



The Dambusters



Newsletter of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group November 2008

From the President

The Queensland Government is still struggling with this dam proposal!

Remember when Anna Bligh announced the release of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) back in October 2007? She told us all it was a truly magnificent piece of work that had involved a large team of experts beavering away for over a year and everyone interested in the proposal should read it – all 1600 pages of it! Well, a lot of people did and guess what? It wasn't a great piece of technical work at all – it was a document designed to "accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative" as the old song goes. Following an unprecedented number of critical public responses they had another go at it and subsequently produced a Supplementary EIS in August 2008 but this one wasn't supposed to be made available for public comment.

Fortunately, there are many decent professionals in the public service that are horrified at the potential consequences of the proposed dam and along the way to the production of the final document several versions 'fell off the back of a truck' and so became available for critical review. We understand that the document made its way to Canberra during September but without the required "Assessment Report" from the Queensland Government. This report is a critically important part of the process and basically says

to the Federal Government that it the EIS has been competently reviewed and that the Queensland Government believes that the proposal should be approved.

The bottom line is however that at this point in time the Queensland Government has not submitted its recommendation to the Federal Government that they approve the project!

How does the Supplementary EIS look?

If the relatively few thinking people that supported the idea of the dam were disappointed with the original EIS they will be even more disappointed with the Supplementary. There are some fundamental weaknesses in this document and we intend to exploit them in ongoing discussions with the Fed Gov department responsible for assessing the proposal and making recommendations to Minister Garrett. What we are not planning on doing is providing that information to the Queensland Government so they can turn their spin doctors loose and create even more advertising using taxpayers dollars to tell us all what a great proposal the dam idea is!

Cont. p 4.



Steve Posselt wins Minister's admiration... and will it make a difference? You bet it did.

It was a windy day, with grey clouds looming in the distance. We hoped that the rain would stay away until after 1pm when Steve Posselt was due to meet Peter Garrett. Steve positioned himself off a small island just out from the Opera House so that he could time his arrival perfectly... read more page 3.

In this Issue...

**Love, Mary Book launch
You're invitation to attend
page 2**

**Climate Torch in Canberra:
Save Mary campaign features
page 2**

**Vic hits the Murray-Darling
with unmissable No Dam
message page 3**

Your Invitation to attend the launch of



'Love, Mary' tells the remarkable story of the Mary River, one of the last remaining rivers still flowing relatively freely in south-east Queensland. With a focus on the Mary River's priceless environmental heritage alongside the value of its human communities, 'Love, Mary' gathers stories of this river's life-giving journey from the hinterland to the sea.

This book is a message of urgency: we need to stand together to save this valuable river, which would be destroyed by the proposed dam on its floodplain. Filled with stunning images along with real stories, powerful facts, quotes, cartoons, poetry and more, 'Love, Mary' serves as a vibrant 'call to arms', compelling people across the country to join with us to stop the destructive dam which has been proposed by the Queensland government.

All the material in this book has been donated for the love of Mary, including photographs, editorial, artwork and design. Printing has been funded by sponsorship, and the book is supported by Save the Mary River Coordinating Group.

Join with MP David Gibson, MP Ronan Lee and MC Jerry Colby-Williams

When: Thursday 4 December, 2008

Where: Avid Reader Bookshop, 193 Boundary Street West End

Time: 6 for 6.30pm

With a catered selection of fresh produce and wine from the Mary Valley.

We hit Canberra—and made a dint

A delegation from the Save the Mary River campaign went to Canberra recently for the final leg of the GetUp Climate Torch relay.. it was a great event to be part of and Lindsay Titmarsh had the honour of running the torch up to Parliament House.

While in Canberra we were also able to meet with some politicians from a number of political parties and the Federal assessors in the Department of Environment, Arts and Heritage. We gave them updates about our concerns of the Supplementary EIS and new research findings about downstream impact concerns from Greater Mary Association who has recently held a Research Forum at Hervey Bay.

Advice from Canberra is that it is very important that we make the Federal Backbenchers aware of our concerns and ask them to speak to Peter Garrett about these concerns relating to Traveston Crossing Dam proposal.

Glenda Pickersgill

Right: Lindsay Titmarsh sole torch bearer at the finale of the GetUp National Climate Torch Relay.



Left: Glenda, Tanzi, Lindsay & Anne there to provide info to hundreds at the Canberra rally.

Keep up the pressure on...

The Hon. Peter Garrett
Minister for the Environment,
Heritage and the Arts
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Peter.Garrett.MP@aph.gov.au

The Hon. Senator Penny Wong
Minister for Climate Change & Water
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
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*... because they're
definitely listening.*

Vic takes to the road with NO DAM message

'No Dam' body artist, Victoria Pullen, joined kayaker Steve Posselt and in Sydney when they met Mr Garrett to deliver 1000s of letters opposing the dam.

Vic is famous for her 'No Dam' body art. Her car, painted especially for the trip, has attracted widespread attention.

"I leave a stash of info on the windscreen, and people just come a take it", she said.

Ever resourceful, Vic took advantage of the media scrum on the streets of Melbourne in the lead up to the Cup. You may have seen her and her "Don't Murray the Mary" t-shirt on Channel 9's Today Show.

"I drove over the mountains to the source of the Murray. Lake Jindabyne and the Hume Weir are so low. Even after the snow's melted. You gotta wonder what it's like further down stream."



Steve's Sydney arrival

Peter Garrett arrived at the Opera House around 1pm and stood around chatting with a large number of us as we waited for Steve to paddle in. The Minister was friendly and relaxed and appeared happy to be there. As he held our life size lungfish in his arms briefly Mr Garrett explained to some of the people standing around him how ancient this species is.

Steve paddled into the wharf and was greeted by waving banners, Save the Mary signs and "No Dam" chants. He wheeled his kayak to where the minister was waiting and unloaded over 3000 letters into a giant sack and handed the sack to the Minister. They shook hands and Mr Garrett told Steve how he appreciated the amazing feat Steve had undertaken and how he will take his decision very seriously. Steve pointed out that as a water engineer he regards this decision by the Qld Gov't to be a bad decision and if the dam were to proceed and the lungfish sent to extinction it would be an international embarrassment for Australia.

The Minister then walked away with the heavy sack of letters on his back, striking an image that had what we hope is a fortuitous resemblance to Santa toting his Santa sack full of good news! For Steve's impressions of the meeting go to http://www.kayak4earth.com/brisbane%5Fsydney/trip_log/arrival.html.

(Cont. p 4.)

Right: Some of Steve's supporters in Sydney members of the Greater Mary Association, the Save the Mary River Brisbane Group, Save the Mary Coordinating Group and the Institute of Sustainable Futures.

From the Brisbane Group

We were busy in September planning and organizing Steve Posselt's October 4 farewell event in Brisbane at the start of his epic voyage to Sydney. We were joined on the day by the Brisbane Greens and a busload of Mary River locals, and Steve was accompanied down the river by a flotilla of local watercraft.

Here's a view of the signed letters for Peter Garrett being placed in the kayak as Steve gets ready to depart, while the lungfish looks on.



We accompanied Steve on his trip through the Gold Coast on October 7, getting more letters signed and helping Steve with media interviews. We also advised the media and local environment groups of Steve's pending arrival in all of the towns, villages and cities that he visited on his way down the NSW coast.

On September 14 we were able to spend 30 minutes lobbying the State Water and Sustainability Ministers, as well as the Deputy Premier at a community Cabinet meeting at Belmont. We have also visited Ronan Lee, the State member who resigned from the ALP and joined the Greens because of the Government's poor environment policies, to seek his practical support for the Brisbane Group.

The Group continued with a busy schedule of public information stalls in the city, at several campuses and at weekend markets. We've been getting letters signed, distributing campaign literature and selling STMR merchandise. We attended the Climate Change events held during the last week of September, and we'll be participating in next week's Walk Against Warming.

David White



President's Report (from p.1)

What happens next?

According to statements from both Ms Bligh and Mr Garrett, it is unlikely that the Assessment report will be sent to Canberra much before Xmas. Mr Garrett has also indicated that his decision is unlikely before next April. In the meantime, he has signalled that although there is no formal process for public comment on the Supplementary EIS and/or Assessment Report, he will receive and consider relevant submissions from the public before making his decision. Looks like we are in for a busy Xmas and New Year folks! There is no way we will back off this close to the finish line. The feeling within our group at this time is that the Queensland Government has not demonstrated that their plan can overcome the many hurdles that Federal Environment legislation requires and that based on the decision making process and execution elaborated by Mr Garrett, the project will not be approved.

In case this is the last *Dambusters* Newsletter for 2008...

Many thanks to the scores of concerned professionals that freely provide us with technical help, and to our membership and supporters for your magnificent contributions in 2008. We are nearly there, so hang in for the early part of 2009; the best part of which will be the planning of the celebration party!

Kevin Ingersole

Steve's Sydney arrival (from p. 3)

In the afternoon Steve, Glenda, Professor Stuart White and Professor Jean Joss spoke at a forum titled "Down the Drain - Is this the future of our rivers?". Cate Faehrmann, Executive Director of the NSW Nature Conservation Council and member of the GetUp board was our MC. So much important information was presented at that forum. For instance Professor Joss, who has been researching the lungfish for 25 years explained how amazing and important the Queensland lungfish is. It is the oldest living vertebrate, older than other species of lungfish living in Africa. The Queensland lungfish has a genome twenty five times the size of the human genome which presents untold possibilities for improving our understanding of ourselves and where we come from. In a sobering statement, Professor Joss also pointed out that with the combination of weirs and the Paradise Dam on the Burnett, there has been no recruitment of lungfish. This means that though they may breed, the eggs either do not survive or do not live beyond the juvenile stage. She also reminded us that contrary to what QWIPL is saying, lungfish do move long distances, they do not breed in dams (unless the dam were choked with water weeds such as hyacinth) and they do not have healthy breeding populations in other rivers in South East Qld.

The forum was captured on video and all presentations will be available through the internet. Please watch the Save the Mary website for a link which will hopefully be posted in the next couple of weeks.

Tanzi Smith

Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Inc Notice of Annual General Meeting 2008

The Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Inc gives notice to its members herewith that the Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at the Kandanga Hall at 7.00pm on Tuesday Dec 2.

Nominations are now called for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Nominations must be in writing, signed by two members, and by the candidate, and then must be handed to the Secretary or forwarded to the Secretary to be received by Tuesday November 18.

D Kreutz
Secretary
PO Box 459
Eumundi Q 4562

David Kreutz
Secretary

Members please note:

Nominees, proposers and seconders must be financial ordinary members of the Association. (ie. have paid the fee of \$25 for the year to end 2008). Associate members may attend the meeting but do not vote and cannot nominate, propose or second nominations. If you are unsure of your status in this regard please contact the membership secretary John Porter on 54855255.

A list of the nominations received will be posted on the Notice Board at the Save the Mary InfoCentre in Kandanga at least 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting.

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Kandanga

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