

News from...

reef rescue

AN INITIATIVE OF THE CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY PROGRAM

The Caring for our Country Reef Rescue program has been in huge demand this year with more and more land managers finding out about the benefits of being involved in the program.

Last year the Reef Rescue program funded a staggering 178 programs across 4 commodity groups (cane, dairy, grazing and horticulture) with over \$2.19 million being invested by the Federal Government in our region. On top of this figure is the amount invested by the land managers themselves who contributed at least 50% to each project. This land manager contribution came to more than a whopping \$4.66 million this means more than \$6.85 million has been invested in the Burnett Mary region under the Reef Rescue program.

Mr Lyons a Reef Rescue participant said "the Reef Rescue project has been great. We have been able to progress our business much quicker than we would have been able to going it alone, and the advice from the field officers has been invaluable for improving our sustainability both as land managers and as a business"

Within each commodity the highest project rate was within the cane industry that had 93 projects completed, grazing had 47 projects completed, horticulture had 27 projects completed and dairy had 3 projects completed.

A further 8 projects were funded specifically on wetlands within the region.

This year, although the Burnett Mary region has received less funding than last year, the demand has grown considerably. Already there are 47 grazing projects completed and 40 horticulture projects completed, with results still coming in from these and other commodity groups.

Mark Casswell, Operations and Program Manager from the Burnett Mary Regional Group says "the response to the Reef Rescue program has been overwhelming, the quality of the projects being put forward and the enthusiasm of the regions land managers to the program has been extraordinary".



Land holders who have been involved with the Reef Rescue program through the Cane industry. These three farmers make up the DAG Group, who won the Burnett Mary Region award for 2009 in Innovation.

Coastal Graziers to Rescue the Reef



Coastal graziers are benefiting in a big way from the Australian Governments' Reef Rescue Plan. The Burnett Mary Reef Partnership has been providing incentives to farmers and graziers in the Great Barrier Reef catchments to improve farm management practices, mainly to keep their fertiliser, soil and chemicals on farm. The Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA) was involved in delivering the grazing component of Reef Rescue for the Burnett Mary Regional Group.

"The on-ground activities implemented through the Reef Rescue Grazing program will not only account for a reduction in sediment export from the land, benefiting the reef, but they will also provide a benefit for producers, enhancing their sustainability," said Leeanne Witcher, Reef Rescue Grazing Extension Officer.

John Bell, Turkey Station, is a Bororen grazier who received funding during year one of the Reef Rescue program. The funding assisted in the implementation of additional fencing and water infrastructure that will allow paddock rotation, and therefore the ability to spell the pasture. The spelling of the pasture helps maintain adequate ground cover, which, during a rainfall event will reduce the amount of sediment loss from the paddock.

"About two years ago, we divided a large paddock into two, allowing us to rest the pasture in these two paddocks. With the Reef Rescue funding available during 2008, we installed additional fencing and water points. This additional infrastructure has given me the ability to spell my pastures, along with making it easier to manage the herd", said John Bell.

There were a range of on-ground activities undertaken by landholders within the Baffle, Isis, Elliot, Lower Kolan, Gregory, Burrum and Lower Burnett catchments. These activities included erosion control, fencing of different landtypes to allow for better grazing management, installation of additional stock water points and revegetation of riparian areas.



Grazier John Bell



Birders flock to Bundaberg Library

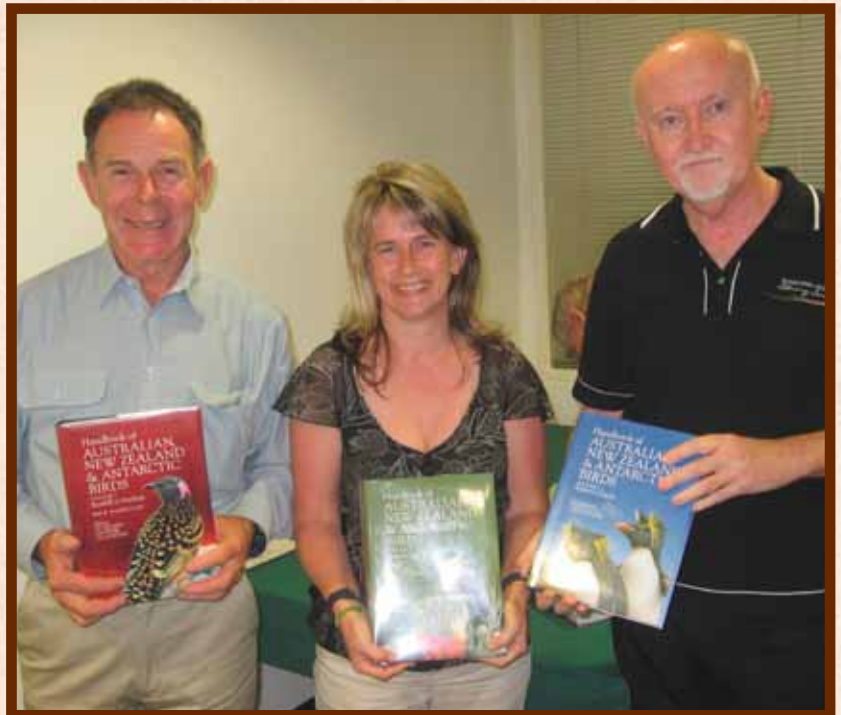
Bundaberg bird lovers will be thrilled to learn that the Bundaberg Library now holds a full set of the Handbooks of Australia, New Zealand and Antarctic birds (HANZAB).

The collection was gifted to the library by the Bundaberg and District Branch of the Bird Observation & Conservation Australia (BUNDYBOC) after 12 months assisting the BMRG with our Burnett Estuary shorebird monitoring program (in conjunction with the Port of Bundaberg).

Club president, Trevor Quested, said the books, which are worth almost \$3000, are an important reference and an asset to the community. "These will be a reference for all time," he said. "It contains all the information on the 957 bird species that we have in Australia." Mr Quested said the books could also help developers to understand the habitat that these birds need. "Careful management means we can have both development and the birds. The Bundaberg region is very rich in bird life," he said.

Sue Sargent, Coordinator of BMRG's shorebird monitoring program agreed, adding, "The Port of Bundaberg is a wonderful site for shorebirds and a precious resource at a time when wetlands are in decline internationally. It demonstrates how development and infrastructure can co-exist with our natural resources with two rare finds – a Buff-breasted Sandpiper and an Oriental Plover, seen at the Port in the last 12 months."

"It's an excellent example of a partnership that benefits our community with improved data available to the Port as well as a resource that benefits our wider community," she said.



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