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RECOGNISE, CELEBRATE & GROW



QUEENSLAND WATER AND LAND CARERS

Annual Report

2025 2026

QWLC

QUEENSLAND WATER & LAND CARERS

Landcare

Coastcare

Junior Landcare

Landcare Agriculture

Table of Contents

About Us	**03**
Our Role	**04**
Our People	**05**
Chair's Report	**06**
Chief Executive Officer's Report	**07**
Treasurer's Report	**08**
Financial Performance	**10**
Members Impact	**11**
Cape York Peninsular – Trevor Meldrum	**12**
Southern and Northern Gulf – Mark Van Ryt	**13**
Desert Channels – Robyn Adams	**14**
South East Queensland – Michael Bond CSC and Bar	**15**
Fitzroy – Lynette Keene	**16**
Queensland Murray Darling – Leo Perkins	**17**
Condamine/ South West - Chris Meibusch	**18**
Burnett Mary - Debbie Seal	**19**
Statewide - Richard Sporne	**20**
Our Patrons	**21**
Naturally Together	**21**
21 Years	**22**
Landcare Awards	**23**
Image List	**24**
Partners/Contact Us	**25**
Acknowledgements	**26**

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.

Our Values

- **Voluntary**
- **Community-based**
- **Agile and adaptive**
- **Culturally driven, Solutions-focussed, Science-guided**
- **Ethical, engaged, empowering**
- **Subsidiarity, representative partnerships**

About Us

Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC) supports community-based approaches to managing and protecting our natural resources – creating more productive and sustainable farms, conserving and enhancing our environment and building more cohesive and resilient communities. We provide our members and communities with information and support for good governance, keeping people safe, the importance of volunteerism and by providing appropriate insurance coverage. We promote subsidiarity - enabling farmers, landowners and conservationists to work together at a local level on local issues. We are a representative body for our members – regions, networks, groups and individuals promoting and advocating for ecologically sustainable development across Queensland in partnership with governments, philanthropists, and the wider community.

As Queensland's peak body for natural resource management volunteers, QWaLC works on behalf of its membership of 507 groups and more than 67.000 members and volunteers.

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

QWaLC's network extends across the 14 NRM regions (management units) and the 12 NRM Regional body organisations of Queensland, each of which is represented by a QWaLC board member elected from QWaLC member groups in that region. The board members participate on a board of management.

QWaLC is incorporated in Queensland and governed by its constitution which sets out the objectives, powers and administrative arrangements.

Our Constitution

Our Constitution is available online click here
or contact QWaLC's CEO: Darryl Ebenezer | darryl@qwalc.org.au

Our role is to:

Promote

Ensure QWaLC is a recognised and valued entity by working locally and regionally to promote our networks, leaders and collective successes.

Acknowledge and celebrate outstanding volunteer contributions, leadership, groups and partnerships.

Recognise and build awareness by sharing practical solutions and outcomes including innovative practical skills and on-ground actions.

Strengthen

Facilitate and support the strength of our network through building good governance, strengthening capacity, fostering financial sustainability and effective risk management.

Provide insurance solutions to appropriately manage risk for activities and our members.
Develop skills to strengthen social connection and community well-being.

Advocate

Advocate for key Queensland priorities and facilitate stronger member engagement to influence decision and policy making
at regional, state and national levels.

Strengthen and advocate for partnerships with First Nations that respectfully build mutual understandings and capacities to care for Country.

Share the QWaLC story to build wider community awareness, member
engagement and knowledge.

Network

Connect, activate and showcase the QWaLC network of diverse member groups and communities.

Mentoring, training and sharing experience and information to strengthen:

- governance
- volunteer activities and management
- resilient, engaged communities.

Create opportunities across the network for learning from and with First Nations people about caring for Country practices and aspirations.

Represent

Ensure effective representation through active engagement, collaborative and focussed leadership and partnerships.

Be a leading voice representing our diverse groups and agricultural communities in discussion about natural resource management, environment and land use.

Represent and give voice to local and regional perspectives through leadership and advocacy on natural resource management concerns in regional, state and national forums.

Our People

These are the 22nd QWaLC Board members. 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.

Region	Board Role Subcommittee Chair	Name
South East Queensland	Chair Governance Risk Insurance & Planning C'tee Chair	Michael Bond, CSC and Bar
Cape York & Torres Strait	Vice Chair First Nations C'tee Co-Chair	Trevor Meldrum
Southern/Northern Gulf	Treasurer Finance and Audit C'tee Chair	Mark Van Ryt
Fitzroy	Secretary Board Member	Lynette Keene
Basin Qld Murray Darling	Member Engagement C'tee Chair Board Member	Leo Perkins
Condamine / South West	Board Member	Chris Meibusch
Desert Channels	Board Member	Robyn Adams
Wet Tropics	Board Member	Jeff Baines
Statewide	First Nations C'tee Co-Chair Board Member	Richard Sporne
Burnett Mary	Board Member	Debbie Seal
Burdekin Dry Tropics/Mackay Whitsunday	Vacant	
Staff	Chief Executive Officer	Darryl Ebenezer



"QWaLC is more than an organisation that is providing good advice and insurance. It is a community of communities."



Chair's Report

Michael Bond CSC and Bar

It is a pleasure to present my first report as the Chair of Queensland Water and Land Carers. Taking over from Mary-Lou Gittins OAM was no small undertaking. Mary-Lou has made an enormous contribution to QWaLC over many years, and I am pleased to report she continues to do so in a supporting role.

What I enjoy most about the QWaLC model is that it is not about us. We are entirely focussed on providing the best support to our member groups. Across Queensland, these groups continue to undertake an outstanding range of work. They restore waterways and bushland, protect habitat, improve soils, monitor and rescue wildlife, host community gardens, control invasive species, educate the next generation and bring people together around a shared responsibility for the environment. Collectively this volunteering effort represents an enormous contribution to the environmental health and resilience of Queensland.

One of the things I have come to appreciate most strongly is the connection between environmental volunteering and community wellbeing. It is the person who gains confidence through volunteering, the veteran who finds a new community, the young person who develops a lifelong interest in the natural environment, or the experienced volunteer who discovers that their knowledge and skills still have enormous value. One of the great privileges of my role is that it provides an excuse to visit our member groups and witness these benefits first-hand.

The year has reinforced for me the importance of leadership. Leadership sustains volunteering. People remain involved when they feel connected, valued, supported and able to make a genuine contribution. Strong volunteer organisations build meaningful relationships, provide opportunities for personal development, foster a sense of identity, communicate openly, give volunteers autonomy, provide organisational support, recognise effort, and ensure fairness and equity.

These are the foundations upon which successful volunteer organisations are built. Again, I have had the privilege of seeing these principles demonstrated first-hand across our member groups.

I have also valued opportunities to engage with the State Government, a number of local Councils, Healthy Land & Water, Volunteering Queensland, the Queensland Conservation Council, National Landcare Network and numerous community organisations.

Events such as QWaLC's 21st, Brisbane Biodiversity Forum, National Landcare Conference, Volunteering Queensland initiatives, Community Gardens gathering and numerous field days all play an essential role in connecting people, sharing knowledge and supporting volunteers across a diverse environmental sector.

QWaLC has an important role as a connector in bringing people together, sharing knowledge and creating opportunities for collaboration.
It continues to be an honour to serve this remarkable community. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I sincerely thank our Chief Executive Officer, Darryl Ebenezer, and our dedicated contractors: Mary-Lou Gittins, Executive Officer; Andrea Mason, Communications; Glen Donoghoe, Project Reporting/Survey; and Dorian Pozzan, Bookkeeper.

I thank our member groups and their volunteers for everything they do. I thank my fellow Board members for their contribution and support, and the State and Federal Governments, community and sector partners for their ongoing confidence in QWaLC.



Michael Bond CSC and Bar



"QWaLC's role is to help members to keep doing their work, and to make sure your contribution is recognised and supported."



CEO's Report

Darryl Ebenezer

The past year has once again reminded me of the remarkable reach and diversity of community Landcare and member groups across Queensland. Whether it is a small group caring for a local creek, volunteers rescuing wildlife, people restoring coastal habitats, or landholders improving the health of their land and water, our members make a practical difference every day.

Our latest Impact of Landcare (in its broadest sense) in Queensland report brings that contribution into sharper focus. During 2025–26, our 507 member groups reported the involvement of more than 67,000 volunteers, contributing over 3 million hours of effort. You engaged nearly 448,000 people in community activities, grew or planted more than 1.28 million plants, managed over 1.24 million hectares of vegetation and undertook almost 64,000 wildlife rescues. The report estimates the overall value of all this activity to Queensland at $220.41 million. Behind every impressive number are local people giving their time, energy and knowledge to the places they care about.

The report also tells us that while community commitment remains strong, enthusiasm alone cannot sustain the work. Many groups face continuing pressure to find reliable funding, recruit and retain volunteers, meet governance and insurance requirements, and keep up with growing expectations of a largely volunteer workforce. Some groups are thriving and expanding; others need help to maintain the basics. Listening to these different experiences, and providing practical, proportionate support, and advocating for change, remains central to QWaLC's work.

We continue to support members through insurance, governance advice, networking, advocacy and communication. Our annual member survey and insurance renewal helps us understand what is happening across the state and where additional support is needed. This data is increasingly valuable when we speak with government, funders and partners about our member's contribution.

Partnerships - Our strategic partnership agreement with Landcare Australia provides an important foundation for stronger cooperation, sharing knowledge and connecting Queensland groups with national opportunities. Seeing the benefits it delivers to members on the ground, we look forward to building more practical opportunities together. We also value our ongoing relationships with the National Landcare Network, NRM Regions Qld, regional NRM organisations and the many other groups working with and alongside our members.

QWaLC greatly values the long-standing support from the Queensland Government, which enables QWaLC to provide affordable and accessible services to groups throughout the state. Our priority will be to demonstrate the value of that investment and make the case for the stability and capacity that member groups need to continue delivering beyond June 2027.

The 2026 Queensland Landcare Awards are a reminder of why this movement matters. With 72 nominations across nine categories the awards recognise extraordinary individuals, groups and partnerships. Congratulations and good luck!

The Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games present an opportunity to think ambitiously about what our communities and landscapes could look like by 2032. Starting those conversations now could ensure regional and local community groups are part of the planning from the start.

I would like to thank the QWaLC Board for their ongoing guidance and support, and our small team for their commitment and hard work throughout the year. A special thank you to our member groups and the many thousands of volunteers, committee members and staff who continue to make such a significant contribution to Queensland's environment and communities. Your efforts and achievements are what make QWaLC's work worthwhile. I appreciate the opportunity we have to support you and look forward to continuing to work together in the coming year.



with thanks, Darryl





Treasurer's Report

Mark Van Ryt

On behalf of the Board of Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC), I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for the financial year ended 30 June 2026. The past financial year has seen QWaLC continue its commitment to supporting Queensland's volunteering groups who care for our land and water, while maintaining responsible financial management and meeting our governance and reporting obligations.

Financial Performance

For the 2025–2026 financial year, QWaLC recorded a net operating deficit of $111,785, compared with a surplus of $208,207 in the previous financial year.

Total income was $491,716, comprising:

- Queensland Department of Resources funding: $390,629
- National Landcare Network funding: $95,187
- Interest and other income: $5,900.

The operating deficit reflects a reduction in revenue compared with the previous financial year, some funding timing, together with increased operating expenditure.

QWaLC maintains a sound financial position, with total equity of $429,018 and cash and cash equivalents of $470,997 as at 30 June 2026.

These reserves provide an important financial foundation as QWaLC continues to deliver services to its members and plan for future funding arrangements.

Expenditure and Member Services

As in previous years, QWaLC's major expenditure relates to the administration and delivery of essential services to our member groups, including insurance, governance, advocacy, communications and organisational operations.

The provision of insurance remains one of QWaLC's most significant commitments and an essential benefit for our members.

Insurance costs continue to be influenced by broader market conditions, reinforcing the importance of careful financial management and continued government support. QWaLC has maintained a provision of $50,000 to assist in meeting the excess should an insurance claim arise.

Financial Audit and Governance

QWaLC's external financial audit for the year ended 30 June 2026 has been undertaken through John Gosper Audit & Assurance Pty Ltd, with Deanna Backman CPA identified as the responsible audit director.

The audit engagement provides for an independent examination of QWaLC's financial statements in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

As part of the audit process, the Chair and Treasurer signed a Letter of Representation confirming their responsibilities for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and the provision of relevant financial information to the auditor.

The Board, supported by the Finance and Audit Committee, CEO and administration team, continues to place considerable importance on financial accountability, transparency and compliance with regulatory requirements.

The audited financial statements and accompanying auditor's report will provide members with further information regarding QWaLC's financial performance and position.

Funding and Financial Sustainability

QWaLC remains reliant on government funding and support from our sector partners to deliver its services and represent the interests of volunteer groups who care for our land and water across Queensland.

On behalf of the Board and our member groups, I sincerely acknowledge and thank the Queensland and Australian Governments for their ongoing investment in QWaLC member groups.

We particularly acknowledge the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural development and the National Landcare Network for their financial contributions during the reporting period.

We also acknowledge Landcare Australia for its contribution towards the delivery of the 2026 Queensland Landcare Awards, which was received during the financial year and recognised as income received in advance for the following year.

With our current funding arrangements with the Queensland Government approaching their conclusion in June 2027, financial sustainability and continued engagement with funding partners will remain important priorities for the Board.

Acknowledgements

I sincerely thank my fellow Directors serving on the Finance and Audit Committee for their valuable contributions, financial oversight and commitment to maintaining sound governance throughout the year. Their willingness to contribute their knowledge, experience and considered advice is greatly appreciated.

I also thank Chair Michael Bond, CEO Darryl Ebenezer, the QWaLC administration team and our bookkeeper for their ongoing assistance and dedication to the effective financial management of the organisation. As this was my first year as Treasurer their support has been invaluable.

Finally, I acknowledge the support of the entire Board in ensuring QWaLC continues to operate responsibly and remains focused on delivering meaningful support to our members.

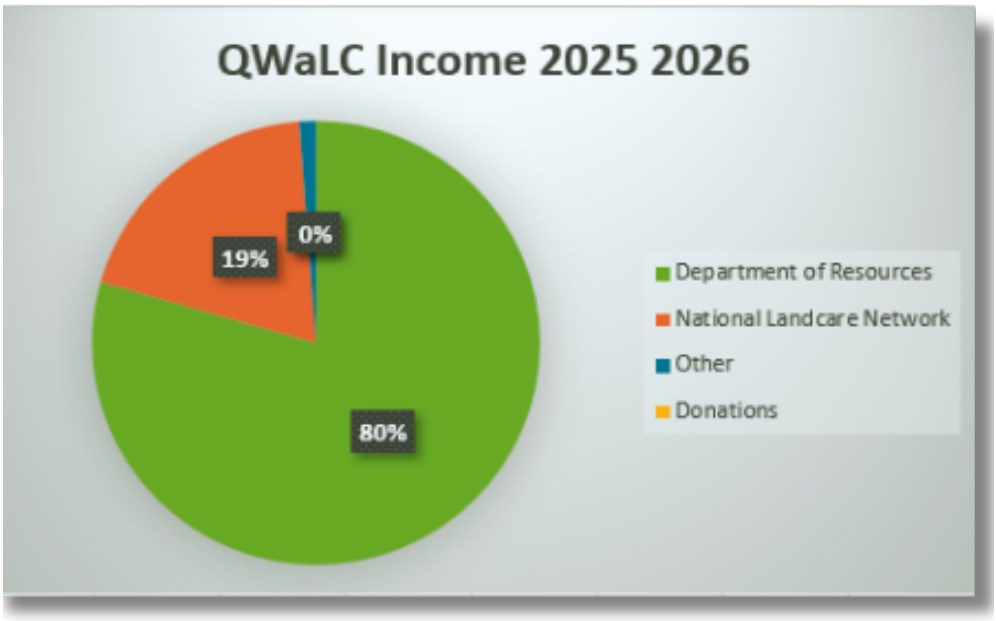
While the financial year has presented challenges, QWaLC remains committed to maintaining a sustainable organisation that can continue supporting the thousands of volunteers caring for Queensland's land and water.

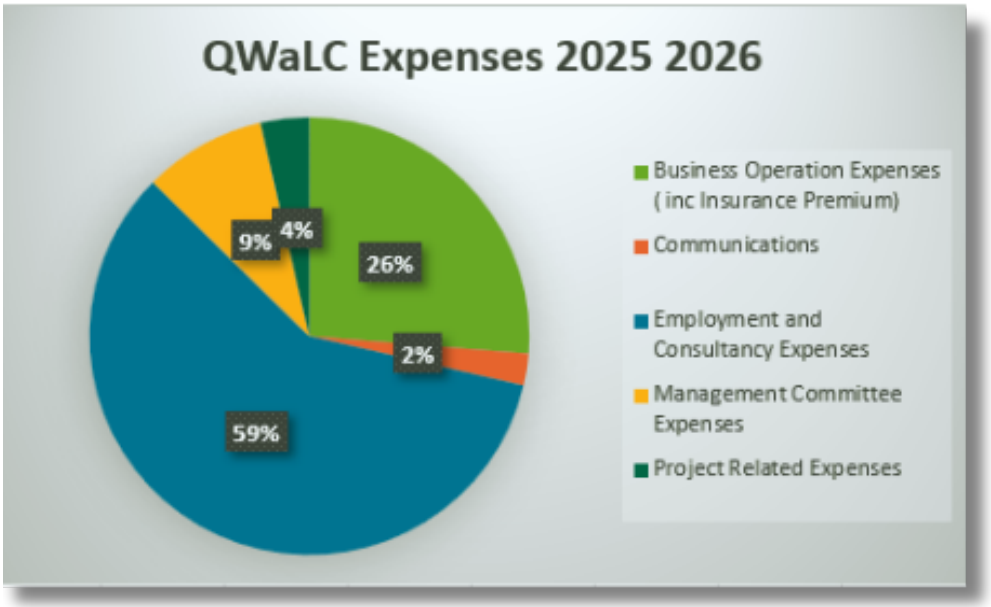
Mark Van Ryt *Mark Van Ryt*



Financial Performance

For the full Auditor's Report 2025 2026 go to: https://qwalc.org.au/about-2/qwalc-annual-reports/





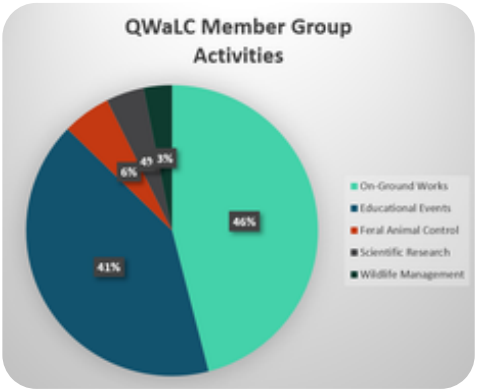
Members Impact

Through extensive research and engagement with its Member Groups, the annual membership and insurance survey provides QWaLC with a comprehensive picture of the overall activities and challenges in QLD, and an overview of existing resource levels state-wide and in each NRM region. See the membership and insurance survey report at: https://qwalc.org.au/about-2/qwalc-annual-reports/

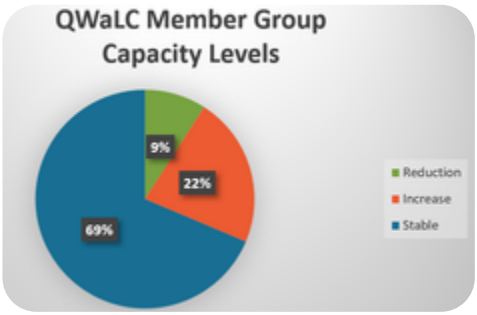
See our full impact at https://qwalc.org.au/impact/



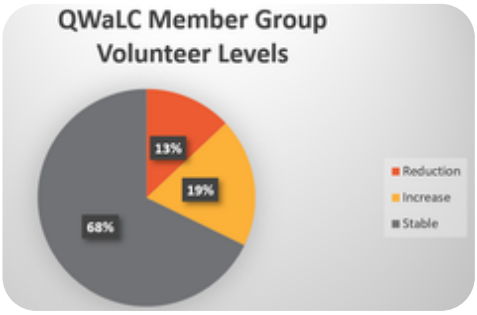
Key Survey Results











Member Group Challenges





"QWaLC - never a dull moment when in Cape York."



Trevor Meldrum

Cape York & Torres Strait

After attending QWALC AGM in Brisbane I rang all the members I could and let them know what was happening for us in Cape York. Also had meetings with individual people to let them know that we are here to help. Also contacted groups who had to yet to fill out the QWALC surveys for Insurance cover.
Throughout the year, I attended many meetings and events to represent and promote QWaLC and engage with others.

Have attended DCCEEW Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan Program meetings in person and online. Represented QWaLC at Queensland Conservation Council, CAFNEC, Biosecurity QLD meetings, Interagency meetings. LMAC meetings, in Cooktown and online. We are still engaging with the Annan, Endeavour, and Normanby producers group as well, helping deliver the Communities of Practice Programs for Cape York NRM. Still completing some invasive species work, private landholder work.
Conducted a Field Day in March and a Workshop July in Cooktown to share our learning with our community

National Landcare Network - Participated at the Parliamentary Friends of Landcare Launch in Canberra Parliament House, where as a First nations Person, I represented QWALC and the National Landcare Network. Also attended meetings with DCCEEW while in Canberra to continue to advocate for equitable resources for all environmental and natural resource management projects for our Cape York Bama.

I have continued to meet with Producers and Traditional Owners. We are helping them, and we are in the frontline for Invasive species in Cape York and Northern Australian.
I also met with Biosecurity Qld as a delivery partner and to help with biosecurity stakeholder mapping in Cape York.

I attended as many member groups meeting as I could attend, physically and online. I have attended all QWaLC meetings and was pleased to be able to lead the Yarn Ups sessions for our members.

As QWaLC Director of the Cape York/Torres Strait Region I would like to recognise the great work that all our member groups have accomplished over the last twelve months. Our country's natural resources range from wetlands to native wildlife which are impacted by human impact now and into the future.

I will continue to represent QWALC to the best of my ability making sure that our region is well represented and that we are not ignored.

While representing QWaLC and the NLN, I delivered training and a short presentation at the Global Landcare Conference held in Fiji in July 2026. Here I made new friends and contacts from all over the world and was able to demonstrate what Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Incorporated had to offer at the Cooktown Student Futures Fair 2025.







"Landcare to us in our region is like gardening at a macro scale."



Southern/Northern Gulf

Mark Van Ryt

In the last year I have attended the National Landcare Conference in Gold Coast; coordinated dozens of landcare activities for my home group Gulf Rivers Landcare and was re-elected as president.

Landcare to us in our region is like gardening at a macro scale. We mainly treat rubber vine, parkinsonia, mesquite, bellyache bush and coral cactus.

I have engaged with the state government agencies, the regional NRM group, the local government agency, landholders and other community groups. Our members are all active in raising awareness mainly about the invasive species threat.

Once reelected to the board of QWaLC, I was appointed to the executive role of Treasurer. In this role I chair the finance committee meetings and help provide oversight on all transactions, income and expenditure.

Our budget is of acute importance now as we are coming to the end of our contract with the state government. In the near future I will contact my local member of parliament to discuss this contract renewal with the Department of Natural Resources as well as other matters.

On the board of QWaLC I represent community groups in the Northern and Southern Gulf NRM regions. It's a huge combined region but with only 10 registered groups. I will endeavor to contact all the member groups, meet face to face and see if there is something QWaLC and myself as director, can do to help.







"The Desert Uplands Committee celebrated their thirty years of elevating land stewardship, grazing land management and aligned rangeland activities"



Desert Channels

Robyn Adams

The spectacularly full lake dominates macro aspects of the basin. Good seasons and previous flooding meant the land 'sponge' was full, and more rains and flooding events across the three main rivers of Georgina, Diamantina and Cooper, their channels and upstream tributaries, made for a record-breaking fill. Many air tourists enjoyed viewing the organic-shaped verdancy from above, the rich pastels of the flush and fill of the salt lake, and that horizon lost in the reflectivity.

The State Government opened an Exclusion Fencing Recovery Grants for those affected by the earlier floods in July 2025; and released a 25-year Blueprint 'Primary Industry Prosper 2030' then for 2050, with a roadshow out west. Interestingly, livestock makes up over a third of the state's primary production, so the basin's rangeland cattle, sheep and goat producers will be challenged to produce more whilst improving their environmental and other sustainability and emission profiles. The Calf Alive Conference in Longreach in November 2025, presented on four years of research and trials of improving calf begetting, health and survival, a key factor in efficient production across the basin's beef grazing enterprises.



With 2026 being the International Year of Rangeland and Pastoralists, and the International Year of the Women Farmer, on-ground commemorative gatherings were hampered by the high cost of fuel and decrees on 'essential travel only'. As the Desert Uplands Committee Chair, I attended the Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women in Kathmandu, Nepal in May; with a field trip up river revealing the community's concern and expectation of glacial melting. It was 32degrees at just under 400 meters elevation, on the day it had been forecast to snow a fortnight earlier.

The Desert Uplands Committee celebrated their thirty years of elevating land stewardship, grazing land management and aligned rangeland activities, completing a documentary on its foundational inspiration and creation. The Committee also continued its Materix Project, a partnership with Meat & Livestock Australia through its Producer Demonstration Site Program, trialling better heifer management practices on rangeland grazing properties in western Queensland. The Committee auspiced a project with the Barcaldine Arid Lands Botanic Park Inc, establishing and fencing a plot just south of the township, through the State Government's CSA program. GroWQ based in Longreach has more of a focus on livestock producers and youth of the basin's predominant Mitchell Grass Downs, with Innovation Forum and other successful landholder/manager gatherings and activities held.

The 8year NACP (Northern Australia Climate Program assisting producers to understand predictivity tools (with a drought focus) concluded in April. The new ZNE-Ag CRS (Zero Net Emissions Agriculture Cooperative Research Centre) started its large-scale, long-term research to accelerate the development and implementation of innovative emissions reduction solutions, with the well-attended Champion Field Day (north of Blackall) bringing these many (new & old) players together with producers and livestock.





"Bringing military veterans together to restore local bushland is proving a powerful connection between caring for Country and improving personal wellbeing."



South East Queensland

Michael Bond CSC and Bar

Looking back over the past year, I have once again been impressed with the remarkable depth of knowledge and generosity that exists within our member organisations. Each visit, workshop, field day and working bee has reinforced the strength of our community of volunteers.

From community gardens and bushcare groups to regional organisations, catchment networks and natural resource management bodies, I have had the opportunity to see the great work being undertaken by volunteers across Queensland. Throughout the year I maintained regular involvement with the Brisbane Catchment Network, participating in monthly meetings and helping strengthen connections between member groups, Brisbane City Council and QWaLC. These relationships remain invaluable in sharing ideas and identifying emerging issues.

I also continued my regular involvement with Save Our Waterways Now (SOWN) and Northey Street City Farm. I took the opportunity to visit and engage with a wide range of other QWaLC member groups and environmental organisations across South East Queensland and neighbouring regions.

These included Oxley Creek Catchment Association, Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee, Norman Creek Catchment Committee, Boonah and District Landcare, Burnett Mary Regional Group, Noosa and District Landcare, Barung Landcare, Whites Hill Bushcare and Wolston and Centenary Catchments. I visited Yandina Community Gardens and participated in activities with community garden groups, as well as visiting innovative regenerative projects such as Raven Place Farm and Zaytuna Farm.

These visits have provided a valuable opportunity to see the diversity and quality of work being undertaken by volunteers. Lasting environmental outcomes are ultimately achieved by volunteers who quietly turn up month after month to care for their local places.

This year provided many opportunities to broaden my own knowledge and bring new ideas back to our member groups. Training and field days covered subjects as diverse as regenerative agriculture, syntropic agroforestry, composting, soil biology, weed ecology, biodiversity conservation, rain-ready landscapes and natural resource management.

One of the year's most rewarding experiences was establishing what is believed to be Australia's first Veterans' Landcare group. Bringing military veterans together to restore local bushland is proving a powerful connection between caring for Country and improving personal wellbeing. Watching this group take its first steps confirms that environmental volunteering delivers benefits far beyond ecological restoration.

Our members have served Australia through military service and are now continuing that tradition of service by caring for Country and restoring a local natural environment. Our tagline: Protecting Country – then and now. Ages range from 20 to a 76-year-old Vietnam Veteran. It is proving very popular with veterans. We have adopted the Rakali as our 'spirit animal' as one was spotted in our local creek. We like its underrated status.







"My primary motivation is to have healthy land and healthy water as well as respect for those that have come before me. To educate people on our natural capital and how through QWALC we can help this happen."

Fitzroy Basin

Lynette Keene

My goal as director is to continue to educate people on the importance of QWaLC. It was great to be able to attend my first face to face meeting in Brisbane in late 2025 and meet all my fellow directors and other QWaLC supporters.

I have had many conversations with people explaining what QWaLC is about - which is so important that people understand what it is all about. Suggesting that people sign up to the newsletter, which is an excellent conversation starter.

It has been a pleasure to assist to educate people with varies training days and conversations on the natural capital we have in our own backyards and how we can look after it.

Biosecurity issues have become more and more important and everyone needs to very aware if we are to protect our environment and our native animals. We all need to do better.

A special thank you to Darryl Ebenezer for all his help and all his updates on what has been happening in the wider QWaLC community.

Another special thank you to Mary-Lou Gittins for all her help and guidance and to Chris Meibusch for dropping in and visiting me in my own backyard.

In the coming year I will strive to continue to develop an understanding of the importance of QWaLC and how it can help our member groups.









*"Strong local groups sustain resilient communities. By listening, connecting people and supporting volunteers, we can care for our landscapes and create meaningful opportunities for the **next generation** across our region."*

Queensland Murray Darling

Leo Perkins

During 2025–2026, my work as QWaLC's Queensland Murray Darling representative centred on listening to member groups, strengthening connections and supporting volunteers. Through member contact, community events and my board and Member Engagement and Communication committee roles, I focused on understanding groups' needs and helping them sustain their work.

Governance and compliance demands were a recurring concern, echoing my experience across other Landcare organisations. Groups also raised the challenge of communicating their value and turning community interest into support and action. These conversations have informed my wider work on practical documentation and communication resources that recognise the realities of volunteer time and capacity.

Attending community events offered opportunities to connect with local people and promote Landcare. One highlight was hosting a Landcare marquee at the Fire-Fly Fete, supporting Tenterfield Aerodrome's development as an aerial firefighting and emergency response base for communities across the Queensland–New South Wales border.

Judging the NextGen Landcare Award has been a particular highlight, revealing the inspiring range of work people are doing to care for their landscapes and communities. Appointed during the reporting year, I completed judging after year end. The entrants' initiative and commitment reinforced my enthusiasm for supporting the next generation.

Supporting membership and insurance renewals reinforced the value of accessible advice and personal contact. I thank the volunteers and QWaLC colleagues whose knowledge and generosity supported my work.

My priorities for the coming year are drought and community resilience, youth engagement across the region and telling the Landcare Story.

Drought preparedness and community resilience mean caring for both landscapes and people. The prospect of an exceptionally strong El Niño adds urgency, although local impacts remain dependent on seasonal conditions. Practical preparation and mitigation sit alongside community connection and mental wellbeing, including recognition of worry and distress about environmental change and disasters. A key focus is supporting groups to create welcoming avenues for people to take constructive local action together, share concerns and connect with appropriate support.

Youth engagement means creating practical, welcoming opportunities for young people to contribute ideas, shape activities and take on meaningful responsibility. Building connections with schools and young adults, and encouraging mentoring between generations, can help groups welcome new participants while valuing the experience of existing volunteers.

Governance and compliance support focuses on building practical, accessible resources that help local groups manage their organisational responsibilities with confidence. Balancing good practice with volunteer capacity, reducing duplicated effort and leaving more time for community and environmental work are central priorities.

Telling the Landcare story focuses on accessible tools that help local groups share their achievements, communicate their value and invite people to get involved. Clear, engaging communication is a priority for building credibility and turning community interest into support and action.



"Together, we are strengthening and empowering volunteers, connecting communities and building a resilient, thriving future for our remarkable region."



Condamine/South West

Chris Meibusch

Over the last 12 months, I have engaged with local landcare groups on the Darling Downs by attending monthly meetings & their different landcare events to support their activities, organisational challenges and planning for future community engagements.

As the QWaLC representative Board Member for the region I regularly attending landcare meetings at Allora, Cambooya, Clifton and Pittsworth, I have been able to build relationships with office bearers and members and understand their challenges of running dynamic volunteer organisations.

I have also met regularly with the local NRM body officers and environmental advocacy staff to encourage co-operation and support of local landcare groups.

With predictions of lower rainfall over the next 3-6 months, local landcare organisations may well be stretched in terms of their volunteer availability. Drought resilience workshops and field days are planned.

Over the next 12 months I aim to foster greater cooperation between local NRM and environmental advocacy groups with our established landcare groups.









"A key focus was helping organisations understand their responsibilities, particularly in relation to public liability insurance, risk management and volunteer safety."



Burnett Mary

Debbie Seal

During 2526, I represented the Burnett Mary region as a QWaLC Director, supporting member groups through advice, advocacy, networking and practical assistance. A key focus was helping organisations understand their responsibilities, particularly in relation to public liability insurance, risk management and volunteer safety. At the MRCCC General Meeting in February, I clarified insurance matters and my QWaLC role. I also attended the ANARRA Members Meeting as Secretary/Treasurer, provided guidance on public liability responsibilities and raised the possibility of QWaLC assistance with first aid training costs.

I responded to an insurance Certificate of Currency enquiry from the Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation and began building relationships with SevGen Indigenous Corporation and Noosa Community Gardens following invitations to visit their facilities. These connections created opportunities to better understand local priorities, encourage participation in the QWaLC network and identify where further support may be valuable.

Throughout the year, I maintained strong links with environmental organisations across the region. At a GREAT meeting, attended in my MRCCC and ANARRA capacities, I contributed to discussion about vegetation management, environmental education, regional environmental values, the Queensland Environmental Offsets Framework and support for Mary River catchment programs. I also engaged with representatives from government agencies and community organisations at MRCCC's 250th General Meeting, strengthening relationships with QWaLC member groups and other stakeholders.

I contributed to preparations for National Science Week through the Gympie Regional STEM Hub and helped plan the STEAMzone Science Fair, designed to connect up to 500 primary students with science, Landcare and Coastcare activities.

I also shared Biosecurity Queensland information about H5 bird flu with ANARRA members and planned to distribute it to QWaLC groups across the region.

Advocacy and communication remained central to my role. I coordinated a Mary River fishing competition that engaged 43 entrants and raised funds for turtle research and nest protection, helped organise a conservation film screening attended by 94 people that raised more than $1,000, and explored QWaLC membership with Save Sunrise Glossies. Through Issue 37 of the CodLine newsletter and ongoing liaison with groups and individuals, I promoted local initiatives, shared information and strengthened collaboration.

Collectively, these activities demonstrate my commitment to accessible Director support, safer volunteering, stronger networks and effective representation of Burnett Mary member groups within QWaLC.





"This year has reinforced my belief that lasting change is achieved through strong leadership, meaningful partnerships, and a shared commitment to creating opportunities for our people, protecting our environment, and building a sustainable future for generations to come."



Statewide

Richard Sporne

During the reporting period, I represented the statewide region of Queensland on the QWaLC Board by bringing local priorities, opportunities and challenges into Board discussions and supporting informed, practical decision-making. I maintained a strong focus on protecting culturally significant sites, managing weeds and pest animals, monitoring native species, and advancing fire management and cultural burning activities.

I also supported biodiversity assessments and mapping, the protection of sensitive conservation areas, and meaningful engagement with communities and Traditional Owners in land management.

Through partnerships with government agencies, councils, universities and conservation groups, I worked to strengthen regional collaboration, share knowledge and help create opportunities for coordinated environmental action.

In the coming year, I will continue to ensure that the region's priorities are represented in QWaLC Board deliberations and translated into practical, locally relevant outcomes.

Key areas of focus will include habitat restoration and revegetation; rehabilitation of waterways, wetlands and riparian areas; and fencing to protect sensitive conservation sites.

I will also support environmental education and awareness programs, ranger program activities and on-country conservation work. By strengthening partnerships, encouraging community participation and supporting Traditional Owner leadership, I aim to help build regional capability and deliver enduring cultural and environmental benefits.





Our Patrons

It's an honour to have the Governor of Queensland as our Patron. Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland and her husband, Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD, are delighted to be joint Patrons of Queensland Water and Land Carers for the duration of Her Excellency's term in office.

Queensland Water and Land Carers Chair, Michael Bond said 'The Governor's role is to represent and support our state of Queensland. This important work complements the work of our QWaLC member groups who protect and enhance Queensland's environment".





Naturally Together

Yarn up is used in both aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to have conversations, sort out problems and to discuss our grievances and to communicate with elders and our ancestors.

QWaLC Board member Trevor Meldrum is a Kuku Yalangi man whose family has ties to Princess Charlotte Bay and the Palmer River and encouraged QWaLC members to 'Yarn up' and get the conversation happening! Our sessions allowed our members to ask the directors questions in an informal setting.

Throughout the year, we also continued our webinar series...aimed at keeping our QWaLC member groups and their volunteers safe as they undertake their work to enhance and protect our environment.









Celebrating 21 Years!

Recognise, Celebrate, Grow.

On Saturday, 30 August 2025, Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC) celebrated its 21st anniversary, a landmark event for the peak body supporting community-based environmental volunteer groups statewide. Festivities took place simultaneously across Brisbane, Innisfail/Cairns, Yeppoon, Toowoomba, and online, drawing over 120 guests—past and present Directors, CEOs, member group volunteers, and representatives from Landcare Australia, the National Landcare Network, and regional natural resource management (NRM) bodies.

A Journey of Growth and Community Spirit
Since its inception in 2003–2004, under a Ministerial Directive from Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Hon. Stephen Robertson, QWaLC has thrived through the support of government and its diverse member base. Today, QWaLC stands as Queensland's leading organisation for environmental volunteers, representing groups from Landcare, Catchment Management, Coastcare, Wildlife Carers, Community Gardens, and First Nations associations.

Recognising the People Behind the Progress
The anniversary ceremony reflected on the dedication of past Chairs, Directors, thousands of volunteers, and enduring partnerships that have shaped QWaLC's story. MC Stephen Robertson, Chair of Healthy Land and Water, acknowledged the organisation's roots and the continued importance of local wisdom.

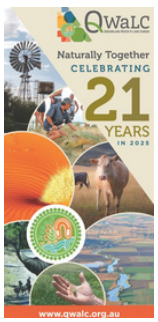
A heartfelt Acknowledgement of Country was delivered by Board member Trevor Meldrum and Kuku Yalangi community member, setting the tone for the celebration. Read more











Landcare Awards

National Landcare Conference and Awards

The National Landcare Awards were held on the Gold Coast in September 2025. We were especially proud to see two outstanding rural landholders progress from the state awards to win at the National Landcare Awards, showcasing some of Queensland's best landcare practices to the rest of the nation.

Australian Government Climate Innovation Award
Grant and Carly Burnham and their four children, Lily, Ruby, Knox and Quade from Bonnie Doone Beef! Lily and Knox received the awards on behalf of the family with a beautiful tribute to their connection to Landcare, the soils and lands on which they live and work.

Australian Government Sustainable Agriculture Landcare Award
Melinee and Rob Leather, Leather Cattle Co. Their leadership is a tribute to their commitment to #sustainableagriculture.









The National Landcare Conference was attended by more than 600 delegates who came together to discuss the real-world challenges facing local communities, landholders and the environment while showcasing practical solutions and insightful learnings from across the country. It was the perfect place to lobby and meet with our partners and learn from experts and community groups from across Australia.

QWaLC was pleased to host the Welcome drinks and Mary-Lou Gittins presented the crowd with a comprehensive overview of Landcare in Queensland and the 21-year history of QWaLC. She was then spectacularly inducted into the Landcare Hall of Fame by conference MC Costa Georgiadis!

Mary-Lou also played a huge role coordinating the 'lunch and learn' short presentations at the conference where award nominees were given the chance to showcase their projects.

2026 QLD Landcare Awards



QWaLC is proud to once again host the 2026 QLD Landcare Awards which will take place in October 2026. They are a prestigious biennial state program, recognising individuals, groups and organisations who are making outstanding contributions to caring for the environment – not somewhere far away, but in our own towns, farms, suburbs and regions.

These awards honour individuals, groups and organisations that are making outstanding contributions to caring for the environment in their local communities for the benefit of all Australians today, and for generations to come.

Leading up to the awards, we are thrilled to have received 72 nominations across 9 categories. We would like to thank all the nominees for their tireless dedication to our landscapes, environment and communities in Queensland.

Images List

Page	Image Title	Photo Credit
Front Cover	• 21st Celebration guests at Brisbane August 2025	Ashleigh Ebenezer
Chair's Report	• QWaLC Board at 2025 AGM	Andrea Mason
CEO's Report	• Karen Walsh Landcare Australia, Mary-Lou Gittins, Steve Bunnell NLN, Darryl Ebenezer, Louise Turner NLN and Michael Bond	Ashleigh Ebenezer
Cape York & Torres Strait	• Community Information Sharing • Global First Nations Knowledge Sharing Fiji • International Landcare Training delivery Fiji	Trevor Meldrum Global Landcare Global Landcare
Southern/Northern Gulf	• Gulf Rivers Landcare relaxing at our Gregory River campfire • Lake Corella bellyache bush - removing the seed to prevent another season of weed germination • Paddle through the second gorge at Boodjamulla national park to inspect the lower water level	Mark Van Ryt
Desert Channels	• Ruminating and resting in the bloodwood shade • Robyn Adams, Nikki Gilder (NSW), Julia Folkes-Taylor at The Global Gathering of Pastoralist Women, Kathmandu, Nepal, May 2026 • Mustang Field Trippers with the yaks, Northern Nepal Near the Tibetan Border, May 2026	Robyn Adams
South East Queensland	• Barung Landcare wetland • Veterans Landcare logo • Veterans Landcare_with Cr Danita Parry. Michael Bond, Sam Smith, Brisbane City Council Catchment Officer	Andrea Mason Michael Bond Cr Parry FB
Fitzroy Basin	• Gindie • Training days highlighting many different land practices	Lynette Keene
Queensland Murray Darling	• Girraween national Park	Photo by Sheila C on Unsplash
Condamine	• Pittsworth Landcare Meeting February 2026 • International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists launch • Allora Landcare Meeting February 2026 • Cambooya Landcare Meeting July 2026	Chris Meibusch
Burnett Mary	• The MRCCC's 250th General Meeting at the Hinternoosa Hatchery • Poster for screening of Love Letter to the Unseen at Gympie Cinema	Debbie Seal
Statewide	• Burn planning for Zamia Conservation Park • Cultural Mapping • Wadja Healthy country survey - while changing a tyre!	Richard Sporne
Our Patron/Naturally Together	• Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland and her husband, Professor Graeme Nimmo RFD	Office of the Governor General
21 Years	• A montage of images from the 21st celebration	QWaLC
Landcare Awards	• Lily and Knox Burnham • Rob and Melinee Leather • Mary-Lou Gittins OAM and Landcare Legend • Minister Murray Watt and Mary-Lou Gittins at the National Landcare Conference	QWaLC

We thank you for your ongoing support of Queensland Water and Land Carers

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DELIVERING FOR QUEENSLAND | Queensland Government

Australian Government
Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

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Landcare Australia

HEALTHY RIVERS TO REEF PARTNERSHIP
MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY-ISAAC

Wet Tropics Waterways

NRM REGIONS QUEENSLAND

fitzroy partnership for river health

Australian Citizen Science Association

CCA
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volunteering queensland

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Acknowledgement

“We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands where we meet, pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging – and we acknowledge the important and practical role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within communities both in Queensland and across the nation.”

Queensland Water and Land Carers supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart.



This piece is called Caring for Earth.
This story is inspired by the three elements Living, Land, Water
“The interconnected earth is the respect between living, land and water and how each interconnects to bring life to the planet. Over 65,000 years Indigenous people have been custodians of Australia, taking what we need and giving back to the environment. Our totems are connected to the animals, land and waters.
May we move towards caring for the planet in a respectful way that can bring healing of the plane.
I want to share this piece with love and harmony”, ***Leah Cummins***

INDIGENOUS ART CODE 5984
Authentic Aboriginal Art by Leah Cummins

“As proud Mayi woman from North Western Queensland I want to share my culture in art”