



The Dambusters



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Newsletter of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group September 2008

From the Vice-President

A big thank you to all who were involved with the recent GetUp torch events. What a fantastic success and nationwide publicity for our campaign to Save the Mary. If you missed this opportunity to visit the proposed dam wall site, the beautiful Mary River, the Great Sandy Strait and the past mistakes of Paradise Dam, we have a number of videos and photo albums that are up on the website. The GetUp Climate Torch reaches Parliament House in Canberra on the 12th October & we'll be there to deliver our messages, "Extinction is Forever... Save the Mary River" and "Save the Great Sandy Strait" to Kevin Rudd and Peter Garrett.

At last we have an opportunity to view the supplementary EIS through the efforts of our Member for Gympie, David Gibson. It is now downloadable from the Parliamentary website or order your free CD, a link is available from our website www.savethemaryriver.com. How could Premier Bligh not consider the people affected by the proposal and especially the downstream Fraser Coast Council as "relevant" stakeholders?

The supplementary EIS is similarly full of assurances that the dam will meet supply demand and maintain environmental flows, whilst admitting that the climate is changing fast. It is still trying to convince the public using average statistics, rather than acknowledging that the Mary River is over-allocated already in the dry months of the years with little fresh water reaching the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Wetlands during these times. It is the length of these dry times and how frequently they occur that will determine if an endangered species will survive or be pushed to extinction. The supplementary EIS acknowledges how little they know. "We do not have basic population and life history information for most species, and this is certainly the case for the suite of threatened species recorded from the study area."

Australia has ratified the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) which includes a commitment to promote the recovery of threatened species. The Mary River has numerous threatened species on national and international registers (IUCN Red List) including local and regional endemics. A large dam in the middle of this critical habitat area WILL NOT contribute to the recovery of these species, irrespective of the 'spin' created by the proponents of the dam and their largely untried mitigation measures.

It is crucial that the Federal Govt. are not fooled by the spin and actually provide a thorough independent and realistic assessment in respect of the EPBC Act and the Matters of National Environmental Significance. By definition, these species are already under severe population depletion/extinction pressure and Australia has committed through ratifying the

CBD to promoting their recovery. The EIS does not provide us with confidence that this can be achieved. To the contrary, the deliberate destruction of critical habitat and major modifications to flow regime, among numerous other impacts, will, on the balance of evidence, result in major declines of the threatened species, directly contrary to Australia's national and international obligations.

The best indication of the reality is to examine the situation at Paradise Dam, the last major dam constructed by the QLD Govt. and reemploying many in the proposed dam on the Mary. Our trip to Paradise showed us a downstream fishlock that has never worked since construction because it can only operate when the dam gets to 62m RL and an entrance blocked with the aquatic weed, *Salvinia*. It has hovered just below that level for the last month, where inflows of 50ML per day are being lost to evaporation. Sunwater, the operator of the dam, virtually stopped all flows downstream in the last month, except, apparently, during the GetUp Torch relay weekend so that the upstream fishlift could be operated a few times!

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A QWIPL employee took a well earned break from disrupting preparations for the Climate Torch at Travie Crossing Bridge, to snap a few photos of the 500 people who turned up for the event.

Read all about the GetUp! Climate Torch Relay weekend page 4—5.

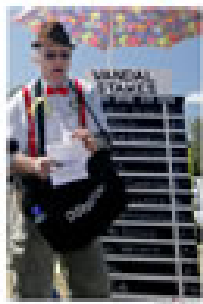
Contact us on: www.savethemaryriver.com

Or phone: (07) 5488 4800

Mail: Postal: c/o Post Office KANDANGA Q 4570

Email: savethemaryriver@gmail.com

Or visit at the Info Centre, Kandanga Railway Stn, Kandanga.
Open 7 days.



The Vandal Stakes scheduled for Travie Xing

A handicap race for all comers over hurdles on a sandy track with the obligatory water jump over 1400 metres distance. This race is scheduled to run in 2008 under the "orsepiss" of QWIPL.

Places your bets.

Vandal name	Aligned with other vandals	Environmental policy	Send your letter to:
Leighton Contractors	SEQure Water: Parsons Brinckerhoff or PB and Halcrow	"We are committed to continuing and strengthening our focus on safety, health, environment and the community. Corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability issues are crucial to protecting the longevity of our company and the environment for future generations."	Peter McMorrow Leighton Contractors Engineering and Infrastructure Level 3 143 Coronation Driver Milton QLD 4067
Thiess	Queensland Water Alliance: URS and SKM	"We are committed to sustainable development throughout our diverse operations which cover a wide range of industry sectors. Continual improvement in environmental performance will be achieved by setting objectives, measuring progress and communicating results. Including: Strive to conserve resources, reduce waste and eliminate or minimise adverse environmental effects and risks that may be associated with our services and	David Saxelby Thiess 179 Grey St South Brisbane QLD 4101
Boulderstone Hornibrook	RiverFirst: Razel, McConnell Dowell, Connell Wagner, Mott MacDonald and Boral	".. environmental and community issues as integral elements of our business. We are committed to best practice environmental management in all aspects of our operations. This matches our 'here-to-stay' business objectives and our long-term vision for the protection, management and sustainable utilisation of the environment. We also seek to be a responsible and respected corporate member of the communities within which we work. Including: undertake activities in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development".	Rick Turchini Boulderstone Hornibrook Level 3 44 Musk Ave Kelvin Grove QLD 4059

Rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally, rally

On Friday 26th September 2008, at 10am, a protest has been arranged outside the Boulderstone Hornibrook offices in Reef St, Gympie.

We hope to create a media opportunity to highlight the inappropriate actions of these companies if they pursue this venture.

Join this protest. Please contact Kent Hutton by Wednesday 24th September, 5482 8830 or kent.hutton@bigpond.com.

Bring your sign, wear yellow and black, bring your voice, bring a mate.



The River, the Bay and the Strait:

A public forum on the downstream impact of the proposed Traveston Crossing dam

Its not a done deal!!! Forget the Queensland Government spindoctors & have your say. Join us in a forum and voice your opinion or listen to a panel of experts describe the impacts to THE MARY, THE BAY and THE GREAT SANDY STRAIT.

5 October 2008, 9:00 am to 5:00pm

Speakers include Max Winders, Associate Professor Joachim Ribbe, Roger Currie, Steve Burgess, Gordon Cottle and Joe McLeod.

The event will close with a Discussion Panel of all presenters and creation of a statement to Peter Garrett.

Presented by the
Greater Mary Association Inc



Hervey Boat Club, Boat Harbour, Urangan

A light morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided

Cost \$10/\$5 concession

Registration 9-9:30am

RSVP Essential for catering purposes: Please call Carol on 4129 5979 or Tanzi on 0405848375 or email greater-mary@gmail.com to RSVP before September 31

He's doin' it again!

He'll accept 'mad bugger' as a compliment. But what we really mean is 'Thanks Steve'.

Steve Posselt has given more to this campaign than many others living outside the area. He kayaked the length of the Mary, established the Save the Mary Brisbane Group, has done countless interviews with the media talking against the proposed TCD and now he's about to launch into another incredible effort: a trip to Sydney from Brisbane along the coast—in his kayak.

He'll be carrying a sack full of letters to deliver to Peter Garrett at the Sydney Opera House.

SO MAKE SURE YOUR LETTER'S IN THE SACK.

Go down to the Info centre and sign letters to Rudd, Wong, Garratt and Albanese. Or go online to www.savethemaryriver.com where you can sign the letters electronically. It really only takes a tick, and it doesn't matter how many you've already signed. Of course better still is something you've taken the time to write. If its in hand writing they have to send you a reply.

And see Steve off at the West End boat ramp on Saturday 4th October—11am Riverside Drive, between Jane and Boundary Streets.



Steve's Itinerary

Saturday 4th Oct
Tuesday 7th Oct
Thursday 9th Oct
Friday 10th Oct
Saturday 11th Oct
Sunday 12th Oct
Monday 13th Oct
Wednesday 15th Oct
Friday 17th Oct
Saturday 18th Oct
Monday 19th Oct
Wednesday 22nd Oct

Depart West End boat ramp.
Gold Coast
Byron Bay
Ballina
Evans Head
Yamba
Minnie Water
Coffs Harbour
Nambucca Heads
South West Rocks
Port Macquarie
Forster. Walk between Pacific Palms and Myall Lakes.
Newcastle
Gosford
Sydney Opera House

Sunday 26th Oct
Wednesday 29th Oct
Saturday 1st November

The crowds came & they kept on coming! to the GetUP! Climate Torch Mary River Relay

An editor of a national magazine commenting on the success of environmental campaigns said recently "People support a campaign that looks like it's going places and can win and shy away from campaigns that have the smell of death!"

Well if the popularity of the recent GetUp! Climate Torch Mary River Relay is any indication – this campaign is very much alive! Over 1200 people touched the GetUp Climate Torch over the weekend of the 5 – 7 September, in a growing wave of outspoken voices concerned about the impact of building a dam on the Mary River.

Sam McLean, the National Coordinator of the Climate Torch relay is so impressed by the success of the grassroots campaign to Save the Mary, he flew up from Sydney to be with the torch as it was welcomed to the river at Crystal Waters on Friday night to when it was ceremonially farewelled on Sunday night.

Speaking at the Welcoming Ceremony at Crystal Waters, Sam explained to the crowd the symbolism behind the Climate Torch.

"The Torch symbolises what we need as a nation to combat Climate Change. Wind and solar generate power for the on-board computer, the lemon works as a battery. High school science and innovation. A hand crank represents the people power that will stop this dam."

Hearing from the President of the Save the Mary group Kevin Ingersole, the group's chief scientist Steve Burgess and Steve Posselt of Kayak4Earth, the crowd were told of the findings of two years of research and what we're likely to see happen if this dam is ever built. A local produce feast and presentation from Morag Gamble of Seed International further highlighted the potential of the region to become a crucial food bowl - a much saner alternative than flooding 76 square kilometres of some of Australia's most fertile farmland. And at 8pm the Torch left Crystal Waters run through the Conondale Valley, over 60km through the night by a team of dedicated and determined torch bearers to save our Mary. After a brief spell at Kenilworth, the torch met with local state member of Parliament and early riser, Peter Wellington MP, who carried it from Kenilworth to Imbil.

People of all ages signed up to carry the torch under their own or their animal's steam from Imbil to Traveston Crossing. Walkers, joggers and cyclists on renewably charged electric bikes carried the torch.

Gwena the horse was unaware of the fuss being made of her cart's passengers when the Senator and Leader of the Greens Dr Bob Brown, alighted the carriage to be driven to the next leg of the relay – a stint on the river with kayaker Steve Posselt.

On the river, hundreds watched on from the Traveston Crossing Bridge to watch Senator Brown come down the river. Cheers for the Mary as Bob, holding the torch, triumphantly broke down a symbolic wall and let the river run free.

A human chain of over 500 people, two-thirds from outside the Valley, linked together with the Mary River Scarf, knitted by the Mary Valley community, and passed along the Climate Torch. Special guests David Gibson MP, Cr Julie Walker, Jerry Colbey-Williams, ABC, Sam McLean from GetUp and Dr Eve Fesl, Gubbi Gubbi Elder addressed the crowd, inspiring, entertaining, informing and building on the arousing and motivational speech by Bob Brown.

With spirits souring, the torch led a convoy of bus and cars north west to the Paradise dam on the Burnett River. Several features about the Paradise dam alarm Mary River campaigners.



collecting the torch



running with the torch



in a horse-drawn cart



passing the torch along the human chain

A weekend with a few simple messages



From the Source to the Sea

The Paradise dam was an approved action by the Environment Minister under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (1999) (EPBC Act) but with conditions attached to ensure the survival of the endangered species including the Australian Lungfish. Yet the Fish Lift and Passage, audited this year by the Federal Dept. for the Environment, have failed to meet the conditions of EPBC approval for the dam.

New research recognises dams as a major contributor of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The EPBC Act does not recognise greenhouse gas emissions and these cannot be taken into account when Traveston Crossing is assessed by the Federal Minister for the Environment, Mr Peter Garratt in a decision roughly expected before Christmas this year.

The Institute of Sustainable Futures estimates the Traveston Crossing dam alone may emit up to 270,000 tonnes of greenhouse gasses per year from the surface of the dam plus another 140,000 tonnes per year from electricity used to pump the water. Large water storage dams produce about ten times more methane, which is a very potent greenhouse gas, than natural lakes.

So 'Camp Paradise' was an evening of good food, expert presentations and entertainment with Connie Neilsen a young performer who grew up on a sugar farm on the river. Connie won first place at the 2008 Tamworth Amateur Song Writers Association competition with her single *Pen in his hand* a song representing the impact of the dam announcement on Mary River farmers. What a voice!

And to the grand finale: We lit up the dam wall in a blaze of laser light with the words 'Save the Mary River' to a cheering crowd of onlookers.

That night, as 'Camp Paradise' slept soundly by the dam wall that would never look the same again, at the South Head of the Mary River another extraordinary action was about to begin.

Lindsay 'Butch' Titmarsh was taking the first steps of his Mary Mud Marathon at 4.30am. Can a person run all day through salt water, mangrove thickets, mud, creek crossings, bushtracks, gravel roads and bitumen highways from the South Head of the Mary to the Northern Head of the Mary?

By mid Sunday morning the Climate torch was back on the Mary River touring the Great Sandy Strait. It arrived by boat to Urangan Pier at 2pm. Another community relay ran the torch along the beach to the Hervey Bay crowd. A Welcome to Country by the Butchulla people, the traditional owners of the lower Mary and the Wetlands we now recognise as the Great Sandy Strait, captivated the swelling crowds. The Butchulla people have been excluded from all discussions and negotiations with the State Government despite their cultural heritage and continuous connection to the land.

At 3pm the crowd was linked together using the Mary River Scarf, to form a colourful and inspiring giant human sign on the beach at Hervey Bay - 'Save Sandy Strait'. Meanwhile, down at nearby Black Swamp Creek, Lindsay 'Butch' Titmarsh is well over half way in his run from the South to North of the Mary River's heads. He has recovered from heat stress, strong calf muscle pain, a lifting toe nail and gravel in his shoe, and is averaging 5.4 km per hour.

As the sun set, Butch has turned into River Heads Road and, after a day of cross country marathon, and at age 60, he carries the Climate Torch. Lindsay paces ever faster towards his destination. Joined by over 30 supporters he averaged 6.4km per hour despite the hills in that last hour until his sore feet touch the water at the North River Heads (north) boat ramp, to complete the river circuit.

The weekend of 5 - 7th September will stand out as a high point in our campaign to save this glorious river which 1000's of us are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to preserve.



Above: South and North Mary River heads; Right: putting the mud into Mary Mud Marathon; and below the 81km circuit he ran.



Can we make it any clearer?



Above: the Butchulla dances; and below Lindsay holding the Torch



Save The Mary River Brisbane Group now in overdrive!

Here in Brisbane, our committed and enthusiastic committee has established working groups as part of a strategy to spread the NO DAM message to all Brisbane residents. We organised a busload of city residents to support the rally and torch event at Traveston on 6 September, and our Paul B produced a great YouTube video of the day's events for promotional purposes.

We've issued two media statements, now have a weekly presence in public spaces in the city, the suburbs and Uni campuses, and we were the focus of the GetUp torch event held here at Roma Street on 13 September.

We had a very successful stall at the City Farm's Harvest festival on 14 Sept. with scores of locals signing letters to federal Minister Peter Garrett and promising to bring their friends into our campaign effort.

A developing strategy is to make contact with several local federal MPs, inform them of the issues and lobby them to encourage Minister Garrett to decline to grant approval for the dam under the EPBC Act.

David White
Secretary of STMR Brisbane



Vice-President Report cont. from page 1

The section on alternatives are equally disappointing. There is no focus on how efficiently the demand management incentives have been taken up and how this could be ramped up to catch water where it falls and use it more wisely. Work summarized by the Urban Water Security Research Alliance shows that the rain that falls on Brisbane is far greater than the total water demand, yet only a very small amount of it is captured. Considering that this is a resource which is available right where it is needed, without needing to be pumped long distances, it presents an enormous opportunity. An opportunity saving of about 800,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year according to the Institute of Sustainable Futures. What is sadly lacking in the comparison between the proposed dam and a suitable desalination plant is comprehensive financial modelling which includes a clear description of and basis for all major cost and revenue assumptions with levels of confidence and degrees of accuracy clearly defined.

From a social aspect, the risk of flooding to the towns of Kandanga, Imbil and Kentilworth which are upstream and within the height of the dam wall is still not being considered should the flood gates fail similar to what recently happened at Lenthalls dam. Nor that there will be impacts on downstream communities from reducing the flows in the river and piping over five times more water out of the Mary River catchment than currently occurs (thats not even allowing for the loss from evaporation). Flood mitigation for Gympie is being promoted with no mention of the increased damages due to the flooding being longer (in the case of the 1999 flood it would have been twice as long the flood waters would have been up).

Looking forward ...we have Steve Posselt, our cross country kayaker who plans to take to the water and this time to raise awareness down the Eastern Coast, by paddle from Brisbane to Sydney to take a sack full of our letters to Peter Garrett at his electorate office. Hope you can make it to his send off on the 4th Oct 11am at West End boat ramp in Brisbane and he is still looking for more support crew. What a truly incredible dedication to the cause to save the Mary.

Convincing our representatives will win this fight... Keep up the talking and writing to politicians, both state and federal to let them know you care about what is happening here.

G.E. Pichergill

<p>The Save the Mary the River website has great gift ideas.</p>	<p>NO DAM merchandise - now for sale online!</p> <p>click here to enter.</p>  <p>activism in shopping</p>	<p>And you can purchase and pay online!</p>
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TO DO

- Check out the **NEW** Letter Generator on savethemaryriver.com
- Use it to send **NO DAM** letters to Rudd, Garrett, Wong & Bligh