Coastal kidneys’
turn in spotlight

BY March next year 100km of Noosa River mangroves will be captured on video to provide something more telling than a snapshot of the water system’s “coastal kidneys”.

Last Saturday Noosa Integrated Catchment Association celebrated the opening of its Noosa Marina office with the launch of Noosa Mangrove Watch, which will see volunteers help monitor the health of one of the river’s most important natural assets.

According to NICA projects coordinator Maree Prior, the river rangers will travel along the river, taking a visual record of the mangrove systems that help provide fish nurseries while filtering catchment run-off.

“This data will be sent to University of Queensland researchers Dr Norm Duke and Jock McKenzie, who were invited guests to the “highly visible” new waterfront front door of NICA.

Ms Prior said the NICA brief was to engage the community and carry out vital monitoring of mangrove and seagrass health, which indicated the state of the overall catchment.

At the end of the Mangrove Watch project the UQ team will issue a report card on its findings that will be used for future comparisons.

Along the way, priority sites will be identified for follow-up actions, which fits well with NICA’s aim to restore the catchment.

Another key aim is to get more people involved in producing positive environmental outcomes while linking community and science to protect valuable mangrove ecosystems though a country community action grant.

On Sunday volunteers underwent field training and a Mangrove Watch trial with the river rangers.

According to NICA, the Noosa River catchment spans 784 square kilometres from Teewah in the north to Laguna Bay where the 60km-long Noosa River enters the ocean.

It includes Lake Weyba further south and most of its area falls within the UNESCO Noosa biosphere reserve.

“The focus area for this project will be from the middle to the lower stretch of the river where mangroves are found,” Ms Prior said.