

Chair's message

BWF is pleased to announce the release of the Lower Burdekin Groundwater Science Plan. This important document identifies a shared view of the priority groundwater science needs of the lower Burdekin; captures stakeholder commitment towards addressing those research priorities; and provides a focus for groundwater science investment in the lower Burdekin. BWF is now working with government agencies to obtain the resources required to meet the objectives of the plan.

Cr Lyn McLaughlin, BWF Chair

Groundwater Science Plan Released

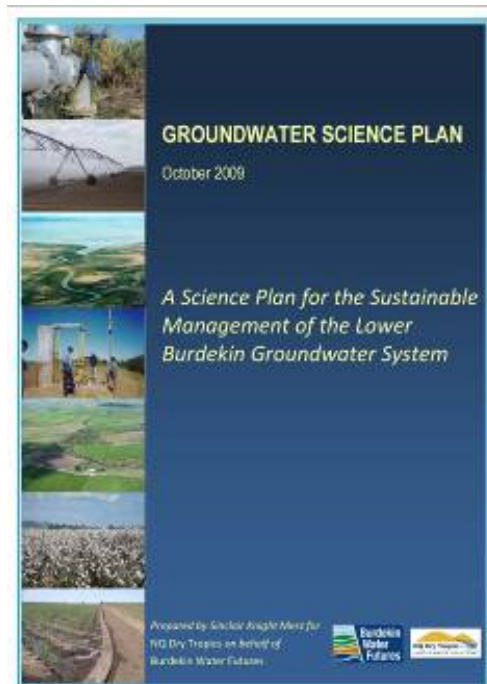
The development of a Lower Burdekin Groundwater Science Plan is an integral step towards addressing the Burdekin's water resource management issues in a strategic and integrated manner.

The plan was funded by NQ Dry Tropics and developed by consultants from Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) in conjunction with the Burdekin Water Futures group.

As well as reviewing existing literature, the consultants held a series of workshops and meetings with stakeholders, researchers and local land and water managers with interests in the water resources of the Burdekin catchment.

The Groundwater Science Plan is based on holistic, integrated thinking. It identifies a set of core projects that will fill gaps in knowledge, and deliver on a clear set of objectives. Both the prospectus and plan are available from the BWF website at

<http://www.clw.csiro.au/naif/casestudies/bwf-activities.html>



BWF Members

BRIA Irrigators' Committee - Dean Sgroi, Wayne Smith and Mauro Garbuio

BSES - Toni Anderson

Lower Burdekin Water - Andrew Kelly

North Burdekin Water Board - Michael Hoey (Deputy Chair, BWF)

South Burdekin Water Board - Robin Juffs and Michael Caspanello

NQ Dry Tropics - Scott Crawford

SunWater - Fiona Christie and Jason Williams

Burdekin Shire Council – Cr Lyn McLaughlin (Chair, BWF) and Trevor Williams

Dept of Environment & Resource Management - Gary Jensen and Graham Herbert

CSIRO & Cooperative Research Centre for Irrigation Futures - Keith Bristow / Jeff Camkin

Contact any of the above members to provide input and/or find out more about the BWF and its activities.



BWF members, Dr Keith Bristow and Mr Jeff Camkin, presented recent research at the 12th International Riversymposium held in Brisbane from September 21 to 24. This year's theme was *Rivers from Source to Sea*.

Mr Camkin gave a presentation on "Supporting River Basin Planning in the Guadiana, Portugal, through the UNESCO-IHP HELP Program" during the session on Upstream Effects on Downstream Communities.

He shared some key thoughts from a recent meeting in the historic city of Evora where scientists, policy-makers and researchers from around the world met with the local community to discuss ideas for improving water governance both within the Guadiana Basin and globally.

Mr Camkin also chaired the Agriculture and Water session, which included excellent practical demonstrations on improving irrigation and land management practices from India, Sri Lanka and Australia.

Dr Bristow featured during the Agriculture and Water session. His presentation on "Irrigation – A need for new thinking" highlighted the need to design our irrigation systems to be more sympathetic with the natural ecological features of a region. This has implications for the repair needed in southern Australia and for the design of new irrigation that is likely to go into northern Australia.

Both presentations highlighted the need for better approaches to integrated river basin management. This includes multi-disciplinary research and trans-disciplinary thinking to help develop better links between water planning and land use management.

More information on this annual event can be found at

<http://www.riversymposium.com/>



Irrigation and Drainage Conference



About 350 representatives from the irrigation industry descended on Swan Hill, Victoria, from October 18 to 20 to participate in Irrigation Australia's 2009 Irrigation and Drainage Conference.

As an invited keynote speaker, Dr Keith Bristow shared recent research into ecological infrastructure and how this is linked to the nation's long-term water security.

The many sessions held during the conference explored a wide range of topics, including: managing a reduced water supply, remote sensing and modelling tools, modernising and improving on-farm irrigation systems, research into salinity, drainage, evaporation losses and climate change.

Amongst the delegation was Joe Linton, grower and South Burdekin Water Board Director, who found the conference invaluable, coming away with a greater understanding of the difference between the abundant water supply system of the Burdekin to that of the Murray Darling basin; an added knowledge on research into drip irrigation systems; and a greater appreciation of the future dilemma of water management.

Cr Lou Loizou, who also attended the conference, was interested to see how farmers in the Murray had been able to adapt to extreme drought conditions and continue production with so little water.

"This is a reminder to me of just how valuable water is, and how one can always learn to do better," he said. "Here in the Burdekin, where water is so plentiful, we should still engage in the most water-efficient practices possible on our farms."

Another important learning from the conference came through seeing the high price that Lower Murray farmers pay for water, highlighting how valuable this commodity is.

BWF members Michael Hoey and Andrew Kelly were part of the delegation and will share their experiences in our next issue.

More details and the full program is available at <http://www.irrigation.org.au/index.cfm?/events/irrigation-australia-2009>

