

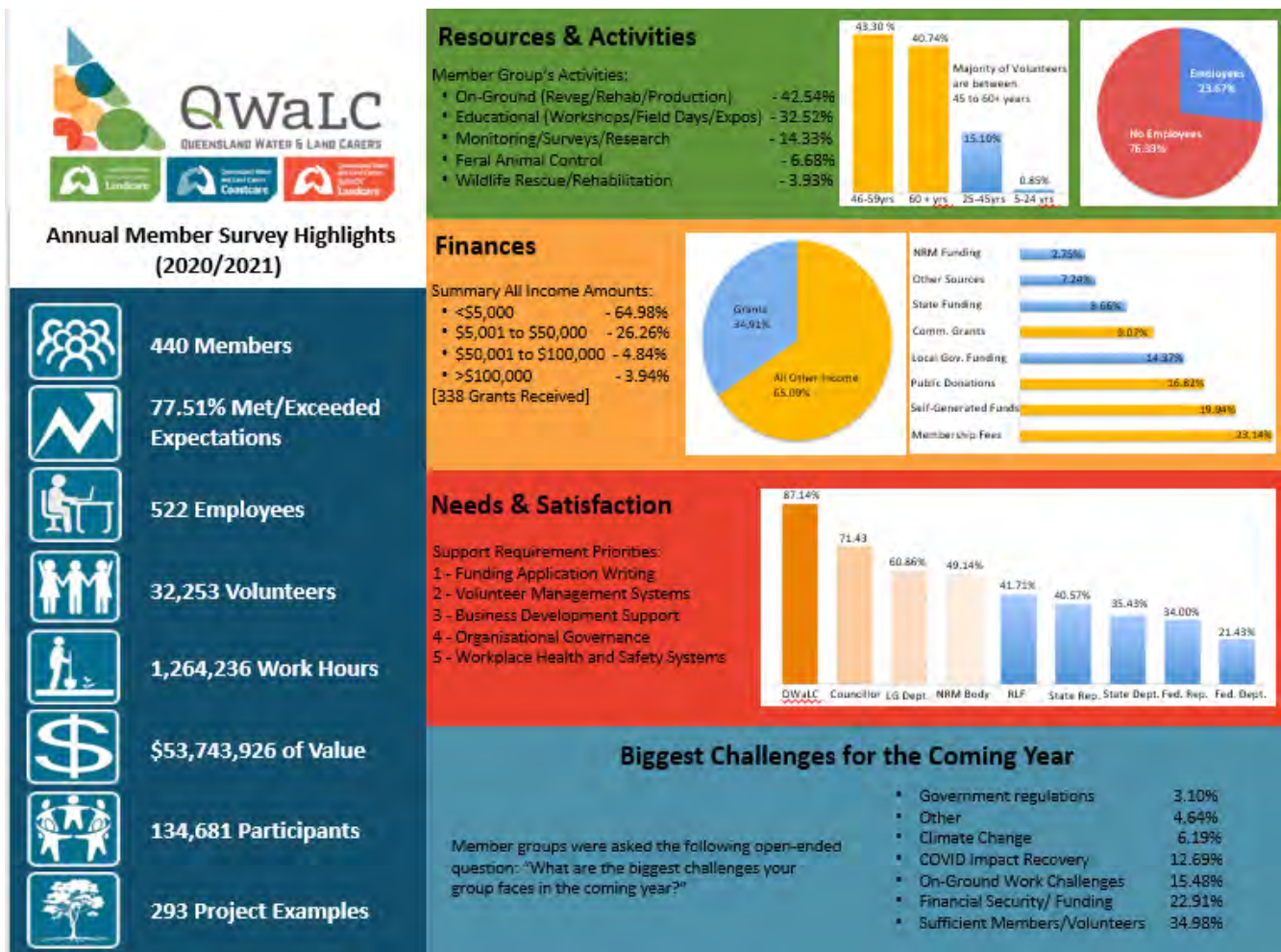


# QWaLC

2020/21

# Annual Report





cover photo – Another day in the Office –  
courtesy of Phil Moran

below Cape Upstart Beach Patrol  
- courtesy of NQ Dry Tropics



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# What is our role?

As Queensland's peak body for NRM volunteers, QWaLC fulfils the following roles:

## Promotion

QWaLC is dedicated to promoting the achievements of natural resource management volunteers across the state.

## Insurance

QWaLC assists groups in their practical work throughout the state by the provision of three vital insurance policies - Association Liability; Public and Products Liability; and Volunteer Accident.

## Advocacy

QWaLC exists in Queensland to advocate specifically on behalf of NRM volunteers. The volunteer NRM sector is vital to the Queensland economy, investing many thousands of hours of volunteer's time into practical environmental outcomes. QWaLC role is to ensure that this contribution is an important consideration in any decisions made regarding the voluntary NRM sector.

## Networking

QWaLC is part of a large NRM network that encompasses volunteer NRM groups, regional bodies, government representatives and industry personnel. We facilitate the exchange of strategies, information, skills and resources. We develop and improve links between volunteer NRM groups, regional organisations and government agencies.

## Representation

A community representative board is a core pillar to the overall make up of QWaLC – and these members ensure that community volunteers have an opportunity to participate and contribute to policies and issues that specifically relate to their region at a localised level. It is the role of your Board members to ensure that they actively engage with member groups and bring forward their views and opinions to be represented at the State and National levels.

## Vision

Thriving and connected  
Queensland communities  
and ecosystems.

## Mission

To encourage our members  
to actively participate in  
improving Queensland's  
environmental, social and  
economic futures.

## Who are we?

Queensland Water and Land Carers Inc. (QWaLC) is the peak body for NRM volunteers in Queensland. We are an independent, non-government, not-for-profit organisation. QWaLC formed in April 2004 to fill an important need in supporting the valuable work of volunteer community groups in the Natural Resources Management sector across Queensland. We currently have a membership of over 400 groups with more than 30,000 individual members. We work on behalf of thousands of natural resource management volunteers across our vast state.

## How do we operate?

The organisation is answerable to our membership, which is made up of a broad range of volunteer NRM groups. Members include Landcare, Coastcare, Waterwatch, Bushcare, catchment associations, conservation groups and subregional organisations.

The organisation is incorporated and governed by a constitution\* that sets out the objectives, powers and administrative arrangements.

QWaLC's network extends across the 14 natural resource management regions of Queensland, each of which is represented by a QWaLC Board Member elected from the region.



## Constitution

contact QWaLC's CEO:

Darryl Ebenezer  
[darryl@qwalc.org.au](mailto:darryl@qwalc.org.au)



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# Our people.

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## QWaLC Board

QWaLC's Board plays an integral part of its role as the peak body for natural resource management (NRM) volunteers. The Board consists of a community representative from across each of Queensland's 14 Natural Resource Management regions. Our Regional Board Members represent their regions and highlight the issues and achievements in each allowing QWaLC to be truly representative of the whole State and to keep in touch with on-ground volunteers.

## The Board

Region	Role	Name
Qld. Murray Darling	Past Chair	Geoff Elliot ( <i>Chair to March 2021</i> )
Condamine	Secretary/Chair	MaryLou Gittins OAM ( <i>Secretary to March 2021, Chair March 2021</i> )
Cape York & Torres Strait	Deputy Chair	Jason Carroll
Fitzroy	Secretary	Shelly McArdle ( <i>Secretary Mar 2021</i> )
Burdekin/Mackay Whitsunday	Treasurer	Graham Armstrong
Burnett Mary	Board Member	Phillip Moran
Southern/Northern Gulf	Board Member	John Brisbin
South West Qld.	Board Member	Cameron Tickle
Wet Tropics	Board Member	Rhonda Sorensen ( <i>to Nov. 2020</i> )
South East Qld.	Board Member	Brian Venez
Desert Channels	Board Member	Ann Ballinger

## Sub Committees

	Chaired by
Governance and Planning	Brian Venez
Insurance and Risk	Phillip Moran
Member Engagement Committee	MaryLou Gittins
Finance and Audit	Graham Armstrong

## Staff

Statewide	Chief Executive Officer	Darryl Ebenezer
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# Chair's Report

It is with mixed feelings that I present my first QWaLC Chair's Report. 2021 has presented all of us with many challenges. In February, one of these sad challenges was the passing of Geoff Elliot, Chair of QWaLC since 2015, and Director for the Murray Darling Region. Many shared their condolences with the Board and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous work that Geoff did on behalf of Members at the Regional, State, Federal and International levels, particularly around one voice for National Landcare and a local group Coordinator Program for Queensland. We will continue to advocate for these essential initiatives.

As incoming Chair, my first national meeting was in Canberra where I met the National Landcare Network (NLN) Board, their personnel and processes. I was accepted as the NLN Queensland State Director. I also attended the launch of the National Parliamentary 'Friends of Landcare', which is Co-chaired by NSW Senator Perin Davey and Victorian Senator Raff Ciccone. I met the Chair of Landcare Australia, Doug Humann, and their CEO, Shane Norrish.

Mara Basanovic, CEO of Volunteering Queensland, invited QWaLC to the launch of the "State of Volunteering in Qld 2021 Report". I participated on a panel to discuss 'volunteering' from a volunteer's point of view. Our CEO, Darryl Ebenezer's (a member of the committee that produced the report) work with the QWaLC survey was commended at the launch. May 2021 National Volunteering Month provided a formal opportunity for QWaLC to recognise Queensland volunteers that care for our people, flora and fauna, land and water with a letter of thanks on behalf of QWaLC.

QWaLC's team consists of Directors and our CEO, Darryl Ebenezer backed up by contractors: Lane Pilon (Administration), Glen Donoghoe (Project Reporting/Survey), Dorian Pozzan (Bookkeeper), and Melissa Robertson and Andrea Mason (Communications). I recognise and thank them for their effort and support over the last 12 months. Special thanks also to Andrew Drysdale of Alsajad NRM and Pamela Greet of FutureAg for their specialist skills.

As noted on the previous page, the year started with a full contingent of Directors, with two vacancies arising during the year, one of these being Geoff Elliot and the other being Rhonda Sorensen of the Wet Tropics region who resigned due to a move NSW. Both of these people will be sorely missed around our Board table.

Photo: Doug Humann LA  
Chair; NSW Senator Perin  
Davey; QWaLC Chair  
MaryLou Gittins OAM & NLN  
Chair Patrick O'Connor.



In 2020, I was able to visit Cape York during a personal trip. Jason Carroll (see page 29) showed me his workplace and explained how they operated, including the efforts to protect our beautiful Great Barrier Reef.

The Board has continued to meet via Zoom (due to Covid) for the most part but fortuitously fitted in one face-to-face meeting in Brisbane in June. The work of our subcommittees allows the Board to focus and make informed decisions around key issues and I thank them all for taking on this additional work.

Through the work of the CEO and regional Directors, our membership continues to grow – a warm welcome to these new member groups. This growth shows the need for QWaLC in supporting local, practical on ground volunteers. Remember that your Regional Director is there to support you and provide a conduit to the Board. This year's annual membership and insurance survey had some follow up questions due to changes in our insurance coverage. Phillip Moran (Chair of the Insurance and Risk Subcommittee) and Darryl Ebenezer, through the survey feedback and negotiations with the insurers, have been able to ensure that members' risk and cover can be managed. We thank the State and Federal governments for their highly valued support in this and many other areas. We also acknowledge the support received from the NLN, Landcare Australia Limited and NRM Regions Queensland, which enables QWaLC to represent and offer such a range of services to our grass root members.

In closing, I would like to thank the QWaLC team for their support over the last few months regarding my role as Chair. Having chaired the initial Steering Committee that formed QWaLC, I have come full circle – what a privilege. I look forward to continuing to contribute to QWaLC and our members in the future through advocacy and providing networking opportunities for our members.

*M. L. Gittins*

**MaryLou Gittins OAM**  
Chair

# Chief Executive Officer's Report

These last 12 months have continued to be a bit different. Whether we are living west of the divide, in far north Queensland, along the coast or in South East Queensland, we have all been impacted in different ways by the ongoing restrictions caused by Covid-19. Not being able to gather together, limited travel around the state, not going interstate. Plenty of challenges to deal with.



Thankfully, across Queensland we have been able to come up with innovative ways to continue to undertake the activities that we as community groups need to do each day, week and month. Some iconic events like World Environment Day have come back in different formats and others are planned for a return in late 2021. Certainly, something to look forward to in the coming months.

In February 2021, we lost our Chair, Geoff Elliot. His passing has had a significant effect on all of us within the QWaLC family. I certainly miss our conversations and we definitely miss his smile and generosity of time. I wish to thank MaryLou Gittins for her willingness to take on the role of Chair and support the organisation through a challenging time.

The last 12 months have been an opportunity to learn, learn, learn with webinars, webinars, webinars on any topic you can think of. Joining in our 'Naturally Together' zooms was an activity that continued across July and August. Participating in the Reef Assist employment program was an opportunity for five member groups that helped provide jobs and practical environmental outcomes to the regions. The "economic stimulus measures in the conservation and land management sector" initiative, that many groups were able to contribute to, was an excellent example of all areas of natural resource management across Queensland working together to propose ways of creating employment and managing our natural resources. A particularly impressive proposal was the Green and Blue economic stimulus proposal put together by a consortia of groups across the Wet Tropics. It is well worth a read. Our advocacy for the establishment of a coordinators program for member groups across Queensland continues.

QWaLC continues to support our diverse membership through our five key roles: Advocacy, Representation, Networking, Promotion and Insurance. We are building on our relationships and partnerships with other groups and organisations, including the National Landcare Network, Australian Citizen Science Association, Volunteering Qld, Landcare Australia, Global Landcare, Queensland Conservation Council and each of Queensland's Regional NRM Bodies and NRM Regions Queensland. The many projects, sponsorships, discussions and meetings we participate in with these groups continue to help us build a more resilient, inclusive and needed volunteer community.



left – on the road 'Zooming' with Chris Norman  
right – Trevor Meldrum in Atherton





I wish to thank Chris Norman from NRM Regions Queensland for our conversations and his tireless efforts to increase the profile and importance of natural resource management both in Queensland and across the nation.

A significant project in early 2021 was the Landcare Led Bushfire Recovery grants program in partnership with the National Landcare Network and Landcare Australia. This program has contributed more than \$1.4m into bushfire affected areas of the rainforests of SEQ. A special thanks to Rosalinde Brinkman of Watergum for helping to make this important program a reality.

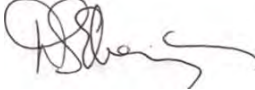
Information collected via our annual Membership and Insurance survey allows QWaLC to advance the goals and aspirations of members and ensure that our insurance and support services are tailored to meet member needs. The information captured from across Qld provides an important snapshot of the environmental, agricultural, advocacy and conservation work members and volunteers carry out around the State and is crucial in emphasizing to a broad range of stakeholders the importance of these practical activities. Next year in February 2022 the survey will be online through the QWaLC website.

AON has continued to provide excellent insurance cover and service, enabling us to provide to QWaLC member groups three insurance policies: General and Products Liability (Primary Liability), Personal Accident (Voluntary workers) and Association Liability (Protector). Thanks to all our more than 440 member groups for being safe. Our sincere thanks to the Queensland Government for their ongoing support of this unique community initiative. The safe undertaking of activities by members and volunteers has meant that our insurance premiums remained affordable – which is an excellent outcome.

I would like to thank all the QWaLC Directors for their guidance and support in maintaining good governance around the activities and direction of the organisation. I want to acknowledge the important roles that our Subcommittee Chairs play - Graham, MaryLou, Phil and Brian. Special thanks to our new Chair, MaryLou Gittins for her exuberant contribution to the activities of QWaLC and also in her role as a Director on the National Landcare Network Board. My great appreciation also to Lane, Dorian, Glen, Pamela, Andrew, Andrea and Melissa who have helped in many different ways over the past 12 months and are always there to assist when needed.

I have relished the opportunities this year to meet with people in person. To all our member groups and volunteers a special thanks for the work you do, the stories you create and the relationships you build. Keep going.



  
**Darryl Ebenezer**  
CEO

*left - Tina Lathouras submission  
to the Landline Quilt*

*far left - Darryl Ebenezer - a  
year of masks*

# Treasurer's Report



QWaLC's external financial audit for 2020/21 was conducted by John Gosper Audit & Assurance Pty Ltd. The independent auditors have stated that QWaLC's financial statements provide a "true and fair view of the Registered Entity's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its financial performance for the year the ended 2021". For additional detail please refer to the auditor's report and accompanying financial information.

During the financial year, there was an overall decrease in equity of \$12,404 with QWaLC's total equity standing at \$249,931 at the end of the year.

Income for the year was once again dominated by grant and contract payments including:

- \$350,000 from the Queensland Department of Resources;
- \$76,679 from the National Landcare Network;
- \$27,118 from Landcare Australia and
- \$12,300 from the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment

On behalf of the QWaLC Board and QWaLC's many community-based member groups I extend our gratitude to these organisations and the government departments for their essential financial support.

Major outgoings were similar to those of the previous year, the costs being incurred in achieving contract and grant milestones and in ensuring the organisation functions in line with regulatory requirements. One example of such requirements is the collection and collation of important information obtained from the annual membership and insurance survey and the subsequent negotiation and provision of appropriate insurance cover for member groups.

Employment and contracting expenses related to providing member services remains the highest expenditure category. The QWaLC insurance coverage premium required a small increase however an allocation of \$50,000 was required due to a significant increase in the deductible needed if a claim eventuated. Board expenses at \$55,122 were less than in the previous year due to the reduced opportunity for face-to-face board meetings in line with ongoing and intermittent COVID-19 control requirements.

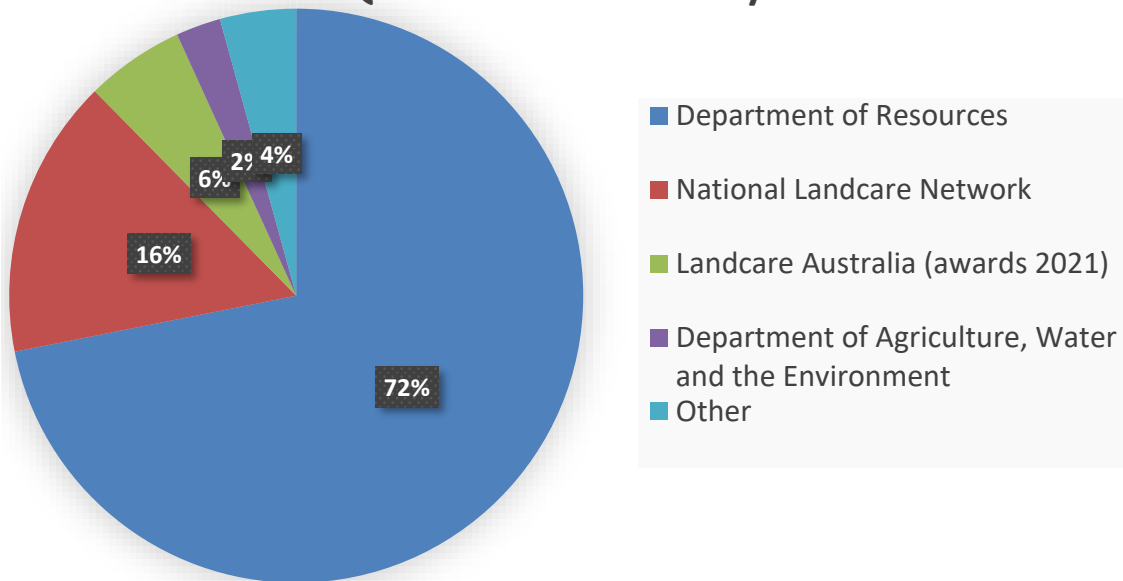
During the year the role of Treasurer for QWaLC was supported by board members serving on the Finance and Audit Sub-committee and I extend my thanks for their support and participation during sub-committee meetings, particularly around discussions to establish the QWaLC budget for the coming year.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our CEO, Darryl Ebenezer and our bookkeeper Dorian Pozzan for their diligence and promptness in dealing with the organisation's financial processes and procedures throughout the year.

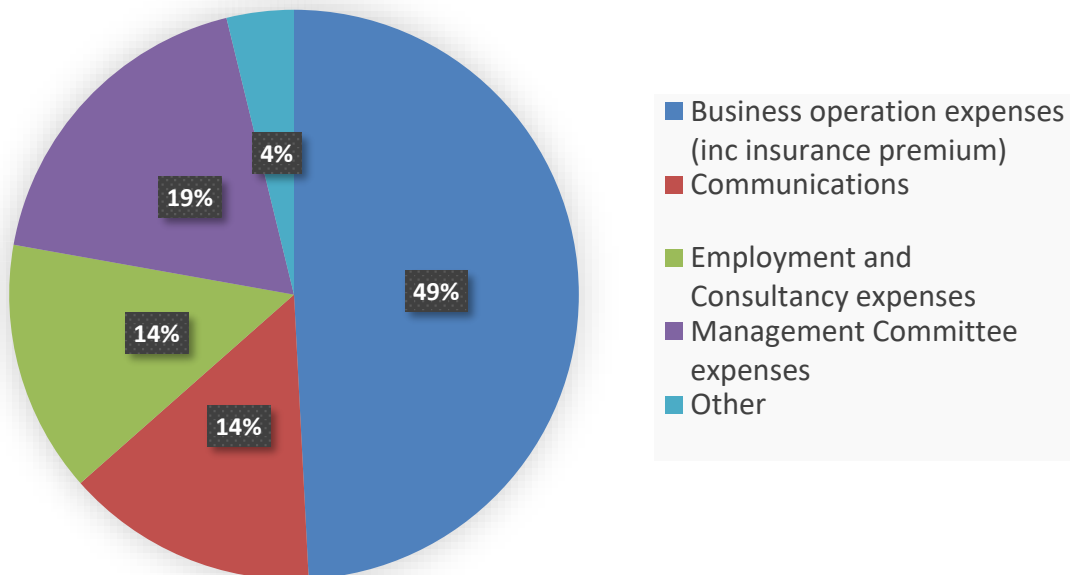
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Armstrong', written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Graham Armstrong**  
Treasurer

## QWaLC Income 2020/2021



## QWaLC Expenses 2020/2021





## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD



Cooktown School CALM students and Rangers learning about rock art conservation.



Jason Carroll & Christina Howley monitoring WQ in Princess Charlotte bay.



Virginia Burns looking after rock art site.

Cultural Camp on Normanby station.



Neville Bowen undertakes Pond Apple Control.



## CAPE YORK AND TORRES STRAIT JASON CARROLL



As a QWaLC representative, I have enjoyed supporting seven Landcare groups on Cape York Peninsula. While this will be my last year as the representative for Cape York and Torres Strait, I am very keen to work with and support whoever is successful in taking on this role at the QWaLC AGM in November 2021.

This year our region welcomed two new Landcare groups to QWaLC, Normanby Land Management and the Cape York Water Partnership. Both groups have a big few years ahead of them delivering projects that will improve water quality on the Great Barrier Reef.

To support our groups I have attended meetings, provided advice and helped with hosting Landcare events such as beach clean ups, grant writing workshops and school visits to project sites. I am continually impressed by the difference that a small group of QWaLC members can make over such a vast area.

There have been many highlights for the year. Of particular note was Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals getting a special commendation at the National Landcare awards for their work supporting Traditional Owners and other property managers to control invasive weeds. The Wenlock Catchment group was successful with funding for a part time Coordinator. I would like to welcome Temaleti Matasia to the Cape York Landcare community and wish her well with her new role.

South Cape York Catchments (SCYC) continued to support three Indigenous Ranger Groups to deliver natural and cultural resource management projects. Work included rock art recording, fire management, school visits, country planning, biosecurity surveys, water quality monitoring and weed control.

Pascoe River Landcare who are part of the Cape York Water Monitoring Partnership, continued their flood monitoring again this year. They collected water samples that provided valuable data on the water quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef from an undeveloped catchment.

Western Cape Landcare Group had some exciting news. They have managed to get approval from Rio Tinto to lease a block of land so they can establish a base for their Landcare Group. This means they can start talking about planning some projects and getting their hands dirty! They are interested in doing some Junior Landcare work when they get up and running.



SCYC volunteers clean up Cape Melville beach.

Rossville Landcare continued removing seed heads from isolated Grader Grass plants along roadsides in their community. Rossville has a no spray policy within the town area, so hand removal of unripe seeds in this situation can reduce the spread of this highly invasive grass.

Whilst I will be stepping out of the role of QWaLC Board representative, my passion for caring for our region and the communities in it will continue. I look forward to catching up with you around the ridges and hearing about the great work I know you will continue to do for your community and our environment.



## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD



Buluwai Indigenous Rangers gaining their fire crew certificates.



Mitchell River Watershed Management Group attracted donations from landholders to defend against the invasive aquatic weed Amazon Frogbit.



## SOUTHERN & NORTHERN GULF

### JOHN BRISBIN



I am happy to report that this has been another exciting and fulfilling year for QWaLC across the Northern and Southern Gulf regions, with the added bonus of some involvement with the Wet Tropics as well. These regions are currently home to 66 member groups working across nearly half a million square kilometres of country. That's double the size of Victoria and 25% bigger than the entire country of Japan! *(and we don't have any bullet trains to help us get around the joint!)*

The groups in our region largely get on with their work without complaint, despite ongoing shortages of funding for the sector, disinterest from government in funding coordinators, and a continued emphasis on exploiting the state's environmental heritage for the sake of short-term economic growth.

Have a look at the QWaLC website to get a sense of the diversity and scale of the groups in these regions, it's really quite impressive. The role that QWaLC plays is highlighted here by a few examples:

QWaLC helped to support the FNQ Environment Roundtable, which was convened by CAFNEC (Cairns and Far North Environment Centre). The event focussed on how groups can be more effective in their planning and collaboration efforts. Attended by over 50 people, the event delivered excellent networking opportunities.

Our insurance scheme continues to prove an essential enabler for volunteer groups caring for all aspects of our lands and waters. This year we welcomed groups such as: Wildlife and Raptor Care Queensland (fully certified rehabilitation centre for injured wildlife), the Boiler Block (natural and cultural heritage aimed at village-scale self-sufficiency), the Atherton Tablelands Foundation (peace and justice with environmental sustainability), and Great Barrier Reef Research Expeditions (volunteer-run research support and logistics).

As a QWaLC Director, I help represent the interests of groups in my regions at various forums and planning processes. This year I was a guest at the Terrain AGM in Innisfail and organised consultative meetings with Northern Gulf NRM. It is a challenge to effectively connect with Southern Gulf NRM given the distance and COVID-era travel restrictions. However, I look forward to strengthening this relationship in the coming year.

It has been a pleasure this year to serve on the National Landcare Network Members' Council. The NLN is a strong advocate for the future of landcare at both state and national levels. My advocacy work is often undertaken in the company of our CEO, Darryl Ebenezer. This year we gave a deputation to the Mayor, Councillors, and senior staff at Mareeba Shire Council, positioning QWaLC as potential collaborators and project delivery partners.

Finally, I'm especially encouraged by the emergence of First Nations landcare and ranger groups such as the Buluwai Indigenous Corporation and the Wanyurr-Majay Aboriginal Corporation. It is clear that QWaLC can provide valuable assistance as these groups quickly up-skill and develop their governance capabilities.

I would like to thank our member groups for their continued efforts to nurture the living landscapes we all depend on, and for their participation in QWaLC. I looking forward to another productive year in your service.



QWaLC CEO, Darryl Ebenezer, visiting the Wildlife and Raptor Care facilities, Julatten.



## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD



*Brahman Cattle*



## DESERT CHANNELS ANN BALLINGER



After what seemed like a never-ending drought, some areas in the Central West received good falls of rain just before Christmas 2020.

With the advent of COVID, the investment in agricultural land and stock has seen a steady upward trend – perhaps one of the very few positives we can glean from this terrible time.

Exclusion fencing has proved to be a great management tool. Wild dogs have been kept at bay, lambing percentages have improved, and there is a greater body of grass with less kangaroos inside the fenced in areas allowing more feed for the stock.

As is often the case with travails of living on the land, those that did receive early rain were then completely eaten out by grasshoppers! Research and trials have been run to try and identify the different types of grasshoppers, their breeding patterns and why they are in some areas and not others.

However, thankfully, it rained again in March and, although patchy, good falls were recorded which brought a good season to many areas.

As always, it has been a real pleasure and honour to represent the Desert Channels region on the QWaLC Board. The issues, triumphs and people of the Desert Channels area, as always, remain close to my heart.

### *Grasshopper Forum*





## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

In spite of the conditions Covid protocols have imposed, it has been possible to engage with a number (if not as many as in other years) of the QWaLC member organisations over the last year. I am pleased to report the SEQ region continues to grow in numbers with new organisations admitted as members. There are now 156 member organisations in the SEQ region. It is also satisfying to learn that most organisations have been able to continue to deliver events and activities even if at a reduced scale over this time. Some activities I have participated in are:

**Citizen Science** - I participated in the two million trees monitoring project at Wacol which involved citizen scientist teams who initially measured tree survival and growth rates following their planting 10 years ago and then made a series of observations on usage by birds and native fauna of the new habitats provided. Although the numbers of fauna (marsupials, reptiles, birds, insects) were not that high, when noted against the age of the new habitat, it provides a baseline for what can be expected in other rehabilitation projects.

**New Member Launches** - it is always pleasing to welcome new member organisations to QWaLC and then, in October, to physically join with them at their inaugural public events or official openings. Attending the Taringa Community Garden Group was one such event where not only the group but partnerships with Council and other community volunteers was on display.

**UQ Gems Industry workshop** - in October I was invited by the Students Union of University of Queensland to participate in an online exposition of employment opportunities for students in the natural resources and environment sectors. Although both public and private employers were the main presenters with paid employment opportunities, my presentation noted that volunteering opportunities, while not providing remuneration, provide excellent material for inclusion in a CV, which is highly valued by prospective employers.

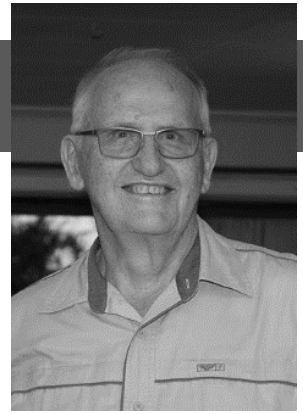
**Merri Merri CEP Planting** - knowing that grant funds are the life blood of so much activity and performances of organisations, it was pleasing to be able to participate in a number of Community Environment Program which supported activity by organisations in the inner western catchments of Brisbane.

**AGMs** - I was pleased to be able to accept five invitations to attend the annual general meetings of members organisations (two virtually). This provides greater understanding the achievements and difficulties such organisations encountered during the year as well as an opportunity to advise of emerging issues around governance and how QWaLC can assist.



**Olympic Landcare Anniversary** (left) - a 20-year Olympic Landcare anniversary event was held at Masons Gully in Rosewood, where all attendees were able to observe the progress made in rehabilitating the creek while a new 'ceremonial' planting of native species including Brigalow trees was undertaken.

## SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND BRIAN VENZ



Working with Volunteering Queensland, the Shell Company in Brisbane provided staff on a weekday to assist the catchment committee to plant out Richmond Birdwing Butterfly Vines in Dillingen Street Park. This activity was a major contributor to establishing local concentrations of the vine which, when mature, will be part of a corridor to facilitate migrations of the Birdwing Butterfly so that different populations can join up and hence retain genetic diversity.



Corporate Volunteering (*left*) - is one of the exciting aspects of the new trends in episodic volunteering. I participated with Ethical Investments Advisors, who not only turned up in numbers to plant out 500 selected tube stocks in the Handel Street Park which is part of the Brisbane River Corridor, but made a financial donation to the local catchment committee to help defray the costs to prepare, plant and perform follow up maintenance of the rehabilitation site.

Nancy Bonnin Chair memorial (*below*) - it is a rare occasion that we are able to participate in where a 'physical' memorial is formed to recognise volunteers who have contributed over and above to

their local environment. Nancy Bonnin was an inaugural and long-time member of the St Lucia Esplanade Bushcare. On her passing, a bequest was provided which allowed a memorial seat to be installed on the banks of the Brisbane River dedicated to her in a ceremony with family members and fellow Bushcarers in March this year.









## WET TROPICS RHONDA SORENSEN



What a year this has been!

The far north has continued to be active despite the enormous pressures and challenges brought on by the continued presence of Covid. The lack of tourism has dealt a significant blow to the economic and social capacity of the region.

Thanks to Rhonda Sorensen for all her work as the Board Member for the Wet Tropics. Rhonda moved away from her idyllic life on the Tablelands to be closer to her family.

It has been helpful that John Brisbin has been able to step in when required as we seek a replacement representative for the Wet Tropics.

We have ongoing participation in the Wet Tropics Waterway Partnership - a practical gathering and display of information. The Report Card, website and staff are able to provide a cohesive message about water quality and the important work of landholders and groups. A virtual launch of the Report Card was an interesting experience and brought out the acting talents of many in the partnership!

The opportunity given by CAFNEC in April to be in Atherton at the FNQ Environment Roundtable, with many QWaLC member groups from around the Wet Tropics, was refreshing and informative. Great to be able to meet in person (a rare event in these Covid times). Thanks again to John Brisbin for being able to step in to some of the activities where a Board Member was needed across the region.

Our sponsorship of the Cassowary Awards in June was an opportunity to recognise the tremendous work of many. Congratulations to all the award recipients especially Adrian 'Golly' Watson, winner of the 'Peter Hitchcock Community Champion Award' and Lisa O'Mara with the 'Thorsborne Award' for Community Conservation and Rehabilitation.

Our relationship with Terrain NRM continued to strengthen through participation in the many activities and projects underway in the region.

One excellent example of groups working together was the Reef Assist program and the more colourful Green and Blue Economic Stimulus Package. A stellar example of leaders within the community joining together to create a practical response to the needs of the tropical north. A big thanks to Lucy Graham (CAFNEC), Scott Buchanan (WTMA) and Stuart Christie (Terrain NRM) and the multitudes of other people who contributed in putting together the package.

Thanks to everyone around for their phone calls, emails and invitations that have given me the opportunity to be involved in the practical and change making activities happening all over the region. I look forward to the coming year and being able to work with you all, as well as with the new Board Member for the region.

written by  
*Darryl Ebenezer*  
QWaLC CEO



## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

Greetings from the South West. We have been very fortunate to have minimal COVID restrictions in this region thus allowing us to continue with face-to-face community activities and field days.

Earlier this year, a dung beetle field day was hosted by Adma Sargood at "Halton" station, Charleville and presented by John Feehan, SOILCAM. This field day was well attended by young and old. Discussions focussed around soil regeneration and pasture improvement by the amazing dung beetles. This day resulted in no dung unturned and children especially enjoying harvesting the dung beetle populations for relocation.

I was fortunate to be invited to a face-to-face roundtable meeting with Telstra CEO, Andy Penn. Our objective was to open discussions about improving rural connectivity in the south west by working with Telstra and the State Government to make the Telstra Satellite small cells more accessible and affordable.





## SOUTH WEST CAMERON TICKLE



More recently, I hosted the Minister for Resources, Scott Stewart, for an on-property tour to discuss the regulations controlling our ability to manage thickened vegetation. Since legislative changes occurred in March 2018, there has been little to no management of thickened vegetation within Queensland thus it was important to show the Minister areas of unmanaged thickened landscapes which had resulted in a monoculture of trees and a lack of biodiversity. Minister Stewart was also shown areas that have been well managed by controlling the regrowth of trees and in turn creating a tree grass balance, which maintains biodiversity and restores the landscape back to its natural state. Overall, a very enjoyable day discussing important issues for the South West.





## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

Another great year for the region despite all the limitations of COVID. Here is just a few great examples of what can be achieved through community endeavour when passion and commitment come together with on-ground action.

### Capricorn Coast Landcare

After the sad passing of their beloved president and founder of Capricorn Coast Landcare, Alby Wooler, in 2017, a whole new team took up the challenge of not just keeping the group going but building on the great work that had been done over the past 30 years. Since that time, the group has maintained the Envirotrail that Alby established in the grounds of Yeppoon State School and have tended and extended the Fig Tree Creek regeneration site in the heart of Yeppoon.

Last year the team began a Coastcare project on the dunes at Farnborough Beach supported by Fitzroy Basin Association Inc. through funding from the Australian Government's Reef Trust Program and Livingstone Shire Council. The project that includes a great deal of hard physical work, removing weeds and planting natives, aims to strengthen the vital coastal wildlife corridor that is adjacent to residential areas of Yeppoon's busy township.

They recognise that caring for the environment is not just about weeding and planting of indigenous species to regenerate our precious native flora and protect our native fauna. They are also heavily involved in marine debris clean ups, source reduction initiatives, recycling and encouraging people to use the cash for containers program.

Capricorn Coast Landcare President, Malcolm Wells, said, "We also recognise that caring for the environment embraces caring for community. We work with the Yeppoon State School Junior Landcare group once a week during schooldays. We are also currently involved with a four-year springboard project, run by the global Lendlease organization, wherein they work on community projects with local environmental groups. This kind of work helps not only to connect people to the environment but also to each other. This is where real inspiration for change happens."

Malcolm noted, "I once asked Alby what he would say to anyone wanting to join Landcare? His advice was simple - get involved. You get out of life what you put into it. Landcare is a good mix of people of all ages and from all walks of life, who come together to work for, and share in, a beautiful future."



*Distance Ed students at a special beach cleanup & sorting.*

### Caring for our Precious Flying Foxes

Another wonderful group that is operating in Central Queensland is the recently formed Bat Care Capricornia. The group that initially mobilized in 2020 when local flying fox colonies were impacted by an extreme heatwave that saw hundreds of deceased bats dropping from trees and a huge number of orphaned bats coming into care.

Until recently these bats, when sufficiently recovered, had to be sent to other regions that had more appropriate infrastructure to support their transition back to the wild on the Sunshine Coast and Townsville.

## FITZROY SHELLY MCARDLE



Bat Care Capricornia was supported by the Fitzroy Basin Association, through funding from the Australian Governments Reef Trust Program and Livingstone Shire Council, to build a soft release enclosure at Waru Gardens in Yeppoon. This allows recovering Flying Foxes to be supported through the process of re-joining a nearby colony.

An event that was held recently saw over 50 attendees join in the celebrations at the formal opening of the facility.

Bat Care Capricornia plans to continue their work to increase awareness around the enormous ecological value of our local flying foxes by hosting events and having displays throughout our local area.

### Jack's Dream Realised

Much has been achieved by a small but dedicated group that make up the Committee of Jack's Paddock based in Yeppoon Central Queensland.

Key achievements include the construction of the shed and annex and fitting them out, installing the driveways, paths and earth mounds, mulching planting and of course weeding, installation of irrigation, creating the share cart, and hosting several wonderful events that include educational workshops, art and music.

The Paddock's Education Officer Pam Purten said "We are so lucky to have such cooperation between Livingstone Shire Council, environmental groups, local businesses and individuals (too many to name!) who came together for a common cause. We had everyone from the Emus Rugby League Team who spread the three truckloads of mulch to Michael who took aerial photos and Dianne who donated plants.



It has taken an enormous effort from everyone involved and it really does make you realize how fortunate we are to live where we do." Jack's Paddock's Bill Gannon said, "The Paddock exists due to Jack Skinners kind donation (via Council) of land to locals. Jack expressly bequeathed the land as a place for children to play.



In line with that, my highlights this past year revolve around seeing children enjoy Jack's Paddock. Our organized picnic days saw children (and the young at heart) dancing giggling in egg and spoon races and having loads of laughs. Even better has been seeing the parents and children enjoying the Paddock after school and on non-school days. What a thrill seeing heads pop up out of the tunnels, bodies rolling down the mounds, small groups in the shade reading books from the 'library house' and others exploring the gardens!"

We look forward to what the team at Jack's Paddock have in store for us next!

## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

As I pen this report, we are under another lock down due to the Covid 19 pandemic. This event has had, and will continue to have, a significant effect on our economy and our people. It is interesting also that our environment has had a healing effect on many people during this time. We have seen more people out connecting with nature and valuing our natural environment. In addition to the pandemic, we have also had drought and, in particular, bushfires very close to home. Community Landcare, Coast Care, Bushcare, whatever the name, has a vital role to play to help our society to overcome adversity. Indeed a KPMG/Landcare Australia report into "Building resilience in local communities" notes "An additional benefit articulated in this report is the role Landcare plays in individual and community resilience, and how that in turn helps communities recover from natural disasters. Our research shows that 46 per cent of survey respondents reported volunteering with Landcare led to an improvement in their mental resilience and ability to manage challenges."

QWaLC has been at the forefront of assisting our communities to deal with, manage and overcome the difficulties we have faced over the last financial year. Whilst travel has been restricted for much of this period, new ways to communicate with member groups have been adopted. Various 'Apps' have allowed groups to stay connected and membership of QWaLC has increased over the last year to 432 groups as at 30 June 2021, representing well over 30,000 volunteers.

The Burnett Mary region continues to grow with many people moving into our region, particularly from southern states. QWaLC works with member groups and our regional body, the Burnett Mary Regional Group [BMRG]. The Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee [MRCCC] have secured funding for innovative projects to reduce erosion and sediment reaching Hervey Bay and subsequently the reef. All our groups, small and large contribute to the health of our environment and our local communities.

QWaLC continues to work with the National Landcare Network [NLN], the NLN Members Council and Landcare Australia on a possible merger of these two entities in order to present to governments one voice for Landcare.

At Board level, we have instituted a series of sub-committees to deal with aspects of our work. Each group has a Chair and works with other Board Members and the CEO. These are:

Governance and Planning – Brian Venz  
Finance and Audit – Graham Armstrong  
Member Engagement – MaryLou Gittins  
Insurance and Risk – Phil Moran

One of the significant areas that QWaLC helps member groups by is via insurance cover. Insurance and risk are areas we take seriously at QWaLC. I encourage all member groups to ensure they keep good records of events, abide by Covid regulations and, if you are planning a 'large' event, to notify QWaLC's CEO. A 'large' event would be if upwards of 40 people were going to attend. The annual QWaLC survey allows us to collate information, which is vital when we are negotiating on your behalf with insurance providers and government agencies. I also need to remind everyone that insurance is not a substitute for risk management. Having insurance should only come into the picture when you've done all you can to minimise risk.' Up-to-date COVID Safe Restrictions can be found on the QWaLC website.

I wish to thank my fellow Board Members who give their time and expertise, and their good humour to make QWaLC meetings both productive and enjoyable. To our CEO, Darryl Ebenezer, in particular, you have been available at all times and your level of communication is first rate. The many groups throughout Queensland appreciate that they can talk to you about any issue they are facing.

This will be my last report as I have served my two terms and, under our constitution, I am put out to pasture. I have enjoyed my time on the Board and getting to understand the enormous diversity of community NRM groups in our great state of Queensland.



## BURNETT PHILLIP MORAN



On a sad note, Geoff Elliott our chair passed away this year. Geoff was a stalwart of Landcare and he is greatly missed. I offer my thanks to MaryLou Gittins who stood up and took on the role of Acting Chair until our AGM. My thanks also to Lane Pilon who is such a fantastic help and support, she makes it look like I actually do stuff! My thanks also to Glen Donoghue and all the other wonderful contractors that work with QWalC.



*Nest box workshop Noosa Landcare*



*Weed killing  
superheros!*



*Fraser Island Natural  
Integrity Alliance field  
trip - Central Station,  
K'gari - site of the  
proposed Butchulla  
Cultural Centre.*

*Noosa  
Landcare  
staff.*



## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

One of my main roles as QWALC Board Member is to help the region's Landcare and other community groups to build on their relationships with other organisations in the region, such as Reef Catchments and North Queensland Dry Tropics NRMs, and to take up various opportunities to enter into contracts to deliver on-ground projects. Through my direct involvement in local Landcare activities, I have contributed to several ongoing NQ Dry Tropics projects, including the Landholders Driving Change Program in the Bogie, Bowen & Broken River areas, and projects protecting vulnerable remnant littoral rain forest patches along the Dry Tropics & Whitsunday Coast Line. My participation includes attending field days, meeting Landholders and participating directly in land management improvement activities such as weed removal and habitat assessments. I find these activities a rewarding way to make a contribution to supporting landholders and primary producers in the region.

For our local community groups, the largest new project to get off the ground during the year was the Reef Assist program. With help from myself and QWALC CEO, Darryl Ebenezer, the three member groups of the Central Coastal Queensland Landcare Network (Pioneer Landcare, Whitsunday Catchment Landcare & Sarina Landcare and Catchment Management) produced a proposal to employ a total of 7.5 staff under the Queensland's Government's Reef Assist grant program. During the project development phase in October, Darryl was able to visit our region to join us at a special meeting of CCQLN to 'kick start' the process. Our resulting submission was taken up by Reef Catchments and included in their larger regional submission, which was successful in receiving funding from the Queensland Government. As a result, each Landcare group was able to recruit and equip a weed control team to work with landholders and Local Councils on problem weed areas and specific environmental weeds such as Cats Claw Creeper, Opuntia species, Dutchman's Pipe Vine, Leucaena and Lantana. The program runs for 12 months providing employment for people who may have lost their job due to COVID.

I have also taken on responsibility to organise and, with the help of other volunteers, perform the quarterly marine debris monitoring of two local beaches in the Whitsundays. This forms the core activity of a contract between Tangaroa Blue and Whitsunday Catchment Landcare.

At the end of June, my attendance in Townsville at the launch of the 2020 Townsville Dry Tropics Healthy Waterways Report Card capped off a year of QWALC's involvement with our two regional healthy waterways partnerships. QWALC is a partner organisation of both the Dry Tropics Partnership for Healthy Waters and the Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership. I have been serving as a management committee member community group representative on the MWIHRP management committee. QWALC's involvement in these Partnerships helps to encourage local member groups to join and participate in these healthy waterways partnerships and contribute to the production of the annual report cards as well as helping the region's community member groups to become more involved in these important broader initiatives. Member groups that have become Partners are Coastal Dry Tropics Landcare, Magnetic Island Nature Care Assoc., North Qld Conservation Council, Ecobarge Clean Seas Inc., Mackay Conservation Group and the Sarina, Pioneer and Whitsunday Landcare Groups.

Personal work commitments reduced my ability to attend as many events and meetings as I would have liked however, I was pleased to have direct contact with a number of local groups, including:

- Providing input and feedback to Whitsunday Regional Council on their Climate Change. Hub and on their regional pest management and invasive weeds plan.
- Attending the AGMs of Bowen & Collinsville Landcare and Whitsunday Landcare Participating in two x3 day volunteer events to do conservation work in endangered, high value remnant Beach Scrub ecosystems.
- Participating/leading three quarterly marine debris surveys of two local Whitsunday beaches.
- A number of QWALC Zoom meetings to deal with Board and Sub-committee Meetings and QWALC AGM.
- Following up with member groups not responding to the annual survey and updating their contact information.
- QWALC Treasurer duties.
- Attending Heath Waterways Partnership Meetings and Report Card events whenever available.
- Participating in Land Holders Driving Change field day and also a Fauna Survey at Mt Pleasant Learning Hub.



## BURDEKIN/MACKAY WHITSUNDAY GRAHAM ARMSTRONG

This is my last year of service on the QWaLC Board. I would like to take this chance to thank the dedicated Board Members and staff at QWaLC over the past six years for their support and friendship. There are many committed people working and volunteering across Queensland to improve land management practices and every bit of effort is worthwhile - thank you all and keep up the good work.



*Resting in the shade during  
Conservation work at Cape Upstart*



*Cleaning up after surveying Wilson's Beach  
and surrounds on the Whitsunday Coast*



## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

The Condamine region's membership is expanding slowly which shows growth in our area. I welcome the different types of groups that work in our region supporting the people, flora, fauna, soils and water. It has been interesting working with COVID as the uncertainty of managing events be, they public, group orientated or general meetings. Some events within the region have been impacted but, due to the reliability of our Members, activities are still happening. As in the world today, the platform changes from physical meeting to Zoom platform.

### Annual General Meetings:

Clifton Landcare invited me to be the guest speaker at their AGM. They are to be congratulated on their activities, notably the work they have completed protecting the habitats of the critically endangered Bulloak Jewel butterfly, which attracted the attention of the Australian Entomological Society Conservation Committee.

Condamine Catchment Management Association's AGM was held at Highfields tavern, the topic being 'how salinity impacts the Condamine Catchment'. I had the pleasure of meeting Pat Weir, MP for the Condamine region. Pat was very interested in the activities of the groups within the Condamine and the work that we all do as volunteers and land managers.

### Field Days and Workshops:

Paradigm of Plants vs Weeds presented by North Eastern Downs (NED) Landcare in partnership with Southern Qld Landscapes - I attended this zoom session with eleven other landcarers developing and extending our knowledge regarding plants vs weeds. It was interesting defining just what a weed is: 'a herbaceous plant growing where it is not wanted' – this could be grass, broadleaf, legume, or trees which can be highly invasive and/or toxic to livestock. We all went away with a more informed view.

*Photo: Condamine Headwaters Landcare: Coordinator, Tanya Jobling; Chair, David Parsons; Condamine Director, MaryLou Gittins*



*Photo: CCMA 2020 AGM: Treasurer - Glenys Bowtell OAM; Secretary; MaryLou Gittins OAM; Chair – Anna Smith; Pat Weir MP; Vice-Chair Dr John Standley OAM*





## CONDAMINE MARYLOU GITTINS OAM

I thank the Condamine QWaLC Members for their communication and conversations over the last twelve months and commend the volunteering work in the region.

Condamine Headwaters Landcare's Natural Sequence Farming - In April, I attended a field to view the Condamine Headwaters Landcare's Natural Sequence Farming Project works at Maryvale - well attended with in-depth discussions and provided examples of change management - particularly the role of the contour banks to hold water in the landscape.

Volunteering Month - May provided the opportunity to send out a 'thank you' from QWaLC to members for all the work they do with in our catchments. Volunteers statistically value add to all projects implemented from Federal, State or Local Government grants.

'Surviving to Thriving' - during May/June these workshops, facilitated by Mara Basanovic, CEO of Volunteering Qld, were held in Warwick, Stanthorpe, Toowoomba, Highfields, Chinchilla, Millmerran and Roma. Whilst it would have been great to have more folk at the events, Zoom allowed wider participation in what were informative and stimulating sessions. Mara presented on this matter to the QWaLC Board in June. Contact me if you would like material from the workshops via email.



*Photo: Warwick Workshop*



*Photo: NED – Plants vs Weeds Zoom presentation.*



## REGIONAL REPORTS FROM THE BOARD

There has been a wide variety of activities in the region over the past 12 months, ranging from on-ground activities to informative sessions. This variety keeps communities engaged in the world where we live, work and play. QWaLC is proud to have a wide base of members in the QMD region. A small sample of their achievements is represented here.

The Stanthorpe Field Naturalists is a small natural history club operating in the Stanthorpe area of the Southern Downs. Club activities occur 10 times a year with a natural history oriented Sunday outing and mid-week meeting which includes a talk covering some aspect of the natural environment. Outings included a survey of eucalypt leaf beetles on a local bush block and visits to local national parks. Talks included one on leaf beetles, one on mistletoes and another on identifying local wildflowers. A book on the wattles of the Granite Belt was added to a series of publications produced by the Consortium and proved very popular with locals and visitors alike. Survey work on two of the Granite Belt's endangered boronias continued and their recovery was noted after the severe drought conditions experienced during 2019. With better rainfall, the group were able to conduct four wildflower walks in spring. Consortium members assisted the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service with post-fire monitoring in Girraween National Park and provided comments on the Southern Downs Regional Council's draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy and their Invasive Pests Strategic Plan.

The Granite Belt Growers Association have a strong focus on water security. With increased climate variability, the need to manage irrigation water supplies for longer and more severe droughts has been identified. With a heavy reliance on on-farm surface water, evaporation control is key. Increased adoption of evaporation control will lead to greater water security in times of low rainfall, while contributing to increased downstream and environmental flows in periods of average or high rainfall. Grant funding continues to be sought to help identify opportunities and quantify the benefits of area-wide evaporation control.

About 680 people attended the Stanthorpe Eco Expo on 3rd October 2020. Congratulations on a great day for this area after the devastating drought and fires. – *photo right*



Macintyre Ag Alliance is a not-for-profit community organisation formed in 1989 with the intention of aiding primary producers in the Goondiwindi region to adopt best management practices to achieve better outcomes for their businesses and the environment. Holding a number of events and initiatives during the year saw a 71% increase in membership. The 'deep ripping field day' in September 2020 saw more than 100 farmers in attendance, travelling from as far as Glenmorgan and Westmar, to learn the latest in deep ripping research, observing how locals have improved yields and productivity in pasture, broadacre farming and irrigation development. MAA also partnered with MLA and Smithfield Cattle Company to host more than 90 beef producers (*photo above*) at Sapphire Feedlot in November 2020, for a field day on making and marketing meat. A 2021 highlight was the receipt of a generous grant from NSW Local Land Services to undertake a 1900km round trip regenerative ag tour into NSW in March - an opportunity too good to miss for 24 MAA members all at different stages in their transition to regenerative ag principles but eager to learn from some of Australia's most innovative farmers. From a mental health perspective, MAA hosted a 'Women on the Land' luncheon at the Botanic Gardens in October 2020 to celebrate Queensland Mental Health Week - a great opportunity for women to get together to discuss an important subject in a year where gatherings have been few and far between.





## QUEENSLAND MURRAY DARLING GEOFF ELLIOT

Finally, a tribute to Geoff Elliot, past Chair, Board Member and Regional Director QWaLC. Over the last twenty five plus years Geoff was an active member of numerous local community groups and held representative positions with the local producer organisation Traprock Group, the Border Rivers Catchment Management Association, Inglewood & Texas Landcare Association (chairman for many years) and Bracker Creek Rural Fire Brigade (second officer).



*written by  
MaryLou Gittins OAM*



Geoff was invited to join the QWaLC Board representing the Qld Murray Darling region in 2014 and at the 2015 AGM was elected to the position of Chair. That same year he was appointed as a director of the National Landcare Network. In 2017 he attended the inaugural International Landcare Conference in Nagoya Japan as a representative of the NLN and QWaLC. He will be sorely missed by those who have worked, played and yarned with him over the years. Thank you, Geoff, for your drive and support of Qld Water and Land Carers.



Photos: Jason Carroll and the reef off Queensland's coast.



**P**eople we  
work with:



Global  
**LANDCARE**



Queensland  
Government



Australian Government



There's a lot happening *in our backyard*



56 regional groups  
across Australia are  
working together to care  
for our natural resources.



Australian Government  
Department of the Environment

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