



***** ** JOINT MEDIA RELEASE *** ****
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MARY RIVER CAMPAIGN RECOGNISED IN ENVIRONMENT AWARDS.

Some of the key campaigners who spearheaded the three and a half year battle to stop the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal on the Mary River have been recognized in the prestigious Sunshine Coast Environment Awards.

Organisers of the annual environment awards, the Sunshine Coast Environment Council, Awards recognized the dedication to the environment and marked it with three special awards.

In a ceremony at Kawana last Friday evening, the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group and the Greater Mary Association each received an award, as did photographer and graphic artist Arkin Mackay.

Accepting the award on behalf of Save the Mary President Glenda Pickersgill, fellow campaigner Ian Mackay paid tribute to the “whole of community” response that collectively fought to overturn the proposal.

“Save the Mary had the support of a wide range of individuals and groups in this campaign,” Mr Mackay said, particularly singling out the wonderfully informed work of the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee whose Chairman Phil Moran was present on the award night.

“There were times along the campaign trail that a snowflake in hell would have been given better odds than us beating the dam,” Mr Mackay said, “but the Mary River had to be saved and the battle would have gone on until that outcome was achieved.”

Compere for the awards night, local ABC identity John Stokes, concurred somewhat ruefully with the ‘snowflake in hell’ comment, in that some twelve months back, he’d feared that the dam proposal was too far down the track to be stopped, and added that he’d walk backwards to Kandanga if Peter Garrett said “no” to it. True to his word, John’s walk, along with fellow announcer Cam Young, will take place on December 12 and will end at the Save the Mary "Victory Celebrations" in Kandanga held from 3pm-10pm at the Kandanga Recreation grounds.

Receiving an award of the Greater Mary Association, research officer Tanzi Smith recognized the dedication of a whole different community downstream of proposed dam site, from Tiaro to Hervey Bay. Her group had formed out of claims that the dam would have “minimal downstream impacts” and was instrumental in state Sustainability Minister Andrew McNamara losing his seat over the issue at the last state election.

Arkin Mackay’s acceptance speech was brief and humble as she pointed out that she was no good at writing submissions so she tried to make a contribution with her camera. Several camera forays around south-east Queensland’s dry dams and a four day kayak trip (with fellow photographer Chris van Wyk) through the area earmarked for the dam produced much valuable photographic material. In addition to this, the compilation of visual albums on her Stop Press website and the networking with a wide mailing list was vital to the campaign. A ten minute slideshow of Arkin’s work concluded the awards evening.

Save the Mary River Coordinating Group president Glenda Pickersgill said that everyone involved in the fight against the dam should be very proud of what they had achieved and these awards helped to recognise that.

“Of course we await Federal Environment minister Peter Garrett’s formal decision on the 2nd December but the “no” that he foreshadowed on Remembrance Day, followed by the Premier’s announcement that the state government wouldn’t appeal that decision, gives us grounds for more than cautious optimism,” Ms Pickersgill

said.

“There’s a lot of healing still to happen but this community has shown itself to be both resilient and committed, and is more than eager to be involved in the way ahead,” she said.

“The community deserves to have a voice in our future vision for the Mary Valley and we urge Ms Bligh to listen and to support us in our way forward.”

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Media Contacts:

Glenda Pickersgill	(Save the Mary River Coordinating Group)	041 144 3589
Darryl Stewart	(Greater Mary Association)	041 877 1655
Tanzi Smith	(Greater Mary Association)	040 584 8375
David Kreutz	(Save the Mary River Coordinating Group)	043 268 3147