



Lee McNicholl, Neville Stiller, Peter Hansen and Ian Hansen at the BSA AGM. Photo Megan James/BMO

# BSA warns on water

New president wants water for water in 'make good' provisions

**N**EW Basin Sustainability Alliance head Lee McNicholl has promised to make water the number one issue for his advocacy body this year.

Mr McNicholl was appointed president at the group's annual general meeting in Dalby this month and he said the coal seam gas industry took 12 megalitres of water each year from each well and that every 1000 wells represented the loss of 6000 head of cattle. He said stories of farmers having improved relations with the companies was still "something of a fantasy."

"As my new fellow committee member Richard Golden said, it's more of a shotgun wedding than a marriage made in heaven." Lawyer Tom Cruthers told the AGM about

the large impacts on groundwater from mining, especially the proposed Galilee basin mines.

He quoted his own *Draining the Lifeblood* report which analysed assessment documents prepared by five coal mine proponents, projects additional impacts of a further four proposed mines and found that together the Galilee coal mines had the potential to cause permanent and unacceptable impacts on regional groundwater and surface water resources.

Mr Cruthers said mining in Queensland was covered by six different acts which overlapped in confusing ways but whereas the coalmining industry needed a water licence, the petroleum industry had limitless

access to "associated water".

"The fact is, we don't know how much water the Queensland mining industry is taking," Mr Cruthers said.

Peter Shannon from Shine Lawyers, who resigned from this year's BSA committee, said CSG negotiation was now changing and companies were "hardening up".

"Your three most valuable resources are your lawyer, your accountant and your valuer," he told the AGM.

"Use them and stay strong."

Mr Shannon noted that a new set of smaller players were entering the gas market such as Armour Energy which didn't have the market capitalisation of the big players and may be more difficult to deal with.