

Lower Burdekin Water

The Year in Review

2018-19



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 2018-19



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.

LBW was one of the first Queensland statutory authorities to reach and surpass the gender equity target set in the Queensland Governments 'Women on Boards' Initiative, during the recent triennial Director nomination process.

Board of Directors during 2018-19 reporting period: Michael Caspanello (Southern Division ratepayer representative), Con Christofides (Northern Division ratepayer representative), Murray Cannavan (Southern Division ratepayer representative), Mark Castelanelli (Northern Division representative), Peter Larsen (miller representative), Neomi Butler (miller representative), Cr Sue Perry (community representative).

A number of directors and senior staff successfully completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors - Foundations of Directorship course to enhance LBW's governance capacity.

LBW currently employs 17 local community members.

There were 73 ordinary, committee and special meetings of the LBW Board held during the reporting period.

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



422

ratepayers and customers

633

designated farming blocks

334 km

of pipelines and channels
managed and maintained

42,200 ha

serviced within the authority area

121,626 ML

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

\$8,840,713

total income for the year

\$5,718,950 of area income

\$2,368,958 of water income

\$753,105 of other income

including a \$195,000 grant from NQ Dry Tropics
for the "System Repair Project - Lower Burdekin"

\$2,171,514

expended in capital works

\$7,961,926

expended in ongoing operations and
maintenance

184,150 ML

pumped from the Burdekin River

Over 30% of water pumped
from the Burdekin River
was diverted to recharge pits

Down River Pumpstation 6,163 ML
McDowells Pumpstation 36,218 ML
Warrens Gully Pumpstation 24,663 ML
Plantation Pumpstation 69,294 ML
Rita Island Pumpstation 4,760 ML
Rocks Pumpstation 43,052 ML

Capital works

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

- McDowell's Pipeline Replacement – preliminary planning and concept design for future upgrade
- Red Lily System Reconfiguration Upgrade – two automated water control gates, VSD upgrade to pumpstation, five new channel crossings, new pipeline, augmentation to 3.5km of channel
- Roncato Diversion - automated water control gate
- Rocks Pump Station Energy Reduction – new VSD and switchboards to reduce energy consumption
- Saltwater Creek and Rocky Ned Road - automated water control gates and fish ladders (in collaboration with NQ Dry Tropics), new road culvert and headwall structure (in collaboration with Burdekin Shire Council)
- Warrens Gully Scheme – application made to the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund for a co-funding grant to construct major new river pumpstation, increase capacity of 10 existing culverts and an inverted syphon

Operations

- Management restructure – moving away from the previous divided structure to better provide a seamless service
- GPS fitted to vehicles to better monitor safety and productivity
- Improvements to the design and documentation of sand dams
- Purchase of a replacement hydraulic excavator (Volvo EC22DL), three replacement 4WD vehicles, and 44 new open-water meters feature in items purchased this year.

Opportunities:

- North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough event significantly increased natural recharge – some 1,600 Gigalitres per day discharged past the Clare gauging station.
- 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.

Challenges:

- An early retirement and unexpected expiration of director appointments due to changes in the Queensland Water Act meant that the Board had six vacancies at the end of June 2019. An application for Ministerial approval for directors to continue in an acting capacity was received after the end of this year.
- Removal of the Code for Self-assessable Development Temporary Waterway Barrier Works had a significant impact on LBW's ability to construct sand dams. LBW is working with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries on a resolution.
- An extended process to fill an ongoing vacancy for a Workplace Health and Safety Officer is an identified risk for the organisation. Current efforts are focused on filling the position internally.

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
- Operational structures review to be completed
- Five yearly asset revaluation scheduled for first half of 2019-20 year
- Review and update of the LBW Strategic Plan
- Implementation of LEAD Safety Culture Model program and Injury Prevention and Management Program