

Lower Burdekin Water

The Year in Review

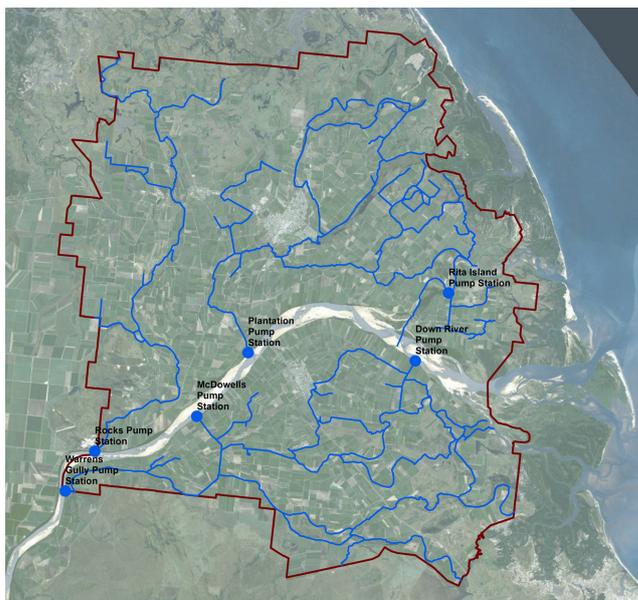
2019-20



This has been a year of transition for Lower Burdekin Water. The Board and staff have worked hard to develop a sustainable future structure, rationalise our operations to provide better outcomes for our customers and the regional environment, and to prepare for upcoming legislative changes. We continued more than 50 years of prudent financial management and have begun to step out of our comfort zone to take a more active role in the regional water sector and our community.



Michael Caspanello, Chairman 2019-20



LBW maintains and manages the Burdekin aquifer to supply the bulk water needs of the region. Our area is the largest replenished coastal aquifer in Australia.

LBW is a statutory water authority created by the Queensland Government in 2015 following the amalgamation of the North Burdekin Water Board (established in 1965) and the South Burdekin Water Board (established in 1966).

Over more than 50 years, the authority has worked tirelessly to provide a safe, reliable and cost-efficient water supply to ratepayers and customers across the region as well as actively replenishing the natural aquifer to allow sustainable groundwater pumping without environmental damage.

Board of Directors during 2019-20 reporting period: Michael Caspanello (Southern Division ratepayer representative), Glenis Jones (Northern Division ratepayer representative), Lisa Parker (Northern Division representative), Peter Larsen (miller representative), Neomi Butler (miller representative).

LBW employed nineteen staff during the 2019-20 financial year and undertook a restructure of its operational management during the 2019-20 financial year.

There were 9 Board meetings, 20 committee meetings and 37 special meetings held during the reporting period.

During the 2018-19 financial year LBW made a commitment to improve the diversity of its Board and to achieve the Queensland Government's Women on Boards initiative target of 50% women on its Board. LBW surpassed the gender target in October 2019 following the triannual nomination and appointment process.

LBW's current strategic objectives

- Safety and wellbeing of people
- Engaged and productive workforce
- Engaged and informed stakeholders
- System health and ecological function
- Proactive and transparent governance
- Manage assets and infrastructure to ensure reliable services
- Manage aquifer heights and water delivery to prevent saltwater intrusion
- Financial sustainability while delivering services at the lowest possible cost

Statistics



The full report can be accessed via our website
www.lowerburdekinwater.com.au



The northern division pumped 28,325ML during December 2019 which is the highest monthly volume of water ever pumped in its 55 years of operation. Irrigation demand during the second half of the financial year reduced with the onset of the wet season and was lower than normal.

402

ratepayers and customers

668

designated farming blocks

344 km

of pipelines and channels
managed and maintained

41,244 ha

serviced within the authority area

148,476 ML

of open water pumped individually by
ratepayers with access to channel
water

\$9,289,330

total income for the year

\$5,766,578 of area income

\$2,882,282 of water income

\$640,471 of other income

including a \$160,362 grant from NQ Dry Tropics
for the "System Repair Project - Lower Burdekin"

\$3,754,367

expended in capital works

\$8,074,650

expended in ongoing operations and
maintenance

219,283 ML

pumped from the Burdekin River

Down River Pumpstation 12,174 ML
McDowells Pumpstation 41,850 ML
Warrens Gully Pumpstation 23,907 ML
Plantation Pumpstation 77,734 ML
Rita Island Pumpstation 12,948 ML
Rocks Pumpstation 50,670 ML

Capital works

A significant capital works program was implemented to improve water management and control energy costs which included:

- Replacement of the existing McDowell pipeline: Stage 2 of the existing McDowell pipeline project involved the procurement and installation of 1.4 km's of DN1300 PN6 GRP pipes and was the final section of the pipeline to be replaced. A new outlet structure and several farmers off takes were also constructed as part of the project scope.
- Rocks Pump Station Energy Reduction: The existing 1.3MW electrical and motor control systems were replaced with new ultra-low harmonic variable speed drives to reduce the electricity consumption at the pump station and to improve water delivery control.
- Oats Gate: Existing timber flow control gates were replaced with new aluminum gates from AWMA Water Control Solutions to provide better control of water flow and reduce occupational health and safety hazards.
- Saltwater Creek – Further works were undertaken to procure and install the final automated water control gates, structures and fish ladder installation as part of the Saltwater Creek project.
- A new replacement Hitachi ZX360LC- 5 hydraulic excavator, a number of new replacement four-wheel drive vehicles and thirty-six new open water meters were purchased and commissioned by LBW during the reporting period as part of its asset renewals.

Operations

- Management restructure – The restructure introduced two new supervisor positions, one new management position and removed an existing management position from LBW's organisational structure.
- Management worked closely with consulting engineers to improve the design and documentation of temporary sand diversion structures (sand dams) within the Burdekin River.
- A major rain event was experienced in late January 2020 which resulted in substantial damage to channels and channel crossings. The total money spent on repairing flood damage was approximately \$83,300.

Opportunities:

- Five yearly asset revaluation undertaken by Assetic Australia Pty Ltd
- Burdekin Water Futures Group – to support a long-term, strategic whole-of-system approach to understanding and managing Lower Burdekin resources and systems.
- Working with NQ Dry Tropics on the System Repair Project – Lower Burdekin which aims to improve water quality, rehabilitate shallow wetland areas in the coastal catchments, and re-establish the natural wetting and drying cycles.
- Resolution of the Bindal People #2 Native Title determination, to which LBW is a party as the organisation owns and operates infrastructure on Crown Lands, will provide additional certainty to all parties.
- LBW is currently investigating the possibility of undertaking a large groundwater research project within its authority area with Flinders University

Challenges:

- LBW did not meet its performance targets set for the 2019-20 financial year for the safety and wellbeing of people, however, no medical treatment injuries or significant incidents were recorded during LBW's operational activities during the reporting period
- there were also no significant unplanned outages in service delivery during the reporting period.
- LBW is undertaking a watching brief around testing and investigations undertaken with regards to a PFAS contamination and any potential effect it may have on its stakeholders. The responsibility for groundwater testing currently rests with the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

Future plans

In addition to ongoing operational works to construct sand dams, asset maintenance, provision of water and aquifer replenishment, LBW will focus in the next year on:

- Improving internal processes and structures to better suit a fully amalgamated organisation serving the entire region
- Review and update of the LBW Strategic Plan