



NRM Plan Launched, \$12.6m Will Be Invested Over Next Three Years

The popping of a champagne cork signalled the official launch of BMRG's Plan – and the start of a new era in NRM for our region.

The ceremony to officially release the plan, Country to Coast – A Healthy Sustainable Future, also featured the announcement of its associated Regional Investment Strategy.

In total, \$12.6 million has been allocated to preserve and restore the region's environmental qualities over the next three years.

Our number one public enemy will be weeds (terrestrial and aquatic) and will attract a significant slice of the \$4.4 million to be spent on the ground.

Works will assist local government and landholders to target eradication and remediation of agricultural and grazing land, plus key privately owned and government-owned land, including the World Heritage Area of Fraser Island.

Funded projects will focus on the most damaging weeds on land and foreshores, and in freshwater and marine environments.

Other allocations include about \$4.5 million to fund research initiatives, such as water quality monitoring, and \$1.7 million to assist landholders with property management planning.

Other priorities include enhancing the capacity for the community to act and change, and sustainability in primary production and coastal development, especially given their effect on biodiversity and water quality.

The commitment to improving water quality is apparent with almost 60% of the total allocation being directed towards

initiatives designed to improve inland aquatic systems (18%), estuarine, coastal and marine habitats (19%), nutrient reduction (9%), turbidity (9%) and salinity (4%).

BMRG also aims to attract at least \$5 million in additional funding from government sources and further funds from private and other non-government sources to enable it to make even bigger inroads into tackling the region's environmental challenges.

About 90 supporters, representing all sectors and all catchments in the region, attended the official launch function which gave way to wine and cheese celebrations. The official ceremonies and speakers started with a Traditional Owners' welcome led by Butchulla Elder Marie Wilkinson.

The function was well supported by Local Government leaders with speeches by Mayors Barbara Hovard (Maryborough), Ron Dyne (Kilkivan) and Kay McDuff (Bundaberg).

The Australian and Queensland Government perspectives were presented by Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Warren Truss and Member for Hervey Bay Andrew McNamara.

BMRG Independent Chair Harry Bonanno also addressed the audience.

The program included the formal signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Australian and Queensland Government and BMRG and MoUs between BMRG and Local Government Authorities. (See NRM Watch page 1 story)

*“Today marks
the beginning
of a new era ...”*

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Warren Truss (left) and BMRG Independent Chair Harry Bonanno toast the official launch of the region's NRM Plan





Burnett Mary Regional Group

...for Natural Resource Management Inc

After the Launch, it's Time to Celebrate



Tom and Evelyn Bancroft and Graeme Esslemont try a piece of cake after the ceremony. The cake was decorated to replicate the front cover of the Plan



Tunja Cottier and Carolyn Taylor relax after the function



Sue Sargent and Mal Thompson



Graeme Elphinstone and Colin McCoull



Ruth Nemeth and Kerrie Green



Above: Adam Newell-Jarvis, Glenda George, Ava McCoull and her Mum Anna



Left: The smallest participant Maya Gleeson Power is all smiles.



Above: Mick and Caroline Haskard

Right: Glen Burfitt and Sue Sargent.



Below: Viv Sinnamon, Dean Power and Mick Haskard discuss the events of the day



Below: John and Denise Della-Torre and Harry Bonanno



Warren Truss and Harry Bonanno sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and Queensland Governments and BMRG

New Era Begins Burnett Mary with of Country to Coast

The launch of Country to Coast – A Healthy Sustainable
beginning of a new era for the Burnett Mary Region
Officer Dr Deborah L Scott
That era started with a commitment to work together
a sustainable future for this and future generations
She commended the vision which created the National
1997, which warned of the national crisis in land and
in the loss of biodiversity.
In quoting from the preamble of this Act, Dr Scott
recognised the need to empower people to play a
decision-making process of our democracy.
She offered thanks to the multitude of people who
milestone including, first and foremost, the regional
those who showed their commitment by becoming
In adding her thanks to both governments (the Australian
and the 27 Local Government Authorities, Dr Scott
between these three groups would be critical to
in the plan.

Community Ownership Essential to Success in Implementing Regional Environment Plan

A holistic approach to the management of resources – delivered by regional bodies which represent the feelings of the community – is the key to the new way of "doing business", according to Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Minister Warren Truss.

"It is very important that these plans are in fact developed from the community level upwards and people do not have imposed upon them a plan for which they've got no personal commitment or no faith in it achieving its objectives," he said.

This region was home to a vibrant primary industry sector, as well as World Heritage Areas like Fraser Island and was close to the Great Barrier Reef.

Mr Truss said this meant more people were being attracted to the area by its natural beauty, its lifestyle and climate, causing increased challenges and impacts on the environment. He said the decision of governments to enter into bilateral arrangements, and contribute substantial funding to the regional delivery of NRM outcomes, had been a "landmark" one.

"(Before this) these different sectors – agriculture, tourism, the environment – would have seemed

to have very little in which they could work cooperatively together and the problems would just be too intractable to even bother to tackle," he said.

"So clearly the Burnett Mary Region Group Natural Resource Management Plan demonstrates that this is no longer the case.

"The issues relating to land management and water quality along the coastal strip impact on the world heritage areas, but they're also vital to ensure the health of our important agricultural industries.

"That's why there needs to be a holistic approach to the management of these resources and we need to plan together to be able to find the way forward to address and manage these issues appropriately."



Dean Power and wife Michelle



Peter McIntosh and Kevin Mahoney



Deb Scott and Kevin Hardware



Sebastian Gleeson Power and Adam Newell-Jarvis strike up a friendship

ns for h Launch Coast

ustainable Future marks the
n, according to Executive

er in partnership towards
s.

natural Heritage Trust Act of
and water degradation and

described how it
major role in the

have helped to reach this
al community – especially
g members of BMRG.

(Australian and Queensland)
t said the partnerships
reaching the targets set out



Staff presented Executive Officer Deb Scott with flowers and a gift to show their appreciation for her dedication



Carolyn Taylor and husband Heath



Glenda George and Ken Jarvis



Left: Kevin Hardware and Darryl Stewart toast to the success of the Plan

Right: Kev Mahoney and wife Helene enjoy dinner at the Carrier Arms





Hard Work Behind Scenes to Produce Plan

The humble, but enthusiastic, beginnings which went on to lay the foundations for present day achievements were remembered by Independent Chair Harry Bonanno.

In his speech, he paid homage to the "hard work and tears of a lot of people and a lot of organisations" which helped create the Plan we have today.

Mr Bonanno talked about the first steps in the plan's creation and the involvement of people like Tom Crothers, and others in the NRM group, who helped "willingly and ably". He paid tribute to Minister Warren Truss for his involvement since the beginning, and to state Minister Steven Robertson. Long-serving BMRG staff members Carolyn Taylor and Glenda George and (early Executive Officer) Tony Dowling were also recognised.

He said the early Board, including directors like Margaret Thompson, faced the difficult task of developing a corporate structure.

"Our early Board worked hard and enthusiastically to get established and they laid the foundations of what we have got here today," he said.

He spoke of his appreciation for the staff and the major effort made by Deb Scott, who had unified the focus of the staff and Board to work toward the same goals, the same objectives and with the same diligence.



BMRG Independent Chair Harry Bonanno and Maryborough Mayor Barbara Hovard with Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Warren Truss and BMRG deputy chair, Woocoo Mayor Kev Mahoney, take a first hand look at water quality monitoring on the Mary River. In the boat are St Mary's College Reef Guardians coordinator Bruce King and students Sarah Kettle, Katherine Reaney and Erin Peatey and BMRG Executive Officer Dr Deborah L Scott.

He said the end result, Country to Coast – A Healthy Sustainable Future, was a plan which could be changed and adjusted to keep in step with new knowledge and circumstances of the future.

"It is a living document, but for the time being it is our bible – and we'll stick by it."



Left: Kilkivan Shire Mayor Ron Dyne speaks during the Plan Launch



Right: Channel 7 conducts an interview on the banks of the Mary River. The Plan launch attracted considerable media interest with a round of photo calls and interviews

A Bright, Promising Future

"In the big scheme of things, Local Government boundaries are meaningless. Feral animals don't worry, rivers flow on regardless and noxious weeds continue their invasive march and this is why a Regional Plan is the only way to go." – Maryborough City Mayor Barbara Hovard. She likened the launch of a plan of this magnitude to being a bit like "giving birth". "But I'm sure the babe has a bright and promising future," she said.

A healthy crowd of invited guests welcomes the official launch of the Burnett Mary's NRM Plan and Regional Investment Strategy.



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