



“Actively Supporting Community-Based Nature Conservation & Sustainable Land Management in Queensland”

# The Health of Landcare in Queensland 2019/2020

(Summary Report)

QWaLC members, primarily Landcare Groups in QLD, are an important part of the community. Our 411 Member Groups have 28,715 community volunteers that contribute over 1,029,360 hours annually. This figure is an increase from the previous year (789,876) despite volunteer numbers decreasing by almost 10% from last year. Their efforts, this year, equate to \$42,944,899 in financial value. This amount is calculated using the Australian Bureau of Statistics volunteer equivalent hourly rate of \$41.72 if paid labour was engaged to provide the same service as our community volunteers. During 2019/2020 member group activities engaged with 432,852 people across Queensland. This represents almost 8.5% of the state's population.

Through extensive research and engagement with its Member Groups QWaLC presents a comprehensive picture of the overall Health of Landcare in QLD, an overview of existing resource levels statewide and in each NRM region. In summary the Health of Landcare in Queensland, although facing many challenges, is in reasonable shape and continues to meet the expectations of Member Groups.

This report provides detailed information regarding Member Groups:

- Human resource demographics (paid staff and volunteers),
- Income sources and levels (Government and other sources),
- Performance and contributing factors,
- Satisfaction levels with networks, support agencies and elected representatives,
- Core activities undertaken by groups,
- Partnerships with local business and other groups, and
- Level of support requests.

The following sections provide a narrative of the Health of Landcare in Queensland supported by substantive quantitative data presented in this report. It details statistical information regarding Member Groups human resources, work activities, finances, performance and satisfaction level with support networks.

### **Human resource demographics (paid staff and volunteers)**

The most popular legal structure of groups, 92.58%, is an incorporated association. A small minority, 3.55%, are companies limited by guarantee while 3.23% remain unincorporated. 17.10% of incorporated groups auspice other groups in their region. 31.29% are registered as charities that have the ability to receive tax- deductible donations.

The majority of Member Groups rely solely on volunteers that are 45 years or older. 73.23% of member groups do not have any paid staff and 63.55% of members, with paid staff (26.77%) have no full-time employees. The majority of paid staff are either casual or full-time. Volunteers continue to play a vital role in Landcare. They contribute over 85,000 hours per month in order to achieve outcomes for their natural environment and the wider community.

Member group volunteers contribute 1,029,360 hours of their time annually. The in-kind financial value of community volunteering is \$42,944,899. 61.61% reported that volunteer numbers are stable while 11.61% reported that their volunteer numbers decreased while 26.77% reported an increase in numbers. Community volunteers are an equal number in terms of female and male.

Collectively member groups have 1,731 individuals that actively participate on management committees. Each group has, on average, 5 committee members responsible for organisational governance. The majority of committees have Individuals with expertise in business, accounting, marketing and environmental management as well as being representative of specific sections of their local communities. For example, Landholders make up 64.52% of all committee members. This highlights the importance of Landcare and it's connection to and influence of sustainable land use practices.

26.77 % of member groups in QLD employ a total of 483 staff and increase from last year's total of 404. They are made up of the employment types as shown in the table below. Just over 35.40% of those employed are located in SEQ. Another 109 employed by Member Groups in the Burnet Mary region while a further 58 are located in Cape York although the majority of these employees are casual.

**Employment Type**

|           |     |           |     |        |     |              |            |
|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|--------|-----|--------------|------------|
| Full Time | 113 | Part Time | 125 | Casual | 245 | <b>Total</b> | <b>483</b> |
|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|--------|-----|--------------|------------|

Generally, it was found that Member Groups that have a mixture of paid staff and volunteers tend to achieve greater levels of engagement with the wider community. Organisational capacity is largely dependent on human resources. Volunteers and members numbers are reported as being relatively stable thereby enabling the majority of Member Groups to meet their expectation within their financial and resource limitations.

**Income sources and levels (Government and other sources)**

This section provides an overview of the types and levels of government funding received and income generated by member groups overall in Queensland and within NRM regions.

63.91% of all revenue received (government funding and self-generated income) were amounts of less than \$5,000 while amounts between \$5,001 and \$50,000 account for 26.73% and amounts greater than \$50,001 accounted for 9.37% of all income. Many groups are unable to rely exclusively on government funding. Member Groups generate income from other sources such as fee for service activities (on-ground work, training and plant sales) public donations and other sources. 68.39% of Member Groups charge a membership fee that is on average \$25. This income accounts for 21.10% of all revenue raised by Member Groups while self-generated income is 18.05% and donations from the general public account for 15.38% of revenue. Collectively Member Groups raise 65.68% of their funds. Government funding accounts for 34.32% of all revenue. Local Government Authorities (LGAs) provided 13.71% of all revenue, State Government 8.88% and the Commonwealth provided 6.31% and regional NRM bodies provided 5.42% of all funding. This represents a decrease from the 8.27% granted during 2019/2020.

30.18% of revenue raised by Member Groups, excluding Government funding, were for amounts of less than \$5,000. 10.75% were for amounts from \$5,001 to \$50,000. 12.62% of Government grants received by member groups were less than \$5,000 while 15.98% was for amounts from \$5,001 to \$50,000.

Amount received in ranges exceeding \$50,001 amount to 5.72% of granted received. A total of 348 grants were received by QWaLC member groups during 2019/2020.

Of the Government funding received by member groups LGAs provided almost 40% mostly for amount of less than \$5,000. Regional NRM bodies provided (15.80%), State government (25.86%) followed by the Commonwealth government at 18.39%. Local government is shown to have been particularly supportive providing member groups with funding in SEQ, Terrain NRM, Burnett Mary, Condamine and QMDC. In South West QLD the Regional NRM Body provided the majority of it funding to Member Groups.

65.16% of Member Groups shared some form of the 34.32% of Government funding allocated across the State while 9.35% of groups did not receive any Government funding. The dispersal of funding across NRM Regions roughly correlates to the number of member groups in each Region expect for South West QLD and Desert Channels .

The majority of Member Groups raise and receive small amounts, of less than \$5,000, and are still able to manage to achieve positive outcomes for their local natural environment thereby enabling them to meet their expectations.

### **Performance and contributing factors**

The performance of groups is influenced by numerous factors. Their ability to meet or exceed their expectations is largely determined by how successful they are at securing and managing human and financial resources. It is also dependent on the availability of resources such as government funding together with a service and advice support network such as that provided by QWaLC and other organisations.

Adverse climatic conditions such as drought and cyclones also have an impact on the availability of additional government funds to undertake additional activities to help the communities cope with the impact of extremes in climatic conditions.

A significant number of member groups, 90.32%, met or exceeded their expectations in 2019/2020. Where groups indicated that they did not meet their expectations it resulted from the limited availability of funding and support services to member groups in these regions had impacted their ability to achieve their goals.

The likely reasons for member groups meeting their expectations is that member groups reported the number of volunteers and members as and organisational capacity as being stable. Member group's ability to raise the majority of their own funds offset the limited availability of securing government funding. The mix of stable human resources and the amount of funds raised means, that in general, member group organisational capacity has remained stable.

It also interesting to note that member group access to support and advisory services, other than government, is very low. Despite this members achieved results. Perhaps because of the reasonable level of support provided from LGAs and NRM region bodies.

Groups that are engaged with their community in partnerships with local business and other groups (52% of all member groups) benefit through low or no cost provision of additional resources to support their organisational aspirations and activities. This also results in greater engagement with the wider community providing the ability for others to support Landcare in their local area. Some of the benefits include Volunteer labour or services free or discounted use of facilities, free or discounted materials, cash donations, free or discounted use of equipment, free or discounted advertising or discounted labour or services.

### Identified support requirements

Member groups were asked the type of support their group required to maintain and improve their performance. The top priorities were writing funding applications followed by volunteer management and workplace health and safety systems. This is the similar to last year.

### Core activities undertaken by groups

Our member groups undertake an extensive range of activities that generate income, protect our natural resources and engage with the wider community. Vegetation management, primarily on-ground works, and training programs such as field days and works are activities that many member groups undertake. Vegetation management results in the reduction of weeds and extension of native riparian plantings that improves the health of waterways and provides habitat for native animals and birds.

Groups also develop and provide printed materials, advisory services, produce native plants and conduct conferences and expos. These activities and many others act to help manage and protect our natural resource while resulting in the sharing of knowledge of sustainable land-use practices and raising the awareness of the work that Landcare does in local communities. These activities attract new members and volunteers. Collectively member groups engaged with 432,852 people across Queensland. This represents almost 8.5% of the state's population.

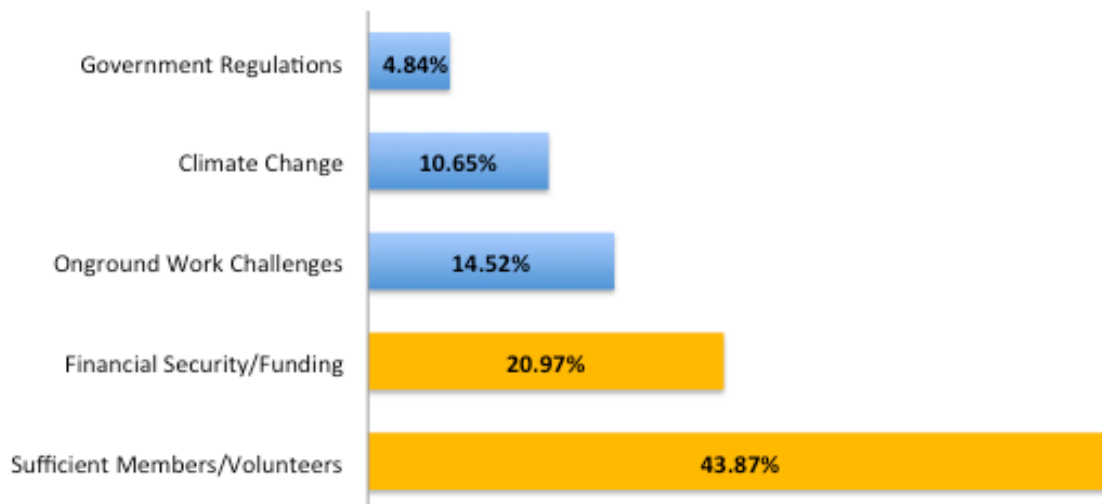
Some of the other activities carried out by groups include:

- Monitoring programs including marine mammal and water quality,
- Fencing to protect natural habitat from feral animals and reduce waterway erosion,
- Establishing and developing programs for land managers,
- Wildlife clinics and native animal rescue and rehabilitation,
- Community gardens that provide produce for local, and
- Cleanup events.

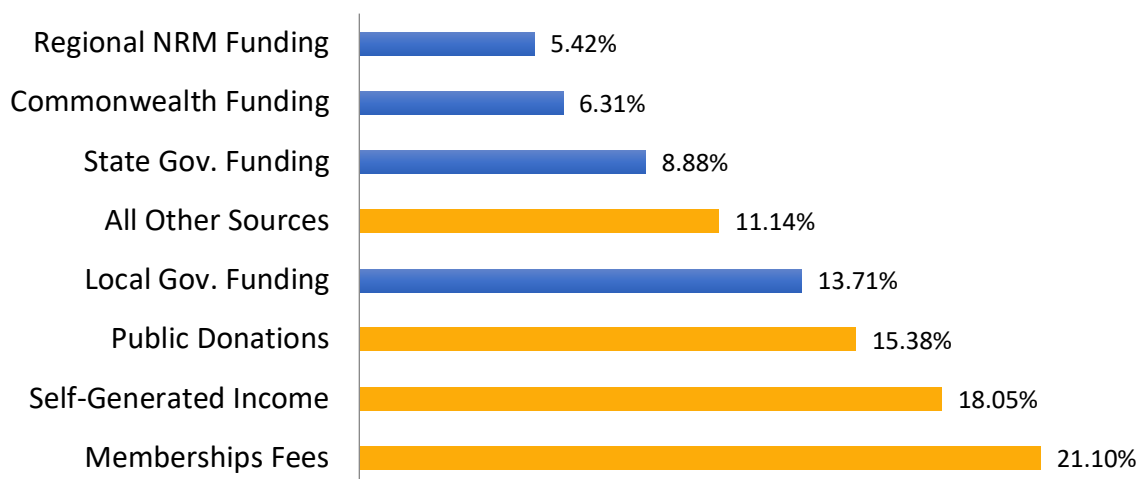
### Member Group Challenges for the Year Ahead

Member groups were asked the following open-ended question: “What are the biggest challenges your group faces in the coming year?” The responses showed that maintaining and recruiting members and volunteers and securing and maintaining sufficient funding are top priorities for 2020/2021. On-ground work challenges and climate also rated as concerns among member groups as shown in the graph below.

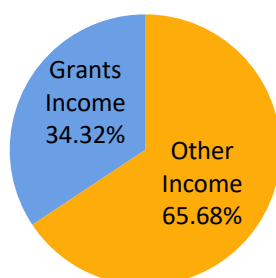
#### QWaLC Member Groups Biggest Challenges for 2020/2021



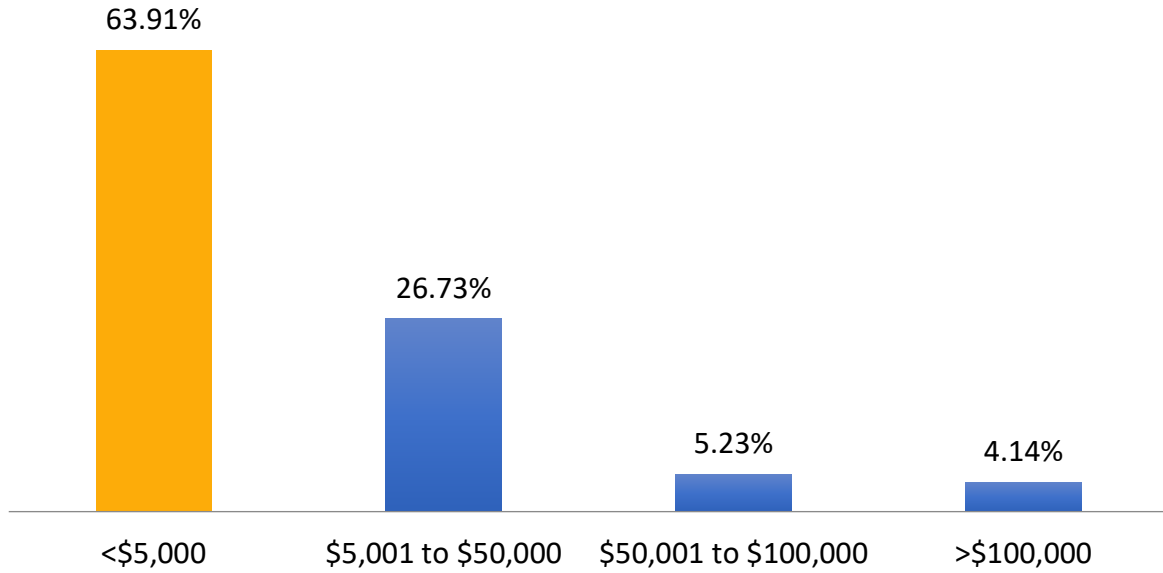
#### Member Group Sources of Income/Funding - 2019/2020



Sources and proportions of Funding and Income Received by Member Groups



All Sources of Income Based on Amount Ranges Received by Member Groups



Member Group Satisfaction Ratings

