

Looking Forward, Looking Back: learning from the past to create a better future

Overview

Many stories will be generated by this project, but the focus will be on creating one meta-story, in the form of a high quality short film that encourages reflection on the theme "Looking forward, looking back" (a titled borrowed from the well known and loved Slim Dusty song). The project will use the power of local oral histories, obtained by interviewing approximately 35 local identities (both non-indigenous and indigenous) from throughout the catchment. Topics covered in the interviews will include, but not be limited to, land management practices, historical characteristics of the Mary River and Tributaries, key historical events associated with the river, local myths and dream-time stories. Interviewees will also be asked for advice to help future generations create a better future for the Mary River Catchment.

There are amazing stories to be told: frogs found in rocks at the bottom of 40ft deep hand dug wells, writhing pools of giant Mary River cod being picked off by birds of prey during drought, massive lungfish cavorting with people in dugout canoes, the comeback of the river from the destruction wrought by the Gympie Gold Rush, the links between breeding cycles of fish and flowering of certain plants and so on. Capturing these stories in a video medium will help bring them to life for a wider audience and facilitate the appreciation of the "shadows of the past" - both light and dark.

From the interviews, a short film will be created which will be publicly screened at a minimum of seven rural locations as part of community building events. These events will tell the story of the local folklore and heritage of the Mary River and encourage reflection on the past, so that we may create a better future for our river and our communities.

Resources for the catchment community

Subject to permission from the interviewees, the complete raw footage will be available for other films and the information collected through these interviews will become a resource for the community. We will seek professional advice regarding the best ways to document the valuable recollections and wisdom of our older generation. Equipment that is required for the project (outdoor screen, HD projector) will also provide a resource for future projects undertaken in these communities.

Links with Schools

Primary schools

Through Barambah Environmental Education Centre,

Potential River Stories oriented specialist Camp at Barambah Environmental Education Centre in Term 1 2013

Secondary or Tertiary education

No links made at this stage.

Timeline

Entire project due for completion by 30 May 2013

Part 1: Complete short film in (around March 2013)

Part 2: Screenings of short film throughout catchment in the lead up to the Mary River restoration stories (April 2013)

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DONATIONS TO THE MARY CATCHMENT PUBLIC FUND ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE