbie Seal	

**Mary River Catchment coordinating Committee**  
**Chairman's Annual Report 2002**  
**Jim Buchanan, Chair, MRCCC**

It is with pleasure that I present this Annual Report for the 2001-2002 year.

During May, the Hon Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Natural Resource & Mines signed the information report for the Mary Basin draft Water Resource Plan. This Water Resource Plan (WRP) will certainly set the scene for future use of water in the Mary River Basin. Over many years, the MRCCC has voiced its concern about the inter-basin transfer of water, mainly to supply an ever increasing coastal population. The Dept of Natural Resources & Mines is to be congratulated for including the entire Mary Basin in this Water Resource Plan.

The Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) led by Dr Sandra Brizga has been working over the last six months and met in Nambour early July to assess current conditions and Environmental Values of the Mary Basin (including Hervey Bay). As an observer at this TAP meeting, I was impressed by the methodology used and the input of all members.

As part of the WRP, Scott Buchanan has commenced a series of five meetings with each of thirteen Sector Representative Groups. This upskilling of the SRG's will benefit the development of possible scenarios to be later refined by the Community Reference Panel (CRP). Again, NRM, particularly Scott Buchanan is to be congratulated on this skilling process for the SRG's. If all Representatives return to their respective groups and report fully on what they have learned, a very large cross section of the Community will be educated about the WRP process.

MRCCC Combined Water Committee raised concerns about how the Community was to be informed. I am satisfied that NRM is doing all in it's power to answer criticism about Community Consultation in previous WAMP's.

If the current process of Community Consultation continues (including three public meetings of TAP) I believe that a Citizen's Panel (Jury) would have little or any added benefit.

There can be no doubt that the WRP will set benchmarks for water quality and quantity for futures generations.

The NHT Grant "Implementing the Mary River & Tributaries Rehabilitation plan" received \$284,200 for the two years of the project, supplemented by Cooloola, Caloundra, Maroochy and Noosa Shire Council with over \$75,000.

To date over \$350,000 of in-kind support has resulted in projects with over 30,000 riparian plants planted within the Mary Catchment, over 32 km of streambank fencing and 22 off stream watering points installed.

Brad Wedlock has done an excellent job in coordinating this project. Demonstration sites are progressing well, supported by input from Griffith University's Centre for Catchment and Instream research, Fisher Stewart and the Cooperative Research Centre for Catchment Hydrology. The NSW Dept of Landcare and Water Conservation has even been involved with interest from Victoria as well.

This project is ongoing with Water Quality Grants to commence very soon.

Brad Wedlock has also spent time working with Landcare and Catchment Care groups in the Mary Catchment helping projects

- Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group – Rivercare Grants for numerous projects on Six Mile Creek.
- Noosa & District Landcare Group – Rivercare Grant for a major project near Cooroy Mountain.
- Barung Landcare – Rivercare Grant for project on Obi Obi Creek.
- Tiaro & District Landcare Group – Rivercare Grant for Mary River Turtle nesting sites.
- Gympie & District Landcare Group – Rivercare Grant for a major project on the lower Six Mile Creek.
- Lower Mary Landcare Group – Telstra Countrywide Tree-planting Grant.

Brad has also taken a leading role in negotiations with four local authorities as listed above. Hervey Bay City Council and Tiaro Shire Council have assisted with in kind support. Thank you to those local government authorities for your contributions.

A full list of the Grant projects is attached to this report and I recommend you read it.

Thanks also to Brad and his publicity team for attending all those exhibitions and field days during the last year.

The Tinana Creek Biodiversity Report printed in April 2002 also lists Brad Wedlock as one of the Fieldwork team – and Brad finds rallying a relaxation!

Phil Berrill has provided an excellent report on his activities as Waterwatch Coordinator. Unfortunately Phil had health problems during the year and this seriously affected his planned program. Thanks to those people who assisted as replacements and the understanding of some groups who may have missed out. One way or another, the Waterwatch Program has to be extended and made a five day job. The contribution of Water Testing and the educational side of school visits both have to be expanded. Sourcing funds for this extension will be a challenge and funds may have to come from a number of sources to achieve the desired result.

Thanks to the Environment Protection Agency for their additional support during the last year.

The continued drought has seen many farmers coming to the Resource Centre with water samples for testing. Phil has set up a new laboratory at the rear of the office especially for testing water samples. This has been a much needed service in recent times.

Thanks Phil for your contribution, particularly given the health problems you have suffered during the year.

The MRCCC Strategy Review is progressing with Brian Stockwell leading the Review. Brian has returned from his tour of Europe (part of his Churchill Fellowship Award). The review will continue as soon as possible after this AGM. However, this Strategy has to fit in with the Regional Strategy (for the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality) and fit with the local authorities Integrated Planning Acts.

Brian will talk about this later today.

A report on the Mary River Cod Project is included in this report.

MRCCC were the State Finalists in the 2001 Catchment/Landcare Award. Margaret Thompson and myself attended the National Finals in Canberra last Wednesday. Gympie Landcare are to be congratulated on winning the State Final in the Rivercare section and also went to Canberra for the National Awards. We must be doing some things right in this Catchment!

A short report from the Regional Vegetation Management Plan – Coastal Wide Bay Working Group is included in this report. Peter Buchanan was our nominee on this group, but owing to his work commitments, Esma Armstrong as proxy attended the six meetings so far and the seventh due late in August. Thanks Esma for filling in for Peter.

As Chair of the MRCCC, I have attended the Cooloola Shire's Conservation Advisory Committee, Gympie Working Group of the SEQ Forest Agreement Planning Process, Rural Futures Program 2021 – a Queensland Dept of Primary Industries and SEQ Region of Councils initiative; Australian Water Association seminars held in Brisbane and Nambour. These four groups are looking to the future and it is essential that MRCCC be aware and able to voice concerns at some of the proposals being put forward, and support other initiatives where necessary.

A successful Landcare Forum was held on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2002, where participants were brought up to date on the Regional Body, NHT 1 and 2 Grants, Envirofund grants, update on the NAP, particularly where the Catchment Committee fits into NAP. Unfortunately, I was only there for a few minutes owing to personal commitments. The forum outcomes are included in this report.

Landcare plays an important "hands-on" role in this Catchment. Gympie Landcare have made a commitment to host the 2003 landcare State Conference from 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> August. MRCCC will do all in its power to assist Gympie Landcare to achieve the best possible State Conference in 2003.

Administrative funding for MRCCC is like water in a drought – getting more and more harder to find. Last year we received \$4,000 from Environment Australia under the Grants for Voluntary Environment & Heritage Organisation program. Following a deputation by Margaret Thompson and myself to the Hon Stephen Robertson, Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, we received \$8,000 in June 2002. There is a very small administration allowance in NHT grants and even less

in Envirofund grants. Currently, we are having negotiations with a number of Councils and others in an effort to have permanent administrative funding. Ideally, our office should operate five days a week, supporting our Rivercare and Waterwatch Coordinators.

Our Mayors Forum this year was held in Maryborough on 17<sup>th</sup> April. Thanks to Mayor Allan Brown, Maryborough City Council for hosting the Forum. Administrative funding was discussed. Brian Stockwell gave an outline of the process for the Strategy Review, and Ed Carroll, DNR & M presented an update on the Pest Animal Reporting System to be introduced by local authorities in the Mary Catchment. Unfortunately, we did not have as many Mayors present as I would have liked. A greater effort must be made in future to plan further ahead to allow all Mayor's to organise their busy programs.

The Burnett Mary Regional Body has now been formed under Independent Chair, Harry Bonnano. Originally for the NAP Regional Body, it will now handle all regional natural resource management funding. We look forward to working with this Regional Body and although we have only one representative from the Mary Catchment on the team, I am certain we will not be disadvantaged. Our Strategy Review must take into account targets for NAP funding. MRCCC look forward to working with the Burnett Mary Regional Body.

On behalf of the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group, the MRCCC received funds from Environment Australia under the Weeds of National Significance Project for two projects aimed at addressing the serious infestation of Lake Macdonald by the aquatic weed, Cabomba. A full report on these projects is included with this Annual Report from Project Officers Phil Moran and Conor Neville.

An application submitted to the Gaming Machine fund on behalf of the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care group resulted in funds being provided to purchase Water Testing equipment. This has enabled monitoring of sites in the Lake Macdonald sub catchment by members of this group and by Project Officers involved in the Cabomba projects.

An further application submitted to the Gaming Machine fund for upgrading facilities at the Mary Catchment Resource Centre resulted in funds being provided to purchase a new computer, A3 printer, software, library publications, a GPS for logging project sites and a video cassette recorder. We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to access these funds and appreciate the benefits for staff and the organisation as a whole in having access to updated equipment.

MRCCC have recently made arrangements to collaborate with the Codline newsletter, compiled and edited by Eve Witney. Articles on MRCCC activities and projects will be featured in the Codline which is widely distributed throughout the Mary Catchment and beyond. In this way, we hope to greatly increase dissemination of information on some of the outstanding work being carried out by our organisation.

It is a great concern to me that the attendance at our General meetings has been very poor. We have struggled to get a quorum more than once. I appreciate that some industries are doing it very tough with low commodity prices compounded more recently by drought. The current Strategy Review will also look at structure of this organisation. Non-attendance could well mean some sector groups losing out.

The Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee has a very important future but that may mean some restructuring. There is an urgent need for a full time Coordinator to work with the Landcare Groups and others in the catchment, and to liaise with the Regional Body.

Dairy Farmers (Queensco-Unity Dairyfoods Cooperative Assoc Ltd) provide MRCCC with free office space. We greatly appreciate this contribution. If we had to pay full value it would severely limit our on-ground activities or payment to office staff. Thank you Dairy Farmers and we do know that some of your suppliers do appreciate our work for them.

I must thank the MRCCC Staff for their support during this year. Debbie, along with Phil and Brad work many more hours than they are paid for. It is good to see the way they all plan ahead and are constantly trying to improve the office.

A big thank you to all government agency staff. Particular thanks to Bob Watson and Brian Stockwell who we probably see more often.

Thank you also to Judith Renshaw who has played a key role (we hope successfully) in recent times in her work assisting us to apply for grants and funding to continue our work.

Thank you to all the members of the MRCCC Executive Committee. When you consider the distance that Margaret and Harry have to travel to attend meetings, they really should get extra thanks.

My personal thanks to my business partners for allowing me the time to attend to MRCCC business. This is quite considerable over a year. Finally, I must thank my wife who has supported me through what at times has not been an easy year.



*MRCCC Chair, Jim Buchanan with Rivercare Project Coordinator, Brad Wedlock and the State Catchment/Landcare Award*

***Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee  
Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting 2001  
Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2001, at DPI Forestry Conference Training Centre***

**10.35 am** Opening. Chairman Jim Buchanan called the meeting to order.

**Attendance:** As per attendance register. David Burnett attended as proxy for Dairy.

**Apologies:** Mal Thompson, Dairy Sector Representative, Athol Craig, Roger Robertson, Mark Cridland, Stacey Brown. Others as per invitation list. Resolved to accept apologies.

**Minutes of previous AGM:** Moved Dave Sands, seconded Paul MacDonald that the minutes of the previous AGM are a true and correct record with the change of "to instead of by" in paragraph 3, page 3.

**Chairman's Report:**

Chairman Jim Buchanan then proceeded to deliver his report as attached.

Highlights:

- National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
- The Water Resource plan for the Mary
- The need for funding for the committee to run it's affairs. The need for reimbursement of expenses is paramount;
- Success of the annual Mayor's Forum;
- Need for outside funding sources;
- Excessive hours of voluntary work by executive members.

Jim then proceeded to thank all those who have contributed and assisted with Mary River Catchment Association Inc. Jim then moved the adoption of his report, seconded John Dillon.

John Horrex then spoke to the report.

**Treasurer's Report.** Moved for adoption, Margaret Thompson, seconded Julie Walker. Carried.

**River Rehabilitation Project update:**

Approximately \$90,000 already allocated in first round of assessments. Next round closing 23 November. Standard of projects extremely high and success of project will achieve much. \$30,000 funding from Maroochy Shire for large woody debris projects. Phil also introduced Luke Brown, a University student working with the project. Paid tribute to Steve Dudgeon who is leaving DNR & M.

**Waterwatch report:**

A report was provided by Phil Trendell.

LCMC

Marylou Gittens, South East Queensland then spoke on LCMC matters, particularly the process for getting issues on to the agenda of the LCMC. She also covered the proposals for restructure for Natural Resource Biodiversity Management.

Review of sector representation

Request from the landcare groups of the Mary to have two representatives, one lower and one upper representative.

John Horrex expressed concern that all landcare groups should discuss the issue and come back to the MRCCC.

Discussion ensued on the ability of this Annual Meeting to accept this motion.

The meeting supported the Chairman's ruling that the landcare groups must sort out their own representation.

Bob Watson gave an explanation of the calling of the teleconference. All landcare groups were notified and asked to take part. It was then up to them.

Much discussion occurred on sector representation. Questions were asked how community representation is obtained. Explanations were given. Historical evidence was related to give a brief picture of how sectors were arrived at.

Sector Nominations

Landcare -	two nominations received. Esma Armstrong and Lin Fairlie.
Grazing beef -	nomination not received
Dairying -	Not received but nomination coming.
Environment -	John Dillon, proxy Jenifer Simpson
DoE -	Stephan Barry, proxy David Field
DNR & M -	Paul MacDonald
DPI -	Graeme Elphinstone
Education -	Mark Cridland, proxy Stacey Brown
Extractive industries -	Mollie Gilmour
Farm Forestry -	Sean Ryan, proxy Ken Matthews
Fisheries -	Roger Robertson
General Community upper -	Dave Sands, proxies Peter Pamment and Mary Flieter
General community lower -	Sue Chapman
Horticulture -	Jim Buchanan, proxy Dennis Bilau
Local Government -	Jenny Burton.
Middle Government -	no nomination
Upper Government -	no nomination
Sugar -	Frank Sestak, proxies Peter Downs and Trevor Turner
State Development -	no nomination received

**Election of special member Margaret Thompson.**

That Margaret Thompson be elected as a special member. Moved Jim Buchanan, seconded Julie Walker. Vote by show of hands. Carried.

Sector Representation was then confirmed. Delegates as listed were accepted.

Indigenous Representation. The difficulties of obtaining formal indigenous representation were discussed and it was agreed that Nai Nai Bird be offered Special Membership. Moved David Burnett, seconded Harry Jamieson that Nai Nai Bird be offered special membership. Carried.

All positions on the Management Committee were declared vacant and Cate Molloy, Member for Noosa was asked to conduct the elections. Cate also spoke briefly about taking a stand.

### **Executive Positions**

Chair -

John Dillon nominated by David Burnett. Declined.

Mollie Gilmour nominated Jim Buchanan. Declined. No further nominations received.

Deputy Chair -

John Horrex nominated Esma Armstrong. Out of order as the landcare representative had not been decided, this nomination was disallowed.

Discussion then took place regarding the absence of nominations for several sector representatives and the advisability of continuing the election of office bearers.

Moved Graeme Elphinstone, seconded John Horrex "that the current office bearers be reinstated until Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October when the adjourned Annual General Meeting will be conducted". Carried.

The meeting then adjourned. Time 12.40pm

### ***Continuation of Annual General Meeting, Monday 22nd October 2001, at DPI Donga, Cnr Cartwright Rd & Louisa Sts, Gympie Minutes of meeting***

**Attendance:** As per attendance book.

**Apologies:** Esma Armstrong, Cate Molloy, Joy Leishman, Mick Venardos, Carolyn Male, Mike Hoare, Mal Thompson

**Minutes of previously adjourned annual meeting:** Jim then read the minutes of the previously adjourned meeting to bring all those present up to date.

**Sector nominations:** Nominations were then read out.

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Nomination</b>	<b>Proxies</b>
<b>Landcare</b>	Peter Dutton	Col Bryant, Lin Fairlie, Joan Dillon
<b>Environment</b>	John Dillon	Jenifer Simpson, Reg Lawler
<b>Local Government Lower</b>	John Horrex	
<b>Local Government Middle</b>	Julie Walker	
<b>Local Government Upper</b>		
<b>Beef and Grazing Industry</b>	Harry Jamieson	Hugh Viner, Dr John Kingston
<b>Education</b>	Mark Cridland	Stacey Brown
<b>Dairy</b>	David Burnett	David Anderson
<b>DPI</b>	Graeme Elphinstone	Bob Simpson
<b>Upper Community</b>	Dave Sands	Peter Pamment/Mary Fleiter
<b>Lower Community</b>	Sue Chapman	
<b>Sugar</b>	Frank Sestak	Peter Downs, Trevor Turner
<b>EPA</b>	Stephan Barry	David Field
<b>Horticulture</b>	Jim Buchanan	Dennis Billau
<b>Farm Forestry</b>	Sean Ryan	Ken Matthews
<b>DNR &amp; M</b>	Paul McDonald	Bob Herd, Mike Hoare

**Extractive Industries**                      Mollie Gilmour                      John Rea  
**Fishing**    Roger Robertson  
**State Development**  
**Irrigation**

**Scrutineers appointed:** Moved Julie Walker, seconded Margaret Thompson that Bob Watson and Tony Coutts Smith be appointed Scrutineers. Carried.

**Election of special members:**

Margaret Thompson was nominated as a Special member. Margaret was elected as a Special member.

Nai Nai Bird was then nominated as a special member. Nai Nai is an indigenous person with special links to the Mary River. Nai Nai was duly elected.

Moved Jim Buchanan, seconded John Dillon that Delegates as listed be accepted. Carried.

**Election of Officer Bearers**

John Rea was then asked to Chair the meeting for the election of Office Bearers.

All positions were declared vacant.

Chair: Jim Buchanan was nominated by John Horrex, seconded by Mollie Gilmour. As no further nominations were received, Jim was duly elected.

Deputy Chair: Harry Jamieson was nominated by Jim Buchanan, seconded by Graeme Elphinstone. As there were no further nominations, Harry was duly elected.

Secretary: Margaret Thompson was nominated by Julie Walker, seconded by David Burnett. As there were no further nominations, Margaret was duly elected.

Treasurer: David Burnett nominated by Jim Buchanan. Declined.

John Dillon nominated. Declined.

Peter Dutton nominated by John Horrex, seconded Julie Walker. Peter Dutton was then duly elected.

**Election of Auditor**

Moved Graeme Elphinstone, seconded Julie Walker that Brown, Macaulay and Warren be appointed as Auditors.

Questions were raised as to appointment of accounting firm. Recommendation to come to General Meeting from Executive.

**Jim then closed the Annual Meeting.**

Jim then informally addressed the meeting as to emerging issues.

Priorities:

- Review of Mary Catchment Strategy;
- Mayor's forum;
- Benefits of ICM;
- Link between ICM with IPA;
- Push for full time Coordinator;
- Landcare Support strategy.

Margaret Thompson then gave a brief report on the formation of the Regional Body for the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ). Body consists of:

- Three local government representatives
- Three landcare representatives (catchment management, community, conservation)
- Three industry representatives (Two Primary, one secondary/tertiary industry)
- Independent Chair.
- Local government still to be confirmed.
- Caroline Haskard (Landcare)



- Trevor Stillman (Catchment)
- Jan Darlington (Community)
- Robert Shaldie (Primary Industry)
- Margaret Thompson
- BIEDO

Citizen's Jury on population capping, Palmwoods Hall, 1/2 November. A number of High Schools attending.

MRCCC Rivercare Grant applications evaluated on 7<sup>th</sup> December.

Launch of Burnett Mary Regional Strategy, 9.30 am, Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December at Kingaroy. Advise Judith Renshaw of attendance.

Dates for next MRCCC General Meetings, 5<sup>th</sup> November, 17 December at DPI Donga.

### **Review of Working Groups**

People were asked to nominate for the Working Groups.

Discussion then ensued as to the reduced support by DNR & M for the MRCCC.

Paul MacDonald explained the reduction in support for Landcare/Catchment Management.

80% of Bob Watson's time is allocated to supporting NHT Projects. The other 20% is allocated to all community groups throughout the North Coast District.

There are no funds for Catchment Management.

There was much discussion as to how this group could be successful in the present climate and many views were expressed.

The announcement of Grants to Voluntary and Environmental Heritage Organisations will not be made until after the Nov 10 Federal Election.

Many ideas were put forward as to how alternative funding could be accessed. Industry support, Local Government, Environmental Levies etc.

Perhaps during the review of the MRCCC Strategy we could do an outreach and create a better understanding of what ICM involves.

Need to see NAPSWQ as an opportunity, not an obstacle.

Need for Strategy Review to be ready for it.

User pays system for water use by Council to contribute to MRCCC actions.

Further informal discussion took place.

**1.00 pm - Meeting concluded.**

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## ***Treasurer's report***

### ***Peter Dutton, Landcare Representative, MRCCC***

My year as Treasurer of the MRCCC has proven challenging, not only coming to terms with understanding the accounts of the organisation but also shuffling my work commitments to enable some participation in General and Executive meetings.

During the 2001/2002 year, the MRCCC have received funding from the Natural Heritage Trust for the Rivercare Project and, to a lesser extent, for Waterwatch. Financial support from local government for the Rivercare Project has been ongoing from some Shire's while other Shire's have provided in-kind support. There is no doubt that the funding bodies receive excellent returns from their contributions, with in-kind support generated valued at over \$400,000 for these two projects alone for the past year of operation.

One problem encountered this year involved paying GST to landholders who received Rivercare Grants. So much confusion was created with some landholders claiming GST while others were not, that the Australian Taxation Office was contacted in relation to the issue. This resulted in a Private Tax ruling for these grants, which determined that if a Landholder used an Australian Business Number for Farm Expenses, that they were entitled to claim GST on the Grant funds.

At the time of writing this report, the MRCCC Auditor was looking at this Private Ruling and based on their advice, I hope to be able to concretely put this matter to rest one way or another for the benefit of future office bearers of the MRCCC and grant recipients.

Our accounting procedures in relation to Natural Heritage Trust funded Projects have been greatly improved this year to enable separate auditing of NHT projects as per the QNHT agreements and I thank Bruce Lawton of BNJ Financial Services and MRCCC's Administration Officer, Debbie Seal for their work in setting this up.

This year, separate bank accounts were established to house funds for the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group's Cabomba Projects. Future funding is currently being sought for a project looking into biological control of Cabomba in collaboration with CSIRO and the Alan Fletcher Research Station. Processes for managing these funds are now established and appear to be working well.

Funding for administration of the organisation continues to be elusive. We are appreciative of a grant of \$8,000 which was received recently from the Dept of Natural Resources and Mines to assist with administrative expenses. Meanwhile, an application to Environment Australia under the grants for Voluntary Environment & Heritage Organisations has been submitted requesting funds to employ a full time administrative officer and reimburse MRCCC Delegates for their travel expenses. The outcome of this application should be known at the end of 2002.

At the recent landcare forum, NHT Regional Coordinator, Sue Carstens advised that the MRCCC's Interim Priority Action application has been included in the State's bid to the Commonwealth for funding. While this is not in itself confirmation of the success of our application, it is a hopeful sign for continuation of the valuable work undertaken by our organisation.

Overall, I believe that the accounts of the organisation are in good shape, which the Auditor's report should attest to.

However, the ongoing challenge remains to continue to find funding which will assist with implementation of actions identified through the MRCCC Strategy. In this regard, I believe that a full time Coordinator could take on the role of helping the MRCCC to apply for the various grants as they become available. The assistance that this role would provide in supporting our honorary MRCCC Executive could be invaluable.

As the Landcare Delegate on the MRCCC this past year, I will be nominating as proxy to support the incoming Lower Mary Landcare Delegate. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported me in the role of Treasurer of the MRCCC and wish the organisation the future success I believe it deserves.

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## ***Implementing the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan*** ***Project Coordinator, Brad Wedlock***

### **Summary**

In 2001/02 over 30 000 riparian plants were planted within the Mary River catchment through the Rivercare Grants program. Over 32 kilometers of streambank fencing was constructed and 22 off-stream-watering points were installed. A majority of this work was carried out in known Mary River Cod habitat, and also known Mary River Turtle nesting sites.

The Water Quality Grants will commence very soon, with some setbacks involving obtaining a suitable consultant to design the projects.

The Demonstration sites are progressing well. There has been significant input to these projects by Griffith University's Centre for Catchment & In-stream Research, Fisher Stewart and the Cooperative Research Centre for Catchment Hydrology. The New South Wales Dept. of Land and Water Conservation has been involved with this project and there has even been interest in the project from Melbourne.

## **Sources of Funding**

During the course of the 2001-02 financial year "Implementing the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan" received funding from the Commonwealth Government through the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) fund and four Local Government Authorities. This was to cover operating costs and Rivercare Grants throughout the catchment. The local government authorities that contributed to the scheme were:

Cooloola Shire Council	-	\$15 000
Caloundra City Council	-	\$7 500
Maroochy Shire Council	-	\$30 000
Noosa Shire Council	-	\$22 000
Maryborough Shire Council		\$5,000

During 2001/02 the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee received \$142 100 from the Natural Heritage Trust for the project – Implementing the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan.

To date the project has generated **over \$350 000** of in-kind support.



*Eucalyptus tereticornis* – Blue Gum  
Mary River - Tiaro

## **Achievements & Highlights**

### **Winning the Queensland Catchment Landcare Award at the 2001 Queensland Landcare Conference held in Goondiwindi**

Implementing the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan won the Queensland Catchment Landcare Award for 2001, and was a finalist for the National Catchment Landcare Award that were announced in August 2002 at Parliament House, Canberra. Jim Buchanan and Margaret Thompson attended to represent MRCCC.

### **Working with Landcare and Catchment Care Groups in the Mary Catchment**

- Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group – Rivercare Grants for numerous projects on Six Mile Creek.
- Noosa & District Landcare Group – Rivercare Grant for a major project near Cooroy Mountain.
- Barung Landcare – Rivercare Grant for project on Obi Obi Creek.
- Tiaro & District Landcare Group – Rivercare Grant for Mary River Turtle nesting sites.
- Gympie & District Landcare Group – Rivercare Grant for a major project on the lower Six Mile Creek.
- Lower Mary Landcare Group – Telstra Countrywide Tree-planting Grant.

### **Working with Local Government**

#### **Noosa Shire Council**

- A major corridor revegetation project was undertaken on three properties on Six Mile Creek above Lake Macdonald. This corridor involved planting over 25 000 native riparian seedlings, that now creates a corridor from Cooroy Mountain Beauty Spot to almost Lake Macdonald. The landholder involved in this project has been absolutely fantastic to work with, however without the significant support of Noosa Shire Council – particularly Raul Weychardt, Keith Garrety, Dave Burrows and Ben McMullen – this project would not have commenced.

- Noosa Shire was instrumental in commencing a project to help rehabilitate a significant riparian rainforest remnant on Pinbarren Creek that also involves the adjoining dairy farmers.

### **Maroochy Shire Council**

- A Threatened Species Network application was written in conjunction with Maroochy Shire Council to help rehabilitate habitat for rare species – particularly focusing on the rare frogs in the Belli / Gheerulla / Kenilworth area. Although this project proposal concentrates on the rare frogs of the area – the Cascade Treefrog & Giant-barred Frog – it also will have spin-off benefits for other rare species found in the area, such as the Red Goshawk, Richmond Birdwing Butterfly and Coxens Fig-parrot. Interestingly, this area has a high percentage of rare fauna and flora that is reliant upon an intact and healthy riparian zone for their survival. If the project proposal is successful the work will be carried out on two council-controlled reserves, and two freehold properties that contain the rare frogs on Cedar and Walli Creek.
- MRCCC obtained \$30 000 from Maroochy Shire Council for riparian rehabilitation work in the Maroochy Shire that involves revegetation, streambank fencing, off-stream watering and in-stream projects, focusing on the use of large woody debris for fish habitat enhancement.
- Maroochy Shire has been very helpful in obtaining suitable logs for the large woody debris projects from development sites. Thanks should also go to Greg Downes, Paul Nowlan, Carruthers Contracting and Claytons Towing.

### **Cooloola Shire Council**

- MRCCC has been involved in the formulation of the Environment Levy Policy for Cooloola Shire. Jim Buchanan and Brad Wedlock attended a number of meetings to help determine a policy for deciding on projects that will be approved through the Environment Levy. The main outcome of the policy was that only projects that showed long-term environmental benefits should be approved for funding through the Levy.
- MRCCC continues to work closely with the Cooloola Shire on a number of projects, and will do so in the future. Consequently MRCCC and Gympie Landcare nominated Cooloola Shire for an award in the local government category of the Regional Award for Excellence in Natural Resource Management.

### **Caloundra City Council**

- Caloundra City Council has been working with the MRCCC on the lower Obi Obi Creek Rehabilitation Plan that Dept. of Natural Resources have contracted consultants Fisher Stewart to undertake.

### **Hervey Bay City Council**

- Hervey Bay City Council and Wide Bay Water staff was very helpful during the planning for the project launch at River Heads - going out of their way to help MRCCC before and during the launch.



**Mary River at Conondale**

### **Tiaro Shire Council**

- Tiaro Shire Council helped to obtain suitable logs for the large woody debris project. The Mayor of Tiaro Shire, Cr John Horrex, estimated the in-kind support from Tiaro Shire Council for the project to be very considerable.

## **Significant Projects**

- **Cooroy Mt - Upper Six Mile Creek Rivercare Project**

This collaborative project involves many different community groups and organisations, including Noosa Landcare, Noosa Council, WWF and Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group, and the property owners, Sean and Lee Rothsey.

The project involves over 15 kilometres of streambank fencing and 25 000 native riparian seedlings along Six Mile Creek from Cooroy Mt Beauty Spot almost to Lake Macdonald. This section of creek has numerous snags, large woody debris, pools and riffles to support Mary River Cod and consequently 500 fingerlings (raised at the Lake Macdonald Fish Hatchery) were released at this site last December.

Significant television and newspaper coverage has been generated through this project, further enhancing the awareness of riparian zone issues in the wider community. The Director General of the Environment Protection Agency has also visited the project. (Phil Berrill even got the DG doing water quality sampling in the creek – with no television cameras around! – Ed.)

- **Friends of Kilcoy Creek Rivercare Project**

The Regional Assessment Panel for the Natural Heritage Trust was very impressed when they visited this project on their inspection of the project. It involves approximately 10 kilometres of streambank fencing along Kilcoy Creek, near Conondale. This project on Kilcoy Creek is positioned very strategically as its headwaters are formed in the Conondale Ranges, and flows out to the Mary River just below Crystal Waters, near Conondale. It is prime habitat for the Mary River Cod, and the undescribed species of Spiny Crayfish. Locals have seen the rare Spiny Crayfish crossing the road. Bob Simpson of DPI Fisheries have released Mary River Cod in this creek, and some properties involved with the project have been Land for Wildlife registered.

However the most significant factor of this project is the enthusiasm of the landholders involved with the project. There are five landholders involved, and each is helping each other to undertake the project – thus forming an informal 'Friends of Kilcoy Creek'. This work has stimulated other interest, and more projects will be forthcoming in the near future. An Envirofund application has been submitted to further the project downstream, and involve more landholders.

The landholders have also formed a Waterwatch Group through Phil Berrill and will monitor the quality of the water in the creek every month. This project would not have been successful without the fantastic support of Scott Woolbank and Phil Berrill.

- **Tiaro Landcare Mary River Turtle Nesting Site Protection Project**

Tiaro Landcare's Turtle nesting site protection project was part of a larger project by Greening Australia called the Pilot Mary River Turtle Recovery Project. Greening Australia's project involved monitoring nesting banks for egg-laying activity and predation, producing information on the extent of turtle hatchlings and raising public awareness. Funding was then sought through the Rivercare Grants Program for fencing materials to control stock access to the nesting sites.

Plastic wire-mesh was trialled on top of the nesting sites to prevent predators consuming the eggs, while at the same time allowing turtle hatchlings to pass through unimpeded on their journey to the River. This proved successful with predation much reduced, and hatchlings able to pass through easily.

## **Monitoring – Industrial Placement Student Project**

During August 2001 to February 2002 an Industrial Placement Student, Luke Brown, from Gatton College commenced a study of the Obi Obi Creek. The objective of his project was to collect baseline information on the large woody debris site before the project commenced. Luke collected at least 6 months of information from the site. A full draft report is available from the Resource Centre.

His findings show that the whole site is rated as 'moderate' using the Index of Stream Condition Assessment - with the streamside zone or riparian area rated as poor.

During the course of his studies, Luke detected a significant spike in the level of pH in the Obi Obi Creek presumably linked with an increase in water temperature. The reason for this spike is not

entirely known, but can be attributed to an increase in algal growth at the same time linked to the increase in water temperature.

Luke also undertook native and exotic plant surveys of the Obi Obi Creek sub-catchment, and found that woody weeds were very common such as Camphor Laurel and Privet. Although Obi Obi Creek still has good intact riparian vegetation, he only identified eight species of native plants that were common along the creek. His survey in the Obi Obi Gorge provided a good snapshot of the potential diversity of the creek – with over 80 species identified.

The information collected by Luke will help form part of the information used to write the Lower Obi Obi Creek Rehabilitation Plan.

Recently Griffith University electro-fished this stretch of creek, and very few species of fish were found, because the site does not provide good habitat for fish at present. A full report of the fish assemblage of this project site can also be obtained from the Resource Centre.

### **Other Projects**

- **Lower Obi Obi Creek Rehabilitation Plan**

The Department of Natural Resources & Mines has contracted consultants Fisher Stewart to prepare a Rehabilitation Plan for the Lower Obi Obi Creek – from the Baroon Pocket Dam Spillway to the junction with the Mary River. Steve Dudgeon will be responsible for preparing this Plan, with the input of the MRCCC, Maroochy and Caloundra Council, WWF and local landholders. Luke Brown's Industrial Placement Report will provide invaluable information to Steve during the preparation of this Plan.

- **Envirofund Application for Friends of Kilcoy Creek**

As a result of the significant amount of interest expressed in rehabilitating the Kilcoy Creek area, an Envirofund application was prepared jointly by the Friends of Kilcoy Creek and MRCCC. It is hoped this proposal will be successful and Phase Two of the project can be implemented.

- **Telstra Countrywide Grant**

MRCCC successfully applied for a Telstra Countrywide Grant for \$4000 through Landcare Australia. This grant is for tree-planting activities in the Maryborough / Tiaro area, and will be a joint project between MRCCC, Lower Mary Landcare Group and Tiaro Landcare Group.

Discussions have been held with both the Lower Mary Landcare Group and the Tiaro Landcare Group. Tiaro Landcare Group has selected Petrie Park to continue their established plantings. The Lower Mary Landcare Group has inspected numerous sites but at this point a site has not been confirmed. Although a site near the Woocoo Shire Depot is the most likely candidate.

### **Publicity & Promotion**

During the 2001/02 year the project has been in attendance at the following exhibitions and field days:

- Implementing the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan Project Launch – River Heads.
- Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Field Day – Amphitheatre, Figtree Lane & Highfield property.
- Six Mile Creek Cod Enhancement Project Launch – Six Mile Creek Rest Area, Gympie.
- Gympie Landcare Tree-planting Events – Clean-up Australia Day.
- Cooloola Environment Expo & Awards Dinner – Gympie.



*Tree-planting near Cooroy Mountain –  
Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group*

- Waterwatch Training Days at Maryborough, Tiaro, Gympie, Woocoo, Amamoor, Maleny, Conondale and Kenilworth.
- Noosa Landcare Environment Day Field Day – Pomona.
- Tiaro Landcare Fishing Competition - Tiaro.
- Mary River Turtle Forum – Tiaro Council Chambers.
- Maryborough Show – Maryborough.
- ‘Chainsaw to Fine Furniture’ – Maleny.
- Rural Futures Centre Opening and ‘Caring for Tomorrow Today’ – Pomona.
- Maleny Show – Maleny.

## **Mary River Waterwatch Community Network**

### **Summary of Activities**



≈ Initiation of Volunteer Networks in Maleny, Conondale, Kenilworth, Kilkivan, Amamoor, Lower-Wonga and Tiaro.

≈ Networks in the Woocoo Shire, Maryborough, Wolvi and Biggenden are planned to kick off before the end of this year, if funding is forthcoming for the purchase of additional Waterwatch Kits for these groups.

≈ Training Days conducted at Gympie Weir, Lake Macdonald, Kilkivan Showgrounds, Kilcoy Creek, Obi Obi Creek at Maleny, Petrie Park Tiaro, Widgee, Wonga, Utopia and the Mary River at Maryborough.

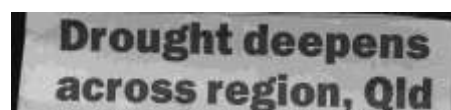
≈ Visited over 40 primary, secondary and tertiary classes all of which have participated in water quality monitoring, riparian awareness and macro-invertebrate ‘water bug’ surveys. I believe this component of the Waterwatch project is very worthwhile with many participants experiencing local creeks, rivers and dams for the very first time.

≈ Held training for Green Corps, Work for the Dole and Community Jobs Plan participants at several revegetation sites along Six Mile Creek and the Mary River. Gympie and District Landcare has achieved much with the assistance of their ‘trainees’ and continued training partnerships with Waterwatch are hoped for the future.

≈ Displays at the Maleny Show, Maryborough Show, Noosa Show, Rural Futures Centre opening in Pomona, Lake Macdonald with schools and training days, Chainsaw to Fine Furniture Expo at Maleny and the Tiaro Annual Fishing Competition at Petrie Park. Participated in EPA pilot project developing realistic quality assurance guidelines for volunteer networks, upgrading training protocol, assisting with equipment calibration and maintenance and providing valuable training for project staff and volunteers.

### **Waterwatch turns into watersearch as El nino arrives**

#### **Phil’s Foreword – strict water restrictions and more fish kills seem likely**



*Gympie Times Headline  
14 August 2002*

Over the last few months the challenge for the volunteers around the catchment has been to find enough water to sample. Most Creeks are dry, the ‘Mighty Mary River’ has slowed to a trickle - only the meagre irrigation water released from Lakes Borumba and Baroon has stirred her recently. The current capacities of both dams are dangerously low at present.

Many fish kills have been reported and more seem imminent if the rains don’t come. Strict water restrictions can only postpone the eventual depletion of the remaining water resources, so keep your gaze to the north and the hope of early spring rains and save water, shower with a friend.

Declared drought and reality aside, it’s not all doom and gloom. The Mary River Waterwatch Network has had a very successful year thanks mainly to the hard work of some remarkable staff

and volunteers whose commitment to the environment gives us all hope for the future, but first let's focus on the culprit for our woes, 'El Nino', and reflect on the 12 months since the last Annual General Meeting was held.

### **What is the El Nino phenomenon and how does it occur?**

The term El Nino refers to the Christ child and was given by Peruvian fisherman (whose catches were adversely affected by the phenomenon) because the unusual warming usually becomes pronounced before Christmas.

#### **El-Nino and the Southern Oscillation**

- ⋈ A quasi-cyclic phenomenon that occurs every three to seven years and has persisted for at least the last 450 years (Rasmussen 1985, Enfield 1989).
- ⋈ "El Nino" refers to the occurrence of abnormally high sea-surface temperatures (SST) off the coast of Peru.
- ⋈ "Southern Oscillation" refers to the accompanying low atmospheric pressure over the eastern Pacific and the high atmospheric pressure in the western Pacific.

*Figure 1: El-Nino Southern Oscillation areas of effect (Lawrence and Dingman 1994)*



#### **The cycle begins**

The typical El-Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) begins in September, when the westward trade winds in the western equatorial Pacific are abnormally strong and sea-surface temperatures in the eastern equatorial Pacific are low.

In December, an anomalous eastward wind flow develops near the International Date Line, and the eastern sea-surface temperatures begin to rise. Accompanying this eastward airflow, the extensive pool of high-sea-surface temperature water that usually exists in the far western equatorial Pacific begins to move eastward.

This movement causes the sea level in the western Pacific to drop, while that along the Peruvian coast rises as much as 10cm by April. The sea surface temperatures along the South American coast typically peak in April to June, but the remainder of the eastern and central Pacific continues to warm until December.

December and January mark the "mature" stage of an El-Nino Southern Oscillation episode, when low pressures exist above the widespread warm water in the eastern Pacific and the westward (easterly) equatorial winds essentially cease. Following this, sea-surface temperatures in the easternmost Pacific begin to decline rapidly and are usually below-normal levels by May.

Thus the entire episode takes about 18 to 24 months.

The end of an El-Nino episode begins when the eastward waves of warm water are reflected off South America and, in a complicated process that involves poleward circulation of the reflected westward moving surface water and atmospheric processes, the sea-surface temperature returns to its original levels and the easterly trade-wind flow is re-established (Enfield 1989)

Although El-Nino Southern Oscillation is essentially the product of large scale, long-period waves in the surface of the tropical Pacific Ocean, it involves major dislocations of the jet streams that can steer unusual weather systems into low and mid latitude regions around the world. The result is unusually warm or cold winters in particular regions, drought in normally productive agricultural areas, and torrential rains in normally arid regions. The most consistent consequences are severe



droughts in Australia and northern South America and heavy rainfall in Ecuador and Northern Peru. (Lawrence & Dingman. 1994)

### ***Waterwatch – Partnerships in Preservation - The Changing of the Guard***

Catchment Management has recently evolved, a changing of the guard so to speak. This example from pre-history seemed inappropriate enough: compare the magnitude of change from the age of Dinosaurs to the all-conquering Mammals of today with that of change from government to community leadership of ICM. Government agencies that previously had been the driving force behind Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) have now taken a metaphorical 'step back'. This change in ideology has increased opportunities for community leadership roles in ICM. A notable recent example of this would be community and sector representatives electing a committee to implement a framework for delivery of the National Action Plan for Water Quality and Salinity through the Burnett and Mary River Catchments.

All agree that government agencies, be it Federal, State or Local still have and must play an important role in managing the future of ICM in the Mary River Catchment and beyond. Waterwatch has been actively seeking partners to help expand and enhance the volunteer network with the ultimate goal of incorporating the entire Mary River Catchment into small groups of regular water monitoring volunteers.

Over the past 12 months some significant contributions have come from government organisations and without their ongoing assistance Waterwatch would be much less capable of serving the wider community. Major contributions have come from the following;



*This sequence of three photos was taken on the Mary River off Eastern Mary River Rd. Excess nutrients and ponding led to this bloom of Azolla and Filamentous green algae.*



#### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

The EPA has contributed \$10,000 to assist with the initiation of the volunteer network, the majority of this moneys has been spent on upgrading our water testing equipment to help ensure that all

data collection can be viewed with a high degree of data confidence and complies with Quality Assurance (QA) guidelines for both equipment calibration requirements and the level and quality of training protocol provided.

In addition to providing financial support the EPA has also sponsored a Natural Heritage Funded Project designed to develop a standardised method of easy to follow quality assurance and field sampling guidelines for key water quality parameters like the levels of salt, pH and turbidity. It is envisaged that other Waterwatch Networks anywhere in Australia could easily adopt the QA guidelines developed during this project.

A large part of the contribution from the EPA to the Waterwatch network has been the employment of Sara Johnson as project officer to oversee this project based at the EPA offices in Brisbane. With both the Maroochy and Mary River Catchments participating it has been a valuable conduit for the interchange of ideas and practical assistance, our Waterwatch Network has benefited and learned a great deal from the experience.

Sara's project is due to end December 2002 and her high level of enthusiasm and professionalism have been a key factor in the improvements made in the overall working of the volunteer network, she will be sorely missed.

John Ferris and the rest of the field team from the EPA offices in Brisbane have also contributed with advice, training and regular QA visits, if we can achieve their level of field-testing accuracy then we will be doing very well indeed.



*Left: Sara Johnson demonstrates the correct use of the Turbidity tube to Amamoor Waterwatch Volunteers*

Russ (Possum) Davies, (pictured right) an EPA Ranger based at the Kenilworth Forestry Station is regularly monitoring several strategic sites for Waterwatch with several more sites along Amamoor Creek soon to be included in the monthly roster.



The significance of this contribution is easily overlooked but the benefits of a vigilant and professional team of Rangers is a huge asset to the Waterwatch Network and to the whole community.



*Above: Amamoor training day*

*Below: Mary River at Tiaro, Lyn Klupfel's regular water monitoring site*



*Phil Berrill monitoring with Fred Goeths on Fred's property in the Upper Mary*

*Below: Sara Johnson with Waterwatch Volunteers at the Kilkivan Showgrounds*



**EPA Partnership Project Report**  
**Sara Johnson, Waterwatch Support Officer**

This year saw the EPA working in partnership with a number of Waterwatch community groups to improve the rigor and data confidence of water quality monitoring data. As many of you will know, Phil Berrill and I have been working to achieve this in the Mary Catchment, as well as increasing the monitoring network.

Some enthusiastic community Waterwatch groups have been monitoring the water quality of their local waterways for many years. There is great potential for the EPA to utilise this widespread information for environmental decision-making if the quality of the data is known.

To help achieve this, the Waterways Scientific Services Branch of the EPA is managing an NHT funded project that is working with Waterwatch networks in two South-east QLD catchments: the Maroochy and Mary River catchments. The project aims to incorporate quality assurance into all facets of Waterwatch monitoring programs to ensure the accuracy of their data. We are also working with the existing networks to increase the coverage of monitoring sites across the catchments. Community groups have a great capacity to collect water quality data during storm and flood events, which are particularly important events in terms of waterway management. To enhance this capability, we are encouraging residents in strategic positions along rivers to monitor turbidity during these events. This is but one example of a community-agency partnership where, by working together, we can make better environmental management decisions.

In the Mary Catchment, the process has been very slow to date across such a large catchment area and was made even slower during Phil B's recent illness. However we are working towards incorporating quality assurance into all facets of the Waterwatch monitoring program by the end of the year. Increased quality assurance is beneficial to everyone in that it will ensure that Waterwatcher's monitoring time and effort is not wasted and also that the data collected will be available for greater natural resource management in your local area. I'd like to thank everyone for their patience during this initial establishment time and for your continued interest in the health of your local waterways.



Traditionally NRM has played a major lead role in the overall implementation of ICM strategies since its inception. More recently NRM has reduced its' overall participation in ICM, the contribution to Waterwatch is still significant

however with a proportion of senior staff time allocated over the last 12 months to assist with coordination of the Waterwatch network. A good example of this partnership at work has been the recent meetings initiated by Bob Watson from NRM between the Burnett and Mary River Waterwatch groups to develop a modern business plan for the coming years, a step forward for both Waterwatch programs. Brian Stockwell's continued collaboration with the MRCCC is also greatly appreciated and I must add the return from Europe was fortuitously timed given the devastating floods that hammered the region only days after his return, Nostradamus perhaps!!!!

In addition to the project officer support, NRM has provided invaluable assistance with the production of high quality maps of the catchment, printing and laminating of interpretive posters for schools and field days and helped out whenever asked, many thanks to all at the Gympie Office.

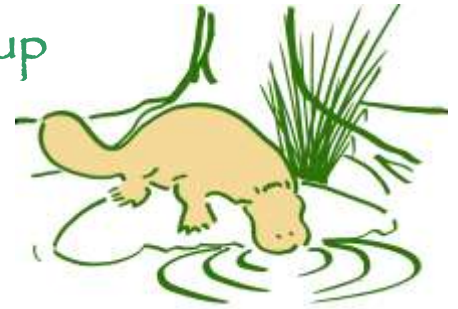
Christina Dwyer and Kirsten Kenyon keep the wheels turning all year and have provided invaluable support to the Mary River Waterwatch Network. Their commitment to the success of all the networks throughout Queensland has never faulted.

The updated version of the Waterwatch database will become available in late September of this year and will greatly enhance the presentation and availability of all data collected and has come at a very critical time in the development and improvement of our Waterwatch network.

At time of printing the Waterwatch Website should be finished it's upgrade so check it out.

# Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group

The Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group (LMCCG) was formed in April 1999. The main foundation issue was and still is the Cabomba weed problem in Lake Macdonald. The group acts as a community clearing house, coordinating research and its implementation and promoting community action.



Lake Macdonald is in a regionally strategic and critical location at the headwaters of the Mary River system, a waterway serving the community needs of the Shires of Noosa, Maroochy, Gympie, Tiaro and Maryborough.

Lake Macdonald and its tributaries are habitat for priority endangered species such as Mary River Cod (the lake forms one of the major nursery sites for stocked fingerlings) and Purple Spotted Gudgeon Fish. The Mary River Turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) and an as yet undescribed species of *Elseya* turtle have a native range downstream. The habitat alterations caused by the prolific growth of Cabomba poses a significant risk to the populations of these species and may be considered as a 'threatening process'.

During 1999 the LMCCG carried out a pilot study into the efficacy of removing the Cabomba infestation using a mechanical harvester, highlighting the environmental impacts caused by Cabomba and the benefits of its removal. When Cabomba was removed, dissolved oxygen levels improved, water nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) were reduced by 25%, and significant amounts of pollution were removed (1,500 kg nitrogen, 122 kg phosphorus, 380 kg manganese, 9.4 g mercury and 216 g lead were removed from the lake in 19 days).

Mechanical control targets a weakness in the plants survival biology. Cabomba has no rhizomes, stolons, tubers, turions or seed. Its only method of spread is meristem fragments, especially the stem tip that is designed to survive hardship and travel on water currents.

The harvester removes the plant canopy, including the stem tips at the water surface, thus reducing potential spread downstream. Also the vigour of the plant is weakened. It is intended to reduce the standing crop of the Cabomba from approximately 75 tonnes/ha to 20-25 tonnes/ha. It has been determined that repeated removal of this amount of material severely weakens the plants and threatens their survival.

After 6 years of intense research by members of LMCCG, no native underwater plants have been found in Lake Macdonald. Cabomba has established a virtual monoculture. Competitive shading and allelopathic activity by the Cabomba infestation has completely destroyed the submerged native plant community, which has in turn seriously influenced the aquatic fauna.

**Cabomba:** Botanical name *Cabomba caroliniana* var. *Carolina* A. Gray.

Cabomba is an American submerged plant. It is recognised as a weed of national significance across Australia. A declared pest plant in QLD, NSW, WA and NT because it:

- Degrades potable water quality,
- Is a public safety risk, and
- Destroys nature conservation values.

Cabomba is a herb forming a dense canopy at the water surface. Native submerged grasses form dense savannah grassland at the bottom of the lake. The control of Cabomba removes the canopy allowing more light to enter, thus promoting regeneration of the aquatic grasses. Areas that were harvested twice during the 2000 pilot study only recorded two remnant native Hydrilla plants surviving beneath the Cabomba canopy. The growth habit of Cabomba compared to the native aquatic grasses can be exploited to favour the regeneration of these grasses.

## **Native Water Grasses:**

Prior to the invasion of Lake Macdonald by Cabomba, the lake bed had a thriving underwater community of native grasses. Native water plants provide feeding, breeding, nursery and protection sites for all water creatures as well as playing a big role in keeping pollution under control.

Through the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, the LMCCG has received funds from Environment Australia's Weeds of National Significance Program for two projects aimed at tackling

the Cabomba problem. The projects have now commenced in collaboration from Tom Anderson at the Alan Fletcher Research Station and the Noosa Shire Council.

The projects are:

- **34505. Strategic Cabomba Control by Community Action**
- **34506. Aquatic Habitat Restoration after Cabomba control.**

The projects actively involve the wider community. School groups, catchment management and Waterwatch members are taking part in planting the propagated native water plants, directly helping to restore the natural balance of the lakes ecosystems.

At the commencement of the project earlier this year, an aquaculture nursery area was set up to grow Hydrilla, Vallisneria and Potamogeton aquatic grass species. This involved establishing 8 above ground pools. Native grasses are field collected from within the Six Mile Creek/Mary River system to provide initial propagating material, and are grown-on in the nursery.

After areas of Cabomba have been harvested, they are assessed for their revegetation potential. Where it is established that the area is suitable for revegetation, plants are taken from the pools and prepared for planting. This involves wrapping the roots with some substrate from the pools in a degradable material and dropping these 'packages' from an aluminium boat. The plants descend and lodge on the bottom, where they will quickly take root and re-colonise the lake bed.

Longer-term maintenance of the operation will be undertaken by the LMCCG (with the assistance of Noosa Shire Council), once the project has been completed. The project aims to develop successful technologies and techniques for water resource management.

**Aims:**

- Control over 100 ha of Cabomba in selected priority areas.
- Revegetate 100 ha of Lake Macdonald with native aquatic grasses.
- Enhance native habitat.
- Improve the visual amenity of the lake.

**Objectives:**

- Evaluate mechanical harvesting regimes.
- Establish a native aquatic grass nursery.
- Develop long term, natural control of Cabomba by re-establishing competitive native aquatic grasses.
- Develop technology and principles regarding culture of aquatic native grasses.
- Improve the quality of recreational experiences offered on the lake.

**Funding:**

Total budget is \$867,000

Funding source	Year \$		
	Jan-June 2001	June-July 2001	June-Dec2002
Commonwealth Gov't. Natural Heritage Trust	0	118,000	56,600
State Gov't. Natural Resources & Mines	17,500	32,000	16,000
Local Gov't. Noosa Council	51,800	428,000	61,500
Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group	7,900	50,800	25,400

**Principles underpinning the plan:**

- Community driven plan.
- Resources directed to where most is to be gained with the best chance of success.
- Long term natural control methods.
- Integrated weed management.

**Relationships with other plans:**

This plan reinforces the:

- National Weeds Strategy.
- South East Queensland Environmental Weeds Strategy
- Noosa Council's Pest Management Plan

### **Harvesting Regimes:**

Experience has shown that Cabomba regrowth after harvesting does not follow a consistent pattern. The effect of season, temperature, wind and flood influence Cabomba response to cutting. To overcome this the harvesting regimes are based on Cabomba growth rate rather than a time period.

The plan studies 2 harvesting regimes.

1. To cut the Cabomba on a regular, relentless basis. (which will never allow the Cabomba to reach the surface.)
2. To cut the Cabomba at a lower intensity. (The plants are allowed to reach the surface before being harvested.)
3. Control areas .(This area will not be harvested, a control provides comparative data on Cabomba growth.)
4. Areas of the dam not under experimentation will be harvested on an as required basis. This will reduce plant biomass, and consequently minimise weed out flow into Six Mile Creek.

Council's Weed Supervisor and researchers work closely with the harvester operator. The operator is also involved with research. It has been suggested that an additional harvester operator be selected and trained to maximise use of the harvester.

### **Regeneration with native grasses.**

Lake Macdonald prior to invasion of Cabomba had a thriving submerged plant community consisting of mainly grasses such as

- *Hydrilla verticillata*
- *Vallisneria nana*
- *Potamogeton spp*

Of these species, Hydrilla and Vallisneria are the most hardy. Mechanical harvesting will remove the Cabomba canopy allowing sunlight to penetrate the water column and provide opportunities for revegetating the lake.

The recovery plan depends on continued Cabomba harvesting before and after the native grasses have been planted.

### **Nursery**

A suitable site has been established near the Noosa and District Landcare Nursery in Pomona.

- Ground preparation consisted of 150 mm of gravel base.
- Growing ponds have been set up for the propagation of hydrilla and vallisneria.
- Ponds are made of heavy timber and thick PVC lining.

All plant material is collected from the Six Mile Creek/Mary River system under an appropriate permit. Care is taken to ensure wild native plant populations are not damaged in the process.

### **Scientific studies by Gabrielle Viviansmith (AFRS)**

Research is being carried out with an appreciation of wider issues such as, landscape aesthetics, wildlife needs and public expectations.

Assessments are being made of:

- Biodiversity. Different species of flora and fauna present. Population sizes and structure, % survival of native plants.
- Habitat integrity. Assess vegetation strata and health eg canopy condition, seedling establishment, plant growth, runner length, Cabomba tolerance to native plants.
- Long term sustainability. Overall interactions between biodiversity, habitat integrity and external landscape processes. Influence of ongoing harvester operations, Cabomba resilience and nutrient impacts.

Methodology used is:

- Monthly scuba diving inspections will be made along permanent 50 m transects that have been set up at 20 locations around the lake foreshore.
- Plant biomass and species composition will be done using diver collected 1m<sup>2</sup> quadrats. Notes will be made of plant weight, plant number, plant length, % flower, % leaf and root mass.
- Records will be kept of water appearance, secchi disc, water clarity, wave height, temperature and dissolved oxygen.

Analysis will focus on biomass changes in Cabomba over time and with treatment.

Regular progress reports will be made to the monthly meetings of the catchment care group providing guidance and flexibility to future harvesting management decisions.

### **Research question 1.**

Do harvesting regimes reduce Cabomba's capacity to dominate?

This would involve a comparison of baseline data (before harvesting) gathered from transects and after harvesting regimes have been implemented at similar times of the year.

Capacity to dominate can be measured by:

1. Plant biomass (wet plant weight)/ m<sup>2</sup>.
2. Plant length.
3. Diversity (number of native species / m<sup>2</sup>., biomass of native species/ m<sup>2</sup>).
4. Buoyancy, specific gravity.
5. Plant health (epiphyte load, colour, strength).
6. Water quality (clarity, algal blooms etc).

Some environmental variables and /or possible covariates.

1. Water depth
2. Sediment type

### **Research question 2.**

Do harvesting regimes influence revegetation success?

The effect of harvesting regimes upon the success of the revegetation program can be determined by comparing measures of revegetation success from different harvesting regimes (control, intensity 1 and 2).

Revegetation success can be measured by:

1. Increased abundance (biomass or wet plant weight/ m<sup>2</sup>) of native species (total and relative to Cabomba biomass).
2. Improved diversity of native plant species / m<sup>2</sup>
3. Reduction in Cabomba abundance (area covered and biomass / m<sup>2</sup>).
4. Improved ecosystem function (water quality, macro invertebrate diversity, fish and bird populations.)
5. Frequency of harvesting.
6. Longer-term increased cover (areal expansion) of native species (mapping approach).

Some environmental variables and /or possible covariates.

1. Water depth (revegetation success may be dependent on water depth)
2. Sediment type (texture, pH, N, P, organic mater).

### **Experimental design.**

A single factor Analysis of variance design with blocking will be used to test questions 1 and 2. Harvesting intensity would be the factor or treatment tested, with the spatial locations of sampling transects representing the blocking factor (2 blocks). Design could be 3 harvesting intensity treatments  $\times$  2 blocks  $\times$  3 replicates per block Total of 18 transects).

### Allocation of treatments and sites.

Treatment	Block (location)	Transect number	Map grid ref.
1, intense	1	T1, T4, T11	A1, A4, E2
	2	T13, T14, T15	J13, I13, H12
2, low	1	T7, T8, T9	C3, C4, D3
	2	T18, T22, T24	I12, G12, H12
3, control	1	T17, T19, T20	F2, F7, D5
	2	T16, T21, T23	I9, J12, I10

- **Block 1 is Lake Macdonald Dr, and block 2 is Hayward Rd.**

### Research question 3.

Are some revegetation strategies more successful than others?

There are multiple approaches that could be taken here, but given the current pioneering stage of aquatic revegetation and limitations on experimental design complexity, a very simple approach is suggested.

If different revegetation strategies are to be compared, then some questions that could be investigated are:

- Whether planting's should be in patches of single species or 3 species mixtures?
- Whether a single planting or repeated planting's should be used?
- Will planting density improve revegetation success and have any impact upon Cabomba?

Density is one of the most fundamental factors affecting revegetation success and cost of revegetation therefore represents a priority strategy to test.

The competitive nature of Cabomba and the range of aquatic habitats present (due to the depth gradient), means that both follow up planting and a mixed species approach, will be best bet options for revegetation success, making the other revegetation strategy questions posed above of secondary importance. Any relationships to individual species success and other factors (eg. Water depth or harvesting regime) could be extracted from the data collected.

This could be done by a simple experimental design that investigates the effect of harvesting regime and planting density upon revegetation success. This should also illuminate any interaction between the revegetation strategies (eg. Planting density) and harvesting intensity treatments.

### Revegetation Timing

- Follow-up planting of one or more species should be considered.
- Aim for when Cabomba growth is slowest relative to native species growth.
- Given the limited timeframe of the project there may not be much flexibility in timing of the plantings.
- Should aim to do plantings in research areas in a compressed time period (to enable valid comparisons of treatments). Other areas could be revegetated with a more relaxed timeframe.

### Design

Some questions need to be addressed before deciding on the planting design (spatial location of plants).

- What will be the planting density per m<sup>2</sup>.
- How many plants will be propagated?
- How much area can be revegetated.
- If different density treatments are to be used how will these be set out ( experimental design considerations).
- Where will be the planting take place (presumably along transect lines allocated to revegetation treatments)?

### Experimental design.



Using the existing harvesting program and field experience, planting density and which species could be tested for revegetation success. A balanced factorial design could be set out in the intensely harvested areas. Two species hydrilla and vallisneria would be one factor, while planting density high and low would be the other . 2 species, 2 densities, 3 replications.

**Treatment allocation.**

Species	Planting density	Replication sites
Hydrilla	High	T1, T15, T25
	Low	T2, T6, T26
Vallisneria	High	T3, T5, T27
	Low	T4, T14, T28

**Progress To Date**

**Nursery Construction**

The Native Aquatic Plant Nursery is in full production. The eight ponds are currently holding winter stock of Vallisneria and Hydrilla, with some Potamogeton. Winter has resulted in slower growth rates of the aquatic plants and pond temperatures are being logged for further analyses. The nursery compound is fully fenced and signs have been erected to inform the public of the intention of the project. Noosa Shire Council has also installed the water supply and backflow devises.

**Planting**

Two plantings have occurred in Lake Macdonald. The first planting was a celebration of World Environment Day and Cooroy State Scholl was invited to participate. Around 70 kids and parents planted native aquatic plants in an area around the Gerry Cooke Fish Hatchery. The day involved a tour of the Aquatic Nursery at Pomona, followed by a walk and talk along the shores of Lake Macdonald. Waterwatch conducted a workshop on water health in the catchment along side the native aquatic plantings. Follow-up work by the project officers has resulted in Cooroy State School adopting LMCCG as their first point of contact for environmental issues.



*Phil Moran with trainee Shane Christensen at the nursery site*

The second planting in July resulted in 6,000 plants being established on the lake bed along predesignated transects. A pontoon was used to ferry the plants to the various transects where the plants were dropped into the lake. Subsequent monitoring by Abyss Diving Services has reported the plants have survived the first month in the lake and have not been out competed by the Cabomba.

**Video Data and Analyses**

The lake is divided up into 20 transects which run 50 metres from the shoreline into the lake. These transects are videoed once a month. The data from the video transects is being entered into a spreadsheet for analyses. This process involves viewing the transect videos and rating the density, epiphytic growth and the posture of the Cabomba plants. The time of year, harvesting regime, and native plantings will be analysed to assess their effect on Cabomba growth. There are more videos to be filmed and analysed before any preliminary data analyses can occur. The results are anticipated to be available before the end of December 2002.

**Publicity and Community Education**

Date	Event	Location	Participants
12 <sup>th</sup> March 2002	Insight into Biological Control Of Cabomba	Cooroy	Dr Don Sands (CSIRO) Dr Cecily Rasmussen (JCU)

			Tom Anderson (AFRS) Keith Garraty (NSC)
18 <sup>th</sup> May 2002	Rural Futures Opening	Pomona	Static Cabomba/LMCCG Display
12 <sup>th</sup> June 2002	Nursery Opening and Planting	Lake Macdonald	Cooroy State School and parents
26 <sup>th</sup> June 2002	Waterwatch	Lake Macdonald	Volunteers-Static display
19 <sup>th</sup> July 2002	Display	Cooroy	Commonwealth Bank
26 <sup>th</sup> July 2002	Walk and Talk	Beauty Falls, Cooroy	Cooroy State School and parents, Landholder
28 <sup>th</sup> July	Tree Planting	Frogmouth Lane, Cooroy	Volunteers and NCS -Static display

### **Biological Control**

LMCCG is currently investigating the prospect of biological control agents for Cabomba. Funding is being sought from various shires and government authorities in NSW and Queensland. To date over \$80,000 has been pledged to launch an initial investigation into control agents found in South America. Total funding for the project is expected to be around \$500,000. This project is still in its infancy but may be a world first and could put LMCCG on the world stage.



*Cooroy State School kids planting native aquatic plants*

### **Reuse of harvested Cabomba**

On behalf of the LMCCG, the MRCCC have lodged an Envirofund application to explore avenues of reusing the tonnes of Cabomba being constantly harvested from the lake. If successful, possibilities for reuse of harvested Cabomba as a mulch will be explored at demonstration sites in the Catchment.

**Conor Neville & Phillip Moran, Lake Macdonald Project Officers**

## **WWF Mary River Cod Recovery Project Update**

### **Phillip Trendell, World Wildlife Fund Mary River Cod Recovery Project**

This year has seen the continuation of the WWF Mary River Cod recovery project in targeting sites for on-ground and in-stream works. The aim of the project for the year was to extend on-ground works to include more potential re-stocking sites and to also locate 2-3 suitable areas for improving in-stream habitat through the use of Large Woody Debris and Hollow Logs.

### **In-Stream Sites**

- Yabba Creek Anabranh – placement of Hollow Logs and Root Wads to increase habitat diversity and potential breeding sites. Anabranh is a natural fishway around Imbil Weir. A concrete pipe was also donated by Cooloola Council and placed in a site that had plenty of snags but no hollows.
- Diamondfield Creek – Tributary off of Amamoor Creek. Placement of Hollows and Root Wads for Habitat improvement.
- Obi Obi Creek – Working with Dairy Farmer Ivan Freidland to improve habitat and control erosion along creek bank.

### **On-Ground Works**

- Extension of work at Obi Obi Creek Crossing No.2 with weed control and revegetation

- Fencing on the Mary River at Gympie (includes removal of Cats Claw and Chinese Elm) and Miva (Both sites have marked Cod Holes)
- Revegetation on Yabba Ck up-stream from Imbil at known Cod hole

### **Partnership Projects**

- WWF Mary River Cod Project has provided funding for Gympie & District Landcare project at Six-Mile Creek/Mary River – many other partners involved making it a great project to be part of. Cod habitat in this area is excellent with a known recent Cod hole.
- Working at Imbil on Yabba Creek Anabranh with Gympie & District Landcare COG Project Officer, Noel Ellis.

It has been a tough year at sites with the dry conditions meaning landholders have struggled to be able to keep water up to the trees. The heavy frosts in June and July have then caused many casualties but plenty of the trees are showing signs of new growth at the bottom.

WWF has continued to be involved in extension activities promoting Mary River Cod recovery during the year. This has included writing articles, developing posters and presentations to various groups including schools, Sunshine Coast Uni and the Gympie Rotary Club. Displays have been held at various locations from Maleny to Pomona and WWF participated in the highly successful Cooloola Environmental Expo held at the Civic Centre – an excellent job done by all organisers and participants.

The WWF Mary River Cod Project has also participated in enjoyable days organised by the MRCCC – Maryborough Waterwatch Training day and Noosa Landcare – Lake Macdonald experience for Cooroy Primary.

The WWF project would like to thank once again the MRCCC for the use of the office and equipment which is greatly appreciated by WWF and one of the main reasons for the project being successful in meeting its goals.

## **MARY CATCHMENT STRATEGY REVIEW – ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Brian Stockwell, Senior Resource Management Officer NR&M**

### **Why review the Catchment Management Strategy**

The endorsed Mary River Catchment Management Strategy was developed after a long and exhaustive consultation process that commenced in 1992 and was completed in 1997. In essence much of the strategy was based on the situation as existed in the first half of the 1990's. While many of the issues, practices and process addressed by the 1997 strategy are still current, much has changed, both in terms of implementation of recommended actions and strategies, and in the operating environment in which Catchment Management is now undertaken. Several factors effecting the capacity of the Catchment Coordinating Committee to achieve its vision and goals lead to the Committee decided to conduct a review of the strategy. These factors included:

- ❑ a strong regional focus for new Federal Government natural resource management planning and funding (under the Natural Heritage Trust and National Action Plans for Salinity and Water Quality programs),
- ❑ the end of the State Governments Integrated Catchment Management Pilot scheme in the Mary and associated strategy implementation grants,
- ❑ substantial alterations to the legislative regime with a goal of achieving sustainable natural resource management including, the Integrated Planning Act, the Water Act and the Environment Protection Act.
- ❑ an increasing enthusiasm for, and involvement in, natural resource management by Local government;
- ❑ the enhanced capacity of Landcare and Catchment Care groups within the catchment; and

- the development of new and innovative frameworks to prioritise natural resource actions, eg. as utilised in the Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan.

### **A Snapshot Of Achievement**

Analysis of the commencement of actions and implementation of strategies within the existing strategies indicate a rapid up-take of recommended catchment management practices over the five years since the strategy was published. A performance assessment review of the Strategy occurred at the end of 1998, at that time only 20% of the recommended actions within the Strategy had not been commenced. Since 1998 many of these actions have been addressed or initiated by various sectors. Others have been determined to be less relevant to the current ICM environment. Many of the actions first envisaged by the ICM plan preparation process in the early 1990's are now standard ways of operating and with only 4% of currently relevant documented actions still outstanding it is evident that continual progress has been achieved over the last decade. Of those strategies outstanding some are still highly topical issues, for example: "Conduct detailed resource assessment of groundwater in the catchment including water quality". It is clear that we cannot rest on our laurels as while many of the actions have commenced, the desired outcome of sustainable natural resource management will not be achieved unless:

- all sectors maintain a system of continuous improvement and innovation.; and
- a number of difficult policy decisions are made as part of resource planning processes that have commenced eg. Water Resource Plan, Vegetation Management Plan, National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, IPA Plans.

Our implementation success has been acknowledged nation-wide with recognition of projects on national television, the Australian Local Government Environmental Best-Practice Forum and the winning of the Queensland Rivercare Award (1999) and BP Catchment Planning Award in 2001. The challenge is to ensure the reviewed strategy maintains the Mary at the cutting edge of innovation.

### **How did we review the Strategy**

In order to respond to the changing circumstances in a timely way a Strategy Review Group consisting of industry, community, council and state government representatives was set up to initiate the review process. This group broadly scoped the current situation and past performance of the MRCCC and the implementation of its Strategy. A series of strategy review group meetings resulted in a resolution to consolidate and refocus the groups role and strategy on:

- elements and actions which have been successful in the past, and
- emerging priorities within the current natural resource management environment.

In order to analyse current and emerging priorities in more detail a series of "expert-experience panels" and a community/industry leader jury in a modified "*Planning Charrette*" process. The process adopted is shown on Figure 1. The process focussed on assessing achievements and analysing the strategies relevance to current environmental conditions and policy frameworks. The aim of the *Charrette* was to encourage participants to think of the catchment as a dynamic system of various integrating processes. The network of expert-experience panels used a systems dynamics approach to deliberate on these issues with respect to five key interrelated groups of processes driving resource management in the catchment; including:

- Land and Soil Processes
- Total Water Cycle
- Natural Ecosystem Processes
- Population Dynamics
- Coordination Processes.

Panels involved people who are, or have been, actively involved in the MRCCC network and included local and state government planners, current and ex -Councillors, Agricultural Economist, Farmers, Water Engineers, Aquatic Ecologists, Environmental Educators, Agricultural Industry & Government Extension Officers, Environmental Scientists, Landcare & Rivercare Officers, a Weed Management Planner, and Conservation group representatives. The panels reviewed the system in terms of the cultural, social, economic and environmental drivers within them and generated a

set of draft recommended strategies for future action. The jury was asked to come to a determination on four key questions after consideration of submissions from the expert-experience panels, and cross examination of witnesses provided by these panels. The critical questions upon which the Jury was empowered to answer were:

1. *What are the key cultural, social, economic and environmental elements and relationships that are driving the degradation of natural resources in the Mary River Catchment?*
2. *Which of these elements and relationships can the catchment community significantly influence in order to make a real difference now and in the future?*
3. *What are the highest priority strategies to pursue in relation to those elements that can achieve a sustainable catchment?*
4. *What are the key attributes of a coordination framework to achieve integrated catchment management in the most effective manner?*

A consensus building approach was used to generate the outcomes of the Planning Charette process, whereby the Jury provided recommendations to assist the MRCCC and others to chart their future course. It is envisaged that funds will be attracted to conduct a broader more participative spatially based planning process at a sub-catchment scale to enhance the inclusion of good integrated catchment management actions in other current resource management planning processes (eg. Integrated Planning Act Plans, National Action Plan for Salinity & Water Quality, Vegetation Man. Plans, Water Resource Plan).

### ***Evaluation Of Planning Charrette Process***

Progressive evaluation was undertaken as part of the Expert & Experience Panels and Community /Industry Leader Jury process, conducted as part of the review of the Mary River Catchment Strategy. Participants were asked to provide feedback on :

1. their understanding / or lack thereof of the process;
2. the content and delivery of presentations/ facilitation, and
3. the outcomes and overall impression of the process.

### ***Results***

The key results from the Expert – Experience Panel evaluation was that Panel Members all agreed that :

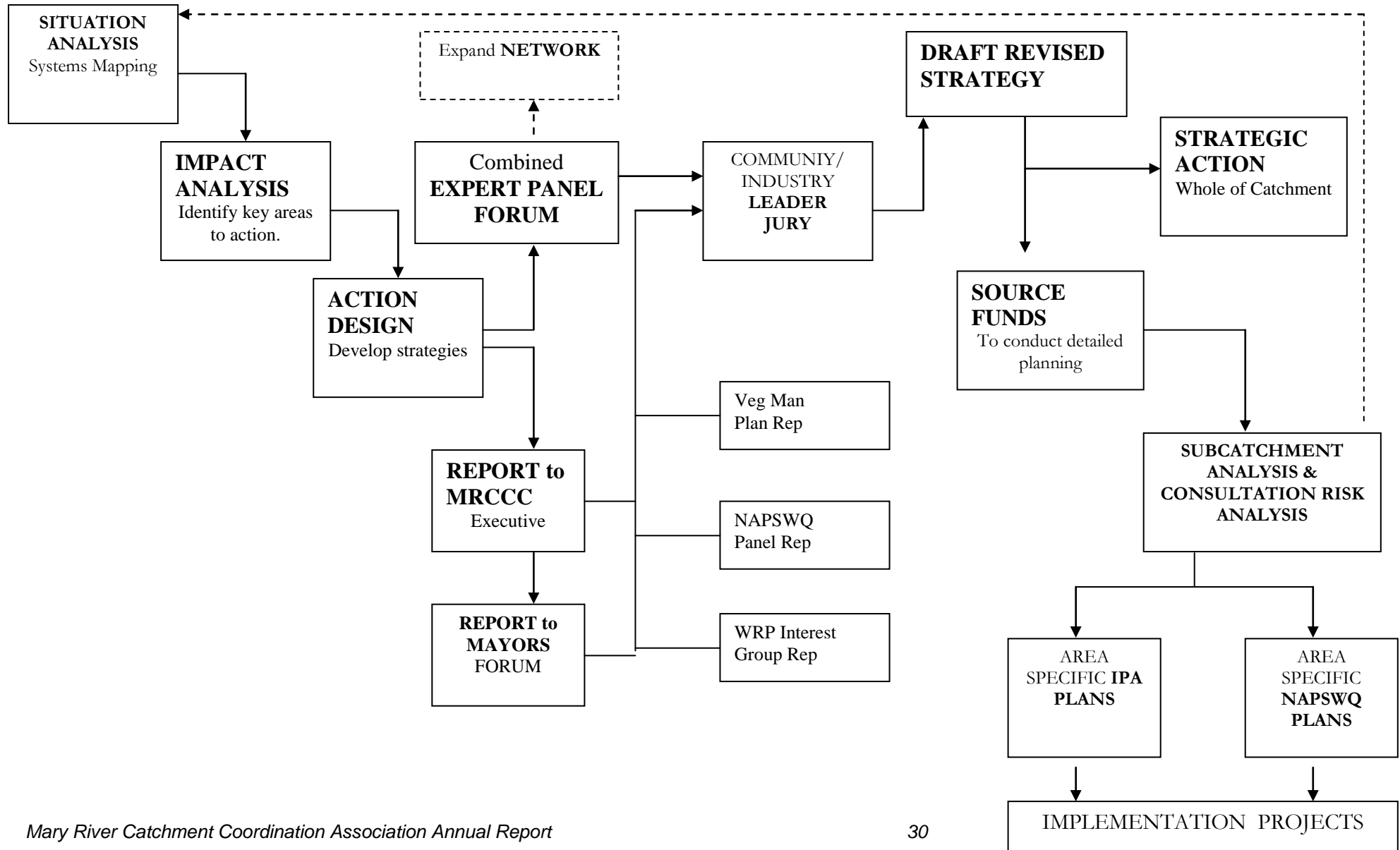
The process of systems mapping and impact/influence charting was an effective method to review complex strategies and chart future directions aligned to priorities.

1. The process of small expert/experience panels and subsequent combined forum was an effective mechanism to develop and establish an effective and efficient network of focus groups to review current integrated catchment management activities in the Mary River Catchment.
2. The network of small groups created to review the strategy provides a good model for ongoing strategic network development of people interested in achieving sustainable development of communities and management of natural resources .
3. Process could be improved if timeframes were not as tight and additional resources be made available for administration to enhance recording and dissemination of outputs.

The key results from this Jury evaluation were:

1. Just under half (47%) of the participants in the Jury were unsure or did not think that the Planning Charrette process was an effective tool for considering and evaluating complex issues, prior to the commencement of the Jury process. By the completion of the Jury all except one respondent however agreed that it was.

# Figure 1 STRATEGY REVIEW PROCESS



2. Prior to the Jury process commencing over half of the participants (61%) did not believe that, or did not know whether, the Jury of Community and Industry Leaders would be able to come up with a consensus position on key elements of the problem and strategies to address them. At the completion of the process all respondents generally supported the recommendations, and all except for one agreed that the Jury process was an effective tool to derive consensus on future directions for ICM and similar complex issues.

3. On average, over 80% of Jury respondents felt that the presentations added to their level of knowledge and understanding of the issues, but about one third of people felt that all their questions were answered.

4. The majority of Jury participants rated presenters as 'good' (median value) in terms of clarity, content, plain English, succinct answers, focus and timeliness. Overall 35% of responses indicated a rating of very good or better.

5. The most common constraint identified was the level of complexity and volume of information provided was excessive for a one day Jury, and that allocating additional time would have enhanced the process.

A summary of results will be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The method of utilising a Jury of Community and Industry Leaders to consider, reflect upon and question recommendations from Expert/ Experience Panels proved to be successful. At the completion of the Jury there was a clear set of strategies agreed upon and future directions charted using a consensus building approach.

More time was needed to:

1. Induct and explain the process and that which preceded it to Jury members;
2. Provide more time for Jury members to consider complex issues and develop questions aimed at exploring recommendations and models developed and presented by "Experts".
3. Explore the various options presented with respect to future Coordination frameworks.

It is therefore recommended that:

1. ***Considering the level of consensus reached it is appropriate for the strategies endorsed by the Jury to be included in the draft reviewed Catchment Management Strategy.***
2. ***Strategies and options regarding future coordination frameworks be the subject of another workshop.***

***That future use of the Jury process for difficult and complex issues be conducted over a minimum of a two day period.***

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## ***Mary River Turtle Forum – Tiaro Shire Chambers, 12 April 2002***

The Mary River Turtle Forum was held in the Tiaro Shire Council Chambers, with around 40 people attending from varied backgrounds. Leading Turtle Researchers, Fisheries Researchers, Extension Officers, Landholders, Council staff and Councillors, Planners and Landcare & Catchment Group members attended which displayed the enthusiasm and commitment in the community to ensure the survival of the Mary River Turtle – *Elusor macrurus*.

The four speakers on the day were:

- Dr Col Limpus – QPWS
- Samantha Flakus – QPWS
- David Parkes – Greening Australia, Tiaro
- Mike Gregory – Threatened Species Network

**Dr Col Limpus** spoke about the three species of rare turtles found in three neighbouring catchments – the Mary, Burnett and Fitzroy Catchments, and the similar characteristics these three turtles

possessed. He also spoke about the 3-Rivers Report on the effect of dam construction on turtle populations.

**Sam Flakus** detailed the research she had undertaken on the Mary River Turtle in the Tiaro reach of the Mary River, and outlined some of the threatening processes she had identified during her study on the turtle.

**David Parkes** provided information on the results of his project, which involved monitoring, fencing and revegetation of known Turtle nesting sites.

**Mike Gregory** spoke on recovery plans that have been developed for other species in Queensland.

#### **The following is a collection of notes from the Forum.**

- Queensland has the most diverse turtle population.
- People believe that turtle populations are not in decline, because some species of turtle are the equivalent of the 'rabbit' in our creeks and rivers. However these turtles represent only one family of turtle.
- The Fitzroy/Burnett/Mary Catchments are the remains of an ancient river system that existed 10 000 years ago. Therefore some relics of this ancient river system still exist, such as the three rare turtles that exist in these catchments:
  - Undescribed *Eiseya* sp. – Fitzroy/Burnett/Mary Catchments
  - Mary River Turtle – Mary Catchment
  - Fitzroy Turtle – Fitzroy Catchment
- These three turtles share similar characteristics that link them back to the ancient river system that was their home 10 000 years ago.
- Species characteristics of the three rare species:
  - Cloacal ventilation – they are 'bum breathers'
  - Delayed maturity / slow growth
  - Low fecundity
  - Fruit-eating, i.e. riparian rainforest fruits
- The 3-Rivers Report studied 10 000 individual turtles before and after dam construction in the Fitzroy/Burnett/Mary. The main finding was the bigger and older the dam the greater reduction in the turtle population was discovered.
- The impact the fox is having on the turtle populations is concurrent with dam construction.
- Feral pigs are a potential impact to the Turtle populations.
- There are two rare species of turtle in the Mary System:
  - *Eiseya* sp. affinities to *dentata*
  - *Elusor macrurus* – Mary River Turtle
- Both species display similarities in –
  - Cloacal ventilation
  - Declining and restricted distribution
- The Mary River Turtle was known in the petshop trade for 20 years as *Alpha petshopii* – because they were sold in the petshop trade as the Saw-shelled Turtle, however many people questioned this – hence the name *Alpha petshopii*.
- Scientists then tried to track down the actual location of where these turtles were being taken from – but were lead on a wild-goose chase by the pet-shop trade. The scientists were told they came from New Guinea, Arnhem Land and the Ross River in Townsville.
- Eventually they were located in the Mary Catchment around the Tiaro reaches – which were the most productive nests.
- Incubation of the Mary River Turtle is easy – needs warm humid sand
- Characteristics of the Mary River Turtle are:
  - Large tail



- Smaller male than female
- No white face
- Mary River Turtle has also been seen in Tinana and Yabba Creek, but is only known to nest in the Tiaro reaches of the Mary River.
- 1960 – 1970's: 3 000 – 10 000 eggs were collected from the Tiaro – Gympie reach of the Mary River.
- 1974 – Fauna Conservation Act introduced – therefore no further collection allowed.
- 1980 – 1988 – extensive surveys conducted to identify the natural location of the Mary Turtle – scientists sent to PNG & North Qld.
- 1990 – the Mary River Turtle natural habitat actually found.
- Anecdotal evidence provided by the original collectors suggests that Tiaro sandbanks were the most productive.
- 1994 – the Mary River Turtle described by science.
- Each turtle has a unique nesting area.
- Researchers are finding mostly adult male turtles (>30cm)
- Average clutch of eggs is 15.



*Will the Mary Turtle win the race for survival?*

According to anecdotal evidence hundreds of turtles were nesting, now there are 12 known turtles nesting today.

## ***Regional Vegetation Management Plan – Coastal Wide Bay Working Group***

Expressions of interest were called in early 2001 for members of the Regional Vegetation Management Plan Working Groups in SEQ.

Members were appointed by the Minister for Natural Resource in March 2002. Members representing Agforce, Queensland Dairy Organisation, Timber Processors, Timber Growers, Local Government, Landcare/Catchment/RSG, community, Cane Growers, Development, Conservation, Indigenous and other sectors were appointed.

There were five working groups in SEQ and meetings are held at 6 to 8 week intervals – Inland Burnett, Coastal/Wide Bay, Brisbane Valley, SEQ North and SEQ South. The 7<sup>th</sup> round of meetings will be in August 2002.

Time to get familiar with the Vegetation Management Act, regulations, cods and policies etc was expected.

Also the need to be familiar with the Water Act, Integrated Planning Act, Regional Forest Agreement, Natural Conservation Strategy, Regional Strategies, National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and other relevant documents. It was also important that the group members work together as a team.

Input into the draft plan has been through sector representatives from industry bodies, community and Regional strategy Groups in each working group area and also through written submissions.

The draft plan will be available for the Moniste4r for natural Resource and Mines Stephen Robertson by the end of the year who will put it out for community consultation.

**Peter Buchanan, Landcare/ICM/RSG Sector representative for RVMP Coastal Widebay Working Group. Proxy Esma Armstrong.**

## **Mary Basin Water Resource Plan**

### **Technical Advisory Panel Meeting, Nambour 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> July 2002**

Following an invitation issued at the first Sector Group Meeting for the Mary Basin Water Resource Plan (WRP) held by Scott Buchanan on 19<sup>th</sup> June, I attended the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) meeting in Nambour on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> July as an observer.

Previous WAMP's have been criticised widely and I wanted to observe the operation of the Technical Advisory Panel (most of whom had taken part in previous WAMP processes). The panel consisted of Dr Sandra Brizga (Geomorphology & Environmental Hydrology), Professor Angela Arthington (Fish & Vertebrate Ecology), Mr Pat Condina (Macro-Invertebrates & Water Quality), Mr Steve Mackay (Aquatic Micro & Macro Phytes), Mr Mark Kennard (Fish Ecology), Dr Neil Loneragan (Estuarine & Marine Ecology), Mr Garry Werren (Riparian, Floodplain & Wetland Ecology & Vertebrate Ecology) and Mr Neil Craigie (River & Hydraulic Engineering). While Department of Natural Resources and Mines (NR&M) was represented by Scott Buchanan, Bob Herd, Ben Sturgess and Bill McFarlane, Environmental Protection Agency.

#### **Mary Basin Water Resource Plan Current Condition and Environmental Values Assessment**

The first morning session was led by Dr Sandra Brizga and basically set the guidelines for condition rankings, aquatic ecosystems values. This was followed by scaling issues in conditions assessment – the use of site data to determine reach ratings.

All of the TAP members then gave their individual ratings on each reach of the Rivers and Streams in the WRP area.

Rivers and streams with large dams were assessed first eg. Yabba Creek, Obi Obi Creek, Deep Creek, Six mile Creek, Burrum River.

The second day was devoted to rivers and streams with unsupplemented extraction eg. Wide Bay Creek, Glastonbury Creek, Kandanga Creek, Tinana Creek, Munna Creek, Belli Creek, Mary River (non tidal reaches).

The afternoon session was an evaluation of Pie Creek (supplemented streams) followed by weirs and weir pondages eg. Tinana Creek Weirs (Teddington, Tallegalla), Imbil, Kandanga, Burrum No. 2.

This was followed by evaluation of Tidal Barrages – upstream impacts in barrage pondages eg. Mary River, Tinana Barrage and Burrum No.1 Weir.

The third day Dr Sandra Brizga introduced topics about estuarine and marine environments - objectives, structure, and processes. All TAP members then discussed flow related condition assessments in estuarine environments- the role of freshwater inflows into estuaries (sediment, nutrients, vegetation, macroinvertebrates, and fisheries).

This was followed by reports on current condition and values of the Mary Estuary, current conditions and values of the Burrum River and Beelbi Creek Estuaries. Hervey Bay – role of freshwater inflows from the Mary, Burrum and Beelbi systems – plumes, nutrients, fisheries; catchment impacts (in particular, flow – related impacts), and other factors.

The three days were full on, and in my opinion, brilliantly led (perhaps sometimes driven!) by Dr Sandra Brizga who had pre-programmed her laptop computer and then had only to enter the assessments of the other panel members and record verbal assessments where necessary.

As an observer only, I cannot reveal the assessments made. These will ultimately (I assume) form part of the TAP report to the Minister. My observation however is very clear – virtually all members complained of the lack of water quality data available. We must press now to have more and better water quality data available before the next WRP in ten years time. The other major observation was the way in which all TAP members were so positive in attempting to do this WRP better than previous WAMP's. Reference was made to previous shortcomings and I felt this was a positive for us.

I was impressed by the methodology used and the professional manner in which each member participated. It was obvious that all Panel Members had done a lot of research complimented by site (or reach) inspections. Literally hundreds of photographs were made available for inspection. The community should have faith in the work being done by the TAP.

A rather interesting exhibit at the TAP workshop was an aerial photograph of the Mary River taken recently with an overlay of the original property survey lines done approximately 1870-1900. This shows how much the River has changed in little over 120 years. Yes, European settlement has caused some of the change, but even without it the River would have changed naturally. It really brings home the fact that the River is a living, dynamic part of our Natural Heritage and will continue to

change naturally. We should accept this change while at the same time trying not to upset natural equilibrium.

The first Mary Basin Water Resource Planning Sector Representative workshop was held on 19<sup>th</sup> June by Scott Buchanan. This was a highly successful workshop and there will be at least another 3 or 4 (for Integrated Catchment Management Sector Representative Group (SRG)) over the next year.

With more than thirteen SRG's to have workshops, this is an enormous undertaking by Scott. With each Sector Group representative going back to their groups and reporting this has the potential to skill up a large percentage of the community. If the Community Reference Panel (CRP) is drawn from these SRG's I believe we in the Mary Basin will have overcome some of the problems of community consultation experienced in previous WAMP's.

NR&M are to be congratulated on this extra work involving the community.

It is my personal view that the Citizens Panel (or Jury) may not be necessary if the SRG's are as effective as I think they can be. I, as chair of Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) will do all in my power to assist and encourage NR&M to embrace the community in the Mary Basin Water Resource Plan.

Jim Buchanan, Chair, MRCCC

## ***Mary Catchment Mayor's Forum Wednesday 17 April 2002 Hosted by Maryborough Shire Council***

### **Forum outcome –notes**

**Attendance:** As per sheet

**Apologies:** Maroochy Shire - Alison Grosse, Noosa Shire - Bob Abbot, Woocoo Shire - Kev Mahoney, Hervey Bay - Ted Sorensen, MRCCC – Peter Dutton

### **Welcome and opening address**

Mayor Allan Brown, Maryborough City Council welcomed participants to the City and the gathering. His address was very supportive of the MRCCC and the work it does. He emphasised the importance of the Mary River and it's catchment to the State Economy.

Jim Buchanan then presented the Chairman's Report on the Mary River Catchment and it's issues. Attached.

### **Catchment Strategy Review – Brian Stockwell**

While waiting for Brian to set up, each participant introduced themselves and spoke of their interest in catchment management.

John Horrex	Water Quality – everything we do has an impact on it
David Lahiff	Kilkivan concerns on water quality deterioration
Allan Brown	Mary is important to Maryborough for water supply and local economy. Water quality, quantity and managing for it. Has changed philosophy since becoming involved with Committee. Importance to Great Sandy Straits. Committed to catchment committee and the work it does.
Harry Jamieson	concern on population growth in future. Need for planning for the future
Mick Kruger	Deputy Mayor, Hervey Bay. Upper May important to Hervey Bay
Jim Buchanan	MRCCC
Margaret Thompson	MRCCC
Ron Walpole, Maroochy	Future water supply source
Mark Breen, Caloundra	Policy Officer for Caloundra City
Don Aldous	Waterways are a priority for Caloundra City
Rachel Lyons, Cooloola	Management of rural ?
Bob Fredman, Cooloola	Matching growth with flow
Scott Buchanan, DNR & M	Diversity
David Smith	DNR & M, Maryborough, Water Resource Planning
Bob Watson, DNR & M	Water is life

Brian Stockwell, DNR & M Place to live and place to play

### **Brian Stockwell presentation on Strategy Review and update**

- Getting the structure right
- Identifying barriers to progress
- The bigger the problem the more need for community input
- Both high and low level activity required
- Need to bring people with you
- Going up-stream. Looking at system driving whole catchment action.

### **Brian then outlined the process to involve participants.**

Brian then walked the group through some suggestions from the working panels on the draft Strategy as it appears from local government. It was then opened up for discussion.

John Horrex asked how far to think ahead – 20 years?

Funding was then discussed as an issue. Jim pointed out that funding for administration for the MRCCC is critical as funding for this aspect is being withdrawn or reduced from State and Federal funding.

John Horrex and Alan Brown both felt that it should be a State Government responsibility. The MRCCC believes that we should be funded by State Government, however this is not going to happen.

Mayors stressed that there were other beneficiaries from the River and they should contribute (transport licences, sand and gravel extractors etc)

Moved Allan Brown, seconded David Lahiff that local government recommends that the Mayor's Forum strongly recommends to the State Minister that funds of \$30,000 be made available to the MRCCC for administration purposes of the organisation. Copies to be sent to Premier and all Environment and local members.

This letter to be forwarded to each Council for support.

Mayor Aldous said he believed that local government contributions would need to be stressed.

Harry Jamieson suggested maybe a deputation of Mayors may be the appropriate body to carry this letter. The MRCCC has been a huge impact on the river system by using matching funding sources. Council, NHT, Jobs Plans.

It was refreshing to hear Alan Brown's compliments regarding the MRCCC activities.

## **Lunch**

### **Capacity Building for natural resource management**

The Program then resumed with a presentation by Judith Renshaw – Capacity building to Resource Natural Resource Management Strategies. A pilot study

Leanne Petersen (DNR & M) is developing a proforma for a business plan for groups.

Workshops include preparation of actions plans, project writing, sources of funding. Probably working in

Mary about June. Judith will develop a resource manual for use of groups. Her assistance is very much appreciated.

### **Pest Animal Reporting System**

Ed Carrol, DNR & M Maryborough then gave a presentation on the Pest Animal Reporting System. Ed is a Land Protection Officer with DNR & M. His area covers six shires in the Mary Catchment and then Queensland wide.

Funding for trial 5000

DNR & M funding of \$5,000 for next six months.

Funding from Councils 60/40 maybe in kind.

Ed was thanked for his informative presentation.

### **Water Resource Planning**

Scott Buchanan then made a presentation on the Water Resource Planning process.

Mary Basin Resource Plan including Burrum, Mary, Noosa, Maroochy and Mooloolah Catchments.

Benefits of WRP approach

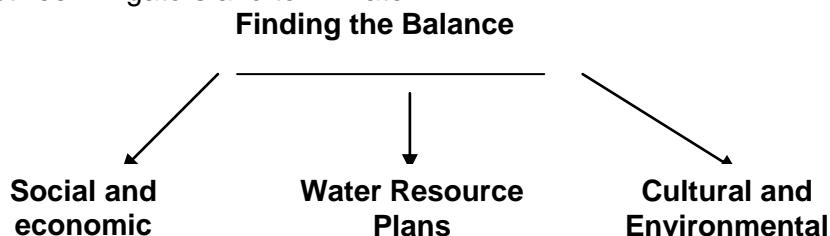
- Basin wide planning
- Greater security of users

- Formal recognition of environmental ?
- Greater community input
- Provides basis for property ? in water

Four phases in Water Resource Plan

1. Pre-planning (collection of data)
2. Draft WRP development
3. Release of draft WRP plan
4. Implementation of WRP

Mary has 50/50 split between irrigators and town water



A framework for the sustainable management and allocation of streamwater based on catchment wide planning.

- Environmental flow objectives
- Water allocation security objectives
- Community consultation

**Consultation**

**Sector Representative Group**

Technical Assessment

Scenario Development

Preparation of draft plan

Community Reference Panel  
Citizen's Panel

Identification of Sector Representative Groups

Community Reference Panel

Should reflect the social profile with particular reference to water resources

**Wrap up**

Waterwatch is extremely important for providing bench marks for the National Action Plan.

Jim then thanked everyone for their attendance, both Councillors, representatives and presenters with a special thank you to Maryborough Shire for hosting the forum.

**Mary Catchment Mayors Forum attendance**

<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>COUNCIL</b>
Ron Walpole	Caloundra City Council
Mark Breen	Maroochy Shire Council
Don Aldous	Caloundra City
Rachel Lyons	Cooloolo Shire Council
Bob Fredman	Cooloolo Shire Council
Scott Buchanan	DNR & M, Gympie
David Something or other?	DNR & M, Maryborough
Bob Watson	DNR & M, Gympie
John Horrex	Tiaro Shire
David Lahiff	Kilkivan Shire
Alan Brown	Maryborough City Council
Harry Jamieson	MRCCC Deputy Chair
Cr Mick Kruger	Hervey Bay City Council
Jim Buchanan	MRCCC Chair
Margaret Thompson	MRCCC Secretary

## **MRCCC Chairman's Address – Mary Catchment Mayors Forum 2002**

Welcome

One thing and only one thing brings us here today – the Mary River.

Our **need** and **demands** on the system vary markedly. It is also clear to me that our concerns regarding current and future issues of the Mary and its catchment also vary considerably. Most river systems usually have a 70/30% break-up respectively on irrigation and urban water use. The Mary uniquely has a 50/50% break-up with a bulk of the urban water being transferred inter-basin. As I mentioned in my opening address last year, current projected growth rates indicate we could be seeing a tenfold increase in population within 50 years.

As leaders of our respective communities we have an obligation and responsibility to plan into the future. We have no crystal balls and we can only go on the best available information given to us to date.

In recent years as a catchment we have been putting all our eggs into one basket –i.e. concentrating on tourism – if September 11<sup>th</sup> taught us anything, it is how fragile our tourism industry is. Agriculture is in my opinion not dead in the catchment.

One of the major outcomes of the April 2001 Mayors forum was a recommendation to the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) Executive that if the Mary River Strategy was to remain relevant then it needed to be updated and brought into line with current issues and merging trends. The current strategy was released in 1996 and printed in 1997. It was always intended that the Mary River Strategy be a living document, however rapid changes in catchment management policy and implementation at a national, state and regional levels over the past years have left the current strategy deficient in some areas, no direct reference to salinity being an obvious example.

Subsequently at the MRCCC general meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> May the committee resolved to proceed with a review of the strategy in keeping with the Mayors recommendations.

The committee intends that a strategy review will:

- Bring the strategy up to date with current and merging trends
- Make the strategy flexible and capable of keeping pace with rapid changes at a catchment, region, state and national level
- Make the strategy more relevant to councils by linking into IPA legislation
- Make the strategy more relevant to stakeholders

### **CONSTRAINTS TO THE PROCESS**

The committee was mindful of several constraints, which could impede or devalue the process. The original strategy development process was carried out in the early 90's through a series of public meetings at Maryborough, Gympie, and Kenilworth. The committee felt that this method of consultation was inappropriate and identified the following issues, which it feels would detract from a similar process being repeated.

- A community which over recent years has been over consulted and is time poor
- No direct funding to conduct the process
- Lack of Resources (financial and human)
- No full time coordinator to drive the process

MRCCC initial focus therefore was to develop a process, which overcame the aforementioned constraints while at the same time, maximised stakeholder participation.

Initially, meetings needed to ask some sole searching questions.

- Review of some of the achievement and evaluate
- Who are we?
- What do we do?
- Who is MRCCC relevant to?
- Why review the strategy?
- Develop a framework for ICM in the Mary catchment
- Elements and relevant roles

- Who else can do these jobs?
- Elements relevant to roles of ICM
- Constitutional and administrative changes

Brian will expand on this later.

MRCCC enjoyed great support from DNR during the 1990's. We had a full time Coordinator plus a budget of \$15,000 for administration. The new Century has given us no joy – Our full time Coordinator has been gradually reduced to 20% and our Administration allowance has been reduced to \$5,000. We understand that from September we may have no government support for a Coordinator and the administration allowance is unknown at this stage.

While the Federal Government program, "Grants to Voluntary Environmental Heritage Organisations" provided us with limited administration support (\$4000) during the current year, we have no guarantee of future support.

How to finance future administration of this organisation remains largely unanswered.

The Federal Government has changed the arrangements under which NHT funding is to be distributed. Previously funding has been delivered through a State Government Agency (DNR). Future funding will be through a Regional Body (My understanding is that the Regional NAP Body will evolve into this Regional Body). While this transition is taking place we all feel a little uncertain about future funding.

Judith Renshaw may have words of encouragement in her address after lunch.

Since formation, the ICM process, stakeholders and MRCCC has enjoyed considerable success. The hard work and effort of the MRCCC was officially recognised in Winners of the 2001 Qld Catchment – Landcare Award and 1999 when the committee was awarded the Queensland Rivercare Award for extensive river management and restoration activities. Other notable achievements are:

- **Mary River & tributaries Rehabilitation Plan for the Mary Catchment**
- **Waterwatch**
- **Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grant Scheme**
- **Dairy Effluent Project**
- **A Resource Atlas of the catchment**
- **A Watercourse Management Manual**
- **MRCCC Web site**
- **Rivers of the Range Project**
- **Researchers Forums**
- **Three Mary River Congresses**
- **Runner-up in the 1997 Queensland Landcare Awards (Catchment Section)**
- **River Care Award for 1999**
- **2001 Queensland Catchment – Landcare Award**
- **State finalist at the National Landcare Awards on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2002 at Parliament House, Canberra**

We have the runs on the board, but I believe our biggest challenges are yet to come.

With growth and development comes one major question – where's the water? – Where's the money? – Where's the commitment?

This afternoon you will hear about a unique "Pest Animal Information Reporting System" (PAIRS). MRCCC has supported this program and is pleased that the Councils of Mary River Catchment will collectively perform the basis of a reporting system which we hope will go statewide and even nationally. It is encouraging that the area you represent is leading the way in this reporting system.

Later this afternoon Scott Buchanan DNR will bring everyone up to date on a Water Resource Plan for the Mary River Basin. At the beginning of this address I used the words 'need' and 'demand' when referring to our use of the Mary River. I will leave it to Scott to talk about the Water Resource Plan.

Irrespective of the outcome of the Water Resource Plan for the Mary I believe we all have a moral responsibility to conserve water use as much as we can. Currently there are programs in Primary Industry aimed at using water more efficiently. Canegrowers, Dairyfarmers, and Horticulture growers are actively pursuing this program in the catchment right now.

Local authorities have introduced water meters, water saving shower heads etc, and this has had an impact on Water Use. Some Councils have introduced schemes for the use of treated effluent water (irrigation of cane and golf courses). MRCCC has supported Cooloola Shire in its endeavour to have Sunwater recognise that recycled water of a certain quality has a value. The recent meeting of COAG at Corowa to discuss the problems of the Murray Darling system decided on an Environmental Flow of 750gig.l or 40%. The West Australian Government has put a 55% E.F. on the Ord River. Could the Queensland Government view the Mary River in the same way?

Now is the time to put some further practices in place to continue water conservation. No Local Authority should have a policy which restricts rain water tanks in urban areas. In fact I believe that all new housing development should include a mandatory rainwater tank. I had originally planned to have a separate section on this issue. Time does not permit so I have included a couple of articles in your material. Please read about the research done by Newcastle University. The water from these tanks is not used for drinking purposes and overcomes the objection some of your health departments may have. The subject of rainwater tanks deserves serious consideration by all Local Authorities and I would be pleased to organise further action through Australian Water Association. Rainwater tanks also result in a big impact on storm water run-off. Please read the material thoroughly.

A regional Burnett/Mary committee has been formed under the National Action Plan for Dryland Salinity and Water Quality. Cr. Kev Mahoney represents Local Authorities on that Body. Regrettably he is unable to attend today. Margaret Thompson is the only other person from the Mary Catchment on the Regional NAP Committee. I trust that Cr. Kev Mahoney will keep you informed of progress on this matter.

In planning for the future I believe we must make some of the hard decisions now and not leave future generations without options. Such issues as Water Recycling should be acted upon now. Other parts of the world have water recycling programs in place now. We should be preparing now, not leaving it to future generations. The Mary River Basin, can, I believe, sustain a huge increase in population in the future but only if we collectively plan now. The MRCCC and Local Authorities can help plan that future together.

***Jim Buchanan, Chair, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee***

## **MRCCC/LANDCARE FORUM**

### **9<sup>th</sup> August 2002**

Margaret Thompson welcomed the participants on behalf of the Chair of the MRCCC, Mr. Jim Buchanan who had been delayed. Mr. Bob Watson was facilitator for the day and opened proceedings by explaining the process and asking everyone to identify themselves and their interests.

Needs for the day were then canvassed:

- To be informed.
- How to get groups to communicate.
- Strengthen existing links.
- Take advantage of current and future opportunities/funding sources.
- Getting locals involved in the Mary from top to bottom.

#### **AGENDA AS PROPOSED BY E-MAIL**

1. What each group sees as the priorities for the catchment.
2. Where is the Mary Catchment Strategy at?
3. Future for Catchment Committee under NAP.
4. What's the latest in NHT1 and 2?
5. Discussion about assistance from other sectors such as Local Government.
6. Regional Waterwatch.
7. What each group has achieved.
8. Landcare RAP – MRCCC.
9. Landcare Conference in 2003.
10. Update of NAP.
11. Communications Skills Project.



### **Landcare Representation on MRCCC**

Peter Dutton gave an outline of the duties of a Landcare Representative on the MRCCC much discussion ensued on how the representation should be arrived at.

Moved: Marilyn Connell

Seconded: Paul Marshall

That each year a Landcare Forum be held a month before to nominate the Landcare representative on the MRCCC. Carried.

Moved: Paul Marshall

Seconded:

That the Landcare groups endorse the decision of the MRCCC to offer two positions one upper and one lower to Landcare representatives on the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee.

Lin Fairlie and Kev Mahoney have offered their services.

### **Review of Catchment Strategy**

- Brian Stockwell then gave a brief overview of the processes involved in reviewing the Catchment Strategy.
- How the recommendations were arrived at.
- There were a number of questions asked re the strategy and where it may take us.

Jim Buchanan arrived and made a few comments on issues such as WRP.

### **Caroline Haskard - Landcare Representative on the Burnett Mary Regional Body.**

- Appointment of staff.
- An Executive Officer and Planning Officer have been appointed.
- Carolyn Anear has been reappointed as Administration Officer.
- Business Plan has been prepared and submitted to the Government Bodies for foundation funding.

### **Questions/Answers**

- Lyn Klupfel had a request about Waterwatch.
- Expectation from Landcare Groups – relationship.

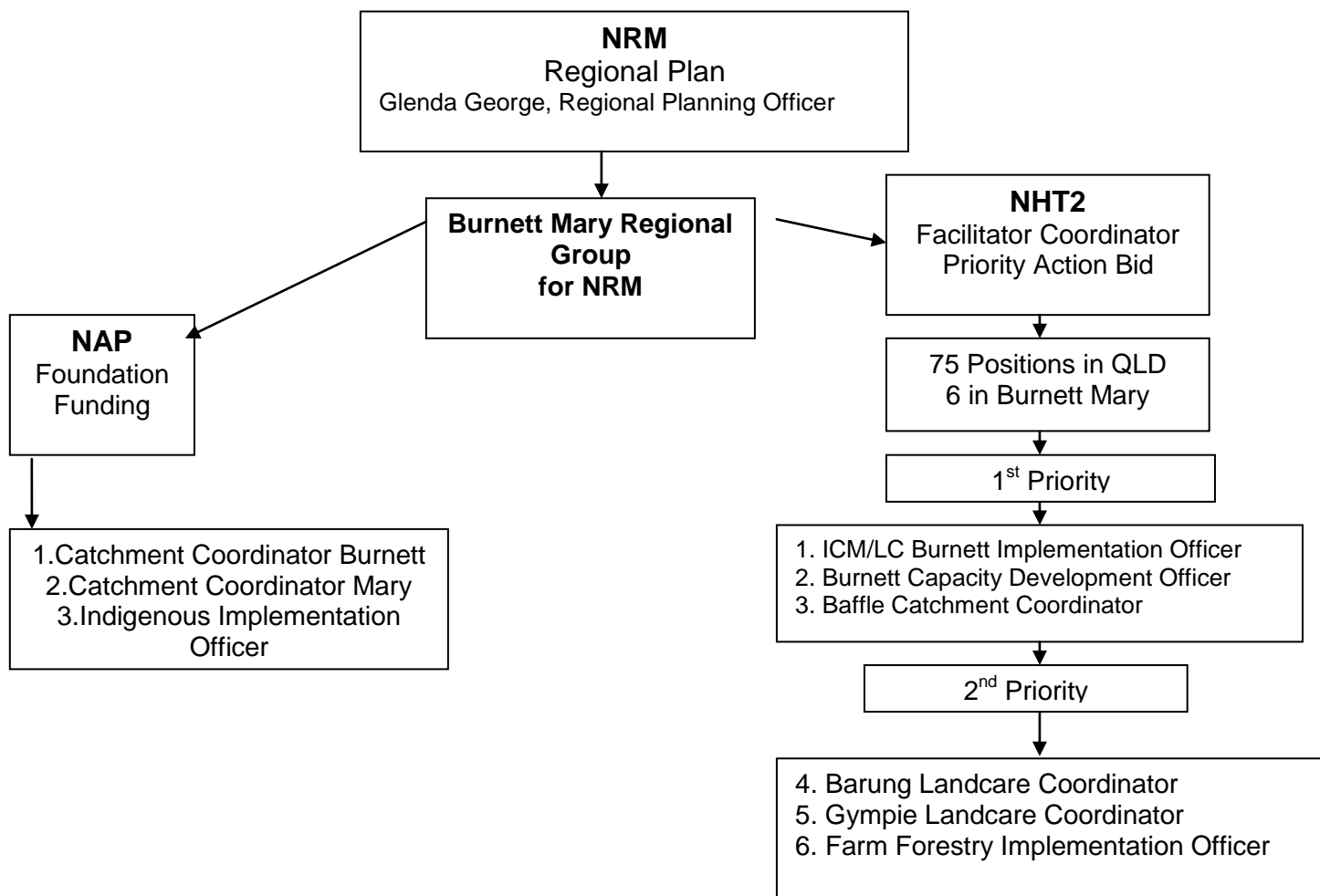
### **Actions from Today**

- Groups to get together to discuss one Waterwatch program for the Mary.
- Groups also wish to get together to discuss issues throughout the Catchment for issues other than Waterwatch.

### **Overview of NHT2 Funding - Sue Carstens**

The following interim priority action projects have been included in the State's bid to the Commonwealth for funding:

1. Corridors of Green
2. On farm Nature Conservation Project, Burnett
3. Barung revegetation
4. MRCCC Strategy Implementation
5. Burnett Catchment Care Assoc
6. Noosa Hatchery
7. Woongara Ck Coastcare
8. Kingaroy Vegetation Strategy
9. Noosa Farm Forestry
10. Mary Valley Sunshine Coast Farm Forestry



Sue drew up the diagram above which details the projects funded under the NAP Foundation Funding and NHT 2 Facilitator/Coordinator Priority Action Bids.

These projects must be funded \$ for \$ by State Agencies

- There were many questions asked. Sue endeavoured to explain the process that has been gone through.
- The 50/50 State Government funding is a sticking point for funding.
- Enviro Fund recommendations have gone to Federal.
- Expect to have approvals within a month with cheques hopefully being sent in the first two weeks of October.
- It is anticipated that there will be a second round of Environmental Grants in February call in December.

#### Landcare Conference

- Leo Duffy then updated on 2003 Landcare Conference.
- Breaking new ground 8<sup>th</sup> –11<sup>th</sup> August.
- Leo distributed a questionnaire for suggestions for the Conference to be included in some of the working groups. Very interesting program is proposed.

#### Communication Skills

- Mark Haas (CSIT) on the communication skills being offered under the Project hosted by Gympie Landcare offering a module “Presenting Information” the presenter can deliver the needs of the participants as identified by them.

#### Proposal Attachment Notes

- Need to feed back to Leo the participants needs to develop the delivery.
- A participant’s list was circulated to collect expressions of interest.

## Getting People Involved

Lin Fairlie opened the discussion with an overview of some of the difficulties Barung has experienced getting broader community involvement. The questions were posed:  
How to keep people interested/motivated.

- Commitment – Do they want to make that or just require information?

## Discussion resolved around the perception of Landcare

- In the Community, in Industry etc.
- Need for partnership and collaboration to achieve marketing aims and the need to reposition Landcare in the psyche of the community.
- The discussion was very beneficial with all taking part.

## A Postcard from Europe

Brian Stockwell gave a short presentation providing a light after lunch overview of his recent EA Waterwatch Churchill Fellowship tour of UK & Europe. He highlighted key differences in the physical and cultural environment and some shared problems. He gave a few examples of more holistic sustainable community type projects undertaken by River Trusts and similar organisations he visited. The different approaches stimulated some discussion about potential ways Landcare could broaden its focus, while retaining its current objectives.

## Getting People Involved

The forum moved on to discuss the issues raised before lunch in the light of the above discussion. Lyn Klupfel from Tiaro outlined the success their small group has had with the Chocolate turtle campaign and local Landcare bus trip. It was thought these initiatives tapped into latent interest and goodwill in the community regarding Landcare issues and were successful, because they were non-confrontational and demanded little in terms of time commitment etc. It was felt the even though there had been 10,000 turtles produced over recent months that the financial return to the group was minimal when compared to the benefits flowing from getting the small message about the plight of the turtle out to the general public.

Gympie Landcare representatives highlighted their successes flowed from a close working relationship with Council, with the introduction of the Cooloola Shire Conservation Strategy and Environmental Levy, they have been able to expand their role and budget significantly. This has also seen a shift in focus from traditional rural issues to riparian plantings, training and the like.

Graeme Elphinstone observed that the secret to both success was that each group has followed its own path, and evolved its own identity, which is part of the underlying philosophy of Landcare.

## Landcare & Catchment Management Group involvement in NAP

Discussion then migrated to how current structural arrangements being driven by the Federal National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality is influencing Landcare and Catchment Management Groups and what this might mean for the future.

- Impediment to broader regional network is cost of travel/distance. An option is to look at the geographic coverage of forums, with ones covering broad catchment or regional areas, occurring infrequently, and serving more strategic purposes. Eg.

SubCatchment	-	Action/Management Planning Meetings?
Catchment	-	Strategic Meeting
Regional	-	once every 6 months
- Actions should be targeted at a sub-catchment.
- Triple bottom line can open new funding sources (grow the cake).
- Administrative processes can drive people away who want to be involved in action, so could be minimised in action oriented groups. .
- Diversity needs to be jealously protected and the top down approach fought if it seeks to limit this.
- “One size that fits all” – Should be challenged.
- Local priorities need to be reflected in regional plan.

Graeme Elphinstone passed on thoughts from a conversation he had over lunch with the existing MRCCC Landcare representative. They perceive a danger that traditional bottom up processes are being lost, now the federal government has seen political capital in the Landcare movement, resulting in it being driven from the top down. There was a fair degree of consensus in the room that this was a significant issue.

Caroline Haskard's view was that Government has handed down the job to regional groups as it considers the issues to be too hard and that consequently it is an opportunity for Landcare and Catchment Management Groups to influence up. Further that she is keen as the Landcare representative on the Burnett Mary Regional Group to be a conduit of concerns and ideas into the NRM planning Process.

Some suggestions were made as to how to facilitate better bottom-up processes including:

- Working together – diversity is the strength.
- Bottom up has to do the leading – taking the initiative, don't wait for decrees from above.
- Regional Waterwatch could be the driver of woe us together highlighting problems and representing to government.
- Landcare cover – What are the things we need to do in our backyards and how?
- Establish links with other like minded groups.

### **NEEDS**

- A need to be informed.
- How to get groups to communicate.
- Strengthen existing links.
- Take advantage of current and future opportunities/funding sources.
- Getting locals involved in the Mary from the top to the bottom.

### **TO DO**

- Communicate after this forum!  
Leanne Saunders undertook to organise a regional waterwatch forum , in part to develop a submission to the regional group as to the desired role of waterwatch in the issues identification process and the resource needs to undertake these tasks.
- Marilyn Connell undertook to organise a catchment wide forum to commence cooperative discussion and discussion on proposals for landcare activities other than waterwatch, possibly with some linked to the draft revised catchment strategy

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Facilitator for the day Bob Watson thanked the attendees for their open and constructive dialogue.

Marilyn Connell thanked Bob for organising the event and suggested it was the best Catchment Landcare Forum she has attended. Others agreed that the unstructured open discursive framework for the meeting facilitated worthwhile discussions.