Bradman • The Gabba 27TH November 1931 Now it's MRCCC's turn for the big double century Meeting# MARY RIVER Garapine • 22ND March 2019

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Sunshine Coast Council

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Noosa Council

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HQPlantations

and thousands of volunteers and landholders who consistently contribute their time and resources to ongoing sustainable natural resource management in the Mary River Catchment.

The MRCCC acknowledges the traditional owners of the Mary River Catchment and their ancestors past and present.

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Front cover graphics - Glen Craig

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Introduction

This booklet has been prepared to commemorate the historic 200th General Meeting of the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee on Friday 22nd of March 2019 at Garapine; the location of the inaugural meeting in November 1993. It adds to a previous booklet prepared for the 100th meeting which was held at the Gympie Civic Centre on Wednesday 16th February 2005.

For almost 25 years, the MRCCC has forged productive partnerships with thousands of stakeholders throughout the Mary River catchment and beyond; government at all three levels, industry, farmers, large and small rural and urban landholders, landcare and environment groups, recreational and commercial fishing interests, forestry, irrigators, Waterwatch volunteers, researchers, school students, and particularly the long-running working partnership with the Gympie District Beef Liaison Group.

These partnerships have triggered a phenomenal groundswell of interest and activities in natural resource management across the Mary River catchment. The wider community is beginning to understand many of the causes of environmental degradation. The farming community is embracing sustainable production as a means of increasing productivity whilst protecting natural assets. Governments at all levels now recognise that community engagement is critical to

River a killjoy

At its present low, the Mary River below Nash's Gully outlet, is a veritable killjoy to children playing in the filthy, smelly water. It's not only the slush that empties from

Nash's Gully that produces the filth. Channon Street Bridge provides a handy rubbish tip for thoughtless town people.

Dead dogs, cats, hares, and other polluting material find a last resting place in the river-bed after a final fling over the bridge rail.

Gympie Times article - 1951

environmental repair and ecological protection. Triple bottom line objectives are now commonplace in strategic planning documents.

So what were the factors that led to the need for an "across the board" shift in philosophy?

In the 1990's, the Mary River was described as one of the most degraded catchments in Queensland. European settlement resulted in extensive clearing of the riverbanks. In recent times, massive land use change due to subdivision, population pressure and other factors together with increasing demand for water resources led to deteriorating catchment condition. Poor management philosophy and an ad hoc reaction to issues combined with limited understanding of the nature of the issues, and lack of means to speedily affect restorative action compounded the problems.

Traditionally, people in the Mary River Catchment relied upon government action to address issues, and this was largely seen as a government function. Increasing recognition by many of the need to operate on a broader front, tapping into the collective experience, knowledge and resources of local communities, generated community interest in addressing river and catchment problems, precipitating the formation of resource management groups including the MRCCC and landcare groups.

Over the last 25 years, these groups in the Mary River catchment have been repeatedly recognised for their efforts, winning numerous national and state awards and accolades. Momentum has accumulated leading to major voluntary efforts to restore key ecosystem components and maintain sustainable primary production. It will be an ongoing task for the MRCCC to ensure that this momentum continues to grow, and that the vision of a sustainable and productive catchment one day becomes a reality.

Formation of the MRCPG

To gather together individuals and representatives of a range of organisations and create a cohesive and functional body that would collectively care for the Mary River catchment, an area of close to 10,000 km², was a concept initially proposed by Guenter Kath, at the time an Upper Eel Creek horticulturalist and Chairman of the Gympie NFF Support Group. Guenter believed that governments spent a great amount of time fixing problems which were easily foreseeable, many of which could have been avoided if a long-term vision existed. Guenter recognised that the traditional "don't worry, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it" attitude did not give people a chance for a long-term solution to environmental damage.

Guenter believed that an inspiring vision, especially if well thought through and based on thorough research, had, by itself, several long term advantages. It becomes a motivating force that generates communal energies and synchronises people's activities, and it prevents individual energies being wasted in pursuit of dreams that later become irreconcilable with society's requirements from which conflicts of greater intensity grow.



Guenter Kath

Early in 1991, Guenter convened a Planning Meeting at the Imperial Hotel, Gympie to discuss the formation of a Mary River Catchment Planning group. Community and Industry members were personally selected and invited by Guenter. At its inaugural meeting in February 1991, the group referred to themselves as the Mary River Catchment Planning Group (MRCPG), discussing the need to start planning strategically for the sustainable future of the Mary River and it's Catchment. The vision of the MRCPG was a 50 year planning model for Mary River catchment management.

Membership of the MRCPG

- Guenter Kath Chairman
- Perry Corbet Commercial Hardwood Forestry & Sawmilling Industries
- John Grimmet DPI Forestry Research
- Graham Smith Sustainable Farming Communities
- Hugh Viner Beef Industry
- Richard Hausman Dairy Industry
- Peter Buchanan Horticulture & Sugar Industries
- Peter Watson Profitable Primary Industries
- Graeme Elphinstone DPI Agricultural Production Group
- Ed Miller Water Resources Commission

The MRCPC established a Demographics Working Party, a Land-use Sub-committee and a Water use sub-committee, and met with representatives of the Gympie Landcare Group and industry bodies regarding new Landsat and Geographical Information System developments.

In July 1991 the inaugural Mary River Congress was held at Maleny. This was the first formal Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) event in the Mary, primarily organised by Maleny High School teacher Peter Oliver, with support from Barung Landcare and the MRCPG. Two hundred people including farmers, students, politicians and scientists from all over the catchment and south east Queensland gathered to discuss aspects of the river and its health. Students were heavily involved in planning and implementing activities on the day. Students also helped in welcoming participants, chairing proceedings, making presentations, and running workshops on the water quality monitoring work that they were doing as part of their school environmental education programs. This would be the first of four such congresses, with others held in Kenilworth, Maryborough and Gympie.

Early meetings of the MRCPG discussed the future of ICM in the Mary River Catchment, Mary River water supply options and avenues for ICM project funding. When the State Government announced that four Queensland catchments would be targeted for a pilot ICM project, the Mary was not included. Consequently, Guenter met with the Queensland Minister for Primary Minister, the Hon Edmund Casey, to lobby for the Mary to be included as one of the pilot ICM catchments. Guenter meeting with the Minister was successful, and the rest, as they say, is history.

The pilot ICM program provided the funding to employ a Catchment Coordinator. A civil engineer by the name of Steve Kelly had already been making a name for himself as the Total Catchment Management Coordinator for the Clarence River Catchment in northern New South Wales. Steve applied for the Coordinator's position, even receiving a visit to his office in Grafton from Gympie Mayoress, Joan Dodt, much to the surprise of his work colleagues, who were unaware at that time that he intended to resign. Steve was appointed to the full-time position of ICM Coordinator in September 1992. That same month, the Department of Primary Industries-ICM Project Management Group met in Gympie to discuss the process of introducing ICM to the Mary Catchment. The key elements of this process were:

- Three public consultation meetings to be held in May 1993 at Maryborough, Gympie and Kenilworth. These information evenings would be a major step in the process of forming an Integrated Catchment Management Committee for the entire catchment. The meetings collectively attracted over 250 people, with the largest attendance being at Kenilworth.
- The formation of a Steering Committee consisting of six members of the community, one DPI representative, one local government representative, the ICM Coordinator and a Community Chair. The Community members were to be decided by the community at the three meetings (two from each). The key interest sectors to be represented on the Coordinating Committee were to be decided by the community at the three meetings.

The role of the Steering Committee was to act as a selection panel for the interest sector representatives. Steering group membership included:

- Mal Lanham
- Richard Hausmann
- Noel Geritz
- David Braddock
- Allan McGrigor
- Jack Beausang
- Adrian McClintock Chairman Widgee Shire Council and member of the state Catchment Management Coordinating Committee
- Tom Crothers DPI Bundaberg

With Steve in the Facilitator's role, a planning meeting was held with the Lower Mary River Study Taskforce at Maryborough. Also, in December 1992 a video was produced; "Everyone lives in a Catchment," with a script written by Steve Kelly and Graeme Elphinstone. The final record of an MRCPG meeting was in June 1994. One of their major achievements had been to get people thinking at the big-picture level.



The first Mary ICM Coordinator, Steve Kelly

MRCCC hits a double century!

Hearty congratulations to the MRCCC! Not only have they received numerous awards including the 2004 National Rivercare Award but they have reached an historic milestone... 200 General Meetings! There was a time when we didn't look like hitting four let alone 200. Who can forget the large public meeting in the Kenilworth State School in early 1993 when it was suggested from a conservationist in the audience that there were too many farmers being nominated for the selection committee? You could have heard a pin drop.

Looking back on the early days, many people held assumptions about the intentions and role of others in the catchment which were undeserved. Many of the farming community have been the backbone of the MRCCC and have been a continual source of practical ideas to implement environmental solutions. At its simplest level it was a question of engaging them in culturally appropriate ways.

The MRCCC worked tirelessly at focussing on the processes needed to introduce catchment management in a very diverse and often

diametrically opposed community. Anything else would have simply seen people taking up staunch positions with little room for moving ahead on the many complex natural resource management issues in the Mary. It is testament to the passion, patience and perseverance of individual members of the MRCCC that they made it through the first few years.

Since the early days the MRCCC has gradually increased its skilled paid staff through various funding programs to bring knowledge about other ways of managing natural resources into the Mary arena. Community-based water quality monitoring, dairy effluent management, riverbank fencing, whole river rehabilitation planning, Mary River Cod recovery and revegetation for biodiversity all brought an essential blend of new thinking and local knowledge. But testing and pushing long-held views, in both the community and in government agencies, was no mean feat and required the MRCCC to become involved deeply in the world of attitudinal change. Strategies involving paradigm-busting, adult education, people's world view, strategic alliances, brokering and mentoring come to mind, and for those of a more academic nature: critical pedagogy, homeostasis, epistemology and ontology.

At a meeting of landholders in the Upper Mary I heard words like fluvial, biodiversity and riparian in the same breath as ecosystem, rehabilitation, and natural capital. The MRCCC's programs and those of the Landcare movement in the Mary must take a bow, for the words people use in everyday life indicate a substantial ripple effect, permanent change and

strong foundations for future MRCCC work.

Many MRCCC general meetings occurred against a background of controversy, which doubtless forged the MRCCC into a tight unit, but also threatened its existence at times.......the erudite, vociferous and passionate debates between the pro-dam and anti-dam factions on the early MRCCC......the infamous ROSS meeting in Cooroy.....breakaway groups in Maryborough and the bush lawyers carping from the side threatening to bring the whole shebang down......not to mention the suspicion surrounding the fact that "The Government" had initiated the formation of the Committee.

And think of all those OTHER meetings held before and after General Meetings to actually reach agreement on what to do.......working groups, reference committees, executive meetings, special strategy meetings (you know the kind). Now add all the telephone calls, emails and conversations required to do the job of the MRCCC. Anyone who has ever been in a nonprofit community group will relate I'm sure. It was truly the most enjoyable and personally rewarding period of my working life.

200 general meetings is a seminal signpost to the massive effort, motivation and commitment displayed by community volunteers, paid staff and many local and State Government workers who believe in the MRCCC cause....and still do. It's amazing what can be achieved when you do two fundamental things; create the conditions in which people want to participate, and provide them with opportunities to be positive and make a contribution.....and that's the simple 'secret' behind the MRCCC work.

Steve Kelly, Gestational ICM Coordinator, 1992-1997

Group to visit Mary River

THE Mary River Catchment Co-ordinating Committee will spend next Monday getting to know the top end of the Mary River Catchment as part of a familiarisation process for the 18 committee mem-

Appointed last November, the committee has the task of working with the Mary River Catchment community to prioritise issues and develop catchment management strategies.

The committee will visit some 11 sites in the Upper Mary Catchment and Kenilworth areas, looking at issues ranging from landslips and bank erosion to work underway in fields such as nutrient management and dairy effluent use. The following week they will tour the Maryborough and Brooweena areas.

Integrated Catchemnt Management co-ordinator Steve Kelly, Gympie, explained the aim of Monday's tour was to ensure that all committee members had a good appreciation of the whole catchment, rather than just the area in which they lived.

"It is part of the process of forming common goals and forging a common view about some of the issues in the catchment," he said.

"We'll be looking at the issues, talking to the people in the catchment and discussing possible solutions.

"The tours will also ensure that members come to understand the catchment-wide scope of some problems such as river bank erosion," he said.

- May Public meetings held at Maryborough, Gympie and Kenilworth resulting in the appointment of a Community Selection Panel and definition of sectors for the soon to be formed MRCCC
- ICM Steering Group determines sector representation for the MRCCC
- Land-use Study of rural subdivision blocks in the Mary River catchment
- Riverbank Erosion
 modelling of sections of
 the Mary River catchment
- Mary River Congress held at Kenilworth
- Catchment Issues Workshops
- Inaugural meeting of the MRCCC held at Garapine, November 1993, where the MRCCC is formally launched by Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon Edmund Casey

Following nine months of an extensive education and awareness program, the three ICM public meetings held at Gympie, Maryborough and Kenilworth resulted in the community:

- raising over one hundred issues for consideration by a Catchment Coordinating Committee
- nominating the key interest sectors to be represented on a Catchment Coordinating Committee and
- selecting two members of the community from each meeting to be on an eight member ICM Steering Group comprising six community members, one DPI member and one local government member.

The community-based Steering Group was given a mandate by the two hundred and fifty people attending the three ICM public meetings in May 1993 to select a Catchment Coordinating Committee using selection criteria developed over the previous nine months of discussions with the community. The initial MRCCC membership involved an eighteen-member committee comprising:

- Thirteen community/industry representatives.
- Three local government representatives.
- Two state government departments represented.

Primary Industries Minister, the Hon. Edmund Casey launched the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee at the Garapine Outdoor Education Centre south of Gympie on the 23rd November 1993.



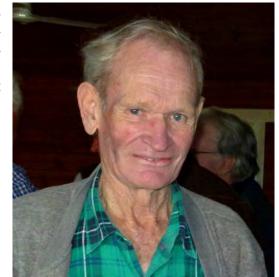
Above right: The inaugural meeting of the MRCCC at Garapine, November 1993 singing "All we are saying, is give creeks a chance" and inset: Rob Priebe, Mal Lanham, Steve Kelly and Fred Murray at the inaugural MRCCC meeting.

Inaugural Chair of the MRCCC, Graham Smith

A cattle farmer from Upper Kandanga, Graham Smith travelled the world and had a varied career. Graham was an inspirational community leader who was able to unite the key interest sectors across the Mary Catchment to the Integrated Catchment Management cause, spearhead the practical roll-out of Landcare and Catchment Management programs, and then ensure that they worked together with the common goal of delivering the best catchment outcomes.

Graham later reflected in his writings as to why he, of all the talented people on the Committee, was chosen by his peers to be the inaugural Chair of this (then new) wonderful community natural resource management (NRM) organisation. He thought it probably was because his past Landcare leadership presented the best compromise and the least threatening option.

Graham once reflected that he probably always had the Landcare ethic in his blood, as his family in Ireland had been farmers for over 500 years. With Graham's passing in 2016, the Mary Catchment lost one of its longest serving and most passionate advocates for the principles of both Landcare and catchment management.



Waterwatch in the Mary River catchment began in a small way in 1989, when Peter Oliver, then a teacher at Maleny High came into contact with the work of Professor Stapp. He started using the material in his classroom and, thanks to the help of the Frank Butt Foundation and others, was able to convince several other schools to become involved with Waterwatch.

Early in its formation, Waterwatch was taken on as a major education and community involvement project by the MRCCC. The Committee received funding for equipment and a part-time Waterwatch Coordinator in 1993. Steve Kelly, anxious to find individuals who could propel the MRCCC towards their goals and objectives, had heard of Peter Oliver and his work. Peter was approached (headhunted!) by Steve, who offered him part-time employment as the MRCCC's first Waterwatch Coordinator. By 1995, 17 schools in the catchment and over 1500 students from Maleny to Hervey Bay, as well as the Barung, Noosa, Gympie and Kilkivan Landcare groups had all become involved in Waterwatch.



Peter Oliver water testing with school kids on the first MRCCC Catchment Crawl

Early in 1994, the MRCCC received a report from DPI Fisheries, Deception Bay on the severe decline of numbers of the endangered Mary River cod and their habitat. The Committee formed a working group to investigate options for their survival and sustainable management. The report noted that the largest remaining populations of cod occurred in the Tinana/Coondoo creeks and the Six Mile creek sub-catchment.

In November 1994, Steve Kelly and Jan Tilden from the WWF Threatened Species Network collaborated to develop a strategy to involve the community in activities aimed at raising awareness of the endangered Mary River cod and the little known Mary River turtle. The general principles of the strategy were:

- To involve the community in development of a plan.
- To use existing groups/networks in preference to establishing new mechanisms.
- Recognition that cod/turtle recovery would not occur without community involvement and ownership in implementation of the plan.
- That community involvement would be backed by good science.
- That community involvement is most effective when the community can relate to tangible on-ground outcomes.

The Strategy aimed to involve numerous sectors from the wider community including commercial and recreational fishing organisations, landcare and conservation groups, schools, industry, councils, irrigators and the fish hatcheries at Borumba Dam and Lake Macdonald. During 1994, the Mary River Cod Recovery Team was formed including representatives from numerous organisations.

1994

- Peter Oliver appointed as part time Waterwatch Coordinator
- First Catchment Crawl
- Roles and Goals Workshop, Forestry Centre
- Mary River Catchment Landuse study
- Statewide Catchment Care road signage
- Community involvement strategy, Cod/Turtle Recovery Plan
- State of the Rivers Reporting
- Catchment Tours
- Establishment of the Mary River Cod Working Group
- Draft Constitution tabled
- Septic Tank Working Group
- Report into Water Quality of the Mary Catchment & proposed Monitoring Network
- → LWRRDC Research Project by Griffith University on Ecological Basis for River Habitat & Instream Flow Management
- PhD Study on Seagrass Death at River Heads
- 'Take a Walk with Mary' video produced
- Development of Catchment Strategy Planning process
- First Researchers Forum

Big cod landed

Mr. J. MacLeod. newsagent Monkland, who is a keen fisherman, has been hauling some fine cod from the river.

11.61

On Saturday night he beat all his previous records with one that must have gone at least 40lbs.

Our informant still lived in hopes of getting a dream fish to beat Mr. MacLeod's record.

Gympie Times - 1918

- ➤ Voluntary Riverbank
 Restoration Grants Scheme
 project commenced as a
 result of Cooloola Shire
 Community Survey. Funds
 received from Cooloola
 Shire Council & Federal
 Govt
- 'Hey Slow Down' booklet produced
- Mary River Cod Forum held
- MRCCC becomes incorporated
- First Mary Catchment
 Mayors' Forum, Gympie
- Researchers Forum detailing the research conducted in the Mary
- Sand & Gravel Extraction Report by DPI
- Knowledge, Research & Education Working Group formed
- First Annual General
 Meeting of MRCCC
- Sand & Gravel Extraction Field Day



Above: VRRGS Project Coordinator, Allan McGrigor explains how eroding riverbanks can be restored

The Voluntary Riverbank
Restoration Grant Scheme
(VRRGS) was established to
provide landholders with an
incentive to rehabilitate their
riparian land. Grants with 1/3
in-kind support were provided
to help support riparian
fencing, installation of offstream watering points,
hardened creek crossings,
woody weed removal and
regeneration of riparian
species. On-ground actions
were aimed at increasing river

bank stability, improving water quality and better drought management. The Scheme was kick-started by a \$50,000 cash contribution from Cooloola Shire as part of the introduction of their Environment Levy, and a \$140,000 Drought Landcare grant. Allan McGrigor was the first Project Coordinator and at that stage Cooloola Shire was the employment agent.

The VRRGS continued until 2000, with support from Greening Australia through the National Corridors of Green Program, and Bushcare through the Natural Heritage Trust. The Scheme ultimately involved 225 landholders who collectively established 180 km of streambank fencing, planted 100,000 trees, installed 150 off stream watering points, excluded 15,000 head of cattle from riparian zones and generated over \$1.2 million dollars in cash and in-kind contributions. The VRRGS was the first devolved grant scheme to operate in Queensland, and its successful outcomes resulted in the MRCCC winning the Queensland Rivercare Award in 1999.

In response to a DPI Water Resources options paper outlining three options seeking to enhance sustainable management and limit extraction of this resource, the MRCCC worked with the Department to conduct a consultation process. A meeting was held in Gympie in May 1995 to release this document, provide some explanation and elicit comment. Sixty interested people attended this meeting which was chaired by the Graham Smith and facilitated by Steve Kelly, with the assistance of Graeme Elphinstone and officers of DNR Water Resources. The second meeting, held on 28

Councils play a part

WITH 12 local government authorities having some responsibility for the Mary River Catchment, the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) initiated a Mayors' Forum in Maryborough in 1995 to forge closer links between local government and Integrated Catchment Management (ICM).

The forum comprised the mayors of Hervey Bay City Council, Maryborough City Council, Cooloola Shire Council, Noosa Shire Council, Maroocj

hy Shire Council, Caloundra City Council, Woocoo Shire Council, Tiaro Shire Council, Kilkivan Shire Council, Kilcoy Shire Council, Biggenden Shire Council and Caboolture Shire Council.

A significant outcome of the first Mayors' Forum was a request by the mayors for the MRCCC to produce a Catchment Management Strategy, which has since been produced, and contributions from a number of councils toward Waterwatch, which, as a result, is now more secure, with more reliable equipment and greater links with councils.

A second Mayors' Forum was held in Gympie in April 1996, and a third is

planned for Maleny in 1997.

MRCCC chairman Graham Smith said there was no doubt that the cooperation between local authorities and the MRCCC had contributed significantly to successful federal and state funding submissions.

"These submissions involving Waterwatch, the Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grants Scheme and four riverine projects involving the National Riparian Zone Program are key projects delivering strategic outcomes in catchment management in the Mary," he said.

"The recent round of National Landcare Program and ICM funding has seen the MRCCC submit funding submissions totalling \$1.5 million, including a major land resource assessment project across the catchment. I believe the majority will be successful—again the links with councils being significant."

In coming months the MRCCC will be acting on the priority actions suggested at the last Mayors' Forum—in particular the MRCCC has already written to the Minister for Natural Resources, Howard Hobbs, supporting Cooloola Shore Council Mayor Adrian McClintock's deputation on accelerating the raising of Borumba

June 1995, was again well attended. The MRCCC was asked to arrange a Reference Panel to look at, and report on the submissions presented by any interested persons or party. The conflict resolution process implemented represented a significant innovation using democratic principles whereby submissions from the public were handled by a committee representing the affected community.

The first Mary Catchment Mayors' Forum was held in Gympie in March 1995. The MRCCC organised the Forum intending to lobby local government in the catchment for funds to continue the Waterwatch program. However, Fred Kleinschmidt, then Mayor of Hervey Bay, advised the Committee that it had set its sights too low and that it should be aiming for Council support for a number of initiatives aimed at sustaining the Mary River. The Mayors agreed to take a number of proposals back to their Councils, which would focus on the interlocking responsibilities of authorities in the Mary River Catchment.

MRCCC Chair Graham Smith noted that one of the most important matters raised at the Forum was the issue of high water demands placed on the Mary River. The 1995 Mayors' Forum was described as an historic event, as this was the first time that the Mayors had come together to discuss issues relating to the Mary River.

The first draft of the Mary Catchment Strategy was developed in 1996 together with position statements on contentious issues of the time in the Mary e.g. sand and gravel extraction, bamboo, water supplies, feedlots and woodchipping. Public meetings were held to enable community consultation on the draft. These meetings generated invaluable and positive input. The draft Catchment Strategy was developed to provide a framework which would lessen and reverse negative impacts on the catchment. Also catchment-wide septic tank guidelines, and catchment-wide Pest Management Programs were being developed.

The 1996 Mary River Congress held in Maryborough had an overwhelming response from schools throughout the catchment, attracting over 200 students and hundreds of adults. This Congress featured an activity entitled "Build A Catchment Out of People". A remarkable survey from students of the Maryborough Primary School identified, amongst other things, that the term 'catchment' was little understood. The Congress also featured a Youth Parliament where students debated issues relating to the catchment.



Graeme Elphinstone with students at the 1996 Mary River Congress

LWRRDC Newbury Workshop - In March 1996 Canadian stream restoration specialist Dr Bob Newbury joined with Stuart Bunn from Griffith University and others to run a Workshop at Crystal Waters on stream hydrology and geometry and their relationship to stream habitats. Principles from the workshop were applied to a number of demonstration projects in the Upper Mary.

ICM – Cooloola Conservation Rate Rebate - In 1996 the Committee initiated the first ever ICM Grant for Nature Conservation Area Rate Rebates in partnership with the Cooloola Shire Council, which by 1999 had resulted in voluntary conservation agreements over 711 ha of important freehold remnants in the catchment.

Draft Riparian Zone Position Statement – Published in 1996 this document included sections on the Value of Riparian Zone Planning and Management. It included a position which stated that "it must be recognised that landowners can manage riparian zones on behalf of the broader community and that the broader community is prepared to assist in paying for this management." It also set out a suggested clause to be included in Local Government Strategic Plans, which was subsequently included

in the Cooloola Shire 1997 Planning Scheme.

Crystal Waters Fishway – In partnership with Department of Natural Resources Riverine Project Officer Damon Telfer, cost-effective fish passage was restored in the Upper Mary near Crystal Waters community. It involved the local community in planning and contributions from Caloundra Council and extractors.

Working Groups – By 1996, the MRCCC had established 13 Working Groups including the Cod Working Group, Wastewater Working Group, Vegetation Management Group, Education and Awareness Working Group, VRRGS Management Committee, Research and Information Working Group, Riparian Policy Working Group, Riparian Projects Working Group, Sand and Gravel Reference Panel, Extractive

1996

- Draft CatchmentStrategy endorsed
- Peter Buchanan appointed as Chair of MRCCC
- LWRRDC funded
 Riparian Revegetation
 Demo sites
- Mary River CodRecovery Team formed.
- Waste-water Working Group formed
- Extractive IndustryReference Panel formed
- LWRRDC funded River
 Processes Workshop at
 Conondale
- Mary River Congress, Maryborough incorporating youth parliament
- Farm Forestry sector representation included
- Feedlot Working Group formed
- Land Valuation Working Group formed
- Landcare Forum established
- State of the Rivers Reporting finalised
- Draft Management Plan for Sand & Gravel Extraction
- Riffle project,
 Kenilworth
- Crystal Waters Fishway



Field component of Newbury workshop

Industry Policy Working Group, Subdivision Policy Working Group and Land Valuation Working Group.

- Endorsed Mary Catchment Strategy released
- First community Riverbank Restoration undertaken at King's property, Conondale
- COG Consortium formed
- Mayors' Forum
- Strategy Implementation Officer employed
- Dairy Effluent Management project commenced
- Wide Bay 2020 established
- MRCCC is Runner-up in QLD
 BP Landcare Catchment
 Award
- Mary Catchment Land-use Study commissioned
- Gympie Imbil Land
 Resource Assessment
- Mary River Congress
- Mary Water Allocation Management Plan (WAMP) commenced
- Brian Stockwell appointed as full-time Catchment Coordinator
- Maryborough Hervey Bay
 Land Resource Assessment

1997 Annual General Meeting - In the 1997 Annual Report, MRCCC Chair Peter Buchanan stated, "Whilst at Telfer and numerous other community organisations and commercial sponsors to undertake the first major attempt at riverbank restoration in the Mary. Approximately 1 kilometre of riverbank was stabilised at the King's property on the Mary River at Conondale. Mesh embayments were erected and a 25 metre wide strip of revegetation was planted to halt serious bank erosion at the site. Numerous local, regional, interstate and international visitors have since visited the site.

King's site during construction in 1997

In 1997 the MRCCC collaborated with DNR Riverine Projects Officer Damon





times we may think that progress of our many goals seems slow, I believe it doesn't hurt us to stop and think that, given the fact that we are a voluntary organisation, we now are currently handling, or in the process of receiving, funding in excess of \$500,000 on various projects."

Cod recovery - During 1997 the plight of threatened species in the catchment, in particular the endangered Mary River cod, was being highlighted by the Mary River Cod Recovery Team based at Maleny. A member of the team, DPI Fisheries Biologist Bob Simpson, had commenced a two-year study to determine habitat requirements for the cod. Funded by the Australian Nature Conservation Agency, the study involved implanting radio transmitter tracking devices into a dozen of the endangered fishes.

The study revealed that cod travelled as far as, and possibly further than, 25 km through the river system during periods of high flow. The study also investigated improving hatchery requirements to enable reliable production of Mary River cod, determining the best strains for restocking, developing broodstock management techniques and use of artificial structures such as plastic pipes to enhance spawning.

1997 Mayors' Forum

The 1997 Mayors' Forum in Gympie discussed implementation mechanisms for the Mary Catchment Strategy and other key issues such as catchment-wide pest management plans, water supply and the placement and management of dump sites. This was a very topical issue at the time, as Maroochy Shire had released details of their proposals to build a super dump at Belli Park, resuming a portion of the MRCCC's Community Delegate, Geoff Wellington's, property. The MRCCC subsequently sent a delegation to Brisbane to discuss the issue of landfill sites in the region with Hon. Di McCauley, Minister for Local Government and Planning.

At the 1998 Annual General Meeting, the MRCCC launched the Mary Action 2000 Plan. This was an ambitious plan aiming to make the Mary the most active catchment in the country by the year 2000, through motivating as many individuals, community groups, industry and government sectors as possible to become actively involved in the implementation of the Mary River Catchment Strategy.

Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation (LWWRDC) Cost Benefit Analysis – In 1998 the MRCCC commissioned consultants to "Measure the effects of on-farm enterprise profitability, and the overall costs and benefits of riparian restoration." Nine case studies covering beef and dairy farmers participating in the VRRGS showed broad financial justification of riparian restoration with three farms having a benefit/cost ratio greater than one.

LWRRDC Riparian Landholder Attitude Survey - Alliance Resource Economics were contracted to undertake a study that focussed on the identification and analysis of the awareness and understanding of riparian landholders regarding the role and function of riparian lands within the Mary River Catchment. Almost 200 responses provided a useful insight into the factors influencing uptake and the motivations which drove people to manage riparian zones and floodplains.

Strategy Working Groups – A key element of the inclusive approach utilised in the implementation of the Catchment Strategy was the formulation of eight implementation working groups and the subsequent targeted forums for different sectors/issues. The working groups each covered one of the eight key action areas identified in the strategy and aimed to achieve an increased commitment to strategy implementation. Participation in the working group framework was diverse with a total of 64 representatives from 10 industry groups, 13 community groups, six councils, and five government departments.

Dairy Effluent Assistance Grants - This grant scheme resulted in approximately 33% of all dairy farms in the catchment upgrading their management systems to comply with the latest environmental codes. This ensured that effluent from around 6000 dairy cattle was sustainably managed. The reused effluent equated to the reduction of nutrients potentially entering waterways of 55 tonnes of Urea, 66 tonnes of Super Phos and 162 tonnes of Muriate of Potash.

1998 Mary Water Summit – The Mary Water Summit, involving all major Councils in the catchment, aimed to improve the sustainable management of water resources and plan future water supply options. 45 people including Mayors, Councillors, engineers, committee members, and relevant government officers attended the summit. It achieved broad support for limiting access to new water pending a Water Allocation Management Plan.

Quilting the Catchment Forum – Approximately 50 Community Nature Conservation Group representatives, Council planners, Environment Officers and State Government Officers attended this forum. It aimed to facilitate cooperative mechanisms between shires to conserve and improve management of areas of remnant vegetation (eg environmental weeds strategies) in conjunction with a range of community groups.

Rural Sector Forum – 'Fostering Sustainable Production' – This forum involved 40 representatives from Dairy, Beef, Sugar, Horticulture, Tree Crops and Farm Forestry industries. The forum identified current activities to enhance sustainable management in rural production activities and methods to increase promotion through industry sectors and development of Best Management Practice.

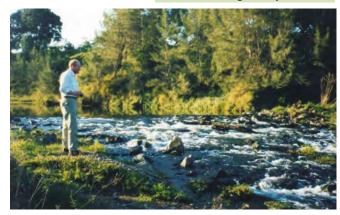
Landcare Forums - Commencing in 1998, three forums were held over a 12-month period aiming to increase communication between eight Landcare and Catchment Care Groups in the catchment. This helped groups learn from each other and increase cooperative effort in the implementation of Catchment

Strategy actions. Themes included "Open Channels-Healthy Flows" and "Consolidating Consortiums". In addition, a bus-load

1998

- Catchment StrategyLaunch
- WWF Cod Mapping commenced
- LWRRDC Riparian
 Revegetation Booklet
 produced
- LWRRDC Cost/Benefit
 Analysis of riparian
 rehabilitation
 conducted
- LWRRDC funded
 Riparian Landholder

 Attitudinal Survey
- Mary River Congress
- Over 2000 students in the Catchment involved with Waterwatch
- Brad Wedlock
 employed part-time as
 VRRGS Coordinator
- Mayors' Forum
- Catchment Tour
- Presentations to Local Government
- Catchment Committee
 Evaluation Survey
- Evaluation of VRRGS project
- Quilting the CatchmentPlanning Forum
- Rural Sector Forum
- Wildlife & Nature Working Group



One of the first Mary River riffle projects

of key industry, departmental, community and Council representatives took to the field as part of the Committee's plan to meet with local Landcare Groups in the Lower Mary.

- Community meetings held following the 1 in 100 years flood
- Maryborough-Tiaro Land Resource Assessment
- Catchment Resource Centre moved to Dairyfarmer's Complex, Gympie
- 🗪 Researchers' Forum
- Landcare Forum
- Lake Macdonald Catchment
 Care group formed in
 conjunction with Noosa
 Council
- VRRGS project finalised
- Winners of the Queensland Rivercare Award
- Mayors' Forum Kenilworth
- MRCCC website established
- Mary Catchment Atlas and Land-use Study produced
- Land Management Practice Working group formed
- *** LWRRDC funded Large Woody Debris workshop at Kenilworth with Canadian Geomorphologist Scott Babekeiff
- Managing Water Quality/Water Quantity working group formed

Soil Acidity Management Plan - In association with the DPI and DNR, the MRCCC facilitated the first ever Soil Acidity Management Plan in Queensland which was also understood to be the first catchment-based SAMP in Australia.

The announcement that the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee had won the Queensland Rivercare Award at the biennial Queensland Landcare Awards in July 1999 provided a great boost to its members. According to MRCCC Chair, Peter Buchanan, "A lot of people on the Committee and within the community have volunteered hundreds of hours of their time to achieve a wide range of on-ground environmental outcomes, which have been recognised in these awards."



The Committee in 1999

The February 1999 Floods were the largest recorded in the 20th century for most parts of the Mary River Catchment. A survey of over 100 landholders involved in the Riverbank Grants scheme was undertaken to identify the damage to fences, revegetation and the extent of erosion at a sample of 33% of project sites. Of those surveyed, 42% sustained no erosion to their project while 34% said their site was much better than unprotected sites.

Mary River Catchment Researcher's Forum - Research, Reachout, Restore

In May 1999, the MRCCC held a forum for researchers in the Mary Catchment. The agenda featured 25 speakers from a number of major universities and government departments, including Dr Ian Rutherfurd from Monash University who was also the project leader of the waterway management division of the Cooperative Research Centre for Catchment Hydrology. The forum attracted 130 government, catchment management and Landcare representatives as well as university students from around South-East Queensland. The agenda covered issues as diverse as how frogs can be used to assess catchment health, tracking radio tagged lungfish, counting bugs in streams and measuring nutrients moving through the soil of dairy farms.

Kenilworth Mayors' Forum – In May, Mayors from Hervey Bay to Maroochy met at

Kenilworth to discuss planning for the future of the Mary River Catchment. Issues discussed included how catchment management provisions could be included in revised Planning Schemes being developed under the state government's new guidelines to protect and improve the health of the river. The concept of a Mary River Rehabilitation Plan was born at this meeting.



River Restoration
Training Course participants

Formation of the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group - In conjunction with Noosa Landcare and Noosa Council, the MRCCC initiated the formation of a Lake Macdonald Catchment Care group. The aim was to improve the downstream water quality of this sub-catchment, address major aquatic weed problems, reduce water treatment costs and improve environmental values through community-based activities and incentives. This group subsequently harnessed over \$1 million towards this effort and inspired state, national and international endeavours.

Kenilworth River Restoration Training Course - 3 Farmers And A Foreigner

In November 1999 Kenilworth was the Queensland base for a river restoration training course run by international river restoration specialist, Scott Babakeiff:, a "Fluvial Geomorphologist" from British Colombia. To commence the training course, a community meeting was organised to allow

local people interested in the river and the Obi Obi Creek to find out about the latest restoration techniques. The course resulted in the MRCCC leading the nation in the use of large woody debris as a restoration technique.

Noosa Shire hosted the 2000 Mayors' Forum. Councillor Bob Abbott set the scene with a welcome entitled "We are the Champions". This encouraged Mayors to provide inspiration and leadership to achieve sustainability in the catchment. The first draft of the Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan was officially launched. Discussion also focused on effective facilitation of future water planning, managing environmental weeds invading the catchment and initiatives to achieve real ICM in Council Planning Schemes.

A major initiative was achieved at the Noosa Mayors' Forum with acceptance of the concept for a rolling fund for river rehabilitation, of which MRCCC would be the custodians. The proposal involved a cash contribution from each shire levied at 0.03 cents/kilolitre of water extracted from the Mary River. Maroochy, Noosa, Cooloola, Kilkivan, Hervey Bay and Caloundra Councils were the first shires to contribute to this fund, which, when combined with Rivercare Grant funds from the Natural Heritage Trust, enabled landholders to access grant funds for riparian restoration projects in each shire.

Future Directions Workshop – A review spanning several months identified the following high priority roles for the MRCCC:

- Advocating to state and federal governments the need for the principles, strategies and processes required to achieve integrated catchment management outcomes, to be intrinsic elements of relevant legislation and policies.
- Facilitating the process of government and community working together to plan and develop strategies to address natural resource management issues.
- Intervention in circumstances where legislation/policy is contrary to the interests of the catchment.
- Listening to the concerns, aspirations and ideas of smaller natural resource management groups in the catchment and providing a united voice to government and institutions.
- Advising and influencing which natural resource management actions are undertaken in the catchment.
- Delivering financial incentive packages to industry and landholders to improve land management practices that achieve broader public benefits.

Rivers of the Range Congress – Approximately 300 people were involved in a series of school performances at Maleny on the theme 'Voices from our Future' to which a panel of parliamentarians and councillors responded.

Mary River Cod Recovery Project

In 2000, the MRCCC shared office space with the World Wide Fund for Nature's Mary Cod Recovery Project Officer, Phil Trendell. During 2000, a variety of activities aimed at improving community awareness of the plight of the Mary River cod were undertaken. Phil was also employed as the MRCCC's part-time Waterwatch Officer.

Olympic Landcare

With 2000 being the year of the Sydney Olympic Games, Olympic Landcare treeplantings occurred around the country as an ongoing legacy of the Games. The MRCCC was responsible for four Olympic Landcare tree-plantings at Maryborough

(Aquatic Park, with the four mayors of the adjoining shires planting Red cedars); Lake Macdonald, Kenilworth and Obi Obi Creek. Tiaro, Gympie, Noosa and Barung Landcare all held planting events.

CSIRO SedNET in the Mary River

CSIRO hosted a workshop of the new SedNET model in the Mary River in 2000. It is used to predict sources and loads of sediments and nutrients throughout a catchment. The original SedNET modelling identified that 87% of sediment delivered to the mouth of the Mary River came from streambank and gully erosion, and has guided many of the MRCCC's on-ground actions.

2000

- Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan devolved grant scheme commenced with funding from local government and the Natural Heritage Trust
- Tiaro Gundiah Land
 Resource Assessment
- Landcare Forum
- Rivers of the Range Congress
- DNR Rivercare Officer appointed
- Rolling Rehabilitation
 Fund proposed to the
 Mayors' Forum Noosa
- State Government
 Catchment Coordinator
 position not renewed
- Final Report and evaluation completed of the VRRGS project
- Future Directions
 Workshop
- Olympic Landcare tree planting projects x 4
- Managing Water Quality Workshop
- Legislation & ProceduresWorking Group formed
- WWF Cod Recovery
 Officer moved into
 Catchment Centre



Olympic Tree planting, Polly's Island, Kenilworth

- Mary River and Tributaries
 Rehabilitation Plan finished
 Project launched at River
 Heads
- Watercourse Management
 Manual and Catchment
 Atlas finalised
- Curra Gundiah Land
 Resource Assessment
- Obi Obi Creek Large WoodyDebris project
- Landcare Forum
- Mary Cod Recovery Plan endorsed by Environment Australia
- Mary River Turtle Recovery Project commenced
- QLD Catchment Landcare Award
- Waterwatch Community
 Network commenced
- Mayors' Forum Tiaro
- Extractive Industry inspection of sites
- Joint EPA/MRCCC community turbidity monitoring commenced

The implementation edition of the Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan was completed in 2001. The overall purpose of the Plan is to prioritise rehabilitation effort on a reach-by-reach basis. The Plan identifies the processes leading to the current condition of the river and tributaries. Importantly it outlines key strategies that are required to be implemented by the Mary River catchment community in order to halt the continued degradation of our waterways. The long-term objective of the Plan is to protect waterways of conservation value, rehabilitate and restore degraded reaches in a more strategic and cost-effective manner than has occurred in the past, to achieve a shared vision of the future. The innovative Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan was the first of its kind in Queensland, and one of the major factors in the MRCCC winning the 2001 Queensland Landcare Catchment Award.

The Hon. Warren Truss, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Hervey Bay Mayor, Ted Sorensen, launched the Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan at the mouth of the Mary at River Heads in July 2001. Butchulla Elder, Auntie Olga Miller, told a story about the Mary and Susan Rivers, and students from Yarralea State School gave presentations on how they would like to see river managed. A range of local industries and primary producers in the Mary donated local produce including prime beef, seafood, cheese, milk, vegetables and even local wine, which highlighted the quality and diversity of the produce of the catchment.



The Hon Warren Truss launches the Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan at River Heads with the MRCCC Chairman Jim Buchanan, Ashton Berry from Greening Australia, and Hervey Bay Mayor, Ted Sorensen

National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality

Following the Federal Government's endorsement of a National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, the Chairs of the Burnett Catchment Care Association

(BCCA) and the MRCCC convened a meeting of community representatives at Kilkivan in May 2001 to gauge community feedback on forming a Regional Management Committee in the Burnett Mary under the NAPSWQ. Two meetings were subsequently held in Gympie and Childers. At the Childers forum, a Steering Committee was formed to finalise the Regional Body, which ultimately consisted of three local government representatives, three community/conservation representatives and three industry representatives. The Steering Committee also determined that the Regional Body would have an independent Chair. The formation of the Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management foreshadowed withdrawal of state agency support for the MRCCC. By the end of 2000, ICM Coordinator, Brian Stockwell was no longer responsible for assisting with strategic coordination of the MRCCC.

Obi Obi Creek Large Woody Debris Project - A reach mid-way along Obi Obi Creek was identified to trial the installation of large woody debris (LWD). The reach chosen had reasonable riparian vegetation, instream habitat and a small amount of natural LWD. The site was a sheer eroding bank four metres high and 15 metres long. The method chosen was bank revetment, which consisted of six large lateral logs with rootballs and two large parallel logs. The logs were secured with a combination of ballast rocks and anchors. There were also two large hollow logs installed instream, which were deemed suitable for cod spawning. An intensive weed removal (mainly Madeira vine) and revegetation project took place in conjunction with the LWD works. The reach was surveyed and monitored to assess the environmental conditions prior to and after the project. Cod fingerlings were subsequently released at this site, and local landholders have since contacted the MRCCC to advise that the cod have returned to this section of Obi Obi Creek.

Community Waterwatch Networks - In 2001, the MRCCC approached riparian landholders with a view to establishing Community Waterwatch Networks in partnership with EPA. Volunteers throughout the catchment were trained to monitor water quality data with an emphasis on movement of sediment throughout the river and its tributaries. The start of the Community Monitoring Networks highlighted the need for a comprehensive quality control program for Waterwatch, as well as more equipment to enable the networks to expand into new areas.

When the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group (LMCCG) was formed in April 1999, the foundation issue for the group was the Cabomba weed problem in Lake Macdonald. After six years of intense research, no native submerged aquatic plants were found in Lake Macdonald. Cabomba had established itself as a monoculture. In 2002 the group was successful in receiving funding through the Weeds of National Significance Program to undertake two projects aimed at improving community awareness of the Cabomba weed and propagating local aquatic plants for replanting areas of the lake. Council purchased a mechanical harvester designed to remove the plant canopy, including the stem tips at the water surface, thus reducing potential spread downstream. As well as operating as a facility for storage of Noosa's town water, the lake and its tributaries provide habitat for the Mary River cod and Giant barred frog. The habitat alterations caused by the prolific growth of Cabomba posed a

significant risk to the populations of cod in the lake.

Community Waterwatch
Networks - As the MRCCC
continued to expand the
Community Waterwatch
networks, the challenge
for Waterwatch
Volunteers in 2002 was
finding enough water to
sample. Many creeks
were dry and the mighty
Mary slowed to a trickle
with only irrigation
water released from
Lakes Borumba,



EPA's Sara Johnson training Waterwatch volunteers at Kilkivan showgrounds

Baroon and the Obi Obi Creek. Numerous fish kills were reported and water restrictions imposed.

Catchment Strategy Review - A group consisting of industry, community, Council and state government representatives was set up to initiate the review of the Mary Catchment Strategy. This group broadly scoped the current situation and the previous implementation of its Strategy. It was resolved from a series of meetings to consolidate and refocus the group's role and strategy on those elements which have been successful in the past. A series of "expert panels" were set up to ensure the Strategy's relevance in readiness for the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality Program.

Cooroy Mountain - Upper Six Mile Creek Rivercare Project - This collaborative project involved many different community groups and organisations, including the MRCCC, Noosa Landcare, Noosa Council, WWF, the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group,

2002

- Catchment Strategy review
- Lower Obi Obi Ck
 Rehabilitation Plan
 commenced
- Landcare Forum
- Mary Turtle Forum held in Tiaro
- Mary WRP Community Forums commenced
- Mayors Forum –Maryborough
- Friends of Kilcoy Creek project initiated
- Threatened Species
 Network "Living with
 threatened Species in
 the Kenilworth area"
 project commenced
- "Hey Slow Down" booklet reprint
- Re-introduction of large woody debris to Obi Obi Creek in conjunction with Maroochy Shire
- Commencement of Cabomba control projects at Lake Macdonald
- First National Water
 Week Catchment Crawl

the Gerry Cook Fish Hatchery, local schools and landholders. The project established over 15 kilometres of streambank fencing and planted 25,000 native riparian seedlings along Six Mile Creek near the foothills of Mt Cooroy. This section of creek has good habitat for threatened frogs and Mary River cod and consequently 500 cod fingerlings were released at this site.

A Water Resource Plan for the Mary Basin - During May 2002, the Hon Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Natural Resource and Mines signed the draft Water Resource Plan for the Mary Basin. Over many years the MRCCC had voiced its concern about the inter-basin transfer of water, mainly to supply an ever increasing coastal population. A number of MRCCC Delegates were representatives on some of the thirteen Sector Representative Groups, as well as contributing to information compiled by a Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) led by Dr Sandra Brizga, which had been working for six months to assess current conditions and Environmental Values of the Mary Basin (including Hervey Bay).

Partnership projects – During 2002 the MRCCC worked in partnership with landcare groups and local government through the Rivercare Grants program. Rivercare Grants were provided to the Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group for projects on Six Mile Creek and the Noosa & District Landcare Group for a major project near Cooroy Mountain, Barung Landcare for a project on Obi Obi Creek, the Tiaro & District Landcare Group for projects aimed at protecting Mary River Turtle nesting sites and the Gympie and District Landcare Group for a major project on the lower Six Mile Creek and the Lower Mary Landcare Group. Rivercare Coordinator, Brad Wedlock, also took a leading role in negotiations with Noosa, Cooloola, Maroochy, and Caloundra Shire Councils.

- Qld Catchment/LandcareAward
- Qld Rivercare Award
 Monitoring and Evaluation
 Report for Mary River &
 Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan
 produced
- Cabomba Mapping Project commenced
- Cabomba Re-use Project commenced
- Kilcoy Creek Rivercare Project Commenced
- Secretariat for 2003 State
 Landcare Conference held in
 Gympie
- Establishment of Kenilworth threatened species project
- Establishment of 7 community
 Waterwatch networks
 involving over 60 volunteers
 monitoring 100 sites
- Development of WaterwatchQuality Assurance system
- Mayors' Forum, Caloundra
- Continued representation on stakeholder sectors for Mary Water Resource Plan
- May Salinity Catchment Crawl
- October National Water
 Week Catchment Crawl
- Bundaberg Rum Bush Fund projects targeting water quality and threatened species
- Lower Obi Obi Creek
 Rehabilitation Plan
- 2 Landcare Forums

The Friends of Kilcoy Creek Rivercare Project on Kilcoy Creek was strategically positioned at the headwaters of the Mary River in the Conondale Ranges. It is prime habitat for the Mary River cod, threatened frog species and an undescribed species of Spiny Crayfish. Locals have seen the rare Spiny Crayfish crossing the road. DPI Fisheries have released Mary River Cod in this creek, and some properties involved with the project were Land for Wildlife registered. The most significant factor of this project is the enthusiasm of the landholders involved, particularly Scott Woolbank, who initiated meetings with several neighbouring landholders, which led to the formation of the 'Friends of Kilcoy Creek' (FOKC) Rivercare group.

The MRCCC received funding on behalf of FOKC from the Australian Government Envirofund. These funds enabled landholders to undertake riparian restoration, weed removal and stream bank fencing to exclude stock. The landholders also started a Community Waterwatch Group, which was incorporated into the upper Mary Waterwatch Network, supported at the time by Caloundra City Council.

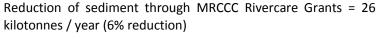
Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation Report - A monitoring and evaluation report was produced in 2003, showing outcomes from the Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan devolved grant scheme. Over 3000 people were ultimately involved in activities related to this project. The summary of findings of the report were as follows:

- Remnant Protection Works 221 hectares (target 200 hectares)
- Revegetation Works 66 hectares (target 50 hectares)
- Number of native riparian seedlings established 73,460 (target 60,000 seedlings)
- ◆ Distance of riparian fencing 72,515 metres
- Area of Voluntary Management Agreements established 719 hectares
- Area of Covenants established 58 hectares
- ◆ Area of threatened species habitat protected − 131 hectares
- Number of head of cattle managed near the riparian zone 2600
- Number of off-stream watering points installed 65
- Area of Woody Weed Control performed 90 hectares
- In-kind Riparian Rehabilitation generated (00-02) \$627,544
- Total Riparian Rehabilitation generated (00-02) \$941,644

Another significant outcome from the devolved grants scheme was provided by Ian Prosser, of CSIRO Land & Water, who used SedNET modelling to determine the reduction in sediment and nutrients exported to the Great Sandy Strait as a result of on-ground works.

His findings in 2003 were as follows:

Current Mary River Catchment sediment export to River Heads = 445 kilotonnes / year



Total Mary River Catchment Nitrogen exported to River Heads: 1541 tonnes / year

Reduction of Nitrogen through MRCCC Rivercare Grants = 53 tonnes / year

Total Mary River Catchment Phosphate exported to River Heads: 344 tonnes / year,

Reduction of Phosphate through MRCCC Rivercare Grants - 16 tonnes / year

Left: The elusive Conondale Spiny crayfish Eustacus hystricosus. Image courtesy of Olly Scully



The MRCCC won the National Rivercare Award in September 2004, qualifying initially as the Queensland Award Winner in the same category at the Queensland Landcare Awards in 2003. The award recognised the significant achievements generated by the implementation of the Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan (MRCCC 2000), which continues to provide a prioritised framework for riparian restoration. Partnerships with Councils also contributed to this award, particularly Maroochy, Cooloola, Noosa, Caloundra and Maryborough.

The national award was the culmination of four years of implementing the Mary River and Tributaries Rehabilitation Plan prepared by Brian Stockwell in partnership with the MRCCC in 2000. With riparian rehabilitation targeting subcatchments, neighbourhood landholder groups were established including the Friends of Kilcoy Creek, Wonga Drought Recovery Network and the Policeman's Spur Rivercare Group. This in turn facilitated the establishment of several community Waterwatch Networks.



Margaret Thompson, Paul Marshall, Graeme Elphinstone and Harry Jamieson with Senator Bob Brown at the National Landcare Awards, Parliament House, Canberra in September 2004

In 2003/4 the Living with Threatened Species (LTS) project found its ground within the local community with Eva Ford at the helm for the MRCCC. Evolving to suit research gaps and the requirements of landholders, the school community and government agencies, LTS became a project that delivers expertise and advice, resources for landholders, educational activities for school students and contributes to scientific research on our threatened fauna species. Maroochy Shire Council provided fantastic support to this program.

The LTS project directed on-ground works in targeted areas of confirmed or likely TS habitat, including Kenilworth, Gheerulla and Belli Park in the Maroochy Shire, and sites within Noosa and Cooloola Shires.

In November 2004 a Frog Forum was held at the Bellbunya Country Lodge, which attracted over 100 people from the local community and beyond. Presenters from the Queensland Museum, University of Queensland, Griffith Uni and QPWS spoke on frog decline, habitat loss and frog identification. Local landholders, Doc Eckley and Peter Turner, talked of the riparian revegetation they were restoring on their properties. The Frog Forum was followed by an evening survey on Belli Creek, successfully locating the three frog species listed under the Federal EPBC legislation as vulnerable - the Tusked frog, *Adelotus brevis*, the endangered Giant barred frog, *Mixophyes iteratus* and the vulnerable Cascade treefrog, *Litoria*

pearsoniana (pictured below).

Right: Images of the three threatened frog species in the Mary River Catchment courtesy of Debbie and Sven Felius and Eva Ford





2004

- Winners of the National Rivercare Award
- Wonga Drought Recovery Project
- Friends of Kilcoy Creek Project finalised
- Formation of Policeman's Spur Rivercare Group
- Lower Six Mile Creek Cod
 Habitat Enhancement Project
- Continuation and expansion of Community Waterwatch Networks
- Living with ThreatenedSpecies Project in Maroochy,Noosa, Cooloola Shires
- Mary Catchment Frog Forum at Belli
- Frog Surveys conducted at 74 sites resulting in 300 frog records
- Large Woody debris installations at Amamoor Creek and Obi Obi Creek
- Cabomba Bio-control project launched with research underway in South America
- Cooloola Shire Water
 Education Program delivered
 to 13 Cooloola Primary
 schools
- Kidzone Environmental Expo
- May Salinity Catchment Crawl
- October National water week catchment crawl
- Continued Committee representation on the CRP for the Mary Basin WRP



- MRCCC holds its 100th
 General Meeting at the Gympie
 Civic Centre
- Resource Centre relocated to Qld Rail buildings in Tozer St, Gympie
- MRCCC listed on the Register of Environmental Organisations and the Mary Catchment Public Fund established
- "Water for the Future" booklet produced
- Munna Creek Grazing Land Management Pilot project in Woocoo Shire
- Lake Macdonald 40th
 Birthday celebrations the
 inaugural Noosa Festival of
 Water
- Draft Water Quality
 Objectives developed for the
 Mary River catchment by EPA in
 partnership with MRCCC
- Widgee Wide Bay Waterwatch network formed
- Long term streamfrog
 monitoring sites established in
 Cedar and Cooroora Creeks
- Launch of the Richmond
 Birdwing Butterfly recovery
 program in the Mary
- Mary River & tributaries
 Rehabilitation Plan updated to
 include more tributaries and a
 water quality prioritisation

100th **General Meeting** - The MRCCC achieved another milestone in February 2005 when the group held its 100th General Meeting at the Gympie Civic Centre. The meeting celebrated the involvement of the large number of people who took part in catchment management in the Mary for over a decade and were the trail blazers for sustainable management of our natural resources, bringing these issues to prominence in a range of community and government forums.



Establishment of Mary Catchment Public Fund - A need was identified to start fundraising to establish a permanent home for the MRCCC and staff. The MRCCC's first "office" was in the Donga at the rear of the DPI in Cartwright Road Gympie and from there, operations moved to the former Dairy Farmers' Butter Factory office in Tozer St. This historic building provided a home for staff and meeting space for the Executive for many years before the building was sold. The MRCCC remains forever grateful to Dairy Farmers for providing this rent free facility for so many years. From there MRCCC moved to the very old and very small Queensland Rail buildings also in Tozer St Gympie, where there was barely enough room to accommodate the staff and all the MRCCC's possessions. This third

move inspired members of the Executive to establish a fund for tax deductible donations to raise money to fund a permanent home for the organisation. It was a lengthy process, updating the Constitution, applying to be listed on the Federal Government Register of Environmental Organisations and establishing the Mary Catchment Public Fund. Former Special Member Angus Hutton was pivotal providing assistance with the process, having helped many other organisations to do likewise.

Water for the Future booklet - The Future Water Options subcommittee was established by Jim Buchanan, Dave Sands, Des King and Jenifer Simpson. This subcommittee developed and produced the "Water for the Future" booklet and a great deal of liaison ensued with a range of organisations to highlight the issues raised by this document. The booklet remains as relevant today as it was when first produced.

Senate Inquiry into Urban Water Management 2002

- we do not use water sustainably
- we know we have to change
- we have the technology and expertise

but we are not doing it

Above: Excerpt from the Water for the Future booklet

The inaugural Noosa Festival of Water - 2005 heralded 40 years since the construction of Lake Macdonald on Six Mile Creek, built to store water for urban supply to the ever growing town of Noosa. The 40th anniversary was celebrated with the inaugural Noosa Festival of Water at the Noosa Botanic Gardens and Lake

Macdonald Amphitheatre. Many hundreds of people came to the

inaugural event, which aimed to showcase the ecological attributes of the Six Mile Creek sub-catchment and the multiple benefits of a clean river system. The success of the event led to the Festival becoming an annual event, ultimately held on the last Sunday of June each year.

Water Quality Objectives for the Mary River Catchment - The MRCCC Waterwatch data was recognised as the most extensive water quality data set for the Mary River catchment, covering more of the catchment than any other organisation. The EPA subsequently used the data to develop the Draft Water Quality Objectives for the catchment, as part of a pilot program for catchments in Queensland. This allowed the MRCCC to highlight the fact that one set of guidelines would not be appropriate for the entire Mary River Catchment, due to natural variations in water quality parameters of different subcatchments (for example low pH of Six Mile Creek or higher salinity of Munna Creek).



The first Festival of Water in October 2005, where, appropriately, it rained.

Traveston Crossing Dam - In 2006, south east Queensland was in the grip of the millennial drought. On the 27th April 2006 the catchment community was shocked and angry at the State Government's announcement to build a dam on the Mary River at Traveston Crossing, resuming around 7600 ha of prime agricultural land and affecting over 900 properties, including 672 residential homes, 36 business premises, 18 dairy farms, 20 small crop/horticulture properties and 144 grazing enterprises.

The announcement led to the formation of the Save the Mary River Group who produced a report titled "Save the Mary River" with contributions from the MRCCC. Apart from the economic and social impacts the dam would have on the community in the middle reaches of the catchment and downstream of the dam wall, the MRCCC's concerns focused on the impact the dam would have upon four federally listed threatened species: the Mary River cod, Mary River turtle, Queensland lungfish and the Giant barred frog, as well as over 536 hectares of

"endangered" vegetation communities that would be flooded by the dam.

When it became apparent that the dam would require federal EPBC approval the Government split the proposal into two stages, which meant that the yield of the proposed Stage 1 was less than a third of the original proposal while the costs to build it more than doubled.



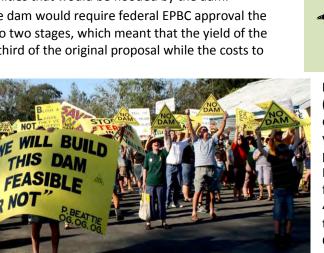
- State Government announces plans for a dam on the Mary River at Traveston Crossing
- Open letter sent to **Premier Peter Beattie** opposing the Traveston **Crossing Dam announcement**
- **Mary Valley Residents** form the "Save the Mary River" group
- Over 2000 people turn their backs on deputy Premier Anna Bligh at a community meeting in Gympie
- Legislation for the amended Mary Basin Water Resource Plan released
- **Mary Program of** Rivercare commences in the Mary catchment targeting 48 project sites
- Frog surveys generate 1199 records
- **Lungfish Recovery Plan** consultation and development
- "SedNET Scenarios in the Mary" workshop
- Cabomba biocontrol agent research continues in South **America**

Mary Program of Rivercare, (MPR) - After a virtual funding drought which lasted many years, and subsequent protracted negotiation with the BMRG, the MRCCC received funding to implement MPR at 48 strategic project sites throughout the Mary Catchment.

MPR worked with landholders at these sites to undertake

revegetation, streambank fencing, off-stream watering and environmental weed control. The project incorporated almost \$1 million of in-kind contributions from partners, more than tripling the initial cash investment from the BMRG. MPR was also supported by the Maroochy, Noosa and Cooloola Shire Councils.

SedNET Modelling - The SedNET modelling system, first used in the Mary Catchment in 2000, is used to predict sources and loads of sediments and nutrients throughout a catchment. A revision of the SedNET model using water quality data, local knowledge and various other data sets occurred in 2006. Findings from the original SedNET modelling (such as 87% of sediment delivered to the mouth of the Mary River was derived from stream bank erosion) have guided many of the MRCCC's on-ground actions. Two workshops were held in the Mary Catchment to model the effects riparian revegetation on sediment loads, how data could be used to improve the accuracy of the contribution of hillslope erosion, and the effects of improved land management practices (for example, zero tillage) in intensive cropping areas of the catchment.



Wivenhoe Dam 2006

BLIGH

TRAVESTON POLITICAL

MARY

- Winners of the 2007
 Queensland Rivercare Award
- Western Mary Catchments
 Grazing Landscapes NLP project
 commenced
- Friends of Mary Consortium established for the South East Queensland Rainforest Recovery Program
- MRCCC website created www.mrccc.org.au
- Gympie FarmFLOW project commences hosted by MRCCC, in a DPI-MRCCC partnership
- MRCCC relocates to shared premises in Nash St Gympie
- Federal Senate Inquiry into Traveston Crossing Dam
- Referral of the Traveston
 Crossing Dam proposal to the
 Federal Department of
 Environment and Water
 Resources (DEW) as a controlled
 action under the EPBC Act 1999
- Submission to the Federal
 Senate enquiry on water supply
 options for South East
 Queensland and the proposed
 Traveston Crossing Dam
- Minister for the Environment on the assessment of the Northern Pipeline Interconnector (NPI)
 Stage 1 under the EPBC Act

Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999;

Western Mary Catchments Grazing Landscapes project – This project commenced in 2007, targeting the largest conglomeration of commercial grazing enterprises on the western side of the Mary River in the Munna, Wide Bay, Widgee and Glastonbury sub-catchments. This project resulted in the formation of the partnership with the Gympie District Beef Liaison Group. It was the first MRCCC project to link with the actions of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan that recommended improved land condition was a way to maximise productivity (and profit) whilst reducing sediment and nutrient losses from grazing land. During 2006-2007 the Western Mary catchments experienced continuing severe drought, with some cases of reliable watering points completely drying up. At some sites this was unprecedented in the records of three generations of graziers on these properties.



Grazing Field Day at Manumbar

Gympie FarmFLOW Project - This project had a focus on implementing best practice through "Area Wide Management" in the diverse high value peri-urban farming systems of the Gympie District featuring a mix of tree and small crops, as well as grazing and dairying. The project was supported by DPIF, BMRG, Gympie Packhouse, Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers, Gympie QDO, Gympie Macadamia Best Practice Group and the Gympie and District Beef Liaison Group. The project targeted two priority water quality agricultural hotspots in the Gympie district – Tinana and Amamoor Creeks. Within this context, commercial producers identified a key focus on soil health and a range of peri-urban issues, which they considered likely to produce the most significant NRM and Regional Economic Development outcomes.

Traveston Crossing Dam - In the MRCCC's 2007 Annual Report, Chairman Harry Jamieson noted that "The Traveston Dam saga has occupied a large part of the past year's activities. TV and radio presentations, numerous press releases, staff preparation of submissions opposing the dam and northern pipeline interconnector construction and attendance at anti-dam meetings have contributed to an input of much time and effort without any recompense." The MRCCC presented detailed written submissions to government on the following issues;

• Referral of the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal to the Federal Department of Environment and Water Resources (DEW) as a controlled action under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity

- A submission to the Queensland Coordinator-General on the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the dam proposal;
- A written submission to the federal Senate enquiry on water supply options for South East Queensland and the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam;
- A submission to the Federal Minister for the Environment on the assessment of the Northern Pipeline Interconnector (NPI) Stage 1 under the EPBC act;
- A submission to the State Coordinator General's department on the terms of reference for an EIS on NPI Stage 1;
- A submission on the draft EIS for the NPI stage 1;
- A submission on the referral of the NPI stage 2 to DEW.

Winners of the 2007 Queensland Rivercare Award - The productivity and successful outcomes of MRCCC projects resulted in our group winning the 2007 Queensland Rivercare Award. The award nomination focussed on the MRCCC's holistic approach to catchment management and work undertaken through the Rivercare Grants Program, the Grazing Landscapes Program, the Living with Threatened Species Program and the six Community Waterwatch Networks.

MRCCC relocate again – In 2008 the MRCCC were on the move again, this time to the former Cooloola Shire Council depot in Tozer Park Rd, where there was sufficient space for our Resource Centre and staff, Waterwatch lab and ample parking. Moving a growing organisation like the MRCCC with all the office equipment and associated project materials ensured that the need for permanent accommodation remained high on the Executive's agenda.

Council amalgamation – Nine councils were amalgamated into three newly formed councils; Sunshine Coast Council forming from Caloundra City, Maroochy and Noosa Shires, Gympie Council forming from Cooloola and Kilkivan Shires and Fraser Coast Council forming from Maryborough and Hervey Bay City, Woocoo and Tiaro Shires. To ensure that the new councillors were aware of our activities presentations were made to the Sunshine Coast, Gympie and Fraser Coast Regional Councils detailing what we do and what we have achieved. A representative of each of the three councils was appointed to the Committee of the MRCCC.

Grazing land condition assessment –A grazing land condition assessment tool was developed in conjunction with graziers as a simple benchmarking and monitoring tool that project participants could perform on their property over time. Another key assessment tool was the development and testing of a simple riparian zone condition assessment that could also be performed by riparian landholders.

Mary Program of Rivercare – 132 project sites where landholders contributed their own labour, equipment and funds resulted in a suite of ecological, social and economic improvements and a significant in-kind contribution. Rivercare project sites were selected according to their priority for water quality improvement (eg. quantity of sediment to Great Sandy Strait) or freshwater biodiversity status (eg. Mary River cod habitat).

Mary Program of Rivercare outcomes - 2005 - 2008

Project Type	Outcome (2005 - 2008)
Riparian fencing	35.5 km
Off-stream watering points	32
Riparian revegetation	42.77 Ha
Environmental weed control	226.7 Ha
Assisted regeneration	85.8 Ha
Stream length	95.63 km
Rivercare Projects	132



Above: The Sisters of Mary formed to take the anti-dam message to the government Living with threatened species — Over the 2007-2008 summer season, 60 frog surveys were conducted resulting in around 700 records of which 136 were threatened species. The 22 waterways visited included Six Mile, Deep, Kandanga, North Deep and Tinana Creeks to name just a few. A survey along the Mary River upstream of Conondale revealed a massive 13 different species, including the Giant barred frog (endangered, EPBC Act), Cascade treefrog and Tusked frog (both vulnerable) in one small area. The Giant barred frog was also found downstream

along Six Mile Creek in the Woondum area and were finally confirmed after five years of visiting Cooroora Creek in the Pomona area.

To date MRCCC has carried out more than 370 surveys targeting frogs of the Mary catchment and collected around 4400 records with 1058 of those being of threatened species. Four monitoring sites are established and have been surveyed for 3 consecutive seasons.

2008

- MRCCC relocates to the old Cooloola Shire Council depot in Tozer Park Rd, Gympie
- Presentations to the newly amalgamated Councils
- Grazing land condition and riparian zone condition assessment tools established
- Gympie District Grazing Land Types booklet produced
- Waterwatch Report Card developed
- Mary Program of Rivercare project finalised after 3 years of implementation involved over 5000 landholders and onground works at 132 sites generating over \$3 million of investment in riparian rehabilitation
- Frog records reach 4400 including 1058 of threatened frog species
- Accelerated involvement with the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly Network in the Mary Catchment
- Weevil imported from Argentina for testing for suitability for Cabomba biocontrol
- Mary River Festival held at Nelson Park in Gympie
- Draft SEQ Water Strategy produced
- Comments on the draft amendments to the Water Resource (Mary Basin) Plan 2006 including the Strategic Reserve
- What's so special about the Mary River and its threatened ecological communities? Paper presented at International River Symposium Brisbane by G Pickersgill, S Burgess and B Wedlock

- MRCCC hosts the Land for Wildlife program in the Gympie region
- SuperGraze project involves over 500 graziers
- Farm Ready grant for Climate
 Resilient Horticulture for the
 Gympie District
- Over 1000 landholders attend MRCCC workshops targeting sustainable production and biodiversity
- Rivercare works and undertaken at 54 properties in the Sunshine Coast hinterland
- Surveys for threatened wallum frog species in the lower Mary and Cooloola Coast
- Wide Bay Burnett Water Strategy (member of technical panel)
- Federal Independent Inquiry into the EPBC Act (Submission and interview by national panel)
- Ongoing Traveston Crossing
 Dam EIS process (Meetings
 with Coordinator-general,
 DEWHA and Community
 Futures Task Force staff)
- Representations to and meetings with State
 Government ministers on species recovery plans and climate change hydrology of the Mary River.
- Peter Garrett announces that the Federal Government will not approve the Traveston Crossing Dam on 11
 November



Traveston Crossing Dam – The most significant highlight for the year was the Federal Government's decision not to approve the Traveston Crossing Dam under the provisions of the EPBC Act. The MRCCC worked hard for the previous 3 ½ years to provide both the State Coordinator General and the Federal Environment Minister with the best possible hard evidence and scientific arguments throughout the State and Federal assessment processes.

The final decision and the legal reasons stated for the decision bore out the arguments provided by the MRCCC and many other submissions and assessments of the project (including the findings of the 2007 Senate Enquiry into the proposal). These are perhaps most clearly stated in former Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett's own words in these excerpts from the final decision statement: "After carefully considering all the information necessary for me to make my final decision, including the recent comments on my proposed decision by the proponent, the Queensland Coordinator-General and the relevant federal ministers, I have concluded that the Traveston Crossing Dam cannot go ahead without unacceptable impacts on matters of national environmental significance."

"As I stated when I made my proposed decision on this project, all of my decisions under the national environment law are based primarily on science, and the science is very clear about the adverse impacts this project would have on the nationally protected Australian lungfish, Mary River turtle and Mary River cod. In making my decision I also carefully considered relevant economic and social matters. Independent analysis of this proposal casts serious doubt over its economic merits. I also had regard to the significant concerns raised by the communities in the Mary Valley that would be most directly affected by the dam."

Supergraze - The SuperGraze project was successfully completed in June 2009 after a year of operation. SuperGraze built upon the previous 3 years of the Western Mary Catchments Grazing Landscapes project. The project aimed to assist grazing landholders to improve the productivity and sustainability of their grazing management systems. The project focused on the grazing enterprises of the Munna, Wide Bay and Widgee Creek, Manumbar, Tansey and Glastonbury areas. Also included in the project were the sub-catchments of East Gympie (Deep and Tinana Creeks) and Kin Kin Creek in the upper Noosa River catchment. The Gympie District Beef Liaison Group and QPI&F were major working partners with support from the BMRG and AgForce. A total of 380 graziers were directly networked through the project.

Conservation Partnerships Program

- In the latter part of 2008 and to June 2009, the MRCCC hosted the Conservation Partnerships Program for the Gympie region. During this

time, the number of properties involved in Conservation Partnerships increased by 38 to over 200. Each property visited received on-site advice and a detailed written report outlining specific biodiversity assets and threats. These properties cover an area of over 4,700 ha – excluding the Wide Bay Training Area which is hundreds of square kilometres.

Right: David Bedford and Ficus microphylla at Amamoor

Mary Valley Renewal - Following the Federal Government decision on the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal, a number of interested groups and regional councils from the Mary Valley and beyond united to form the Mary Valley Renewal Team. The MRCCC partnered with Gympie and Sunshine Coast Regional Councils, Mary Valley Inc., Save The Mary River, Mary Valley Chamber of Commerce, Greater Mary Association and other community representatives.

The Team coordinated an extensive public consultation process throughout the first half of 2010 to develop a Mary Valley Community and Economic Action Plan, which laid out a community vision for the future of the Mary Valley and the River, and identified a number of community projects to help achieve this vision. The team also liaised with government at a local, state and federal level to inform government policies and plans, which impact on the future of Mary Valley communities, businesses and the environmental values of the river. Another outcome of the "no dam" decision led to the MRCCC commencing negotiation with the Federal Government to develop a multi-species recovery plan for the threatened aquatic species of the Mary River Catchment.

Vale Gerry Cook – Pioneer of the Mary River cod breeding program, Gerry Cook, passed away in 2010 aged 94.

An avid fisherman in his younger years, Gerry recognised that the Mary River cod was a species in trouble and he saw cod breeding and release as a way to give back to the sport of fishing. In 1983 he and a group of mates got together to start a captive

breeding program at a shed on the banks of Lake Macdonald, Cooroy.



The mighty Mary River cod

Working out how to breed cod was not easy and there was much trial and error before the group were successful. When the original hatchery buildings were destroyed in a storm in 2006, Gerry was recognised for his work when the new hatchery was built and named after him.

Reef Rescue – In 2010 MRCCC commenced the Reef Rescue, Grazing Lands project in the catchment. This project was a partnership between the Federal and State

Governments, DAF, BMRG and AgForce. The MRCCC's role was to broker on-ground projects with cooperative graziers to improve grazing land practices and downstream water quality. It supported graziers through access to advice and financial incentives to implement eligible on-ground projects to improve downstream water quality, demonstrate changes to land management practices and improve enterprise sustainability.

Graziers wanting to access the incentive funding undertook an audit of their current grazing land practices using an A,B,C,D report card system with the assistance of the project team. During this audit on-ground projects were identified that helped to improve the report card rating.

FarmFLOW - The FarmFLOW project continued in 2010 with several Best Practice demonstration sites, field days and the development of management

> guidelines. Demonstration sites were established and field days held for:

- Dairy nitrogen trial
- Pineapple fertiliser trial
- Beans Minimum Till
- Macadamias Canopy and Orchard Floor management.

The Grazing Land Type booklet for the Gympie district was produced.



- ► Vale Gerry Cook Pioneer of the Cod Breeding program at the Hatchery at Lake Macdonald, which is named in his honour
- MRCCC involvement in the Mary Valley Renewal process
- "LUNKERS" (artificial habitat) installed at Belli Creek Crossing
- 450 landholders attend a series of Land for Wildlife workshops
- Gympie FarmFlow project best practice demonstration sites established for zero-till beans and Macadamia orchards
- Mary Basin Water Resource Plan draft Resource Operations Plan released
- Reef Rescue, Grazing Lands project commences in the Mary **Catchment**
- **Negotiations with the Federal** Government about a multispecies Recovery Plan for threatened aquatic species in the Mary River Catchment
- MRCCC develops an A-B-C-D grazing land practice assessment for the local arazina



Beans minimum till trial field day -Participants recording soil biota





Show for his minimum till beans and Right: Minimum till field day at the Fewtrell property, Curra

- Record flooding in Wide Bay
 Creek, and throughout the
 catchment in January
- Evaluation of flood damage to MRCCC on-ground project sites found minimal damage to young revegetation projects
- MRCCC hosts the "War on aquatic weeds" forum, Noosaville with 97 attendees
- Final year of Gympie District
 FarmFLOW project with 437
 landholders involved in training
 and 20 workshops held
- Threatened Aquatic Species
 Recovery Plan prepared, after
 extensive input and feedback
 from stakeholders and all levels
 of government
- Land for Wildlife continues in Gympie Region with four workshops held
- Independent scientific review of the MRCCC's poolriffle-bar EPBC nomination including workshops and fieldwork
- "Shaking it for the Dugong" competition

Was a grassy bank, Mary River, Tiaro (can you spot the dog?)

2011 Floods in the Mary River Catchment

Sub-catchments of the Mary River received record flooding as a result of heavy rainfall on the 7th January. This rain also devastated the Lockyer Valley and Toowoomba with tragic outcomes. Wide Bay Creek catchment reset flood heights at the gauging stations at Kilkivan and Woolooga. The flood waters breached the entire gauging station at Kilkivan, so that the actual flood height will never be known.

The floodwaters at Woolooga were many metres higher than the previous peak recorded in 1947, flooding many buildings and businesses in the township. The Widgee and Lower Wonga districts were also heavily impacted by these floods, and again, the flood heights will never be known as there are no flood height stations or stream gauging stations in these creeks. Locals however, reported that the flood levels had reached record peaks. The Mary River at Home Park upstream of Tiaro reached 18.7m, the 3rd highest flood peak since gauging commenced.













Delegates provided photos showing the impacts of the 2011 floods right across the catchment



2011 continued

War on aquatic weeds forum, Noosaville - The Lake Macdonald Catchment Care group received a small grant from the Federal Government to hold a forum about the prevention and management of aquatic weeds. The forum was held on the 24th of June, 2011 at the Australis Noosa Lakes Convention and Exhibition Centre, Noosaville. 97 people attended including representatives of state and local government from the NSW border to Gladstone and beyond. Problematic aquatic weeds from South America thrive here because of the similar sub-tropical climate. Forums like this improve information and treatment methods about these species, including herbicide updates, physical removal and biological control options.

Draft Threatened Aquatic Species Recovery Plan prepared - The Mary River Threatened Species recovery plan is the first of its kind in Australia to focus on a whole river system. The MRCCC's approach was based on selection of "umbrella species" that represent key ecological functions and/or have major conservation needs. These include the Mary River cod, Mary River turtle, Australian Lungfish, Giant barred Frog and the Freshwater mullet. The aim was to have the Plan endorsed to provide guidance to the Australian Government Environment Minister and her/his staff regarding decisions under the EPBC Act related to the Mary River.

The process of developing the Recovery Plan provided the opportunity to develop a set of agreed actions that could be implemented to achieve the recovery of key endangered species as well as improve the overall health of the river. In addition to having one part time staff member dedicated to the project (Tanzi Smith), MRCCC staff members Eva Ford and Steve Burgess were members of the Technical Advisory Group which provided scientific input to the plan. Steve was also on the recovery team which consisted of representatives from major stakeholder groups including state and local government, community, conservation, natural resource management groups and water infrastructure operators.

The Gympie District FarmFLOW project was successful at engaging farmers of the district for climate change adaptation and best management practice adoption. Demonstration and trials were well utilised throughout the project, with collaborators being keen to host field days and share their experiences. Strong linkages were forged with the Gympie District Beef Liaison Group, Gympie branch of the Qld Dairy Organisation, the Gympie Macadamia Bestprac Group and the Gympie Packhouse.

Highlights or achievements from the Gympie District FarmFLOW project:

- Assessment of practices at demonstration sites have strongly shown that BMPs deliver both economic and environmental benefits:
- Small crop growers (especially beans) are now recognising that minimum till is a viable option for adapting to climate change.
- Strong engagement with the Macadamia industry through industry groups, workshops and demonstration sites.
- Minimum till in beans is shown to have an efficiency saving of \$238/ha compared to conventionally grown beans
- Better orchard floor management in Macadamias has reduced sediment run-off from 1.5t/ha/yr to 150kg/ha/yr
- Reducing pre-plant fertiliser in pineapples can save up to \$1000/ha in fertiliser costs









Vale Eddie Gresham and Hugh Viner - Two champions of the Mary Catchment passed away this year. We will continue to remember Eddie Gresham and Hugh Viner, two influential gentlemen who helped to forge links between dairy and grazing landholders, and the landcare and integrated catchment management movement in the Mary. Eddie is remembered for his contributions to the dairy industry, his passionate application of biodynamic farming and his contribution to the MRCCC's community Waterwatch program as a volunteer for many years. Hugh Viner was one of a small group of 'community influentials' drawn together by Gunther Kath in early 1991, to pool their extensive talents and experience, and begin developing a planning model for the sustainable management of the Mary River Catchment.

- 150th MRCCC General Meeting celebrations
- Launch of "Once an endangered species" DVD on the plight of the Mary River Cod
- Commencement of the 6
 year Australian
 Government Clean Energy
 Fund, Biodiversity Fund –
 Implementing the Mary
 River Threatened Aquatic
 Species Recovery Plan
- Continued involvement in the Mary Valley Renewal process
- Record flooding in upper Six Mile Creek, Noosa hinterland
- Establishment of the Tinana/Coondoo Creek Community Waterwatch network
- MRCCC hosted the Mary
 River Cod forum, Tewantin
- CSIRO Cabomba biocontrol research completed
- Colton coal mine proposed in the Susan River subcatchment Maryborough
- 6th Australian Stream Management conference paper prepared on the "Development of the Mary River Aquatic Threatened Species Recovery Plan"
- Mary River Threatened
 Aquatic Species Plan
 Indigenous working group
 bus tour of catchment
- Continued stakeholder engagement and input into the Mary River Threatened Aquatic Species Recovery Plan 4 community workshops held across the catchment

Biodiversity Fund - In May 2012 the Federal Government Environment Department approved a six year proposal that MRCCC submitted to their Clean Energy Futures - Biodiversity Fund. The proposal, "Restoring riparian resilience – implementing the Mary River Threatened Aquatic Species Recovery Plan" was based on the principle that riparian rehabilitation is one of the most strategic actions that can be undertaken to protect and restore high conservation values in the catchment. The project aimed to establish strategic biodiverse plantings that restored high priority riparian zones and protected the threatened species habitat contained within the critically endangered sub-tropical lowland rainforest community. By controlling invasive species and restoring riparian zone connectivity and condition, the project aimed to enhance riverine ecosystem function, increase resilience and establish a high conservation value carbon sink at the landscape scale.

During the early phase of the project from 2012 to 2014, based on previous and current rivercare programs, 'demonstration reaches' were identified. These demonstration reaches were used for learning purposes, community awareness and to refine and develop rehabilitation technologies such as promoting cats claw and madiera vine biological control releases for the Tingid bug and Jewel beetle.

Mary River Cod forum, Tewantin - On 21st February 2012, Fisheries Queensland and the MRCCC hosted a forum to evaluate the ongoing role of fish stocking for the management of the Mary River Cod. The forum, held in the old Council Chambers in Tewantin, was attended by 31 delegates. The forum provided a much needed opportunity for interested parties, including hatchery operators, fisheries scientists from the Qld and NSW governments, researchers, Australian Government Environment Department and MRCCC staff to review the role that fish stocking plays in conservation of the Mary River cod.

Key outcomes from the forum were:

- Tinana and Coondoo Creek populations are genetically distinct from the population in the main trunk of the Mary and are of high conservation value. Urgent research is required to determine sustainable levels at which brood stock can be taken from this population.
- Significant knowledge gaps regarding the species were identified. They
 relate to the reproductive biology of the cod, the level of natural breeding and
 survival of young, genetic structure of the populations and areas of habitat critical for
 cod.
- Stocking in the Mary River catchment has not occurred since 2008. It should not occur again until 2013, and only if the research undertaken in the intervening period supports further stocking. Apart from the genetic implications of stocking programs, another complicating factor is that, while stocking continues, inability to distinguish between stocked and wild cod makes it very difficult to tell whether the cod are successfully breeding in the wild. This has a significant bearing on the conservation status of the species.
- Stocking outside of the Mary River catchment should continue.
- It was proposed that DEEDI/QDAFF develop a Mary River cod stocking policy that minimises the risks that stocking can pose to the genetics, and therefore fitness, of the cod population.

These outcomes continue to be refined and incorporated in the Mary River Threatened Aquatic Species recovery plan.

Once an endangered species DVD -

Sunshine Coast Council provided funding to produce a DVD which detailed the life cycle and breeding program for the Mary River cod. Luke Barrowcliffe directed and produced the short film, which included what is believed to be the first underwater footage ever captured of a Mary River cod in the wild. The DVD was launched by

Member for Wide Bay, Warren Truss at the MRCCC's 150th General Meeting in February 2012. 1000 copies of the DVD were produced with copies sent to schools, libraries, fishing clubs and individuals throughout south east Queensland.



- Record flooding in Wide Bay Creek (Kilkivan and Woolooga), Munna Creek following Cyclone Oswald
- Reef Rescue Grazing Lands project networked with 390 graziers through the 3 year program
- 3 Year Reef Water Quality Grants Program, Grazing Lands project commences in the Mary River catchment
- Assessment of riverbank and on-ground projects following the Australia Day floods
- "Something about Mary" publication
- A number of Waterwatch volunteers recognized for 10 years of voluntary service
- Mary River Restoration
 Stories 20 years of MRCCC
 Rivercare workshops held across
 the catchment
- Kenilworth Homestead annual Hong Kong student environmental program commences
- Search for a property for the MRCCC Resource Centre and office
- Cats claw vine biocontrol, Jewel beetles and Madeira vine beetles released in the catchment
- Great Barrier Reef
 Catchment Loads (Sediment &
 Pesticides) monitoring program
 commenced near Tiaro, Mary
 River and lower Tinana Creek in
 partnership with the
 Department of Environment and
 Science

2013 Floods in the Mary River
Catchment – While the Mary River
catchment was still recovering
from the 2011 record floods, more
record flooding occurred in 2013
as a result of heavy rainfall on the
Australia Day weekend in January.
The Wide Bay Creek catchment at
Kilkivan and Woolooga again reset
flood heights at the gauging
stations. The flood waters at
Kilkivan were equal to the 2011



floods, while the Woolooga floodwaters were nearly one metre higher than 2011, devastating the township again. The Munna Creek gauging station at Marodian was 1 metre higher than the 1955 record, and the Glastonbury Creek gauging station also broke the 1955 flood peak.

The floodwaters on the Mary River at Miva almost broke the previous 1974 flood peak of 20.8 m, with a 20.5 m flood peak recorded in January 2013. Some locals believe the Miva flood peak in 2013 was actually higher than the record. MRCCC estimated that at the peak of the flood, there were 368 tonnes of sediment flowing under the Dickabram bridge per minute (the equivalent of 10 dump trucks per minute).

The Mary River at Home Park upstream of Tiaro reached a new peak of 23.1 m, surprising the DNR hydrographers, who thought that the gauging station was providing faulty river height readings. They contacted Garth Jacobsen of Home Park to check if there was a flood of this property. At the peak of this flood there were 870,000 megalitres of water flowing past Tiaro, which would have filled Wivenhoe Dam in one day, or filled Borumba Dam 20 times over.



Reef Water Quality Program, Grazing Lands (formerly known as Reef Rescue)

The Reef Program was funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments providing 3 years funding to the Burnett Mary Reef Partnership Program, a consortium comprised of MRCCC, BMRG, Burnett Catchment Care Association, Qld Dairy Organisation, Maryborough, Isis and Bundaberg Canegrowers.

The program provided local graziers with advice and financial support to implement eligible on-ground projects that demonstrated improved land management practices and enterprise sustainability whilst contributing to Reef Rescue water quality outcomes. After the 2013/2014 summer drought rain fell in late March 2014 and provided incentive for involvement of the grazing community in Reef Rescue projects. A significant focus of the project was to provide financial incentives to shift cattle camps adjacent to riparian zones to appropriate sites higher in the landscape. By doing so, the accumulated manure from the new cattle camp is filtered through pasture before reaching the riparian zone and waterway.

- Kenilworth, Mary River commences with the establishment of a stakeholder group to investigate options for Charles Street Park, Kenilworth
- On-ground flood recovery projects implemented on the Mary River at Maryborough
- Establishment of the Belli-Cedar Creek Landholder group
- Steve Burgess and Eva Ford presents a paper "Frogs weapons of mass rehabilitation in the Mary River catchment" at the 7th Australian Stream Management conference paper
- Seqwater MRCCC partnership commences
- Tiaro Lower Munna Creek Waterwatch community network formed
- Launch of "In retrospect the Mary River" DVD of short stories of locals from the Mary River catchment
- MRCCC purchases 25 Stewart Terrace, Gympie
- MRCCC resolves to continue small scale Land for Wildlife activities in Gympie and Fraser Coast Council areas
- Assisted with the revision of the Mary Catchment Water
 Quality Improvement Plan that identified the Mary Catchment as a major sediment contributor to the Great Barrier Reef
- Bus trip of established riparian rehabilitation on-ground project sites in the upper Mary River catchment
- Nomination of the
 Freshwater mullet to be listed as a
 threatened species under the EPBC
- Western Mary Catchments Grazing Landscapes Booklet produced

MRCCC purchases 25 Stewart Terrace, Gympie –

In what can only be described as one of the most momentous days in the history of the MRCCC, on the 8th February 2014 MRCCC Chairman Ian Mackay and Life Member Jim Buchanan signed the contract to purchase 25 Stewart Terrace, Gympie, the soon to be new, permanent home of the MRCCC. Months of planning followed with Jim project managing the renovations needed that would convert the 1928 Queenslander into a suitable office for the MRCCC staff and a meeting space for multiple users. The majority of the purchase price and cost of renovations was provided by donations made to the Mary Catchment Public Fund, with MRCCC providing a small contribution. It took over a year before the renovations were complete, but all through that time, Jim never took his eye off the ball, and to say





the MRCCC is eternally grateful for his contribution is an understatement. We consider ourselves to be one of the most fortunate non-profit groups in the country!

On-farm Productivity & Riparian Recovery Program (Flood Recovery)

Funding from the Queensland Government's On-farm Productivity and Riparian Recovery Program via the BMRG was negotiated for the Mary River Catchment following the extensive flooding that occurred throughout the Mary River

Catchment on Australia Day 2013. After a series of meetings during 2013 it was decided that the funding allocated to the Mary River Catchment should be directed to 'riparian recovery' projects in the following priority areas:



Maryborough reach, Mary River (predominantly caneland) and the lower Munna Creek (Glen Echo) area (grazing); Kenilworth reach, Mary River (dairy and grazing). 82 properties received on-property advice from the MRCCC on restoring or stabilising erosion caused by the 2013 Australia Day floods. The majority of this advice involved how to stabilise riparian areas and address gully erosion. In February 2014 a steering group approved two riverbank stabilisation projects on cane-farms in the Maryborough reach of the Mary River and four riparian fencing and creekbank stabilisation projects on grazing properties in the lower Munna Creek, Glen Echo district. One of these projects included a wetland aquatic weed management project at Marodian waterhole.

In March and July 2014 stakeholder meetings were held at Kenilworth to discuss options for river stabilisation in the reach of the Mary River from the Walli Creek confluence (Bellbird gauging station) downstream to Moy Pocket. Each stakeholder contributed to the works as follows:

- BMRG flood recovery funding
- MRCCC integrated catchment management, threatened aquatic species habitat, connections with riparian landholders, funding for weed control and revegetation.
- Sunshine Coast Council managed Charles Street river park / recreation area, river rehabilitation demonstration program.
- Seqwater Kenilworth township urban water off-take
- DNRM permitting and approvals, sustainable river management Each of the partners agreed that an investigation study for the reach was required to understand river processes, build a business case, and develop rehabilitation options. Each partner contributed to funding the study.



Mary River Kenilworth pile field demonstration site, Charles St River Park

The Charles Street River Park pile-field demonstration site was completed in June 2015. This collaborative project between Seqwater, BMRG, Sunshine Coast Council, DNRM and MRCCC has dramatically transformed a badly eroding section of riverbank / parkland through the use of a series of 'pile-fields'. These pile-fields are lengths of timber (similar to long strainer fence posts) rammed 6-8 metres into the riverbed and partially up the riverbank with approximately 1 m of timber exposed. The underground length is to ensure they ware not undermined by floodwaters. Each pile-field is comprised of 20-30 timber posts, uniformly spaced to slow the flow of floodwater and deposit silt and sediment against the toe of the riverbank to stabilise the entire bank. Local native riparian species were planted on the riverbank to stabilise the site in the long-term. A community tree-planting event organised by Sunshine Coast Council took place in July.

Mary River month – The MRCCC formulated the inaugural Mary River Month, from World Rivers Day on the 4th Sunday in September through to the Mary River Festival in Kandanga on the second Saturday in November. Mary River Month was developed as an ambitious calendar of events which included the two-day catchment crawl, bus trips, a river listening trip and the Spring in the Mary Photo Competition. Mary River Month also coincides with National Water Week, the Australian Backyard Bird Count and National Frog Week. Mary River Month also includes events and activities from a range of other organisations.

Catchment crawl

The annual Mary River water quality catchment crawl recommenced in October 2015 after a 7 year hiatus. The catchment crawl follows the main trunk of the Mary River from its headwaters above Conondale to River Heads near Hervey Bay, sampling the water quality along the way over 2 days. In 2015 the catchment crawl sampled 13 sites on the Mary River and seven sites on its tributaries.



Mary River edStudio

Education sector delegate Sue Gibson (pictured left), the Principal of the Barambah Environmental Education Centre, and local teachers Robyn Yates (Tinana School) and Zela Bissett (Mary Valley College) developed an "edStudio" with a focus on the Mary River. EdStudio is an Education Queensland intranet site that Queensland teachers can access. Called "Get to know the Mary" the edStudio unit focused on year 3/4 history curriculum

using the MRCCC's Looking Forward, Looking Back project as a basis. Other teachers in the catchment were invited to be involved in developing more material for other year levels and subjects. The MRCCC will continue to play a support role in this project.

2015

- MRCCC celebrates 20 years since incorporation in 1995
- MRCCC Resource Centre
 permanently moves to 25 Stewart
 Terrace
- Cyclone Marcia in March
- Riverbank pile-field
 demonstration project completed
 at Charles Street park Kenilworth,
 Mary River in collaboration with
 SEQWater, BMRG, Sunshine Coast
 Council
- White throated Snapping
 Turtle recognized as a species and
 listed as critically endangered
- Inaugural Mary River
 Month in September
- Gympie Koala Action
 Group formed
- First October Catchment
 Crawl since 2008 water quality
 sampling from the headwaters to
 River Heads
- Feral pig monitoring and trapping project in Wolvi and Amamoor
- Totally Wild television show films endangered streamfrogs with Eva Ford
- "Get to know the Mary" edStudio (Education Queensland) produced targeting year 3-4 curriculum based on MRCCC's "In Retrospect" DVD
- Continued Land for Wildlife workshops on host properties in Gympie & Fraser Coast
- Office of Fair Trading transfers the assets of the Gerry Cook Fish Hatchery to MRCCC
- Establishment of Gerry Cook
 Fish Hatchery steering committee
 and development of a 5 year
 strategy
- 2000 Mary River cod fingerlings released in the catchment

- MRCCC Resource Centre at Stewart Terrace, Gympie opened by Hon Warren Truss MP
- Reef Trust Phase II Gully Erosion
 Control project commences
- Reef Water Quality project networked with 630 graziers over the past 3 years
- 8th Australian Stream Management conference paper presented by Tanzi Smith and Caitlin Mill
- 20 Million Trees Goomboorian Koala corridor project commences
- Steve Burgess won the Bob Hawke National Landcare award
- Meeting with the Australian Government's Threatened Species Commissioner
- SEQWater proposes spillway upgrade for Lake Macdonald, and forms a community reference group
- Alternative herbicides for revegetation trials commences in collaboration with University of Sunshine Coast
- Mary River Turtle population study commenced by Marilyn
- Mary River Cod genetics project in collaboration with Sunshine Coast Council & Griffith University
- 5000 Mary River cod fingerlings released, with 400 PIT tagged fish released into Munna Creek for future monitoring
- Vale Graham Smith

Mary Catchment Resource Centre Official Opening – In March 2016 the MRCCC realised a long held ambition when Federal Member for Wide Bay, Warren Truss, officially opened the Mary Catchment Resource Centre at 25 Stewart Terrace, Gympie. The building incorporates an open plan office for staff downstairs, meeting rooms, a library and a full kitchen upstairs, 15 kva solar power and 45,000 litres of rainwater. The Waterwatch lab is in the garage, which also includes internal parking for two vehicles and storage areas, plus carport parking for 5 more vehicles. Gardens featuring native plants donated by Noosa, Gympie and Barung Landcare are becoming established, and the Centre is regularly visited by members of the public seeking information about a myriad of issues.



Warren Truss MP and Jim Buchanan officially opening the Mary Catchment Resource Centre in Gympie

Reef Program #2 - Grazing Lands in the Mary Catchment (2013-2016) – This working partnership between the MRCCC and the Gympie District Beef Liaison Group (GDBLG) was completed this year with supporting partners, the BMRG and AgForce. Funding was jointly provided by the Queensland and Australian Governments. The primary objective of the project was to increase the adoption of best land management practices within the grazing industry to reduce the amount of sediments and nutrients leaving the farms. The aims were to improve downstream water quality entering the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.

The Reef Program #2 Grazing Lands project had three main components:

- 1. Providing best grazing land management training to grazing landholders
- 2. Providing financial incentives to aid the implementation of Best Management Practice
- 3. Benchmarking grazing land practices (A-B-C-D) 630 grazing landholders were directly involved in this project.

Mary River cod Genetics Research - The Sunshine Coast Council provided a grant to the MRCCC to support research being undertaken by Griffith University to develop a specific genetic marker for the Mary River cod. This research has multiple potential benefits for the cod and the restocking program, enabling the ability to assess the efficacy of the current cod breeding and stocking activities, and establishing detailed genetic knowledge from which future

management of the species and its habitat can be monitored and assessed.

Goomboorian Koala Corridor Project – Funding from the Australian Government's 20 Million Trees program was received to plant 10,000 trees across 15 properties in the upper Tinana sub-catchment by June 2018. Gympie Regional Council also contributed to the project. "Creating Connections" was adopted as the name for the project to illustrate the aims of establishing connections for movement of koalas and other wildlife, and between the people and communities of the Goomboorian, Kia Ora, Neerdie and Wolvi districts. Tree plantings were held to encourage community participation and to support the



landholders who committed areas of their property to koala conservation. The plantings also helped people learn about revegetation methods, the importance of the area for koalas and the significance of the Tinana Creek system for threatened species such as the Mary River cod, Giant barred frog, Queensland lungfish and Mary River turtle.

- Cyclone Debbie in March
- Australian
 Government, Clean Energy
 Futures Fund, Biodiversity
 Fund project completed
 after 6 years of
 implementation with 192
 landholders engaged
- Reef Trust phase III, Grazing Lands project commences
- Reef Trust phase IV, Riparian revegetation project commences
- Find a Frog in February citizen science program commences with 389 frog records from 79 participants
- Threatened Species
 Commissioner Mary River
 catchment tour with
 Professor Stuart Bunn
 (Griffith University)
- Seqwater MRCCC partnership commences targeting the Mary River upstream of Kenilworth and Goomong
- BMRG Systems Repair program funded Upper Tinana Creek strategic cats claw vine control project ends
- First meeting of the Gympie Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) hub
- 16,500 Mary River cod fingerlings released in the catchment
- "Mary River cod Respected and Protected"
 video produced
- Vale Angus Hutton











Biodiversity Fund Project - The Restoring Riparian Resilience: Implementing the Mary River Threatened Aquatic Species Recovery Plan was finalised in June 2017. Funded by the Australian Government's Clean Energy Futures Fund in 2011/2012, this \$2.4million project focussed on restoring riverbank health, one of the most important actions for recovery of threatened aquatic species in the Mary Catchment. The Restoring Riparian Resilience infographic to the left summarises what was achieved. All targets were exceeded.

As the 6-year project drew to a close those involved with the project took time to reflect on the achievements and lessons learned. The project greatly contributed to raising awareness of the unique threatened species identified in the Mary River Threatened Aquatic Species Recovery Plan, and opened new channels of community engagement. Many new and positive relationships were forged among the 192 landholders engaged through this project. Additionally, the monitoring and evaluation component demonstrated considerable improvement in ecosystem structure and function as a direct result of project works.

Reef Trust Phase III, Grazing lands in the Mary River Catchment

The MRCCC is a Reef Alliance partner;

a consortium of groups headed by the Queensland Farmers Federation, tasked with delivery of the Reef Trust Phase III project across the entire Great Barrier Reef catchment. The project works with grazing landholders to adopt grazing land management practices that achieve Reef Trust outcomes in terms of water quality, nutrient and sediment losses to the reef. The Mary River is the southern-most of these reef catchments, with grazing being the largest single land use i.e. about 70% of the catchment area. In the Mary River catchment streambank erosion has been identified

as the largest contributor of sediment and nutrients to the southern reef. Consequently this Reef Trust Phase III project is primarily focused on practices to improve riparian zone management in the grazing landscape. The MRCCC project team and Graeme Elphinstone, provide graziers with extension support, technical advice and training to implement eligible on-

ground projects using best management practices within priority areas of the Mary River catchment. The priority sub-catchments targeted for the Reef Trust Phase III project are those that have been identified by the Queensland Government catchment model "Source" as the highest contributors of sediments to the southern reef.



Soil Health with Ann McKenzie (BMRG) at the March 2017 Grazing BMP workshop at Imbil

2017- continued

Find a Frog in February Citizen Science program - In 2017 the MRCCC embarked on this citizen science program to encourage the catchment community to be involved in collecting frog records from their local area. February would normally be a safe bet for finding fauna that enjoy moisture, heat and humidity, such as our frogs. So February was chosen to receive frog records under the banner of 'Find a Frog in February' (FFF).

The MRCCC was successful in obtaining funding from the Sunshine Coast, Noosa and Gympie Councils and the Burnett Mary Regional Group in order to cover the whole catchment as well as the Noosa and Burrum River systems and coastal catchments from Burrum Heads to Peregian. Delivery of this first-time citizen science program required much learning in order to reach as many people from the catchment as possible through modern



media vectors. The instructional video for how to survey for frogs, instruction flyer, record sheet and a myriad of extraneous information to help would-be frog surveyors was included on the MRCCC's FFF web page. Prior to and during February a series of media releases were sent to the main-stream media outlets, departmental staff, NRM groups, local newsletters, all schools and the MRCCC networks as well as regular Facebook posts to encourage participation. Year 1-7 students accessed a frog module on edStudio.

Despite the record-breaking, hot, dry February 389 frog records were received from:

- 22 species (out of 42 for the area) of which 3 are threatened
- 79 surveying participants
- 88 surveys at 68 locations

Seqwater – MRCCC Partnership - MRCCC and Seqwater have been informally working together for a number of years now including Seqwater having a position on the MRCCC General Committee and supporting the Gerry Cook Hatchery and the

Noosa Festival of Water. Seqwater is a very important partner because of the role they play in overseeing much of the water extraction and use in the catchment. In recent years they have increased their focus on how catchment management impacts on water quality. As a result, the MRCCC and Seqwater are now working together in a formal partnership which commenced early in 2017 and has potential to continue to 2021. The aim of this partnership is to improve water quality upstream of Seqwater's four offtakes in the Mary River catchment at Kenilworth, Mary River (Goomong), Lake Macdonald and Lake Borumba. Over the next five years this program has the potential to facilitate over \$1.3 million of onground work in the catchment.

Segwater's primary focus is the supply of safe drinking water, a new angle for the MRCCC compared to the various Reef Water Quality programs which are focussed on sediment and nutrients or the LTS and Restoring Riparian Resilience project, focussing on threatened species habitat. Segwater places the highest priority on reducing pathogens in the water, with sediment and nutrients having an important but lesser priority. This program provides new opportunities for the MRCCC to work with landholders operating dairies and to expand our projects beyond pasture management, riparian fencing, weed control and revegetation to include effluent management and nutrient management. We have access to dairy consultant, Dave Clarke, to assist us in providing the best possible support to the dairy operators.





The partnership is based on prioritisation of properties in terms of the potential to gain improvements in water quality upstream of the four off-takes. Criteria such as proximity to the offtake, intensity of land use and prior involvement with the MRCCC were used to identify the first suite of landholders for engagement on five dairies and one grazing property in this current financial year.

- Reef Trust phase II Gully Erosion
 Control project completed after
 3 years of implementation
 culminating in 38 gully
 remediation projects completed
- 20 Million Trees Goomboorian Koala corridor project completed with 12,000 koala food trees established in the corridor
- 40,000 Mary River cod fingerlings released in the catchment
- MRCCC and SEQWater negotiate relocation of the Mary River cod breeding program to an alternative location due to the temporary closure of the Gerry Cook Fish Hatchery
- Sandy Strait Research fund to encourage research on the interaction of the Mary River with the Great Sandy Strait
- Great Sandy Strait cruises with John Sinclair
- Mary River Cruise with Lindsay Titmarsh

Vale Rob Priebe – The MRCCC mourned the loss of Rob Priebe in 2018; Dairy sector representative, Deputy Chair of the MRCCC and one who was always looking at avenues to support the organisation. Rob's passion, enthusiasm, sense of humour and his poetic skills are missed by all.

Vale Guenter Kath – The passing of Guenter Kath was also lamented by the MRCCC in 2018. Guenter will always be remembered for being the first to see the value in bringing multiple stakeholders together to solve issues relating to natural resource management. The MRCCC owes its existence to Guenter, and those he inspired and encouraged to follow the path of integrated catchment management.

Gully Erosion Control Program - Reef Trust Phase II - The MRCCC Reef Trust gully erosion control project was due for completion in December 2018. The project area predominantly focused on the Western Mary catchments – Munna, Wide Bay, Widgee, Glastonbury, Myrtle, Tanyalba, Ooramera and Benarige Creek subcatchments where gully erosion is prevalent on sodic sub-soils. To broadly identify where sodic subsoils occurred in the Western Mary catchments (and

beyond) the CSIRO Atlas of Australian Soils
Landscape units Tb69 and Tb70 provide a strong indication of prevalence of gully erosion. Regional ecosystems (vegetation communities) containing Gum-topped box also showed a high prevalence of gully erosion. With this information, areas of



likely gully erosion were mapped and targeted for project works. In addition, significant gully erosion was occurring on properties with sodic subsoils outside this area. To date gully erosion issues were also identified in the Coondoo, Curra, Gutchy and Coonoongibber Creek sub-catchments. During the 3 years of the project 47 expressions of interest forms were returned to the MRCCC for gully erosion projects. Above: A gully on landscape unit Tb69 in the Mt Urah district south of Tiaro

Great Sandy Strait Research Fund - In 2018, the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation (FIDO), Greater Mary Association (GMA) and the MRCCC combined forces to create the Great Sandy Strait Research Fund. The fund was established with donations from each of these organisations totalling \$25,000. Great Sandy Strait cruises in late 2017 and early 2018 subsequently raised over \$7000 for the fund and a further \$12,500 was contributed from donations made to the Mary Catchment Public Fund. The purpose of the fund is to support research into the Great Sandy Strait to:

- Better understand where sediment and water (and any associated heavy metals) go in the lower Mary River and Great
 - Sandy Strait under a range of different flow levels.
- Create a more comprehensive baseline of current pollution levels
- Improve the precision of predictions regarding the impact of changes in the river/catchment as a result of projects like the proposed Colton Coal mine near Aldershot.

To date, one fully funded project, "Hydrodynamics and Materials Transport in the Mary River Estuary: An Initial Assessment" will be completed by researchers from the University of Queensland. The research will involve



Researchers and Consortium partners at their initial meeting at Lindsay Titmarsh's Tandoora property

undertaking a geomorphological assessment of the Great Sandy Strait and lower Mary estuary to better understand how the tides and river flows move water and sediment. Based on this assessment a hydrodynamic and water quality model will be developed. Sites that are a high priority for establishing a baseline will be identified and sampled.

Chairmen of the MRCCC		
Graeme Smith	1993-1996	
Peter Buchanan	1996-2000	
Jim Buchanan	2000-2003	
Harry Jamieson	2003-2008	
Paul Marshall	2008-2009	
Phil Moran	2009-2012	
lan Mackay	2012 - current	

MRCCC Waterwatch Coordinators	Year
Peter Oliver	1994 – 1996
Cameron Romano	1996 – 1997
Mark Crawley	1997 – 2000
Phil Trendell	2000 – 2002
Phil Berrill	2002 – 2004
Dale Watson	2004 – 2008
Steve Burgess	2006 – 2014
Jenny Whyte	2012 – 2017
Jess Dean	2017 – Current

Mary's Famous Five – The endangered Mary River turtle, the endangered Mary River cod, the vulnerable Queensland



Lungfish, the endangered Giant Barred frog and the freshwater mullet, thought to be disappearing in the Mary River catchment. Images courtesy of Gunther Schmida and Eva Ford

MRCCC Delegates 2019 Interest Sector Name **Title Beef** Mick Seeney Delegate **Grazing Lands Graeme Elphinstone** Delegate Coastcare Lindy Orwin Delegate **Dairying** Elke Watson Delegate **Dept of Environment and Science** Vacant **Dept of Agriculture and Fisheries Jason Keating** Delegate **Dept of Natural Resources** Vacant **Education** Steve Roach Delegate **Environment Lower** Mike Moller Delegate **Environment Upper** Narelle McCarthy Delegate Fishing Vacant Delegate **Forestry** Ernie Rider Delegate **Ross Smith General Community Lower** Delegate **General Community Middle** Ray Zerner Delegate **General Community Upper** Dave Sands Delegate **General Community Western Peter Hughes** Delegate **Gympie Field Naturalists** Berry Doak Delegate **Horticulture small crops** Bree Grima Delegate Horticulture tree crops Brice Kaddatz Delegate Irrigation Vacant **Landcare, Lower Mary** Carol Neilson Delegate **Landcare, Upper Mary** Phil Moran Delegate **Landholder/Project Participant** Jon Hannon Delegate **Landholder/Project Participant Bob Hood** Delegate **Land for Wildlife** Annette Bourke Secretary Margaret Thompson Life Member Treasurer Life Member Jim Buchanan Delegate **Fraser Coast Council** Cr James Hanson Delegate **Gympie Regional Council** Cr Darryl Dodt Delegate **Noosa Council** Cr Brian Stockwell Delegate **Sunshine Coast Council Denise Lindon** Delegate Segwater Vacant Delegate **Small Farms Steve Burgess** Delegate **Special Member** Nai Nai Bird Delegate Glenda Pickersgill **Special Member** Delegate Sugar Vacant Delegate **Special Member** Ian Mackay Chairman Waterwatch Garth Jacobson Delegate Waterwatch **Antoinette Augustinus** Delegate

2019 and beyond

MRCCC Staff

The MRCCC currently employs 8 full time and 3 part time staff. Throughout a long history of working with the national and international scientific community, the MRCCC has amassed considerable technical and scientific knowledge about the Mary Catchment and sustainable management of its natural resources.

The MRCCC staff members are suitably qualified and have extensive experience in the field of integrated catchment management. Collectively, the team has over 50 years' experience in the fields of sustainable land management, agricultural systems, riparian zone systems, water quality monitoring and data analysis, aquatic health assessment, subcatchment planning and threatened aquatic species monitoring.

Debbie Seal -Administration, financial management, marketing. Coordinator of the Noosa Festival of Water, support for the Gerry Cook Hatchery, Koala Action Group Gympie, Gympie STEM Hub and Cooloola Nature.

Brad Wedlock - B.App.Sc. (Natural Systems & Wildlife Management)

Specialist in grazing landscapes, sustainable grazing systems, fluvial geomorphology, riparian condition assessment and flora identification, water quality monitoring and data analysis.

Eva Ford – B.Sc. (Australian Environmental Studies)

Specialist in fauna and macroinvertebrate assessments and monitoring, water quality monitoring and data analysis, community-based citizen science and rivercare programs and monitoring programs.

Steve Burgess - B.Sc (Australian Environmental Studies) & Post Grad Maths & Science

Specialist in water quality monitoring and data analysis, hydrology, statistics and agricultural and water modelling. Highly experienced educator.

Kath Nash – B.Sc. (Hons) B.App.Sc (Conservation and Park Management)

Specialist in fire regimes and impacts on flora and fauna, threatened species habitat management, monitoring and evaluation, water quality monitoring and analysis, wetland ecological function, environmental project planning and implementation, community engagement.

Belinda Wedlock - B.App.Sc (Biology)

Significant experience in environmental project and program management, specializing in catchment and water resource planning. Experienced in field survey techniques, research and analysis.

Rebecca Watson - B.Sc. Hons Natural Sciences

Significant experience with project design, implementation and management, biocondition monitoring and evaluation, water quality monitoring and analysis, project auditing and environmental assessment, cultural heritage reporting.

Caitlin Mill – B.Env.Sc (Environmental Science)

Experienced with biocondition monitoring and reporting, water quality monitoring and data analysis, aquatic fauna surveying, GIS mapping, report writing

Jess Dean - B.Env.Sc (Environmental Science)

Experienced with water quality monitoring, coordinating Waterwatch volunteers, Waterwatch data analysis, calibration of Waterwatch equipment, frog surveying, aquatic macroinvertebrate assessment, GIS mapping, drone operation and educational activities with school children.

Sarah Grimish – B.Env.Hlth.Sc (Environmental Health Science)

Experienced with report writing, frog monitoring, BioCondition monitoring and Index of Stream Condition assessment frog monitoring, gully monitoring and data entry.

Current clients

- The Australian Government Department of Environment and Energy
- The Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads
- The Queensland Department of Environment and Science
- Seqwater
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Noosa Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- The Burnett Mary Regional Group for Natural Resource Management
- HQPlantations
- The Noosa, Barung, Gympie and Tiaro Landcare Groups

And in the future

By the year 2050, the community will be enjoying the benefits of sustainable agricultural, fishing and recreational activities flowing from a river system that has healthy natural forests on stable streambanks shading the length of the river and all its creeks, where pools, riffles and snags interplay, to create diverse habitat for a myriad of life forms.

The waterways, whose reflections are as clear as they were when the first explorer gazed upon them, will be as clean as has been recorded in living memory. Major linkages will exist to allow our special fish, turtle, frog and bird species to move freely between conservation reaches.

The flow of water and sediments through the rivers and creeks will sustain the physical and biological needs of the riverine system, as well as the agreed sustainable requirements of the community. The community will be able to see, understand and value the changes, be proud of their role in achieving them, and be committed to restoring the catchment for the next 50 years.

Mary River Conondale – Image courtesy of Todd Fauser



	Acronyms List
BCCA	Burnett Catchment Care Association
ВМР	Best Management Practice
BMRG	Burnett Mary Regional Group
CRP	Community Reference Panel
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DAF	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DEEDI	Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation
DEW	Federal Government Department of Environment and Water Resources
DEWHA	Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DNRM	Department of Natural Resources and Mines
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
DPIF	Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPBC	Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation
FFF	Find a Frog in February
FIDO	Fraser Island Defenders Organisation
FOKC	Friends of Kilcoy Creek
GDBLG	Gympie District Beef Liaison Group
GMA	Greater Mary Association
ICM	Integrated Catchment Management
LMCCG	Lake Macdonald Catchment Care Group
LTS	Living with Threatened Species
LWD	Large Woody Debris
LWRRDC	Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation
MRCCC	Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee
MPR	Mary Program of Rivercare
MRCPC	Mary River Catchment Planning Committee
NAPSWQ	National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
NFF	National Farmers Federation
NLP	National Landcare Program
NPI	Northern Pipeline Interconnector
NRM	Natural Resource Management
QDAFF	Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
QDO	Queensland Dairy Organisation
QPI&F	Queensland Primary Industries and Fisheries
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
SAMP	Soil Acidity Management Plan
SedNET	Model for predicting sediment source, load and nutrients
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
TAP	Technical Advisory Panel
ToR	Terms of Reference
VRRGS	Voluntary Riverbank Restoration Grant Scheme
WAMP	Water Allocation Management Plan
WBBROC	Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils
WRP	Water Resource Plan
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

