

## Chair's message



February has been an outstanding month for Burdekin Water Futures in its mission to achieve long-term sustainability of water resources in the Burdekin region. The BWF-hosted Burdekin Water Forum drew more than 70 people on each of the two days to explore the challenges confronting integrated water resources management in our region. The importance of transparent collaboration between all stakeholders was a theme throughout the event.

The forum also saw the official launch of the Burdekin as an operational HELP basin – a highlight in the move to strengthen national and international links with similar catchments and their research, law, policy and water management processes.

BWF extends thanks to the international and Australian speakers who shared their time and expertise to highlight challenges and opportunities within the Burdekin and internationally. Appreciation is also extended to our gold sponsors – SunWater, BRIA Irrigators Committee, CRC for Irrigation Futures, Lower Burdekin Water and the Burdekin Shire Council. The hard work of the organising committee, with particular thanks to Maree-Anne Gorizio and Di Popham, is also acknowledged.

*Cr Lyn McLaughlin, BWF Chair*



## Water Forum brings catchment together

The value of integrated water resources management, the specific needs of the Burdekin catchment coastal floodplain and a call for action on priority needs were a focal point during discussions at the recent Burdekin Water Forum. The successful, two-day event also highlighted the need for collaboration, accountability, transparency and participation.

The forum boasted two international speakers, Professor Shahbaz Khan (UNESCO, France) and Dr Ken Knox (URS Corporation, USA), and active involvement by community members, farmers, water service providers, scientists, NRM managers and government representatives.

It began with an evening forum on Monday, February 15, led by Dr Knox and Professor Khan sharing their international experience on groundwater, irrigation and water management. With more than 70 participants, the forum was very informative and set a positive grounding for the discussions to follow.



**Shahbaz Khan, Keith Bristow  
and Ken Knox**

Day two on Tuesday, February 16, was an interactive workshop with about 75 participants exploring the challenges within the catchment from various stakeholder perspectives. This allowed participants to hear first hand experiences and to view the interrelatedness of all sectors that form the region and that depend on access to fresh water to ensure the region's viability for future generations.

### Forum speakers ignite interest

Our international guest speakers set the scene and got the audience to think globally as well as regionally about ways to work together across catchments, disciplines and industries in the search for better water resource management. Dr Ken Knox spoke in depth about groundwater, highlighting processes that have been undertaken internationally to improve groundwater management. Prof Shahbaz Khan highlighted the latest approaches to irrigation being used internationally and how new thinking and collaboration can improve regional water management.



Ken Knox, Trevor Williams and Evan Shannon



Shahbaz Khan and Scott Crawford

Our Australian speakers shared the challenges faced within their areas of responsibility and expertise. This allowed stakeholders to gain a better appreciation of the interconnectedness of the catchment and the importance of each sector working together towards a common goal. Topics included an overview of the lower Burdekin water systems, water resource planning and allocation, meeting environmental needs, delivering a reliable water supply and meeting community water needs.

You can view a profile of each speaker and their presentation at <http://www.clw.csiro.au/naif/casestudies/bwf-forum2010.html>

### The farmer perspective

One of the features of the forum workshop was the visually-recorded interviews of four Burdekin farmers - Con Christofides, Murray Cannavan, Mauro Garbuio and Russel Jordan. Produced in the week prior to the forum, the DVD gave the farmers the opportunity to outline challenges they face and successes they have achieved over the years. The farmers involved were present during the screening of the interviews and participated in the panel discussion at the end of the forum. This proved a successful tool in highlighting grassroots issues and the need to involve primary producers in the search for environmental and economic sustainability.

View the DVD at <http://www.clw.csiro.au/naif/casestudies/bwf-forum2010.html>



Mauro Garbuio

### Official launch of Burdekin as a HELP basin



The Burdekin Dam

The Burdekin catchment was officially launched at the forum as an Operational HELP Basin within UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme.

BWF member and senior principal research scientist with CSIRO Land and Water, Dr Keith Bristow, said: "Being part of the HELP network allows the Burdekin to share experiences, data and knowledge with a range of other catchments throughout the world. This knowledge will help the region implement more effective integrated water resources management."

The aim of HELP is to strengthen field-oriented experimental hydrology, highlight the need for ecologically sustainable development, and encourage active involvement of scientists, policy experts, land managers and water resource managers to ensure that scientific results benefit both society and the environment.

Professor Shahbaz Khan, Chief of the Sustainable Water Resources Development and Management Section of UNESCO's Water Sciences Division performed the launch on Tuesday, February 16.

For further details visit: <http://helpforum.ning.com/page/information-about-burdekin>

Visit the BWF website:

<http://www.clw.csiro.au/naif/casestudies/burdekin-water-futures.html>