



Burnett Mary REGIONAL GROUP

Practical Solutions for Natural Resource Management

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020

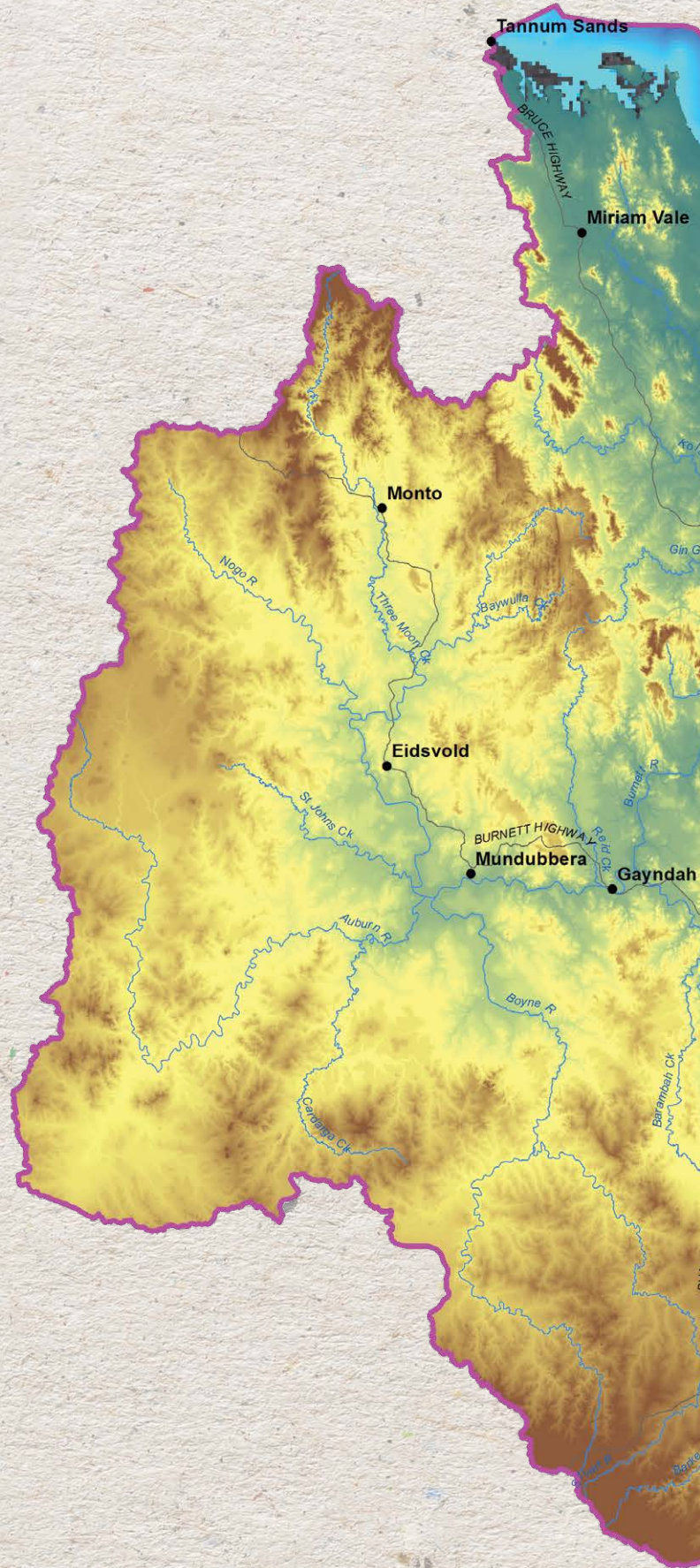


Contents

Welcome Message	03
Message from CEO & Chair	04
Financial Summary	05
‘Strait Expectations’ – Restoring The Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Wetland	06
Protecting Saltmarsh and Marine Turtle Monitoring	07
Nest to Ocean - Taking Turtles off the Menu	08
Paddock to Reef program	09
Reef Alliance Project 2	10
Natural Resources Investment Program Reef Water Quality	11
Out & About	12
GIS, data management and drone support	14
Better beef for the Reef	15
Enhanced Extension and Coordination	16
Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions	17
Resilient and Productive Farmers across the Burnett Mary Region	18
Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) project	19
Bunya Mountains Murri Ranger Program	20
Saving Soils in the Burnett Mary	22
Board of Directors	23

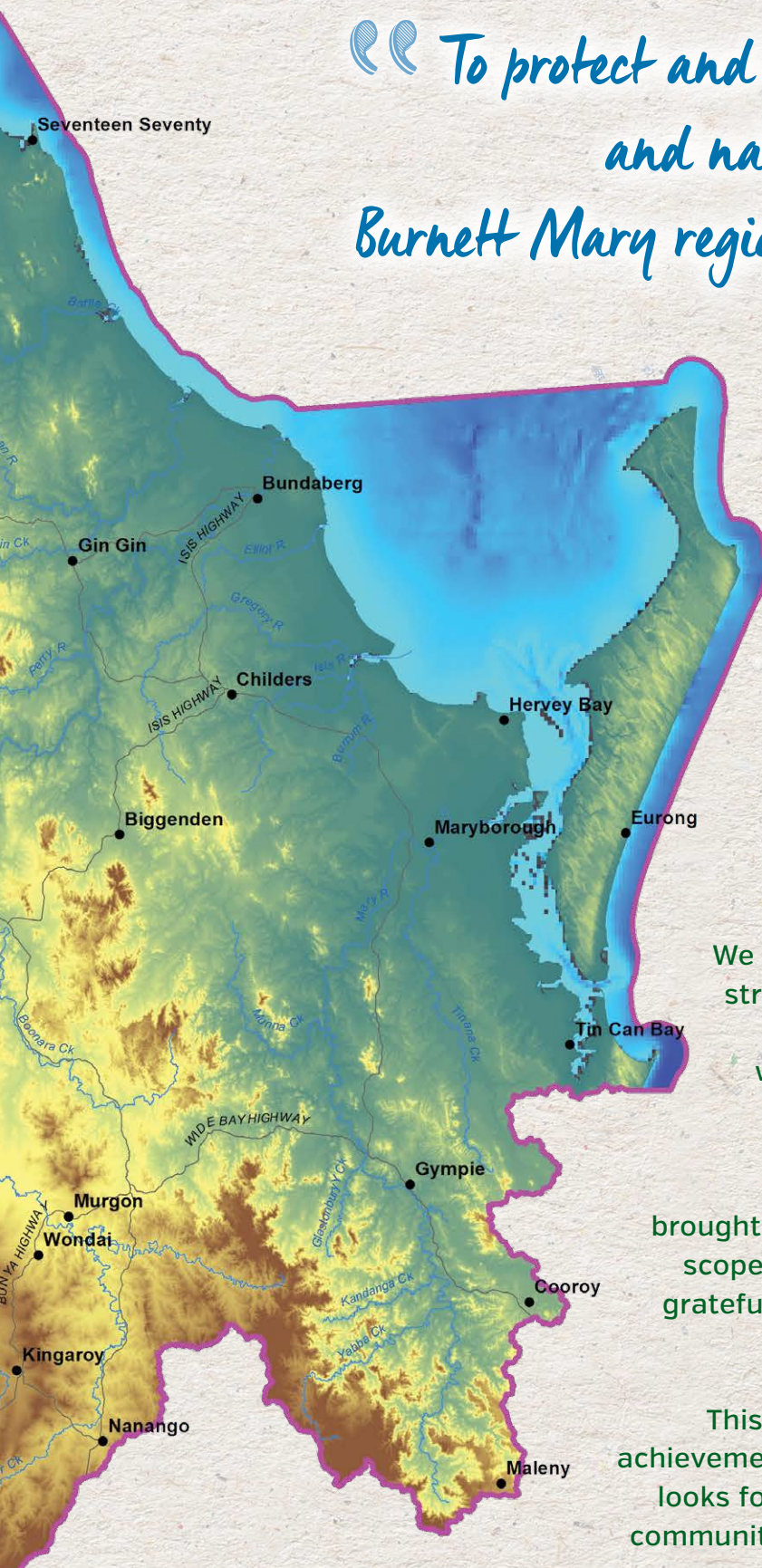
Front Cover:
Yathon Cliffs West Coast of K'gari (Fraser Island)

Back Cover:
The Butchulla Dance Troupe



Our Vision

To protect and enhance the agricultural and natural environment of the Burnett Mary region for future generations



Welcome

Welcome to the Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) 2019/2020 Annual Report.

Covering approximately 56,000km² of land and 11,000km² of sea, the Burnett Mary region is internationally renowned for its ecological diversity, extensive primary production and rich cultural heritage.

We are proud to work on projects that build stronger and more resilient enterprises for this vast region and combat adversities while minimising environmental impacts for a more sustainable future.

Despite the challenges that 2020 has brought, BMRG has been able to deliver a broad scope of work this year and as always, we are grateful to our many partners for their ongoing commitment and collaboration.

This collaboration is evident throughout the achievements highlighted in this report and BMRG looks forward to working with the Burnett Mary community to build on these achievements in the coming years.



Message from CEO and Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Executive Management and Staff, we are pleased to present the Burnett Mary Regional Group Annual Report for 2019/2020.

2020 has been quite a challenging year for many organisations due to COVID-19 and in March the decision was made to have all staff work from home. This was an important and necessary decision to make as the safety of our staff is paramount. As government restrictions eased, staff resumed working from the office in early May.

In May BMRG commenced negotiations to relocate the business from 193 Bourbong Street Bundaberg to 160 Hughes Road Bargara, with the main office move to the new premises occurring on the 1st of July. The new office facilities provide all staff with more office space, breakout areas for networking and an office environment that has had an increase in productivity.

Over the past 12 months we have streamlined internal processes with a strong focus on continuous improvement. Part of this process is the development and advancement of digital initiatives across the business and how these processes can improve BMRG's overall efficiency and effectiveness.

2020 will also see the election of a new Board of Directors, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our Directors for their wonderful contributions to BMRG and look forward to working with the new board.

Finally, we would like to thank our members, Landcare groups, research partners, Federal, State and Local Governments, Traditional Owners, the community, BMRG Board and the Staff for their dedication in delivering the successful outcomes for this year.

We look forward to our continued collaboration in the coming years.

Sheila Charlesworth Chief Executive Officer

Tony Ricciardi Chair



Financials at a Glance

To view BMRG's 2019-20 full audited financial statements, please visit www.bmrg.org.au



Ecosystem Management

\$623,682

PROJECTS

Protecting Saltmarsh and Marine Turtle Monitoring, Restoring Great Sandy Ramsar, Nest to Ocean, White Throat Turtles, Queensland Disaster Resilience Fund

Agricultural & Extension Services

\$1,068,026

PROJECTS

Regional Extension Coordinator, Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator, Productive and Resilient Farmers, Flex Fund and Peer 2 Peer, Grazing BMP, CB for BMP Champions, GRASS, Soil Conservation Training

Water Quality
\$1,808,175

PROJECTS

Reef Trust III, Better Beef for the Reef, Paddock to Reef, Reef Water Quality, Monies Creek, Saving Soil in the Burnett Mary, Great Barrier Reef Foundation, ISIS 20-20 Nutrient MPP

Indigenous Engagement
\$746,210

PROJECTS

Bunya Mountain Murri Rangers

NOTE: Expended funding for 'Core Services' under the Australian Government's Regional Land Partnerships [RLP] program and expended funding for 'Regional Coordination and Evaluation' under the Queensland Government's Natural Resources Investment Program [NRIP] has been apportioned across the four program areas represented in this table.



Photo: Completed streambank rehabilitation

‘Strait Expectations’ – Restoring The Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Wetland

The ‘Strait Expectations’ project, funded by the Australian Government’s Regional Land Partnerships Program, focuses on threat abatement and restorative activities within the Great Sandy Strait’s catchment, to enhance critical habitats and improve the quality of water entering this pristine marine environment and ultimately the Great Barrier Reef.

Through a strong collaborative partnership with several key organisations, including the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, Noosa and District Landcare Group, The Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care Group, Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation, South East Queensland Water and Alluvium Consulting, BMRG has achieved highly cost-effective sediment loss reduction, long-lasting feral pig control outcomes, effective control of Weeds of National Significance and restoration of endangered vegetation communities.

BMRG hosted a VIP lunch and community day to celebrate the completion of the Carter site works. Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment representatives, David Weir and Keith Armstrong, attended the day to see the finished work and meet all the project partners who helped make it happen.

Landowners, Stephen and Ruth Carter, were delighted with the results and were grateful that their riparian farmland has been protected from further erosion. BMRG will build upon the success of this project to continue its work in reducing sediment loss to the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Wetland.

One of the most challenging activities for the Strait Expectations project will be the rehabilitation of an erosion site on the banks of the upper Mary at a site near Kenilworth known as the Sample’s Site. This section of river includes a highly erosive bank that is approximately 600m long and 10m high, and has moved 100m since the late 1950’s. The Sample’s Site alone has lost over 366,250 cubic metres of sediment in this time. In addition to major sedimentation rates and loss of farmland, the erosion site is also in close proximity to a major road, vital to the community infrastructure needs of the Mary Valley, making this erosion management project even more important.

Design work has commenced for the Sample’s Site and through the application of design ingenuity will see a different approach used to achieve the desired sediment saving results within the confines of the site. A downstream rock pool, important habitat for the Mary River cod, will be protected by the works, an existing stand of riparian vegetation will be retained within the design, and three riffle zones will be recreated in-stream, ensuring that the complexity of aquatic habitats is maintained, enhanced and protected.

The sediment savings from the streambank rehabilitation works all help to contribute to the 20% reduction target set out by the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan, and assist greatly in reducing impacts to the unique biodiversity and critical habitats of the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Wetland and the ultimately the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

Protecting Saltmarsh and Marine Turtle Monitoring

Protection of 387ha of Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh [STCS] from the impacts of livestock degradation was completed at the Foreshores property "Mundoolan" near Turkey Beach. By building 5km of exclusion fencing at the property, the saltmarsh habitat gains protection from two main threats - attenuating pollutants from cattle manure and decreasing sediment and nutrient filtering caused by hoof compaction and trampling.

To quantify the success of the STCS protection, a water quality monitoring and aerial drone survey program was completed. In addition, a Property Management Plan was drafted to support the landholder with effective management of the land, including weed and pest species, to protect the STCS that borders their land.

BMRG has been supporting four highly motivated groups of marine turtle volunteers at Wreck Rock Beach, Moore Park Beach, Lady Musgrave Island and Fraser Coast for several seasons. The volunteers prepare a



Photo: Coastal saltmarsh and mangroves at the Mundoolan property

few months in advance, however, the busiest time is from early November, when the marine turtles swim ashore to lay their eggs, through to late March when the hatchlings make the trip back to sea.

The data collected during the season consists of marine turtle species identification, number of eggs laid, number of egg clusters relocated, turtle tagging and monitoring beaches for fox, goanna, wild dogs and other predators. This year, more than 300 turtle nest interventions were undertaken to transfer clutches to predator exclusion cages or relocated from areas inundated by king tides and coastal erosion. The collected data supports state and national management strategies that aim to protect these ancient marine reptiles.

A marine debris collection component was also introduced to the program to mitigate the impact of debris, primarily plastics, to marine fauna and ecosystems. This year, 250kgs of marine debris was removed from 393ha of coastal and estuarine ecosystems by individuals, community groups and Gidarjil rangers.



Photo: Debris removed from Kelly's Beach in Bargara



Photo: Judi Giarola and a fellow volunteer rescue a Flatback turtle at Moore Park Beach

Nest to Ocean - Taking Turtles off the Menu

Uncontrolled European red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) predation on marine turtle eggs and hatchlings could have a potentially devastating impact on surviving numbers of endangered loggerhead (*Carretta carretta*) and vulnerable green (*Chelonia mydas*) and flatback (*Natator depressus*) turtles nesting on beaches in the Burnett Mary region.

BMRG and its partners have been proactively mitigating red fox predations on marine turtle nests at Wreck Rock, Mon-Repos, Moore Park beach, Point Vernon and K'Gari for four nesting seasons in a row. The Nest to Ocean 2018-2020 turtle hatchlings protection and monitoring program has been completed with a positive outcome for this financial year.

17 active dens were identified, and subsequently fumigated, and three red foxes trapped over a 30 day period. This result was achieved in partnership with Tom Garrett (Southern Queensland Landscapes) and his detection



Photo: Rocky at work – identifying an active fox den



Photo: Gidarjil Sea Rangers installing a new predator exclusion clutch relocation cage at Wreck Rock Beach

dog, Rocky. Land and Sea Rangers from Gidarjil Development Corporation supported the pair through numerous hours of beach patrols during and after the fox detection phase and participating in baiting activities. In addition, the Gidarjil rangers promoted red fox awareness at four local schools and eight community events throughout the year.

The united initiative of fox den fumigation and associated soft-jaw trapping technique has been favourably reflected in the decreasing numbers of turtle nest depredation caused by red foxes. Predator exclusion clutch relocation cages also provide a greater chance of higher hatchling emergence rates.

The joint effort of BMRG, Southern Queensland Landscapes, Gidarjil, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Bundaberg Regional Council and volunteer community groups is leading to decreased fox predation at marine turtle nesting beaches in the Burnett Mary region.



Paddock to Reef program

The Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting program (Paddock to Reef program) is a collaboration between approximately 20 organisations and more than 100 individuals such as government agencies, industry bodies, landholders, and natural resource management groups.

The program aligns with the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan (Reef 2050 WQIP) framework to evaluate management practice adoption, management practice effectiveness for water quality benefits and economic outcomes, catchment condition, pollutant runoff and marine condition. The Paddock to Reef program results also report on progress towards the Reef 2050 WQIP through the release of the annual Reef Water Quality Report Card.

The Paddock to Reef program reports on a paddock, sub-catchment, catchment, regional and Great Barrier Reef-wide scale. In the Burnett Mary region, there are 19 water quality monitoring sites that each collect water samples for analysis of sediment and nutrient loads

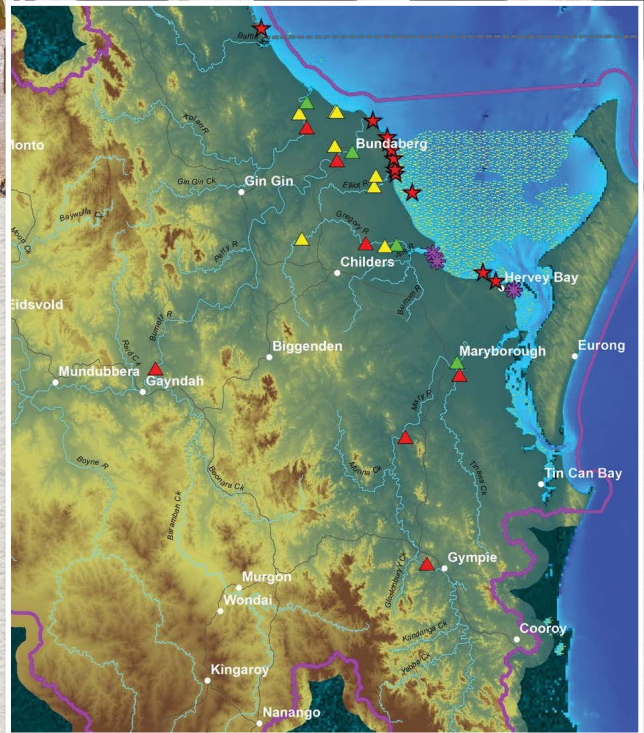


Photo 1: Marine and Water Quality Monitoring Sites map

and/or pesticide concentrations. There are also seven wetland monitoring sites and five seagrass monitoring sites. Members of Gidarjil Development Corporation undertake inshore coral monitoring at 16 different sites and water quality sampling.

Notable achievements from the year for the program include:

- Over 70 attendees at the 2019 Regional Integrated Science Forum
- 50 nutrient and pesticide surveys complete in five different sub-catchments



Photo: Conducting coral monitoring in the Burnett Mary Region

BMRG collaborates with multiple industry and research organisations to support and promote land management practices that result in improved water quality flowing into the Great Barrier Reef lagoon.



Photo: Grazing land management workshop and pasture field walk held at Ridgewood

Reef Alliance Project 2

The Reef Alliance Project 2 sought to continue and improve upon the preceding Reef Trust III, “Growing a Great Barrier Reef” Project (known as the Reef Alliance Project 1 – RAP1), delivered by Reef Alliance members and managed by Queensland Farmers Federation. The project maintained the momentum and ensured continuity of RAP1, which takes farming beyond industry best management practice in cane and grazing at a Reef-wide scale.

The project aimed to address sediment, nitrogen and pesticide runoff through the provision of extension services with a focus on cane and grazing management practices in high and very high priority basins as defined in the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan.

RAP2 supported farmers and graziers through customised farm planning, technical training, access to specialised agronomic advice and support. The project also supported the continuation and employment of extension and



Photo: Pasture assessment field day

technical staff to assist farmers and graziers to improve their practices for water quality improvements.

In the Burnett Mary region, BMRG partnered with regional delivery partner, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, a local catchment group who facilitated engagement with graziers, on-property extension, property planning and group training.

Achievements included:

- 46 graziers engaged in one-one-one property consultations, including property mapping, grazing land types, property infrastructure, safe stock rates, pasture identification, grazing land condition assessments, riparian condition assessments and management, key grazing management practices.
- 11 graziers improved practices over 674ha through riparian fencing and off stream watering points, fencing to land types and additional watering points to spread grazing pressure.
- One grazing land management workshop was held in conjunction with Country Noosa on a grazing property where improved grazing systems and rotational grazing practices had been implemented. This was combined with field walk on pasture plant identification, pasture forbs, recognising grazing land types and forage assessment.

The highest loads of fine sediment in the Mary catchment are derived from streambank erosion, which flows into the Ramsar listed Great Sandy Strait.

Natural Resources Investment Program Reef Water Quality

The Burnett Mary Catchments are two of the top contributors for fine sediment entering the adjoining marine ecosystems. Natural Resources Investment Program (NRIP) Reef Water Quality program, funded by the Department of Natural Resources Mining and Energy, has four major outcomes targeted towards reducing sediment entering the Great Barrier Reef and the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Site:

1. Streambank remediation
2. Wetland rehabilitation
3. Grazing land practice change
4. Riparian zone protection

Despite delays caused by COVID-19, our key delivery partners were able to successfully complete most of their required outcomes for the year. Noosa and District Landcare were able to deliver 460 hours of feral pest control over 298 hectares – removing 91 pigs from key wetland habitat in the Susan River area. The Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee surpassed their target of 3.3km of riparian fencing; installing 5.52km and 22 off-stream water points throughout the Mary Catchment to further protect the riparian zone from cattle.

One of the major accomplishments for the project was the completion of Clarke's site streambank remediation. Located on a productive cattle stud property in the Kenilworth reach of the Mary River, the site



Photo: Feral pigs in the Susan River wetlands

had extensive streambank and gully erosion issues that were exacerbated by a recent flood event. Bank stabilisation was achieved by reducing the slope of the outer southern bank through reprofiling and installation of rock revetments and pile fields. The streambank remediation works are estimated to reduce sediment outputs by 1,718 tonnes. The sediment savings from the Clarke's site will directly contribute to achieving sediment reduction targets from the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan for the Mary catchment.

Another highlight for the project was having funding representatives from the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy join the BMRG team on a site tour, visiting two key sites at Kenilworth and Susan River. The field day provided an excellent opportunity for the liaison officers and technical staff to see the on-ground works and to ask additional questions about the streambank remediation methodology.



Photo: The Clarke's site, post streambank remediation

Out and About...



Photo: Ann presenting at the Better Beef for the Reef field day



Photo: Radka with Nev and Bev (Turtle Volunteers Queensland)



Photo: Minister for Environment Sussan Ley with Sheila, David De Paoli (Austchilli) and Tony



Photo: Bundaberg NAIDOC festival



Photo: The team at the strategic planning meeting



Photo: Community day to celebrate the completion of the Carter site works



Photo: Wendy practicing her short interview skills with Peter Lewis

Photo: Ryan & Simon flying a drone



Photo: Simon, Ryan, Emma and Ben visit Isis High



Photo: Sheila announcing the Moneys Creek catchment funding



Photo: Simon, Ann, Wendy, Emma, Ryan, Dominique and Cathy conducting land condition assessments



Photo: Emma and Ryan with Damien OSullivan (DAF) and Luami at Bucca Field Day



Photo: Nick with Kerry Blackman (Gidarjil) and Laura Sutton (Greencollar)



Photo: Kevin setting up the DJI 600 drone



Photo: Nick and Jason visit Kenilworth

Photo: Bundaberg NAIDOC festival





Photo: John Coulombe flying the M600 with our thermal sensor to find fox dens

GIS, data management and drone support



Photo: Rocky the fox detection dog testing thermal detection effectiveness

Due to the demand for drone services, BMRG has continued to invest in drone technology with a suite of new sensors, hardware and personnel through funding from the Natural Resources Investment Program.

Another six BMRG staff were trained as drone pilots bringing our number of pilots up to 10. Four of those pilots are licenced to fly larger multirotor drones up to 25kgs.

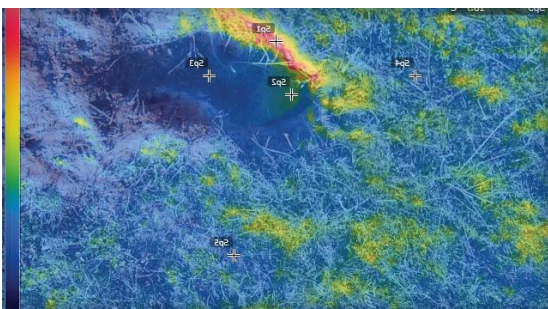
Our current fleet of the Phantom 4 Pro and Matrice 600 Pro have been joined by two Mavic 2 Pro drones for field staff and the new Matrice 300 RTK to capture survey accurate imagery. This will support our project officers to capture accurate and quality imagery of our beautiful landscapes and monitor the progress of project works.

With the expansion of BMRG's drone program has come the need to better manage risk and take opportunities to fly under challenging conditions. Our very own GIS and Drone Program Manager, Kevin Bowden, has obtained a Remote Operating Certificate [ReOC] for BMRG and operates as BMRG's chief pilot,

approving flights and maintaining our fleet. This has improved our capacity and allows us to fly night missions as an option, something not available without a ReOC and approval from a chief pilot.

This year an exciting collaboration began between BMRG and Tom Garrett and his fox detection dog Rocky from Southern Queensland Landscapes. The project involved trialling drone thermal technology to identify the location of active fox dens and in doing so assist with protecting nesting sea turtles from predation.

The technology is used to determine surface temperature differences between fox dens with recent activity and ambient surface temperatures surrounding the fox den. Preliminary research was undertaken this denning season to determine whether it would be effective and efficient to use a drone mounted thermal camera to map active dens. This project will continue next season with the aim to prioritise resources for fox management and monitor management effectiveness.



The sky is no longer the limit as BMRG soars to new heights!

Photo: Thermal image of a fox den



Photo: Gully Restoration and Farm Walk field day participants at Geoff and Maureen McCarthy's property near Apple Tree Creek

Better beef for the Reef

Over the last 3 years our Grazing Extension Officer, Emma Baker, has supported 45 graziers in the Burnett Mary region to engage with and adopt new grazing land management practices as part of the Better Beef for the Reef project.

Funded through the Queensland Government's Reef Water Quality Program, the project wrapped up on the 31st of August 2020.

Workshops, demonstration sites, field days and one-on-one engagement have been the tools to empower graziers to apply the knowledge and skills obtained through the project. In collaboration with our friends at Vet Cross, we successfully hosted a Beef Production Seminar in Gin Gin which attracted over 60 local producers. Tim Emery from Tropical Beef Technology Services was a key presenter on the day. Participants walked away from the seminar thinking about solutions to local issues affecting beef production businesses and the economic benefits of genetic selection.

In addition to group activities, Emma worked side by side with graziers on over 90 property visits. Through this one-on-one extension, we were able to upskill graziers in various key areas such as property mapping, forage budgeting, rotational grazing techniques, wet season spelling, animal nutrition, including dry season supplementation programs, soil testing and amendments as well as weed identification and management.

Five demonstration sites were also funded through the project to provide incentive to



Photo: Looking at symptoms of nutrient deficiencies in different pasture species



Photo: Soil Conservation Consultant John Day talking about Gully Erosion with Emma Baker and Burnett Mary cattle producer, Heather Fricke

landholders to help address issues such as gully erosion and evening out grazing pressure on sensitive pastures. Eleven graziers also received tailored advice on gully remediation and rehabilitation from John Day, Soil Conservation Consultant.

A special thank you to all of the landholders who gave their time and participated in this project and shared their valuable experiences. Their passion and dedication to the cattle industry is to be admired, particularly during some of the driest years on record.

Photographs, videos and case studies from these sites will be available on our website and Facebook page.



Photo: *Grazing Naturally workshop*

Enhanced Extension and Coordination

The Enhanced Extension Coordination (EEC) project is funded by the Queensland Government through the Reef Water Quality program. In the Burnett Mary region, it is being delivered throughout the Reef catchments by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Natural Resource Management groups.

The EEC project addresses the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce recommendation that the Queensland Government invest in more targeted and coordinated extension to support practice change that will result in improved water quality outcomes for the Reef.

Over the past 12 months BMRG Regional Extension Coordinator, Wendy Thorsborne, has met the targets of the project including:

- Updated the Burnett Mary Regional Extension Services Strategy (BMRESS) in consultation with extension staff/industry service providers.
- Facilitated the establishment of the Burnett Mary Regional Extension Reference Committee to provide input to the review of the BMRESS and allocation of discretionary funding.
- Facilitated the Cross Industry Networking forum to enhance opportunities for collaboration and professional development of extension practitioners.
- Developed the 19/20 Collaboration Strategy for the Burnett Mary region.
- Developed the Burnett Mary Communication and Engagement Plan, Putting Producers First.
- Facilitated the prioritisation and delivery of flexible and peer to peer projects supporting priorities highlighted in the BMRESS.
- Delivered the Communication Capacity Building for extension officers and industry BMP 'champions' in Great Barrier Reef NRM regions project.
- Delivered the Soil Conservation Technical Training and Mentoring Program throughout the Burnett Mary and Fitzroy Basin regions.
- Delivered the Sustaining our Soil project in collaboration with Fitzroy Basin Association.



Photo: *Darryl Hill Erosion Control workshop*



Photo: *Telling Your Story workshop with Pete Lewis, Gympie*

Photo: Gully erosion

Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions



Photo: GRASS Team- Cathy Mylrea, Emma Baker, Roger Sneathe (DAF), Megan Gurnett (DAF), Kate Brown (DAF), Dominique Glasgow and Ryan Trott

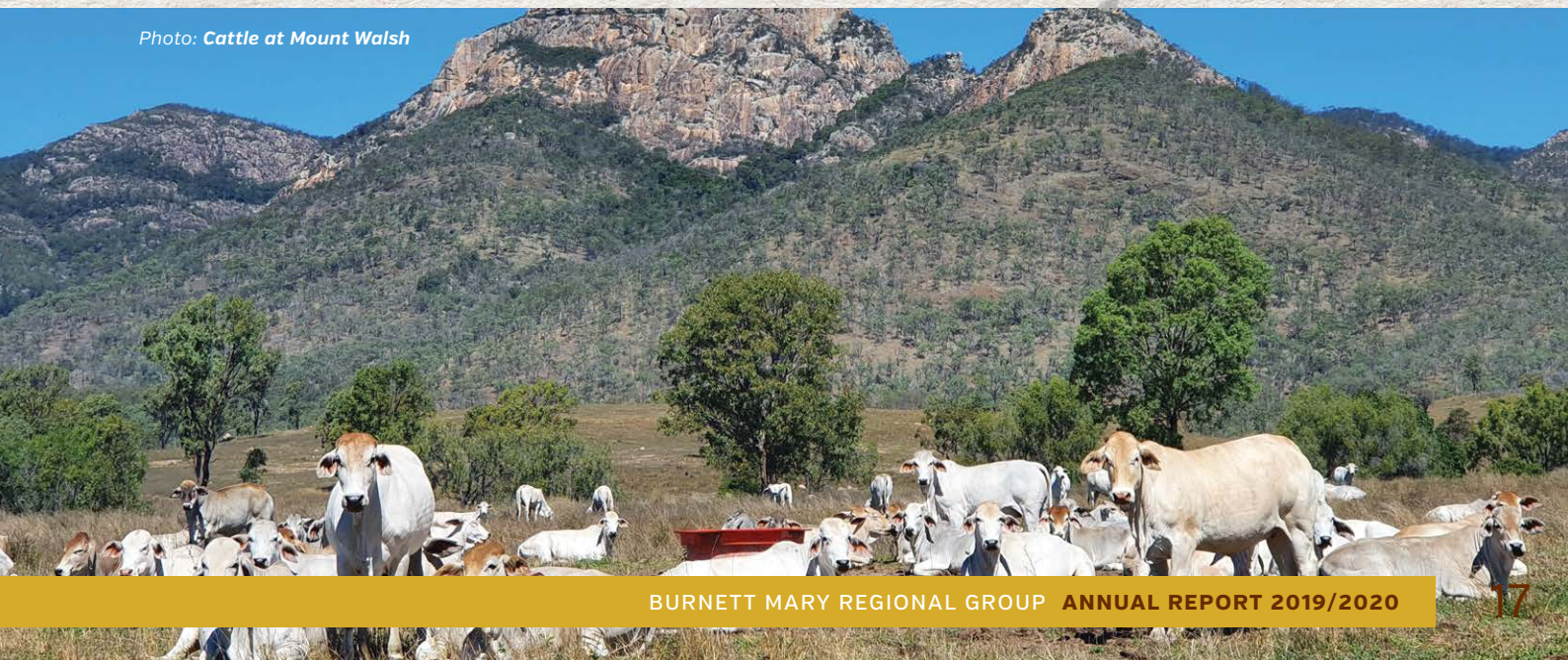
Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) is a program funded by the Queensland Government Reef Water Quality program and delivered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), Burnett Mary Regional Group, Fitzroy Basin Association and NQ Dry Tropics. GRASS aims to assist landholders in working in a Reef regulated environment.

This program focuses on identifying areas in poor and very poor land condition with a higher erosion risk and works with landholders to improve these areas through land condition assessments and the development of an Action Plan for Land Management. Landholders are

supported to improve land condition through incentives funding opportunities for activities including: gully erosion remediation, riparian fencing and hillslope erosion control.

Over the past 12 months, our GRASS Extension Officer has worked with 11 landholders to develop Action Plans for Land Management. These plans assist them in analysing their current land condition and developing plans to improve any areas of the property that are in lower condition. Graziers were also provided resources and information on the requirements of the grazing minimum standards for the Reef Protection Regulations, and how they can comply.

Photo: Cattle at Mount Walsh



Resilient and Productive Farmers across the Burnett Mary Region

Now in its second year, the Resilient and Productive Farmers across the Burnett Mary Region project gained momentum by expanding its network and activities working with and supporting land managers through a particularly challenging year of extremely low rainfall. Key achievements included the delivery of 11 stakeholder engagement events, five properties soil tested, 11 properties receiving one-on-one support, two property management plans developed and more than seven communication materials published.

Events supported through this project included property mapping workshops, drought and climate information sessions, and Grazing Naturally workshops on topics such as pasture management, herd management and soil health with over 200 land managers participating. BMRG delivered most events in collaboration with existing Landcare, producer or community groups including South Burnett Grazing Network, Burnett Inland Economic Development Organisation, AgForce, South East Burnett Landcare Group and Central Burnett Landcare Group.



Photo: Dick Richardson giving a demonstration at the Grazing Naturally event

One-on-one support included new and follow-up visits, phone calls and emails providing ongoing access to information and support as well as the development of in-depth property management plans. Soil testing linked with the property management process by attracting participation and supporting those making land management changes. The development of flyers, social media posts, electronic announcements and media releases continues to attract participation and promote the project and the work of BMRG.

Photo: Ryan (right) assisting Armin Machiani at the property mapping workshop at Mundubbera



Photo: South Burnett Grazing Network hosted Grazing Naturally with Dick Richardson





Photo: Mundubbera Mapping Workshop

Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) project

BMRG's Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) project is funded by the Regional Land Partnerships program as part of the National Landcare Program to support sustainable agricultural practices in the Burnett Mary region.

This year, Dominique Glasgow and Ryan Trott, continued the RALF delivery for the Burnett Mary. Dominique and Ryan attended more than 20 Landcare meetings throughout the region, however many events planned for the last quarter were delayed due to COVID-19. Where possible, the RALFs have participated in online meetings and events to achieve as many targets as possible. Some of these include the North and South Ag Network Forum and the CIN Practical Extension Toolbox Session.

One of the highlights for the RALFs during the year was their involvement with rolling out Burnett Mary Regional Group's first Burnett Mary Regional Community Grants Program. This program was aimed at landcare, producer, catchment and other community groups. Eligible projects were aimed at building the group/organisation's capacity to better deliver landcare, agricultural and environmental results, directly aligning with RALF service outcomes. The grants were offered for activities such as funding assistance towards regional events or workshops, operational needs, meeting costs, training courses for members such as grant writing and communication activities.



Photo: Prue Saxby presenting at the Mundubbera Grant Writing Workshop



Photo: Mundubbera Grant Writing Workshop

Another highlight for the RALFs this year was organising training workshops to upskill groups in the Burnett Mary. In February, the RALFs hosted two grant writing workshops in Gympie and Mundubbera, with presenter Prue Saxby of Indigo Gold. The workshops were aimed at Landcare group members along with volunteers and landholders. More than 45 participants attended both workshops, representing a variety of groups. Participants were able to tap into Prue's experience and knowledge and take away key learnings including; finding out how to find suitable grants, how to be 'grant-ready' within their group or committee and tips and tricks on how to write an appealing application that funders are looking for.

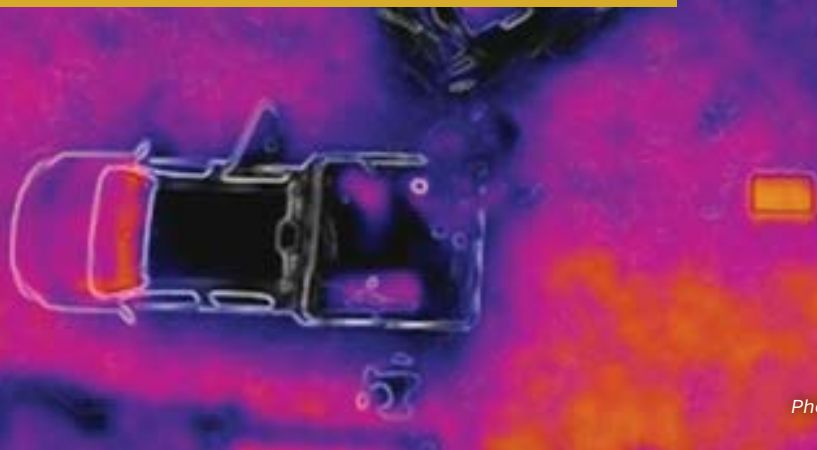


Photo: Mop up day rangers at the Taabinga homestead after the burn

Bunya Mountains Murri Ranger Program

The Bunya Mountains Murri Rangers (BMMR) undertake work in Russell Park (a Council-owned nature reserve) and Bunya Mountains National Park. The Bunya Mountains are of cultural and environmental significance and support more than 30 rare and threatened species. Activities include survey and recording of flora and fauna; heritage site management; implementing appropriate fire regimes; maintaining tracks and visitor areas; and managing weeds and feral animals.

The work is undertaken in partnership with the Bunya Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (BPAC), the Burnett Mary Regional Group, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Queensland Herbarium, and the Southern Queensland Landscapes.

This year, BMMR have been undergoing training for essential land management skills, including; ACDC chemical application qualifications, chainsaw level 2, excavator, roller, front-end and skid-steer loader, ATV training, 4x4 (and recovery training in extreme situation), CALM (conservation and land management), and Cert 4 in Workplace, Health and Safety.

In September, cool burns were successfully conducted at Taabinga Homestead in partnership with BMMR, Landholders, BPAC and the Booie Rural Fire Service. This resulted in positive outcomes for grass cover, removal of invasive species, and promotion of native flora growth. This activity marks a growing appreciation for traditional burning methods, and the number of private landholders interested in participating in traditional fire practices is growing.

Photo: Senior Ranger, Kori Munro, demonstrating and practising removing a coolamon off a gum tree, after rain in a gully way





This year, remote sensor cameras were placed out in the field to monitor the presence of pest animals such as feral pigs and cats. If sightings of the target species are confirmed, the BMMR notify QPWS, Biosecurity QLD and the Western Downs Regional Council, and plans are established between the stakeholders to initiate control activities. Timing is crucial to maximise the results of the pest animal operations, for example feral cats are best targeted when they are in their dependant stage.

BMMR continue to treat and manage invasive native species that encroach on the ecologically endemic, and culturally significant, grassland balds. Additional control of madeira vine also occurs at high priority sites, to protect the canopy ecosystem of the rainforest.

The BMMR undertake community-based cultural activities as well, including a Country awareness program with the Wacol Youth Detention Centre, and the Bunya Boys Junior Ranger Program with Nanango and Kingaroy State Schools.



Photo: A work experience participant collects coolamon and prepares a clap stick on the fire this practise harden the timber



Photo: BMMR acquired an ATV for recovery operations in extreme situations

The Rangers teach the youth about Country and culture and undertake tool-making and art workshops with the junior rangers. Our rangers also provide work experience opportunities for young indigenous students keen on pursuing a career in managing Country or learning more about indigenous culture. Duties include;

- Tool maintenance and use
- Weed Control
- Traditional tool making
- Collecting coolamons off gum trees (used to carry food, water, paint, babies or grinding material)
- Cultural knowledge of the Bunya Mountains and the surrounding landscape
- The role of a ranger



Photo: Gully dump

Saving Soils in the Burnett Mary

The Australian Government's National Landcare Program: Smart Farms Small Grants (SMSG) aims to support the adoption of best practices that improves the management and quality of our natural resources and increases on-farm productivity.

BMRG's Saving Soils in the Burnett Mary project is funded through SMSG and is designed to improve soil conservation outcomes in the Burnett Mary, with a focus on the inland Burnett. The aim is for landholders to have an increased capacity to adequately address gully erosion issues.

The project supports landholders through field days on demonstration sites, case studies, tailored erosion remediation guides and the development of videos providing advice on soil conservation issues, particularly gully erosion.

This year, five gully erosion demonstration sites were identified, four gully erosion demonstration sites were contracted and nine landholders received tailored erosion control advice.

BMRG has also taken the opportunity to collaborate with the Fitzroy Basin Association, our consortium partner in the Fitzroy catchment, to develop four gully remediation videos. This will broaden the scope of the videos, resources available and the potential reach to landholders.

The project is ongoing and will be supporting more landholders next year.



Photo: Project Officer Simon Hunt collecting footage of gullies for technical remediation videos

Look out for the videos on YouTube and our Facebook page!



Photo 1: A 4.5m tall eroded bank created after an intense storm

Photo 2: Soil Conservation expert, John Day in his element

Board of Directors

“ We would like to thank our members,
Landcare groups, research partners, Federal,
State and Local Government, Traditional Owners,
the community, BMRG Board and the staff for their
dedication in delivering the successful outcomes this year.
We look forward to our continued collaboration
in the coming years. ”

Photo Left to Right: **BMRG Board of Directors Vanessa Elwell-Gavins, Professor Phil Brown,
Tony Ricciardi (Chair), Mike Moller, Elizabeth Shanks**



BARGARA

160 HUGHES ROAD BARGARA QLD 4670 - T: 07 4181 2999

WONDAI

32 BRAMSTON STREET WONDAI QLD 4606 - T: 07 4169 0720

www.bmrg.org.au



Australian Government



Queensland Government

