

MARY RIVER DRINKING WATER CATCHMENT

Fact Sheet

Which Drinking Water Catchment does my water come from?

There are four separate catchments that supply the Fraser Coast Community with drinking water. The Mary River drinking water catchment supplies the community of Tiaro.

A pump, located on the bank of the Mary River at Tiaro, pumps source (river) water up into the Tiaro Water Treatment Plant, where the water is treated, then supplied to residents of Tiaro as drinking water.



Map of the Mary River Drinking Water Catchment

Mary River Catchment

- The Mary River catchment is the largest of the Fraser Coast regional Council's water source catchments. It is some 310 kilometres in length and covers an area of 9,595km² (Australian Government, 2011).
- The Mary River Catchment extends through the Fraser Coast, Gympie and Sunshine Coast Regional Councils. The catchment starts in the Conondale Range, near Maleny in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast and flows to the Great Sandy Strait at River Heads, passing through the regional townships of Kenilworth, Gympie, Tiaro and Maryborough.

- The catchment supports a variety of significant and environmentally sensitive flora and fauna including:
 - Australian Lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*)
 - Mary River Cod (*Maccullochella peelii mariensis*)
 - Mary River Turtle (*Elusor macrurus*)
 - White-throated Snapping Turtle (*Elseya albagula*)
 - Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*)
 - Platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*)
- The Mary River catchment has cultural and heritage significance for both local indigenous communities and early pioneering settlers.

Land Uses

Land uses in the Mary River drinking water catchment are:

- Agriculture
- Rural residential
- Plantation forestry
- Cattle grazing
- Native forest – conservation
- Urban development (townships)
- Sand and gravel extraction

Water quality challenges in the Mary River drinking water catchment

Contamination of source water in our drinking water catchments can have a major impact on drinking water quality and the level of treatment required. Fraser Coast Regional Council undertake catchment monitoring within their boundaries of the Mary River catchment to monitor the potential for contamination or impact on water quality from a variety of sources:

- Sediment/soil runoff and erosion of riverbanks can cause high turbidity levels
- Animal faeces (from cattle and other animals) can introduce pathogens
- Pathogens and chemicals from primary and secondary recreation (i.e. swimming and boating)
- Chemical contamination from herbicides and pesticides
- High nutrient runoff from fertilisers - can increase growth of aquatic weeds including Salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) and Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), which can choke waterways and block water supply infrastructure and can contribute to increased algal blooms and outbreaks of the toxic blue-green algae.