



Annual Report 2025

Celebrating 30 years of community catchment action

MRCCC Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 29th October 2025, Albert Bowls Club, Gympie

The MRCCC acknowledges First Nations people of the Mary River catchment: the Jinibara people from the headwaters in the Conondale and Blackall Ranges, the Kabi Kabi people from the lands where the river begins its journey to the sea, the Wakka Wakka people in the very northwest part of the catchment and the Butchulla people in the tidal reaches, Great Sandy Strait and on K'gari.

We acknowledge the various names by which they've known this river that we've known so recently as the Mary; Numabulla, Moonaboola, Moocooboola, Mooroooboooola.

The MRCCC's efforts "healing the country", (this catchment), have spanned thirty years.

We remain humbled by our First Nations peoples' long connection and custodianship and look forward to working together into the future.

The MRCCC gratefully acknowledges support from the;

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

Great Barrier Reef Foundtion

Office of the Great Barrier Reef,

Seqwater,

Burnett Mary Regional Group,

Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads,

Queensland Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

Queensland Department of Resources,

Sunshine Coast Council,

Gympie Regional Council,

Noosa Council,

Fraser Coast Regional Council,

Moreton Bay City Council

Inspiring Australia through the University of Queensland,

HQPlantations

Project Partners

Noosa, Gympie, Barung and Tiaro Landcare, Greater Mary Association, Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care group, Hinterland Bush Links, Lake Baroon Catchment Care group, Cooloola Coastcare, Griffith University, University of the Sunshine Coast, University of Queensland, Charles Darwin University, James Cook University, Australian National University, Alluvium Consulting, CSIRO, the Australian Macadamia Conservation Trust, Qld Parks and Wildlife Service, Queensland Water and Landcare and thousands of volunteers and landholders who consistently contribute their time and resources to ongoing integrated catchment management.

Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee

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Find us on Facebook	<u>Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee</u>

Front cover image courtesy of Brad Wedlock. Hervey Bay sunset on marine turtle nesting beach and migratory sea bird habitat

DONATIONS TO THE MARY CATCHMENT GIFT FUND ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Thank you to all those who donated to the Mary Catchment Gift Fund during the past year,

and to Amanda and Steven Sandburg for their generous donation of a canoe, trailer and outboard motor.

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Mary River Catchment



Catchment map

MRCCC Delegates 2024-2025

Interest Sector	Representative	Title
Arts and Culture	Joolie Gibbs	Delegate
Beef	David Higgins	Delegate
Biocontrol	Ross Smith	Deputy Chair
Coastcare	Nancy Haire	Delegate
Grazing Lands	Graeme Elphinstone	Delegate
Dairying	Elke Watson	Delegate
Dept of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation	Maria Zann	Delegate
Dept of Agriculture and Fisheries	Vacant	Delegate
Education	Ben Ryan	Delegate
Environment – lower catchment	David Arthur	Delegate
Environment – upper catchment	Narelle McCarthy	Delegate
Fishing	Rod Thompson	Delegate
Forestry	Ernie Rider	Delegate
General Community – lower catchment	John Williams	Delegate
General Community – middle catchment	Ray Zerner	Delegate
General Community – upper catchment	John and Mary King	Delegate
General Community – western catchment	Vacant	Delegate
Gympie Field Naturalists	Berry Doak	Secretary
Horticulture - Small Crops	Vacant	
Horticulture - Tree Crops	Brice Kaddatz	Delegate
Irrigation	Vacant	
Landcare, Lower Mary	Carol Neilsen	Delegate
Landcare, Upper Mary	Phil Moran	Delegate
Land for Wildlife	Nonie Metzler	Delegate
Fraser Coast Regional Council	Cr George Seymour	Delegate
Gympie Regional Council	Cr Gordon Maudsley	Delegate
Sunshine Coast Council	Denise Lindon	Delegate
Noosa Shire Council	Cr Tom Wegener / Ben Derrick	Delegate
Seqwater	Tim Odgers/Julian Omara	Delegate
Project Participant	Bob Hood	Delegate
Project Participant	Vacant	Delegate
Qld Water	Jess Dean	Delegate
Service Clubs	Neil Andison	Delegate
Special Member/Small farms	Steve Burgess	Delegate
Special Member	Lyn Smith	Delegate
Special Member	Glenda Pickersgill	Delegate
Special Member	Nai Nai Bird	Delegate
Special Member	Ian Mackay	Chair
Life Member	Margaret Thompson	Treasurer
Sugar	Vacant	
Waterwatch	Craig & Leslie Hanson	Delegate
Waterwatch	Garth Jacobson	Delegate

MRCCC Staff

Brad Wedlock – B App Sc (Natural Systems & Wildlife Management)

Specialist in project design, implementation and management, grazing landscapes, sustainable grazing systems, fluvial geomorphology, river restoration, aquatic ecology, riparian condition assessment and flora identification, GIS mapping, water quality monitoring and data analysis.

Eva Ford – B Sc (Australian Environmental Studies)

Specialist in project design, implementation and management, threatened stream frog surveys and identification and other threatened aquatic fauna. Experienced with water quality monitoring and data analysis, aquatic macroinvertebrate assessment, freshwater fish assemblage and monitoring programs, educational activities, environmental assessments.

Steve Burgess – B Sc (Australian Environmental Studies) & Post Grad Maths & Science

Specialist in water quality monitoring and data analysis, hydrology, statistics, agricultural systems, water modelling. Highly experienced educator.

Alana Ebert – B Laws (Hons), B Behavioural Science, (currently completing B. Sc. - Ag Science and Environment & Sustainability) Specialist in project design, implementation and management, riparian condition assessment, sustainable grazing and dairy effluent management, Best management practices (BMP) for water quality in dairy and grazing systems for water quality, community and stakeholder engagement, riparian rehabilitation, and water quality monitoring. Upper Mary Rivercare program lead.

Rebecca Watson – B Sc Natural Sciences (Hons) Proven track record delivering the Mary River Recovery project, in partnership with landholders and other stakeholders. Extensive experience with revegetation design, implementation and management, biocondition monitoring and evaluation, water quality monitoring and analysis, project auditing and environmental assessment, cultural heritage reporting.

Sarah Grimish – B Env Hlth Sc (Environmental Health Science), M Sc Environment and Sustainability Experienced with report writing, frog monitoring, BioCondition monitoring and Index of Stream Condition assessment frog monitoring, gully monitoring and data entry.

Tom Brook – B Sc Marine Science (Hons) Experienced in riparian rehabilitation and condition assessment, flora identification, project design, implementation and management, bio-condition monitoring and evaluation, water quality monitoring and analysis, project auditing and environmental assessment, aquatic and terrestrial fauna surveying, GIS mapping.

John Day - Master of Farming Systems Management, Associate Diploma Rural technology animal husbandry. Extensive experience soil conservation, gully erosion rehabilitation and stabilisation - design and implementation.

Shona Sengstock – B Sc (Environmental Studies in progress) Water quality monitoring and reporting, coordination of the Waterwatch networks, macroinvertebrate sampling, Mary River turtle monitoring and nest protection, aquatic fauna monitoring, threatened stream frog monitoring, school education programs

Nathaniel Larsen – wildlife habitat specialist Biodiversity Conservation project, aquatic fauna habitat restoration design and implementation, water quality monitoring, turtle monitoring and nest protection.

Kym Burnell-Jones – B Sc (Marine Biology and Zoology) Extensive experience designing and developing information materials, implementing education programs, science, environment and compliance communication, websites, interpretive displays, event and conference coordination, fisheries compliance, visual expression and corporate identity management.

Kath Bennett – B SC (Hons), Ass Dip App Sc Extensive experience with marine, estuarine and freshwater ecosystems, wetland assessment, ecology, fisheries resource management, waterway barrier works and freshwater fish passage, habitat assessment and protection, fish biology, communications and reporting.

Ollie Scully – B Sc (Environmental Science) Threatened species monitoring and ecological surveys, freshwater ecosystem processes, project design, implementation and management, stakeholder engagement and collaboration, educational programs.

Keishia Duffy – B SC (Environmental Science), B Sc (Animal Ecology) Geospatial analysis specialist, licensed drone operator, wildlife ecology surveying, data analysis and reporting, statistical modeling, monitoring and evaluation.

Administration Team

Deb Seal, Sandra Noonan, Diana Francis

Supporting the Executive, committee and staff with administrative and financial management, communications and PR, social media, event management, Waterwatch and Wildnet data entry, technical support, file maintenance, record keeping.

Chairman's Report 2025

For what has been the MRCCC's thirty-second year as an organisation promoting and facilitating integrated catchment management including sustainable land management and custodianship of our catchment, it is important to acknowledge those who have been its custodians for a far, far longer time.

The catchment's headwaters lie in the Conondale and Blackall Ranges, the country of the Jinibara people. As the river flows northwards, Kabi Kabi country extends over more than the Mary Valley, also encompassing the coastal plain from Redcliffe to Childers. In some of the western parts of the catchment we acknowledge the Wakka Wakka people and of course the Butchulla people down

towards Maryborough, the river mouth, the Great Sandy Strait and over on K'gari.

We acknowledge their long connection to country, the different names by which they've known the Mary River, and pay our respects to elders past, those of the present and those who will continue to care for country into the future.

I am pleased to report of our increased involvement with First Nation peoples in the catchment. For me, the highlight of our recent Catchment Crawl was that we had rangers from Jinibara, Kabi and Butchulla involved.

It gives me great pleasure to present my Chairman's Report of the past year. My report will be something of an outline, a



*MRCCC's Eva Ford (left) with Jinibara, Kabi Kabi, Butchulla people and MRCCC volunteers at the 2025 Catchment Crawl.
Photo courtesy of Anne Pennington*

flat rock skimming over the waters of a cram-packed year. I urge you to read it in conjunction with the more detailed project reports contained in our 2025 Annual Report.

Each year, a few weeks before our AGM, we hold our annual water quality Catchment Crawl which started in 2002 as a small event focused on the river itself. Today, it's a two-day event involving two teams visiting sites along the river and its major tributaries, gathering water quality data, doing riparian and aquatic macroinvertebrate assessments, and capturing a snapshot of the waterways at a time of the year when the river is often at its most stressed. This year, a third team of MRCCC's river specialists led interested landholders and members of the public on a walk and talk at three catchment crawl sites to learn about terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity, in particular, the Mary's threatened aquatic species.

As well as the data, the Catchment Crawl highlights the size and diversity of our catchment. Driving from the headwaters at Conondale, all the way down(stream) to River Heads over those two days makes it plain why we have located our office in Gympie, more or less the mid-point. With the size of the catchment around **9,500 km²**, our success depends on collaboration with a network of partners including the Great Barrier Reef agencies (state and federal), our regional body BMRG, Seqwater, Griffith, James Cook and the Australian National Universities, and the four local councils: Sunshine Coast, Noosa, Gympie, and Fraser Coast. We appreciate enormously our partnerships with the local governments of the catchment.

I'd like also to thank Qld Water and Land Care (QWaLC) for negotiating insurance coverage each year, for the MRCCC and over 400 landcare, catchment, coastcare and wildlife rescue and care groups working throughout the state.

We recognise and thank a number of other groups working with a similar vision in the catchment: Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group, Barung Landcare, Hinterland Bush Links, Noosa and District Landcare, Gympie Landcare, Save the Mary group (organisers of the Mary River Festival each July), Gympie Region Environment Advocacy Team (GREAT), Cooloola Coastcare, the Greater Mary Association, Tiaro and District Landcare, Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care group.

This year saw the finalisation of the five year Mary River Recovery project in association with BMRG. This involved the construction of a number of pile fields each associated with impressive riparian plantings. The work was undertaken at badly eroding sites which were a major source of fine sediment to Great Sandy Strait, Hervey Bay and particularly the southern part of the Great Barrier Reef. (more detail elsewhere).

At our recent meeting, Peter Hairsine of Australian National University presented his analysis that showed not only that our efforts really were reducing sediment but also they were doing so in a most cost-effective way.

Our Seqwater partnership program is achieving impressive results in the Kenilworth and Goomong reaches of the Mary, engaging riparian landholders in on-ground works and field days through our highly successful Upper Mary Rivercare program.

Two new, multi-year projects commenced over the past year. The state-funded Place-Based Integrated Catchment Management project has allowed us to form partnerships with James Cook University and the Office of the Great Barrier Reef; and the federally-funded Urban Rivers project in partnership with Gympie Council are both charting a course for better catchment health outcomes.

I must thank the various contractors who provide the hard physical work on so many of our projects. I always feel somewhat humbled after each AGM when people congratulate us on the great work done over the previous year, when I realise that that we ourselves don't have a nursery, don't grow a single tree, or plant one for that matter. Although we design and facilitate projects, we have a symbiotic relationship with some great contractors and it is they who deserve enormous recognition and thanks for what can be some pretty hot and hard work on often quite challenging sites. We thank teams from Noosa, Gympie and Barung Landcare groups as well as private contractors like Lucas Reid, Carl Scheffe, Lukas Clay and their staff for the excellent work they do.

We still have enormous concerns over the proposed Borumba Pumped Hydro project. The change in government has meant closer scrutiny of the project, investigating, as we understand, a number of different options. Last year MRCCC presented a "Borumba Creek balancing storage" option which would mean that the existing Lake Borumba would not be used as the lower storage, hence avoiding the inevitable downstream water quality issues associated with the regular up and down movements of vast amounts of water, the *raison d'être* of pumped hydro. It is important to point out that approvals are still not in place for even the exploratory works. I must recognise the incredibly diligent attention, scrutiny and careful consideration that Steve Burgess has brought to examining this proposal and its impacts. We are immensely grateful for Steve's work. The long awaited upgrade to the Lake Macdonald spillway commenced this year, once completed there will be better creekflows downstream to help support the Mary River cod population in Six Mile Creek.



Chairman Ian Mackay at the STEAM Train of Knowledge event, showing an aspiring young Steve Irwin look-alike how to weave Cat's Caw creeper vine

One highlight of the year was STEAMZONE a collaboration between MRCCC, the Gympie STEM Hub and a number of other groups. Masterminded by MRCCC's Deb Seal and Education sector delegate Ben Ryan, the day saw 180 Year 4 students and their teachers board the Mary Valley Rattler (STEAM train) headed for Amamoor and a host of science-based activities. Hot on its heels was Cooloola Coastcare's Science Market at Rainbow Beach (in conjunction with the Bioblitz) where we talked water bugs to enthusiastic junior scientists.

MRCCC coordinates a number of citizen science projects. Our Waterwatch network has seen volunteers collecting water quality data, as well as river and creek observations for over twenty years. The popular Find a Frog in February now has years of records of our catchment's frogs while the fledgling Turtlecare and Bug Club continue to find that happy mix of citizens "doing" science, learning while observing and recording.

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We are thankful that the biocontrol rearing facility previously at Gympie Landcare has continued in the capable hands of manager Yvonne Hennell, now working with Ecoinsects. We were pleased to again be able to host the annual biocontrol forum organised by Yvonne.

We are once again indebted to Jennifer Nichols of ABC Sunshine Coast for her reportage of many of our activities and to Lesa Bell of Gympie Living, a free monthly publication which regularly features articles of catchment interest.

I'd also like to acknowledge the work of Darren Knowles at his Hinternoosa Hatchery near Cooroy. Darren continues producing Mary River cod fingerlings for conservation stocking in the Mary River catchment, and for recreational fish stocking elsewhere in south east Queensland. And on that note, we are immensely appreciative of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' greater input into education and awareness of the need to protect Mary River cod, through development and installation of new signage about the cod and the closed season for fishing during cod breeding season, and increased patrols for compliance purposes.

We are indebted to Tiaro & District Landcare, and in particular Marilyn Connell for her infectious enthusiasm of all things Mary River turtle. Marilyn is always there to help and offer advice when something turtle-related crops up. Charles Darwin University's recent findings on the age and movement of the blue catfish in the lower river are revealing and open up many more questions on this important part of the river.

I thank delegates who are retiring this year, particularly long-term delegate and past Chairman Phil Moran. We have benefitted from Phil's wisdom and experience, not to mention his sense of humour, over many years.

I thank my fellow Executive, Ross Smith (Deputy Chair), Margaret Thompson (Treasurer and Life Member), Berry Doak (Secretary), Bob Hood and Garth Jacobson. Their wealth of experience and knowledge guides decision making that benefits the ongoing welfare of the Mary River catchment and the MRCCC.



The MRCCC Executive and staff: Top left to right – Ross Smith, Bob Hood, Brad Wedlock, Ian Mackay and Garth Jacobson with Deb Seal, Marg Thompson and Berry Doak

I particularly recognise and thank our treasurer Margaret Thompson for her long involvement in this organisation, much of which has been as a member of the executive. Marg travels the longest distance to attend meetings and I thank also her family, Vivienne and Michael who drive her. Margaret has already been elevated to being a Life Member but if we had a category of Life Member Plus, Marg would deserve it.

We were advised last year of administrative changes to the Public Fund, the avenue by which tax-deductible donations could be made to our organisation. Management of the Public Fund was in the hands of several trustees as per the previous Federal Government requirements. The new arrangement calls for a Gift Fund which now operates in the name of the association ie MRCCA Inc, managed by the MRCCC Executive. I'd like to thank the Public

Fund trustees, Graeme Elphinstone (chair), Elke Watson (secretary), and Margaret Thompson for their long service in that capacity. Other trustees were myself and, before his passing, Jim Buchanan. The MRCCC executive has decided that the new Gift Fund be overseen by a Gift Fund subcommittee which would operate under our MRCCC constitution, and will invite the previous trustees to be part of that subcommittee.

That our organisation functions so effectively is due in no small way to the exceptional work of our Operations Manager Brad Wedlock and, even though she's trying to retire, Deb Seal, who continues to work part time. I thank them enormously; their long-term dedication and involvement is at the heart of the success of this organisation. I'd like to recognise with enormous gratitude, the manner in which Deb has juggled her aspiration to be retired alongside continuing the smooth functioning of this organisation at so many levels.

Our staff numbers continue to grow such that we now have office spaces both upstairs and down in our Jim Buchanan Centre at 25 Stewart Terrace. I thank all our staff for their dedication and commitment over the past year.

MRCCC is an incredible group of people: delegates, staff, landholders, partners and the interested public. It runs on the generosity of time, experience and wisdom of so many people and I thank you all. *Ian Mackay, Chairman*



Treasurer's Report - Three Decades of Financial Management

Over the last 30+ years, I've witnessed the MRCCC evolve into the highly effective organisation it is today. I am proud of our incredible achievements, particularly when recalling our origins.

In the mid-nineties, the Mary River was recognised as one of the most degraded river systems on Australia's east coast, and the Mary River cod was classified as endangered. At that time, the concept of integrated catchment management was virtually unknown. The formation of the MRCCC, spearheaded by a state government-funded coordinator, marked a new era of collaboration. This initiative fostered partnerships among a myriad of organisations and individuals managing land throughout the Mary catchment.

The MRCCC's first Mayors'yy Forum in 1995 secured ongoing local government backing for essential on-ground work: improving water quality and threatened aquatic species habitat. This involved controlling erosion and sediment, managing stock access to waterways, revegetating riverbanks with native species, and removing woody weeds.

Initial financial support from local government proved crucial, acting as leverage for subsequent state and federal funding. This slowly built our capacity. Early catchment repair efforts were strategic—likened to saving the women and children first—focusing on protecting and restoring areas in good condition that were relatively inexpensive to rehabilitate, rather than immediately tackling the highly degraded, expensive-to-remediate "basket cases" (steep banks losing tonnes of sediment).

Three decades later, while our primary focus remains consistent, a critical new understanding has exponentially increased our impact: the Mary River catchment is the fourth highest contributor of fine sediment to the southern Great Barrier Reef. This has significantly enhanced our ability to attract major funding and achieve greater outcomes for the catchment's health.

The journey from two staff and our first grant of \$50,000 from the former Cooloola Shire Council in 1995 to a team of 10 environmental scientists and a total income of over \$4 million in the recent financial year shows how far we've come. Our current capacity allows us to tackle even those original "basket cases," a testament to the extent to which integrated catchment management is now embraced across the region.

Total funding received since 1999 is now over \$34 million, with the largest portion of these funds directed toward on-ground works. This significant achievement reflects the acuity and foresight of our Operations Manager, Brad Wedlock, whose continuous efforts to secure partnerships and funding in line with the catchment strategy's priorities are vital to achieving our core objectives.

In addition, we appreciate the funding agencies who acknowledge that multi-year support achieves greatly improved long-term project outcomes, providing the MRCCC and land managers with the stability and certainty needed to undertake major bank stabilisation, revegetation and maintenance works. Combining funding with the in-kind contributions of our project participants over the past three decades, has generated a significant and impressive investment in integrated catchment management.

Operating costs and administration of the MRCCC, the Committee and community delegates' travel is partially supported by bank interest, which also provides MRCCC staff with opportunities for professional development within their fields of expertise.

Our income stream is further enhanced by tax deductible donations to our "Gift Fund," now under the administration of the Australian Taxation Office. These legislative changes effective 1 July 2024 are now incorporated in our revised Constitution.

Finally, I must commend and thank our financial controller Deb Seal, without whom the role of Treasurer would be far more time-consuming, and our very knowledgeable and competent staff, who each bring their passion and commitment to their roles, for the benefit of the MRCCC and the catchment.

Marg Thompson, Treasurer, MRCCC



MRCCC Treasurer and Buffalo farmer, Marg Thompson

Mary Catchment Gift Fund – 2024/25 Annual Report

The Mary Catchment Gift Fund continues to play a valuable role in responsibly managing donations from dedicated members of the Mary Catchment community to support MRCCC's catchment management program and its aligned Environmental Groups' projects.

The Gift Fund's role has continued to provide an opportunity for the MRCCC to obtain financial support by way of donations from the broader community. This is facilitated by the provision of a tax incentive mechanism to donate to such organisations, on behalf of the Australian Taxation Office.

Fifteen (15) donations to the value of \$22,688 - ranging in size from \$10 upwards, were received during the 24/25 year. These funds will be allocated for the use of MRCCC's projects and aligned environmental projects in our region.

The process to facilitate the allocation of donated funds as Grants to an aligned Environment Group's two marine turtle project applications in the Great Sandy Marine Park, was finalised in September 2025.



Marine turtle satellite tracking, Great Sandy Strait

These projects encompassed – “Southern Great Barrier Reef courting green turtle satellite tracking and ARGOS data collection”, and “Native vegetation management for the green turtle basking and foraging site at Mangrove Point, Booral”. The MCGF Trustees must satisfy themselves as to the merits of the proposed environmental projects by way of a formal Project Proposal, and further ensure that the Grant funds are correctly expended for the listed purposes, as evidenced by a documented Project Completion Report.

Potential new projects in the pipeline for Gift Fund support include – ‘The predation of juvenile Mary River turtles’, ‘Monitoring woodland bird populations’, plus an extension of the current ‘Satellite tracking of marine turtles’ project. The MRCCC welcomes donations to the Mary Catchment Gift Fund from both MRCCC members and other interested persons in the broader Catchment community who wish to support important environmental projects and activities. Such donations are tax deductible.

Graeme Elphinstone, Chair, 2024-2025



Chairman Ian presents Peter and Bevly Hughes with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of their support for the MRCCC over many years.

Vale Peter Hughes.

The MRCCC has an abundance of talent among the delegates who support the group. Sadly we have lost one of our very talented delegates. The passing of Peter Hughes leaves a big gap in our organisation. Until recently, Peter was our reporter to the local newspaper, providing information about meetings, guest speakers and field days.

Peter was the delegate for the Western Mary Catchment Community and lived at Widgee.

Peter and family bought the Widgee property in the early 60s. There was no home on the block but Peter was attracted to the diversity and richness of vegetation types on the land. He set aside the land as a Nature Reserve which was his great love. Passionate about caring for the environment, Peter was able to identify rare and endangered plants on his Nature Reserve. He and Bevly soon made friends with Gympie’s first

National Parks Ranger, understanding that resources were very limited in those early days. They became lifelong friends with Ron and Yvonne Turner.

Peter and Bevly were foundation members of the Gympie and District Field Naturalists Club over 50 years ago. Peter’s other great love was journalism, and he and Bevly were soon producing articles about the Field Nats Club for the Gympie Times. Peter wrote the articles and Bevly, a talented artist, drew illustrations for the articles. In more recent times, Bevly supported the articles with photos.

In the eighties, Peter started writing the farming articles for the Gympie Times. He was a great support to Graeme Elphinstone, writing up field days. These informative articles were circulated to several newspapers in the state. For over 20 years, Peter also reported on the MRCCC meetings for the Gympie Times and later for Gympie Living. He also continued reporting on the outings for the Gympie Field Nats, having done this now for over thirty years.

Peter was a quiet reserved person, who was willing to support others to understand their local environment.

More recently, Peter supported Bevly when her health was failing then health issues of his own and the stress of supporting Bevly took its toll. He had a fall at home while walking with friends and was hospitalised for several weeks, followed by rehabilitation at Eden. He then went to an aged care facility in Gympie where his health continued to deteriorate and he passed away on the 18th August. Peter will be greatly missed by all.

Berry Doak, President, Gympie & District Field Naturalists and Secretary, MRCCC

Vale – John ‘Cutty’ and Lyn ‘Nette’ Cutmore

Great sadness in our catchment community prevails at the loss of an iconic couple from the Obi Obi sub-catchment. Cutty and Nette were one of those couples possessing infinite connection to each other, their family and community members. To visit their property and house was to be welcomed with the graceful country style borne of the interdependence we have for each other, and openness to the world without, while the internal world remains solid and sure.

The MRCCC encountered the Cutmores in 2002 when Cutty notified us, with delight and excitement that the Mary River cod had returned to his section of Obi Obi Creek, following the release of Gerry Cook Hatchery bred cod fingerlings some five years earlier! Cutty, multi-generation dairy farmer, was a ‘mover’ and he was ever vigilant to improve the state of his local area, whether as Founding and continual Secretary of the Obi Obi Creek Water User Group for 42 years, or as Chief Camphor Controller on his own property with his amazing hand-forged, savage-toothed grinder disk!



John "Cutty" Cutmore at his farm on the Obi Obi

The cod was to start a long relationship between us that evolved into numerous projects to improve habitat along and in the creek; now set to continue well beyond his and Nette's lives. The Cutmores touched many MRCCC delegates and staff members, all delighted by Cutty's wit and rascal smile, and by the warm heart of that determined country woman always by his side; Nette.

In 2008 Cutty, ever the adventurer, suffered from a most serious motorbike accident on the farm that he remarkably survived, but which led to continual and serious health issues. Nette and Cutty's dedication to each other was tested to the nth degree but their partnership proved to be indomitable. We became accustomed to the 'new' Cutty with his electro larynx, which really just added more character to the man, and to Nette's attentive observation and care for their needs.

Cutty finally succumbed to health issues in February this year and Nette in April. As a whole of river catchment community of people working to improve our environment and connections between people, their passing is a loss to us all. The spirit of this grand couple will live on in the waters of the Obi Obi and all that reside in it. *Eva Ford, Threatened Species Project Coordinator, MRCCC*



Don Bradley next to sisal hemp at Sandy Cape. Photo courtesy Lesley Bradley

Vale Don Bradley

The MRCCC community was saddened to hear of the passing of Don Bradley in December 2024, beloved husband of Lesley, founding member of the Lower Mary River Land and Catchment care group, and tireless supporter for the environment in the Fraser Coast region including K'gari and the islands of the Great Sandy Strait. Don is probably best known by the MRCCC community for the countless hours he and Lesley contributed to monitoring marine turtles and removing weeds from coastal locations, so busy they were rarely able to attend MRCCC meetings, except to present on the work of their group. The following obituary is kindly provided by Sue Sargent, President of the Fraser Island Natural Integrity Alliance (FINIA).

Farewell to Valued FINIA Friend, Don Bradley –

26 September 1946 to 15 December 2024

In December 2005, a small group of dedicated conservationists, traditional owners and land managers met to discuss the issue of weeds of significance and barriers to implementation (such as tenure). The group visited sites around the island including Bogimbah Mission and Eurong. Two days later they formed FINIA – the Fraser Island Natural Integrity Alliance for K'gari.

Two of the foundational members, alongside other giants John Sinclair and George Haddock, were Don and Lesley Bradley.

Born in Nambour on 26 September 1946, Don was brought up on a farm. He was a natural athlete and national hurdles champion. But after three successive cyclones battered the farm, the family moved to Banyo where Don attended teachers' college before he started teaching at Chermside State School. He was, by all accounts, a gifted teacher, remembered, respected and loved by many of his students.

Don was also a good husband, meeting first-year teacher, Lesley, at Chermside. They married on 14 December 1968 – with sons Glenn and Craig born in 1972 and 1975. Life with the Bradleys was an adventure – travelling to Uluru, K'gari, the Whitsundays, and South Australia. They were always on the move, seeking new experiences and making memories together.

Not unexpectedly perhaps, retirement was never going to be a gentle exercise. Instead, Don and Lesley focused on their passion for conservation – notably the little brown jobs (LBJs) or shorebirds, weed management on Big Woody Island, revegetation at Booral, planting trees, weeding, and watering, along with the weed management program at Sandy Cape, where Don also helped with turtle counting and nest relocation.

Don was also instrumental in 'borrowing' an Ergon pole on Round Island building a bird's nest for raptors on top. The nest was used for years until the pole eventually rotted.

I first met Don and Lesley in 2003, working for the Burnett Mary Regional Group. They taught me a new respect for shorebirds and their significance for the Great Sandy Strait. Each time we caught up, I learned more, becoming a regular visitor at their home. So, it was natural to invite them along for the K'gari weed workshop in 2005.

Don was a gentle man, a gifted storyteller with a terrific sense of humour, but he was also a maverick. Strong-willed and independent (and 99% MacGyver) Don would see a problem, roll up his sleeves and solve it. When someone foolishly told Don that he would “never eradicate the weeds at Sandy Cape,” he set out to prove them wrong.

His system of monitoring was to count how many weeds of each species they removed – over the years reporting back at our FINIA meetings numbers in the tens of thousands, to hundreds, and finally after over a decade of weeding, none (whereupon he would put them ‘on watch’... just to make sure they didn’t make a sneaky reappearance).

Never one to shy away from a challenge or an opportunity, Don and Lesley also assisted with the cane toad workshop with the University of Sydney and then taught Butchulla trainee rangers how to make a cane toad tadpole trap for themselves.

Like many of us, I will miss Don’s presence. But I can still hear his laughter and thank him for his dedication to Sandy Cape, K’gari and FINIA.

To Lesley and family, we offer our grateful thanks for sharing Don with us, for his K’gari legacy and our deepest sympathy for your loss.
Written by Sue Sargent, Chair of FINIA with the permission of the Bradley family.



Vale Kay Herron

The upper Mary Catchment community was very saddened by the recent passing of Kay Herron, much loved wife of Elaman Creek farmer Joe, a long term Conondale farming family. Very well-known and highly regarded to many in the local community, the Herrons partnered with the MRCCC in the mid 90s and were one of the first to take up a riverbank restoration grant. The Herrons recently signed up to the Upper Mary Rivercare Program, and have completed kilometres of riparian restoration on their property which borders both the Mary River and Elaman Creek.

Kay was a very keen gardener who loved her flowers. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.



Mary River Recovery Project and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements flood recovery – Improving reef water quality through riverbank restoration and repair

Funded by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation with assistance provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) – a collaboration between the BMRG and MRCCC

Projects undertaken on Kabi Kabi and Butchulla country

Aim: to reduce 26,000/tonne/year fine sediment to the Southern Great Barrier Reef

Background

The Mary River is the fourth highest contributor of fine sediment to the Great Barrier Reef; with riverbank erosion by far the largest cause of erosion in the catchment. In February 2020, a study of the Mary River identified the river reaches with the highest sediment loads caused by riverbank erosion. From these reaches, priority sites were identified for remediation based on the scale of fine sediment savings downstream to the Great Barrier Reef. Due to the fine nature of the sediment within the riverbank, these eroded fine clay and soil particles travel easily through the Mary River and out onto the southern reef.

In July 2020, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation funded the “Mary River Recovery” project, based on the findings of the “Investment strategy for the Mary River”. The Mary River Recovery Project is delivered by a consortium involving the MRCCC, the Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG), and Alluvium Consulting. Although 2024 was officially the final year of the project, an extension was granted to June 2025, enabling the remaining funds to be directed towards maintenance of five project sites, and for further riparian vegetation resilience activities. Seqwater have committed to maintaining a number of these large riparian revegetation projects into the long term.

Riverbank erosion

Riverbanks are the largest source of erosion in the Mary River catchment. Stabilising these large, eroding riverbanks involves reprofiling up to 10m tall vertical banks to a 1-in-3 slope, then ramming in rows of timber poles into the lower slope of the riverbank near the toe (up to 4m deep) to create a pile field that slows the riverflow down during flood events. Rock support is also provided to reduce the likelihood of scour along the riverbank. Pile fields reduce stream velocity and promote fine sediment deposition which provides favorable conditions for vegetation establishment.

A riparian revegetation program with three years maintenance is then undertaken, using suitable native species propagated by the local landcare groups. Although the vegetation takes time to reach a level of maturity, structural diversity and robustness that allows it to perform its desired erosion control (and other) functions, the timber pile fields provide protection in the meantime, decaying after 10 – 15 years, by which time the riparian vegetation is established.

Project completion

After five years of implementation, 11 large scale riverbank remediation projects were completed on the Mary River, from Conondale to Tiaro opposite Petrie Park. Over 26,000 tonnes of fine sediment is now saved per year. 2025 is the final year of the Mary River Recovery project – the largest river rehabilitation project undertaken on the Mary River.



Mary Valley large scale riverbank remediation. Top photo, March 2021, middle October 2021, below October 2025.

Over the past five years these large-scale riverbank remediation sites have been planted with native riparian seedlings supplied by Barung, Noosa & Gympie Landcare groups and Corella Native Nursery. Follow-up maintenance activities of these revegetation areas have been completed by the local Landcare Groups and local revegetation contractors including 'Corella Nursery', 'Seeddown' and Carl Scheffe (Tiaro/Miva) and 'Re-Tree Veg' (Conondale/Cambroon). Members of Kabi Kabi and Butchulla have also assisted the project team with sites in both Kabi Kabi and Butchulla country.

Mary River Recovery implementation and challenges over the years

2020 – the start of the project!

The Mary River Recovery project started in 2020. The initial site was completed in the upper Mary River on the Watson's dairy farm at Conondale. This site had eroded badly following a succession of floods, and was documented as providing a high fine sediment load to the Great Sandy Strait and southern Great Barrier Reef, irrespective that it is located in the upper Mary catchment. Completed during the dry season of 2020, the revegetation commenced in late November 2020 in hot conditions with Watson irrigation ensuring tree survival until breaking rains received in December 2020. To avoid a repeat of this scenario, most of the following plantings at pile field sites occurred in the autumn. Autumn planting offers the following advantages:

- weather is milder than Spring/ Summer (for plant establishment and people planting seedlings)
- the plants have 3 months of establishment before winter, and avoids flood season
- the soil profile should have the most moisture possible, following the Summer wet season
- milder winters - less likelihood of frosts

With a few exceptions, all sites in the Mary River Recovery project were planted in Autumn, with excellent results to date.

2021 – building momentum!

In 2021, three badly eroding riverbank sites were remediated and subsequently revegetated the following year (2022); Kevindale in the Mary Valley, Mackie at Kenilworth and Marr at Kenilworth.

The riverbank remediation work occurred in Winter/early Spring to avoid flood season and to fit within the Mary River turtle nesting requirements. Mary River turtles nest in Spring and work is avoided during this time.

2022 - the year of the floods!

2022 will be remembered as the year of the floods, with major flooding occurring in February, and subsequent floods in May and July, but the whole year the river was up and down.

The 2021 riverbank sites were revegetated in Autumn 2022 as planned, with some delays caused by flooding preventing access for revegetation crews. Deep subsoil moisture and ongoing rainfall ensured a good start to vegetation establishment. An interesting finding of the 2022 floods on the revegetation sites was that young seedlings planted near the water's edge (toe) in conjunction with Lomandra (mattrush) had been shielded from scour by the Lomandra. The seedlings that performed best were the Lomandras that were planted in the same hole as the bottlebrush. Incidentally, this vegetation in 2025 is now undergoing a thinning program to ensure secondary species can access the light to achieve more robust growth. The *Acacia* pioneer species performed the role of ensuring rapid site capture and protection of more susceptible species to harsh conditions presented at these pilefield sites. They will naturally senesce over the coming years mulching on the bank to add vital organic matter. Project sites completed in 2020 and 2021 were not affected by the 2022 floods, testament to their design characteristics.

During 2022, pile field earthworks were not possible until July due to ongoing flooding and continued saturated flood plains which took months to 'drain' before dry enough to undertake earthworks. Petersen at Miva then Schiefelbein upstream of Munna confluence were completed by Christmas. Remaining sites were postponed until Autumn 2023 to avoid the forecasted wet summer.

Due to severe damage to some riverbanks caused by the 2022 floods, BMRG and MRCCC were able to access flood recovery funding from the Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements River Recovery program. This enabled six badly eroded riverbank sites to be remediated at Elaman Creek, Conondale; lower Obi Obi Creek, a site on the river at Kenilworth, two sites on the Mary River in the Mary Valley and The Sands in Gympie. This work occurred between 2023 and 2024 with large-scale revegetation activities occurring also supported by Seqwater.

2023 – the year of the drought!

2023 was exceptionally dry and in Kenilworth the driest in 100 years. Given the flood delays during 2022, the dry conditions in 2023 enabled earthworks completion of five sites including: Robinson, Mimnaugh (Tiaro), King (Cambroon), Perren/Kennedy (Kenilworth) and Baillie (Moy Pocket) marking the end of earthwork activity. The final site was completed just days before breaking rains in December.

While construction charged ahead, dry conditions presented challenges in establishing vegetation at the Miva and Tiaro sites. Good showers during April presented favourable planting conditions for the Munna site however firefighter pumps, aqua-spears, which deliver significant water direct to the root zone, and sprinklers were required for all planting during this period as soil moisture rapidly disappeared. Sites from Cambroon to Moy Pocket were revegetated the following Autumn in the hope that summer rains would replenish soil moisture after months of extremely dry conditions. Today, the four revegetation sites at Miva and Tiaro have exceptional survival and growth which is a testament to the crews that have laboured to ensure excellent establishment conditions on the sites irrespective of the weather encountered.

2024 – a great start to the year!

Good rainfall across the catchment since late 2023 successfully broke the extended dry period, resulting in the excellent survival of over 120,000 trees and shrubs. These native species—many sourced from local seed—have shown remarkable resilience through both drought and flood, now exhibiting vigorous growth under favourable conditions. Optimal initial establishment and consistent maintenance over the first few years remain crucial for long-term success. During 2024 the DRFA flood recovery project sites were completed with revegetation activities spanning 2024 -2025.

2025 – Extended maintenance facilitates site capture

In June 2024, GBRF agreed to continue maintenance of the most recently planted sites with unallocated funds remaining for the 11 sites. Unspent funding was also allocated to vine weed control and extension activities which included hosting a contractor field day to share learnings across the catchment, create a fact sheet and develop a case study.

Extended maintenance has been critical in enabling sites to fully establish. Contractors infill planted, watered where necessary, undertook strategic ‘lift pruning’ and installed small scale erosion control measures. These activities ensure sites receive targeted maintenance in a timely manner. Long term, this reduces the potential for costly repairs.

The greatest threats during the initial years of establishment include vine weed incursions where young plants are blanketed in vines unable to then access light for growth. Another includes need for critical watering for new plantings when dry hot weather is anticipated. Plant vigour can be improved by strategic fertiliser application, often required when plants struggle following sudden changes in environmental conditions – namely dry to waterlogged conditions.

Other threats to the sites include fence breaches leading to damage from livestock, pig damage and flood damage to trees and banks. One of the most beneficial activities has been the ability to respond to flood impacts through targeted infill planting along the toe which was undertaken throughout the season.

Given the favourable wet season, plants have grown vigorously with ‘site capture’ noted in some areas. ‘Site capture’ is a term used to describe where the canopies join and little light penetrates to the ground preventing grasses and vines from outcompeting the planting. At site capture, regular maintenance for weed control is no longer required.

Site visits during 2025 have been a joy with *Acacia* pioneers flowering prolifically during the autumn and *Callistemon* now in full flower. Birds are plentiful at many sites and turtles have been noted basking on installed large woody debris. Lomandras have grown wonderful root networks along the toe and despite some erosion following repeated minor – moderate flooding, fallen Lomandras are holding to the bank as they do in ‘normal’ riparian systems. This demonstrates the key role Lomandra roots play in this early stage of revegetation establishment.

Mary River Recovery activities – Summary

Site and location on Mary River	Fine sediment saving (t/yr) to the reef	Seedlings established*	Stabilisation works completed	Revegetation completed	Maintenance funding during 2024 – 2025
Watson, Conondale	1,970	10,000	Spring 2020	December 2020	SEQWater
Mackie, Walli Mt	1,103	5,197	Winter 2021	February 2022	SEQWater
Marr, Kenilworth	1,340	5,007	Winter 2021	March 2022	SEQWater
Kevindale, Mary Valley	1,757	16,389	May 2021	May 2022	SEQWater
Petersen, Miva	1,791	17,880	October 2022	June 2023	GBRF
Schiefelbein, Miva	2,952	25,025	January 2023	May 2023	GBRF
Robinson, Tiaro	8,717	10,209	August 2023	Sept 2023	GBRF
Mimnaugh, Tiaro	1,174	4,891	Sept 2023	Sept 2023	GBRF
Kings, Conondale	863	2,718	Sept 2023	March 2024	SEQWater
Perren / Kennedy, Kenilworth	3,212	8,737	October 2023	April 2024	DRFA / SEQWater
Baillie, Moy Pocket	1,212	6,450	December 2023	April 2024	GBRF
TOTALS - 2020 - 2024	26,226 tonnes fine sediment reduction to the reef per year	112,503			

*Additional 9515 trees established during the extended maintenance period 2024 - 2025

A 12 month Vegetation Resilience Program (2024/25) undertaken at the 4 reaches involved intensive vine weed control to further support the riverbank stabilisation investments by reducing the Cats claw vine and Madiera vine infestations in the adjoining upstream banks. The table on the following page shows the total area treated.

Site and location on Mary River vine weed control (Vegetation Resilience and Extended Maintenance program combined)	Cat’s claw and Madeira vine treated area (ha)
Conondale - M4 Reach	4.1
Kenilworth - M6 Reach	9.75
Moy Pocket - M7 Reach	1.21
Goomong - M9 Reach	10.92
Miva - M11 Reach	42.07
Tiaro - M12 Reach	11.4
TOTALS – 2024 - 2025	94.4

The inaugural ‘Contractor Field Day’ was held in April 2025. Three sites on the Mary River were chosen for broad discussion amongst the group— Kings at Cambrook, Perren/ Kennedy at Kenilworth and Baillie at Moy Pocket. Each site was planted on similar soil moisture during the Autumn of 2024 however each had different challenges ranging from soil types, access to water for irrigation and continued erosion during the wet 24/25 season. Each site was managed by a



The inaugural Contractors’ Field Day was an outstanding success

different contractor. Contractors involved in the revegetation delivery attended with their staff along with MRCCC and some landholders. The aim was to share in the learnings and problem solve as a group. It also provided opportunities for contractors to engage with others in the industry, building connections and collaboration.

A fact sheet was developed by BMRG addressing the activities landholders could undertake post-completion of projects to maintain the integrity of the work and a case study interview with Glen Baillie and other landholders provided insights to the program and what their aspirations were going forward.

Fauna

For all sites, careful consideration is given to fauna protection, particularly threatened freshwater turtles. Species Management Plans are developed in conjunction with the Department of Environment for riverbank stabilisation projects on the Mary River to ensure that project works are conducted with due consideration to mitigate impacts to native fauna. The endangered Mary River turtle and white-throated snapping turtle can use eroded riverbank sites for nesting habitat, therefore due consideration of impacts to these species is critical. Species Management Plans cover all projects of this type along the Mary River with special emphasis on threatened species, colonial breeders and special least concern fauna.

Stakeholder days and flood assessments

Members from CSIRO, Great Barrier Reef Foundation, local government, state government departments, Traditional owners, landcare groups, landholders and other stakeholders attended annual field days held between 2020 and 2024 in Kenilworth and Tiaro during the implementation of the project. These ‘stakeholder’ days were held to showcase the project sites following the 2022 floods when it was clear the sites had performed remarkably well to significant flooding. These days were very informative and stakeholders were keen to gather learnings from the project. Following the major 2022 floods all sites were inspected within days of floodwaters receding to develop a ‘plan of works’ to recover the project sites – fortunately minimal damage occurred. The Watson site that had been the earliest implemented in 2020 had performed exceptionally well. Timely maintenance enabled damaged plants to be recovered.

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement (DRFA) river recovery project sites

While the 2024/25 financial year was the final year of Great Barrier Reef Foundation, Mary River Recovery project – a series of joint Queensland and Australian Government funded 2022 Flood Recovery (Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement) river recovery projects were planned and implemented during 2024 / 2025 on the Mary River, at Kenilworth, Tuchekoi, Gympie, Elaman and lower Obi Obi Creeks as detailed in the table on the following page.

Site and location on Mary River	Seedlings established*	Stabilisation works completed	Revegetation completed
Elaman Creek, Conondale	7,890	Sept 2024	Sept 2024
Lower Obi Obi Creek	3,910	Sept 2024	Oct 2024
Mary River, Kenilworth	2,193	October 2024	Dec 2024
Mary River, Kandanga	15,616*	February 2025	March 2025
Mary River, Tuchekoi	11,135*	June 2025	June 2025
Mary River, The Sands Gympie	10,000 infill	No large scale stabilisation	ongoing
TOTALS – 2024-2025	50,744		

*Includes infill planting adjacent to pile field site

The assessment of sites and delivery followed the same process for design and implementation as the Mary River Recovery being implemented by a consortium of MRCCC, BMRG and Alluvium. At all sites, there were challenges undertaking earthworks; adjacent to the Conondale School on Elaman Creek, the continued river rise at Kenilworth, Baroon Pocket dam continually spilling into the Obi Obi and the ongoing wet season at Tuchekoi. Challenges during civil construction were mostly due to the ongoing wet conditions although the wet season enabled good establishment of plants across all sites. Recent dry conditions will return crews to regular watering regimes.

Planning for 2025 and beyond

The DRFA funded sites and the seven Mary River Recovery sites upstream of Gympie will continue to be maintained under the SEQWater partnership with MRCCC. Sites further north at Miva and Tiaro including Petersen, Schiefelbein, Mimnaugh and Robinson were included in the recent ‘Reefwise’ grant funding application to maintain connections with these landholders and sites. Maintenance, vine weed control at these sites and ongoing connection with landholders will be possible through this program should it be successful.

Waterwatch 2025

On Jinibara, Kabi Kabi, Wakka Wakka and Butchulla country

For more than 24 years, the MRCCC Waterwatch program has relied on dedicated citizen scientists volunteering their time to collect valuable water quality data throughout the Mary River catchment. This extensive monitoring provides detailed baseline information on the physical and chemical characteristics of waterways, alongside assessments of riparian and instream conditions. Volunteers also record observations of aquatic fauna such as platypus and turtles, document the presence of water weeds, and report on general river flow conditions.

Currently, nearly 80 volunteers are actively sampling at 103 sites across 81 waterways within the Mary River Catchment. As a result, the MRCCC’s Waterwatch database continues to expand, offering members, stakeholders, and the broader community a comprehensive record of water quality across the catchment. The program is generously supported by Noosa Shire Council (NSC), Sunshine Coast Council (SCC), and Gympie Regional Council (GRC). Fraser Coast Regional Council has recently funded the purchase of a new water testing kit.

The transition of the MRCCC’s long-term dataset to the Statewide Water Information Management (SWIMS) database, in partnership with the Queensland Water Directorate (QLDwater), highlights the remarkable scale of the data collected.

The data transfer process is no small task, involving a considerable time commitment to enable this transfer in a series of phases. We thank Jess Dean for guiding us and providing exceptional support for this transition.



MRCCC Waterwatch volunteers and Waterwatch delegates Craig and Leslie Hanson at their Waterwatch site on Kandanga Creek



Michelle Skinner, QPWS Maleny collecting a water sample from Pencil Creek in the Upper Mary

Data collection is further supported by community organisations such as HQPlantations operating in the Toolara and Imbil forestry areas, and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). Sampling crews operate from QPWS Kenilworth at Boloumba Creek campgrounds, Charlie Moreland and Little Yabba Creek, with QPWS Maleny now sampling at Mapleton National Park, Kondalilla National Park, and QPWS Gympie, including Amamoor State Forest, Mothar Mountain Rock Pools and Glastonbury Creek campground. The additional data collected provides a comprehensive dataset of water quality across the region’s waterways.

Coordinating the distribution of water testing kits represents a significant logistical achievement, made possible by the support of local individuals and businesses. MRCCC extends sincere thanks to B&H Rural Tiaro, BOS Rural Kandanga, Amamoor Store, Barung Landcare, Ottiam Realty Mapleton, Conondale Store, and Kenilworth Garage for their ongoing assistance in storing and transporting testing kits for volunteers.

Funding from local government in the catchment remains vital for the purchase, maintenance, and calibration of equipment, volunteer coordination, data entry, analysis, and report production — all essential to the continued success of the MRCCC Waterwatch program.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all Waterwatch volunteers for their time, dedication, and support over the past year. Special recognition goes to our long-term volunteers who have consistently contributed to the program and continue to advocate for its importance, including Garth Jacobson and Leslie and Craig Hansen, our Waterwatch delegates on the MRCCC General Committee. A sincere thank you and acknowledgement to our retiring volunteers who have also contributed to the success of the Waterwatch program and wish you all the very best for the future.

This year, we were delighted to welcome new and returning participants to the Waterwatch program. It has been a privilege to meet new volunteers and reconnect with existing ones. Waterwatch continues to grow through participation in community events alongside the MRCCC Bug Club and Upper Mary Rivercare programs, strengthening local engagement and environmental stewardship throughout the catchment.

New Waterwatch Volunteers	Waterway monitored
Jeanette McGuire	Mary River, Peacons Pocket
Richard Parke	Six Mile Creek, Gympie
Rebecca Couche`	Deep Creek, Gympie
QPWS – Gympie	Glastonbury Creek, Amamoor Creek, Woondum Creek
Paul Russell	Coolabine Creek, Kenilworth
Richard and Alice Bassett	Obi Obi Creek, Kenilworth
QPWS - Maleny	Pencil Creek, Picnic Creek, Montville
Mary Bowe	Little Yabba Creek, Kenilworth
Annette and John Sinclair	Mary River, Crystal Waters
John and Mary King	Harpers Creek, Conondale
Tina Souvlis	Mary River, Maryborough
Tilly A’Honi	Schulz Creek, Tinana
Sue and Ken Pyke	Munna Creek, Glen Echo
Carol Harris	Yabba Creek, Bella Creek
Arna Love	Yabba Creek, Imbil
Sara McGaughey	Little Bella Creek

Waterwatch Networks, Waterways monitored and Volunteers

Waterwatch Network	Waterways monitored 2024-2025	Waterwatch volunteers
Upper Mary (Mapleton, Maleny to Conondale)	Mary River, Booloumba Creek, Fryers Creek South, Lagoons at Russell Family Park, Little Yabba Creek, Lobster Creek, Scrub Creek, Skene Creek, Picnic Creek, Kilcoy Creek, Harpers Creek, Pencil Creek	Eric Anderson, Peter Watson, Annette and John Sinclair, John and Mary King, Roger Westcott QPWS Kenilworth, - Bronwyn Mc Adam, QPWS Maleny – Michelle Skinner,
Kenilworth (Brooloo, Belli Park, Coolabine, Obi Obi)	Coonoon Gibber, Coolabine Creek, Obi Obi Creek, Mary River	Des King and Colleen Ryan, Ian Mackay, Steve Dennis, Paul Russell, Richard Bassett, Georgina Cooper
East Gympie (Gympie, East Deep Creek, Traveston, Mothar Mountain, Woondum)	Mary River, Deep Creek, Peter and Paul Watton Gully, Woondum Creek	Bob and Lorraine Hood, Jude Coates, Richard Parke, Rebecca Couché , QPWS – Gympie
West Gympie (Pie Creek, Langshaw, The Palms, Glastonbury, Jones Hill)	Calico Creek, McIntosh Creek, Pie Creek, Snake Creek, Three Mile Creek, Glastonbury Creek	Bruce McCulloch, Pat Ridgewell, Joolie Gibbs, Graeme Elphinstone, Patriece and Dave Wippell, Ian Smith, Robin Yule, Tony DiCarlo
Imbil to Amamoor (Kandanga, Kybong, Amamoor)	Mary River, Amamoor Creek, Coles Creek, Kandanga Creek, Traveston Creek	Glenda Pickersgill, Noo Dye, Leslie and Craig Hanson, Marion Firns and Warren Crispin, Jeanette McGuire
Yabba Creek (Imbil HQ Plantations)	Araucaria Creek, Caseys Creek, Derrier Creek, Yabba Creek, Little Bella Creek, Bella Creek	HQP- Kath Nash, Carol Harris, Arna Love, Sara McGaughey
Widgee & Wide Bay (Sexton, Lower Wonga)	Mary River, Fat Hen Creek, Six Mile Plain Creek, Wide Bay Creek, Widgee Creek	Rob Newcombe, Anette Bambling, Jannette and Brad Parke, Stephen Horseman, Mick Bambling, Brian Thomas
Tiaro (Maryborough, Netherby)	Mary River, Deep Creek, Fay Smith Wetlands, Schulz Creek, Goorah Creek, Gutchy Creek, Ooramera Creek, Saltwater Creek, Chinaman’s Creek and Ululah Lagoon	Garth Jacobson, David Arthur, Ross and Gail Smith, Brian Carter, Owen and Lynda Thompson, Tina Souvlis, Tilly A’Honi
Munna (Brooweena to Glen Echo)	Calgoa Creek, Chinamans Gully, Dry Creek, Eel Creek, Munna Creek, Sandy Creek, Teebar Creek	Cam and Lisa Hughes, Iain Lewis, Kev and Helen Rogers, Spencer and Leslie Innes, Kerrie Dixon, Ross Kinbacher, Brett and Tammy Marsh, Ken and Sue Pyke
Tinana (Bauple, Glenwood, Goomborian)	Big Sandy Creek, Coondoo Creek, Hines Creek, Ross Creek, Sandy Creek, Tinana Creek, Ulirrah Creek, Yards Creek	Kevin Jackson, HQP Rick Sizer, David Wilson
Noosa Hinterland (Pomona, Cooroy, Ridgewood)	Six Mile Creek, Cooroora Creek, School Creek, Ferrells, Cooroy Creek, Frogmouth Creek, Waterford Creek, Jam Pot Creek, Pinbarren Creek, Coles Creek, Skyring Creek, Middle Creek, Slate Creek, Blackfellows Creek, Happy Jack Creek	MRCCC and Noosa Council staff and volunteers
Jinibara	Obi Obi Creek, Dry Creek, Elaman Creek,	JPAC Rangers – Chris Emerson, Kuta Kina, Courtney Kina, Jason Murphy

Jinibara Waterwatch

Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (JPAC) have been an active member of the Waterwatch Upper Mary network for the last 3 years, regularly sampling sites on the Maleny Plateau, the Stanley River and Neurum Creek. Jinibara Country encompasses the Upper Mary River, including Obi Obi Creek, which originates on the Maleny Plateau and is an important tributary of the Mary River Catchment.

This year, funding from the Office of the Great Barrier Reef (OGBR) in the place-based project provided support for JPAC to establish their own Waterwatch program allowing expansion of sample sites. Through this funding, Jinibara received dedicated water quality monitoring equipment and, assistance from MRCCC to develop a six-site sampling run within the upper Mary River Catchment.

The sampling run includes Obi Obi Creek at both the headwaters and mid-catchment, Dry Creek at Kirby's Road Environmental Reserve, Elaman Creek, and the stunning headwaters of the Mary River along Policeman's Spur Road. Regular monthly monitoring now takes place across these sites, including riparian and instream condition assessments linked to their seasonal calendar, ensuring a consistent and valuable contribution to catchment-wide water quality data. Training will now be provided for data entry into the MRCCC SWIMS database.

Noosa Shire Council and Sunshine Coast Council Report Card Projects.

In 2025, a 12-month collaboration between Noosa and Sunshine Coast Councils and the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) commenced. Sunshine Coast Council and Noosa Shire Council have adopted a regional approach, working jointly with MRCCC to create water quality report cards for the Mary River catchment. Building on the foundation laid by the coastal report cards from Healthy Land and Water and the existing MRCCC water quality report cards, this partnership aims to complete catchment wide report cards for each council.

To develop the Sunshine Coast Hinterland Report Card, Sunshine Coast Council will conduct monthly sampling at 10 core sites, while MRCCC will undertake bi-monthly sampling at eight supplementary sites. Noosa Shire Council, in partnership with MRCCC, will sample eight core sites monthly within the Mary River catchment.

The report card will be based on a range of ecological and water quality indicators, including nutrient levels and general water quality, aquatic macroinvertebrate surveys and riparian zone condition assessments to assess overall aquatic ecosystem health, and fish monitoring to evaluate aquatic biodiversity. With monitoring set to continue into 2026, this project will augment the strong partnership with council groups and improve understanding of catchment health.

The Gympie Region Waterwatch Report 2018 – 2025

The Gympie Region Waterwatch report covering the period from 2018-2025 will be officially released next month. This seven-year report is the biggest MRCCC water quality report to date. The report covers five Waterwatch networks in the following districts; Imbil to Amamoor, Gympie East and West, the eastern sub catchment of Tinana and the western sub-catchments of Widgee and Wide Bay creeks. This report covers a diverse area from the acidic waterways in the east to the western catchments near Kilkivan, including over 82 sites from 75 waterways totalling approximately 6000 data entries. Many of the Waterwatchers in these networks have been collecting data for over 20 years and are contributing to a long-term dataset which enables accurate interpretation of water quality in the Gympie region.

A workshop to present the report and deliver report card grades for Waterwatch sites within the Gympie region is planned for Tuesday 18th November at the MRCCC Office.

Welcome Keishia,

With many new water quality sampling runs and more projects coming on at MRCCC, we welcome Keishia Duffy to help out with Waterwatch. Keishia has just completed degrees in Animal Ecology and Environmental Science and has a keen interest in functional and spatial ecology with a broad generalist interest in both marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Keishia has quickly become a valuable part of the MRCCC team and we are delighted to have her on board.



Mary River Annual Water Quality Catchment Crawl 2025

On Jinibara, Kabi Kabi and Butchulla country

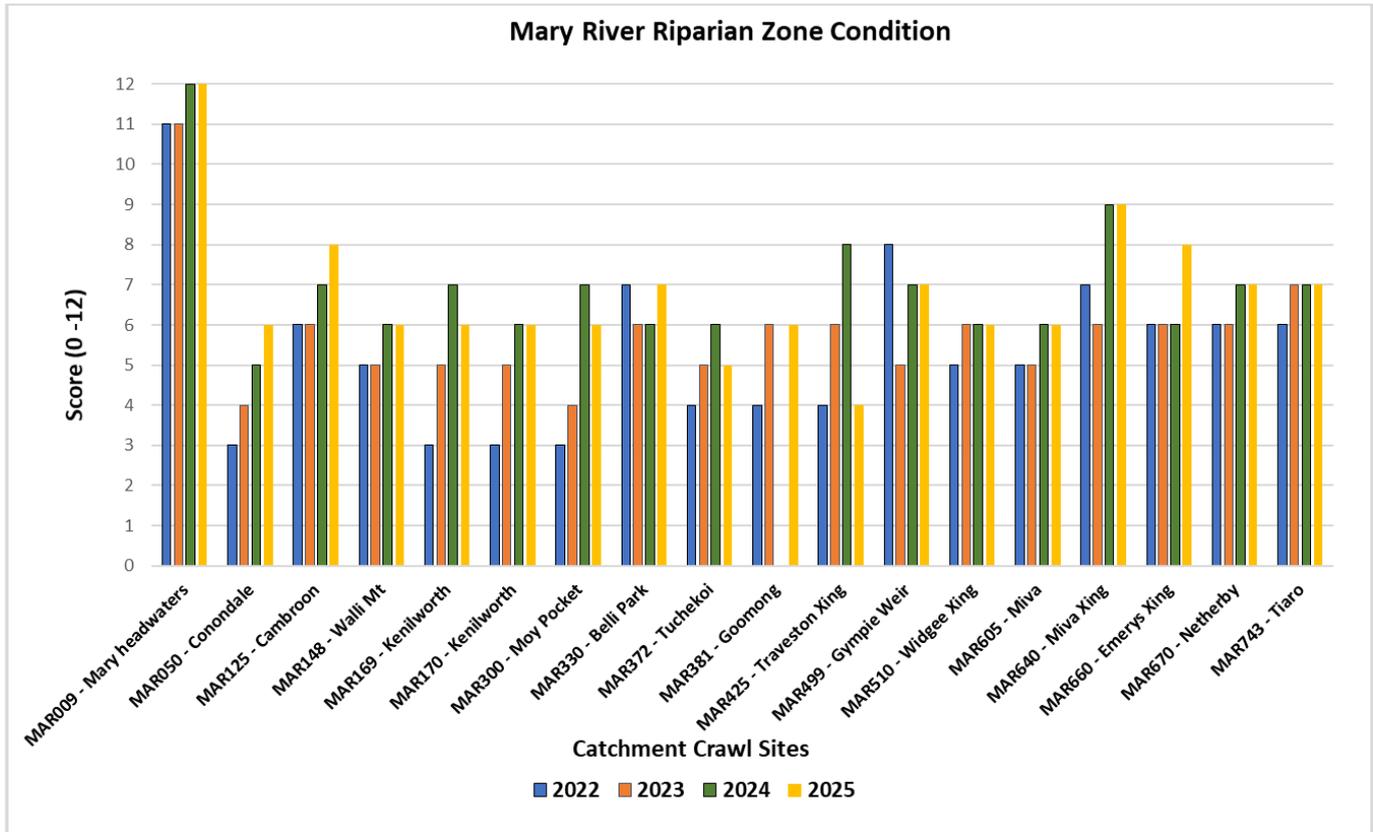
Held annually since 2003, the MRCCC's Catchment Crawl provides a snapshot of water quality throughout the entire Mary River catchment in early October each year. In 2025, sampling occurred at 34 sites along the Mary and its major tributaries. This covers the entire length of the catchment from the headwaters in the Conondale Ranges, travelling downstream to River Heads where the Mary River flows into the Great Sandy Strait. This year emphasis was on comparing 2024 to 2025, given both years have had decent rainfall and stream flows. Both 2024 and 2025 did not record any floods of substantial size, even though the river seemed to be in continual state of small scale flooding, until this recent dry Spring.

The 2025 Catchment Crawl was held on the 8th and 9th of October. Collecting data at the same time in Spring before the wet season each year allows the comparison of changes, trends and observations over time. Data collected at each site includes physical and chemical water quality parameters of temperature, pH, electrical conductivity (salinity), turbidity, dissolved oxygen, nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) and total suspended solids (sediment load). *E. coli* (faecal coliforms) were also sampled at each site. Observations are also noted for riparian zone and instream habitat condition, changes to stream and bank condition compared to previous years, weed species, shading of water, presence of vegetation layers, fauna and other general observations.

Two wet years

There was a focus this year on observing how the catchment is functioning after two good rainfall years in 2024 and 2025 (to date). The continual rises in the river seem to have scoured or removed the native aquatic plants such as Ribbonplant. This is an interesting finding, where good rainfall and multiple small floods may not be ideal for our native aquatic plants that species such as Lungfish rely upon. Riparian recovery, post 2022 floods, appears to have stabilised in recent years.

Riparian zone condition continues to either improve three years following the 2022 floods (upper catchment sites) or the majority of sites have reached their recovery potential. Traveston Crossing site has dropped considerably in condition, likely due to the scale of four wheel drives returning to this site creating more and more tracks now that the location has been unfenced since the 2022 floods.



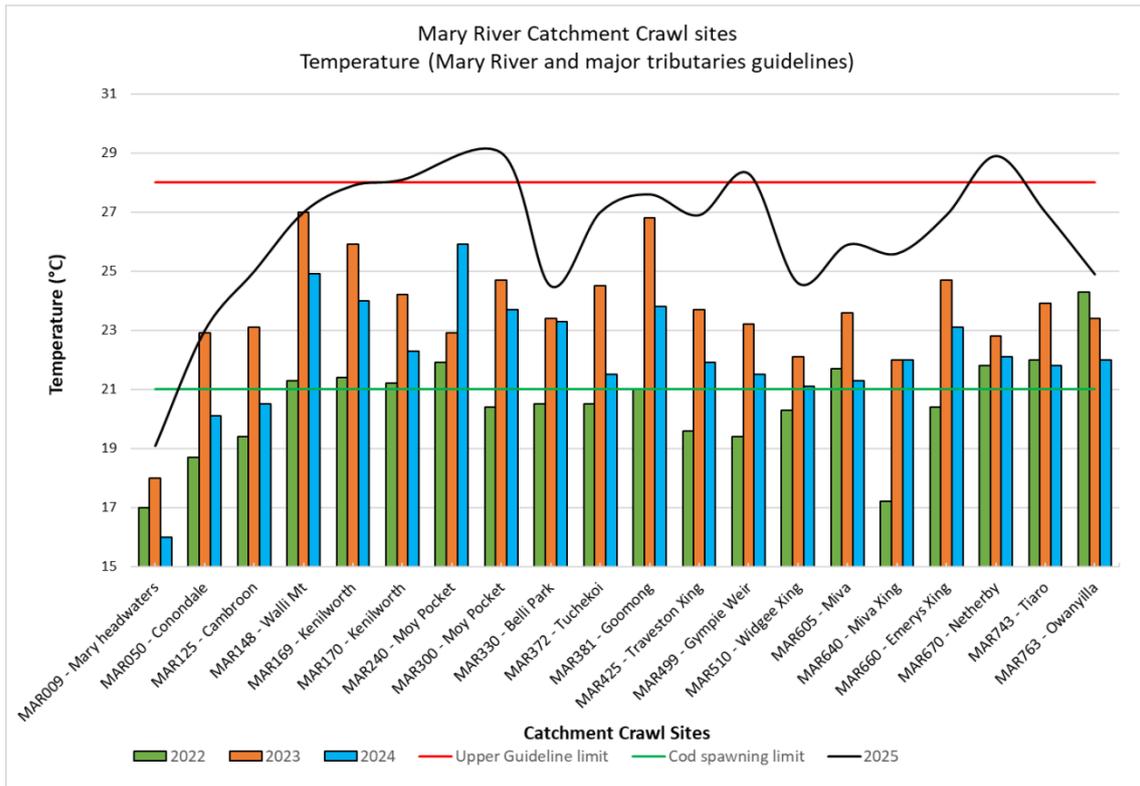
Air and water temperature and river flow

In the weeks prior to the 2025 Catchment Crawl, the average maximum air temperature for September 2025 was 26.8°C (slightly lower than 2024 at 27.3 °C, BOM Gympie data) and the average minimum was 11.8°C (slightly lower than 2024 at 12.1 °C).

In 2025, sunny conditions were consistent on both days of the Catchment Crawl, which, combined with the warm air temperatures, resulted in an average water temperature of 25.6 °C (compared to 21.8 °C in 2024); which is almost the warmest Catchment Crawl on record. The 2017 Catchment Crawl was warmer at 26.95°C. This year the water temperatures, all sites were above the ideal Mary River cod spawning temperature of less than 21 degrees.

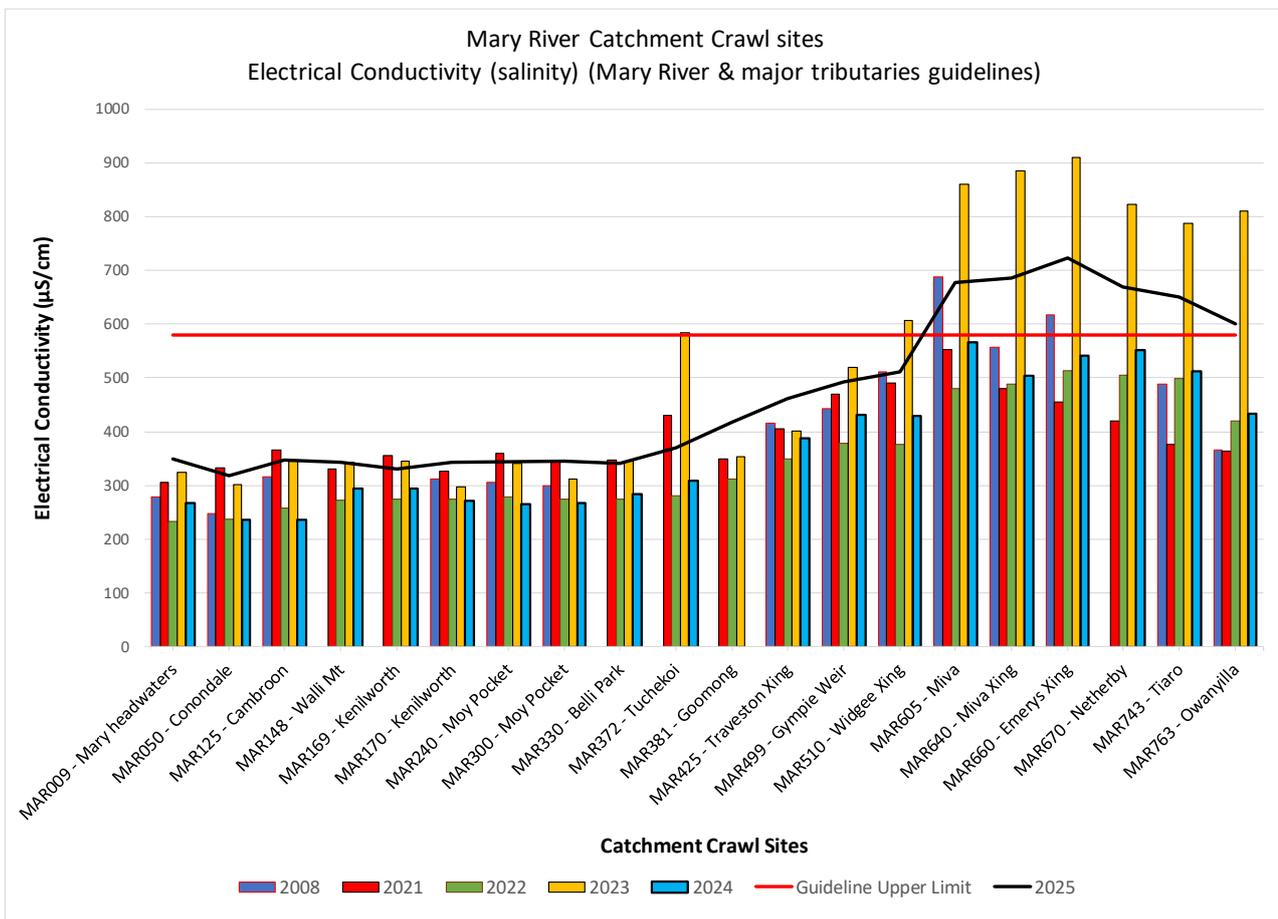
In 2025, the river was flowing in the range of 20-50% of normal flow during the catchment crawl, below the flows recorded during the 2024 catchment crawl. The river has been rapidly dropping since winter 2025 due to an exceptionally dry start to Spring. The river flow at Gympie (Fisherman’s Pocket) is concerning as this lack of flow will be experienced further downstream to Miva and Tiaro in the following weeks if there is no decent rainfall.

Mary River flows (median value for September)	Sept 2022 meg/d	Sept 2023 meg/d	Sept 2024 meg/d	Sept 2025 meg/d	Flow on 9/10/25 meg/d
Kenilworth (Bellbird gauging station)	60	5	43	96	66
Gympie (Fishermans Pocket gauging station)	1,184	34	245	220	41
Miva (Miva gauging station)	342	42	365	459	166
Tiaro (Home Park gauging station)	2,315	43	400	460	186



Electrical Conductivity (salinity)

This year’s electrical conductivity levels were comparable to 2021 and 2023 for the sites above Tucheokoi – indicating reasonable upper catchment river flows flushing any residual salt coming from the landscape. In the lower Mary River (below Gympie) the historical trend of increasing salinity was again recorded; with the highest salinity levels obtained at Emerys Crossing. The sites downstream of Widgee Crossing were all non-compliant with salinity guidelines this year.



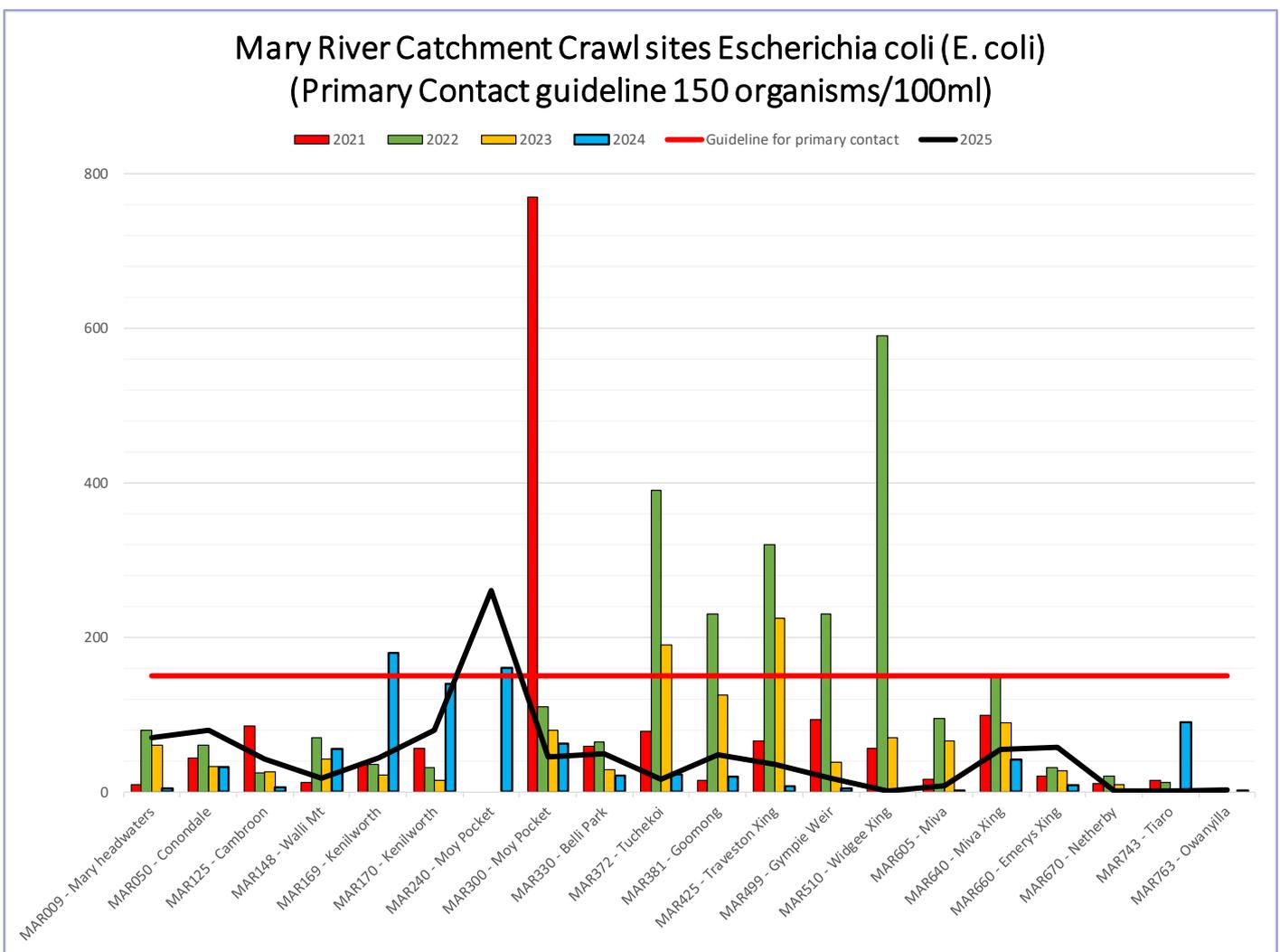
A possible explanation for the higher than guideline salinity levels in the lower catchment could be due to the declining streamflows in the river since winter this year (with a very dry Spring) resulting in a greater proportion of groundwater/ aquifer input into the river compared to surface river flows.

Escherichia coli (E. coli)

Escherichia coli (E. coli) is a bacterium that is commonly found in the gut of humans and warm-blooded animals. *E. coli* levels are used as indicators of the presence of fecal material in water. It can indicate the possible presence of disease-causing bacteria, viruses and protozoans. Sources of bacteria include improperly functioning wastewater treatment plants, leaking septic systems, storm water runoff, animal carcasses and runoff from animal manure and poorly functioning animal effluent systems.

The guidelines for *E. coli* levels are the Primary Contact Guideline (ANZECC and ARMCANZ, 2000) and the value is 150MPN/100ml. The MPN – *most probable number* is the number of organisms (colonies) that are *most likely* to have been observed in the laboratory test.

On a positive note, the higher *E.coli* levels experienced in 2025 were below guideline levels (<150 colony forming units/100mL), apart from a site near Moy Pocket. The sites near Kenilworth that had high *e.coli* levels in the past are now compliant. Widgee Crossing which has failed in the past has now been compliant for many years.



The MRCCC acknowledges and thanks all the landholders and volunteers who attended and assisted the 2025 Catchment Crawl, particularly Ian Mackay, Ian Smith, John King, Hannah Maloney, Kenneth McClymont, Sophie Blond, Sam Thomas, Nicole McMullen, Jude Coates and Garth Jacobson. The Jinibara, Kabi Kabi and Butchulla ranger’s assistance on both days of the catchment crawl was also appreciated.

Thanks also to Seqwater for supporting this year’s Catchment Crawl and the Queensland Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation for providing nutrient and total suspended solids analyses.



The Mary River upstream (left) and downstream (right) at Home Park in the lower Mary



Fraser Coast Council’s Amber Kelly searching for water bugs during the Catchment Crawl

Catchment Crawl 2025

Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Surveys

On Kabi Kabi and Butchulla country

After last year’s success, aquatic macroinvertebrates were again featured in this year’s Catchment Crawl, forming part of our fauna-focused creek walks and talks. Due to the upper Mary River catchment fishing closure—in place to protect breeding Mary River cod—the event was held on the second day of the catchment crawl extending into the lower Mary catchment outside the restricted fishing area.

Guide to interpreting SIGNAL 2 scores:

SIGNAL 2 Score	Habitat Quality
>6	Healthy habitat
5–6	Mild pollution
4–5	Moderate pollution
<4	Severe pollution

Sampling and identifying macroinvertebrates helps reveal the health of waterways, with results analysed using the AUSRIVAS sampling guide alongside water quality and habitat assessments. Each macroinvertebrate type is assigned a grade number (1–10): low

numbers indicates a high tolerance to pollution or habitat disturbance, while higher numbers represent sensitivity to pollution or habitat disturbance. The overall SIGNAL 2 score reflects average sensitivity within the sample.

The first survey took place in Tinana Creek near Missings Bridge, Bauple. This tannin-stained creek features dense riparian cover, woody debris, and steady riffle flow. Butchulla (BNTAC) and Jinibara (JPAC) Rangers completed the survey, identifying eight macroinvertebrate species, many sensitive to pollution. The SIGNAL score of 5.1 indicated mild pollution or habitat disturbance, while tadpoles and three stream frog species were also recorded.

The second site was at the Susan River, along Maryborough–Hervey Bay Road in the Fraser Coast region—an important Mary River tributary. With woody debris and vegetated pools, the site was divided by large drainage pipes creating variable water levels. BNTAC and JPAC Rangers again completed a survey, along with Fraser Coast Council staff. This site hosted more species, though most were less pollution-sensitive. Notably, large dragonfly nymphs were found nearly ready to emerge. The SIGNAL score of 2 indicated pollution issues or habitat disturbance, consistent with runoff and disturbance from the roadside location.



MRCCC Bug Club – 2025

On Kabi Kabi and Wakka Wakka country

The MRCCC Bug Club has had a fantastic start to 2025, despite the wet weather delays early in the year. So far, we've held three engaging sessions with an average of 8–10 participants at each event. Most attendees have been families with enthusiastic home-school students, creating a lively, hands-on learning environment.

In addition to our regular sessions, Bug Club members have proudly represented MRCCC at several community events, including the Kenilworth Family Fun Day, the Mary River Festival, the National Science Week STEAM Train of Knowledge at Amamoor, and the STEAMzone Science Market at Rainbow Beach. These activities help showcase the importance of aquatic biodiversity and waterway health across the Mary River catchment.

Each Bug Club session begins with a short introduction to the Mary River catchment and a look at the day's sampling site on a map. Participants then collect a water sample, gather aquatic invertebrates, and finish by actively sorting and identifying the specimens they've found. This hands-on approach provides a fun and memorable way to learn about water quality and the creatures that call our creeks home.

Bug Club Highlights

AJ Mitchell Park (Drainage creek to Deep Creek, 22 February 2025): Thick beds of *Vallisneria nana* (ribbon plant) with sedges, reeds and grasses lining the creek. Water levels were about one metre with a slight flow. Samples included freshwater snails, mussels, shrimps, water boatmen and water striders. This site achieved a SIGNAL score of 3, indicating tolerant bugs but good species richness.

Deep Creek, Bridge Road Gympie (24 May 2025): Electrical conductivity was high (709 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) with minimal edge vegetation following flooding. A sediment film covered much of the water and rubbish was present. The moderate flow reached 60 cm depth under full sun. Samples included freshwater shrimp, midge larvae and mussels. This site also scored 3, with lower species diversity noted.

Widgee Crossing, Mary River (16 August 2025): Water quality was within normal range, but recent rain had increased stream flow and depth (70 cm), covering the riffle bar. This site featured a wide gravel bar and a small grassy island. Samples revealed recently hatched mayflies, stoneflies, toe-biters, whirligig beetle larvae, shrimps and mussels – a rich mix of aquatic life. Signal score of 4.5 with moderate species richness. Thanks to all the volunteers and participants who contributed their time and expertise, to create this successful “Bug Club” initiative. Look out for us in 2026!

Australian Citizen Science Conference -Melbourne 2025

Recently, Waterwatch and Find a Frog in February partnered to evaluate the effectiveness of the MRCCC's long-term citizen science programs. Citizen science engages individuals in observing, collecting and analysing data from the natural world. The Australian Citizen Science Conference, held every two years, took place this year in Melbourne in collaboration with the University of Melbourne.

Our goal was to explore ways to enhance our citizen science programs from the perspective of the volunteers themselves. We wanted to understand what our volunteers have learned, why they continue to participate, and—most importantly—how we can improve these programs for the future. To gather these insights, we distributed surveys to both past and present participants, asking what motivates them to take part in citizen science and how they believe we can reinvigorate our initiatives to reach the next level.

The responses revealed a deep appreciation among volunteers for the threatened species of the Mary River Catchment, which our programs aim to protect. Many participants shared that learning about the creatures inhabiting the creeks keeps them engaged and fuels their motivation to contribute. They also felt that collecting data plays a meaningful role in supporting conservation efforts.

As the MRCCC citizen science programs have reached a significant long-term milestone, volunteers expressed a desire for more opportunities to share knowledge and attend workshops. A recurring suggestion was to involve school students, fostering a sense of catchment stewardship in the next generation. Additionally, with technology becoming increasingly central to our lives, participants recommended a move toward digital data collection tools—such as mobile apps and real-time data access—to complement traditional paper-based methods.

The Australian Citizen Science Conference was well attended, and we were proud to present our findings through a presentation, poster, and short video. The video proved especially impactful, sparking connection and appreciation for our volunteers among the audience.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who completed the survey and to the dedicated Waterwatchers who took part in the filming. Your contributions continue to strengthen the foundation of citizen science across the Mary River Catchment.

Seqwater – MRCCC Partnership

On Jinibara and Kabi Kabi country

In the fourth year of a five-year program, the 2021-2027 Seqwater- MRCCC Partnership continues to build on successes of the past three years, and grow collaboration among Mary River catchment landholders, organisations and community.

The Program was developed with the purpose of improving water quality upstream of the Goomong and Kenilworth offtakes on the Mary River. Projects therefore prioritise sediment, pathogen, and nutrient risk reduction to the upper catchment drinking water supplies.

By investing in source protection and integrated catchment management, Seqwater can reduce water treatment costs, improve asset life, and engage with communities and stakeholders in a way which demonstrates they are focused on collaborative actions to deliver a safe, reliable, resilient, and value-for-money water supply to the Sunshine Coast, Noosa and Gympie communities.

Building on the extensive works of previous years, in 2024-25, the MRCCC delivered over \$3.5 million worth of water quality improvement projects in Seqwater target reaches of the Mary River catchment. Seqwater contributed a total of \$953,639.44 on MRCCC projects during 2024-25. The MRCCC was able to increase this investment by leveraging in-kind contributions from landholders and co-funders to the value of \$2,556,960, boosting the overall value of 24-25 Seqwater projects to \$3,510,599.44.

Collaboration, co-investment and leveraging resources

In addition to direct funding from Seqwater and in-kind from landholders and other sources, the MRCCC leverages significant investment for our projects from other funders of complementary programs and projects. This collaborative practice enables us to save Seqwater money and extend allocated project funding over additional years, maximising outputs and efficiencies, value-adding, and delivering more “bang for buck” to achieve our goals.

Partners in this collaborative practice include the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF) and the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) managed by Queensland Government Department of Environment, and in the coming year, the Office of the Great Barrier Reef (OGBR). This year in particular, MRCCC has endeavoured to integrate the OGBR and Seqwater programs with a view to ongoing future engagement and significant in-kind investment to match Seqwater’s investment in the catchment.

Key deliverables

Co-designed with landholders, Seqwater and MRCCC, the Upper Mary Rivercare program reflects the needs and interests of Upper Mary landholders, protects the quality of the local drinking water supplies, and provides positive catchment outcomes for the Mary River and local community. This year the program has grown to 52 participants; we have completed seven Best Management Practice (BMP) assessments with eligible landholders; and delivered and/or participated in 14 extension events.

- Rehabilitation, revegetation and maintenance of revegetated riparian areas by planting more than 29,320 native seedlings across 14 projects in the Kenilworth, Goomong and Cambroon reaches, with funding sourced through Seqwater, Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation (GBRF).
- Engagement with nine dairy operators focused on a range of projects and planning for improved water quality outcomes. Dairy engagement included co-hosting an effluent management workshop with Dairy Australia and a local dairy operator, and developing plans and designs for effluent management and effluent irrigation systems. Other dairy operators were engaged via workshops, MRCCC property visits, and BMP assessments. In 2024-25 the MRCCC also initiated engagement with the Department of Primary Industry’s dairy team, with a view to future collaboration in dairy extension. This new partnership has proven fruitful being involved in recent project proposal development. Eight local dairy operators are now signed up to the Upper Mary Rivercare Program.
- Covering Kenilworth, Goomong and Cambroon reaches, Seqwater supported the continued control of vine weeds along Mary River and tributaries. Working with Hinterland Bushlinks, vine weed management was also carried out at Kenilworth, Lake Borumba and Cambroon. With Seqwater funding, we managed 485.3 Ha of riparian areas across 91 properties, with 15,500 biocontrol agents released in the Kenilworth and Goomong reaches of the Mary River.
- Through the annual MRCCC Catchment Crawl and the Mary River turtle Nest Protection and Monitoring project in Kenilworth, we continued supporting broad-reaching community awareness raising. Kabi rangers assisted the MRCCC with turtle nest protection at the nesting banks in the Kenilworth area.



Noosa Landcare weed control team treating an epic Cat's Claw Creeper Vine on Walli Creek.

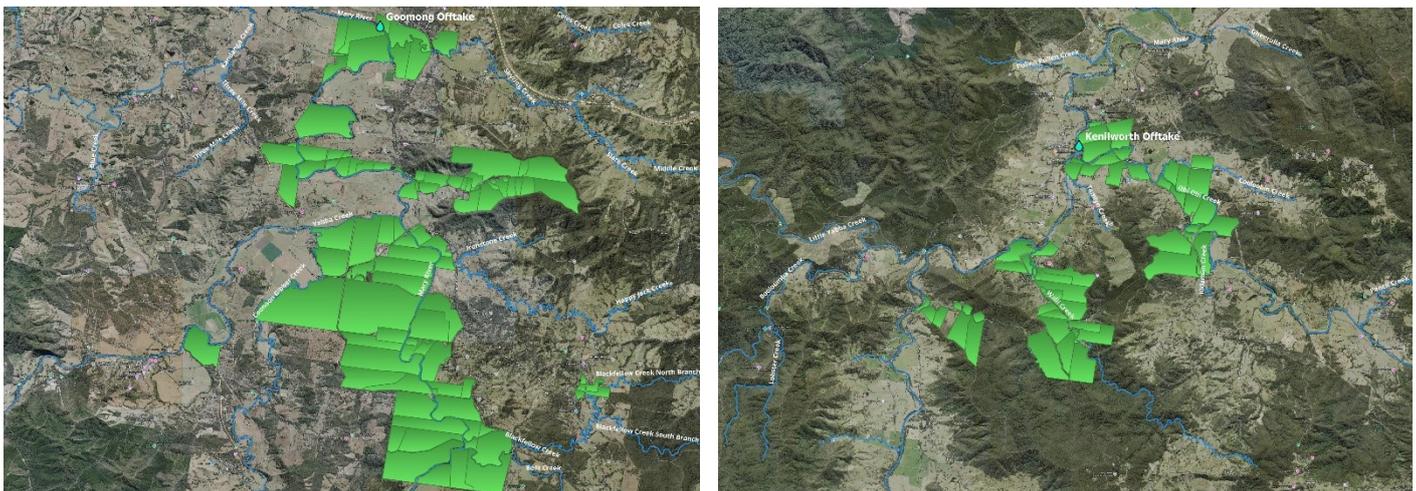
OUTPUTS AND EXPENDITURE

Outlines of budget expenditure and co-contributions for 2024-25 are summarised in the table below. The key program outcomes achieved in 2024-25 are summarised in Table 2.

Co-contributions and Seqwater expenditure for 2024-25 in Seqwater reaches.

	Co-contributions (ex-GST)	Seqwater expenditure (ex-GST)
Project funding expended	\$2,556,960.00	\$953,639.44
Total		\$3,510,599.44

Key program outputs for 2024-25	Total
Projects implemented	19
Dairy Projects engaged	9
Riparian fencing (length in metres)	6,163 m
Area of riparian weeds managed (ha)	485.34 Ha
Trees planted (native seedlings)	29,320
Cat’s Claw and Madeira vine bio-agents released (no. of insects)	15,500
Rivercare program participants	52
BMP assessments completed	7
Extension events (workshops, field days, field walks, etc.)	14



Areas of vine weed treatment in the Goomong reach (left) and the Kenilworth reach (right) of the river and tributaries 2024-2025.

Seqwater – Upper Mary Rivercare Landholder Program

On Jinibara and Kabi Kabi country

The Upper Mary Rivercare (UMRC) Program is a community-driven water quality improvement program co-designed by Upper Mary landholders in collaboration with the MRCCC and Seqwater. The UMRC program now has 52 participating landholders actively engaged through workshops and field days. A total of seven Best Management Practice (BMP) assessments were completed during the last year. BMP assessments lead to the creation of Property Water Quality Action Plans, which outline projects for water quality improvement over the coming years. Projects are then integrated into Annual Work Plans for following years.

The MRCCC continues to develop, organise and support workshops, field days, pasture walks and other extension activities to engage new and existing landholders. These activities result from consultation with landholders, focusing on their areas of training needs and topics that support their goals. Extension activities also provide regular opportunities for landholder peer-to-peer connection, support and learning.

One particular observation the UMRC team has noted this year is that the group’s participants are forming stronger connections, developing community and engaging with each other more deeply at our organised events.

Highlights of activities from 2024-25 include:

November 2024 Kenilworth Vine Weed ID Workshop

Vine weed infestation, including Cat’s Claw Creeper vine (CCCV) and Madeira vine continue to be problematic, and control is a priority for Upper Mary Rivercare participants. Learning about weeds and visually similar native vine species is also a priority for Rivercare participants. With CCCV usually in full bloom this time of year, this timely workshop attracted much interest with more than 30 attendees, including Kabi Kabi and Jinibara Rangers. Starting at Moy Pocket, where Jewel Beetles were released to feast on the CCCV, the group then moved to Kenilworth to check out the vine weeds along the river at Charles Street Park.

May 2025 Showcasing best land management pasture practices Beef Grazing Field Walk, Conondale

With many UMRC participants managing grazing properties, the aim is to improve downstream water quality without stressing their paddocks. At this field walk in Conondale, learnings focused on pasture plant ID (including 3P grasses, legumes, edible forbs, and weeds), assessing land and pasture condition, dry season forage budgeting, and implementing improvements that benefit livestock wellbeing, grazing efficiency and downstream water quality. Once again, this event was popular, with over 20 grazing enterprises coming along to what was a perfect autumn day.

July 2025 UMRC Introductory Workshop Moy Pocket

To become an UMRC program participant, attending an Introductory Workshop is mandatory. Here Rivercarers are introduced to the program, learn about river processes, and the importance of protecting water quality in the catchment for community and environment. We also encourage participants to contribute their stories, and guide us about what is important to achieve the goals for their properties. At this particular gathering, the focus was on vulnerable river inhabitants such as the Mary River cod and Mary River turtle, and included a walk-and-talk along the river. More than 30 people attended enjoying a hot lunch, excellent discussion with other rivercarers, and magnificent weather.

August 2025 Fencing Along Waterways Workshop, Carters Ridge

One of the most requested workshop topics is fencing, particularly riparian fencing that is critical to supporting river and stream-bank rehabilitation and management. With the catchment subjected to serious flooding reasonably regularly, finding resilient fencing solutions that are easily constructed and repaired is a priority for our landholders. In this workshop, we invited our landholders to co-design the agenda and deliver much of the content, appreciating that they are the ones with on-the-ground experience, driving innovative solutions for their particular circumstances. We also learnt about wildlife-friendly options, and fencing solutions that don’t involve a fence! Attended by more than 30 people, with lots of discussion and engagement, this workshop was a success. In addition to workshops and events organised directly by the UMRC team, our program participants also attend activities that are part of other MRCCC and stakeholder projects and programs such as the Natural Resource Recovery Program (NRRP), Seqwater Noosa Landcare Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcure Program, MRCCC Catchment Crawl in October each year, and the Mary River Festival in July.

Feedback for Upper Mary Rivercare is overwhelmingly positive. The program enjoys consistently high participation and engagement rates. The team is always encouraging Rivercarers to actively collaborate with us to continue evolving the program into one that supports their rivercare and property goals.



*Top: Introductory Workshop, Moy Pocket
Centre: Grazing Workshop, Conondale
Above: Vine weed ID Workshop, Kenilworth*



Mary River Integrated Project

On Jinibara and Kabi Kabi country

The Mary River Integrated Project (MRIP), funded via the Queensland Government Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, aims to enhance water quality and land management practices in the southernmost Great Barrier Reef catchment.

The Reef Place-Based Integrated Projects initiative aims to improve Reef water quality while adding value to whole-of-catchment and local economies across a range of cross-sector settings. As part of this initiative, MRIP is applying an Integrated Catchment Management approach that brings together land, water, and biodiversity management to address key issues such as riverbank erosion, waterway health, and the protection of threatened species.

The project targets key water quality risk areas by working with grazing landholders, dairy farmers, riparian landholders, and road contractors to reduce fine sediment and dissolved inorganic nitrogen losses. It also aims to increase landholder awareness of water quality risks, incorporate traditional ecological knowledge, and support threatened aquatic species iconic to the Mary River.

MRIP promotes sustainable land management and water quality improvements through collaborative and science-based approaches, addressing primary water quality risks, enhancing landholder awareness, and generating co-benefits for the ecosystem.

Key stakeholders and project partners include Seqwater, the Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, Noosa and District Landcare Group, HQ Plantations, TropWATER at James Cook University, and the Australian National University.

The project includes five activity areas focusing on water quality monitoring, managing fine sediment, rehabilitating riparian zones, and supporting sustainable land management.

1. The Pilot Water Quality Best Management Practice Dairy Farmer Network Program,
2. The Pilot Upper Mary River Jinibara Water Quality Monitoring Program,
3. The Unsealed Roads Fine Sediment Management Program,
4. The Mary Valley Riparian Zone Management Program, and
5. The Small Area Grazing Landholder Program.

In May 2025 an in-person stakeholder meeting was held at HQ Plantations Imbil with 23 representatives from 12 organisations attending. The five activity areas were discussed in detail followed by field visits to an unsealed road crossing, and a riparian zone management project site.

Pilot Water Quality Best Management Practice Dairy Farmer Network Program

The Pilot Water Quality Best Management Practice Dairy Farmer Network Program is being implemented in the Mary River catchment to support dairy farmers in adopting improved practices that reduce nutrient loss, improve effluent management and overall water quality, and enhance riparian zone condition. The project is delivered in partnership with research body TropWATER (James Cook University) and local dairy farmers, with support provided from Seqwater, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), Subtropical Dairy, and other technical experts.

To date, nine dairy farms have been engaged across multiple focus areas including; water quality monitoring, riparian zone management, effluent management design, laneway demonstration site, riparian fencing and off-stream watering, and erosion rehabilitation advice.

A water quality monitoring program has been designed by TropWATER that tracks nutrients through the landscape. This monthly monitoring program has commenced at four dairy farms in the catchment and involves on-farm sampling at 16 sites including effluent ponds, farm dams, wetlands, and drainage lines. Additional event-based sampling will be conducted on-farm and in-river designed to capture nutrient dynamics during runoff events. Data-sharing agreements have been established with Seqwater and Sunshine Coast Council providing access to existing river water quality monitoring sites to inform baseline and ambient conditions.

The next steps are to continue monthly sampling and prepare for the event-based water quality sampling this coming summer; continue support for the implementation of on-ground effluent, riparian, and erosion management projects; and strengthen industry, research, and landholder partnerships for co-investment.

Pilot Upper Mary Jinibara Water Quality Monitoring Program

The Pilot Upper Mary Jinibara Water Quality Program is a collaboration between the Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation's Freshwater Rangers, and the MRCCC. The Jinibara People's country includes the headwaters of the Mary River, specifically the Conondale and Blackall Ranges. This project integrates cultural values, ecological monitoring, and capacity building to support water quality outcomes in the upper Mary River catchment. The Jinibara Rangers have been supported in developing a monthly water quality monitoring circuit, and ecological condition assessment tools have been co-designed and implemented. The Jinibara water quality monitoring program is now operational across six sites, with independent monitoring capacity demonstrated by the Jinibara Rangers.

The next steps are to continue monthly WQ monitoring across the six sites and support ongoing data entry and interpretation, reporting, and integration with the Jinibara Country Health Checklist.

Unsealed Roads Fine Sediment Management Program

Unsealed roads and tracks in the Mary River catchment have been identified as significant sources of fine sediment, contributing to the degradation of water quality in the Great Sandy Strait and the southern Great Barrier Reef. In partnership with the Australian National University, the Unsealed Roads Fine Sediment Management Program aims to design and implement best management practices to reduce sediment delivery by establishing demonstration sites, delivering training, and conducting field days with key stakeholders including HQ Plantations and local dairy farmers focused on laneway upgrades.

The project aims to reduce sediment loss from unsealed forestry roads and dairy laneways, with a focus on trialling cost-effective, innovative designs and engaging landholders to improve water quality outcomes. Through key stakeholder consultation, demonstration sites for forestry roads and dairy laneways have been selected and designs have been drafted. The next steps are to finalise the forestry road design, trial rubber flap water diverters at the dairy laneway site for implementation in Spring 2025, and prepare for a workshop series in 2026.

Mary Valley Riparian Zone Management Program

The Mary Valley Riparian Zone Management program engages landholders to restore riparian habitats, reduce fine sediment loss, and improve water quality outcomes. The project builds on existing investments and partnerships while expanding into priority reaches with limited prior funding. Project activities include revegetation, maintenance, weed control and landholder projects including riparian fencing and off-stream watering point installation. To date, seventeen landholders have been engaged across the target reaches encompassing over 14 km of streambank and 24 ha of riparian area. Engagement through the program has allowed for increased dairy farmer engagement in riparian zone management programs and further enhanced strong collaboration with regional partners and funding bodies. On-ground works commenced include targeted control of invasive weeds such as Cat’s Claw Creeper and Madeira vine, and preparation for revegetation works. Planting will commence once ground moisture is suitable and consistent rain is forecast, usually late spring or early summer.

Small Areas Grazing Landholder Program

The Small Area Grazing Landholder Program supports grazing landholders in the upper Mary Catchment to improve land condition, pasture and groundcover management, water quality, and riparian land management outcomes. The program combines field walks, workshops, 1-on-1 and group extension support, and best management practice (BMP) planning to build landholder capacity and drive on-ground improvements. Through this phase there has been consistent engagement with grazing landholders through multiple thematic workshops delivered through MRIP and other funding programs. The next stage is for one-on-one extension support with landholders identified for BMP planning.

The Mary River Integrated Project delivered by the MRCCC is part of the \$5.5 million Reef Place-Based Integrated Projects initiative funded through the Queensland Government’s Queensland Reef Water Quality Program.



*Top: Jinibara rangers testing water quality in the upper Mary
Above: Peter Hairsine discusses water sensitive designs for unsealed roads*

The Urban Rivers and Catchments Program – An integrated catchment management program for the Gympie urban river reach

On Kabi Kabi country

About the program

The Urban Rivers and Catchment Program (URCP) is an initiative of the Australian Government focused specifically on rehabilitation of rivers in highly populated urban areas. The impacts to the rivers from urban environments are often different from rural environments, and funding can be relatively difficult to obtain. Only small areas of the catchment were eligible for this funding – primarily focused on the Mary River in the Gympie and Maryborough CBD areas.

The URCP – Integrated catchment management program for the Gympie urban river reach brings together the MRCCC, Gympie Regional Council (GRC), Gympie and District Landcare (GDL) and the Kabi Kabi People’s Aboriginal Corporation (KKPAC) to build on past rehabilitation efforts in the Gympie town reach of the Mary River, lower Deep Creek and lower Six Mile Creek over the next 4 years. These efforts will benefit water quality and threatened species in the Gympie town reach of the river. We are incredibly fortunate to still have populations of species such as lungfish, Mary River cod, Mary River turtle and platypus persisting and breeding in Gympie’s urban waterways after decades of intensive gold mining activities, followed later by sand mining. The influence of these past activities is still evident along the river today. Current threats to the river include urban runoff, tree and vine weeds, and bank erosion causing water quality issues. This project aims to reduce the impact of these threats.

Project progress

This project officially commenced in March 2025, establishing an advisory group with our project partners to plan on-ground works. This group has generated excellent discussion and collaboration with regards to the project, as well as identifying wider community issues.

A draft Mary River rehabilitation plan for the Gympie reach was developed by Alluvium, including analysis of LiDAR datasets comparing Mary River bank and riverbed erosion from 2009, 2015 and 2024 from Jones Hill to Widgee Crossing. One interesting finding from the report is that more streambank erosion occurred in the period between 2009 and 2015 (encompassing the period including the 2011 and 2013 major floods), than between 2015 and 2024 (encompassing the 2022 major flood). Once this document is finalised it will be a useful tool to inform future rehabilitation works and planning for this reach by council, Landcare and MRCCC.

Discussion with the federal Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water (DCCEEW) to develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) plan was finalised in July 2025. This plan sets out the project targets in terms of benefits to water quality, threatened species and riparian health, along with outputs in terms of on-ground works (i.e. hectares of weed control, revegetation, kilometres of stock exclusion fencing etc). It also sets out our monitoring requirements in terms of plant survival, development of a water quality monitoring plan, and flora and fauna surveys. The first round of six-monthly reporting for the January to June 2025 period using the Federal Government’s online reporting tool, MERIT is now complete.

On-ground works for the Urban Rivers program began in April 2025 with weed control on lower Deep Creek. Weed control works have since expanded to lower Six Mile Creek, and work is set to begin on several more properties in coming weeks. Small amounts of revegetation have also occurred at two properties where the weed control works have opened up suitable planting areas. Gympie Landcare are doing excellent work, covering a lot of ground in the short time since on-ground works began. We are anticipating a good spring/summer season for planting conditions, so larger-scale revegetation works will begin once we receive the first significant rainfall of the season. These plants should get the best possible start to life, although we do also plan for plants to be watered should we experience adverse conditions over spring and summer. The remainder of the 2025/26 financial year will see on-ground works ramping up, with a continuing focus on revegetation and weed control, plus several fencing and off-stream watering projects added into the mix.

In mid-September, representatives from MRCCC, Gympie Regional Council and Gympie Landcare undertook a kayak-based survey of the Gympie river reach, commencing upstream of the Six Mile Creek confluence and finishing at the Eel Creek confluence at Widgee Crossing south. Lots of great data was collected by the kayak team, including location and severity of weed infestations, riparian vegetation condition, threatened species habitat and bank erosion. This data will be used to inform future program planning and prioritisation. Additionally, it was a great way for the project team to evaluate the overall condition of the Gympie reach of the Mary River. We resolved to undertake the survey again at the end of the Urban Rivers project (early 2028) as a way to document notable changes to riparian condition, weed infestations and in-stream habitat.

This project is funded by the Australian Government’s Natural Heritage Trust under the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program.



Sunshine Coast Council partnership

On Jinibara and Kabi Kabi country

Having completed the first year of our three-year partnership with the Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) we reflect on what this on-going funding enables us to do for the catchment and the community. The program is funded through the SCC Environment Levy Partnerships and supports our connection with the community of the upper Mary River catchment through the SCC Landholder Environment Grant (LEG) program, linkages with other MRCCC programs in the area, two Waterwatch networks (see Waterwatch report), long-term frog monitoring, Find a Frog in February citizen science program, student workplace learning opportunities and the MRCCC Codline newsletter.

The LEG program is available throughout the SCC area and we invite rural landholders to work with us to develop their projects in line with MRCCC and SCC environmental priorities and to link in with other MRCCC programs. This year we supported twelve landholders to develop projects for Expression of Interest submission. Of those, eight progressed to submit applications. \$25,000 was awarded for projects that resulted in 2,300 trees planted along 400 metres of waterway, 430 metres of waterway managed for weeds, 1,100 metres of riparian fencing and two off stream watering points installed. With MRCCC co-funding and landholder in-kind support the projects' value increases to \$63,000. Five of the landholders were new to working with the MRCCC and they are warmly welcomed into the catchment community through invitations to MRCCC (and other) activities, supply of information releases and an invitation to be in touch for advice and support.

Long-term frog monitoring

Long-term frog monitoring has been carried out at four sites for 20 years now. The program is supported by both the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Councils, reflecting their interest in the persistence and population dynamics of threatened and non-threatened stream frogs. The surveys target the vulnerable Giant barred frog (*Mixophyes iteratus*), Tusked frog (*Adelotus brevis*) and Cascade treefrog (*Dryosophus* (was *Litoria*) *pearsoniana*). Over the years we have seen small fluctuations in abundance and occasional absences. Overall the species appear to be in healthy numbers and condition.

Out of interest we investigated the identification of individual Giant barred frogs using facial and dorsal patterns and found that individuals carry the same patterns through life. From our photographs we determine one individual to be 6.5 years old and the greatest movement has been 170 metres. Most commonly, this species movement is less at between 10 and 50 metres. The images above left show the unchanged markings on the face of one individual over time.

We have been fortunate to secure further funding, advice and technical support from SCC to enable the MRCCC to work with the Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (JPAC) to install and monitor additional frog transects at three new sites on SCC reserves in Dry Creek (Obi Obi), London Creek and upper Stanley River.

	Left	Right
Date: 2023 Mar 14 Code: Sex: M Transect Location: Anabranch 'Scarface'		
Date: 2021 Oct 23 Code: Sex: M Transect Location: 0-10m "Scarface"		 Images: E Ford
Date: 2023 Dec 7 Code: Sex: M Transect Location: Just D/S of 0m 'Scarface'		



*Noosa High School students on a monitoring transect –
Image courtesy Nik Olds*



Eastern Stony Creek frog -*Rhyaconastes wilcoxii*
Image courtesy Kylie Ryan

Site visits in January and February 2024 involved transect location, riparian habitat assessments, water quality monitoring site determination, plant identification, mapping of habitat features of the system and, finally, frog surveys. Further surveys to continue the monitoring exercise are planned for the 2025-26 frog breeding period. This has been a valuable partnership between the MRCCC, SCC and JPAC to develop relations and expand the interests and skills of all involved.

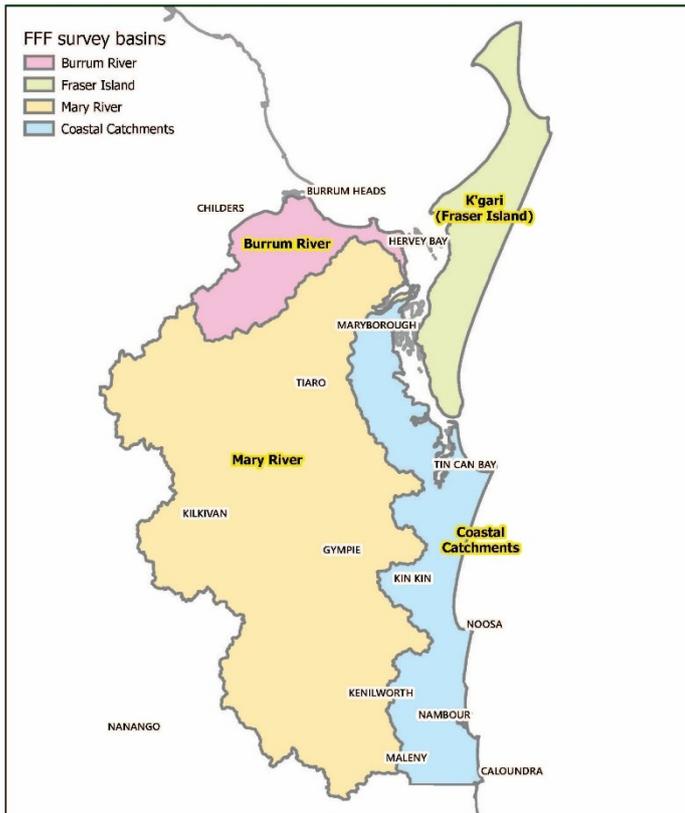
Find a Frog in February

Our 9th Find a Frog in February (FFF) citizen science event took place this year with support from Sunshine Coast, Noosa, Gympie Regional and Fraser Coast Regional Councils. Collectively, local government in the Mary River catchment support development and delivery of workshops, surveys, school monitoring, data processing, data sharing, analyses, media and notifications, and preparation of the annual FFF Report.

During February, seven community workshops were held followed by hands-on night frog surveys in Tanawha, Maleny, Obi Obi, Cooroy, Imbil, Rainbow Beach and Burrum Heads. We worked with Maleny, Tewantin, and Tinana State Schools and Noosa District State High School to provide frog awareness education for students from Prep to Year 7 and to guide surveys of their established frog monitoring transects.

FFF 2025 (MRCCC and iNaturalist records)	
Frog Finders	173
Sites visited	305
# frogs observed	1575
# species reported (-/45)	31
# threatened species (-/8)	6
# extinct species (-/2)	0

Frog records are submitted by the public via several options including data sheets, email and apps, and after verification, are shared with the Queensland Government WildNet database and the Threatened Species Network. The Find a Frog in February Report is produced annually to present observations of the season, frog records, trends in populations, interesting information from participants and the activities that occurred. Annual FFF Reports are available on the website <https://mrccc.org.au/frog-in-february/>



Scale: 1:1,250,000
Geographic Coordinate System: GCS_GDA_1994

MARY RIVER CATCHMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

FIND-A-FROG IN-FEBRUARY

MRCCC makes no representation or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness or timeliness of responsibility and all liability is excluded without limitation, liability or mitigation. It is accepted, known, intended and agreed that no consequential damage and costs which might be incurred as a result of the data being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason. This map is not to be held or treated as part of a memorandum.

Map produced by Jess Dean 11th of January 2022

PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY: Sunshine Coast Council, Your Environment Levy in action, Fraser Coast Regional Council, NOOSA Council, GYMPIE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Student work placements

Our Student Workplace Learning Program continues to attract more students each year; typically, 3rd year undergraduates from the University of the Sunshine Coast. This past year we have hosted three students:

Keishia Duffy – 4th year - double degree in Ecology and Environmental Science (GIS Minor).

Sharny Michaels – 3rd year Bachelor of Environmental Science.

Ashleigh McDougall – 3rd year Bachelor of Animal Ecology.

Our students contribute their student and life experiences while gaining valuable hands-on skill and understanding of catchment management and community connection. We are always wistful as they leave us to venture into an unknown future but, we are always certain that they go with a higher level of river wisdom to contribute and to relay on for decision making. Sharny and Keishia have both spent time as casual staff members since the completion of their placements, with Keishia now employed part time to assist with Waterwatch and other projects.

Accelerating flood recovery of threatened aquatic species habitat

Assistance for these projects is being provided through the jointly funded Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA)

On Jinibara and Kabi Kabi country

In 2022, the Mary River catchment experienced record flooding, significantly impacting upon the critical habitat of endemic and threatened aquatic species including the critically endangered Mary River turtle (*Elusor macrurus*), White-throated snapping turtle (*Elseya albagula*), the endangered Mary River cod (*Maccullochella mariensis*) and the vulnerable Queensland lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*).

In 2023 the MRCCC, with assistance from Tom Espinoza from BMRG, successfully prepared the “Accelerating flood recovery of aquatic threatened species habitats” funding submission, under the joint State and Commonwealth Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Biodiversity Conservation Program. Although the project was scheduled to finish in June 2024, a one-year funding extension was granted to continue some activities for a further year into 2025/26.



Mary River cod in a purpose built Cod Hollow

Mary River Cod Habitat Enhancement

Following European settlement, historic land clearing and overfishing resulted in a significant population decline of the Mary River cod, the olive-green mottled apex predator of the Mary River and its tributaries, leading to the species being declared endangered by the federal government in 1992. Since then, habitat degradation, extreme weather, introduced pest fish species and illegal fishing particularly during cod breeding season continue to place this species at risk of extinction in the wild.

The MRCCC’s Biodiversity Conservation project supported on-going and new innovative projects aimed at restoring habitat for the Mary’s unique and threatened riverine species, including our beloved cod.

Over the past two years, the MRCCC and partners developed, installed and monitored innovative habitat structures dubbed “Cod Hollows” with the aim of increasing in-stream recruitment of the Mary River cod. Early in the monitoring process, cod were documented spawning in the recently installed Cod Hollows in the upper reaches of the Mary River. Cod hollows weren’t just enjoyed by cod; a plethora of other species also made themselves at home including Saw-shelled turtle, Eel-tailed catfish, Longfin eel and Eastern water dragons.

Date of installation	Location	Notes
July 2024	Upper Mary River, site 1	Installed with Griffith University, BMRG and monitored by Jinibara rangers
July 2024	Upper Mary River, site 2	Installed with Griffith University, BMRG and monitored by Jinibara rangers
July 2024	Elaman Creek, Conondale	Installed with Griffith University, BMRG and monitored by Kabi rangers
July 2024	Lower Obi Obi Creek, site 1	Installed with Griffith University, BMRG and monitored by Kabi rangers
July 2024	Lower Obi Obi Creek, site 2	Installed with Griffith University, BMRG and monitored by Kabi rangers
July 2024	Yabba Creek	Installed with Griffith University, BMRG and monitored by Kabi rangers
April 2025	Upper Obi Obi Creek	Installed with Sunshine Coast Council and Jinibara rangers
April 2025	Skyring Creek site 1	Installed with Healthy Land & Water, Kabi & Jinibara rangers
July 2025	Skyring Creek site 2	Installed with Noosa Council, Kabi & Jinibara rangers

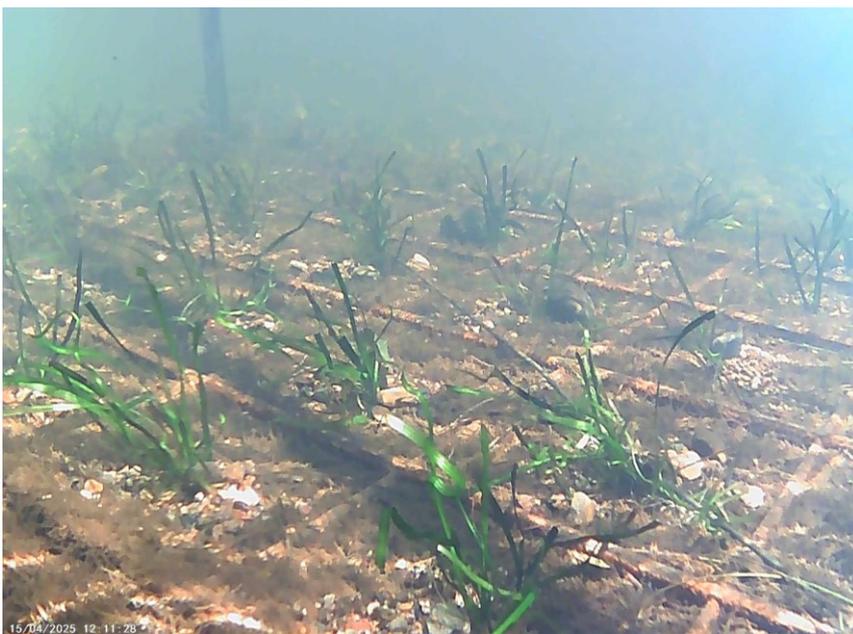
The MRCCC’s partner organisations filled different niches and evolved from the project’s conception in 2023 depending on technical skills, capacity, interest and great enthusiasm. Those instrumental to the project’s outcomes and deserving of our appreciation include the landholders, Griffith University, Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, Burnett Mary Regional Group, Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, Arboreal, Arbaron, Noosa Shire Council, Sunshine Coast Council and Barung Landcare.

Inter-organisational relationships were strengthened during 2023-25 and a future beyond the project timeline became apparent. The success of the project demonstrated by the MRCCC garnered additional funding for the program from DRFA and new funding from Noosa Shire Council in the 2025-26 financial year. Transport and Main Roads HQ Plantations, John Holland and local councils have offered to supply timber with naturally occurring hollows of the dimensions suitable for cod to breed and spawn.



Above: The MRCCC's juvenile lungfish Neo

Below: Aquatic garden of Vallisneria in a jute "sandwich" quadrat



standing enclosure, MRCCC designed the 'jute sandwich' quadrat as a cheap and 'easy build' structure that can easily be placed into the waterway. Vallisneria was directly transplanted into fenced in-stream enclosures and unfenced structures and monitored over time to assess the viability of this method to rapidly enhance Vallisneria growth and distribution in the waterways.

February 2025 was a dry month and transplanted Vallisneria growth was averaged at 50cm over a six week period. A flooding event in March 2025 resulted in the transplanted Vallisneria being dislodged entirely. Although the free-standing enclosure was compromised, the 'jute sandwich' quadrat held fast, indicating this structure is a useful and viable method of growing Vallisneria through transplanting.

Knowledge acquired from this project will help to inform future development of a post-flood mitigation toolkit for local NRM groups and landholders, aimed at improving lungfish breeding and recruitment success. In developing emergency response strategies that bolster habitat resilience, faster recovery of Vallisneria after significant flood events may be possible. Outcomes from this project seek to contribute knowledge to previous and ongoing studies conducted by other organisations and educational institutions.

Australian Lungfish (*Neoceratodus forsteri*) Habitat Enhancement Project

On Jinibara and Kabi Kabi country

The flood recovery project for the Australian lungfish was initiated after the widespread loss of in-stream aquatic macrophytes from the extreme flooding event in the Mary River catchment in 2022. MRCCC collaborated with landholders, Seqwater, BMRG, Griffith University, Noosa & District Landcare Group, Healthy Land & Water, Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation and the Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation to develop the Australian Lungfish habitat enhancement project. MRCCC maintained ongoing engagement with landholders at all stages of the field trials and throughout the project.

This project aimed to support the recovery and on-going resilience of the vulnerable Australian lungfish (*N. forsteri*) by developing habitat enhancement measures that landholders in the catchment could easily replicate and install. *Vallisneria* is a native aquatic plant in the Mary River catchment that forms meadows on the streambed providing lungfish food and spawning habitat. Flooding can cause scouring of the streambed and loss of aquatic macrophytes, such as *Vallisneria*, that potentially takes years to recover. This project developed methods to fast-track the establishment of *Vallisneria* beds at selected sites in the Mary River catchment at a variety of scales.

Several techniques were developed to fence sections of selected waterways for the purpose of transplanting *Vallisneria*. Aside from fencing off pile field bays and a free-

Mary River turtle and White-throated snapping turtle

On Kabi Kabi and Butchulla country

The federally listed, critically endangered Mary River turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) and the white-throated snapping turtle (*Elseya albagula*) are unique, large, short-necked turtle species. As its name implies, the Mary River turtle only naturally occurs in the Mary River catchment whilst the white-throated snapping turtle has a rather restricted range; only found in three river catchments.

Both turtle species lay eggs at aggregated nesting sand banks on the shores of the Mary River’s main stem and to a lesser extent, its tributaries. Predation of turtle eggs and nesting females by foxes is causing a significant impact on the abundance of these species. As a result of this ongoing threat, the MRCCC and Tiaro Landcare Group developed the Mary River and White-throated snapping turtle nest protection program; a conservation initiative to increase recruitment through the protection of turtle nests. Works conducted under this initiative include community outreach, in-situ nest protection, nest relocation and fox control. On-going financial support for this program is funded by Seqwater, Urban Rivers and the DRFA.

Targeted control of European Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) populations was funded by the 2023-25 DRFA Biodiversity and Conservation project. Fox predate upon the eggs and hatchlings of Mary River and white-throated snapping turtle . Fox control sites included four nesting clusters at Peacons Pocket and Kandanga in the Mary Valley, and two sites near Tiaro. Two separate contractors were engaged: ‘Vertebrate Pest Management services (VPM)’ and ‘Predator Control’. VPM focused on den management from mid-October to November at all four cluster sites when dens were early in the kit stage of fox lifecycle. The detection dog, Cooper worked the riverbank seeking fox dens. When dens were located, they were then fumigated using Denkafume. The VPM team are experienced at this work undertaking months of similar work from August to December in south east Queensland. Knowledge sharing with the landholders involved has been invaluable for those keen to extend their knowledge.

‘Predator Control’ focused on fox culling using scope and gun to reduce the numbers of predators at the Tiaro cluster sites. The work involved assessment of fox areas in partnership with landholders, setting traps, bait stations and trail cameras and finally luring the foxes to the shooting range through use of ‘callers’. These activities determined fox movements and numbers. In total, 25 foxes were culled over the 4 cluster sites including 19 vixens. A similar approach will be used to extend the fox program during 2025 – 2026 with funding support from Gympie Regional Council and DRFA.



Mary River turtle nest relocation is undertaken when nests are threatened by flood inundation

Mary River turtle nest protection statistics		
Reach	Number of nests protected	Number of hatchlings
Kenilworth	2	40
Mary Valley	8	0
Gympie	4	57
Tiaro	17	202

The DRFA project also funded an innovative habitat enhancement technique to improve in-stream habitat and boost the survivorship of turtle hatchlings. These structures, called “Turtle Pots,” replicate natural stick bundles and were strategically placed between nesting banks and nearby riffle zones—the desired habitat for juvenile Mary River turtles. Other species documented using the "Turtle Pots" include Krefft's turtles, Empire Gudgeons, and a variety of invertebrate species.

Turtle nesting is triggered by rain and river flow. Aggregated nesting events on our monitored banks were triggered by spring storms at different times throughout the season. Multiple cross-organisation and community/landholder supported teams manage on ground nest protection work on different reaches of the Mary River for logistical purposes. Multiple low level flood events submerged and inundated in-situ protected nests.



2024-2025 Local government investment in catchment management

Sunshine Coast Council partnership

The Sunshine Coast Council has supported a partnership program with the MRCCC since 2007 when the Caloundra City and Maroochy Shire Councils amalgamated. The Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) Partnership is pivotal for the MRCCC, providing a block of 3 years funding certainty that allows MRCCC to leverage additional funding, or link and elevate other MRCCC programs such as Reef Trust 4, Mary River Recovery and more recently the Upper Mary Rivercare Program funded by Seqwater.

The partnership also assists landholders in the catchment to access the SCC's Landholder Environment Grant (LEG) program. Eva assists both the landholder and SCC to develop quality on-ground landholder projects that meet the criteria of the SCC LEG program. The LEG program also allows the MRCCC to engage with new landholders and bring these people into other MRCCC led programs. The SCC – MRCCC Partnership is mutually beneficial for both organisations and for landholders in the Sunshine Coast hinterland.

Importantly the SCC partnership allows funding support for two Waterwatch networks in the Upper Mary River catchment. Without local government funding the MRCCC would be unable to continue to coordinate the logistics and reporting required for our Waterwatch program. Since the start of 2025 the MRCCC has been assisting SCC to develop the Mary River water quality report card which will build upon datasets collected by SCC and the MRCCC's existing water quality report card produced with data collected by the Waterwatch volunteers in the upper catchment. Ongoing since 2009, the most recent report was released in September 2024.

Noosa Council Multi-year Environmental Collaboration grant

2025 is the final year of the MRCCC's inaugural 3 year partnership for Noosa Council's Multi-year Environmental Collaboration grant. The MRCCC developed three separate multi-year proposals:

- Rural hinterland extension program
- Citizen Science Waterwatch program – hinterland catchment crawls
- Biodiversity Resilience – frog monitoring and Find-a-frog in February program

In 2018, Noosa Council supported the MRCCC to produce the Noosa Shire Water Quality Monitoring Situation Analysis report, which identified where water quality data had consistently been collected across the shire, and where gaps existed. The Noosa Council 3 year Waterwatch program supports a 6-monthly water quality catchment crawl which collects data from creeks where no data has previously been collected as per the 2018 report (reviewed by MRCCC in 2023). This year, these catchment crawls incorporated aquatic macroinvertebrate sampling using the AUSRIVAS methodology. Since the start of 2025, MRCCC has collected monthly water quality data for a Mary River catchment water quality report card in Noosa Shire.

The Rural Hinterland Extension program provides landholder extension support focused primarily on small area grazing landholders in the Noosa hinterland – the main grazing enterprise of the Noosa Shire. Last financial year this funding provided leverage for MRCCC to access funding for the Natural Resource Recovery Program and Noosa Landcare's Lake Macdonald Seqwater Partnership program funding. The MRCCC and Noosa Landcare jointly organised group extension events eg. field walks and pasture farm walks in the Noosa hinterland. Noosa Shire grazing landholders were also actively invited to attend MRCCC grazing land activities in the Mary Valley and Upper Mary River.

Noosa Council has also offered support for the continued installation of cod-logs into creeks. Council had stored some suitable logs in their depot, allowing us to carve these logs on-site earlier in the year, and keep them in storage for instream installation later in the year. In April and July, Kabi Kabi and Jinibara rangers, Healthy Land & Water and council staff assisted Nathaniel Larsen to install cod logs into two sites in Skyring Creek.

Gympie Regional Council Community Partnership Grant

Gympie Council is the MRCCC's longest serving partner, with the former Cooloola Shire Council being a pivotal foundation member of the MRCCC, providing substantial support in many forms. Since 1995, the MRCCC has received an annual grant from Gympie Regional Council, supporting Rivercare and Citizen Science programs. In 2024 the Council developed a 3-year Community Partnership funding arrangement for NRM groups in the shire. Along with other key groups including Gympie & District Landcare and Cooloola Coastcare, MRCCC were recognised for their contribution to the region and were successful in obtaining a 3 year partnership agreement.

The current partnership offers long-term support for Waterwatch which has 5 networks in the Gympie Region – the largest in the catchment.

In 2025 MRCCC prepared three reports for Gympie Council on integrating catchment management into their local government framework, a species management plan framework and a Mary River turtle nest protection program. These foundational reports open up opportunities for closer collaboration between Gympie Regional Council and MRCCC.

Fraser Coast Regional Council

In 2024/24 Fraser Coast Regional Council assisted the MRCCC to purchase much needed new water testing equipment for the Waterwatch networks in the Fraser Coast – Munna Creek and the Tiaro-Maryborough networks.

Earlier this year, the MRCCC appreciated an opportunity to meet with Fraser Coast Regional Council Directors and Senior staff to discuss the Fraser Coast Regional Water Supply Strategy, which includes a proposal for a pipeline from the Maryborough to Torbanlea to provide urban water for an ever increasing population in Hervey Bay.



The heavily forested land that will be inundated if the Borumba Pumped Hydro scheme goes ahead

Borumba Pumped Hydro proposal

The MRCCC has remained engaged with consultation on the proposed Borumba Pumped Hydro scheme over the last year. In late 2024 we suggested a major modification to the scheme, arguing it should incorporate a separate lower balancing storage in the Borumba Creek sub-catchment which would reduce the direct impact on the Mary River system of the massive volume of water that would be pumped directly between Lake Borumba and the upper reservoir in the original proposal. In early 2025, the state government announced that the business case for Borumba was under review and a number of alternate options for the scheme are under consideration. Our latest information is that most of these options involve building a smaller scheme than originally announced and that the MRCCC suggestion is still under active consideration.

In the meantime, Queensland Hydro has undergone a significant internal restructuring and all investment decisions regarding the project are now under the supervision of the Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC). We expect that QIC will disclose which short-listed options are going to proceed to the stage of a formal business case to the stakeholder reference group by the end of 2025. A decision on the renewed business case is not expected until the middle of 2026.

Qld Hydro has prepared 2 variations to the exploratory works since February and is expected to submit their final proposal for these works to the federal government by the end of October 2025. The timeline for these exploratory works has been extended, and if approved, there is no intention to commence the major tunnelling operations associated with the exploratory works until the 2027 calendar year.

During the year, many MRCCC delegates and staff have been involved in giving extensive written technical feedback to Queensland Hydro on the proposed exploratory works, and have consulted directly with federal and state government departments regarding the assessment of the project. We are committed to staying engaged with Qld Hydro and the State and Federal Governments regarding the design and assessment of this proposal, because of its sheer scale and likely catchment wide implications for our Mary River system should it go ahead as proposed.



26th International River Symposium Brisbane, 8–10 September 2025 – Summary Report

Theme: River Revolution – Accelerating Solutions for Climate Resilience

Host: International River Foundation (IRF)

The 26th International River Symposium brought together global river, water, and catchment management professionals to accelerate practical, scalable solutions for rivers facing climate, ecological, and social pressures.

A key focus of the 2025 Symposium was building practitioner capacity and strengthening global networks across disciplines. Important themes included recognising the interconnected challenges facing river systems globally, noting a holistic approach to river health is essential.

This involves building climate resilience and adaptation into management strategies to prepare for increasing floods and droughts. Simultaneously, there is a global push for the restoration and protection of wetlands and intact ecosystems by 2030, which are vital for biodiversity and natural water filtration. In urban areas, a focus on urban river management and liveable waterway design is key to transforming polluted channels into vibrant community spaces. These efforts are underpinned by effective governance, finance, and cross-sector partnerships, which ensure that resources are aligned with goals. Finally, the successful management of rivers must include the integration of cultural and Indigenous knowledge, respecting and utilising centuries-old wisdom for sustainable and equitable outcomes.

Day 1 of the symposium involved a Masterclass consisting of intensive training sessions on integrated catchment management, climate adaptation, and nature-based solutions. Day 2 and 3 involved keynote speakers and skill-sharing workshops consisting of peer-to-peer demonstrations of successful restoration tools, monitoring frameworks, and community engagement techniques.

The winner of the International River Prize was Friends of the Chicago River, recognised for their extensive work restoring the Chicago River. Since 1979, Friends has been working to protect and restore the Chicago-Calumet River system for all people, water, and wildlife. Other finalists included: 1) The Cumbrian River Restoration Partnership Program nominated for its work in the Cumbria River, Lake District (UK) over the last 15 years; 2) The Klamath River (USA) project: the largest dam removal and river restoration effort in U.S. history. The project involved removing four hydroelectric dams to reconnect more than 640 kilometres of river habitat and restore salmon migration; and 3) The Vjosa River (Albania) campaign successfully halting large-scale hydropower projects on the Vjosa River. These efforts culminated in the Albanian government's historic 2023 designation of the Vjosa as Europe's first Wild River National Park, protecting the entire 270-kilometer free-flowing river and its tributaries.

In summary, a strong theme throughout the Symposium was the connection between international initiatives and local-scale river projects. It was highlighted that no matter the scale, from global partnerships to local on-ground restoration, success depends on collaboration among delivery partners and the longevity of organisations and initiatives within their regions. Sustained relationships, trusted local institutions, and consistent regional leadership were recognised as the foundations for enduring river health and community resilience.



Professor Tim Flannery and satirist John Doyle (aka rampaging Roy Slaven) with chocolate turtles on their visit to the Mary River during filming of the ABC's Two on the Great Divide documentary!

Mary River catchment "care" groups

Tiaro & District Landcare

The power of an idea – how chocolates helped save a turtle!

Back in 1999 the task of saving an endangered species seemed daunting for a group of farmers and rural landholders from Tiaro. Where would the money come from to enable members to undertake a turtle conservation project? Fortunately, we had three members who had an idea and were able to make it happen, Lynn Klupfel, Carol Neilsen, and Carol Klupfel. Lynn could see the value in raising money that was 'Landcare' money so the Landcare members had full control over how it was spent. Never in our wildest dreams could we have anticipated the impact of this germ of an idea that emerged. Through making and

selling chocolate turtles, Tiaro Landcare has raised funds to support nest protection and research programs.

It is impossible to even imagine the impact of chocolate turtles in spreading awareness of the Mary River turtle and by association Tiaro Landcare. Most recently at the Australian Turtle Conference, we were surprised when the President of Turtle Survival Alliance from USA said he was under instruction from one of their Board members to bring home chocolate turtles from Tiaro Landcare. Our chocolate turtles have been sold as part of Trade tables at conferences within Australia, Malaysia, and at numerous international Turtle symposiums in the United States of America. Chocolate turtles have been presented to the former Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. Premier Peter Beattie was presented with chocolate turtles.

Professor Tim Flannery and comedian John Doyle (aka Roy of Roy and HG fame) have enjoyed our chocolate turtles when they were in Tiaro filming *Two on the Great Divide* ABC documentary.

Chocolate turtles have saved Tiaro Landcare money. As each pack of turtles includes an informative tag, we do not have to pay for production of educational leaflets on the Mary River turtle. Instead, people actually pay for the information. Chocolate turtles are frequently purchased as gifts or mementoes from Tiaro and thus every recipient gets to learn about the turtle even while eating a chocolate turtle. Visitors to Tiaro purchase chocolate turtles through local outlets such as the Tiaro Craft Cottage, Tiaro Butcher, and Retro Coffee on the Bruce Highway.

It makes for a good media story – a Landcare group having to make chocolate turtles to save an endangered turtle. Numerous media outlets have used this storyline including the ABC, the Guardian, and peer-reviewed Scientific Journals which are read by scientists around the world.

Friends of the Western Swamp tortoise from Western Australia realised what chocolate turtles could do for their program and checked with Tiaro Landcare if we would mind if they copied our idea. Now they too raise money from selling chocolate turtles.

Funds raised from chocolate turtle sales has meant Tiaro Landcare always has a cash contribution available when applying for grants. Thus, it is not just the money from actual sales that has benefited turtle conservation and research but the value of the multiplier effect.

Over 20 years later, Carol and Col are still diligently making chocolate turtles which continue to raise the profile of the turtle and contribute much needed funds. Carol shared her story at the August MRCCC General Meeting. Many people have contributed in some way to the making, sales, distribution of our chocolate turtles, but we do owe Col and Carol a huge vote of thanks for their commitment over two decades to this highly successful project.

We are also very thankful to MRCCC for their help over many years in selling hundreds of packets of chocolate turtles and contributing to its success.

Marilyn Connell, Project Leader, Tiaro Landcare

Gympie & District Landcare

A Year of Growth, Collaboration and On-Ground Impact.

Over the past twelve months, Gympie District Landcare has continued to expand its capacity to deliver high-quality environmental restoration and education programs across the region. Our field crew has doubled in size, enabling us to take on more large-scale projects, and our nursery has grown significantly with the addition of several new greenhouses to meet the increasing demand for native plant supply.

This year, our teams worked with the MRCCC and Gympie Regional Council across six Urban Rivers sites, focusing on the control of Cat's Claw Creeper and other invasive species. Extensive revegetation has been carried out to stabilise riverbanks and improve water quality within the Mary River and its tributaries, providing direct benefits to the region's well-loved and listed aquatic species — the Mary River cod, Australian lungfish, Mary River turtle, white-throated snapping turtle and Platypus.

Through our partnership with the BMRG, we have undertaken several large-scale koala habitat projects, planting more than 20,000 trees across the region. These works aim to connect fragmented habitat and strengthen movement corridors for local koala populations.

Gympie District Landcare continues to collaborate closely with Gympie Regional Council on their Natural Areas Program. Several new sites were added to the ongoing program of weed control and revegetation. These efforts support long-term biodiversity improvement and community enjoyment of local reserves and public lands.

Further afield, our partnership with the Burnett Mary Regional Group, Kabi Kabi People's Aboriginal Corporation and Gidarjil Development Corporation has seen significant riparian restoration along both the Mary and Burnett Rivers. Together, we have implemented large-scale weed control and native tree planting programs, combining ecological restoration with cultural partnership and shared care for Country.



Koala in habitat restoration site planted by Gympie Landcare

In collaboration with HQPlantations, Gympie Landcare also supported hazard-reduction burns and wildfire response across the region. A number of crew members completed fire-crew training, expanding our organisation’s capacity to respond to and manage fire safely within our landscapes.

Across many of our worksites, we’ve also documented the presence of listed and regionally significant species, including the critically endangered Native Guava (*Rhodomyrtus psidioides*) and the vulnerable Giant Barred Frog (*Mixophyes iteratus*). These findings highlight the ecological value of the areas we’re restoring and reinforce the importance of ongoing protection and habitat connectivity.

Our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program continues to deliver valuable hands-on training for participants completing Certificate I and Certificate III studies in Conservation and Ecosystem Management. Graduates from the program are now contributing to local restoration projects and strengthening our region’s environmental workforce.

Gympie District Landcare’s achievements over the past year reflect the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners. Together, we remain committed to protecting and restoring the natural landscapes of the Gympie region, fostering local skills, and nurturing a strong, community-based approach to caring for Country.

Marty McArthur, Environment & Conservation Manager, Gympie & District Landcare



Top: the larval phase of the endangered Southern Pink Underwing moth

*Above: The Pink Underwing moth shows its colours
Images courtesy Ollie Scully*

Barung Landcare – Growing a Connected Landscape Barung Natural Area Services

The 2024–25 year was one of steady, productive work for Barung’s revegetation and natural areas team. With a strong focus on ecological integrity, the team continued delivering restoration projects across the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay regions.

Key works included the ongoing Lower Caboolture Nutrient Offset Project, targeted weed control on the Stanley River to suppress invasive Cat’s Claw Creeper, and practical support to community Bushcare groups through heavier maintenance tasks. The team also assisted private landholders with Voluntary Conservation Agreement sites, maintaining and restoring important remnant ecosystems.

In the upper Mary River catchment, through collaborations with MRCCC and Hinterland Bush Links, extensive weed-vine control and riparian revegetation strengthened riverbanks and improved habitat connectivity. Across Sunshine Coast Council reserves—from the Blackall Range to Beerwah and the Glass House Mountains, our Natural Area team’s ongoing works is keeping invasive species at bay, particularly within the Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve. At the Maleny Community Precinct, Barung worked alongside Council on a major vine weed control and replanting project, and maintained several Council offset sites to ensure strong and measurable ecological outcomes.

We are grateful to all of those who engage the Barung team to undertake these works, including: Healthy Land and Water, Hinterland Bush Links, Sunshine Coast Council, City of Moreton Bay, MRCCC, and many others — for their continued collaboration and trust in our team.

The coming year will see us continue this focus on quality, best practice, and professionalism, with renewed confidence and a strong platform for future growth.

Barung Nursery

A highlight of the year was the collection, propagation, and tubing of 2,000 *Carronia multiseppalea* vines — the host plant for the endangered Southern Pink Underwing Moth. The vines will support local revegetation and recovery projects across the Blackall Range.

This achievement reflects the dedication and skill of Barung’s volunteers and nursery team, who collect seed, propagate, and nurture thousands of plants each year. Their consistency and care underpin Barung’s reputation for growing strong, healthy, local native stock — a cornerstone of many ecological restorations.

During 2024–25, tens of thousands of Barung-grown native plants found their way into riparian corridors, wildlife habitat plantings, and revegetation projects across the region — stabilising slopes, enhancing creeks, and extending koala corridors while supporting threatened species recovery.

Education and Community Engagement

Barung’s education program continued to connect people with nature through workshops, talks, and community events focused on conservation, biodiversity, and wildlife gardening. Over the 2024–25 financial year we delivered 31 workshops and gatherings, and participated in 22 off-site events — including local markets and partner programs — where we shared plants, books, and information.

A highlight was running two ‘Find a Frog in February’ events.

Community connections remained at the heart of our education efforts — from welcoming new residents at local events with native plants and landholder guides, to partnering with groups such as Friends of Mary Cairncross and Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens for specialist wildlife gardening workshops. We also began improving our volunteer onboarding and management processes, ensuring that volunteering with Barung remains welcoming, rewarding, and purpose-driven — helping our community grow together for nature.

Together, Barung Landcare’s nurseries, restoration teams, trainees in the Skilling Queenslanders program as well as our education program continue to strengthen biodiversity, connect communities, and nurture a shared future for our region’s landscapes and wildlife.

Cam Burton, Landcare and Partnerships Manager, Barung Landcare

Noosa and District Landcare Group

In 2024–25, Noosa & District Landcare Group (NDLG) continued its long-standing partnership with the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC), delivering significant on-ground restoration outcomes across the catchment.

Through our contracting services, NDLG supported restoration works on 41 properties within the Mary River Catchment. These efforts focused on stabilising riverbanks along the Mary River and its tributaries, particularly upstream of the Kenilworth and Goomong Seqwater offtakes. This work contributed to a measurable reduction in fine sediment entering local water treatment facilities and helped protect downstream ecosystems, including the Great Sandy Strait and Southern Great Barrier Reef, during flood events.



The Noosa Landcare Contracting team undertaking revegetation at the Ledger pile field site, Mary River, Kandanga

A total of 10,389 native plants were established across MRCCC-led projects, with 7,487 planted at a key pile field site in Kandanga. Despite challenging conditions—including 246.6 mm of rainfall recorded in March 2025—our team demonstrated resilience and adaptability, ensuring the successful delivery of the project.

Ongoing maintenance was carried out across previously revegetated sites, with a strong emphasis on weed control to support the health and resilience of native plantings. Targeted management focused on invasive transformer species such as Cat’s Claw Creeper and Madeira Vine, along with other high-risk weeds known to outcompete native vegetation. These efforts are critical to ensuring the long-term success of restoration works and the ecological integrity of the sites.

Project Officer Nicole shared her reflections on the year’s achievements:

“It’s been incredibly rewarding to witness the enthusiasm of our crew as we’ve commenced work on new sites. Collaborating with a new group of neighbouring landholders to tackle invasive transformer weeds has been a highlight—together, we’re protecting and enhancing the landscapes they care so deeply about, ensuring they remain healthy for future generations.

The growth we’ve seen across the pile fields following the initial establishment years has been remarkable. The Ledger and Beel sites continue to be favourites for both the crew and myself, with revegetation now extending along both sides of the creek and further downstream.

There have also been some truly special moments in the field, including sightings of endangered species like the Mary River turtle in Kenilworth and local Platypus in Imbil.”

We are proud of our strong and collaborative relationship with MRCCC and grateful for the expertise of their team, whose guidance and coordination has been instrumental in achieving these outcomes.

Beyond these on-ground works, we have worked together with MRCCC to deliver Grazing Management extension work in the Lake Macdonald Catchment as part of the Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcure Program, in partnership with



Above: Nature Journaling with Dion Dior in stunning rainforest locations was extremely popular at this year's Cooloola Bioblitz

Below: Mycologist Dr Sandra Tuszyńska (right) with volunteers examining fungi during the Cooloola Bioblitz



Rangers, marine turtle displays with the wonderful "Turtle Pam" in costume spreading joy (Cooloola Coastcare) as well as many other diverse scientific activities. These ranged from extracting DNA to blowing gigantic bubbles, from digging up dinosaur bones to making moths fluoresce with UV light, from Nature Journaling to puppet shows. MRCCC member, Steve Burgess and his grandchildren swept the competition prize pool with their wonderful costumes.

Cooloola Coastcare WaterWatch

21 sites continue to be monitored by volunteers, including the new site at Kangaroo Creek on Tin Can Bay - Gympie Road. It was added after massive clearing upstream in early 2024.

Seqwater. A key highlight was the Pasture and Soil Health Field Walk held in October 2024, which attracted 25 participants. Brad Wedlock and Graeme Elphinstone also supported Program Project Officer, Nicole Palombi with one-on-one grazing management consultations with program landholders. The guidance and mentorship of Brad and Graeme has been a great asset to the program and to our project team.

We look forward to continuing our work in the Mary River Catchment alongside MRCCC in the year ahead.

Illana Kelly, Noosa Landcare

Cooloola Coastcare

Cooloola BioBlitz Aug 22 - 24, 2025

In August, 15 expert leaders and 119 'Citizen Scientists' gathered at the Rainbow Beach Community Hall to conduct Biodiversity Surveys in the Cooloola region for 48 hours. Day and evening surveys from the beaches to the wallum and the rainforests resulted in 4,813 observations of 1,105 species, nearly a thousand more observations than 2024. With the wildflowers in bloom, there were lots of pollinators and other insects active and the recent rains had the frogs singing and the fungi exploding. Tiny peacock spiders were popular although challenging to find. An interesting find was made by Team Leader Elliot Bowerman who sent the Herbarium a sample of *Lateristachys lateralis* (Slender Clubmoss) for their collection. It was the first record for the Cooloola region and the first recorded sighting of the species north of Stradbroke in over 100 years.

STEAMzone Twilight Science Market for National Science Week

Cooloola Coastcare hosted the 2nd STEAMzone Twilight Science Market in conjunction with the Cooloola BioBlitz, capitalising on so many scientists being in town. The aim of the event is to create opportunities for the public and scientists to interact. Around 450 patrons enjoyed the "Live Scientist Encounters" with the environmental scientists, forensic scientist, geneticist, microbiologist, technologists and even an astrophysicist. The event was well supported by local Environmental Groups and Gympie Regional Council Library, Environment and Biosecurity teams. The 3 hour, hands-on event had 37 stalls including a marine touch pool, non-venomous reptile display, macroinvertebrates experience (MRCCC), QPWS and Butchulla Land, Sea & Sky

A Coastal Water Quality Management Report was provided to Gympie Regional Council. A Coastcare volunteer has developed software to collect data on a tablet device during monitoring. This allows data to be collected into a database to aid report generation.

TurtleCare

Marine Turtle Nesting Season (Nov 2024 to Apr 2025) was the biggest nesting season in 5 years. 90% of nests were Green turtles and 10% were Loggerhead. TC Alfred caused havoc with the beaches, and many nests had to be relocated, and some were lost to the high tides and dune erosion.

Stranding numbers have decreased over the past year. 22 strandings were recorded with 8 taken to Australia Zoo Wildlife hospital. Of the 8 only 1 survived. All 8 were juvenile turtles with plastic ingestion problems. Many of the deceased strandings were from boat strike injuries.

Habitat Regeneration

Rainbow Beach Regen and the Friends of the Tin Can Bay Foreshore teams continued to provide regular weed removal across their priority sites.

Shorebirds

The new team have begun identifying key habitats for feeding and roosting; re-established May and September counts; increasing community understanding and appreciation of shorebirds through 6 media features, public education events and publications including a section in the new 'Cooloola Birds of Interest' pocket guide booklet; and cementing relationships with other stakeholders including the Queensland Wader Support Group, Cooloola Nature, other bird counters in Great Sandy Strait locations, BirdLife Australia, Gympie Regional Council, Butchulla Land and Sea Rangers and Marine Parks Rangers.

Threatened Species – Focus on *Phaius*

In 2024, Cooloola Coastcare completed a series of surveys to discover, describe and protect local populations of Australia's largest ground orchid, the endangered Southern Swamp Orchid, *Phaius australis* (aka *Phaius tankervilleae* var *australis*). Following the completion of the government-funded project, Cooloola Coastcare was contracted by GRC to draft a guideline for the management of *P. australis* on council lands. This was delivered in June 2025. A program to monitor and protect this beautiful species in the local area is on-going.

Marine Debris Clean Ups

Several clean ups were conducted across the coast removing a huge amount of plastic from the beaches after Tropical Cyclone Alfred caused flooding and following other severe storms in the region. A new experiment using Containers for Change deposit bins in the National Park at Teewah Waste Station hopes to stem some of the plastic waste while contributing to the conservation efforts of Cooloola Coastcare.

National Register of Big Trees Australia (Auspiced by Cooloola Coastcare)

Sam Mitchell has conducted big tree surveys in Gympie and Noosa Council areas and the Cooloola Recreation Area with many new National Champions across a range of species identified and both councils starting a significant tree register to aid in planning decisions and fire management.

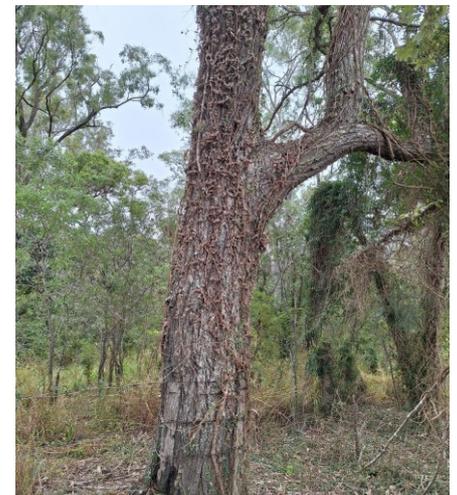
Lindy Orwin, President

Greater Mary Association and Cat's Claw Creeper Bio-controls

GMA was established to gather community support in the lower Mary R catchment to fight the Traveston Dam. Since then, we have been carrying out tree planting and community awareness displays on issues concerning the Mary River and funding research involving the waters of the Mary River and the Great Sandy Strait.

Another large part of our activities has been the breeding and distribution of Cat's Claw Creeper bio-controls and monitoring their progress. GMA was one of the first to produce Jewel beetles in quantities for release starting in 2013. Tingids were also produced for a several years although unfortunately we have not been successful in producing Leaf tying moths. All production of bio-controls was ceased in 2024 prior to which more than 40,000 Jewel beetles were released, made possible by an initial Government grant and ongoing support from MRCCC.

We continue to monitor the activity of CCC bio-controls over a large part of the vast Munna Creek sub-catchment and the Mary River from Scotchy Pocket near Gunalda to Maryborough. The monitoring is a quick subjective assessment of each site (~ 30 mins) and recording of an effectiveness rating from 1-10 for each of the bio-controls. Not all known sites are regularly monitored with sites that are quick to access and on public land preferred.



Complete defoliation of CCC runners by Leaf tying Moth



CCCV leaves tied into "tubes" by the Leaf Tying Moth

A summary of observations is as follows:

Jewel beetles - The beetles usually persist at all sites although numbers are sometimes low. Our observations indicate their effectiveness has dropped off over the last several years, but they are still wide ranging and persistent. They will likely overcome their challenges and adapt to the conditions as the others seem to be doing.

Tingids - Tingids have traditionally been very variable, going from boom to bust quickly. They seem to prefer higher humidity, so the recent good seasons have been to their liking. However, even before the recent seasons our observations indicated they were becoming more resilient. Recent observations show they are having significant effect on several CCC infestations.

Leaf tying moths - The spread of the Moth in recent seasons is exciting, and their infestations were so heavy in most cases they should persist in most of these new areas. We have seen several instances where they have wiped out the young CCC tendrils climbing up the tree trunks. This indicates that they would be beneficial after physical treatment. We have also noticed a few instances where they have established well away from riparian vegetation. A good new infestation of LTM has a marked effect on CCCV, although sometimes drops off in intensity after a year or two.

The future - While our current bio-controls are having important effects on the CCCV they don't seem to have much effect on the mature CCCV in the high canopy. It therefore needs to be emphasised that bio controls will be most effective when combined with physical and chemical control methods

A new **leaf pathogen** has been submitted to the Federal Government for release. It is reported to be very successful in South Africa, having a big effect on CCCV there. We should take every opportunity to apply pressure to the politicians as they may be reluctant to agree to release a new biocontrol agent because some in the community raise the few environmental problems from the past. Rigorous research has been undertaken and the leaf pathogen has been released in South Africa for some time.

Moth Nights and UV-Induced Fluorescence

Once a month, around the new moon, we attend the Black moon Moth Night. During these evenings, we set up several light sheets and traps to attract and observe moths. Typically, we use three types of light sheets: a black light, a UV light, and a mercury vapour light.

We switch the lights on just before dark and leave them running for about three hours. During this time, we photograph any visiting moths and note their behaviour. Afterward, we dismantle the sheets and set up two overnight light traps—one mercury vapour and one UV. The next morning, we collect and photograph the moths that were captured overnight.

Jessica Raintree, whose property in the Diamond Valley hosts many of our sessions, has been using light sheets for over two years. She has recorded more than 500 different moth species so far. The lights also attract a variety of other

insects and spiders—some of which take the opportunity to enjoy a moth for dinner.

We've also used our light sheets at events such as the Cooloola Bioblitz and with the Gympie and District Field Naturalists. In winter, moth activity is lowest, with around 40 species recorded per night. In summer, that number can exceed 100. All moth sightings are uploaded to iNaturalist, which helps identify unknown species and contributes to a growing record of local biodiversity.

Another fascinating part of our work involves searching for ultraviolet-induced visible fluorescence in insects and other creatures. Many insects and arachnids display striking fluorescent patterns under UV light. Recently, researchers have discovered that some Australian mammals—such as Spotted Quolls and Platypus—also exhibit this trait.

Several Australian orchids, along with other orchid species, fluoresce as well. Even many minerals and rocks glow beautifully under UV light, adding another layer of wonder to these night-time explorations.

By Ian Smith

MRCCC Workshops, festivals, field-days, presentations (2024-2025)

When	Activity	Partners	Notes
All year	Kenilworth Information Centre	Sunshine Coast Council	Servicing MRCCC project participants in the upper Mary River catchment through regular office presence in the town of Kenilworth.
October 2024	Spring pasture condition and soil health fieldwalk, Lake Macdonald	Noosa Landcare, SEQW	Key role of pangola grass in waterlogged pastures; the advantages of planting pangola as an understory 3P grass in existing setaria grass pastures
October 2024	Mary River Recovery presentation at Noosa Landcare	Noosa Landcare	Speaker at Noosa Landcare's monthly Landcare Catch-up
November 2025	Vine weed workshop, Moy Pocket	Upper Mary Rivercare, BMRG	Inspected rainforest being invaded by cats claw and Madeira vine – tips to identify native and exotic vines at Moy Pocket and Kenilworth
December 2024	Upper Mary River Integrated Project - stakeholder introduction workshop	Office of Great Barrier Reef, HQ Plantations, Noosa Landcare, Jinibara, Australian National University, James Cook University	Introduction workshop for stakeholders involved in the Office of GBR funded Mary River Integrated Project (Place based program)
January 2025	Noosa Catchment Crawl	Noosa Council, Noosa Landcare, Noosa Integrated Catchment	Aquatic macro-invertebrate and water quality sampling at 12 sites throughout the Noosa hinterland
February 2025	Queensland Water Environment Forum	Qld Water Directorate	Presentation on water quality analysis using citizen science data
April 2025	DPI GRASS workshop, Gympie	DPI, BMRG	Presentation at GRASS workshop on assessing grazing land condition
April 2025	Corridors of Green contractors Skills Day	Noosa, Gympie Landcare, contractors	Sharing learnings and skills day with contractors working on Corridors of Green projects with MRCCC
May 2025	Showcasing Autumn pastures fieldwalk, Conondale	Upper Mary Rivercare	Showcasing best grazing land management & Autumn pasture management practices - beef grazing field walk
May 2025	LGAQ NRM Forum Gympie	Local Government Association of Qld, Gympie Council	Presentation on Mary River Recovery project for the NRM Forum
May 2025	Upper Mary River Integrated Project - stakeholder workshop	Office of Great Barrier Reef, HQ Plantations, Noosa, Barung Landcare, Jinibara, Australian National University, James Cook University	First stakeholder workshop for partners involved in the Office of GBR funded Mary River Integrated Project (Place based program)
May 2025	Kenilworth family fun day	Kenilworth Progress Association	MRCCC stall provided kids with microscope to view aquatic macro-invertebrates and water quality information
May 2025	Presentation on cod logs	Lake Borumba Fish Stocking Association	Presentation to the fish stocking association on cod logs
May 2025	Presentation on cod logs	Noosa Landcare membership	Thursday catch-up presentation series
June 2025	Upper Mary Rivercare workshop, Moy Pocket	SEQW and MRCCC	Introductory workshop for landholders wanting to be involved in the program from Moy Pocket district
July 2025	Mary River Festival Kandanga	Save the Mary River Group	Water testing, creek walk and general catchment information provided.

July 2025	Noosa Catchment Crawl	Noosa Council, Noosa Landcare, Noosa Integrated Catchment	Aquatic macro-invertebrate and water quality sampling at 12 sites throughout the Noosa hinterland
August 2025	Cod season closure launch	Primary industries Minister, Fisheries officers, Gympie Council, Cod hatchery	Launch of the Mary River Cod closed season by Tony Perrett MP – Primary Industries Minister – with fisheries officers, Darren Knowles from the cod hatchery and Gympie Regional Council reps
August 2025	Carbon in grazing lands workshop, Imbil	Upper Mary Rivercare	Workshop to grazing landholders participating in the Upper Mary Rivercare program on carbon markets
August 2025	Biocontrol forum, Gympie	EcoInsects, Biosecurity Qld, SEQW, local government	Annual biocontrol forum on cats claw and Madeira vine learnings and research progress
August 2025	STEAM Train of Knowledge Gympie to Amamoor	Barambah Environmental Education Centre, Cooloola Coastcare, Friends of Amamoor	Exploring STEM in the Mary River during National Science Week with 180 school kids - showcasing science involved in land and water management
August 2025	Cooloola Bio Blitz	Cooloola Coastcare	MRCCC stall provided kids with microscope to view aquatic macro-invertebrates and water quality information
August 2025	Riparian fencing workshop, Tuchekoi	Upper Mary Rivercare	Landholders sharing information on riparian fencing types and tips
September 2025	Threatened species workshop, Woodford	Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation	Organised by JPAC - Nathaniel spoke on Mary River Cod, Ollie spoke on threatened crayfish, frogs and other key species
October 2025	Mary River kayak – Gympie reach	MRCCC, Gympie Council, Gympie Landcare	Kayak of the Mary River, Gympie mapping turtle nest banks, weeds, erosion etc
October 2025	Moy Pocket Rivercare project open day	Upper Mary Rivercare, SEQW	Property tour of riverbank rehabilitation site at Moy Pocket
October 2025	Turtle training workshop	Kabi Kabi, Jinibara and landholders	Training for turtle nest identification and protection, Gympie
October 2025	Annual water quality Catchment Crawl	Kabi Kabi, Jinibara, Butchulla, Sunshine Coast & Noosa Council	Water quality sampling of 32 sites on the Mary River and tributaries over 2 days
October 2025	Creek walk series of educational activities	Members of the public	Activity of the annual water quality Catchment Crawl in the upper catchment
October 2025	Bug club sampling of lower catchment	MRCCC bug club and members of the public	Bug club – aquatic macroinvertebrate – sampling of Tinana Creek, lower Mary River & Susan River

Educational activities including Find-a-frog in February (FFF)

Date	What activities	With whom	notes
All year	MRCCC 'bug' club	Waterwatch citizen scientists	Establishing a bug club of members interested in identifying aquatic macroinvertebrates
December 2024	Cod hollow logs carving/ training days	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation & Kabi Kabi Aboriginal People Corporation	Two training days to learn how to build cod logs held with Atticus Foord and Nathaniel Larsen with JPAC and KKPAC ranger teams
December 2024	Christmas celebration – frog talk and survey event	Friends of Mary Cairncross	Survey Mary Cairncross Discovery Centre ponds, Maleny
December 2024	Water quality and riparian zones training	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation	Workshop with JPAC rangers on water quality in the Upper Mary River catchment
January 2024	Install frog monitoring transects in Sunshine Coast Council Environment Reserves	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	London Creek and Annie Hehir Environment Reserve, upper Stanley River and Dry Creek Environment Reserve (Obi Obi)

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Feb 2025	Frog workshop and surveys – mini BioBlitz (frogs)	Cooloola Coastcare	Frog surveys around Rainbow Beach area
Feb 2025	Frog monitoring training and survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	Kirby Road Environment Reserve
Feb 2025	Frog monitoring survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	Annie Hehir Environment Reserve
Feb 2025	Frog monitoring survey	Sunshine Coast Council	Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve, Maleny
Feb 2025	Frog talk and monitoring survey	Gympie East State School	Deep Creek, Gympie
Feb 2025	Frog workshop and frog surveys	Sunshine Coast Council and public	Maroochy Botanic Gardens
Feb 2025	Frog monitoring survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	London Creek Environment Reserve
Feb 2025	Frog workshop and frog surveys	Sunshine Coast Council	Maroochy Botanic Gardens
Feb 2025	Frog workshop and frog surveys	Noosa Council and public	Cooroy Creek, Cooroy
Feb 2025	Frog talk and survey	Noosa District State High School	Frog monitoring on Cooroora Creek, Pomona
Feb 2025	Frog talk and survey	Maleny State School	Frog monitoring on Obi Obi Creek, Maleny
Feb 2025	'Frog Hop' Imbil area	Gympie Regional Council and public	Frog surveys along Yabba and Derrier Creeks
Feb 2025	Frog workshop and surveys	Fraser Coast Regional council and public	Surveys around wetlands of the Burrum Heads area
Feb 2025	Frog talk and survey	Tinana State School	Frog monitoring at Woocoo Park, Tinana

Conferences and seminars

When	What	notes	
July 2025	Attendance and Presentation	Annual Freshwater Turtle Conference, Coffs Harbour - Mary River Turtle conservation activities	Also poster presentation on MRCCC Mary River Turtle activities
September 2025	Attendance	International River Symposium, Brisbane	
October 2025	Attendance and Presentation	Australian Citizen Science Association Conference 2025	Presentation and poster – taking MRCCC Citizen Science programs forwards

Representations during 2024/25

When	What	Who	notes
January 2025	Borumba pumped hydro alternatives with Qld Treasury	Qld Treasury	Presentation on potential alternative plan/ site (Borumba Creek balancing storage) for Borumba pumped hydro project
All year	Mary River Recovery Steering Group	Great Barrier Reef Foundation, BMRG, Alluvium	Quarterly meetings with the steering group to deliver the Mary River Recovery project
All Year	Australian Citizen Science Association	Australian Citizen Science Association	Chair of the ACSA Queensland Chapter
All year	Borumba pumped hydropower plan	Qld Hydro & Dept of Energy	Representatives on Environment Stakeholder Group and other stakeholder groups

All year	Great Sandy Strait Ramsar Management Advisory Group	BMRG	MRCCC representative on Group
All year	Qld Frog Society	Qld Frog Society	Mary River Coordinator
All year	Waterwatch Australia Network	State representatives from Waterwatch groups meet quarterly	Queensland representative for Waterwatch Australia
All year	Lake Macdonald spillway upgrade program	Seqwater	MRCCC representative on Community Reference Panel
All year	Environmental & Sustainability Advisory Committee	Fraser Coast Council	MRCCC representative on advisory committee
All year	Biodiversity Reference Group	Gympie Regional Council	MRCCC representative on advisory committee
All year	GREAT – Gympie Regional Environment Advisory Team	MRCCC, Gympie Landcare, Cooloola Coastcare, Koala Action Group, Gympie Field Naturalists, ANARRA Wildlife Rescue	MRCCC representative on GREAT committee
All year	Water quality integrated program	Noosa Council	MRCCC representative on program committee
All year	Noosa River Expert Advisory Panel	Resilient Rivers	Representative on expert advisory panel

MRCCC Research Project Collaboration

Project	Project collaboration	Description
Cane Toad Challenge (CtC)	University of Queensland Molecular Biology Unit.	MRCCC is an Affiliate Member of the CtC program developed by UQ. This program enables the MRCCC to disseminate the tadpole baits and traps to community members for tadpole control.
Mary River turtle nest protection	Tiaro & District Landcare	Community and landholder links provided by the MRCCC to assist with the turtle nest protection program and its expansion upstream in to the Kenilworth reaches.
Threatened frog species trends	Threatened Species Index (TSX)	Data sharing with TSX and QLD WildNet database.
Wallum frog and freshwater fish recovery	Griffith University	Investigating the recovery of wallum frogs and freshwater fish following the Black Summer bushfires in 2019 on K'gari (Fraser Island)
Mary River turtle – predator understanding	Charles Darwin University, Tiaro Landcare	Tag and release for catfish – tracking catfish movements
Pilot region of state and transition model for rainforests and vine thickets of the Burnett Mary region, QLD	CSIRO, BMRG, MRCCC	MRCCC representatives participated in workshops to develop this vegetation model and listed as authors in the paper

Submissions

Date	To	Issue
October 2024	Qld Hydro and Dept of Energy	Alternate proposal Borumba Dam pumped hydro plan to utilize Borumba Creek as a balancing storage for better water quality outcomes
November 2024	Noosa Shire Council	Submission on the Lake Macdonald botanical gardens master plan
February 2025	Australian Government, EPBC unit	Exploratory works submission for Borumba Dam pumped hydro-power project
February 2025	Fraser Coast Regional Council	Comments on the Fraser Coast Council Water Security Strategy and the Maryborough Hervey Bay pipeline
May 2025	Noosa Shire Council	Requesting a water conservation program for Noosa residents to reduce per capita water consumption to SEQ consumption levels
July 2025	Fraser Coast Council, Metlen (Munna Creek Solar Farm)	Information on significance of Munna Creek and fish passage concerns of temporary creek crossing
September 2025	Australian Government, EPBC unit	Submission on the powerline route – Halys to Borumba Dam
September 2025	Sunshine Coast Council	Comments on draft planning scheme
September 2025	Australian Government Senate Select Committee	Submission to Senate Select Committee on Information Integrity on Climate Change and Energy
October 2025	Australian Government, Dept of Environment	Submission on the draft Lungfish Recovery Plan

MRCCC General Meetings 2024/2025

Date	Venue	Speaker	Topic
10/09/2025 GM 238	Uni SC Gympie tutorial rooms	Joe Boyle DPI Fisheries officer	Mary River cod closed season and interpretive signage
		Sam Coyle (GRC)	Fire Ants
10/12/2025 GM 239	Uni SC Gympie Lecture Theatre	Elke Watson	The dairy Industry and WQ improvements in the catchment
11/02/2025 GM 240	Uni SC Gympie Lecture Theatre	MRCCC Brainstorming session	
2/04/2025 GM 241	Maleny Sport and Recreation Centre	Neil Andison	Platypus Whisperer
13/05/2025 GM 242	Uni SC Gympie Lecture Theatre	Phil Moran, Noosa Landcare	A look back on his time with Noosa Landcare
24/06/2025 GM 243	Uni SC Gympie tutorial rooms	Professor Andrew Olds , Sunshine Coast University	Hervey Bay Paleochannel
6/08/2025 GM 244	Gunalda Hall	Mariana and Hamish Campbell, Charles Darwin University	Research into the impact of catfish on Mary River turtles
16/09/2025 GM 245	Conondale Hall	Peter Hairsine, Aust National University	Mary River Water Quality Trends,
		Atticus Ford, Arboreal	Arborist, Cod logs
		Spencer Shaw	Bunya dieback
29/10/2025 AGM	Albert Bowls Club	Dr David Roberts, Seqwater	Lungfish research and observations

Words from our Waterwatchers

Amamoor Creek	" 5 x turtle egg shells outside of hole"
Yabba Creek	"SEQwater has been releasing water from Borumba Dam following the earthquake"
Kandanga Creek	" Bobcat working on pathway next to creek, but no sediment control!"
Mary River	"The bank is getting steeper to trasverse. The newly planted trees and lomandra are looking lovely and healthy. Lots of happy birds on dusk and a big old echidna shuffling down to the river"
Tinana Creek	"Riparian zone almost pristine"
Sandy Creek	"3 metre wide pollen slick on surface"
Coondoo Creek	"Fireplace at test site. Dumped cans. Indiscriminate spraying RE 12.3.1 Lomandra and other native riparian vegetation sprayed with herbicide beside culvert"
Wide Bay Creek	" 3 pelicans"
McIntosh Creek	" Water level much deeper than previous"
Broken Bridge Creek	"Detritus on edges and near causeway pipes"
Skene Creek	" 1 x White face heron, 1 x Australian white ibis, 2 x Dusky moorhens and 1 x Australasian Grebe"
Picnic Creek	" Chain sawing of the tree near the water"
Calico Creek	" Shade cover of the creek has decreased due to Chinese elm which dominate the riparian zone"
Snake Creek	" Guppies and shrimp"
Obi Obi Creek	" Banks holding well, good plant cover"
Mary River	"Cats claw, west bank, old bridge exposed!"



MRCCC staff and volunteers Catchment Crawl, River Heads



MRCCC Delegates, May 2025

MARY RIVER



C A T C H M E N T

COORDINATING COMMITTEE
