



# The **CODLine**

***Incorporating NEWS of the  
Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee***

## ***Finding the balance over 80 years***

by Lesley Innes  
Landholder, Boompa

The Innes family has been the custodians of the property known as 'Innooroolabar' for almost 80 years. It is a long narrow property stretching for 20 km in the Boompa area (near Biggenden). The property adjoins the wilderness area of the Mount Walsh National Park. Uniquely, it is the source of tributaries which flow into two river systems, the Mary and the Burnett. The land has been used for beef cattle grazing and native timber hardwood production.

### ***Historical management***

We are fortunate to have diaries left by Spencer's father, Wroxton, so we have good historical records from the 1930s onwards.

Wroxton and Marjorie Innes, the original owners, managed the land sustainably even before the term was invented. They quickly realised that the land would not respond if it was not respected. Although the property covered a large acreage, its hilly terrain and thick timber regrowth meant that stocking rates had to be light, paddocks had to be spelled, and timber had to be controlled and harvested selectively.

Originally, the property was stocked with Hereford cattle, so there was a need for regular mustering and dipping with chemicals to control for ticks. A constant theme was also the ever-present vagaries of the weather. Back then there were no dams and the cattle relied on temporary flows in



*Mustering through the timbered country.*

*[Photo: Lesley and Spencer Innes]*

creeks and gullies. The paddocks around the house had been cleared by ringbarking for grazing with patches of timber left for shade and future timber harvesting. Only 15 per cent of the property was used in this way and the remainder was left as native eucalypt forest. Weed control was done by hand. Noogoora burr pulling and lantana grubbing were established practices even in the 1930s.

### ***Adapting to the land***

Rather than fighting the environment, the family has learnt to adapt. Over time, dams were built for stock watering; today there are well over 30 dams. This has taken the pressure off the creeks and has promoted more even grazing within paddocks. The breed of cattle has gone from Hereford to Braford to Brahman

cattle so it's no longer necessary to use chemicals to control ticks. Pastured paddocks in the open grazed country are renovated so that water can be retained in the soil, run-off and erosion are reduced, and the mulching improves soil health. The remaining 85 per cent of the property, which is timbered, has native pasture, thus providing a balance between introduced pastures and native grasses.

### ***Weed control***

Unfortunately, weed control consumes about 80 per cent of the work program. Lantana and burr are on-going issues as are Giant Rat's Tail (GRT) grass and timber regrowth/vegetation thickening. The GRT grass, originally imported by government research bodies, has been a

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**Finding the balance...***... continued from page 1*

curse for the past 20 years and requires dedicated (almost obsessive) spraying and chipping as it is a prolific breeder. Over the past 50 years, paddocks that had well-spaced trees have gradually thickened with saplings, resulting in reduced grass cover and increased potential for erosion, so ringbarking and chemical treatment are routinely factored into the management program.

**Fire management**

Fire has traditionally been used to control weeds such as lantana and as a pasture management practice to renew native pastures. Over time it became apparent that relying on annual burns to remove dead frosted pastures was making the ground hard, more susceptible to erosion, and eventually unproductive. Now open paddocks are left unburnt for five or more years, and are burnt selectively only after sufficient rainfall in the cooler months.

**Self-education and community support**

The current generation has continued to run the property as a successful commercial enterprise that is managed in an environmentally sustainable way. We have taken advantage of self-education

opportunities such as Grazing Land Management workshops, AgForce training days and Forest Practice workshops. This training keeps us up to date with the latest sustainable farming practices and provides opportunities for reflecting on our goals and connecting with other local like-minded producers.

Together with others in our catchment we are members of the Waterwatch network, collecting data on the health of our main watercourse, which flows into Munna Creek, for the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee. After many years of drought and watching native turtles and fish die in the local creek, it is very encouraging to see the creek so healthy again with native animals thriving. We hope to see the re-introduction of cod and mullet one day.

Presently, we are completing a project with funding from the Reef Rescue program. We have built a fence through a large paddock and installed an extra dam to promote more even grazing and keep cattle away from the creek to reduce silting. As we adjoin the Mt Walsh National Park and have wildlife corridors and threatened species habitats to protect, we are talking to the Burnett Catchment Care Association about possible ideas for maintaining these habitats through the Healthy Habitats program.

**Changes over 80 years**

Whilst daily work tasks are similar to the past – ie mustering, fencing, weed control – it is the proportion of time given to these tasks that has changed. Where cattle work used to consume 80 per cent of the time, we now spend that time on weed and regrowth control. With the exceptional rainfall of the past two summers we have seen an explosion of weeds, especially lantana and GRT grass. Our long term goal is to be certified organic beef producers so we use no hormones or chemical treatments on the cattle and have never used fertilisers on the soil. Unfortunately, we still have to use chemicals to treat weeds and re-growth.

The recognition by governments of the role that landholders play as environmental management warriors is a welcome development. We hope that public funding will continue to support the landholders' fight to maintain healthy waterways, pastures and habitats for the benefit of us all.

**Grazing Lands publication**

'Grazing Land Types of the Gympie District'

is available as a free download at the MRCCC's website

[www.mrccc.org.au](http://www.mrccc.org.au)

or in hardcopy from the MRCCC Resource Centre on

5482 4766 or

[mrccc@ozwide.net.au](mailto:mrccc@ozwide.net.au)

**Riparian grazing**

By Graeme Elphinstone (QDAFF) & Brad Wedlock (MRCCC)

Riparian zones are sensitive areas but they can still provide valuable and timely forage, provided safeguards are adopted to prevent degradation and support the continuity, density and width of the native vegetation.

There will be some situations where grazing riparian zones is not recommended, e.g. eroding riverbanks, pristine remnant rainforest.

**Unique grazing land type**

Riparian zones constitute a unique grazing land type and need to be managed appropriately.

Riparian zones in good condition play a key role in grazing landscapes by preventing the loss of valuable nutrients and sediments from the farm, and protecting downstream water quality.

Riparian zones can encompass some of the highest environmental and conserva-

tion values (both aquatic and terrestrial) on most grazing properties.

**Winter season grazing**

If the riparian area is left ungrazed over the warmer months it will get the full benefit of a wet season recovery period and will have higher groundcover levels during the summer flood risk period, reducing the risk of bank erosion, slumping and so on.

During winter, the cattle are more likely to spend most time grazing the pasture and less time standing in the shade and water to keep cool (decreasing the amount of nutrients from dung and urine entering the stream).

Having the summer stand-over pasture reserves in the riparian zone available for winter grazing will provide a strategic and valuable forage resource for the grazing enterprise.

**Short sharp grazing**

Restricting grazing to two or three times per year and using a larger group of cattle is better than grazing smaller numbers of cattle over extended periods in this zone.

Cattle will target the high quality pasture grasses when they enter the area and are best moved on before they progress to grazing the shrubs, herbaceous plants, matrush and tree seedlings, which would likely increase the risk of degradation and erosion.

The size of the grazing mob should be closely matched to the available pasture feed resources within the fenced area. Electric fencing can be used effectively to divide longer sections of riparian zone into shorter sections for better managing cattle movement.

# Dagun Grower's Market turns 1

by Elaine Bradley, Market Coordinator

The quiet little town of Dagun becomes a social hive of activity each Saturday afternoon when the Dagun Growers Market opens for business at 2 pm at the old railway station.

Most of the produce comes from small acreage operations and home gardens. The main feature is a co-operatively run stall carrying the harvest from a number of local growers. Individual stall holders are also encouraged. There is always a wide variety of stock (more than 30 varieties of fruits and vegetables each week), all locally grown.

Increasingly, growers are adapting to a 'market garden' approach of growing and harvesting a wide variety of crops in small quantities. This differs from the typical 'commodity farming' approach of producing large quantities of only a few lines which are harvested in bulk and sent to a centralised market for distribution.

More than 40 growers are now registered; about half of these bring stock along in any particular week. We also encourage customers to 'get growing' and bring their excess to share.

From a small-scale grower's point of view, a co-operative market takes much of the pressure off us to supply a wide



range of mixed produce every week. It allows us to undertake more sustainable methods of crop production and reduces the impact on the market of individual crop failures. Growers are discussing ways to coordinate production, harvesting and storage.

Our growers are encouraged to 'play' with the produce they're selling and to

provide information, advice and recipes. Customers are encouraged to try something new each week to provide a greater diversity of foods in their diet.

Come along and see for yourself!

For more information, contact Elaine Bradley on 5484 3749 or [wurraglen@hotmail.com](mailto:wurraglen@hotmail.com)

## Building Our Future

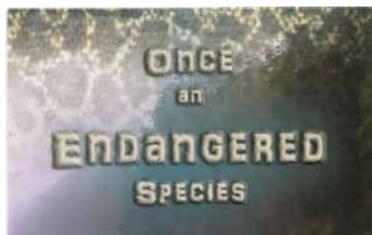
Thursday 19 July 5.30 pm  
Imbil Showgrounds Hall

Come along to the next Mary Valley Community Forum, 'Building our Future', hosted by the Mary Valley Renewal Team.

The forum will focus on key community projects and will include an update about the State Government's new land and management strategy for the valley.

'Recovery for the Mary – Biodiversity federal funding for our Giants' will be one of the projects to be discussed on the night.

For more information, contact Glenda Pickersgill on 5484 3150 or [glendap5@gmail.com](mailto:glendap5@gmail.com)



Once an Endangered Species, a DVD about the Mary River Cod, includes what is believed to be the first ever underwater footage of the cod in the wild. It provides information on the cod's life cycle and captive breeding program and demonstrates the rehabilitation of cod habitat and riparian areas.

Produced by Goorie Vision for the Gerry Cook Fish Hatchery, with funding from Sunshine Coast Council.

**\$10** (incl postage), available from the MRCCC on 5482 4766 or [mrccc@ozwide.net.au](mailto:mrccc@ozwide.net.au)

## Looking forward Looking back:

**Learning from the past to create a better future**

MRCCC has received funding to collate oral history about the Mary River into a short film.

We would like to interview people who have had a long association with the Mary River and can contribute to local folklore about the river, her creatures and her people.

Topics covered will include what the landscape looked like, key events associated with the river, local myths and dream-time stories, as well as advice for future generations managing the Mary catchment.

Please send suggested contacts to [mrccctanzi@ozwide.net.au](mailto:mrccctanzi@ozwide.net.au)

# Connecting habitat in the Mary Valley

by Susie Duncan, Hinterland Bush Links

Many animals will not cross cleared country because of the risk of being taken by predators such as hawks and dogs. And sometimes the distances are just too great to cover when you need to feed regularly. For example the Wompoo and other smaller fruit doves reliant on rainforest fruit year round will not expend the energy to get to a small isolated patch of rainforest with only a little fruit available. This means the seeds they spread after feeding on rainforest fruit never get to these isolated blocks. Connecting up the bush facilitates this dispersal as well as providing habitat for healthy populations.

Hinterland Bush Links was launched at Booloumba Creek in the upper Mary Valley late last year, with 140 people planting 700 trees as part of a wildlife corridor to link the Conondale and Blackall ranges at Cambroon.

Several landowners on Booloumba Creek are contributing to the Cambroon corridor by restoring bush through natural regeneration i.e. protecting seedling plants that come up after birds or wind disperse seed. This is the easiest way to restore native vegetation as long as you have a nearby seed source, for example scattered rainforest trees that provide a roosting spot for birds that then poop out seed.

In these situations the biggest challenge is usually keeping on top of the weeds.



Like many parts of the Mary Valley, the Cambroon district has a great diversity of weeds. Weed vines tend to be the most obnoxious because of their ability to move into previously undisturbed vegetation and smother canopy trees. Currently a strategy is underway to deal with these weed vines and build on good work that has been undertaken by landholders on Chinaman Creek and Walli Creek and by the Bushcare group at Little Yabba Park.

Further down the valley there is opportunity for creating a key linkage from the northern part of the Blackall Range at Mapleton Forest Reserve to Imbil State Forest, but linkages at any scale in any area are valuable. Working with neighbours to connect areas of restoration work on your properties will multiply the value

of your efforts. You may like to set up your own bush links group with adjacent landowners.

Hinterland Bush Links is organising restoration workshops and regular volunteer restoration days. We can visit your property if you would like help setting up a local bush link group. Also, Little Yabba Park Bushcare group meets at the park at 8 am on the first Friday of each month if you would like to join in.

*For more information call Susie Duncan on 5429 6622 or visit the Barung website: [www.barunglandcare.org.au](http://www.barunglandcare.org.au)*

*Further background on connectivity and information about restoring habitat is available at the Hinterland Bush Links website: [www.hinterlandbushlinks.org](http://www.hinterlandbushlinks.org)*

## An opportunity to Waterwatch

by Ian Mackay, Waterwatch Delegate on the MRCCC

Every month, six water-testing kits leave MRCCC to travel separate tortuous routes throughout the Mary catchment. Waterwatch volunteers are a dedicated lot; each monthly site visit takes upwards of half an hour as the tester records water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH and electrical conductivity and observes water weeds, wildlife and flood damage.

Waterwatchers look forward to their monthly visit 'to reflect on the river (or creek)', to observe its moods and to collect the important scientific data.

Like the river itself, Waterwatch networks display some fluidity with individuals moving on, creating spaces to be filled by

others. Such gaps presently occur in the Kenilworth network. The recently created Tinana Creek network is still looking for volunteers to ensure a better coverage of the catchment. And network schedules are re-jigged when someone indicates an interest in testing at a new site.

In short, your Waterwatch networks are doing well but could maybe need YOU.

New volunteers receive training in the use of equipment and completing the data sheets and receive a copy of the data for their network annually.

*To learn more about Waterwatch, contact the MRCCC on 5482 4766 or me as Waterwatch delegate on 5446 0124.*



*Graeme White and Nina Cox testing the water in Coolabine Creek.*

# Noosa Festival of Water

Noosa Botanic Gardens, Lake Macdonald, Cooroy  
on **SUNDAY 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2012** from 10 am until 3 pm

The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Noosa Festival of Water will showcase some of our region's finest features through a range of entertaining and educational activities aimed at the whole family.

- Animal displays with **Geckoes Wildlife, Reptile Awareness Displays**, and **Save the Fraser Island Dingos**
- **Weaving workshops with Kris Martin** using the weed vine Cat's Claw Creeper (\$20, bookings required)
- **Permaculture Trainer Tim Lang** putting together a dinner garden
- A **RockCote competition** for \$450 worth of environmentally friendly interior house coatings



## On the water ...

- Take a **free boat trip** across the lake to tour the Hatchery and the Noosa Water Treatment plant
- Learn to paddle a **canoe**, have a go at **stand-up paddle**, try your hand at **sailing**

## On shore...

For the kids, there's the **Kid's Fishing Clinic** and **Arting About** activities. There'll be many informative displays by **community and regional groups**. A range of refreshments will be available, or bring a picnic to enjoy by the lake.

Residents of the Noosa Biosphere who bring a current rates notice can **choose two free trees** from the Noosa Landcare display, and MRCCC will **test 500 ml samples of dam, creek or bore water** brought in by landholders.

Musical entertainment will feature Caitlyn Shadbolt and Aiming High and also the Tapper Girls, Blue Monday, and Lyndon Davies and the Gubbi Gubbi Dancers.

For more information, contact the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care

Group on 07 5482 4766 or [lakemacgroup@ozwide.net.au](mailto:lakemacgroup@ozwide.net.au)

or visit us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/noosafestivalofwater](http://www.facebook.com/noosafestivalofwater)



## Land for Wildlife and Healthy Habitats

by Peter McAdam  
Biodiversity Officer, MRCCC

Hosted by the MRCCC, I look after **Land for Wildlife** in the Gympie and Fraser Coast Council areas of the Mary River catchment.

I also support landholders in enhancing the management of their properties under the **Healthy Habitats** program and have organised a series of field walks, workshops, and planning days. The Biodiversity Field Officer position is funded through an agreement with the Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management (BMRG).

So far this year there have been several very successful bus tours with invited speakers, property visits and a lot of enthusiastic involvement from the participants. Everyone seems to have enjoyed themselves very much.

Next in our series will be a workshop in early June focusing on **biological controls of the weed vines** Cat's Claw Creeper and Madeira Vine. We will be visiting the Widgee area.

In early July the focus will be on **stock management**, especially fencing layouts, types, rotations. This is about achieving a balance between productivity and nature conservation, and should be of particular interest to LfW members and graziers and particularly to people revegetating in riparian zones and people with flood-prone land and fencing. Host for this event will be Glenda Pickersgill who has beef cattle properties at Kandanga and Kinbombi.

Later in the year we have a **property planning workshop** and a **paddle on Tinana Creek** to see the Lowland Forest from a different perspective.

Also coming up will be a look at **legal options** available to conservationists on harm prevention, evidence collection and options for succession planning. This year's wrap-up will be a **bush foods get-together** for LfW, Landcare and friends.

For more information on times, dates and bookings call the MRCCC office on 5482 4766 or check out our website [www.mrccc.org.au](http://www.mrccc.org.au) for the Mary or [www.bmrg.org.au](http://www.bmrg.org.au) for a broader listing.

# A future for Koalas

by Rachel Lyons, Wildlife Rehabilitator, Wildcare Australia Inc.

The Koala is in crisis. The estimated 80 000 to 100 000 Koalas remaining throughout mainland Australia face numerous complex threats. The future of the Koala is not looking at all positive.

## Threats

The Koala population has never recovered from large-scale fur hunts between 1915 and 1919 and again in 1927, during which one million and 600 000 Koalas respectively were killed. Few comprehensive nation-wide surveys of population numbers have been undertaken; however it is apparent that Koala numbers have been in significant decline over the last century, particularly along the east coast.

Koalas are endangered by habitat destruction and being attacked by domestic dogs and hit by cars. Disturbingly, Koalas in Queensland face what could be a much more significant problem, an infection by a retrovirus that suppresses their immune systems, turning usually mild diseases such as chlamydia into killers. Chlamydia now kills hundreds of Koalas in Queensland each year.

Recent studies have identified that all Koalas in Queensland are infected by a retrovirus; this is not the case in other states. The effect this will have on Queensland's Koalas is worrying.

## Listed as vulnerable

The recent listing of the Koala as 'vulnerable' under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conserva-*



Photo courtesy of the Australian Koala Foundation  
[www.savethekoala.com](http://www.savethekoala.com)

## To help Koalas

- Confine domestic dogs from late afternoon to daybreak.
- Drive attentively and slowly in Koala areas (watch for signs).
- Plant Koala food trees and help to develop wildlife corridors.
- Minimise fencing in Koala areas.
- Report Koalas that appear sick or have wet/red looking rumps or pink/conjunctivitis looking eyes as soon as possible. (Early treatment improves survival rates.)
- Donate money or your time to the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital:  
[www.wildlifewarriors.org.au/wildlife\\_hospital/](http://www.wildlifewarriors.org.au/wildlife_hospital/)

*If you find an injured Koala in the Mary River catchment or elsewhere in south-east Queensland, please contact the Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital on 1300 369 652. The Hospital will help to coordinate the rescue with local Koala rehabilitators.*

*tion Act 1999* (EPBC Act) in QLD, NSW and ACT may provide some benefit to Koala populations through the control of development approvals in areas where Koalas live.

In Queensland under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* the Koala is listed as 'regionally vulnerable' in the SEQ Bioregion (from Gladstone south) and 'of least concern' (common) elsewhere.

The Queensland Government has implemented the 'State Planning Policy 2/10 – *Koala Conservation in South East Queensland*', which imposes constraints on the development of Koala habitat within SEQ (from Noosa south). The recent Federal EPBC listing of Koalas will have greater legislative effect in areas outside of SEQ.

## Helping Koalas

The Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital in Beerwah takes by far the majority of Koalas requiring veterinarian treatment from the Mary catchment.

More than 4650 Koalas from around Queensland and northern NSW have been admitted to the hospital since it opened in 2004.

During 2011, 754 Koalas were admitted for chlamydia or other sickness or injuries.

The solution to ensuring the survival of Koalas in their habitat, given the disease situation, is complex. Beneficial actions include having better development controls, improving road crossings, educating dog owners, researching the retrovirus, and developing anti-retroviral drugs or other veterinary treatments for Koalas.

## SEQ KOALA NATURE REFUGES PROGRAM

A Koala Nature Refuge is a voluntary agreement between a landholder and the Queensland Government. It is a commitment to improve and preserve land that is suitable for rehabilitating to increase koala habitat.

To receive funding, applicants need to sign a Koala Nature Refuge Agreement (also called a conservation agreement). Koala Nature Refuge Agreements are perpetual on freehold land, attached to the land title, and binding on successive owners of the land. The Koala Nature Refuge can apply to the whole property or to certain areas of the property.

The property must be within the SEQ Protection Area (ie Sunshine Coast Council) and have at least two hectares available of land rated as having medium to high suitability for rehabilitation.

More information is available on the DERM website  
[www.derm.qld.gov.au](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au)  
or contact a Nature Refuge Officer on 3330 5359 or  
[koala.refuges@derm.qld.gov.au](mailto:koala.refuges@derm.qld.gov.au)

# Nature gives and takes away

by Lee Daffin, Landholder, Conondale

Since first writing for the *CodLine* nearly five years ago, my 7.6 hectare Harper Creek Road property has experienced some dramatic extremes in weather. I've seen some fantastic gains in my revegetation work and some massive failures.

In 2009 with a riparian reveg grant from the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, I put in 700 trees along the creek. Contractors came in, prepared the area using the poison circle method, and planted the trees with water crystals and mulch. It all looked great until we had three really bad frosts within a week, and then no decent rain for months. That wiped out a lot of the trees.

When the rain finally came, so did the weeds. I tried my best to find the trees and poison around them but I was swamped. By the start of winter 2010 we had lost about 650 trees. It was heart breaking. I was determined to never let the weeds win again.

In spring 2010 I bought 1.5 km of 1 metre wide weed matting, mulch, stakes, tree bags and 600 trees. I planted the trees through the weed matting and then mulched and bagged them. This worked fantastically until early January 2011 when the creek flooded and washed away more than 350 of the trees, all the mulch, and hundreds of metres of weed matting.

This flood changed the course of my creek and ripped out mature riparian trees. Some old-timers said it was worse than the 1974 floods. It was a landscape-changing event. Now I was really starting to feel discouraged! It seemed that whatever I did, Nature just froze it, starved it of water, or washed it away.

In late 2010 I expressed interest in the Koala Nature Refuges Program (see information box on next page). My property met the criteria, being within the SEQ Koala Protection Area and having at least two hectares available with a medium to high suitability for revegetation.

DERM staff and I spent most of 2011 preparing. We mapped the exclusion areas and defined the revegetation areas; got quotes for fencing, slashing, rehabilitation work, a cattle grid and an accountant; and gave the Refuge a name. In consultation with the Mimburi Upper Mary Aboriginal Association, the refuge was named 'Harper Creek Guala Nature Refuge', recognising the koala. In early November 2011 the project was approved – well, this made my day – but the agreement is still to be signed (gazettal process, legal checks, new State Government etc).

So over the next five years we will plant 995 trees and protect them until they can look after themselves. Eighty per cent of the trees will be food trees and twenty per cent habitat trees. The trees will be planted over two hectares of my property, some in open areas and some as infill in degraded areas. All in all, this will transform my property.

I also gained a Sunshine Coast Council Major Grant during 2011. Late last year the contractors returned and planted 500 trees along my creek. This time we used Jute Tree Surrounds (Mulch Mats), tree bags, and bamboo stakes. Using the mats meant we didn't need to mulch, which saved a lot of time and money. Having all the trees in bags means we can see where they are and they are protected, for example, from herbicide spray drift. I use poison to keep the grasses and weeds down. This has helped a lot and I haven't lost many trees this time around. I've learned a great deal from this process of trial and error.



*December 2010 - freshly planted*



*January 2011 - scoured by floods*



*May 2012 - progress and growth!*

Along the creek there is an area of revegetation that is about 500 m<sup>2</sup> that has a nice canopy over it. This really helps to retard the growth of the weeds. The other areas are coming along nicely too, but as anyone who is trying to rehab some land knows, it is a slow process.

*If you would like to hear more about Lee Daffin's experiences in revegetation, you can contact Lee on 5435 0172.*

# Mary River Threatened Species Recovery Plan – Input invited

by Tanzi Smith, MRCCC

MRCCC, DSEWPaC and BMRG have developed a list of proposed actions that aim to protect the five umbrella species that are the focus of the plan and also contribute to improvements in overall river health. The actions fall under these six themes: increasing or improving habitat, reducing threats, enhancing community capacity and connection to the river, improving indigenous involvement, reducing knowledge gaps and improving regulations and institutions.

We are seeking feedback from interested groups and individuals on these draft actions. We particularly want to identify actions needed to facilitate and better support the crucial role that individual landholders and community organisations play in undertaking onground actions

and monitoring the health of the river or threatened species.

A number of people have asked me whether this is just another plan that reinvents the wheel. The recovery plan builds on all the work that has been undertaken in the past, but adds some important layers that we hope will formalise some protection for the river, help attract more funding, and broaden community input, particularly from indigenous people. The role of the recovery plan is to integrate individual species recovery plans with actions that improve the overall health of the river ecosystem.

The plan will ultimately become a ‘legislative instrument’ under the federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. This means that if a project like the Traveston Crossing dam

ever came our way again, this recovery plan would be used to determine whether the threats of the proposal were significant. The plan also outlines the habitat characteristics that are critical to the survival of the species and actions needed to abate the threats. These factors would also be considered during the assessment of any proposed development.

*You are invited to have your say by asking Tanzi to attend a meeting of your group or by attending a public forum about the plan. Forums are planned for Maryborough (7 June), Maleny/Conondale (11 June, to be confirmed) and Gympie (14 June). Dates and times will be advertised on the MRCCC website. For more information, contact Tanzi at MRCCC on 0405 848 375 or [mrctanzi@ozwide.net.au](mailto:mrctanzi@ozwide.net.au)*

## More threats loom ...

Two years on from Traveston and it is becoming apparent that we may have another fight on our hands to protect the Mary River and Great Sandy Strait.

The threat arises from mining – particularly for coal and coal seam gas. A large area is under exploration for both of these resources right now, particularly in the northern part of the catchment.

The only project to reach the mining lease application stage is the proposed Colton Coal Mine, 2.1 km from Aldershot and 7 km from the Maryborough Base Hospital.

If approved this mine will cause draw-down of groundwater in a 3 km radius and routinely pump mine effluent, which is classed as hazardous waste, into the Mary River at Dundathu. If the mine goes ahead the pit will be a hole in the ground the size of 170 football fields, and 60-80 m deep, requiring continual pump out of acidic, saline water that is high in metals.

The mine would be located in the Susan River catchment and present the threat of discharge of saline and/or heavy metal polluted water into this sensitive fish breeding area and Ramsar site.

The site is located at the junction of two bioregional biodiversity corridors identified by the EPA as encompassing wallum

habitat that is suitable for acid frogs (one species, the wallum froglet, has been found at the proposed mine site).

The Environmental Management Plan acknowledges ‘there would be potential for harm to a significant environmental value in the event of a failure to contain scenario.’

The proposal has been delayed by several issues related to management of the hazardous wastewater and biodiversity impacts.

At present the state government is in the process of deciding whether to allow the project to proceed by granting an environmental authority.

*You can follow the issue, particularly the health impacts, on the Aldershot and District Against Mine (AADAM) website: [www.aadam.jigsy.com](http://www.aadam.jigsy.com)*

*You can also follow mining-related issues by liking the Facebook page of Fraser Coast Mining Watch.*

*In the Gympie region you can also find out more about local CSG and coal mining issues by contacting the Gympie Water Air and Soil Protection (WASP) group via email [gwaspgroup@gmail.com](mailto:gwaspgroup@gmail.com) or Adele Coombs on 0427 839 165.*

## Brownwater Classic

Saturday July 7 from 1 pm

Pickering Bridge, Moy Pocket

Blackbean pod boat building and racing, rock-skipping competitions, friendly company. Boat building materials supplied, everything else BYO.

More info: Ian Mackay on 5446 0124

## Kandanga Community access trail

Come explore Kandanga Creek near the Kandanga bridge. Turtles and platypus are often seen in this stretch of the creek.

A Conservation Volunteers Australia team has been working hard to develop a community access trail. They have cleared large weed infestations, put in a path, and planted lots of native riparian plants to extend the community tree plantings carried out at the two most recent Mary River Festivals.

To find out more about stream ecology, and local weeds (which may be lurking in your garden), visit the Save the Mary Museum and River Education Centre next to the Kandanga Railway Station on Wednesdays and Sundays 10 am to 4 pm.

# Frog Business

by Eva Ford, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee

For the past nine years I have spent the warmer months searching out the frog inhabitants of the Mary River catchment. We identify species and locate individuals at night by their calls. A light drizzle can bring out large numbers of calling males of the Graceful Treefrog *Litoria gracilentata* and Orange-eyed Treefrog *Litoria chloris* among many others.

The past two seasons have been marked by frequent and sometimes severe flooding. Such conditions provide excellent habitat for frogs that breed in temporary and still water bodies but certainly reduces the available time for breeding in flowing streams. Having said that, tadpoles of the endangered Giant Barred Frog were found in Belli Creek in March 2012 following some of the most severe flooding on record. At one of our long-term monitoring sites on Cedar Creek we detected the rare Green-thighed Frog *Litoria brevipalmata* for the first time since visits began seven years ago. These frogs love extra wet conditions but myste-

riously disappear after a few days of intense calling and breeding.

The endangered Giant Barred Frog *Mixophyes iteratus* and vulnerable Tusked Frog *Adelotus brevis* are commonly detected at all sites. The Giant Barred Frog was recorded slightly less often in the drier years of 2006 and 2007 but numbers seemed to recover during the recent wetter years. This is a long-lived species so short-term climatic hardships would be unlikely to affect their persistence over several years. However, prolonged dry conditions would certainly begin to effect breeding success and longer-term population levels. It also brings into focus the importance of riparian resilience, connectivity and in-stream refuges for helping species, both fauna and flora, to survive adverse conditions and maintain critical populations during the dry times from which to re-establish 'normal' numbers when conditions again become favourable.



Green-thighed Frog *Litoria brevipalmata*.

[Photo: Eva Ford]

MRCCC's 'Living with Threatened Species' program aims to increase awareness about threatened species and the ecosystems that support them and to assist landholders with property planning and rehabilitation activities (see article below on SCRC Landholder grants).

Frog surveys provide an opportunity to explore the wonders of creek life at night and learn about local fauna first-hand. Many locals take up the offer to participate in the frog surveys each season. Volunteers are always welcome – contact Eva Ford at MRCCC on 5482 4766.

## Grants support landholders in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland

by Eva Ford, MRCCC

More than one third of the Sunshine Coast Council area lies in the Mary River catchment through Cooroy, Belli and Kenilworth and south including the Conondale Range and western aspect of the Blackall Range. The upper Mary catchment has a very diverse and significant suite of flora and fauna and include some world-class reserve areas. However much of the land is privately owned and the protection of natural assets depends on individual landholders.

Many of the tributaries provide excellent habitat; the riparian vegetation is usually intact and continuous along the banks, supporting some of the highly significant species associated with our waterways that are federally listed as endangered – Mary River Cod, Mary River Turtle and Giant Barred Frog. Richmond Birdwing Butterflies are also seen in this area.

For more than 15 years the MRCCC has worked with landholders in the Sunshine Coast hinterland to protect and enhance riparian areas and improve land management practices to better sustain a healthy environment along with continued production. This work has been supported by the Sunshine Coast Council, Burnett Mary Regional Group and many other funding bodies.

The Sunshine Coast Council has recognised the importance of its waterways and its responsibility to downstream water users through its planning and support of projects. The Council's conservation officers and environmental teams work tirelessly to carry out and support projects throughout the Council area. Sunshine Coast Council's Community Grant Scheme has been developed to assist landholders in undertaking environment work on their properties. The Landholder Environmental Grant is open twice a year

and can provide incentives to carry out stock fencing along waterways or around significant natural areas, off-stream watering, environmental weed control to encourage natural regeneration, and revegetation projects.

Since September 2010 MRCCC has assisted 60 property owners in weaving their way through the grant process and managing their projects after successfully obtaining grants. Some of the landholders have a long history of river-care involvement with MRCCC while others are new to the concept. Often people are linked to other landholders in their neighbourhood or sub-catchment who have similar aims and are undertaking similar projects.

The next round of SCC Landholder Environmental Grants is due in October 2012. Interested landowners begin the process in August and are welcome to contact the MRCCC on [mrccc@ozwide.net.au](mailto:mrccc@ozwide.net.au) or 5482 4766 for assistance and advice.

# WONS bitten, twice shy

by Steve Burgess, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee

In April, the two most serious vine weeds of the Mary River catchment (Cat's Claw Creeper and Madeira Vine) were added to the list of 'Weeds of National Significance' (WONS) by the Australian Government as part of the Australian Weeds Strategy. Draft copies of the national management strategies for Cat's Claw and Madeira Vine are expected to be available for public comment by the end of May 2012.

What does this mean for landholders?

Under Queensland law, these weeds are currently scheduled as class 3 weeds, which means they cannot be supplied or sold, and may be required to be removed from environmentally sensitive areas. Inclusion in the WONS list does not change their status under State law, but will increase the effort and funding for cooperative research and control actions by the Commonwealth and State Governments. This includes the release of a best practice management guide for the control of each of these weeds, and (hopefully) support for further development and release of biological control agents.

In the meantime, Landcare and community groups throughout the Mary River Catchment are a-crawl with activity, raising and releasing the biocontrol bugs and beetles that are already available.

The Cat's Claw Creeper tingid bug has been available for a few years and colonies have successfully established in a number of places following the placement of tingid-infested plants. Even better – colonies of the bug are now being discovered many kilometres from the nearest release site. The tingid bug slows the growth of Cat's Claw by sucking the sap from the leaves, leaving distinctive white blotchy spots on the foliage. Colonies seem to come and go in population explosions, particularly at times when temperatures are moderate (20 to 30 degrees) and the plants are fresh and sappy.

The new hope for Cat's Claw management is a leaf-mining jewel beetle *Hylaeogena jurecki*. This critter has a larval stage which mines its way under the surface of the leaf then pupates as a convenient 'scab' on the leaf (which can be easily collected and distributed).



*The new Madeira Vine biocontrol agent, Plectoncha correntina, is about the size of a ladybeetle.*

*[Photo: Biosecurity Queensland, DEEDI]*

It emerges as a voracious beetle which chews its way through the whole leaf then flies away quite strongly to settle on new territory. The beetle has been extensively tested by Biosecurity Queensland to make sure it doesn't attack plants other than Cat's Claw; it is expected to be released sometime this year.

Madeira Vine has not escaped the biocontrol bite. Biosecurity Queensland has released a beetle, *Plectoncha correntina*, which attacks Madeira vine, and this agent has been released in several locations throughout the Mary Catchment to observe how it behaves in the field. The damage is done by the larvae, which cover themselves in a distinctive glob of brown sticky slime as they munch voraciously through the leaves of Madeira vine.

*For information on how to obtain Tingid Bugs for Cat's Claw Creeper control in the Mary catchment, contact your local Landcare group.*

*For information on biocontrol for Madeira Vine, contact Peter McAdam, Healthy Habitats officer at the MRCCC.*

*In the Gympie Region, Gympie Landcare has a specific project to get groups of neighbours working together to control Cat's Claw Creeper. Contact Don Maskall, or email [catsclaw-action@gympielandcare.org.au](mailto:catsclaw-action@gympielandcare.org.au)*

*A weevil to help control salvinia *Salvinia molesta*, the fern-like water WONS that can completely smother the surface of small farm dams, is available through Gympie Regional Council.*

# Kabunga Ck

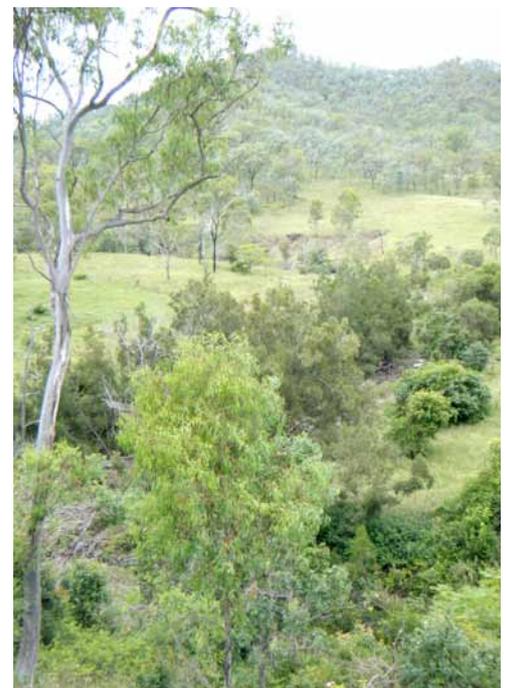
by Glenda Pickersgill,  
Landholder

Kabunga Creek at the headwaters of Wide Bay Creek near Kinbombi had been dry for almost all the time we've owned the 830 acre cattle property since 2003. Then the rain came in an intense 24-hour 300 mm rain event in 2011 and Kabunga Creek ran a torrent. The vegetation along the creek was severely damaged, deep gullies eroded back, and numerous landslips appeared in the steep country.

With help from a Reef Rescue grant, we have fenced to control stock grazing along 3 km of the creek and converging gullies with amazing results already. Lots of pioneer natives like she-oaks and black ti-tree are growing through the cobbles and the creek still continues to flow crystal clear with lots of frogs calling.

There's more work to do. The good wet brought lots of weeds to control, most notably climbing tropical legumes, lantana and Moth Vine. Where the creek leaves the property and stock have access to the water, dense swards of filamentous algae are apparent, coating the rocks in the creek.

Interestingly, the word Kabunga is reportedly derived from the Kabi language, Kalabara clan, word 'gobongo', indicating 'frog'. Koalas are also frequently seen in the Forest Red Gums *Eucalyptus tereticornis* along the small alluvial flats adjoining Kabunga Creek (photo below).



# Breeding cod, stocking cod

by Peter Kind, Principal Scientist (Freshwater), Fisheries Queensland

In February 2012 the MRCCC and Fisheries Queensland co-hosted a forum to collate existing scientific knowledge about Mary River Cod populations and discuss the role of fish stocking as a recovery action and fisheries management tool for cod.

The forum was organised in part to assist the development of recovery actions in the Mary River Threatened Species Recovery Plan.

Forum delegates included representatives from all levels of government, research scientists, recreational anglers, cod breeders and interstate guests involved in the recovery of the closely related Eastern Cod in northern New South Wales.

Participants strongly agreed efforts should continue to address the significant knowledge gaps that remain in our understanding of the Mary River Cod, relating to its reproductive biology, natural recruitment, genetic structure of cod populations, status/location of critical cod habitat, and wild population numbers. Specific recommendations were developed regarding the stocking of captive-bred cod fingerlings, including:

- Fisheries Queensland to lead the development of a comprehensive Mary River Cod stocking policy to address brood stock collection, handling techniques, hatchery management and restocking protocols, with minimising genetic risks associated with fish stocking to be a key goal of the stocking policy.
- Restocking of captive-bred fingerlings should continue to play a role in the management and recovery of Mary River Cod populations, complementing other on-ground recovery actions and community education programs.
- The current position of no stocking in the Tinana/Coondoo Creek sub-catchments should continue as populations in this area are genetically distinct and considered of high conservation value.
- Since no fingerlings have been stocked in the Mary River or its tributaries since 2008, this position should continue for 5 years (ending 2013) and then be reviewed. Stocking habitat criteria in the current Mary River Cod Recovery Program should be reviewed.
- Major dams in the Mary River Catchment should continue to be stocked and

specific conditions for stocking these dams should be developed.

- Stocking programs in catchments outside the Mary Valley, where cod populations have been established where there used to be cod, should continue.

Fisheries Queensland and the other workshop partners are working on these recommendations for the ongoing management of cod stocking programs and the Mary Valley Threatened Species Recovery Plan.

## Gerry Cook Fish Hatchery News

by Vince Collis

After the last two years of no spawning, we've got fish in the ponds and we're hoping. Not saying what for, but we're hoping! The last two years have been so wet it isn't funny; maybe this was why the cod didn't feel the need to breed. Who knows? Anyway, the powers that be seem happy with our set-up, so if we get fingerlings this year we'll just need to make sure we've got the money to feed them.

# Yabba Creek threatened by Tilapia

## - the cane toad of our waterways

by Dale Watson, Mary River Coordinating Committee

The recent discovery of a single Tilapia in Yabba Creek has many people concerned about the imminent danger this pest fish, often referred to as the cane toad of our waterways, presents for the Mary River system and our unique fish species.

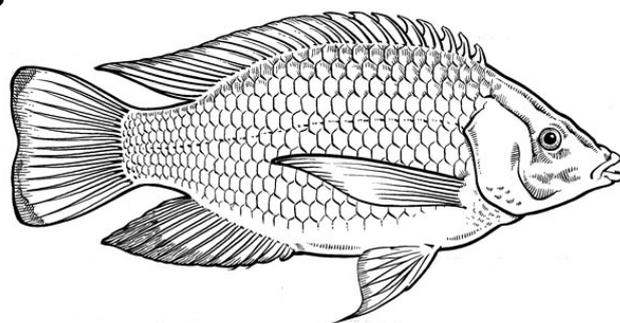
Mozambique Tilapia *Oreochromis mossambicus*, also known as the Mozambique mouth-brooder, can quickly dominate a water body, outcompeting native fish for habitat and food. Its feeding and nesting habits degrade water quality. Tilapia reproduce year round. The eggs and larvae are held in the mouth where they can survive even after the parent fish has been killed.

Tilapia are deep-bodied with a thin profile and long pointed fins. The fish are usually

dark grey but can be silver, with 2 to 5 dark blotches/spots on the sides. The single long continuous dorsal fin is a key characteristic for identification.

Once established in a flowing river or creek, Tilapia are almost impossible to eradicate. This fish is declared noxious in Queensland. It is unlawful to possess noxious fish alive or dead or to use them as bait. Penalties of up to \$200 000 apply. Tilapia are mainly spread by people moving them between waterways.

If you catch a Tilapia, do not release it; kill it humanely and dispose of it away from the water body.



Mozambique Tilapia *Oreochromis mossambicus*.  
[Image: DEEDI, Queensland]

We are urging everyone to be on the lookout for these pests, especially if you are fishing or enjoying the waters of Borumba Dam and Yabba Creek.

Report any sightings or catches of pest fish to the MRCCC on 5482 4766 or the 24-hour Fishwatch hotline on 1800 017 166.

# Caring for our Catchment

## Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee

The Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee is made up of 25 business and community sector representatives and a number of special members. Collectively, these Delegates represent some thousands of catchment residents, ensuring that issues affecting the wider catchment are identified and, if possible, addressed. The committee meets every 6 weeks, most often in Gympie. In February 2012 the MRCCC held its 150th general meeting, which was attended by 80 people.

The Committee currently employs 4 full-time and 4 part-time staff, who work from a Gympie Council-owned building in central Gympie.

MRCCC staff work with landholders, providing technical advice and facilitating access to modest financial incentives to facilitate riparian rehabilitation works targeting priority reaches of the Mary River and its tributaries.

MRCCC staff help to coordinate programs locally such as the Reef Rescue program, which is assisting the grazing industry to adopt best land and riparian zone management practices, as well as Land for Wildlife in the Gympie and Fraser Coast council areas, Healthy Habitats, and six community Waterwatch networks which collect data from the upper Mary in the south to the Munna Creek subcatchment near Maryborough.

MRCCC has recently been awarded \$2.4 million over six years from the Federal Government's Biodiversity Fund. The Biodiversity Fund provides funds to restore, manage and enhance biodiverse carbon stores. Funding will focus on protecting and restoring riparian zones with threatened species habitat, particularly in the Mary Valley.

A wide range of fact sheets and reports are available through the MRCCC website: [www.mrccc.org.au](http://www.mrccc.org.au)

Phone: 5482 4766

Email: [mrccc@ozwide.net.au](mailto:mrccc@ozwide.net.au)



## Barung Landcare Association

Based in Maleny, Barung Landcare is working to develop ethical solutions for a sustainable future, supporting local and regional community empowerment to conserve and enhance the rich diversity of natural resources of the Blackall Range and environs.



Over the past 20 years we have run a widely praised local native plant nursery. Our current nursery is located in Porter's Lane, North Maleny, and open to the public Wednesday to Friday. We are also soon to open a new wholesale native plant production nursery at 135 Forestry Road, Landsborough.

Barung maintains a Contracting Services team who are experts at environmental regeneration and revegetation. They specialize in weed control and on ground activities, such as species selection and planting, and have experience ranging from small residential properties through to large-scale, multi-partnership projects.

The Barung office is located in our Resource and Education Centre in the Riverside Centre, Maleny where advice and information is available on a range of landcare and natural resource management topics. There is also a wide range of natural history books available for sale, including books on plants, fungi, birds and reptiles.

Check out our website for online purchases and what is happening at Barung: [www.barunglandcare.org.au](http://www.barunglandcare.org.au)

Phone: 5494 3151

Email: [info@barunglandcare.org.au](mailto:info@barunglandcare.org.au)

## Noosa & District Landcare Group

Noosa Landcare was established in 1991 and is based in the hinterland town of Pomona. We have two offices in Pomona, three nurseries and a compound to store vehicles and equipment. The group currently has over 30 employees, making it the second biggest employer in Pomona. We work anywhere... from Miriamvale in the north to the Gold Coast, with most work coming from the Mary and Noosa river catchments. Training in aquatic plants has been offered all over Australia, with over 2500 people trained.

NDLG conducts property visits, carries out large scale revegetation and weed control, supplies local provenance tubestock, and importantly disseminates general information on Natural Resource management issues to the general public and members. We also conduct workshop series and have a presence at regular

events such as the Festival of Water at Lake Macdonald, Noosa Biosphere day, National Tree Day, and World Environment Day. The group manages the Sunshine Coast Council's Community Nature Conservation Program (CNCNCP) in the northern region, with over a hundred and fifty volunteers working on fourteen reserves in the Noosa Biosphere region. We also maintain a Waterwatch program monitoring the health of our creeks and rivers with the assistance of more than forty volunteers. The three nurseries also have approximately thirty volunteers.

Noosa Landcare has a core belief in the education of our young people. To this end we conduct school visits, talks, excursions and events to educate and inform students about our special part of Australia. We also have programs that aim to support people looking to gain employment. These programs are in partnership with the State Government, Sunshine Coast Council, SEQ Catchments and Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service.

Further information can be found on our website [www.noosalandcare.org](http://www.noosalandcare.org) or at our office in Pomona in Station Street, opposite the pub. Phone: 5485 2468.



## Mary River Turtle Conservation

by Marilyn Connell, Mary River Turtle Project Officer, Tiaro Landcare

Spreading the news about the endangered Mary River Turtle has taken a varied and diverse path during the past six months. Last summer, two of our members had the pleasure of spending a day on the Mary with Tim Flannery and John Doyle during the filming for the ABC TV documentary, 'Two on the Great Divide', during which Tim highlighted the national importance of the Mary and two of its endangered aquatic creatures, the turtle and lungfish. An exhibition, 'Exclusive & Elusive', based on the Mary River Turtle was designed and created by Tiaro Landcare members and installed at Gatakers Art Space in Maryborough during December. As a result, Mudlarks Pottery Group made and donated 100 little pottery turtles to assist in raising funds for our conservation project. At this event, we had the inaugural Australian screening of our DVD, 'Sharing Mary, a long fat turtle tale'. The creation of the DVD is due in no small part to the commitment of John Wilson, professional videographer from Hervey Bay, a grant from Fraser Coast Regional Council, and the efforts of many of our members. The DVD can be purchased via our website: [www.maryriverturtle.com](http://www.maryriverturtle.com).

Ergon Energy Green Team co-ordinators put in a huge effort organising our Easter Chocolate turtle drive which distributed hand-made turtle-themed Easter eggs and chocolates throughout Queensland.

Funds raised assist with funding new research. PhD candidate Mariana Campbell has been analysing data toward identifying critical habitat for the juveniles. Tracking adult turtles is the subject of an ongoing research partnership between the University of Queensland and Tiaro Landcare. Once data has been downloaded from hydrophones located in the river, it will be available for viewing on UQ's School of Biological Sciences website. Mariana and I (representing Tiaro Landcare) presented papers on turtle conservation and research at the international Turtle & Tortoise Symposium in Orlando, Florida; there is significant international awareness of the research and conservation activities being undertaken on the Mary River Turtle.

However, the most important aspect of our project is our onground endeavours to conserve the species. Last season Tiaro Landcare members monitored 72 nests locally and 17 nests in the Traves-ton-Kenilworth reach of the Mary River.



Thankfully the clutches laid early in October had hatched prior to the December flood rains. Unfortunately some clutches laid during December were lost during the many flood peaks experienced last summer. Without financial assistance from the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, our conservation efforts would be limited.

To keep up to date with Tiaro Landcare's project activities, purchase a DVD or book, or donate to their project, please visit their website [www.maryriverturtle.com](http://www.maryriverturtle.com)

### Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care

The group's focus is enhancing awareness and building coastal resilience on the Fraser Coast.

Through the engagement and participation of volunteers, we increase on-ground implementation to address issues whilst improving the overall resilience of the Fraser Coast to address future impacts.

We are involved in a broad range of activities throughout Hervey Bay/Maryborough and we coordinate activities involving schools, user groups and their members, such as:

- community/school meetings and training events to engage new members in coastal conservation, including training in marine turtle monitoring, shorebird and weed ID
- involving communities in monitoring turtles, freshwater fish and shorebirds
- eradicating weeds and planning revegetation, with regular weeding days at Fay Smith Wetlands, Big Woody Island and Sandy Cape.

More information:

Lesley Bradley on 4128 1750 or [dlmbrad@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dlmbrad@bigpond.net.au) or

Richard Joll on 4123 0667 or [sixgun\\_rich@hotmail.com](mailto:sixgun_rich@hotmail.com)

## Greater Mary Association

The Greater Mary Association Inc. is focussed on improving the management of the lower Mary River (roughly from Gunalda north) and the Great Sandy Strait, raising awareness about the river and the Strait and increasing the community's connections to these unique ecosystems.

Our group was created in 2007 in response to claims the proposed Traves-ton Crossing dam would not have downstream effects. We still keep a close eye on and make submissions about projects and policies that may impact on the Mary River and Great Sandy Strait, such as the Water Resource Plan and the proposed Colton Coal mine.

We have funding from the Federal Government and BMRG for two onground projects – creating a 'Mary River Koala Corridor' north of Tiaro, and setting up and maintaining a biocontrol facility for control of Cats Claw Creeper. We need volunteers to help make these



projects a success. Updates on these projects are available through two blogs [www.maryriverkoalas.blogspot.com](http://www.maryriverkoalas.blogspot.com) and [www.tiarotingids.blogspot.com.au](http://www.tiarotingids.blogspot.com.au)

We are entirely volunteer run and meet monthly. This year, we are experimenting with alternating between an indoor meeting and an outdoor weekend activity. Wherever possible we take the opportunity to work with other groups. Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings.

You can follow our activities on Facebook by searching for our name and liking us.

Phone: Ross Smith on 0429 624 600

Email: [greatermary@gmail.com](mailto:greatermary@gmail.com)

# Yabba Creek student case study

by Jeff Wheatley

Head of Geography, Brisbane Girls Grammar School

The Geography Department at Brisbane Girls Grammar School has developed a program whereby students are able to undertake learning experiences that go beyond the classroom. One such example is the two day Year 11 Geography field trip conducted in late February 2012 to Marrapatta, the School's Memorial Outdoor Education Centre near Imbil. The task requires students to apply what they have studied in class about Managing Catchments to a 'real world' setting. After

conducting a range of water tests along Yabba Creek and listening to a variety of members from the local community, each student reported on the current state of Yabba Creek and proposed two strategies to address the vision of the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee - *to achieve a sustainable and productive catchment*. A student's response to such an investigation (see below) provides an insight into the benefit of such a valuable learning experience for the students.

In addition, the field trip has provided an opportunity to develop a very good relationship between the School and the local community. To this end, I would like to acknowledge Gary and Linda Rozinski, Glenda Pickersgill, Col Huddy, Janine Gledhill, Marcel and Rosemary DeLeon, Ashley Gill, as well as Rob Priebe and Kaili Parker-Price and the staff at the MRCCC for the time and effort they have provided over the past twelve years.

## ***Managing Catchments: An extract from a student report with proposals for managing Yabba Creek***

Yabba Creek is part of one of Queensland's most diverse catchments, the Mary River catchment. The range of economic activities in the Yabba Creek catchment, from farming and forestry to tourism and recreational activities such as fishing and canoeing, emphasises the reliance people, plants and animals have on the creek.

The use of Yabba Creek for future generations has been compromised by the recent flooding, severe bank erosion, land degradation and rapid land use changes, indicating the need to put in place strategies to achieve the vision of the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) to better sustain Yabba Creek. These strategies focus on improving the management of the creek banks and riparian vegetation within the catchment to ensure healthier water quality.

Improving creek banks and riparian vegetation would provide financial benefit for Council, farmers and other businesses active around the creek whose economic situation would improve if less maintenance on creek and banks was needed. However, to improve the riparian vegetation and creek banks, more funding is needed. The government would need to subsidise funding for the local council workers and provide incentives to encourage private landowners to put in their own time and money.

Developing the riparian vegetation would substantially improve the quality of the water in the creek:

- Less erosion will occur as deep

rooted native flora hold stream banks, decreasing turbidity levels.

- The riparian vegetation would reduce salinity and act as a buffer by filtering and reducing the amount of nutrients and algal-simulating bacterium entering the creek.

However the change toward less saline, less turbid and possible cooler water may have an impact on some species. It only takes a 2°C increase in water temperature to place an aquatic ecosystem under

stress. Providing more riparian vegetation, and thus shade, will likely lower the water temperature to a more natural level for most native species.

Socially, there will be considerably less maintenance in the future for local council and farmers. However some private landowners may not be willing to improve riparian vegetation on their properties if the incentives aren't rewarding enough.



*Cows at one of the many dairy farms in the Yabba Creek catchment. Healthy grass in the foreground is flourishing as the result of recent constant rains. The heavy forest in the background demonstrates the open and closed forest that surrounds most of the Yabba Creek catchment.*

# Creating an Inclusive SEMP

by Zela Bissett, Earth Smart Facilitator

Recently I had the privilege of working with Gympie West SS to create their SEMP, the document that guides and records the school's journey towards improved environmental sustainability. A SEMP is a Sustainable Environmental Management Plan and state schools in Queensland are now required to either have or develop one in the course of 2012.

As an Earth Smart facilitator responsible for piloting teachers and Principals through the SEMP process, I am always amazed at the care and thought that school staff put into their environmental impacts. Sometimes we work with schools just

starting on their environmentally literate citizenship, but at Gympie West I found a school that had embarked on that journey some time ago.

Science Spark Don Reid, who worked with the school during 2010 and 2011, says he could perceive the atmosphere of care and concern for the environment when he noted that the scrap buckets were regularly emptied into one of the school's four compost tumblers as a part of every day. 'The school captain then turns the tumbler six times,' reports Don. 'It's like a privilege to get to do it.'

The other unusual thing he noted was

the lack of rubbish bins. 'Why don't you have a litter problem?' he asked, and teachers informed him that the students are expected to bring a litter-free lunch. Not all students can do this 100% of the time, but any packaging is taken home and dealt with there.

The underpinning work done by those who kicked the process off years ago has resulted in a school setting where values of concern and caring do not apply only to humans and academic success, but include the natural world as well. At Gympie West, it is a tribute to the whole team that it has become cool to care.



## Clarence and Lucy and the Creek Company

by Dr Peter Oliver    Hear the tune at: [www.youtube.com/clarenceandlucyshow](http://www.youtube.com/clarenceandlucyshow)

Clarence and Lucy are firm food web friends

They live in our local creek just down a few bends

Lucy the Lung Fish and Clarrie the Mary Cod play – All day long

They love the cool clear water in the shade of the trees

It doesn't have to be deep only up to your knees

Clarrie and Lucy and the creek creatures sing a creek song – Come sing along

*With a ribbit and croak, have a laugh and a joke – YEA!*

*Squawk, swim, jump off a log*

*With a buzz and a smile, move your gills with real style*

*Come sing with the lungfish and the cod!*

From the small beetle larva to the grown dragonfly

To the mullet or the skink up in the tree  
Along with catfish and cockatoo, they sing this melody – Down by the creek

*Chorus*

They have cool creek parties on the warm summer nights

Swimming and dancing by the firefly lights

And the sweet gum tree blossoms perfume the dark – Down by the park

*Chorus*

So when you're thinking of creeks in your paddock or town

They're more than just drains that the water flows down

They're home to Clarence and Lucy and the creek company – Come sing with me

*Chorus*

### VIDEO COMPETITION

Make a video and win prizes!

For more info and to upload your videos, go to:

[www.youtube.com/clarenceandlucyshow](http://www.youtube.com/clarenceandlucyshow)

Video contest theme: Creeks, Creatures, Country, Community – make a video about ANYTHING to do with creeks and their creatures who need them!

FREE video workshops available.

Winners will be announced at the Mary River Festival in Kandanga in November 2012.

Email today for details:

[theCLARENCEandLUCYshow@gmail.com](mailto:theCLARENCEandLUCYshow@gmail.com)

or give Shawn Jarvey a call on 0450 563 356.

# The **COD**Line

Good news for the Mary River Cod and the Mary River Turtle

is hosted and supported by Barung & District Landcare Group and the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee with funding support by the Sunshine Coast Council gratefully acknowledged.



WORKING FOR OUR FUTURE



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## **Finding funding**

It's been a year since the last issue of the *CodLine* because of funding constraints.

The *CodLine* is produced by the MRCCC and Barung Landcare with some funding from the Sunshine Coast Council, which is greatly appreciated.

With additional funding we could get back to two issues a year! Paid advertising has been considered, but many readers appreciate that the *CodLine* is advertisement free.

If you would like to contribute to the production of the *CodLine*, please contact Deb Seal at the MRCCC on 5482 4766 or [mrccc@ozwide.net.au](mailto:mrccc@ozwide.net.au)  
Thank you!

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