



Chair's message



Our Burdekin catchment sits in close proximity to environmentally-sensitive wetlands, waterways, and the Great Barrier Reef Lagoon. There is a strong interconnectedness between these environmental systems and our community, our farming practices and our industrial practices. Changes undertaken or experienced in any of these systems can have an effect on other systems.

We need the environmental system to be strong so that it can support our social and economic systems for the long-term future.

BWF believes it is important for us as individuals, organisations and a community to be aware of this interconnectedness and extend our focus when making choices about future activities.

BWF members met recently with representatives under the Reef Guardian Stewardship program and were delighted to hear how this program is encouraging groups to be proactive in their practices.

Cr Lyn McLaughlin, BWF Chair

Member Profile – Colin Bendall

Colin Bendall (right) is the area operations manager for SunWater for the Far North Region. Based at the Clare Service Centre in the Burdekin, Colin has a team of 80 staff who look after infrastructure from Proserpine to Bamaga in Cape York and west to Mount Isa. The major dams that form part of Colin's responsibility include Burdekin Falls, Peter Faust, Julius and Tinaroo Falls.



Following his graduation from the Burdekin Rural Education Centre in 1980, Colin worked on various farms and also spent some time working on an exploration drilling rig. He started his career with the then Water Resources Commission in 1985 as a water officer in Millaroo.

Since then, he has notched up more than 26 years' experience in the Queensland water industry, including 10 years of designing on-farm dams, drainage and irrigation systems. Colin's career has included a 13-year stint at Mareeba and five years at Emerald. Whilst based at St George, he obtained an Associate Diploma in Farm Water Supplies.

Colin enjoys working and living in the Burdekin and is involved with several community groups including Burdekin Water Futures and Rotary. Colin is committed to contributing to and achieving sustainable water outcomes for local customers and the wider Burdekin community.



The latest information on irrigation and water management will be presented at the 2011 Irrigation Australia Conference and Exhibition from August 22 to 25 in Launceston, Tasmania. For more information on registering as a delegate or speaker, attending field trips and participating in workshops, go to the conference website at <http://online.saneevent.com.au/ial2011/>.



As highlighted earlier, the strong interconnectedness between the various systems of our region should feature strongly in the decision-making process for future activities. BWF, in its aim for the long-term sustainability of our region, keenly supports individuals and organisations who are working proactively to improve their practices and create long-term positive results for the environmental system.

The Reef Guardian Stewardship Program provides the opportunity for community and industry to be proactively involved in activities that protect the Great Barrier Reef and all of its associated systems. The BWF recently hosted representatives from the program's four branches of: schools, councils, farmers and fishers.



From the Burdekin Shire Council was Tracy Jensen (left) who is the council's coordinator and link into the Reef Guardian Council program. Tracy believes the program plays an important role in encouraging communities, individuals and businesses to help build a healthy and resilient marine park.



Alan Mullaly (right), principal of Burdekin Christian College, spoke about the college's involvement in the Reef Guardian Schools program. The Burdekin Christian College was one of the first schools to join the program and it has received many awards over the years. This program is now incorporated into many areas of

the school's curriculum, resource management, on-ground projects and community education activities.



Joe Linton (left) is a member of the steering committee that is developing programs for the Reef Guardian Farmers. Becoming a Reef Guardian Farmer is an acknowledgement of intent to continue to improve farming practices and on-ground work. In the Burdekin there are two farmers in the pilot phase:

Willy Lucas and Mark Rossato.

Photo courtesy of Canegrowers

Neil Green, who is involved in the Reef Guardian Fishers program, outlined some of the improved fishing practices that are being undertaken. Neil spoke of a net that he had designed and used for the past 10 years which had been proven to save turtles and dugongs that are accidentally caught.



The Australian Government has allocated \$3 million over two years to expand the Reef Guardian Stewardship Program. The funding will help to deliver enhanced community and local government stewardship programs and new industry stewardship programs that will facilitate the adoption of environmentally-sustainable best practices.

The Reef Guardian Schools program was launched in 2003, and now has more than 150 schools involved. The Reef Guardian Council program was launched in 2007 and involves 13 councils along the Great Barrier Reef coastline that focus their Reef Guardian activities around: water management, waste management, land management, climate change, and community. The Reef Guardian Farmers and Reef Guardian Fishers programs were launched this year. For more information and to get involved with the Reef Guardian Program visit:

http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/corp_site/about_us/reef_guardians



"The Value of Rivers" is the theme for the 14th International Riversymposium, being held in Brisbane from September 26 to 29. Delegates will be exposed to the latest thinking and research on river and water management, including the environmental, economic, cultural and spiritual values of rivers.

With the recent climatic events across Queensland and the world, there will also be a strong focus on how these events have influenced our water systems.

For more information visit <http://www.riversymposium.com/>