

It's a busy time of the year with plenty of opportunities to get involved

With the weather warming up, Mary River turtles waiting for some rain to kick-start their breeding season - a storm or two will do - and Mary River cod also looking to expand their families, we have a lot going on in the Valley right now.

There's plenty going on to keep us all busy! Such as ...

The next Rivercare/Creekcare Introductory Workshop to be held on Tuesday 13 October is well into planning; the River upstream of Six Mile Creek is currently closed to fishing until the end of October; our annual MRCCC Catchment Crawl is happening in early October; and some of our worst vine weeds are flowering (or about to) so we'll be able to see them better and lock in some control before they get worse.

This special newsletter is a collaborative effort between Upper Mary Rivercare run by the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) and Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcare run by Noosa and District Landcare. Please take a moment to make a cuppa and enjoy what's inside.

Newsletter highlights

- It's a busy time!
- 2026 Cooroy Mountain Introductory Workshop
- Landholder profile: Ashleigh and Rowan Kahler
- Fencing the future: how one property is helping Lake Macdonald
- Closed waters: no fishing
- 2026 annual water quality Catchment Crawl
- Protecting Mary River turtles
- Urban Rivers (Gympie) project
- Weedwatch
- Fauna survey and platypus spotting
- Coming events

Cooroy Mountain Introductory Workshop

**A joint Upper Mary Rivercare (MRCCC) and Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcare (Noosa & District Landcare) event
TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER, 2026**

Our annual Introductory Workshop is your gateway into the Rivercare and/or Creekcare program where you can access support to improve your property and contribute to source water protection and healthy waterways.

We are jointly hosting a jam-packed workshop covering the Program, and focussing on best practice for property and pasture management, and we'd love to see you there.

The workshop's location is on a current landholder's property - 36 hectares nestled at the base of Cooroy Mountain, and will explore hands-on, practical ways to improve pasture condition, manage grazing and protect your waterways.

Share ideas with fellow landholders, pick up tips on riparian and dam management, weed and native plant identification, and discover the support and funding available through the Rivercare/Creekcare Program to help you on your property.

Register your interest via email at admin@mrccc.org.au, or call 07 5482 4766. An invitation with more details will go out in late September.

See you there!



View of Cooroy Mountain from our upcoming 2026 workshop hosts' property



A glorious winter day at the 2025 Kenilworth-Moy Pocket Introductory Workshop

Here's what a participant said about a past workshop:

"Hi Alana, thank you for the plant species lists and also many thanks for the hard work and effort that you and the MRCCC crew put in toward the recent Field day, not only was it informative and interesting, it was well presented. It was nice to meet like-minded people but also to meet the team. The catering was terrific and the day enjoyable."

Congratulations on a great day and please thank everyone for making it such a success.

Simon and Rita"

"Source protection activities include supporting best practice and regenerative farming practices and waterway restoration including erosion repair, revegetation and weed management."

Introducing ... Ashleigh and Rowan Kahler

Dairy in the Mary - an Upper Mary Rivercare project



The Kahler Family

Rowan and Ashleigh have owned their block – just a stone's throw from the Seqwater's Goomong offtake – for around ten years. Ashleigh grew up and lived on the river her whole life.

This year, the Kahlers shifted their focus from beef cattle and ginger to dairy, to spend more time at home with their young family. Currently they run around 145 milkers.

Both Ashleigh and Rowan come from farming backgrounds, with both having grandparents who were dairy farmers.

In the past, the Kahlers have grown a variety of crops including ginger, garlic, pumpkins and zucchinis, among others. They are very familiar with the soil on their land, its fertility and capacity, and they very much appreciate how the river contributes to this productivity.



Newly installed herringbone dairy for the Kahler's 145 or so milking cows chosen to minimise waste during milking

With close connection to their land, and a passion for the Mary River, the Kahlers are keen to implement a range of projects on their property to improve their land and protect the river. Plans include repairing gully erosion, fencing the river, riparian revegetation, and managing stock to support these projects into the future.

Having joined the Upper Mary Rivercare program in July 2025, Ashleigh and Rowan continue to build their knowledge base by attending dairy-focussed workshops and field days, in addition to workshops coordinated by MRCCC. They are also keen to learn more about regenerative farming and pasture management, and be involved in farm trials for protected fertilisers and/or other soil amendments. They apply nutrition farming and regenerative farming principles to their enterprise, practice re-use where possible, and plan to grow pasture for their herd and supplement with other feed as needed.

"The river is clean, it has unique species diversity and all our memories have involved the river. It defines us as farmers. The river makes our land fertile and our river flats productive. It's unbelievable"



Part of the Mary River frontage on the Kahler's farm

More about MRCCC and our work @

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/mrccc.org.au>

YOUTUBE: <https://www.youtube.com/@maryrivercatchmentcoordina7756>

Scan the QR codes below for instant access.



MRCCC Facebook



MRCCC Youtube



MRCCC Instagram

Fencing the Future: How One Property Is Helping Lake Macdonald

For Michael Riggs, caring for the land has been a lifelong commitment.

With nearly 60 years on the land, his experience shows how practical changes, supported by the right program, can make a real difference both on-farm and across the wider Lake Macdonald catchment, helping to protect water flowing into the region's drinking water supply.

Michael has lived on his property in the Lake Macdonald catchment since April 1966, when his parents first purchased the farm. The property was originally run as a dairy, with pasture seed production and sales providing an additional source of income. Under Michael's management, the dairy grew from around 60 cows to a peak of 180. Throughout his time on the property, Michael has maintained a strong interest in sustainable land management, a commitment to pasture legume establishment to reduce fertiliser use, and caring for the health of the land.

"I've always been interested in looking after the land," Michael said. "Even when we were dairying, we used less fertiliser than most."

Michael is a member of the Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcure Program, an initiative delivered by Noosa Landcare in partnership with Seqwater. The program supports local landholders to help protect the health of the region's waterways. Noosa's drinking water is sourced from the Six Mile Creek and wider Lake Macdonald catchment, with water from Lake Macdonald treated at Seqwater's Water Treatment Plant before being supplied to the community. How land is managed within the catchment plays an important role in maintaining water quality. Through a combination of technical advice, on-ground works and financial assistance, the program supports landholders to make practical changes that benefit both their properties and the broader community.

Michael and his partner Jenny became involved in the program in 2020 after speaking with a neighbour who was already taking part. That initial conversation opened the door to learning more about what the program could offer.

Still, joining wasn't an immediate decision.

"We were a bit sceptical," he said. "Fencing off areas where cattle used to drink and sit in the shade—it sounded a bit backwards to what we were used to."

It's a hesitation many landholders can relate to. Like most working farms, the property has always had competing priorities, and investing in new approaches doesn't always feel straightforward.

After a number of conversations and a better understanding of the program, Michael and Jenny decided to give it a go.

One of the first projects focused on improving a well-used laneway that was contributing runoff into a nearby creek. This led to the installation of off-stream water troughs and, over time, fencing along the entire length of Upper Six Mile Creek on the property to reduce erosion and improve water quality.

What happened next came as a surprise.

"Before the creek was even fenced, the cows actually preferred the trough water," Michael said. "That was interesting to see."

Once fencing was completed in erosion-prone areas, the benefits became even clearer.

"You could see a big difference. The banks started to recover, vegetation came back, and the water quality improved."

Like many landholders, there were challenges along the way, particularly around losing some grazing land and managing fencing maintenance.

"You've got to balance it with running a productive property," he said.

Over time, however, those concerns have become less significant as the long-term benefits have become more visible.

Financial support through the program has also been key to making the works possible.

"We wouldn't have done it otherwise," Michael said. "There are always other priorities on a farm—fencing, infrastructure—so it's hard to justify creek fencing without that support."



Michael and Jenny Riggs

Beyond the on-ground works, the program has helped build knowledge and awareness on the property. For landholders considering getting involved, Michael's advice is simple:

"Why not? What have you got to lose? It's worth joining—you can see the benefits."

Looking ahead, Michael plans to continue improving the property, including ongoing weed control and encouraging native vegetation along the creek line.

Find out more about Creekcure

The Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcure Program can help you manage your land with the health of our region's waterways and catchments in mind — with benefits for you, your community and Lake Macdonald.

The program provides landholders with the opportunity to learn about:

- Funding available for water quality projects, including erosion and sediment control works on your property. *
- Practical ways to protect the health of the Lake Macdonald catchment.
- Local initiatives already underway to protect Lake Macdonald and the waterways that flow into it as part of the region's drinking water supply.
- Threats to freshwater native flora and fauna, and how you can help protect the environment.



The Riggs property with Cooroy Mountain in the background

*Funding support is subject to participation in the Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcare Program and an eligibility assessment.

Join us at the upcoming Creekcare workshop on Tuesday 13 October to find out more. To register or discuss how the program could support your property, contact Nicole at Noosa and District Landcare on 5485 2468.

More information: Noosa Landcare – Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcare Program



Fencing and offstream watering points have reduced erosion and resulted in improved water quality in Six Mile Creek

Noosa and District Landcare / Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcare

<https://noosalandcare.org/>

LATEST NEWSLETTER: <https://mailchi.mp/ccb037e3f938/noosalandcare-newsletter-spring-1852>

Scan the QR codes below for instant access.



Noosa & District Landcare



N&DL spring newsletter

2026 Annual Mary River Water Quality Catchment Crawl

The MRCCC Catchment Crawl is an annual event that has been running for more than 20 years. It brings together members of the catchment community to work collaboratively and capture a snapshot of catchment health across the Mary River and tributaries. The timing of the event is particularly significant, as it helps build our understanding of water quality and water temperature during the spawning period of the endangered Mary River cod.

This year three teams – Mary, Tributary and the Traditional Owner Custodian teams – will sample 36 waterway sites from the headwaters in the Blackall ranges, through the trunk of the catchment in Gympie, and out to the mouth of the waterway at River Heads.

Landholders, councils, Landcare members, traditional owners, students and volunteers work in partnership collecting various water quality, riparian zone health, instream condition assessment, plant identification and photo monitoring data to form the catchment-wide report card.

The annual Catchment Crawl held in the first week of October is an important event for the catchment community to play their part in science monitoring as well as initiate conversations and strengthen partnerships with each other by the River. This year is especially significant for the traditional owner custodian team as Rangers from Jinibara, Kabi Kabi and Butchulla first nation groups collect catchment health data, travel the length of the catchment, and camp together over three nights along the Mary River.



The Annual Catchment Crawl starts all the way at the Mary River Headwaters above Conondale ...



... to River heads near Hervey Bay ... Here the Bug Club is investigating macroinvertebrates in the Susan River just upstream of its confluence with the Mary River

Closed waters No fishing

1 August – 31 October



**Protect Mary River cod
during breeding season**



**You can't possess
or use a fishing line
in Mary River and
adjoining waterways**
upstream of its junction
with Six Mile Creek at the
creek's northern bank



You can fish in:

- Baroon Pocket Dam
- Lake Borumba
- Lake Macdonald

Can I fish here?



Download the
Qld Fishing 2.0 app



Scan for the app

Report illegal fishing:
☎ 1800 017 116

More information:
☎ 13 25 23

🌐 fisheries.qld.gov.au



**Queensland
Government**

Threatened species protection:

Critically endangered Mary River turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) and white-throated snapping turtle (*Elseya albagula*)

In 2024 the Mary River turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) was declared critically endangered, its numbers having declined by more than 80% since the 1960s. It is also on the EDGE (Evolutionary Distinct and Globally Endangered) list, and is only endemic to the Mary River catchment. We think it's a rather special turtle and we are working hard to ensure it has a future.

With this in mind, we are working with Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC) and Gympie Regional Council (GRC) on programs and projects to support Mary River turtles, particularly at this time of year when significant rain events between October and January trigger turtles to nest on suitable sand banks.

The MRCCC's Freshwater Turtle Conservation Program focusses on two key on-ground measures to mitigate nest predation. The first is through fox control, and the second is nest protection via in-situ mesh installation, or relocation to an enclosure.

Two freshwater turtle conservation workshops were held in August. A total of 30 volunteers, council biosecurity officers, landholders, Landcare project officers, Kabi Kabi Land and Sea Rangers, and Jinibara Freshwater Rangers attended and contributed to both events. The workshops were kept small, and grouped into participants largely familiar with each other, to foster conversations and strengthen relationships. Content focussed strongly on Mary River turtle ecology, and connecting habitat features and river processes with aspects of turtle lifecycle. Practical training in turtle tracking and nest protection built local capacity for monitoring and rapid response during the nesting season.

The first workshop held on August 13 comprised 15 people, including volunteers, landholders, Gympie Regional Council officers, Gympie District Landcare staff, and MRCCC project officers. It focussed on the importance of instream habitat, stream morphology and water quality to Mary River turtles. Gympie Regional Council's Ben Kendall also presented the council's targeted Mary River turtle fox control program and spoke about past achievements and upcoming plans for 2026-27.

The second workshop also comprised 15 people and was held on August 18, this time tailored to Traditional Owners. Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation's Land and Sea Rangers and Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation's Freshwater Rangers attended, along with a volunteer, Sunshine Coast Council Pest Management Officers and MRCCC project officers. The workshop's focus this time was on introducing Mary River turtles, threats to their survival, and conservation efforts to support them. Practical nest protection training was also undertaken on a nest bank near Kenilworth.

Support for our special Mary River turtle from our whole community is always appreciated. If you see any threats to turtle nests this breeding season, including foxes and dens near the river, call us on 07 5482 4766, or email admin@mrccc.org.au.

More information is also available at:

Gympie Regional Council: <https://www.gympie.qld.gov.au/Environment-Waste/Controlling-Weeds-and-Pest-Animals/Pest-Animal-Management>

Sunshine Coast Council: <https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/environment/invasive-plants-and-animals/invasive-animals/managing-invasive-animals/what-council-is-doing/coastal-fox-control-program>

MRCCC: <https://mrccc.org.au/living-with-threatened-species/>

Scan the QR codes to the right for instant access.



Freshwater turtle conservation workshops held on the banks of the Mary River in August 2026. Even the local turtles were keen to lend an ear (below)



Gympie Regional Council



Sunshine Coast Council



MRCCC

Urban Rivers Community Awareness Day

World Rivers Day
Sunday 27 September, 2026
7 am - early afternoon
The Sands, Gympie

A fun, informative, family day, interactive displays, activities, walks ... and
Best punk hairstyle award
in honour of the Mary River turtle -
the original punk bum-breather

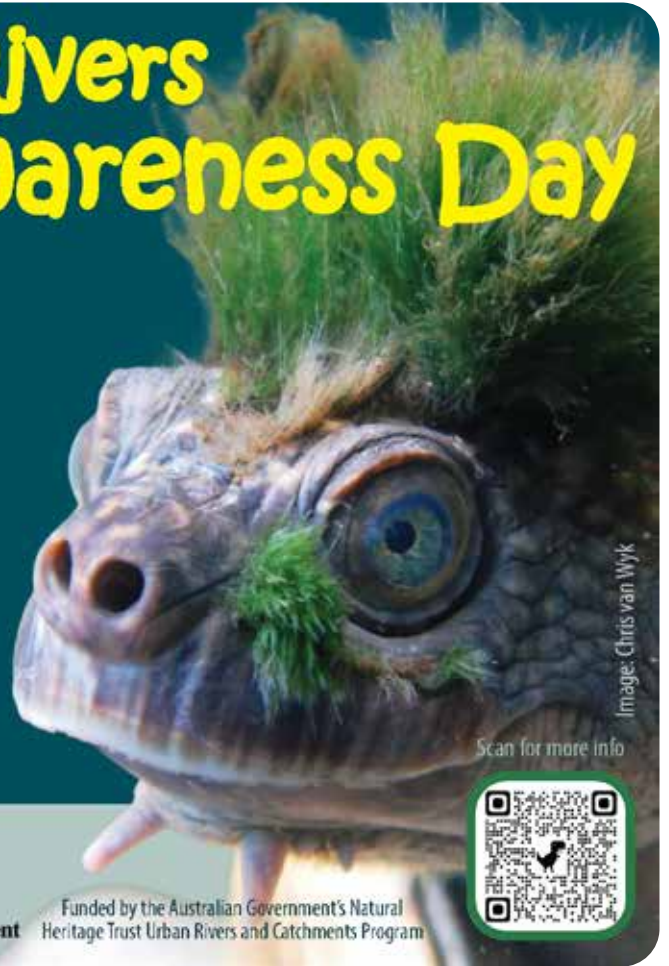


Image: Chris van Wyk

Scan for more info



Australian Government

Funded by the Australian Government's Natural
Heritage Trust Urban Rivers and Catchments Program

Weed watch

Weeds to watch for this spring are **cat's claw creeper vine** (CCV *Dolichandra unguis-cati*) and **honey locust trees** (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). As they flower they become more obvious and are easier to note locations for treatment. Dealing with them before they set seed after flowering is the best time to prevent them spreading further. Explore more on our fact sheets page at: <https://mrccc.org.au/fact-sheets/>



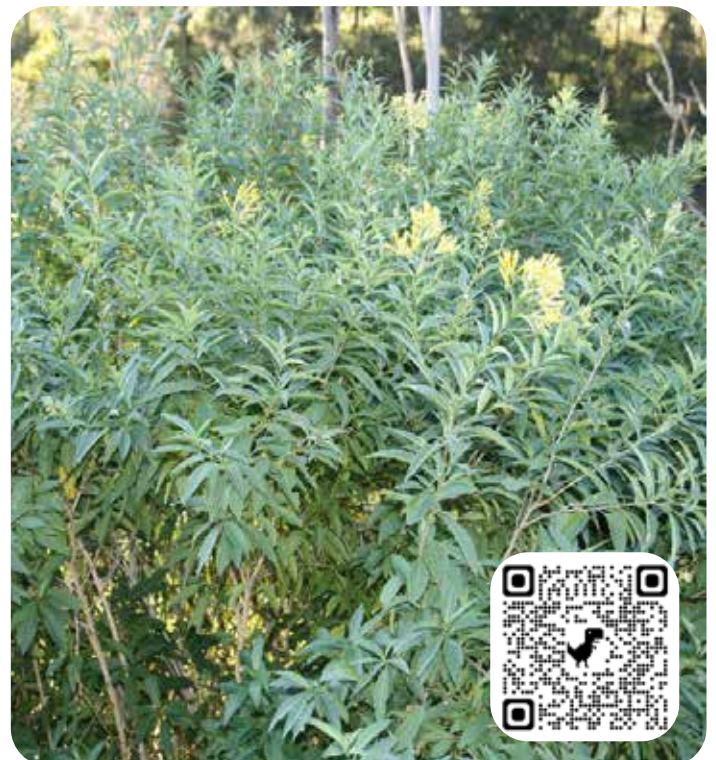
Bright yellow flowers of the cat's claw creeper vine



The flowers of honey locust are also yellow and they usually sport nasty spines

Green cestrum (*Cestrum parqui*)

With pastures in decline due to lack of rain, and stock looking for feed, there is risk of them eating what they shouldn't, and green cestrum is known to be toxic to stock. One local landholder has already reported several fatalities in his herd this season. NSW Local Land Services has an informative video on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWm9csPyBp4>



Green cestrum are known to be toxic to stock

Threatened Upland Stream Fauna Survey

The MRCCC is launching a project to study wildlife in Bellthorpe's upland streams. If you own a property with creek frontage in Bellthorpe, Booroobin, or Wootha, we'd love to hear from you!

Get in touch if you are interested in hosting surveys for threatened stream fauna on your land: admin@mrccc.org.au, or call 07 5482 4766.

Project Area: Moreton Bay Council area, above 100m elevation.

Key points of interest: stream frontage adjacent to intact streamside vegetation

Key species: Spiny crayfish (Pricklebacks, lobsters, mountain crays) and stream frogs



Conondale spiny crayfish (Euastacus hystricosus), image: Oliie Scully

Platypus perceptions

Have you spotted a platypus in the Mary River or her tributaries? Phone is in to us at 07 5482 4766



Upcoming workshops, events and activities

- 1 August – 31 October: closed season to protect Mary River cod in the Mary River and adjoining waterways upstream from Six Mile Creek
- SEPTEMBER is Biodiversity Month. Check it out at: <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/biodiversity/biodiversity-month>
- 27 September: World Rivers Day
- 27 September: Urban Rivers Community Engagement Day at The Sands, Gympie from 7 am to early afternoon
- 27 September – 31 October, 2026: Mary River Month
- 28 September – 1 November 2026: Spring in the Mary annual photography competition and environments celebration of the Mary River
- 7-8 October, 2026: Water Quality Catchment Crawl from the headwaters of the Mary to River Heads
- 13 October, 2026: Upper Mary River Care and Lake Macdonald Creekcare joint Introductory Workshop at Cooroy
- 27 October, 2026 – MRCCC Annual General Meeting, Albert Bowls Club, Gympie

"Rivercare and Creekcare is a Seqwater initiative delivered in partnership with local catchment and landcare groups to help protect the health of the region's waterways."

The Upper Mary Rivercare Program is delivered by the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee with funding support from Seqwater. Visit www.mrccc.org.au/projects/upper-mary-rivercare-program/ for more information on the Program.



Noosa and District Landcare
PO Box 278, Pomona Qld 4568

Rural Future Centre: 65 Pavilion Street, Pomona
Hinter Hub Store (public nursery and gift shop):
6 Station Street, Pomona
Phone: 07 5485 2468

Contact the MRCCC Resource Centre
25 Stewart Terrace, Gympie
Ph: 07 5482 4766
email: admin@mrccc.org.au
Website: www.mrccc.org.au

For general enquires: office@noosalandcare.org
For Wholesale nursery enquiries: nurserymanager@noosalandcare.org
For Hinter Hub: hinterhub@noosalandcare.org