Lower Burdekin Water Futures

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Newsletter ***Issue 5 – July 2009***

Welcome by Chair

Reaching out and sharing information across organisations, disciplines and regions is an important way to increase knowledge and understanding, debate options, share solutions, and create opportunities in which we can continue towards our goal of long-term sustainability for our region.

Recent LBWF participation at the UNESCO HELP meeting in Portugal has highlighted this, and the upcoming Groundwater Users & Managers (GUM) workshop in the Burdekin will provide another opportunity to share knowledge and improve understanding and management of our groundwater resources.

An article in this issue tells how the Department of Environment and Resource Management shares on-line data with stakeholders.

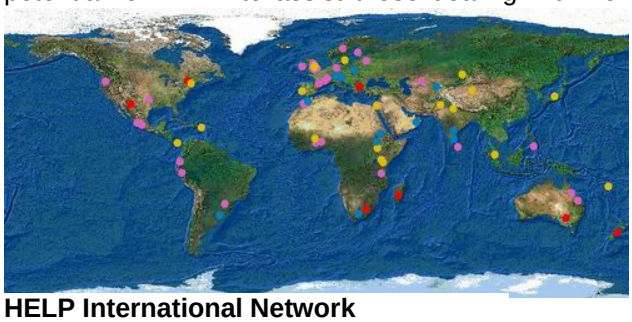
We must continue to work together, collaborate on activities and ventures and share research findings to secure the future of the Burdekin for generations to come.
Lyn McLaughlin – LBWF Chair

Strengthening Water Governance for Sustainability

The UNESCO-IHP HELP Program Seminar "Strengthening Water Governance for Sustainability" was held in Evora, Portugal, from June 24 to 26.

Hydrology for the Environment, Life and Policy

In the opening session of the three-day event, UNESCO's Professor Shahbaz Khan highlighted the potential for HELP to assist those dealing with new water management challenges in a more holistic, interdisciplinary, participative and comprehensive way. Professor Khan stressed that there are common issues across basins and there is a need and an opportunity to share experiences, support adaptation and customise solutions across basins to meet local needs. Professor Khan is chief of the Sustainable Water Resources Development and Management Section of the Division of Water Sciences, Natural Sciences Sector for UNESCO.



HELP International Network

Day one of the forum provided an opportunity for 17 speakers to share experiences from individual basins and programs. Keith Bristow (right) gave an overview on the issues faced in the Lower Burdekin basin. His presentation on *Integrated Water Resources Management in the Lower Burdekin, Australia* highlighted that management of water systems is both an individual and collective responsibility. How to address issues within complex systems was keenly discussed. Jeff Camkin (left) gave a presentation on *Dealing with complexity and uncertainty in water management: the role of community knowledge and social learning.* Jeff spoke about the role of

community knowledge in dealing with complexity and uncertainty in integrated water resource management. He presented on research and development of a platform to support sharing and use of community knowledge in the Lower Burdekin HELP basin.

Day two focussed on technical and scientific dissemination on the Guadiana Basin, which extends across Portugal and Spain. Fourteen speakers shared information on projects and technical research being undertaken within the basin.

Alqueva Dam

It was generally agreed that scientific findings must be shared with stakeholders and society, to support a better water future for all.

The exchange of information across international basins is an integral part of increasing knowledge and understanding and to improving water governance.

Day three involved a field visit to the Alqueva Dam (left), located on the Guadiana River, Portugal. Alqueva is the largest dam in Europe.

On line system to view regional stream flow data

The Department of the Environment and Resource Management (DERM) has made it possible for stakeholders to view the latest stream flow data for the region via the Internet.

Burdekin River

DERM utilises a system known as DADS (Data Acquisition Delivery System) to automatically download data from field sites - either daily or weekly - and display the information in a graphical and tabular form. This can be accessed by the public at no cost, by either clicking on locations on a displayed map, or by conducting a site search. Data for each parameter logged is displayed for the past seven days. Go to http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au/water/monitoring/current_data/map_qld.php

This year marks the centenary of stream flow data collection in Queensland, with the first staff gauge having been erected on the Logan River at Beaudesert. Since the establishment of this gauging station, the network was expanded across the state and hydrographers have collected a huge amount of data on stream levels, stream flows, rainfall, water quality, and other information.

The data is collected from the State's assessment network and other monitoring sites, processed by DERM water monitoring staff, and stored on the Surface Water Database (Hydstra). This valuable resource is used to provide information for licensing and water resource plans. It is also used by other stakeholders, including the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) which accesses the data for its own investigations so it can post results on its website.

DERM also operates an Internet site titled WaterShed which contains site details as well as historical data summaries for flow and water quality. The following link provides more information on this service: http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au/watershed/index.html

LBWF Members

Dean Sgroi and Wayne Smith (BRIA Irrigators' Committee)
Toni Anderson (BSES)
Andrew Kelly (North Burdekin Water Board)
Michael Hoey (North Burdekin Water Board and Deputy Chair, LBWF)
Robin Juffs and Michael Caspanello (South Burdekin Water Board)
Scott Crawford (Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM)
Fiona Christie and Jason Williams (SunWater)
Lyn McLaughlin (Mayor, Burdekin Shire Council and Chair, LBWF)
Trevor Williams (Burdekin Shire Council)
Gary Jensen and Graham Herbert (Natural Resources and Water)
Keith Bristow and Jeff Camkin (CSIRO & Cooperative Research Centre for Irrigation Futures)
Contact any of the above members to provide input and/or find out more about the LBWF and its activities.