



# The Dambusters Bulletin

Important News from the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Inc.  
December 21 2009  
Victory Edition

## Traveston Crossing Dam gets final NO

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A huge thank-you to all those who were involved with saving the Mary River!

The Traveston Dam proposal was assessed by the Australian Government because it had the potential to impact on nationally listed threatened species, migratory species, the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar wetland, and the World Heritage values of Fraser Island.

Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett has made his final decision on the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal, determining that the impacts of the proposed dam on threatened species would be too great. Here are some important extracts from his press release.

“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,” Mr Garrett said.

“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.”

“Throughout the assessment process a range of measures were suggested to better protect the Mary River environment and the threatened species that rely upon it. I believe there are practical measures that should be imple-

mented to protect the species including rehabilitation of riparian corridors, improved cattle fencing around sensitive habitat, and finalisation of a recovery plan for the Australian lungfish. I believe that these are measures that should still be undertaken despite the proposal not proceeding.”

“I believe that it’s critical that both local and state government work together to tackle the threats to these species and secure their future. My department is currently examining the possibility of pursuing a regional recovery plan for the area.”

A big thank-you to all our committee members for organising the huge thank-you party on Saturday 12 December 2009 at the Kandanga Oval (where the first anti-dam rally was held) where we were joined by anyone who did anything to stop the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal.

# We've Won!!!!

“It is clear to me that the Traveston Dam cannot go ahead without unacceptable impacts on matters of national environmental significance.” - Peter Garrett

11/11/09



## WAYS TO PROTECT THE MARY RIVER FOREVER

The Save the Mary River Coordinating Group's objective has always been to prevent the damming of the Mary River at Traveston Crossing now and forever. We've achieved the now, our focus is now on the forever. This is the third time the Traveston Crossing Dam has been announced and we want to be sure that it never gets announced again.

The EPBC act recognizes the importance of management plans developed for Biosphere Reserves. Properly funded and implemented management plans for the existing Great Sandy and Noosa biosphere reserves would ensure a far more sustainable future for the Mary estuary and impacted waters. We look forward to working with Minister Garrett and his Department on any plan to develop a regional recovery plan for the unique species and ecosystem of the Mary River. It is only through involvement and consultation with the community that this plan will have the best on-ground outcomes.

We must get the proposed dam removed from state legislation including the Water Act where it is listed as a drought measure. The legislation which was used to justify the proposed dam, the Mary Basin Water Resource Plan must be revised. This plan is a farce, created to make the dam look feasible with a **strategic reserve** of 150,000ML/yr that has no scientific basis and not community endorsed – it doesn't protect the Mary River or the Mary Estuary.

There are many lessons to be

learnt from this Traveston debacle in particular the need for proper consultation and negotiation with communities over water use and supply. The 50-year draft SEQ Water Strategy is now open for comment. Here we are still seeing a high target of 230 L/p/day and the statement "options to make use of **strategic reserve** in the Mary Basin will be investigated, including an upgrade of Borumba Dam and water harvesting. These options will need to address the same issues that were raised in relation to the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam."

It would appear that there is still a threat of more interbasin transfer out of the Mary catchment (the Northern Pipeline Interconnector (NPI) stage 1 takes from Lake Baroon and the still to be federally approved NPI stage 2 would take from Lake McDonald and the Mary River at Coles Crossing). This is totally unfair as Moreton catchment has twice as much water that falls on that catchment as what they use. It needs to catch the water more efficiently and use it more wisely.

Closing date for submissions to the 50 year SEQ Water Strategy is 12th Feb 2010. Everyone is encouraged to provide feedback on the 50-year SEQ Water Strategy, and water-saving targets by: Calling the QWC feedback hotline: 1300 789 906, using the

web feedback form at [www.qwc.qld.gov.au](http://www.qwc.qld.gov.au) or emailing submissions to [qwconquiries@qwc.qld.gov.au](mailto:qwconquiries@qwc.qld.gov.au)

We need to send a clear message that **interbasin** transfer from the Mary catchment is not acceptable to our community or the health of our Mary River.



It is already over allocated and has low dissolved oxygen and elevated salinity levels about EPA guidelines

now during low flows (July-Nov months) and particularly during dry years. We need to urge all three regional councils in the Mary catchment to be educating, assisting and planning to be water wise.

In the face of climate change with predicted higher temperatures, more evaporation and lower flows in the Mary River combined with increasing population in our catchment, we need to be looking at every way to be more efficient in our water use in the home and agriculture, retrofitting tanks and water efficient appliances and ensuring any new housing developments/rural pursuit are capturing water where it falls not relying on taking more water from the river.

There has been a huge collection of information about what is special about the biodiversity in our area and we have a great opportunity for the community to be involved in the

rebuilding process, caring for the river and the environment.

I personally would like to see a healthier river within a decade, with rainforest establishing along the streambanks, shading the water and connecting with other remnant native vegetation higher up in the rural farming landscape of the Mary Valley.

However it will take lots of work and support to fence out stock, install off stream watering points for the stock to use, and control of weeds in a farming environment that increasingly is getting more difficult with rising costs and in the face of climate change. But one thing is for sure, there was a strong message from our members that revegetating along streambanks was important in protecting our special river critters.

The Traveston Crossing Dam proposal brought us together with unnecessary stress and uncertainty but out of it has risen a strong sense of the Mary river community, built wonderful friendships and networks and given us motivation to protect what is uniquely special here in the Mary River catchment.

I encourage you to renew your membership in the new year as there is much work still to do to make sure that another dam is not announced again and the Mary River runs healthy, runs free and is protected for future generations to enjoy.

Glenda Pickersgill, President Save the Mary River Coordinating Group. Mobile: 0411 443 589

### Comments from Readers

*Thank you all for your tireless campaigning.*

*Again, a huge thank you for your support in keeping the river flowing through the Valley and my parents property for which they have worked there whole life for and now wholeheartedly deserve to enjoy in their retirement. It has to be said, this was an illustration of relentless unity in the local community for which you can all be forever proud. Much Thanks again,*

*Barry & Trinity Hall  
London*



## ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY (President's Report continued)

There is a lot of uncertainty in the community at the moment and people want answers. There are so many different situations that people are in regarding buying back, not being able to buy back, changing water rights, leasing and impacted business. There is no-one truly looking at the social impact of this debacle and there is no doubt that there will be more social impact in May 2010 when previous landholders will indicate if they will buy back their land from QWI.

Unfortunately certainty appears a little way off. As far as we can tell, the Queensland Government is still working out what they will do. For ex-

ample, there is no certainty about what support there will be to rebuild the community or protection to the river. We are doing our best to create an opportunity for the Mary Valley communities to influence this process.

There's a lot of healing still to happen but this community has shown itself to be both resilient and committed, and is more than eager to be involved in the way ahead. Feedback from our members indicate our community needs a say in the future vision for the Mary Valley and that there are lots of good ideas out there that people would like the opportunity to contribute to in moving forward.

The Save the Mary River Coordinating Group continues to do its utmost to represent its members and to fight for a healthy Mary River, and vibrant Mary Valley communities supported by continuation of farming and food production in the region.

The last few weeks have on one hand have been a very busy time working with other groups to get the structures in place to foster a positive way forward for the Mary Valley and to involve the community.

The Save the Mary River Coordinating Group and the Greater Mary Association are involved in the Mary Valley Renewal team and are focused

on making sure that the community voice is heard and acted on by the Queensland Government. After what the community has been through over the last three and a half years, the community deserves to have a voice in our future vision for the Mary Valley.

The community needs to be involved in identifying urgent matters for consideration, longer term matters, concerns and changes needing to occur in the future for the best outcomes for the Mary valley and the Mary Catchment. This is planned for the New Year 2010.



Left: celebrations at Kandanga Oval on 12 December.

The Queensland Government's Community Futures Taskforce are compiling factsheets in response to questions from the community after the 'No Dam' decision – please contact 1800 133 258

### Who can help in a mental health crisis?

Lifeline 13 11 14 (national)  
Lifeline Imbil 5488 6439  
MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78  
Suicide Call Back Service (national) 1300 659 467  
Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800  
Police, Ambulance 000



### Who can help with mental health issues?

FOCUS (Gympie) 1300 880 574  
Lifeline Gympie 5480 3400  
Gympie Hospital 5489 8444  
Relationships Australia 1300 364 277  
Rural and Remote Mental Health 13 14 65  
Rural Women's Counselling Service 1800 182 098  
Women's Information Service .1800 188 158



Diet and Mark from Noosa Community Radio, FM 101.3, covered the celebrations at Kandanga on 12 December for the station. You can hear it again by surfing to [www.noosacommunityradio.org/relaton-and-worries-in-the-mary-valley/](http://www.noosacommunityradio.org/relaton-and-worries-in-the-mary-valley/)

### Future planning for the Mary Valley:

A Renewal Team with representatives from Save The Mary River Coordinating Group, the Greater Mary Association, the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, Mary Valley Inc, Gympie Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council and a number of other groups will be organizing public meetings in the new year at local halls to encourage people to have say about the future of the Mary Valley.

The Renewal Team is not making decisions on the future of the valley. **Its role is working to ensure that MARY VALLEY PEOPLE HAVE A PROPER SAY IN THE MARY VALLEY'S FUTURE.** The team is there to ensure that the way forward will be community driven, independently & professionally managed with a voice that will be heard by Local, State and Federal Government. Here are three questions to get you thinking...

1. What are urgent issues for you and your family living in the Mary Valley in the next 6 months?
2. What are changes that you would like to see happen in the Mary Valley over the next 10 -20 years?
3. What activities would you like to see the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group involved with in the future?

## Prayers for Mary nurture community spirit in advance of announcement

**Just days before the heavenly announcement, from Peter Garrett, an ecumenical church service brought over 160 campaigners together in prayer to save the Mary.**

Father Mark from the Noosa Catholic Parish has been so moved regarding the plight of the people in the Mary Valley that he offered St Patrick's Catholic Church in Pomona for an ecumenical service. Dr Eve Fesl, aboriginal elder whose mother was born on the banks of the Mary River, gave a traditional welcome to country, and began the service with song. The congregation then joined in singing 'The Great Southland'.

Father Mark's opening prayer reminded us of God's calling to protect our natural environment and asked God to help us cooperate with others in a spirit of love and fellowship. Genesis 1:20-30 was beautifully read by Kandanga resident, Patricia Gabbana, one of the Mary Valley Catholic residents who will be forced to sell their land if the dam is given the green light this week by Environment Minister Peter Garrett. The Gabbana's fertile land has sup-

plied fruit and vegetables to Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast for over 24 years. The very imminent dam decision was weighing heavily on the minds and hearts of many of the people attending this service. The Uniting Church minister, Ainslie Bos, read the Responses. Reflections of World Traditions were shared in the ecumenical service. Two acapella choirs, Cooloola Voices and Pomona Community Choir joined together with 30 strong voices singing "Down to the River to Pray" and "Go Tell it on the Mountain to let the river flow!"

A stirring reflection was given by Reverend Iain Watt, Uniting Church Minister who has offered support to the Valley residents for the last three and a half years. Rev. Watt spoke of the social injustices done to many residents in the Valley, describing their strong feelings of powerlessness and loss of hope. He followed this moving reflection with prayers for healing and peace, praying for those deeply affected to date. The General Intercessions prayed for the country's leaders in Canberra, that that make informed decisions, and that the Mary River will be left to run unheeded to the Great Sandy Strait. The service concluded with the

Lord's Prayer followed by the final hymn "Peace in the Valley".

As folk mingled outside the church, local duo Linda and Mark entertained the crowd with spirited music. A sausage sizzle and afternoon tea served by the St Patrick's community gave time to share stories and re-connect some of the community that has been torn apart by the dam decision. A busy stall provided further information for those wishing to support the Save the Mary Campaign. God's constant love for us all was certainly evident and felt by many who gathered on this occasion.

Thoughts were expressed such as "this style of service could be the way forwards in the future- all faiths putting aside differences to care for the planet."

Father Mark and Rev Iain, in conjunction with Adele and Adrienne from Save the Mary River Group are willing to assist other Church Communities to use the prayer service for the Mary River, to pray for the day that all the trouble and sorrow will pass, and there will be "Peace in the Valley" again.

- adapted from Save the Mary Media Release

### Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Annual General Meeting

At the AGM on 17 December, the following were all re-elected to the executive of STMRCG:

Glenda Pickersgill (President)  
David Sims (Vice-President)  
David Kreutz (Secretary)  
Lyndall Ensbey (Treasurer)

David Kreutz called on all members to renew their memberships and encouraged new members to join. A DVD containing the slide show presentation from recent celebrations will be included with 2010 membership.

The AGM also decided that the Save the Mary Info Centre will continue to operate on a reduced scale, opening 10am-4pm Wednesdays and Sundays. Volunteers still required.

### LATE NEWS

**Messages** of support and congratulations are flooding in from all over the world. If you've written and not heard back...it's going to take us a while to work through them all!

**Remember** to write to Peter Garrett thanking him for his decision to save the Mary.



### Contacts List

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Web: [www.savethemaryriver.com](http://www.savethemaryriver.com)  
Forum: [www.travestonswamp.info/forum/](http://www.travestonswamp.info/forum/)

Save the Mary Info Centre  
Open 10am-4pm Wednesdays & Sundays  
Visit: Kandanga Railway Station, Kandanga. Phone: (07) 5488 4800

### Greater Mary Association (GMA)

email: [greatermary@gmail.com](mailto:greatermary@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.ourgreatsandy.com/](http://www.ourgreatsandy.com/)

### Save the Mary River Brisbane Group

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