



Wheezer
the lungfish
says, "Save the
Mary River!"

Dam the Mary River? Save the Mary River!

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Save the Mary River Coordinating Group

Support and Information Centre, Kandanga Railway, Ph: 5488 4800

<http://www.savethemaryriver.com/> savethemaryriver@gmail.com

Riders answer call to Kandanga 1000

THE word has gone out – and riders from throughout the country have answered the call of the Kandanga 1000.

They will come from the border towns of New South Wales and the Channel country of central Queensland to lend their weight to the fight against the proposed Traveston Crossing dam on the Mary River.

Most will arrive on September 16, setting up camp in paddocks near the Kandanga Creek State School and enjoying a bushman's night of entertainment round the campfire.

Then at 9am sharp on September 17 they will mount up and ride a scenic circuit into the Kandanga township and back, filling its main street with horse flesh and country threads.

These are the grassroots people – horsemen and women – who will ride in support of saving the Mary Valley and its river.

The 1000 riders symbolise 1000 farms and the lives of 10,000 people directly affected as Premier Peter Beattie grabs at the solution of a mega-dam to save the south-east from the grip of a water crisis.

It's a solution fiercely opposed by many country and city residents of the south-east, and in the Mary Valley most prominently by the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group.

Group treasurer Lyndall Ensbey and husband Neville are among the organisers of the Kandanga 1000 and have been heartened by the response to the ride.

One volunteer travelled a round trip of 3000 kilometres over 11 days to get the message far and wide, delivering posters to 127 towns and 46 trail rider clubs.

He says that as far out as Bouldercomb west of Rockhampton, and then down the Brisbane Valley way through Esk and Toogoolawah, he never heard a good word about the mega-dam on the Mary River, or the State Government's water plans for the future.

This is not about fundraising, Lyndall is quick to clarify.

"We want to keep the focus on the campaign to fight this dam any way we can," she said.

"This fight is more important than anything else at the moment and the aim of the ride is to give the people of the Mary Valley a real lift, to keep the smiles on their faces and to show them they are not alone. When you have your seat in the saddle, you feel like you are actually doing something to stop this dam."

Lyndall and Neville stand to lose their 250 acres of prime "A" class grazing land, and believe the issue is about more than dams.

"It is about the Premier's attitude to the people in general – throughout Queensland voters are well aware that this is also designed to divert people from the mess of the health system, among other things."

The Sunday ride normally takes about 1 _ hours, but with 1000 riders that could stretch out to three hours, as the riders meander through the hills taking in scenery which would be lost forever should the Traveston Crossing dam proceed.

Cost is \$10/adult, \$5/child or \$20/family which includes camping, entertainment and the ride. You can book by calling Peter on 5484 3040, Brett on 5484 3532 or Neville on 5484 3697.

Follow the campaign against the dam on www.savethemaryriver.com

Caption:

SADDLED UP: Ashleigh Ensbey (left) and sisters Danielle and Alexis join their father Neville in preparation for the Kandanga 1000.

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Media Contacts: Kaili Parker-Price 5484 5338 Mob 0419 672947
Lyndall Ensbey 5484 3697 Mob 0427 167329