

2026

ANNUAL REPORT

Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee

Connecting community and catchment for a sustainable future

MRCCC Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 27th October 2026 - Gympie Pavilion

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, Mooroobooocoola.
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
- Office of the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage
- Seqwater
- Queensland Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation
- Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Queensland Department of Primary Industries
- Queensland Department of Natural Resources, Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development
- Burnett Mary Regional Group
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- City of Moreton Bay
- Inspiring Australia through the University of Queensland
- HQPlantations
- Wild Macadamia Conservation

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, Valley Invasive Species Management Advisory Group, Griffith University, University of the Sunshine Coast, University of Queensland Reef Catchments Science Partnership, Charles Darwin University, James Cook University, TropWater, Australian National University, CSIRO, Alluvium Consulting, 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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Web	www.mrccc.org.au
Find us on Facebook	Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee

Front cover image: Mary River, Moy Pocket, courtesy of Brad Wedlock.

DONATIONS TO THE MARY CATCHMENT GIFT FUND ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

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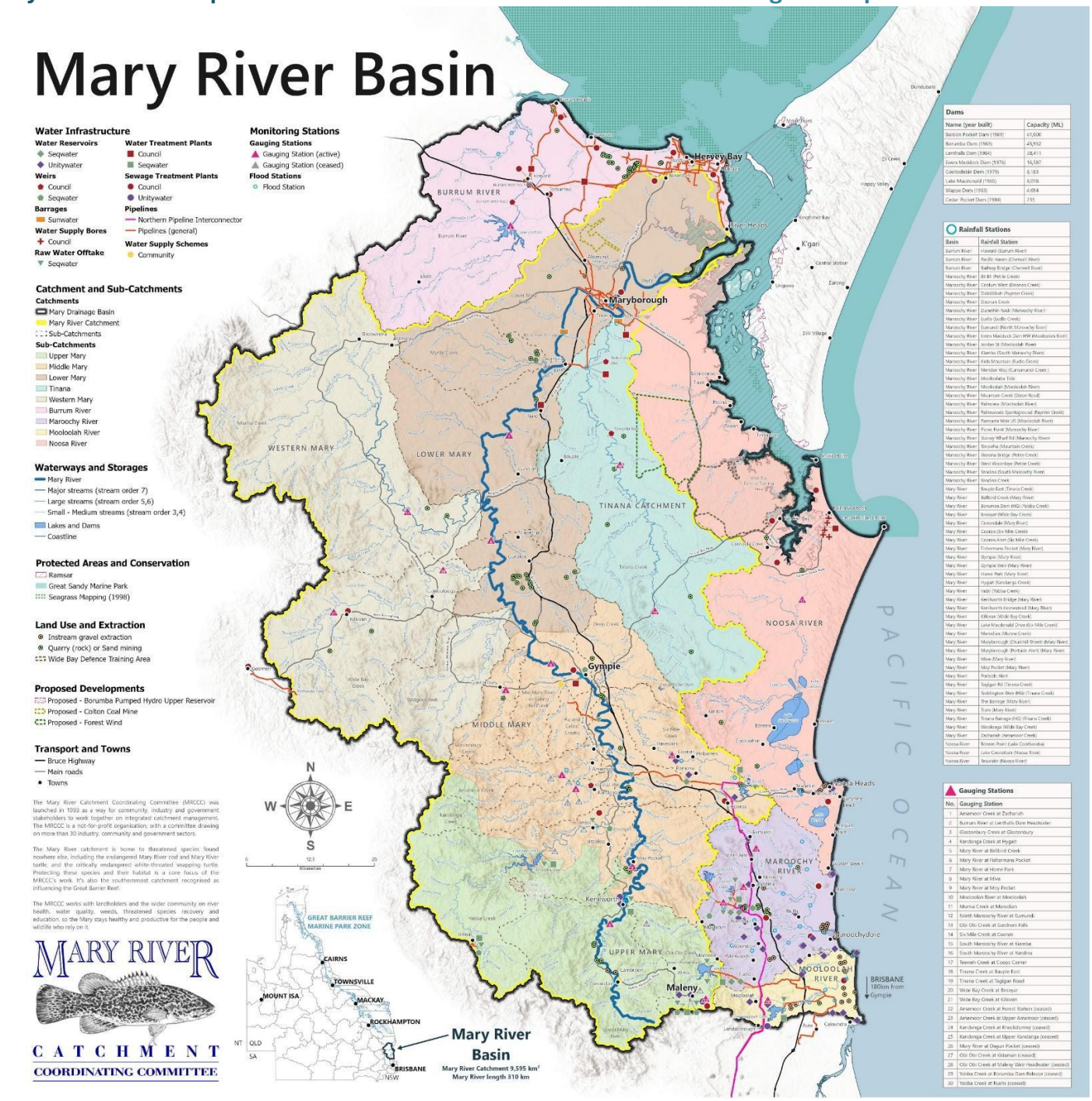
Mary River Basin Map – interactive version available at www.mrccc.org.au/maps



Traditional Owners

The Mary River flows through the Country of four First Nations peoples. The Jinibara people are Traditional Owners of the headwaters in the Conondale and Blackall Ranges, and the Kabi Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) people of the Mary Valley. The Wakka Wakka people hold Country in the far north-west, and the Butchulla (Badtjala) people the tidal lower reaches.

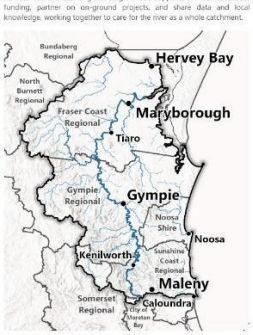
Known to its first peoples as Numabulla, Moonaboola, Moorooboola and Mooroobooccola, the river holds deep cultural significance. Today the MRCCC works alongside Traditional Owner corporations on projects to heal Country.



Local Government Areas

Four councils share the Mary River catchment: Sunshine Coast, Noosa, Gympie and Fraser Coast. Gympie and Fraser Coast councils supply drinking water and treat sewage for their own communities. In the south, Unitywater (part-owned by Sunshine Coast and Noosa councils) provides these services, with Seqwater supplying bulk water from Borumba Dam and Lake Macdonald.

All four councils are long-standing MRCCC supporters. Most contribute funding, partner on on-ground projects, and share data and local knowledge, working together to care for the river as a whole catchment.

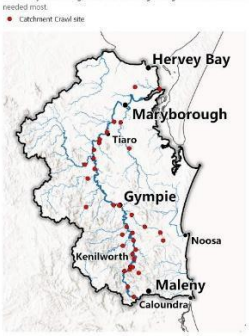


Catchment Crawl

The Catchment Crawl is the MRCCC's annual citizen science snapshot of river health. Each year, volunteers, landholders, councils and researchers collaborate to sample water quality at sites across the Mary – from the rainforest headwaters at Conondale to the sea at River Heads. It's part of a community monitoring effort that has run for more than two decades.

The results build a catchment-wide picture of river health, helping the community track change over time and target on-ground work where it's needed most.

Catchment Crawl site



National Parks & State Forests

The Mary Basin is dotted with national parks and state forests along its ranges. Conondale and Kondalilla protect subtropical rainforest and tall eucalypt forest, while extensive state forests carry timber plantations and native hardwood. Together they safeguard the catchment's headwaters, habitat and water quality, and offer camping and recreation.

These protected forests also shelter threatened plants and animals and link wildlife habitat across the landscape.

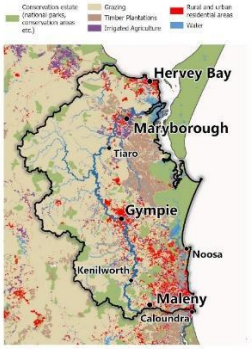
National Park
State Forest



Land Use

The Mary is a working catchment. Grazing covers most of the basin, with dryland cropping and irrigated farming worked through the fertile valleys and lower floodplains. Towns like Gympie and Maryborough anchor the built areas, while national parks, state forests and waterways hold the natural framework together. How this land is used upstream shapes the river everyone shares downstream.

Conservation estate (national parks, conservation areas etc.)
Grazing
Timber Plantations
Irrigated Agriculture
Rural and urban residential areas
Water



In memory of Jon Buchanan, whose vision for this map guided its making.

Delegates 2025--2026

Interest Sector	Representative	Title
Arts and Culture	Joolie Gibbs, Pie Creek	Delegate
Beef	David Higgins, Gunalda	Delegate
Biocontrol	Ross Smith, Tiaro	Deputy Chair
Coastcare	Nancy Haire, Cooloola Cove	Delegate
Grazing Lands	Graeme Elphinstone, The Dawn	Delegate
Dairying	Elke Watson, Cambroon	Delegate
Dept of Environment, Science and Innovation	Maria Zann, Maryborough	Delegate
Dept of Primary Industries	Vacant	Delegate
Education	Ben Ryan, Barambah	Delegate
Environment Lower catchment	David Arthur, Maryborough	Delegate
Environment Upper catchment	Narelle McCarthy, Montville	Delegate
Fishing	Rod Thompson, Lake Borumba	Delegate
Forestry	Kath Nash, Imbil	Delegate
General Community Lower catchment	John Williams, Hervey Bay	Delegate
General Community Middle catchment	Ray Zerner, Dagun	Delegate
General Community Upper catchment	John and Mary King, Conondale	Delegate
General Community Western catchment	John Atherton, Miva	Delegate
Gympie Field Naturalists	Berry Doak, Dagun	Secretary
Horticulture - Small Crops	Vacant	
Irrigation	Vacant	
Landcare, Lower catchment	Carol Neilsen, Woocoo Park	Delegate
Landcare, Upper catchment	Cam Burton, Maleny	Delegate
Land for Wildlife	Hume Field, Little Bella Creek	Delegate
Fraser Coast Council	Amber Kelly, Hervey Bay	Delegate
Gympie Regional Council	Cr Gordon Maudsley, Imbil	Delegate
Sunshine Coast Council	Denise Lindon, Caloundra	Delegate
Noosa Shire Council	Rodrigo Oliviera, Noosa	Delegate
Seqwater	Tim Odgers, Palmwoods	Delegate
Project Participant		Delegate
Project Participant	Bob Hood, East Deep Creek	Delegate
Water	Jess Dean, Gympie	Delegate
Service Clubs	Neil Andison, Maleny	Delegate
Life Member/Small farms	Steve Burgess, Dagun	Delegate
Special Member	Glenda Pickersgill, Kandanga	Delegate
Special Member	Ian Mackay, Moy Pocket	Chair
Life Member	Margaret Thompson, Maleny	Treasurer
Horticulture - Tree Crops	Brice Kaddatz, Araluen	Delegate
Sugar	Vacant	
Waterwatch	Craig and Leslie Hanson, Kandanga	Delegate
Waterwatch	Garth Jacobson, Tiaro	Delegate

Office Bearers 2025-2026

Chair	Ian Mackay
Secretary	Berry Doak
Treasurer	Margaret Thompson
Deputy Chair	Ross Smith

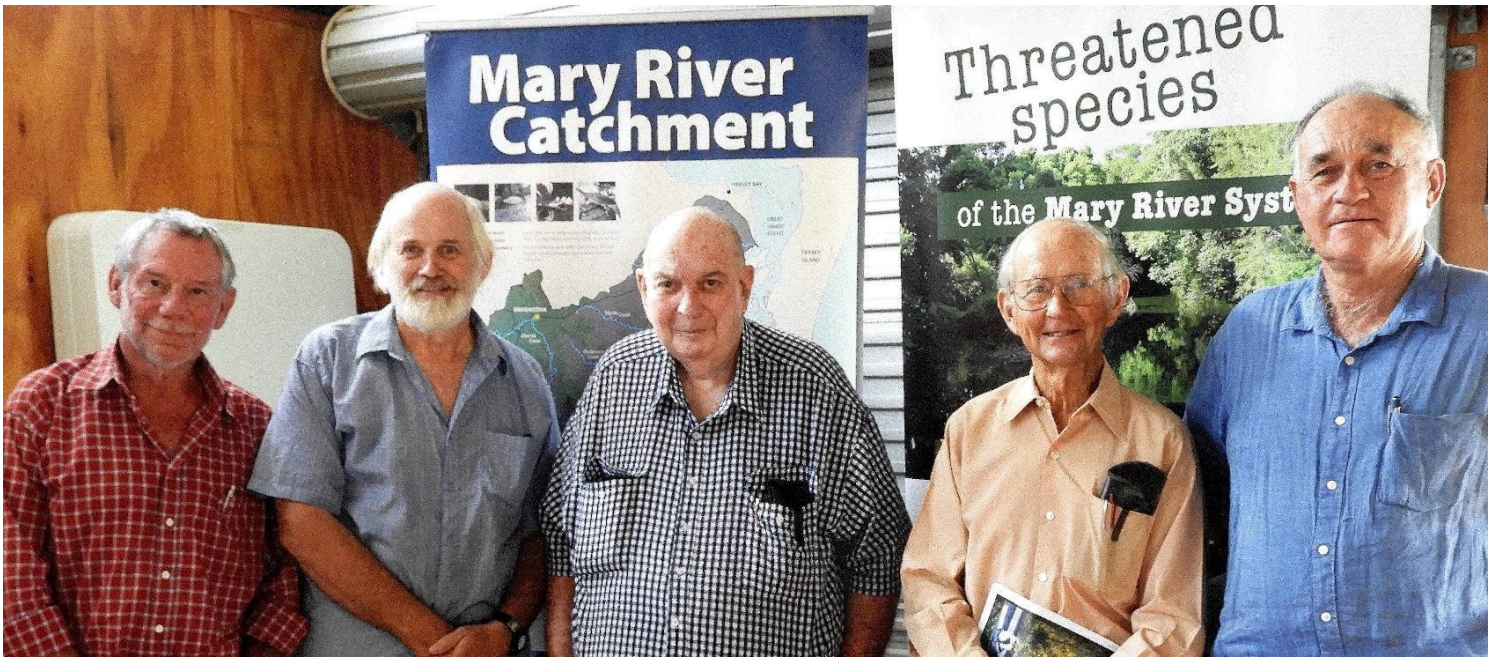
Past MRCCC Chairs

Graeme Smith, Kandanga	1994 - 1997
Peter Buchanan, Goomboorian	1997-2000
Jim Buchanan, Gympie	2001-2003
Harry Jamieson, Munna Creek	2003-2007
Paul Marshal, Gympie	2007-2009
Phil Moran, Cooran	2009-2012



Above: Lyn and Graham Smith at their Kandanga farm, late 1990's

Below L to R: Phil Moran, Ian Mackay, Jim Buchanan, Harry Jamieson and Peter Buchanan



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. Sc. Plant Agricultural Science (with Distinction), B Laws (Hons), B Behavioural Science. Specialist in project design, implementation and management, sustainable grazing and dairy effluent management, best management practices (BMP) for water quality in dairy and grazing systems, community and stakeholder engagement, riparian rehabilitation, and water quality monitoring. Seqwater/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 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.







Top: Steve Burgess shows volunteers the waterwatch kit
Centre: Sarah Grimish collecting macroinvertebrates
Below L to R: Shona Sengstock, Kym Burnell-Jones, Keishia Duffy, Alana Ebert and Bec Watson

Kyle Sanderson – B Sc (Environmental Science) Experienced in project management, ecological restoration, flora identification, community development and stakeholder engagement.

John Day - Master of Farming Systems Management, Associate Diploma Rural technology animal husbandry. Extensive soil conservation experience, 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, PhD candidate 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 modelling, monitoring and evaluation.

Administration Team

Deb Seal, Kim Maddison, Sandra Noonan, Lesa Bell

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.



MRCCC and Seqwater gathering in the Mary Valley

Chairman's Report 2026



Ian Mackay on the Mary River - image courtesy Jennifer Nichols

As I reflect on the activities of this year, our thirty-third as an organisation of river and catchment custodians, I need first to recognise those who've been custodians for far, far longer.

The Mary has its beginnings in the high rainfall areas of the Blackall and Conondale Ranges, Jinibara country, flowing northwards through the western part of Kabi Kabi country. Out even further in some of the western parts we acknowledge the Wakka Wakka people and of course, around the river mouth and its seamless fusion with Great Sandy Strait and its connection with K'gari, the Butchulla people.

We acknowledge their long connection to, and custodianship of this country that we have known by the name Mary only since 1847. We acknowledge the care and respect they have always had for the river, the different names they had for it and the creatures that live in these parts, and we pay our respects to their elders' past, those of the present and those who will carry on into the future.

It gives me great pleasure to present my Chairman's Report for 2026. My report is but an entry point to our far more detailed Annual Report outlining the activities of this organisation over the past year.

Any successes of MRCCC need to be shared with, and credited to, our partnerships and collaborations with a host of organisations both in and outside the catchment, all of whom share our commitment. The list of these partners seems to keep on growing and we, and the catchment, are the richer for it.

When we held our 250th meeting at the cod hatchery back in June 2026 we had tangible evidence of the breadth of these partnerships when over 100 people attended, representing a host of involved partners.

Our partnership with Seqwater has led to the highly successful Upper Mary Rivercare and has even opened up a research partnership with DPI Gatton**.** We welcome the recognition by Seqwater's Source Protection Team that streambank condition is reflected in water quality which in turn is reflected in the cost of water treatment for urban users.

We are very pleased to have an excellent relationship and partnership with the Office of the Great Barrier Reef. More details on that multi-pronged project, including our collaboration with TropWater, James Cook University and the Australian National University, can be found elsewhere in this report.

Our partnerships with local government areas in our catchment, Sunshine Coast, Noosa, Gympie and Fraser Coast, continues to grow and develop. This year I am pleased to report engagement with the City of Moreton Bay for the Upland Threatened Fauna Project – crayfish and stream frogs.

We welcome the initiative of the Resilient Rivers program, born out of the interest of the Southeast Queensland Council of Mayors. Given this geographical base, it means that the upper sections of the Mary (in Sunshine Coast, Noosa Council and City of Moreton Bay areas) are included while those further downstream (Gympie and Fraser Coast Council) are not. We see a lot of merit in eventually including the whole of the river in this program.

Also developing, in a particularly pleasing way, is our relationship with the various Traditional Owner groups in the catchment. At last year's Catchment Crawl, we had involvement from Jinibara, Kabi and Butchulla Rangers and this has developed both during the past year and particularly for this year's Catchment Crawl. The ranger groups and some MRCCC staff took part in a three-night/two-day journey from the headwaters to the sea, visiting the Butchulla midden and oyster bed near River Heads.

In addition to funded partnerships, we recognise and commend may other groups with 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.

But beyond funded partnerships and like-minded groups, I have to acknowledge the individuals who partner with MRCCC. The citizen scientists who are the backbone of the Waterwatch network, Find a Frog in February, freshwater Turtlecare and Bug Club are valued enormously. Can I particularly thank Ian Smith and staff member Shona Sengstock for their interest and dedication with the fledgling bug club, raising awareness of the invertebrates that are the basis for aquatic life.

For the first time since I became Chairman, we have no active joint projects with our regional NRM group. Government NRM funding is crucial for local groups—it maintains the local Landcare networks, ensures grass roots involvement, creates a local stewardship ethic and expands the reach of sustainable management of this catchment.

However, we see regional funds are increasingly being directed to regional NRM groups rather than direct to local NRM networks essential for community-backed success. Funding allocation needs to refocus on empowering local, collaborative groups on the ground. The MRCCC is encouraged to hear that the Queensland Government is considering ways of re-establishing catchment based approaches to ensure grass roots involvement, local stewardship and action.



Jennifer Nichols filming on the Mary River with Nathaniel Larson and Luke Carpenter-Bundoo from Griffith Uni



Alana Ebert, Brad Wedlock and Ian Mackay with the Queensland Landcare "Highly Commended"Sustainable Agriculture Award

This year saw the unveiling of what's become known as "Jim's Map". The late Jim Buchanan was both passionate and generous about this organisation. He was also passionate about how we understand and use our water resources. Jim had always wanted to see a map of the catchment that showed everything that was "water –related" and towards the end of his life engaged past MRCCC staff member and water industry delegate Jess Dean to capture a mass of geographical information in one place. The map has expanded a little to take in other catchments that are included in the Mary Basin Water Plan.

Earlier this year, we were pleased to enter into an agreement with the Wild Macadamia Conservancy which has seen Tina Raveneau appointed to further our understanding of the locations of existing wild macadamias in the Mary catchment.

A recent Landline program on ABC television has shone a light on a number of MRCCC projects. From pile fields to the successful creation and deployment of cod logs, from dairy effluent to water testing, it concentrated on more than just projects but picked up the range of partners involved in our work. We must thank ABC's Jennifer Nichols for her ongoing interest and reporting on projects and the Landline team for bringing it to air.

I also thank Lesa Bell and Gympie Living for the prominence she always gives to MRCCC stories and for her excellent work recently on our social media.

I thank delegates, from all the various interest sectors, for their involvement during the past year. I always have a little chuckle at the gloomy forecast made at the time of formation of MRCCC, that "with all these different interest sectors pushing their own barrows, I'd be surprised if the thing lasts three months". The fact that MRCCC has not only survived three decades (rather than 3 months) but has thrived, is a tribute to people working together.

After all, there's a lot more that unites us than divides us. I would urge delegates to give consideration to increasing their involvement by joining us on the Executive.

I particularly thank my fellow executive for the past year, Ross Smith (Deputy Chair), Margaret Thompson (Treasurer and Life Member), Berry Doak (Secretary), Bob Hood and Garth Jacobson. We benefit from their experience, knowledge and dedication.

That our organisation functions so effectively is due in no small way to the exceptional work of Brad Wedlock, our Operations Manager and, even though she's trying to retire, Deb Seal who continues to work part time. Their long-term commitment and experience, plus that of Eva Ford, has built up strong community support and has been vital for our good standing in the wider community. As past Deputy Chairman, the late Rob Priebe, used to say "MRCCC is an organisation that is not only well-known in the community but is also known well."

All our staff do a wonderful and committed job. This was abundantly plain at the recent Catchment Crawl. The complex logistics to make it all run so smoothly were coordinated by Waterwatch coordinator Shona Sengstock, but as she modestly points out "it was a real team effort, everyone did a wonderful job". With three teams totalling between 60 and 70 people converging each day at lunch time, it was a huge undertaking. I thank all those who participated.

I thank all our staff for their dedication and commitment over the past year.

To top it all off, MRCCC was recently awarded a Highly Commended in the Australian Landcare Sustainable Agriculture category at the Queensland Landcare Awards, recognising the outstanding work of our project officers and partners.

After a few years now as Chairman, I still find some difficulty in describing, structurally, just what MRCCC is. It's more than the committee of interest sector delegates, more than the staff. It has to take in the landholders, Waterwatchers, stakeholders, partners, citizen scientists and supportive members of the interested public across the length and breadth of the catchment.

It is an incredible group of people, passionate people. Now well into its fourth decade, it's so rewarding to look back and see changes made over that time, all due to the generosity of time, experience, knowledge and wisdom of so many people.

I thank you all. *Ian Mackay*

Treasurer's Report



Another annual meeting heralding a new year of endeavours for MRCCC as an organisation and the catchment. Some projects are winding up while we enter a new era with others.

I continue to be amazed at the ability and enthusiasm of our staff. Their strength and diversity of knowledge enables them to collaborate with a diverse range of funding providers, project partners and landholders to achieve results for the betterment of the catchment. Refer to the extensive list at the front of this Annual Report.

The exchange of knowledge is outstanding and widely recognised by researchers, universities and government departments as well as others. MRCCC is being recognised as an organisation to "go to" and partner with.

True catchment management requires every funding dollar to deliver maximum impact on the ground. Frontline organisations like MRCCC and local landcare groups are uniquely positioned to turn modest grants into significant ecological gains through community trust, volunteer mobilisation, and deep local insight. NRM funding must be fair and equitable and available to all groups. By directing funds straight into the hands of grassroots groups each dollar is maximised, ensuring the long-term health of our land and waterways. Fortunately, our partnerships with local government, the Office of the Great Barrier Reef and Seqwater are strong and we thank them for their continued support. Seqwater in particular has enabled us to plan ahead over future years.

The MRCCC's gift fund continues to provide a platform for receiving donations that contribute to catchment management projects. Our staff are working to a plan of priorities which makes it so much easier to justify applying for funding for best outcomes. Thank you Brad and the rest of the staff for working to a vision and adapting where necessary. *Marg Thompson*

Mary Catchment Gift Fund – 2025/26 Annual Report

Now operating under the auspices of the Australian Taxation Office, the Mary Catchment Gift Fund continues to play a valuable role in responsibly managing tax deductible donations to support MRCCC's catchment management program and aligned environmental groups' projects. The members of the Gift Fund Management Committee are Margaret Thompson, Elke Watson, Ian Mackay and Graeme Elphinstone (Chair).

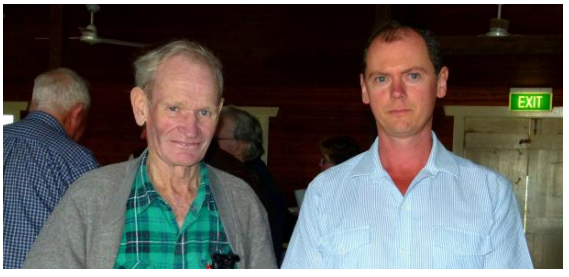
Ten (10) donations to the value of $15,965 - ranging in amounts from $10 upwards, were received during the 25/26 year.

The allocation of donated funds to three projects was finalised in June 2026. These projects encompassed "*Developing a Mary Basin map of water-related natural features and infrastructure*" by MRCCC, the *"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"* on behalf of the Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care group.

Potential new projects in the pipeline for the 26/27 year include – 'Mary River turtle nest and hatchling protection'; 'Mary Basin water infrastructure map – to assess further format opportunities'; 'Wonky Holes scoping research – Hervey Bay'.

The Gift Fund Committee welcomes donations to the fund from both MRCCC members and others in the broader catchment community who are interested in supporting important environmental projects and activities. These donations are tax deductible. We invite you to discuss your individual interests in making a donation with one of the Committee members listed above. *Graeme Elphinstone*

Vale James Hansen



Only days before the 2026 AGM, former MRCCC delegate and Fraser Coast Councillor, James Hansen, lost his life in floodwaters near his Boompa property, after a deluge of rain hit the district. James was first elected to the MRCCC as a delegate representing Fraser Coast Regional Council in 2008, having previously served as a Councillor for the former Woocoo Shire Council prior to amalgamation. One of the last dairy farmers in the Munna Creek sub catchment, James was an advocate for regenerative agriculture and organic farming. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family.

James Hansen (right) with former MRCCC Chair Graham Smith at the 2008 AGM.

Borumba Pumped Hydro proposal. Kabi Kabi & Wakka Wakka country

The Borumba pumped hydro proposal is arguably the most complex, risky and expensive single water and civil construction project ever to be funded in Queensland. It poses the greatest potential risk of all futures currently being considered for the Mary River system. This is why the MRCCC has stayed engaged in active consultation with the State and Federal Governments, Queensland Hydro, Powerlink and the Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) since we first became aware of the current proposal in 2021.



For all of the past year, the project has been under review by QIC, and there has been very little active consultation with the public regarding any of the specific design or operational details now being proposed or assessed. As explained in previous reports, the project is split into many different components, each being assessed, regulated and funded in different ways. Some, like the 'exploratory' works and temporary workers' accommodation camps, have the required approvals and funding, and are either underway or are completed. Other components, like the main works and transmission line connections are still under assessment. Other associated components, like a new northern road access route via an upgraded Yabba Creek Rd and Old Forest drive have yet to be designed and submitted for assessment.

From the very few meetings we have had during the last year, we believe QIC is now considering a project design with less electrical storage and power capacity, and will be explicitly considering the economic value of water from the project as part of its investment decision. We have been waiting for any description of the new design and business case since late 2025, but it now appears that these might not be released until early-mid 2027.

The rest of the world has moved on since the project first made a funding case based on the capacity to provide 2GW of firmed 'green' electricity on demand to Rio Tinto and Fortescue metals for aluminium refining and smelting, and 'green' hydrogen production in Gladstone. Since then, Fortescue has abandoned the hydrogen hub, and Rio Tinto has entered into a separate direct energy investment arrangement with the State and Federal governments. Additionally, in that time, grid scale battery storage costs have fallen by nearly two thirds, and the predicted construction cost of the project rose to over $18 billion, after an original funding announcement of $6 billion.

In the meantime, the environmental studies published for the exploratory works have confirmed our initial submissions regarding the extraordinary high environmental values of the land and waters that would be damaged by the proposal. The cultural heritage studies conducted under the Indigenous Land Use Agreement for the exploratory works have confirmed "hundreds of sites and values". In spite of constant requests for information, no means for avoiding or mitigating the downstream sediment and water quality risks identified for the project have been presented. Repeated requests for the results of dam safety and project failure risk modelling to be released to the public have also been specifically denied. No realistic carbon budgets accounting for methane production from the project have been presented.

To add to the uncertainty, the Premier and Treasurer recently issued (welcome) statements in Parliament that the Mary River will not be the site of the new dam the government is investigating for supply to the SEQ urban grid, and that the hard-won Mary Basin Water Plan will stand, in spite of the revised economic scope of the Borumba proposal as a water supply project.

We hope the QIC will take all these issues into account, and eventually recommend an energy storage strategy that does not pose so many risks and cause so much damage. However, as matters stand right now, the project has received a large State budget allocation ($324M) in the current year. Qld Hydro have let contracts for interim civil works and producing the Environmental Impact Statement for the main construction works.

Initial procurement activities to implement the environmental offsets required for the project have commenced. The project was granted a time extension for conducting the main works EIS and is currently designated as a State Strategic project.

Borumba pumped hydro is written into the current draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) includes it and the transmission line connections in the latest Integrated Systems Plan, assuming first power in 2034. We have heard that the tunneling works expected to commence in early 2027 have recently been put on hold, but are awaiting written confirmation from the State Government on this. Steve Burgess

Flood Recovery – 2022 Ex Tropical Cyclone Seth

Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement (DRFA) river recovery project sites - Bec Watson

While the 2024 / 2025 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 finalised in 2025 / 2026 on the Mary River at Kenilworth, Tuchekoi, Gympie, Elaman and lower Obi Obi Creeks. These projects were delivered in partnership with BMRG and Alluvium.





L: Maxine and Vern Gilbert with MRCCC and Cr David Law in front of the revegetation of their reach of Obi Obi Creek.
R: Timber pile fields and vegetation stabilising the banks of Obi Obi Creek on the Gilbert property.

Site and location	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 through Urban Rivers*
TOTALS	50,744		

These projects funded under 2022 flood recovery focused on a reach approach to remediation, addressing riparian threats such as vine weed control upstream and downstream of the target erosion hot-spots.
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.



Petrie Park Tiaro looking across to the major rehabilitation site on the west bank of the Mary River

MRCCC Waterwatch Program 2025 – 2026 - Shona Sengstock, Steve Burgess, Keishia Duffy

Kabi Kabi, Jinibara and Butchulla country

For more than 25 years, the MRCCC Waterwatch program and its dedicated band of citizen scientists have been collecting valuable water quality information throughout the Mary River catchment. Through monthly monitoring, Waterwatchers have built an extensive long-term dataset that helps us better understand the health of our waterways.

Monitoring includes key water quality indicators such as water temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, pH and salinity, alongside assessments of riparian and instream condition. Volunteers also record observations of aquatic plants and animals, including fish, turtles and platypus, while documenting the presence of aquatic weeds and changes in river flow.

The Waterwatch database continues to grow, providing a valuable resource that is shared with our catchment community and stakeholders to support a better understanding of local waterways. Over the past year, 12 Waterwatch networks operated across the catchment, with 102 individuals, families and businesses monitoring 80 waterways. This ongoing effort reflects the dedication of our volunteers and the important role our local communities play in keeping an eye on the health of their creeks and rivers.



Waterwatch training at the Sands, Gympie with Shona Sengstock, Chris Stroband, Ian Smith, Jude Coates and Joolie Gibbs

Our Waterwatchers are our eyes on our river and creeks. Through their long-term commitment to the program, our volunteers have helped build a better understanding of catchment health and provide an early warning of changes in water quality when they occur.

A big thank you to all our catchment champions who head out each month to collect samples and observations including the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) and HQPlantations teams, who cover large areas of the catchment to carry out monthly monitoring. Your efforts to help build a broader picture of waterway health while keeping our community connected are appreciated.

We proudly acknowledge and thank our long-term volunteers for their dedication and commitment to caring for our local waterways. Your time, knowledge and ongoing contributions play an important role in helping us understand and protect the health of our river and creeks. A special mention and heartfelt thank you to Bob and Lorraine Hood, Mick and Evonne Bambling, Ian Mackay, the Dennis family, Des King, Leslie and Craig Hanson, David Wilson, Anette Bambling and Kevin Jackson. Thank you for being part of the Waterwatch journey and for the care you continue to show our catchment.

Waterwatch would also like to sincerely thank the volunteers retiring from the program this year. We greatly appreciate the time, knowledge and care you have shared over the years. Your efforts have helped build a better understanding of waterway health across the Mary River Catchment and have connected local communities with the waterways they value.

This year, Waterwatch has been busy training volunteers and welcoming new recruits into the program. It's wonderful to see new people getting involved, joining our catchment community and keeping an eye on local waterway health. A warm welcome to Ken Tyson, Karen Walsh, Renee Grant, Greg and Christine Neville, Dan Carney, Craig Rosier, Lucy McKee, Libby Pohlman, Ron Black, Ken and Sue Pyke, Norm Heselwood, Jane Woodward, Nicole McMullen, Duncan Sayers, Carla Lambropoulos, Di Collier, Gary and Thea Warburton and Paul Schmidt. We look forward to working with you and thank you for becoming part of the Waterwatch team.

Waterwatch has many moving parts behind the scenes. Water testing equipment needs to be transported, stored and made available at various drop-off locations throughout the catchment. This would be much more difficult without the generous assistance of our local businesses. A big thank you to B&H Rural in Tiaro, Kandanga Snack Bar in Kandanga, Kenilworth Garage and Conondale Store for helping us keep the program running smoothly.

Waterwatch is generously supported and funded by Noosa Shire Council, Sunshine Coast Council, Gympie Regional Council and Fraser Coast Regional Council. Their contributions help keep the program running and support our volunteers in monitoring waterways throughout the catchment.

MRCCC also continues to partner with the Queensland Water Directorate (QLDWater) to transition the long-term Waterwatch dataset into SWIM Local, the Statewide Water Information Management database. Jess Dean continues to support MRCCC transition the large Waterwatch dataset over to this new format. This work will help ensure our valuable, community-collected data remains accessible and continues to contribute to waterway management into the future.

A busy season for MRCCC Bug Club

The MRCCC Bug Club has enjoyed a busy season, with the extended autumn and warmer winter conditions providing great opportunities to explore aquatic macroinvertebrates, or 'water bugs', living in our waterways. Water bugs are valuable indicators of waterway health because they are abundant, diverse and sensitive to changes in water quality, flow and habitat conditions.

Recent finds have included some impressive caddisflies, along with mayflies, stoneflies and plenty of freshwater crayfish. Healthy waterways such as Boulder Creek near Mothar Mountain, Kirby's Reserve near Obi Obi and Coondoo Creek near Toolara Forest offer a range of habitats, with fallen timber, leaf litter and overhanging vegetation providing important shelter and food for aquatic life.

Freshwater crayfish have been a regular sight during sampling, and platypus have also been active across the catchment. As breeding adults come together and prepare burrows for their young, healthy waterways with good habitat and reliable food sources are especially important.



Ian Smith and Shona Sengstock talking all things water bugs at the Mary River Festival 2026

Ian Smith has been an integral part of the MRCCC Bug Club, generously sharing his time, equipment and expertise in identifying and photographing water bugs from the Mary River and its waterways. Ian has played a valuable role in passing on his extensive knowledge to our young bug enthusiasts, inspiring the next generation to discover the fascinating world of aquatic life.

A big thank you to Ian for travelling the catchment with us and nurturing a love of all things creepy-crawly in our next generation of bug lovers!

Sample Location	**Waterway**	**Taxa Richness**	**Pollution Sensitivity Score**	**Summary**
Marapatta Outdoor Education Centre, Imbil	Yabba Creek	4	3.2	Poor
Amama Day Use Picnic Area	Amamoor Creek	7	4.8	Moderate
Mooloolah River Landcare, Bug Day Out	Mooloolah River	11	6	Moderate
Toolara Forest	Coondoo Creek	5	4.8	Moderate
Urban Rivers Community Day	Mary River	5	5.2	Moderate
Mothar Mountain Rock Pools	Boulder Creek	8	6.5	Good

Good: Many taxa (high diversity), sensitive taxa present

Moderate: Medium numbers of taxa (moderate diversity) some sensitive taxa present

Poor: Few taxa (low diversity), sensitive taxa present, tolerant taxa predominant

Caring for Catchment

The Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (KKPAC) Land and Sea Rangers have also been developing their aquatic macroinvertebrate sampling skills while undertaking water quality monitoring throughout the Noosa Shire in the Mary River Catchment. Water quality monitoring across eight sites has helped the Rangers develop confidence in riparian condition assessments, surveying healthy instream habitats and undertaking water quality data collection.

KKPAC have also been assisting Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (JPAC) Rangers to sample waterways in the upper catchment. JPAC have been busy refining their water quality sample run at six sites over the last few months, growing their Ranger teams and working in partnership to care for country.

R: Jinibara rangers water testing at Six Mile Creek



Catchment Crawl 2026

Jinibara, Kabi Kabi and Butchulla country

The annual MRCCC Catchment Crawl brings together members of the catchment community to work collaboratively and capture a snapshot of catchment health across the Mary River. Held in the first week of October, 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, 75 participants in three teams – Mary, Tributary and the Traditional Owner custodians sampled from 35 waterway sites from the headwaters in the Conondale Ranges, along the Mary River through the Mary Valley to the estuary at River Heads. Landholders, Waterwatch volunteers, council staff, landcare staff, traditional owners, students and volunteers worked in partnership collecting data on water quality, riparian zone health, instream condition assessment, plant identification and photo monitoring to form the catchment wide report card.

	Team Mary	**Team Tribs**	**Team Traditional Owner**
Day 1 (Upper)	17 Samplers	9 samplers	32 Samplers
Day 2 (Lower)	15 samplers	11 samplers	28 Samplers
Sites sampled	13 sites	14 sites	8 sites



MRCCC with Team Traditional Owners during the 2026 Catchment Crawl

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 on changes to stream and bank condition compared to previous years, new weed species, shading of water, presence of vegetation layers, fauna and other general observations.

The annual Catchment Crawl is an important opportunity for the catchment community to play their part in citizen science and monitoring while also initiating conversations and strengthen partnerships with each other by the river.

This year was especially significant for the Traditional Owner team as rangers from Jinibara, Kabi Kabi and Butchulla came together to collect catchment health data, travel the length of the river and camp together over three nights on-country.

This event helped to strengthen partnerships between traditional owner groups and MRCCC while building skills and confidence in water quality monitoring, sharing knowledge across country and collecting baseline data from the upper, middle and lower Mary River Catchment.

Camping across the catchment gave the ranger teams extra opportunities to share knowledge of country, promoting cultural and environmental stewardship and foster continued partnership for collaborative catchment management.

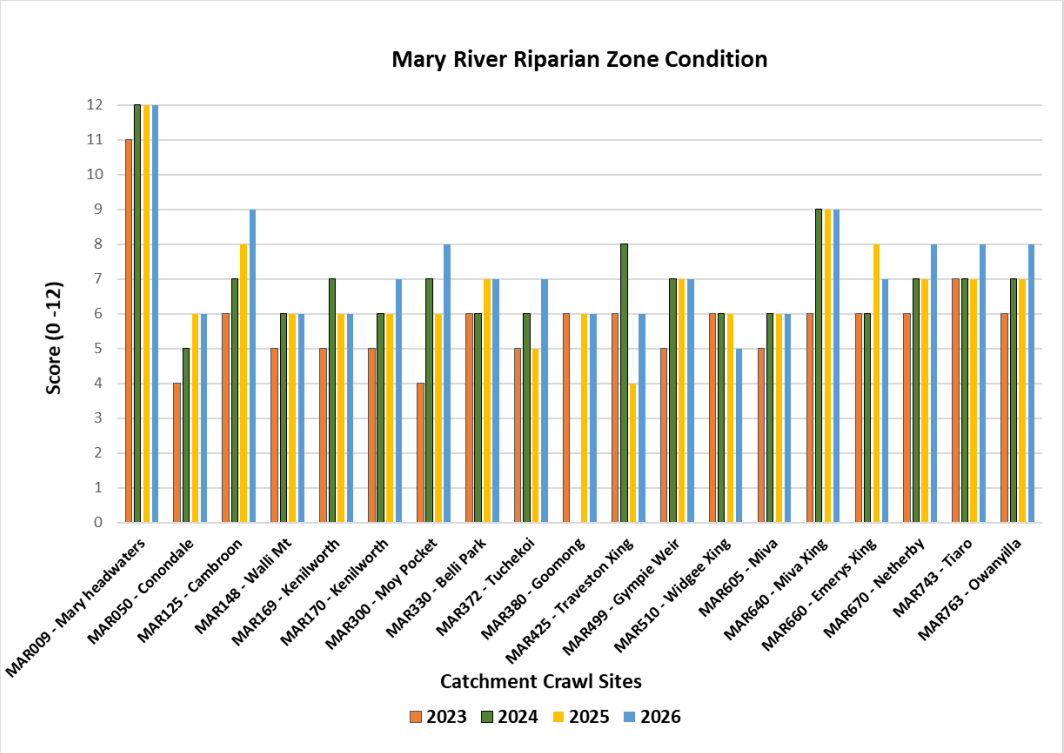
The MRCCC and ranger teams would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to Thea and Gary Warburton – ‘A place called home’ and Luke and Arna Love from ‘Yabba Ridge’ for hosting the team at their campgrounds.



Catchment Crawl team at River Heads – the final site after 2 days of travelling down the catchment

Dry start to the year

There was a focus this year on observing how the catchment is functioning after lower than usual summer rain at the start of 2026. The dry weather resulted in virtually no flooding occurring in the catchment in 2026, however significant flooding occurred in Wide Bay Creek and around Miva earlier in the year when the Burnett River and Bundaberg flooded.



Riparian recovery, post 2022 floods, appears to have stabilised in recent years; with only slight improvements observed across the Mary River this year. To provide context, after the 2022 floods the general riparian condition of all Mary River sites was overall "below average" (45%), then by 2025 the condition had improved to an overall "average" condition (57%). In 2026, the overall condition of the Mary River sites had improved to 61%, or above average condition.

The condition of the Traveston Crossing site has improved slightly since last year's assessment, likely due to new fencing of the site limiting four-wheel drive vehicles access and allowing the riparian zone to recover. The drier conditions ie no flooding, has resulted in ribbon-plant and other native aquatic plants being more obvious on this year's Catchment Crawl.

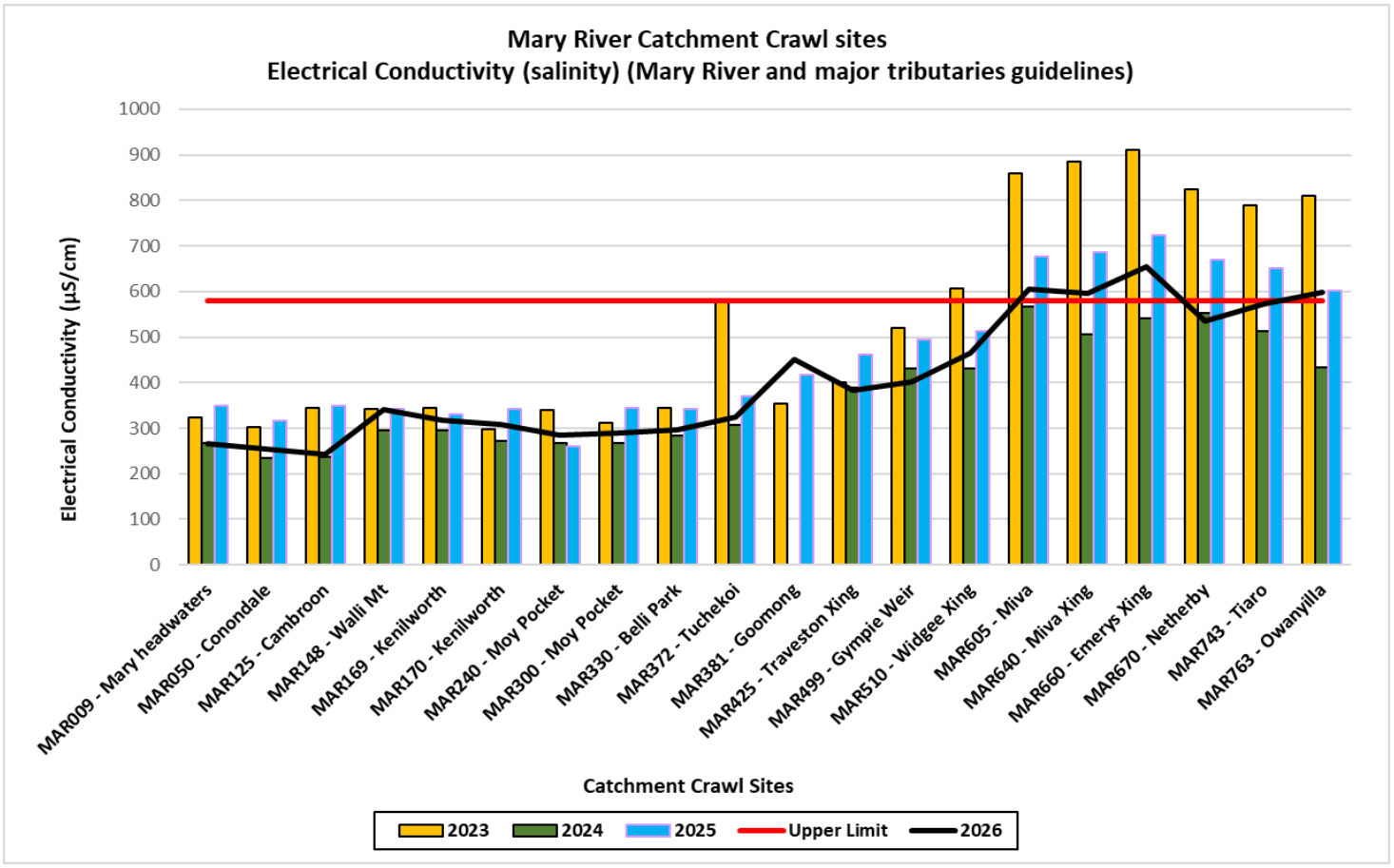
Mary River flows (median value for September)	Sep 2022 meg/d	Sep 2023 meg/d	Sep 2024 meg/d	Sep 2025 meg/d	Sep 2026 meg/d	7th Oct 2026 riverflow
Kenilworth (Bellbird gauging station)	60	5	43	96	34	26
Gympie (Fishermans Pocket gauging	1,184	34	245	220	114	83
Miva (Miva gauging station)	342	42	365	459	92	74
Tiaro (Home Park gauging station)	2,315	43	400	460	147	75

Electrical Conductivity (salinity)

This year's electrical conductivity levels were comparable to 2024 and 2025 for the sites above Tuchekoi – indicating reasonable upper catchment river flows flushing any residual salt coming from the landscape. The Goomong site (MAR381) shows an uplift in salinity which is consistent with 2025, which drops back down at the next site at Traveston Crossing (MAR425). It could be assumed that Skyring Creek which flows into the Goomong site was not flowing, and as a consequence the salinity level in the Mary River at this location has become elevated.

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 as is consistently observed on each catchment crawl. The western tributaries of the lower Mary River ie. Widgee, Wide Bay and Munna Creeks all have high salinity levels – much higher than the river, and their discharge into the river results in higher salinity levels in the river downstream of Gympie.

In 2026, compared to 2025 the sites downstream of Gympie were only just above the upper guideline level of 580 us/cm. If there is no significant rainfall during October and November the salinity level in the lower catchment is expected to rise significantly beyond the upper guideline, potentially compromising irrigation water supplies.





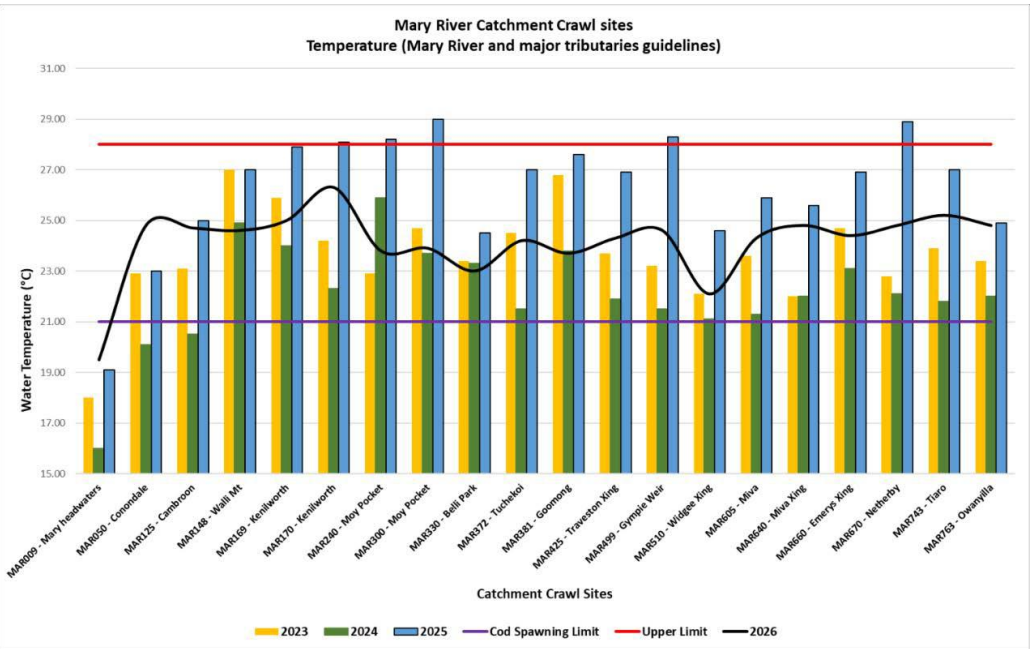
Team Mary - MRCCC staff, delegates, students, volunteers and guests on this year's catchment crawl

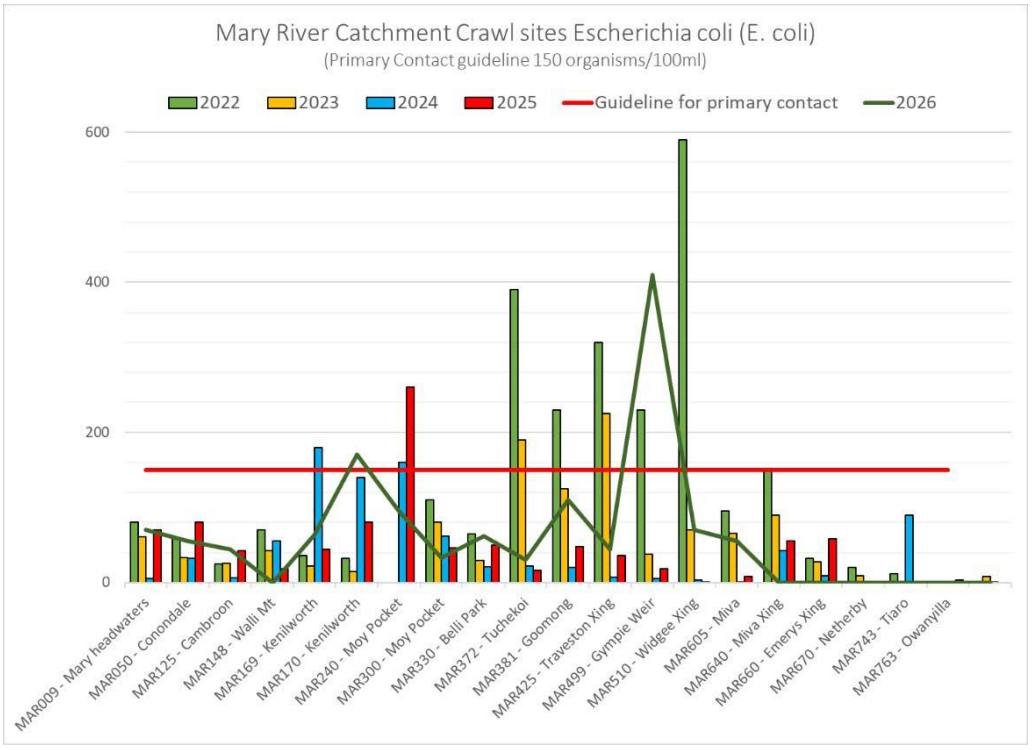
Air and water temperature and river flow

In the weeks prior to the 2026 Catchment Crawl, the average maximum air temperature for September 2026 was 26.9°C (almost the same as 2025 at 26.8 °C, BOM Gympie data) and the average minimum was 11.4°C (slightly lower than 2025 at 11.8 °C).

In 2026, cloudy conditions were consistent on both days, which, combined with the warm air temperatures, resulted in an average water temperature of 24.1 °C (compared to 25.6 °C in 2025 which was almost the warmest Catchment Crawl on record).The 2017 Catchment Crawl was warmer at 26.95°C. This year the water temperature at all sites were above the ideal Mary River cod spawning temperature of less than 21 degrees, apart from the upper Mary River headwaters site.

In 2026, the river was flowing in the range of 20-50% of normal flow during the catchment crawl, similar to the flows recorded during the 2025 catchment crawl. The river has been rapidly dropping during September 2026 due to an exceptionally hot and dry start to Spring. The low river flows were concerning as this lack of flow will be further expressed downstream to Miva and Tiaro in the following weeks if there is no decent rainfall.





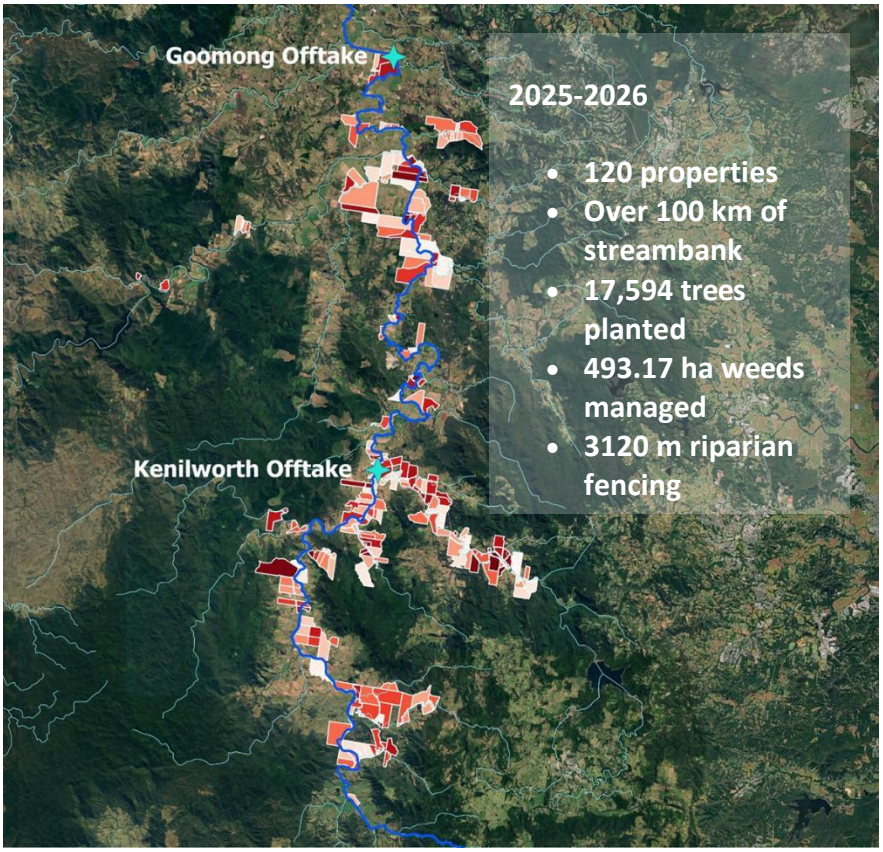
Escherichia coli (E. coli)

Escherichia coli (E. coli) is a bacterium commonly found in the gut of humans and warm-blooded animals eg cattle and horses. *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 effluent systems.

The guidelines for *E. coli* levels are the Primary Contact Guideline (ANZECC and ARMCANZ, 2000) and the value is 150 CFU/100ml. A CFU is an acronym for colony forming units, ie the number of bacteria organisms (colonies) observed in 100mL of water. A laboratory is required to test for *E.coli.* On a positive note, the *E.coli* levels experienced in 2026 were generally below guideline levels (<150 colony forming units/100mL), apart from the Gympie Weir which had stormwater discharging into the river upstream of the weir. The Kenilworth site is at the guideline level for *E.coli*. Widgee Crossing has been consistently well below the guideline since the 2022 result.

The MRCCC acknowledges and thanks all the landholders, Waterwatchers and volunteers who attended and assisted the 2026 Catchment Crawl, particularly Ian Mackay, Jess Dean, Desiree Gralton, John and Mary King, Rodrigo Oliveira, Garth Jacobson. Shaun Fisher, Hayley, Amber Kelly, Dan Pagotto, Mark Scanlan, Sarah Iwanoczko, Tim Odgers, Julian O'Mara and Ben Ryan. The Jinibara, Kabi Kabi and Butchulla rangers' 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.



Seqwater Partnership Program

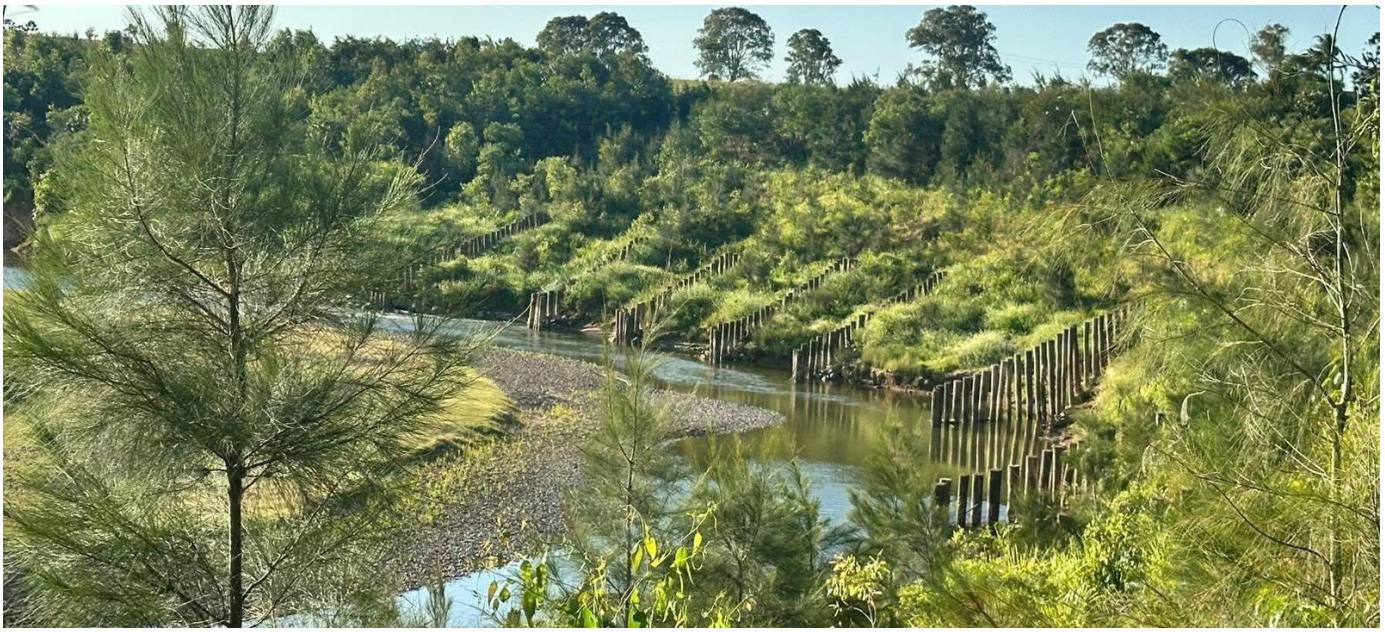
Alana Ebert, Kym Burnell Jones, Kyle Sanderson
Jinibara, Kabi Kabi country

In 2025-26, the MRCCC delivered the fifth and final year of works under our five-year delivery agreement with Seqwater. We also developed our next five-year implementation plan, which Seqwater approved for delivery from 2026-27. This next phase supports an expansion of our source protection activities into Moy Pocket, Conondale and Jimna, with Seqwater prioritising landholder projects along the main stem of the Mary River between Coles Creek and Conondale, and vine weed control (Cat's Claw Vine and Madeira Vine) in the upper Mary catchment.

Our Seqwater source protection partnership was developed in 2015-2016, with the purpose of improving water quality upstream of the Goomong and Kenilworth offtakes on the Mary River. Over the next implementation period, this will expand to include the Jimna water supply. 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.

Community engagement, landholder co-design, and peer-to peer learning are core elements of how our Seqwater Upper Mary Rivercare program is delivered. We also aim to support and partner with local not-for-profits and small businesses where possible, with a grass roots, place-based service delivery focus. Our projects include riparian fencing, off-stream watering, pasture improvement, dairy practice improvement, effluent management, vine weed biocontrol, threatened species recovery management, riparian weed control, riparian revegetation and maintenance, First Nations ranger group training, engagement and capacity building, and much more!

Building on extensive water quality improvement projects in Seqwater target reaches of the Mary River catchment in previous years, Seqwater contributed a total of $670,000 towards MRCCC projects in 2025-26. The MRCCC was able to increase this investment by leveraging in-kind contributions from landholders and co-investors to the value of $1,413,000 boosting the overall value of 25-26 Seqwater projects to $2,083,000.



Mary River restoration on the Mary River at Goomong

Traditional Owner Aquatic Biodiversity Project

In 2025-26, the MRCCC combined our threatened species protection and habitat improvement projects with Indigenous engagement, capacity building and training activities to support our ongoing work with local Traditional Owner Ranger groups. In recognition of the Kabi Kabi and Jinibara Ranger groups' keen interest in aquatic biodiversity projects, the MRCCC delivered hands-on threatened species conservation and cultural activities in the catchment.



Above: Marcelo Benvenutti demonstrating protected fertiliser plot trials at DPI Gatton
Below: DPI's Mark Bauer, Marcelo Benvenutti, Alana Ebert and Elke Watson at the protected fertiliser plot trials at Gatton



MRCCC-DPI – Nitrogen Use Efficiency Trial (Protected Fertilisers)

The MRCCC has teamed up with Queensland's Department of Primary Industries (DPI) on an important project exploring how protected fertilisers can boost productivity on farms while reducing impacts on our waterways and the Great Barrier Reef. This work forms part of the Mary River Integrated Project, funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef and Catchment Water Quality Program. The trial also has funding support from Seqwater's source protection program – Upper Mary Rivercare.

This project commenced in 2025-26 and will investigate ways to improve nitrogen use efficiency in subtropical dairy systems, including the use of DMPP (a nitrification inhibitor) combined with urea and liquid effluent. The trial will compare different fertiliser treatments to determine their effects on pasture growth, feed quality, nitrogen use efficiency and nitrogen losses through the soil.

The project will also explore whether improved fertiliser efficiency can allow farmers to reduce synthetic nitrogen inputs without compromising pasture production, potentially lowering fertiliser costs and reducing nutrient and pathogen losses to the Mary River and, ultimately, the Great Barrier Reef.

The trial is being conducted by the DPI Dairy Group at Gatton from March 2026 to April 2027, with results shared with dairy farmers through field visits, demonstrations and industry extension activities. Findings may also be relevant to other subtropical grazing and cropping industries.

Riparian rehabilitation and weed management

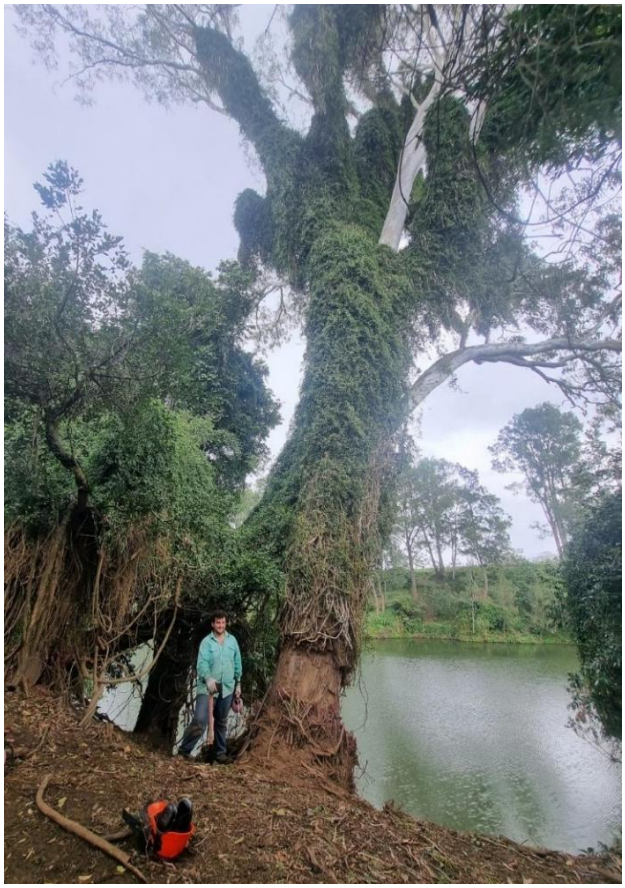
2025-26 saw the continuation of maintenance and infill planting works at existing properties on the Mary River and tributaries. Rehabilitation and revegetation of riparian areas was undertaken through the planting of 17,594 native seedlings across four projects, and the maintenance of existing revegetation sites at 25 properties in the Conondale, Cambroon, Kenilworth, Obi Obi and Goomong reaches. Funding was jointly sourced through Seqwater, Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA), and the Office of the Great Barrier Reef (OGBR).

This year, the weed management program expanded to a broader, more continuous area of the catchment, extending to the Mary headwaters and upstream tributaries, while also connecting downstream from the Kenilworth offtake with the Goomong reach through Moy Pocket. Following the handover of the Upper Mary River Vine Weed Program to the MRCCC, successful treatments targeted key upstream Madeira vine and Cat's Claw creeper infestations, while significant mature infestations at Moy Pocket were treated for the first time. This inclusion establishes a long-term management approach to protect riparian vegetation and reconnect weed management across the catchment.

Covering Conondale, Cambroon, Kenilworth, Obi Obi and Goomong reaches, Seqwater supported the continued control of vine weeds along Mary River and tributaries. With Seqwater funding, we managed 493.17 ha of riparian zones at over 100 properties and treated 219.65 ha of vine weeds for the financial year. 40,400 biocontrol agents were released in Kenilworth and Goomong reaches (32,000 jewel beetles, 8200 tingid bugs and 200 Madeira beetles).

Key program outputs for 2025-2026

	Total
Projects implemented	25
Dairies engaged	11
Riparian fencing (length in metres)	3,120
Area of riparian weeds managed (ha)	493.17 Ha
Trees planted (native seedlings)	17,594
Cats claw and Madeira vine bio-agents released (no. of insects)	40,400
Rivercare program participants	57
BMP assessments completed	5
Extension events (workshops, field days, field walks, etc.)	12





Landholders at the Moy Pocket Cat's Claw creeper control workshop, March 2026

Seqwater – Upper Mary Rivercare Landholder Program

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.

This past year there has been a strong focus on collaboration with more than half of our nine workshops held as a joint activity, or facilitated by other groups supported by MRCCC. By growing connections between landholders in neighbouring catchments, we strengthen and amplify our work's effectiveness, and diversify our knowledge base and experience.

Our landholder contact list has grown to well over 200 and we have more than 57 landholders currently listed in our Rivercare program. In addition to nine landholder workshops, we have been involved in three other events including Find a Frog in February, Contractor Days, the Mary River Festival in July and the MRCCC annual Catchment Crawl in October.

In the last year a total of five Best Management Practice (BMP) assessments were completed to secure 5 years of support with landholders, with more currently in the pipeline.

As always, the MRCCC Upper Mary Rivercare team 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.

Highlights of activities from 2025-26 include:

Collaborative activities

In February 41 people attended a partner workshop to explore the fascinating world of frogs, platypus and conservation options for landholders. Coming together with the MRCCC, Sunshine Coast Council staff, Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group and our local Platypus Whisperer, Neil Anderson, the workshop took place at Obi Obi Hall and preceded an exciting and anticipatory visit to Obi Obi Creek. Platypus were elusive but, as the light fell away, we scoured the creek bank and nearby dam for frogs and other fauna. A sleeping Krefft's turtle and juvenile Eastern water dragon were engaging additions to Stony creek frogs and other frog species.

The team partnered with Roving Restorers in March in the upper catchment at Conondale. Participants came together to learn about the ongoing work of Hinterland Bush Links' Upper Mary Weed Vine Project (now managed by MRCCC), to identify and manage weeds, and support nature and wildlife.

Also in March, Upper Mary Rivercare supported Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group to host a workshop for Upper Mary landholders to identify and control cat's claw and Madeira vine near the headwaters of the catchment.

Cats Claw Vine Control 'Tips and Tricks'

9 Workshops -March, May and June 2026 with Carl Schefe and MRCCC

Location: Walker Road Bridge (hosts – Peter and Libby Rough)

30 people attended including 21 landholders; 2 Barung Landcare; 5 Kabi Kabi rangers. Participants came from Gympie, Widgee, Moy Pocket, Sunshine Coast, Maleny and Landsborough.

MRCCC facilitated a series of drop-in grass roots workshops at Moy Pocket on the Mary River. The workshops targeted both locals from the district and others across the catchment keen to upskill on Cats Claw Vine from our experienced contractor, Carl Schefe. Three days during March, May and June were advertised where an attendee could choose one of three time slots. There was a maximum of 5 people per group. This provided a safe place for people to ask questions directly relevant to their situation. Each participant was provided a cheat sheet with some essential information to take home.

Carl provided useful information on essential kit, chemical use and methods for control. There were good discussions and it highlighted the growing demand for correct and up to date information and control methods. With most participants attempting to control Cats Claw Vine in their own patch many were unprepared using ineffective chemical, wearing insufficient PPE and unable to tackle large areas methodically. Carl was a wonderful communicator and tailored his training to each group. Libby and Peter were gracious hosts offering a great shady spot on the river at Moy Pocket. Their contribution is hugely appreciated. Future grass roots workshops are planned next year focusing on Madeira vine control.



May was a perfect time to hold an Introduction to Cool Burning and Fire Risk Management workshop for landholders which was a collaboration between Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners, local landholders, community members and experienced rural fire members, and Upper Mary Rivercare. At the end of an engaging open forum on cool burning as a tool for land management, indigenous leader Michael Turner led a practical demonstration on Marrapatta Memorial Outdoor Education Centre grounds on Yabba Creek where they implement an active cool burning plan.

Most recently, on 13 October 2026, the annual Upper Mary Rivercare Introductory Workshop was held in collaboration with Noosa and District Landcare's Lake Macdonald Catchment Creekcare team. Well attended by landholders from both catchments, participants were treated to a pasture field walk on the beautiful Noosa Hinterland property before settling down to an informative session on how the catchments and water grid works, and how important the program is in achieving safe drinking water for our communities, as well as huge benefits for wildlife and environment. There were lots of new faces, everyone was highly engaged and excellent new connections were made, we were encouraged by how landholders embraced the program and how everything was so clearly communicated on the day.



Small-group workshops

A series of targeted, small-group workshops also featured during this year, allowing for more personal and tailored information-sharing. In March, May and June, a series of small, five-person workshops were held in conjunction with experienced contractor Carl Schefe with the goal of sharing practical tips and tricks to control cat's claw and Madeira vine.

A small-group forage budgeting workshop was held in July, when pasture growth is typically slow, to demonstrate what stocking rates would be viable to support a grazing herd without supplementary feeding. This followed a broader Beef Pasture workshop and field walk held in May focussed on regenerative grazing practices in the Upper Mary, which itself was a follow-up to a 2025 workshop.

Meeting landholder needs

The Upper Mary Rivercare workshop program aims to deliver what our program participants ask for and need. We are continuously gathering topics to prioritise what information landholders are seeking to sustainably manage their property and enterprise.

Top right: A cool burn in progress at the workshop held in May

Bottom right: Upper Mary Rivercare participants at the Cooroy Mountain workshop



Kevindale, Goomong

Bec Watson – Kabi Kabi country

Seqwater has purchased a 141-hectare property in Kandanga, currently used for dairy farming and grazing directly across from the Noosa Water Treatment Plant intake on the Mary River. The purchase was voluntary, with Seqwater identifying the opportunity and approaching the landholder before the property was placed on the market. A property management plan will be developed in collaboration with the MRCCC, with funding allocated over the next five years for the property's management and rehabilitation.

The property includes 2.5 km of Mary River frontage, which will be rehabilitated. Cattle grazing, through grazing leases, will be carefully managed across the property as a land management tool. This acquisition protects the water quality for the Noosa Water Treatment Plant and protects important aquatic threatened species habitat on the Mary River.

Mary River Integrated Project - Working together for a healthier Mary River. Project Lead Tom Brook

Kabi Kabi and Jinibara country

The Mary River Integrated Project (MRIP) is bringing together landholders, Traditional Owners, researchers, government and community organisations to improve water quality and land management across the Upper Mary River and Mary Valley catchment.

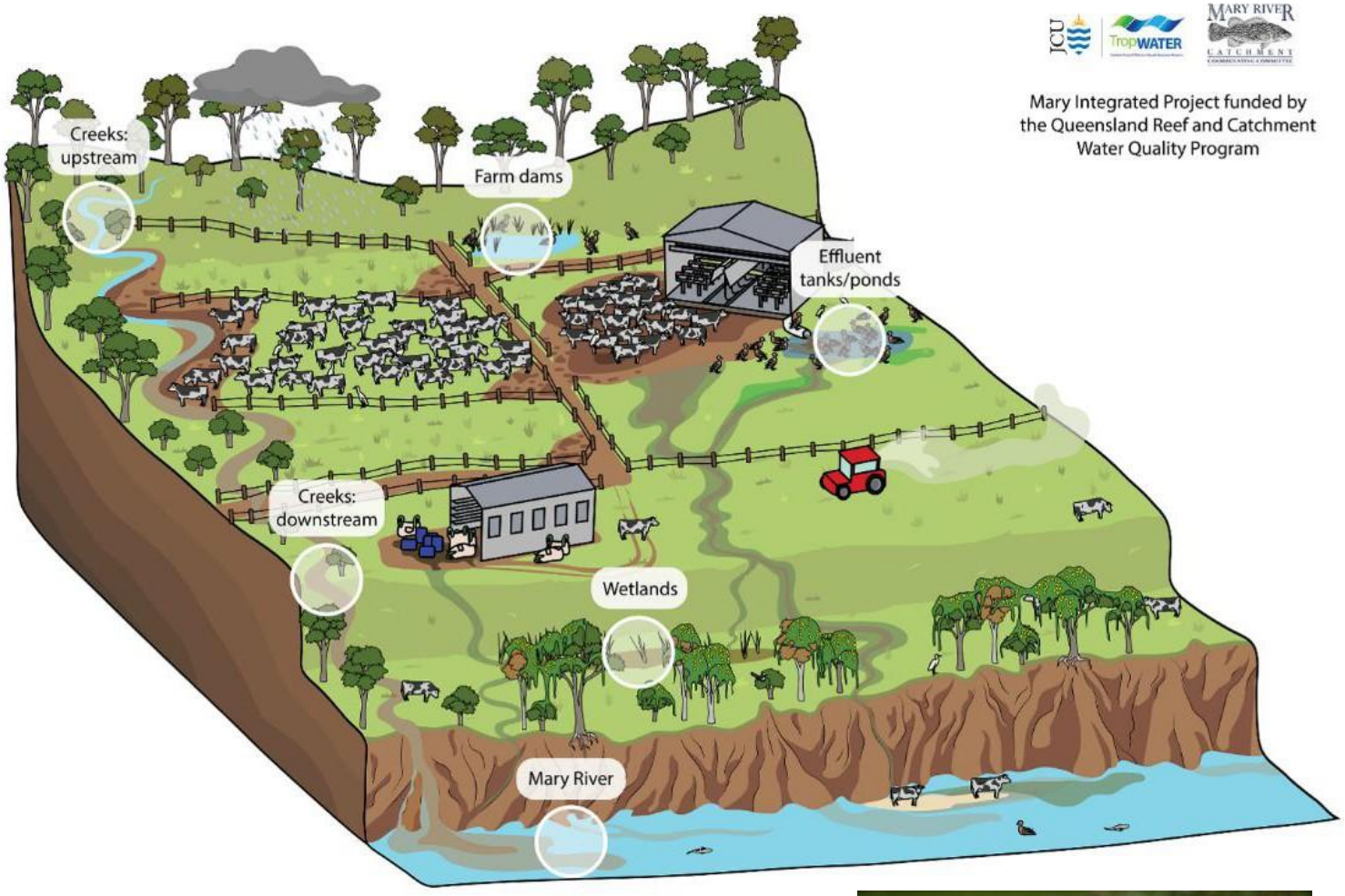
Funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef and Catchment Water Quality Program, MRIP focuses on some of the key water quality risks in the Upper Mary and Mary Valley. The project works with dairy and grazing landholders to reduce fine sediment and nutrient losses, restore riparian areas and build practical, long-term land management solutions.

Importantly, MRIP is about more than individual projects. By combining local knowledge, science, traditional ecological knowledge and on-ground action, the project is helping build stronger partnerships and a more connected approach to catchment management.



Mary River revegetation area at Cambroon in the upper catchment

Mary Integrated Project funded by the Queensland Reef and Catchment Water Quality Program



A year of on-ground action

Over the past year, significant progress has occurred across all five MRIP activity areas:

Pilot Dairy Water Quality Best Management Practice Project– *learning from the farm scale*

The Pilot Dairy Water Quality Best Management Practice Project is working directly with dairy farmers to better understand nutrient movement through farms and identify practical opportunities to reduce losses.

The project has now collected over 12 months of water quality data from three dairy farms across the Upper Mary and Mary Valley, complemented by Sunshine Coast Council monitoring in the Upper Mary River. Data collection also occurred during rainfall events to capture nutrient flushing events where the highest concentrations of contaminants are often washed into the water. Preliminary findings show that nutrient levels (dissolved inorganic nitrogen) and bacteria levels reduce significantly across the dairy farm landscape as they move closer to the river.

Protected fertiliser efficiency plot trials have also commenced with the Department of Primary Industries at Gatton College, providing an opportunity to investigate how fertiliser management can be improved while maintaining productive pastures. In field trials in the Mary Valley is planned for 2027.

This work is supported by partnerships with dairy farmers, Dr Zoe Bainbridge at James Cook University, TropWATER, Seqwater, and other researchers and technical specialists.



TropWater's Zoe Bainbridge talks about how water quality moves through a dairy farm landscape

Pilot Upper Mary Jinibara Water Quality Monitoring – *building capacity*

The Pilot Upper Mary Jinibara Water Quality Monitoring Program continues to combine cultural knowledge, ecological, water quality monitoring and practical training.

The Jinibara Freshwater Rangers have established an on-country water quality monitoring program across six sites in the Upper Mary. During the year, MRCCC has continued mentoring a new intake of Jinibara Freshwater Rangers and strengthened collaboration with the Kabi Kabi Land and Sea Rangers team.

This is an important part of MRIP's focus on building local capacity and incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into integrated catchment management.

Unsealed Roads Fine Sediment Management– *tackling sediment at the source*

Unsealed roads can be a significant source of fine sediment, particularly where runoff concentrates and carries material directly towards waterways.

MRIP has moved from planning into demonstration, with a forestry road demonstration site established in partnership with HQ Plantations and technical expertise from Peter Hairsine (Australian National University). The site was showcased during the May 2026 stakeholder field day, and a dedicated workshop was held for local operators to get together and talk best practice and road maintenance. These workshops provided opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and have generated considerable momentum across the industry.



Peter Hairsine speaks to stakeholders at the unsealed roads demonstration day

A second demonstration has also been established on a Mary Valley dairy farm. It includes a trial of a self-cleaning rubber water diverter designed to capture fine sediment and nutrients from a laneway and redirect runoff into an adjacent paddock, where it can be filtered before reaching the waterway. Early observations show the structure is holding up great and successfully keeping laneway runoff under control.

These demonstrations provide practical and low-cost examples for water sensitive road design that can be seen, tested and potentially adapted across the catchment.

Riparian Zone Management– and a 30,000-Tree Milestone

Riparian restoration remains one of the largest areas of on-ground activity within MRIP.

During the project to date, riparian management has been undertaken across 29 properties covering 25 kilometres of riverbank, with more than 30,000 trees planted and maintained. This massive achievement wouldn't have been possible without the muddy boots and hard work of our skilled and experienced local landcare groups – Gympie, Noosa and Barung Landcare - and highly skilled local contractors. A bush regenerators field day was held in June on Yabba Creek, bringing together MRCCC contractors who shared their knowledge and experience in best practice control of Madeira vine, which is becoming and increasing threat to the catchment.

This builds on the strong foundation of previous investment in the Mary River catchment while extending restoration into priority areas. The result is not simply more trees in the ground, but healthier riverbanks, improved habitat and a practical contribution to reducing sediment and nutrient movement into waterways.

Small Areas Grazing – practical support for landholders

The Small Areas Grazing Landholder Program continues to support grazing landholders through practical workshops, field walks and extension activities. This year included beef pasture and regenerative grazing practices workshops and field walks, as well as forage budgeting field walks. The program has also continued working with MRCCC Upper Mary Rivercare to support property planning and implementation of on-ground projects.

In May 2026 a grazing lands workshop and field walk was held at Conondale where the issue of pasture rundown and its impacts on downstream water quality was discussed. Options to address pasture rundown and pasture forage shortfalls was discussed with the group. A nearby grazing property practicing an intensive pasture cropping system was inspected.

A small discussion group came together in July 2026 in the Upper Mary catchment to practice how to calculate and prepare a pasture forage budget though pasture cuts in the paddocks.

Over the course of the 12 months the project team has helped grazing landholders prepare best management practice property plans, and helped to deliver on-ground projects that improve downstream water quality.

Bringing people together

A major strength of MRIP is the network of people and organisations involved.

In May 2026, the annual stakeholder day brought together 37 people from 17 project partner groups for a field tour showcasing MRIP activities. Participants visited the forestry road demonstration site, a property on the Mary River near Conondale to discuss riparian management and threatened species, and a dairy farm to explore water quality monitoring and management.

The field-based format provided an opportunity to see the work happening on the ground, share experiences and talk openly about what is working, what is being learned and where the project can go next.

MRCCC and project partners also hosted a field visit for Minister Powell and the Office of the Great Barrier Reef team in July to discuss current and future programs.

Looking ahead

The next stage of MRIP will continue to focus on turning knowledge and partnerships into lasting improvements across the catchment.

This includes continuing water quality monitoring and data interpretation, supporting dairy farmers and grazing landholders with practical best management practices, expanding riparian restoration, learning from the unsealed roads demonstration sites and strengthening partnerships with Traditional Owners, researchers, industry and government.

MRIP demonstrates what can be achieved when investment, local knowledge and on-ground action come together across a catchment.

Activity Area	Key Statistic	Achievement / Significance
Stakeholder engagement	37 participants	Attended the May 2026 annual stakeholder field day
Project partnerships	17 partner groups	Represented at the annual stakeholder field day
Landholder engagement	38 participants	Properties engaged in best practice plans & on-ground work
Riparian zone management	29 properties	Riverbank restoration and management undertaken across the catchment
Riparian area	25 km / 60Ha	Riverbank covered by riparian management activities
Tree planting	30,000+ trees	Trees planted and maintained to improve riverbank stability, habitat and water quality
Water quality monitoring	3 dairy farms, 6 Mary River sites	More than 130 water samples collected
Jinibara Freshwater Rangers	6 monitoring sites	Water quality monitoring established across Jinibara Country in the Upper Mary
Unsealed roads management	2 demonstration sites	Forestry road and dairy laneway demonstration site established
Fertiliser efficiency research	Trials commenced	Collaboration with the DPI to investigate improved dairy fertiliser management
Grazing landholder	Workshops and field walks	Practical extension in beef pasture management, regenerative grazing and forage budgeting

Bush Regeneration Contractor Sharing Day, 18 June 2026 Yabba Ridge, Imbil

29 people attended including Kabi Kabi rangers; 16 contractors from Barung, Noosa and Gympie Landcare, Hinterland Bushlinks, Ecollaboration, Retree Veg, Corella Nursery, Stoney Creek regenerators, Native Foresters, Seqwater, Sunshine Coast Council and MRCCC project officers.

Bush regeneration contractors across the catchment were invited to the annual Contractor Sharing Day to network and share their understanding of Madeira vine weed control which was this year's topic. It was also an opportunity for MRCCC to acknowledge and thank the group for the enormous body of work they do in improving the riparian health of the catchment.

The location was a shady spot on Yabba Creek at Yabba Ridge camp ground where the Love family made the group very welcome. Feedback from 2025 identified the need to understand why funding bodies focus on certain elements of bush regeneration work.

Tim Odgers from Seqwater Source Protection spoke to the group and explained why they fund vine weed control which enabled many to get an understanding of the big picture. During the morning, participants shared ideas and many good discussions were had to resolve some of the Madeira vine control issues.

Feedback noted the extent of interest from the group for more days like this to increase understanding on many issues from soil erosion, nest boxes, biocontrols, managing chemical applications in sensitive environments and all in between. This coming year, MRCCC project officers will narrow down some options for the next contractor sharing day which aims to include some of these fantastic ideas.

We would all like to give our contractors a huge shout out for the amazing work they do.



MRCCC personnel with bush regenerators from around the Mary River catchment gathered to share knowledge of their experiences with Madeira vine.

The Urban Rivers and Catchments Program

An integrated catchment management program for the Gympie urban river reach. Kath Bennett and Sarah Grimish

Kabi Kabi Country

About the program

The Urban Rivers Catchment Program (URCP) – Integrated catchment management program for the Gympie urban river reach is now in its second year of operation. This Program 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. Riparian remediation and restoration works are continuing at the six selected project sites, showing good progress, and already exceeding anticipated goals. These efforts will improve in-stream habitat and water quality for aquatic threatened species in the Gympie town reach of the river. Also, the Grey-headed flying fox historic roosting site at the most downstream site at Widgee Crossing is being rehabilitated through vine weed removal. On-ground works detailed in this report facilitate natural regeneration of native flora species and assisted regeneration at revegetation sites.



Mary River turtle nest habitat protection fence, The Sands, Gympie

Project progress

The table below details the progress summary of the Gympie Urban Rivers project to date and the agreed medium term project outcomes to be met by 30 June 2028. In terms of area and kilometres of riparian habitat, on-ground works and project progress has already exceeded the medium-term project outcomes.

Medium term outcomes	Actions	Target	Total work to date	Progress Summary
MT1	Silt inputs measurably decreased against pre-2024 pre-project levels	35.5 hectares of aquatic and riparian zones remediated benefiting the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar site and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area	75 ha	Reported total exceeds the stated target
MT2	Improved in-stream habitat against pre-2024 pre-project levels	9 kilometres streambank remediated across 6 project sites	13.8 km	Reported total exceeds the stated target
MT3	Improved critical riparian habitat directly benefitting EPBC listed Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia and Grey-headed flying fox historic roosting site against 2024 pre-project baseline levels	12.3 hectares remediated at Six Mile Rest Area and Widgee Crossing	32.6 ha	Reported total exceeds the stated target
MT4	Improved breeding outcomes for MRT	Nest protection and translocation	Habitat protection fence in place for nesting turtles at The Sands during nesting season 1 Oct 26 to 31 Jan 27. Three nests located and protected to date.	Progress already better than last season where no nests were located at The Sands.

The table below details on-ground works and revegetation (trees planted) per reporting period since project inception. Widgee Crossing and Six Mile Rest Area are identified as priority areas for rehabilitation for the historic grey-headed flying fox and remnant Lowland Rainforest of Sub-tropical Australia respectively.

Reporting Period	Total weed treatment area	Area of revegetation (ha)	Length of riverbank remediation (km)	Priority area rehabilitation (ha)	Trees planted
MPR1	0.593	0	0	0	0
MPR2	19.293	3.133	4.684	12.43	10,644
MPR3	32.8	1.446	9.08	18.26	6,356
MPR4	17.189	0.62	0.036	1.91	830
Total	69.875	5.199	13.8	32.6	17,830

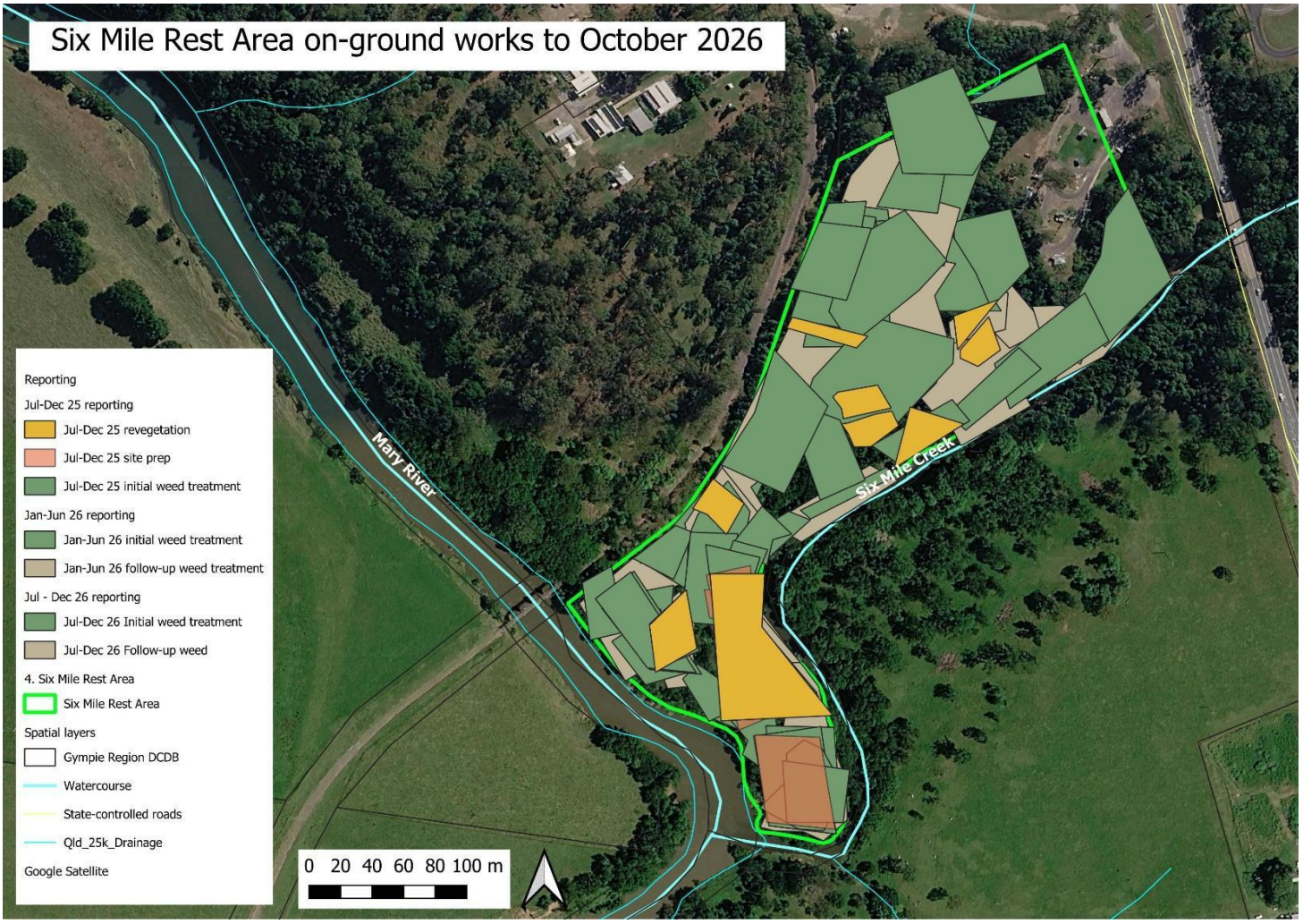
On-grounds works to date

Riparian Rehabilitation and On-ground Works

MRCCC continued delivering riparian rehabilitation works throughout the Mary River urban reach, supporting improved river health, reduced silt inputs and the regeneration of native vegetation. A total of 75 hectares of on-ground works was conducted in the riparian zone at the six project sites including:

- 70 hectares of weed treatment to facilitate native regeneration; and
- 5.2 hectares revegetated with 17,830 mixed native species across the fossicking area on Deep Creek, Six Mile Rest Area, River Trail and The Sands and on private properties in Lower Deep Creek and on the Mary River.

Natural regeneration of native flora species has been observed at sites where weed treatment has occurred, particularly Six Mile Rest Area. Assisted regeneration of native plant species is also being observed at the revegetation sites including the River Trail and The Sands, Six Mile Rest Area, and Lower Deep Creek.



Riverbank and Streambank Remediation

The quality of in-stream habitat along the Mary River, Deep Creek and Six Mile Creek directly benefits aquatic species listed as threatened under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) including the Endangered Mary River cod, Critically Endangered Mary River turtle, Vulnerable Australian lungfish, the iconic platypus and other native aquatic species. A total of 13.8 km of riverbank and streambank remediation works has been conducted across the six project sites. This includes weed treatment, site preparation, and revegetation works.

2 kilometres of river/stream bank frontage was fenced off and protected from stock at two freehold properties on the Mary River and Deep Creek. Both sites have been revegetated to improve bank stability and reduce sediment flowing into the river during flood events. These activities help to restore river and stream bank riparian vegetation, improve bank stability, improve water quality and support healthier in-stream habitats.

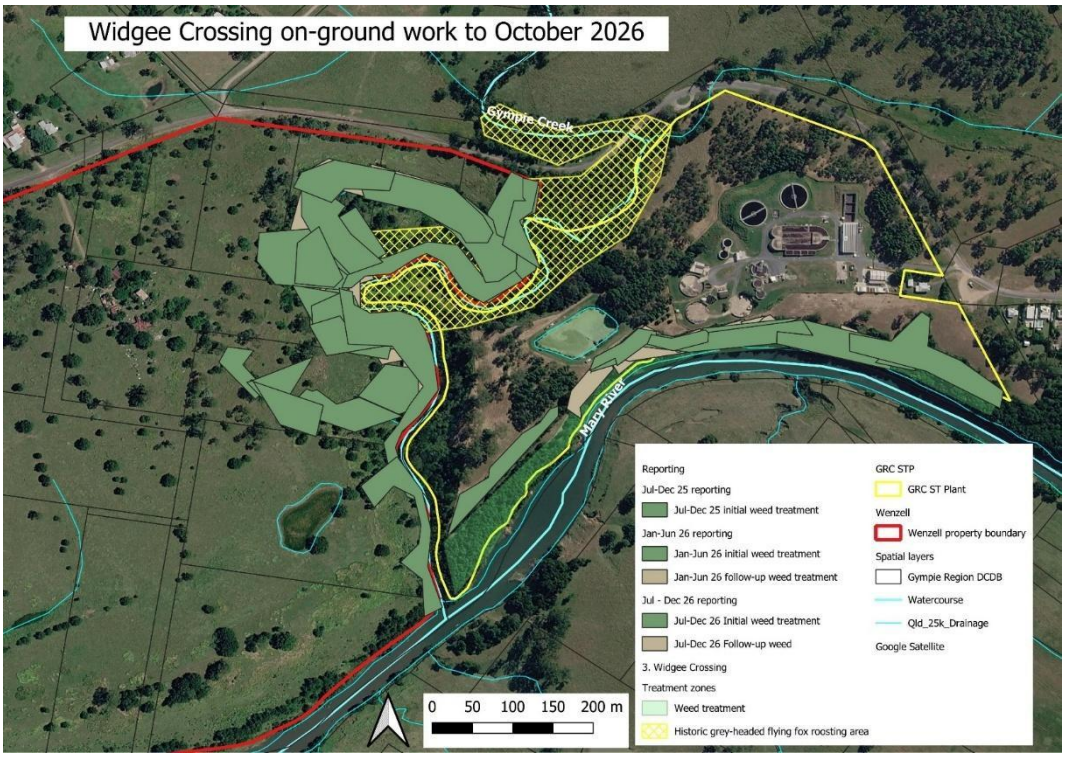
Rehabilitation of Priority Ecological Areas – Widgee Crossing and Six Mile Rest Area

A total of 32.6 ha of weed treatment (initial weed treatment and follow-up weed treatment) was conducted at the priority ecological areas at Six Mile Rest Area and Widgee Crossing. Natural regeneration is occurring at both sites following weed removal. Areas at Six Mile Rest Area that have been revegetated show favourable signs of assisted regeneration of native species. These works are improving the natural resilience of the riparian areas, supporting the recovery of native vegetation and improving the condition of important ecological areas along the Mary River and Six Mile Creek.

The quality of critical riparian habitat directly benefitting Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia Threatened Ecological Community and EPBD listed threatened species will be measurably improved against 2024 pre-project baseline levels through the protection and restoration of the riparian zone. This includes stock exclusion, the removal of all habitat-transforming weeds, and the re-establishment of high-quality native habitat across the project sites at Six Mile Creek and Widgee Crossing.

Community Awareness Day – World Rivers Day

The MRCCC hosted a Community Awareness Day in September 2026 at The Sands, Gympie in recognition of World Rivers Day. The event was supported by Gympie Regional Council, Gympie District Landcare, the Kabi Kabi People's Aboriginal Council and Gympie South Lions Club. The Community Day was well attended, and included Gympie Mayor Hartwig and Councillor Warnes. Activities and displays on the day included a Welcome to Country by Kabi Kabi Traditional Owners, guided bird and river trail walks, Bug Club activities and storytelling, information on pest species and native plant giveaways.



The Mary River turtle nesting habitat protection fence at The Sands was launched and included tree planting along the top of the riverbank at The Sands. A light-hearted punk hairstyle competition was also held in recognition of a Mary River turtle photograph by Chris Van Wyk.

The event strengthened community awareness of the Urban Rivers project and progress to rehabilitate the river, improve water quality since gold mining ceased in the town, conduct biodiversity conservation including eradication of pest species and the importance of protecting Mary River turtle nesting habitat.

Mary River Turtle Nest Protection – The Sands

Active searches for Mary River turtles (MRT) were undertaken during the 2025/26 nesting season at the known nesting bank at The Sands and other potential nesting locations along the urban reach of the Mary River, between Six Mile Rest Area and Widgee Crossing. No nests were found at The Sands, primarily attributed to human activity such as camping and camp fires on the nesting bank during nesting season.

As a result, planning and implementation of temporary fencing at the known MRT nesting bank at The Sands, Gympie, formed part of the project's 2026–27 nesting-season activities. Following approval from Gympie Regional Council, an MRT nest habitat fence was constructed along the top of the bank and along each side to the water's edge with signage.

The signage was developed by the Urban Rivers Advisory Committee and MRT experts, to raise awareness of the need for nest habitat protection and enlist support from the general public. Monitoring of the bank is occurring early mornings between 1 October 2026 and 31 January 2027. Once located, nests are protected and translocated to a secure enclosure for incubation and successful release. To date three MRT nests have been located at The Sands and protected.



Kabi Rangers Slade Dalton and Jacquie Sandy at the Urban Rivers Community Day

The project will continue to focus on protecting the nesting habitat at The Sands, and locating and protecting MRT nests and safely releasing hatchlings back into the Mary River.

Communications, Community Engagement and Partnerships

Communications and engagement during 2026 helped raise awareness of the Urban Rivers Project, strengthen relationships with local stakeholders and expand opportunities for landholder participation. Activities included:

- Media coverage through Codline and Gympie Today, and ABC Wide Bay Radio coverage or interviews;
- Flyers promoting the Community Awareness Day;
- Development of new contacts and networks within Gympie Regional Council; and
- Engagement with new landholders.

Priorities for the year ahead

Project priorities for the next 12 months to October 2027 include:

- Continuing weed treatment and revegetation maintenance across the project sites.
- Supporting natural and assisted regeneration of native vegetation.
- Maintaining engagement with landholders and project partners.
- Protecting Mary River turtle nesting habitat at The Sands.
- Monitoring rehabilitation outcomes and documenting progress.
- Continuing community education and awareness activities.

Overall Project Summary

The Urban Rivers Project continues to support the rehabilitation of the Mary River Gympie urban reach during 2026/27 through riparian weed management, native revegetation, riverbank remediation, ecological restoration and community engagement.

The September Community Awareness Day provided an important opportunity to engage residents, share local and Indigenous knowledge, promote river health and highlight the importance of Mary River turtle conservation.

Continued rehabilitation, stakeholder partnerships and protection of turtle nesting habitat remain important components of the project's ongoing contribution to a healthier Mary River.

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

Local Government Partnerships with the MRCCC – Eva Ford, Shona Sengstock, Keishia Duffy

From the headwaters to the outflow of the Mary River into the Great Sandy Strait, the local Government Councils are connected by the flowing waters, the traverse of flora and fauna and by the activities of the community. Three Biospheres (Sunshine Coast, Noosa and Great Sandy) also span, adjacent to each other, across the catchment. These are three out of the five existing in Australia! That means, we all live and work in a most special region that is deserving and necessarily demanding of our effort to protect and improve. The local councils are instrumental in this arena having close connection to the people and the environments.



Aquatic fauna surveys in mountain streams of the Stanley River catchment

We recognise the connection that the Councils have, not only with the MRCCC, but with each other and the myriad of groups and organisations. The Mary River and the flux of movement of life up, down and across the landscape, enable partnerships and cooperation to develop in many different forms.

City of Moreton Bay

There is a corner at the southern/upstream extent of the Mary River catchment administered by the City of Moreton Bay. That small area supports rural folk who live with the biodiversity riches many travel far and wide to experience. The montane environment brings high rainfall, lush rain forests, mountain streams and, unfortunately, threatened species.

Here lives the suite of threatened stream frogs and two amazing crayfish. Endangered and vulnerable, they have enabled us to pique Council concern and obtain 12-months funding for a pilot project to investigate these species. The focus is on distribution and population levels at 10 sites of varying condition; remnant, recovering and disturbed. We also will be initiating a rehabilitated disturbed site for long-term monitoring to determine species recovery.

At the same time, we have also had an opportunity to delve into other aquatic life through City of Moreton Bay's Healthy Environments grant program partnering with Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Griffith University Australian Rivers Institute. The aim of the project is to improve our understanding of the biodiversity and species richness within the Stanley River. The second survey is planned for early November this year to add to the late summer survey that revealed 11 fish species, two turtle species, one frog species (Giant barred frog) and platypus residing at six sites.

Sunshine Coast Council

The MRCCC has had close bonds with the Sunshine Coast Council for the last 16 years, long before amalgamation when it partly identified as Maroochy Shire Council. Some of our relationships with staff and Councillors remain after decades of communication and joint programs. Evolving from short-term, small budget, devolved grant programs to the perpetual arrangement under the Environment Levy Partnership (ELP), the MRCCC has been supported as an entity to maintain connection and provide environmental support to the upper Mary River catchment community. Currently we deliver the following programs under the ELP with additional investment from a range of project partners and landholder volunteers:

- Landholder Environment Grant (LEG) assistance for landholders in the upper Mary River catchment
- Maintain connection with landholders, other MRCCC programs and other organisations
- Coordinate two volunteer Waterwatch networks
- SCC Mary River catchment water quality report card - MRCCC supporting council to collect and develop the report card. This data contributes to understanding dairy water quality pathways through the dairy farm landscape with linkage to MRCCC OGBR dairy water quality monitoring program
- Coordinate Find a Frog in February citizen science program
- Continuation of long-term frog monitoring sites
- Frog monitoring with Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation Rangers
- Long-term frog monitoring at Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve
- Collaborative community workshops e.g. Obi Obi community workshop
- Host students under a workplace learning program
- Production of the MRCCC annual Codline newsletter
- Administration support

Some highlights during the year included:

- MRCCC/SCC staff day out – A tour of key sites in the upper Mary River catchment.







Top right: Frog monitoring on Obi Obi Creek
Centre: Ian Mackay and Cr David Law for the Obi Obi Creek sub-catchment familiarisation tour
Below: Sunshine Coast Council and MRCCC staff assessing riparian condition at Gheerulla Creek Cat's Claw creeper infestation

The tour highlighted the issues and some of the solutions for stream bank erosion and weed control, the work being done on so many farms to improve land and water management practices and the work we do to protect our biodiversity through turtle nest protection and long-term frog monitoring.

- Obi Obi community workshop – Held in Obi Obi Hall with platypus and frog searching into the night. This was a joint event for Find a Frog in February, Council conservation options for landholders, the activities of Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group and the status of platypus and what they need from us.
- An afternoon with Councillor David Law – It had been a while since we'd provided Cr. Law with an update of our activities in his division 10 and the time was spent on properties along Obi Obi Creek to highlight the challenges landholders face during floods and how we work with them to stabilise banks, look out for threatened species and facilitate best land management practices.

We are currently in the final year of a 3-year partnership. The partnerships give stability to the MRCCC and allow for leveraging of additional funding and expansive partnerships with other groups and organisations. The supported projects link in so well with other programs, particularly the Upper Mary Rivercare Program funded by Seqwater, the DRFA Biodiversity Conservation program and the OGBR /MRIP Place-Based programs. The LEG program facilitates introduction to new landholders who can then be supported via SCC funding and from our other programs.





Top left: Catfish nest in Six Mile Creek

Above: Catchment crawl monitoring on Six Mile Creek Cooran

Noosa Council

Multi-year Environmental Collaboration (MEC) grants normally run for 3 years, however, a 12-month extension was granted to recipients for the 2026 to 2027 financial year. Our focus is on four areas:

- Rural hinterland extension program
- Citizen Science Waterwatch program – hinterland catchment crawls in conjunction with Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation Rangers (KKPAC)
- Biodiversity Resilience – long-term frog monitoring and Find a Frog in February program
- Cod Log installation and monitoring with KKPAC

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 the MRCCC to provide extension support to the Resilient Rivers Program focused on the Noosa River catchment grazing landholder community. Technical support was provided to Noosa and District Landcare's Seqwater Lake Macdonald source protection program. One-on-one landholder field support was provided in the Kin Kin, Cootharaba Lake Macdonald and areas. A Lake Macdonald landscape unit booklet is in development, which will be useful for small area graziers. Noosa Shire grazing landholders were also actively invited to attend MRCCC grazing land activities in the Mary Valley and Upper Mary River.

Monthly water samples are collected under a report card development program and incorporate training and field visits with Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (KKPAC) rangers. In addition, and following on from the MRCCC's Noosa Shire Water Quality Monitoring Situation Analysis report in 2028 (reviewed by MRCCC in 2023), the Noosa Council multi-year MEC supports a 'Catchment Crawl' every 6-months to collect data from creeks that have not been sampled prior to this program.

Data collection includes:

- Phys/chem water quality data
- E. coli levels
- Nutrient analyses
- Riparian Condition
- Aquatic weed assessment
- Incidental flora and fauna
- Aquatic macroinvertebrates
- Riparian condition assessment

This partnership provides opportunities for the broader community such as KKPAC, university students, landholders, Landcare staff and relevant council departments to visit waterways, network, share information and learn new skills. Events such as the bi-annual catchment crawls allow partnerships to strengthen and grow and potential projects and conversations to develop.



Above: Turtle surveying in the Gympie region

Stream frog populations, including iconic threatened species (Giant barred frog, Tusked frog and Cascade treefrog) are monitored at sites along Six Mile Creek and Cooroora Creeks twice each spring-summer season (refer to the Long-term frog monitoring report). We have recently been working with Council staff, Rodrigo Oliveira to install 'acid frog' monitoring sites along Burgess Creek under the goals of the Council's Burgess Creek Integrated Catchment Management Plan that is nearing endorsement.

Find a Frog in February is supported through this partnership and brings the world of wetlands, waterways and frogs to the community, increasing understanding and regards for frogs and their habitats and influencing choices and actions of people in their every-day lives (refer to the Find a Frog in February report).

Gympie Regional Council Community Partnership Grant

The MRCCC's long relationship (since the MRCCC's inception) with Gympie Council includes their representation as Cooloola Shire Council on the MRCCC committee. We continue to receive annual funding support from Council that has evolved in recent years to 3-year partnerships that align with Sunshine Coast and Noosa Councils. The partnership and other funding supports:

- Coordinate five volunteer Waterwatch networks (refer to the Waterwatch report)
- Coordinate Find a Frog in February citizen science program (refer to the Find a Frog in February report)
- Distributional surveys for critically endangered Mary River turtles along Widgee Creek with assistance for nest protection
- Protection of Mary River turtle hatchlings through translocations to 'safe' locations
- Water monitoring of Lake Alford to develop a water quality monitoring plan
- Preparation of the Gympie Region Water Quality Report Card
- Ongoing significant support for the Urban Rivers program (refer to Urban Rivers report)
- A review and update of the Mary River turtle nest protection program These activities and developments provide opportunities for closer collaboration between Gympie Regional Council and the MRCCC.

Fraser Coast Regional Council

Find a Frog in February is supported each year by the Fraser Coast Regional Council. The funding enables us to provide a community workshop and surveys, and to work with local schools. This year we provided a community workshop and frog surveys in the Toogoom area and a frog talk at Hervey Bay Library. Our event with Tinana State School continued for another exciting year of presentation and Woocoo Park monitoring survey (refer to the Find a Frog in February report).



Tinana Primary School frog survey, February 2026

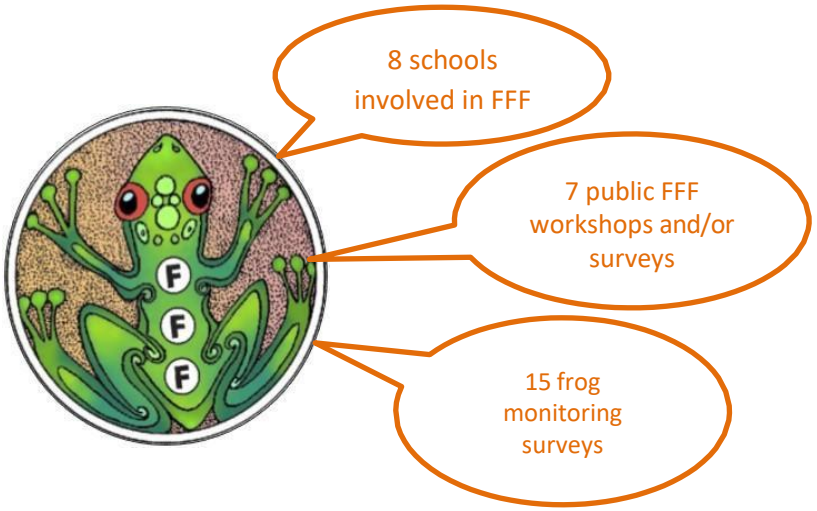
In 2025/26 Fraser Coast Regional Council assisted the MRCCC to purchase much needed new water testing equipment for the Waterwatch networks in the Fraser Coast – Munna Creek and the Tiaro-Maryborough networks. Also supported was a 10-year Fraser Coast water quality report card to be released later this year using data collected by Waterwatch volunteers. Volunteers in the Fraser Coast council area have been collecting data since 2003; one of the longest standing networks in the catchment.

Find a Frog in February – Eva Ford, Ollie Scully

10 years of the MRCCC's Find a Frog in February (FFF) citizen science program has highlighted the global and national plight of our frogs and the threats to their persistence, while celebrating the wonderful richness we have in the FFF program area (see map). The program's media blitz each year shares with the broad community what we can all do to reduce our impacts and how to improve the resilience of both threatened and non-threatened species through habitat protection and provision.

The 2025-26 active frog season was marked by very little wet weather, low creek flows, dry wetlands and variable temperatures from cool to steamy and hot. Difficult for humans, imperfect breeding and feeding conditions for frogs. February was particularly dry with a few patchy, small rain systems for some. Consequently, frog activity was low, resulting in low detectability and a small data set. Such is the outcome of long-term monitoring.

The following table provides some overall statistics of FFF 2026 activity collected through our volunteer network directly to the MRCCC and through the iNaturalist platform (additional records are submitted through FrogID; 2026 data pending).



FFF 2026 (MRCCC and iNaturalist records)	
Frog Finders	*1078*
Sites visited	*534*
# frogs observed	*6483*
# species reported (-/45)	*37*
# threatened species (-/8)	*8*
# extinct species (-/2)	***0***

The major period of FFF is February, however, we receive incidental records throughout the year and hold events during the summer months from December to March.

Highlights of the FFF period were:

- Joint workshops:
  - Obi Obi event with Sunshine Coast Council and Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group and the Platypus Whisperer, Neil Anderson.
  - Curra workshop and survey with Gympie Council.
  - Toogoom workshop and surveys with Fraser Coast Regional Council.
  - Kin Kin workshop and surveys with Noosa Council and Noosa and District Landcare.
  - World Frog Day international webinar presentation on Find a Frog in February in conjunction with Irish river and conservation agencies and groups.
- High interest from schools to install long-term monitoring sites with 4 schools engaged with MRCCC staff for class and frog monitoring activities, and an additional eight schools requesting to be involved in setting up their own frog monitoring sites in 2027.
- 10-year anniversary celebration at the Mary Valley Festival with an appearance of Gina the Giant barred frog (aka Beanie Wedlock), Noosa District State High School (NDSHS) long-time involved teacher, Nik Olds, and long-time assistant and volunteer, Belinda Wedlock. Frog cakes were made by the students from NDSHS and shared around to the crowd.
- Interest in running their own FFF program came from The Canoe Project on Magnetic Island off Townsville. We look forward to assisting them to set up in 2027. Several known and unknown groups and schools run their own FFF events as we see the program expanding further afield.
- Start of the Find a Frog in February Manual for all types of users from individuals to organisations.



Gina the Giant barred frog celebrates 10 years of FFF with frog cupcakes!



Noosa Council's Rodrigo Oliveira up close with a Giant barred frog on Six Mile Creek

Of interest is the number of people who choose to use an App platform to submit data. This year 890 volunteers submitted 2318 records through iNaturalist. These records are useful for presence/absence data as a value of abundance is normally not collected or provided. Records coming directly to the FFF until at the MRCCC provide much more information as to habitat, conditions and, importantly, abundance. During 2026, 188 FFF volunteers provided 4,165 records to the MRCCC for processing. To monitor population trends of our diminishing frogs, and to be able to take action to improve their situation, observations with this type of detail are critical and encouraged by the FFF team.

While this program is about Citizens contributing to Science, it is equally about Science for Citizens. Here's a few quotes form our volunteer froggers:

- Michelle Wilson – "*It makes me feel a little more positive as we tackle the things that make a measurable difference, especially in these worrying times*"
- Antonio Martinho - "*My participation in the 'Find a Frog in February' program is driven by a deep commitment to both the civil and scientific communities of the Mary River*."
- Ashley Keune - *"The Find a Frog in February initiative provides a wonderful opportunity to foster family connection and environmental awareness. Seeing the joy and curiosity in children as they explore the outdoors at night time is deeply inspiring. Experiences like these not only create cherished childhood memories but also help cultivate a long-term commitment to caring for our natural world."*
- *Rohan Porter "Whether we are spotlighting under the stars or happily braving the rain to hear who is out and about, we participate because it matters, because, as the Lorax says 'Unless someone like me cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not!'"*

(NB – All records, including those from iNaturalist, are curated and provided to the Qld Government WildNet database)



The next generation of scientists joined Eva Ford for the Curra frog workshop and survey

Frog monitoring

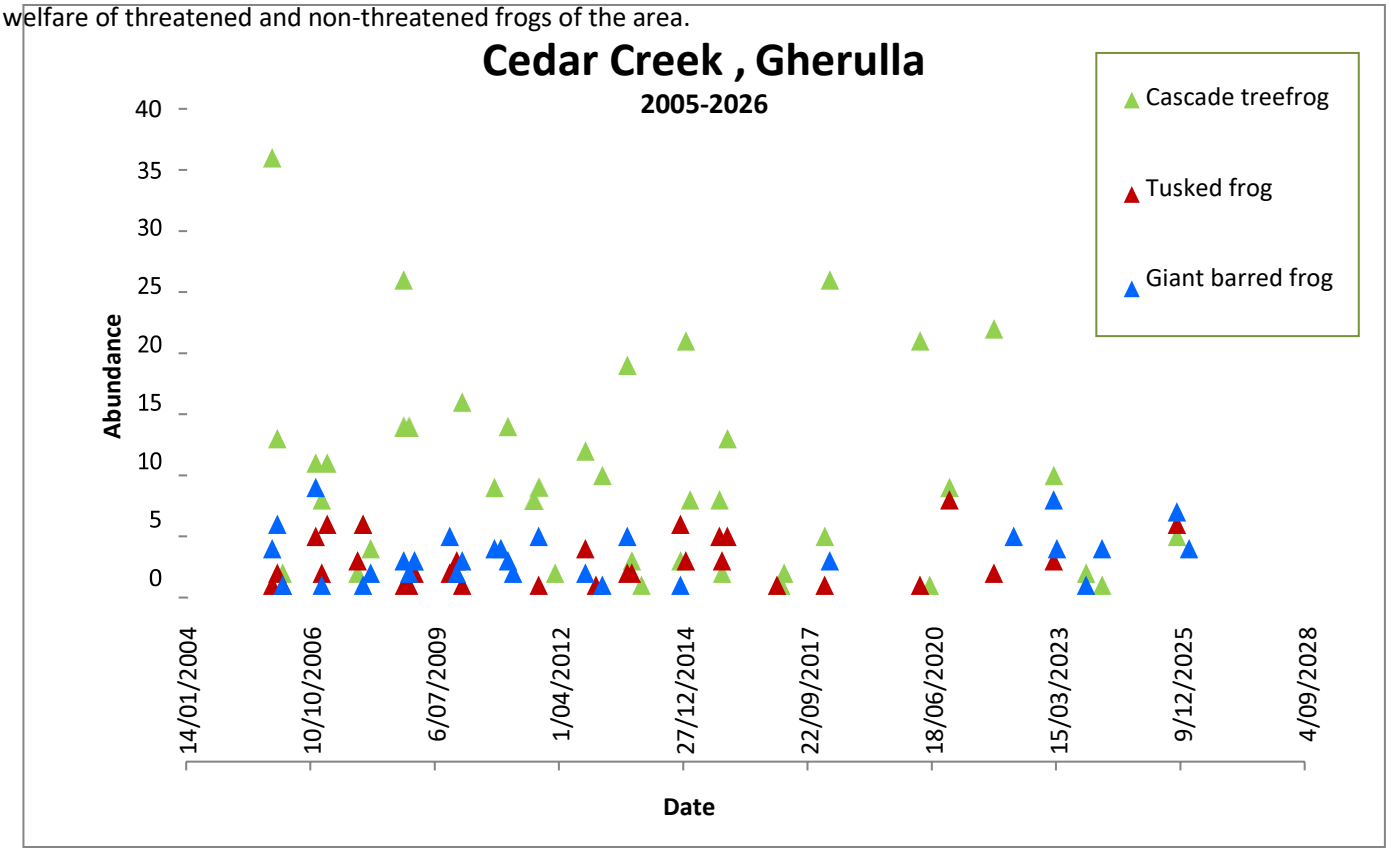
More than 20 years of collecting seasonal frog monitoring data at four sites in the Sunshine Coast and Noosa local Government areas has revealed that our threatened stream frog populations are relatively stable. Threatened species targeted by surveys include the Giant barred frog (*Mixophyes iteratus*), Tusked frog (*Adelotus brevis*) and Cascade treefrog (*Dryopsophus pearsoniana*). The sites all have relatively intact riparian vegetation and low to medium human impact from the surrounding land uses. Each site has its own uniqueness; Six Mile Creek site is downstream of Lake Macdonald but in the midst of Tewantin National Park, Cooroora Creek is bounded by a town park, and Belli and Cedar Creeks flow from large tracts of remnant vegetation; protected estate and freehold.

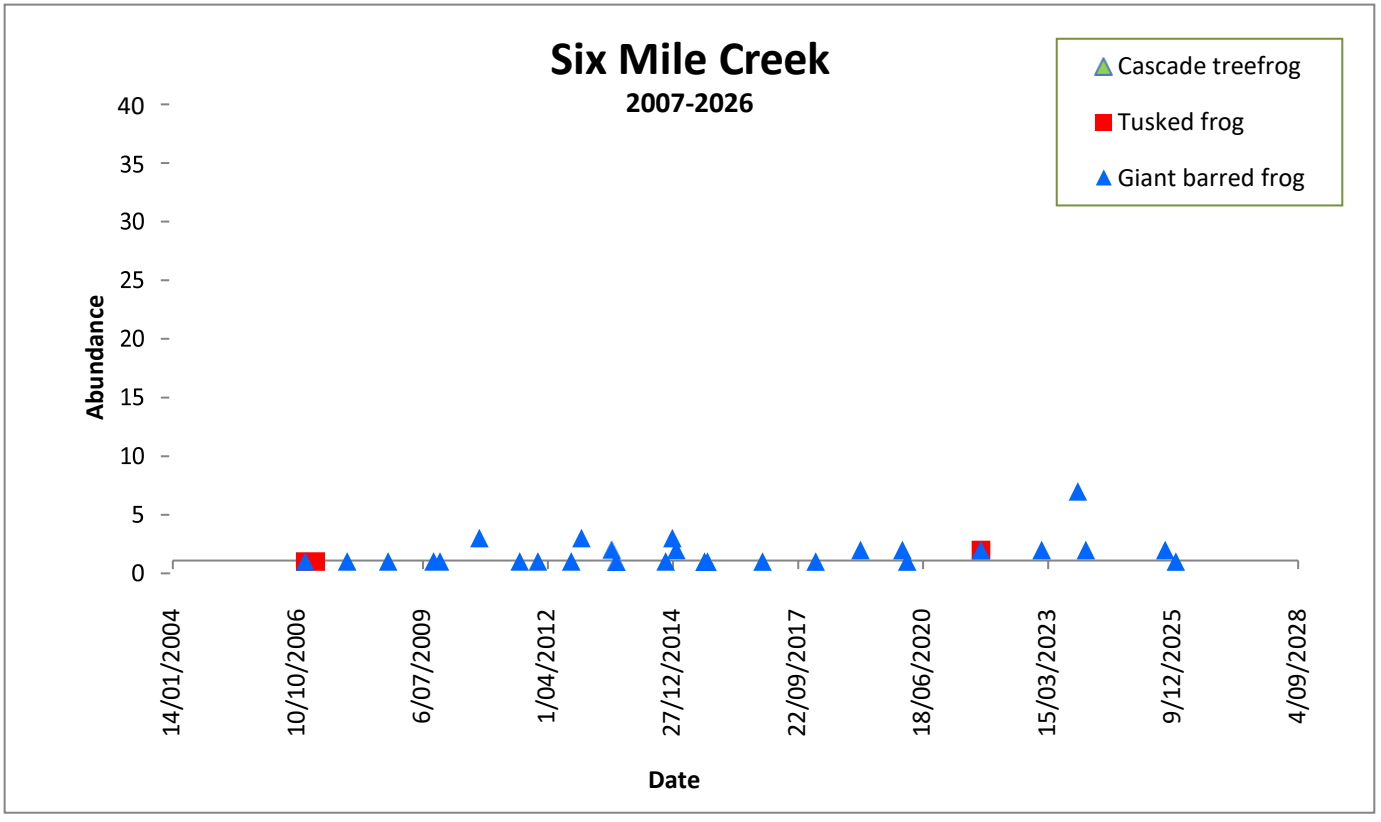
Using the same scale in the graphs, variation between sites is most obvious at Belli and Cedar Creek. We can see that these two well-forested sites with landscape-scale connectivity differ greatly in species presence and abundance. All three species are present at Cedar Creek, however, only Giant barred frogs are found consistently, but in very low numbers, at Six Mile Creek. Tusked frogs that are usually a commonly heard species in a broad variety of habitats, are very rarely encountered here.

Of interest is that a higher number of Giant barred frogs are detected at a lagoon system 50 metres to the north of the transect site. Data such as this informs closer consideration of our land and water management and may inform mitigation actions.

Three additional long-term frog monitoring sites on Sunshine Coast Council reserves were installed and surveyed during the 2024-25 summer season by the Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation (JPAC) with the MRCCC. These sites are awaiting their second season surveys this summer. The sites are in the upper Stanley River and Obi Obi Creek catchments and provide a range of habitat types and stream condition. Consequently, we are discovering variable frog assemblages at each site. Over time, 'normal' patterns will emerge against which we will be able to assess anomalous trends.

The MRCCC is grateful for the continued support of both the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Councils, reflecting their interest in the welfare of threatened and non-threatened frogs of the area.





Student workplace learning opportunities

This year we welcomed Ashleigh McDougall and Jaime Wallis to our workplace learning program. Both students have been completing their last Batchelor degree year in Animal Ecology at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Students participate in a myriad of activities during their period with the MRCCC including mapping, data management and processing, attending meetings, visiting landholders, water testing and fauna surveys. Ashleigh assisted with our poster design for the 2025 Australian citizen Science Conference. We currently have three other students working with us; Ethan Norris, Raylene McSweeny and Ryley Delaney who have been gaining experience through less formal arrangements, working on turtle nest protection data entry, interactive online mapping of citizen science data (Find a Frog in February) and data basing a sub-set of the Waterwatch data to analyse catchment loads for selected waterways. While they gain valuable insights and skills revolving around waterway management, our appreciation of these young people grows with each intake as they bring new ways and new understandings to our interactions.



Ashleigh McDougall learned about water testing and innovative footwear on dairy farms

The Irish Connection

The MRCCC has connected with several Irish entities over the past few years through visitation and events. The major partnership is with the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), recently renamed as the River Basin Management Service (RBMS); a Local Authority Shared Service, funded by the Irish Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage that works closely with all local authorities, communities and stakeholders in the Republic of Ireland (and outside!) 'to identify causes of poor water quality and to act to resolve the problems.' Following attendance at a 'Communities caring for Water' conference in Claremorris, Ireland in 2025, relationships were cemented to make way for further joint discussion and activities.

During 2026 we collaborated to provide to the international community a series of webinars that would highlight each country's natural values, issues and solutions based on community involvement. We targeted special international days of significance; World Wetlands Day, World Frog Day and International Endangered Species Day. Topics included the MRCCC structure and activities, Community-led river restoration in Donegal, frog conservation programs (Find a Frog in February, Hop To It), threatened species (Mary River turtle, Mary River cod, montane crayfish, Marl Lakes, Alpine newt). Groups presenting alongside the MRCCC were RBMS, the Irish Peatland Conservation Council, the Herpetological Society or Ireland, University College Dublin, Roden Ecology and Inishowen Rivers Trust (Donegal). Audiences came from Australia, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, England, Germany.



The MRCCC Arts and Culture delegate, Joolie Gibbs, often joined our meetings in preparation for her art tour of Ireland to present her '22.96|Overflow' exhibition in July 2026.

Where to next? We are exploring further webinars as they were generously attended by many, and possibilities of exchange staff between organisations. Ireland has strong relevance for our own project work, particularly in the area of dairies and other intensive farming practices, as well as waterway and biodiversity rehabilitation. Ireland has a strong sense of 'place', a cultural history that emerges through most interactions, and a societal ethic of community and well-being. The bonds between Ireland and Australia are strong and we look forward to many future interludes and sharing of approaches. Webinars are available to watch at

World Wetlands Day - 2nd Feb 2026 https://vimeo.com/1162571740?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

World Frog Day – 21st March 2026 https://vimeo.com/1176521849?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci



The endangered Conondale Crayfish -Euastacus hystricosus – *image Ollie Scully*

Threatened Upland Stream Fauna project

Eva Ford, Ollie Scully

The MRCCC is collaborating with a range of partners in the Upper Mary including Moreton City Council and Barung Landcare to undertake a project targeting threatened upland stream fauna (TUSF) in the Conondale-Blackall range.

Background

The Conondale-Blackall Range uplands are an ecologically important geographic region that supports significant populations of many distinctive, narrow-range flora and fauna.

Of these, some of the most notable are the stream fauna including two species of freshwater crayfish (*Euastacus hystricosus* & *E. urospinosus*) and one frog (*Rheobatrachus silus*). The region experienced significant declines, (including two extinctions) of the same suite of fauna, largely due to extensive clearing and fragmentation on the Blackall and Bellthorpe sections of the range, but also from the invasion of the fungal pathogen *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (BD) which combined with clearing to render two stream frogs extinct and many others at threat of extinction. Consequently, the majority of remaining upland stream-endemic fauna within the Conondale-Blackall Range uplands are considered at threat of extinction under state and federal legislation. In total, four upland frogs and two upland freshwater crayfish (see image right) are threatened, and two frogs are extinct from this region.

This project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Establish connective riparian corridors between long-term revegetation sites and/or protected high-quality riparian remnants
- Document TUSF population trends within revegetating and remnant habitat to compliment and improve long-term datasets
- Engage with landholders, traditional owners and other community members to align bio-cultural, economic and TUSF restoration and conservation objectives on public, private and freehold land by raising awareness of these elusive threatened species.
- Summarise conservation outcomes supported by empirical data in a scientific publication, to provide robust information to the broader conservation community.

Active conservation

- Identify degraded riparian reaches with good connectivity between high-value riparian habitats, sites containing multiple TSF species prioritised.
- Locate and establish communications with relevant landholders, assess feasibility of works and develop case-specific plans with mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Implement riparian recovery projects to re-establish suitable habitat within stream corridors. Include weed control, off-stream watering, canopy restoration.

Monitoring TUSF

- Identify revegetation sites which match criteria of suitability (to be developed) in varying stages of progress.
- Establish long-term monitoring transects within suitable sites and collect baseline data.
- Reinstate historic long-term frog monitoring transects, whilst developing methods to include *Euastacus*.
- Provide high quality outputs quantifying population recovery trends, if observed.

Project Area

Whilst the majority of the Mary River's southern headwaters are comprised of high altitude (>200m asl) watersheds, this project will primarily focus on the Blackall Range and Conondale Range due to the high concentration of both TUSF richness/diversity and well-established bush regeneration activities. Whilst other upland areas support TUSF, they will be lower priority for initial works on account of comparatively poor feasibility and TUSF diversity. However, once established, conservation works in sites further afield may be incorporated.

Threatened Aquatic Species Initiatives – Nathaniel Larsen, Ollie Scully

The Threatened Aquatic Species Initiative aims to foster community involvement and engagement while building the skills and capacity of key stakeholder groups, including Traditional Owners, landholders and volunteers. This is achieved through a range of collaborative activities, including practical, hands-on workshops, presentations at symposiums and conferences, strengthening relationships with media outlets to raise awareness, and delivering on-country conservation activities that encourage knowledge sharing, participation and collective stewardship of threatened aquatic species and their habitats. The program is funded by Seqwater, State & Federal Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, Noosa Shire Council and Gympie Regional Council.

Mary River Cod Habitat Enhancement Program

The Mary River cod (*Maccullochella mariensis*) is the northernmost member of its genus and has been evolutionarily separated from the Murray cod (*Maccullochella peelii*) for approximately one million years. Although smaller than its southern relative, there are historical records of our cod reaching 40 kg and 120cm long, making this fish the apex aquatic predator of the Mary River. As an apex predator, it plays an important role in maintaining ecosystem balance.

Listed as endangered, the Mary River cod faces numerous threats, including a shortage of suitable spawning habitat. The species relies on naturally occurring spawning chambers such as undercut banks and hollow logs, making the installation of artificial "Cod Hollows" an effective habitat enhancement and recovery tool.

The MRCCC's annual Mary River cod fingerling stocking program continued in December 2025, with fingerlings sourced from Darren Knowles' Hinternoosa Hatchery. Darren Knowles, MRCCC, BMRG and Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group organised releases and co-refined recovery site selection criteria to guide stocking efforts and maximise recovery outcomes. Potential recovery sites were assessed against a range of criteria, including habitat quality, current population occupancy, historical significance to the species, the presence or absence of key threats, aquatic fauna passage, and the likelihood of long-term population establishment. Priority was given to areas with good habitat, low existing occupancy and high recovery potential. Some locations represent lower-confidence but strategically important restoration opportunities, where successful population establishment would deliver significant conservation outcomes and improve species resilience across the broader catchment.

In March 2026, 25 cod hollows were installed in the upper Mary River catchment in partnership with Kabi Kabi Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, Ozfish, Department of Environment Tourism, Science & Innovation, Sunshine Coast Council, and Noosa Shire Council. The ABC Landline joined Kabi Kabi Rangers, Jinibara Rangers and the MRCCC for a cod hollow installation on Obi Obi Creek, providing an opportunity for all present to share the significance of cod and the potential this project has for the recovery of the species.







Top: Darren Knowles, Hinternoosa Hatchery, with a bag of Mary River cod fingerlings ready for release.
Middle: Cod logs ready for installation.
Bottom: Preparing to install a cod log.

In September 2026, cod hollow monitoring was conducted alongside Noosa Shire Council Staff and Kabi Kabi Land and Sea Rangers. Eel-tailed catfish (*Tandanus tandanus*), Long-finned eel (*Anguilla reinhardtii*), and *Hypseleotris* spp were recorded. Although no cod were observed occupying spawning structures during the monitoring period, water temperatures remained lower than necessary for spawning. Continued advocacy for extended seasonal and multi-year monitoring will support assessment of long-term structure uptake and help quantify their contribution to cod population recovery.





Top left: Ollie with Mary River turtle and Nathaniel with White-throated snapping turtle found during surveys in the Gympie region
Above: Nathaniel Larsen delivering a Turtle workshop on the Mary River

Freshwater Turtle Conservation Program

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 it is endemic to the Mary River catchment. The White-throated snapping turtle is also critically endangered and found in the Mary River catchment.

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.

During the 2025-26 nesting season, 79 Mary River turtle nests and four White-throated snapping turtle (*Elseya albagula*) nests were recorded. A total of 881 Mary River turtle hatchlings emerged across all monitored nesting banks, while 22 White-throated Snapping turtle hatchlings emerged from a single nesting bank. All nesting and presence records have been entered into the WildNet database, and a new nest relocation enclosure has been constructed in readiness for the next nesting season.

In December 2025, MRCCC assessed sand banks in the lower Mary River, Widgee and Wide Bay Creeks that are known or historically recognised as nesting habitat for the Mary River turtle and White-throated snapping turtle. Surveys were undertaken to assess turtle nesting habitat, accessibility, in-stream habitat condition, and nesting activity to prioritise sites for future conservation investment and management actions.

The surveys confirmed new evidence, with predated eggs of the Mary River turtle and White-throated snapping turtle recorded. Multiple active fox dens were identified near nesting habitat, reinforcing the importance of integrated predator control alongside nest protection. Overall, the assessment identified priority sites, documented key threats, and provided recommendations for targeted monitoring, nest protection, and fox management.

In April 2026 aquatic fauna surveys were undertaken by the MRCCC in Widgee Creek. The surveys sought to document the broader aquatic fauna assemblage and identify conservation values, threats and management opportunities within the catchment. Three survey sites were selected based on habitat suitability, accessibility and the presence of potential nesting habitat.

A total of 80 fauna detections were recorded, including Mary River turtles, White-throated snapping Turtles, Mary River cod and platypus, demonstrating the high conservation value of the creek. The project also identified significant threats from Cats Claw Creeper and Madeira Vine on potential nesting banks. Findings support further monitoring, targeted weed management and habitat restoration to protect threatened species and improve ecosystem health within Widgee Creek.

Two freshwater turtle conservation workshops were held in August 2026. 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 subsequent interpersonal 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.

Significant knowledge of freshwater turtle nesting sites has been generated through engagement with MRCCC's Landcare and revegetation partners. These observations provide an important foundation for identifying and protecting key nesting habitats. Data collected through the project will inform ongoing conservation actions and will be collated and submitted to databases such as TurtleSAT and WildNet, enhancing regional knowledge of turtle populations, informing management and policy decisions, and increasing opportunities for future research.

The Freshwater Turtle Conservation team from Tiaro and District Landcare (TDLG) and the MRCCC had the pleasure of joining ~120 freshwater turtle enthusiasts from across Australia at the annual Australasian Turtle Symposium in Adelaide in October 2026. The MRCCC presented, introducing the Mary River turtle (*Elusor macrurus*, MRT), the river as it was, the unfortunate state our river is in today, and the collaborative works over the past 30 odd years between the MRCCC, TDLG, and other partners to remedy it. The threats facing Australian turtle species are varied, and their life histories complex. That said, many points of comparison can be drawn between species and these will improve both research and on-ground conservation of the Mary River turtle.

Krefft's turtle (*Emydura macquarii krefftii*) is often overlooked in conservation discussions because it is generally regarded as a "common" species with a comparatively large distribution, particularly when contrasted with our critically endangered turtles. However, Krefft's turtles comprise a substantial proportion of the vertebrate biomass in the Mary River, its tributaries, wetlands and impoundments (e.g. farm dams), therefore playing a profound and significant ecological role. The Mary River catchment represents the southern extent of the species' distribution. Our baseline understanding of local Krefft's turtle populations is limited. Care must be taken not to use other turtle species, such as the critically endangered Mary River turtle, as a direct point of inference. Krefft's turtles nest in the early morning and late afternoon, and nesting females have been encountered during the annual Catchment Crawl in October, providing a valuable opportunity to improve MRCCC's understanding of their reproductive ecology first hand.





Fox Control Workshop

21 November 2025 with Tom Garrett 'Vertebrate Pest Management' and MRCCC

Location: Mary Valley Road, Kandanga (hosts – Scott Cook and Sally Burey)

32 people attended including representatives of Fraser Coast Regional Council, Gympie Regional Council, Noosa Shire Council, Sunshine Coast Shire Council, 4 Kabi Kabi rangers, Valley Invasive Species Advisory Group, industry and landholders.

Background

MRCCC's interest in fox control relates to the significant impact foxes have on the critically endangered Mary River and white-throated snapping turtles during nesting and hatching along the Mary River. Fox control is an essential management tool to reduce predation of turtle eggs at nesting sites and protect young turtles during hatching.

Through the Disaster Relief Flooding Arrangements Biodiversity Conservation project, 14 active fox dens were fumigated and 25 foxes shot. The idea of a fox control workshop was developed following den fumigation work undertaken by Tom Garrett in October 2025. Tom recommended that active dens be followed up with baiting and/or trapping to target remaining foxes, particularly vixens out hunting during the day. As this follow-up requires specific skills and planning, MRCCC identified a workshop as an effective way to provide an opportunity for local councils to connect with landholders and link into their pest management activities.

The longer-term goal is to support groups of landholders, with MRCCC facilitation, to develop more coordinated fox control in areas where threatened freshwater turtles are most at risk.

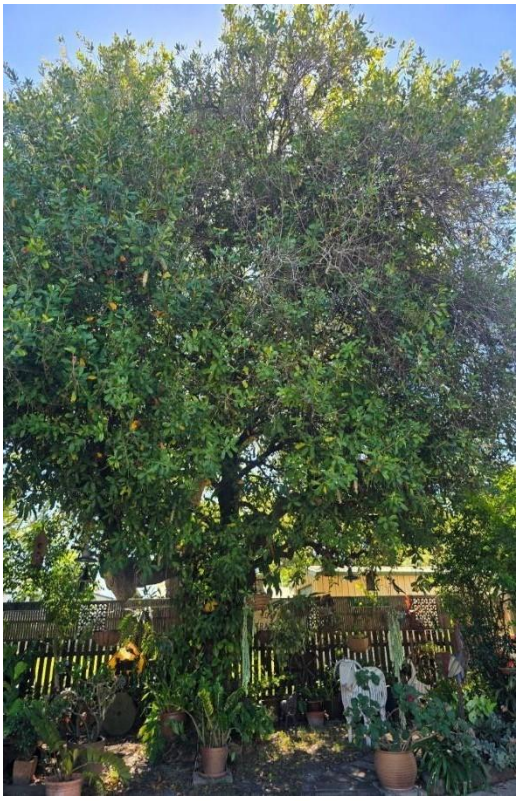
Workshop Content

Glenda Pickersgill provided an overview of local conservation efforts for the threatened Mary River turtle and explained the importance of fox control for long-term nest and hatchling protection. Tom Garrett shared his experience and provided practical guidance on trapping techniques, fox baiting, camera monitoring and bait placement. Following the presentation, participants had the opportunity to observe Tom set a trap.

Representatives from each participating council outlined their fox control activities and explained how landholders could access available council resources.

Scott and Sally Cook were wonderful hosts, and their hospitality, the setting and Tom's expertise contributed to a highly valuable morning. Common areas of interest and the opportunity to connect through FeralScan have provided a strong starting point for keeping the group engaged. MRCCC support ongoing collaboration between council, local landholders and VISMA towards fox control efforts.





Wild Macadamia Conservation Project – Tina Raveneau

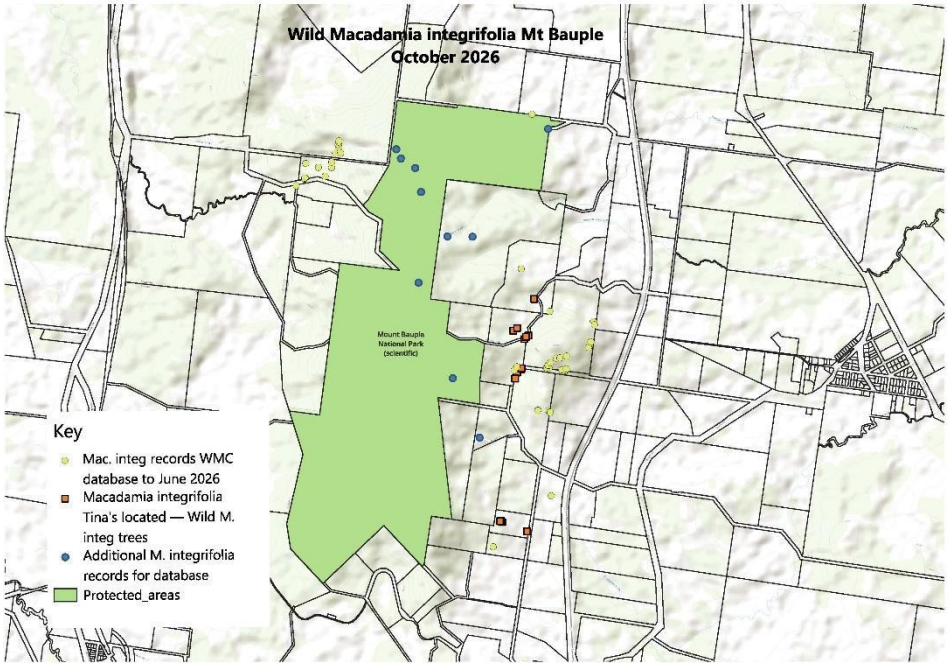
In June 2026 Wild Macadamia Conservation Inc. partnered with MRCCC to deliver a two-year project to protect the Mary River catchment's endemic macadamia species - *Macadamia integrifolia* and *M. ternifolia* - and their habitat. The initial focus is the Bauple population of *Macadamia integrifolia* (Bauple Nut) with activities also supporting conservation of populations of both species in the upper catchment.

Early, meaningful consultation with Traditional Owners is key to the project and we are currently engaging with Butchulla and Kabi Kabi to develop a project that achieves shared outcomes for community and Country.

Activities so far have included:

Community engagement

- Information stalls at local events - Mary River Festival and Tiaro Field Day (with the MRCCC team) and the Bauple Nut Bash. Many enthusiastic community members have provided information about historic planted trees and known wild populations of both species and expressed their willingness to help with this project.
- Talks and presentations at Tiaro Field Day and Burrum District Garden Club.
- Reaching out to landowners with known wild macadamias on their property as well as owners of properties with likely habitat on slopes surrounding Mount Bauple National Park. On invitation by owners, 11 wild trees have been located on two new properties, and additional trees have been recorded on properties with historic records.
- Providing information on habitat protection, identification and advice about weed species.
- Landowners have been sharing issues, concerns and hopes for the macadamia habitat and their property in general.
- Discussing tourism opportunities with Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (BNTAC), Bauple Museum and members of the local community.
- Recorded old historic trees for future DNA testing (Maryborough, Tiaro, Bauple, Miva).



Permit application – we are seeking permission to access Mount Bauple National Park (Scientific) to conduct on-ground surveys to determine the current distribution and health of wild macadamias within the park and are awaiting approval.

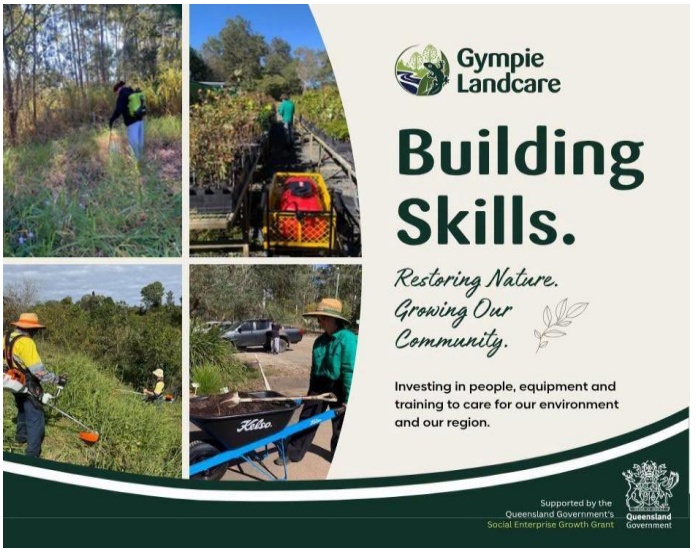
Desktop research of historic macadamia records, the Wildnet database and iNaturalist, has added to our knowledge of tree locations and potential new populations. We particularly acknowledge botanist Tony Van Kampen for sharing his local knowledge and records from the "Fraser Coast Plants" website (alphitonia.com).

Habitat Conservation

- Distribution of Amamoor-Imbil provenance *Macadamia integrifolia* and *M. ternifolia* trees (grown from cuttings) to eligible Gympie Land for Wildlife properties. Thanks to Gympie Landcare for caring for the trees and assisting with this program.
- Researching private conservation agreements and options for long-term protection of habitat on private property to provide advice to landowners.

Top left: Engaging with landholders at the Bauple nut bash
Centre: Bauple nut, Kent St Maryborough, 120+ years old
Bottom: Wild Macadamia Integrifolia, October 2024

Gympie Landcare – Going from Strength to Strength



2025–2026 was a year of continued growth for Gympie Landcare, building on our longstanding commitment to the region's environment and local community. We supplied 64,965 native plants to the community, planted 36,459 across the Gympie region and improved 160 hectares of natural vegetation, helping restore habitat, stabilise riverbanks and support biodiversity. Alongside our ongoing partnership with MRCCC, we worked with other natural resource management organisations, local businesses and government partners across the Wide Bay Burnett. Our projects spanned koala habitat and waterway restoration, First Nations partnerships and fire ecology, while our retail nursery expanded its range to include endemic wildflowers and smaller native species suited to home gardens, pollinators and backyard biodiversity.

Our commitment to skills and education in the environmental sector saw 22 trainees graduate with a Certificate I in Conservation and Ecosystem Management through two Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs, with 18 now employed. Our Community Education Program welcomed 57 participants to Backyard Biodiversity and Bush Regeneration workshops, funded through Gympie Regional Council's Community Grants Program. We look forward to continuing this momentum alongside our community and partners, protecting and restoring our environment through actions both large and small.

Tiaro Landcare



Mary River turtle hatchling

The Biennial Tiaro Field day is our flagship community outreach event to connect local landholders with local agricultural suppliers, and experts in land management. The 2026 event featured a diverse lineup of interactive activities, agricultural workshops, and rural lifestyle exhibits. A new addition was the Hobby Farm hub which featured chainsaw maintenance, 'tagging done right' for livestock compliance, and practical beekeeping hints. A strong line up of 38 head of cattle took part in the Led Cattle competition. Special guest was the very popular Tania Kernaghan. The event was well attended. The event is a collaborative partnership between members of the Tiaro & District Chamber of Commerce and Tiaro Landcare.

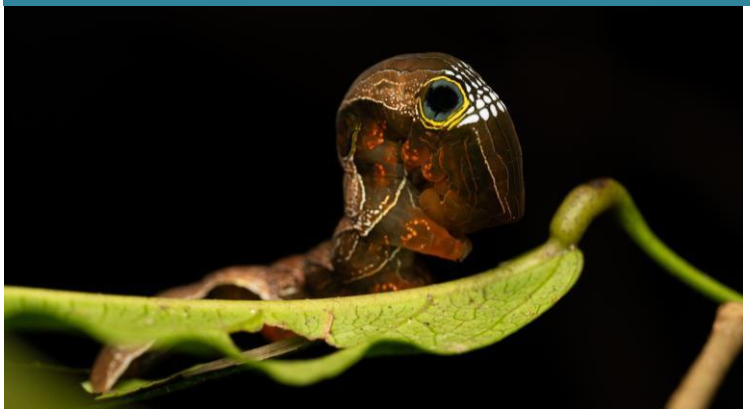
Mary River turtle conservation project. Nesting site surveillance was conducted over seven broad locations in the Tiaro reach of the river. Sixty-four nests were located resulting in 641 known hatchlings. We had a trade table at the Australian Turtle Symposium (Adelaide) which featured our chocolate turtles and turtle-themed items. Chris Stiler, Tina Raveneau and Marilyn Connell appreciated the opportunity to attend, gain new knowledge, and make new contacts. The Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species (FAME) is funding our 2026 Mary River turtle conservation program. Tiaro Landcare greatly appreciates the wide range of support received from MRCCC.

Barung Landcare



The Barung Natural Areas team delivered two significant projects this year. The first was a planting and weed vine control project along Neurum Creek. Funded by Seqwater, with additional support provided through a collaborative funding partnership with DETSI, the project delivered 4550 plants and ongoing weed vine work along the creek. This unique initiative combined environmental restoration with practical training, knowledge sharing and stronger partnerships with Jinibara Traditional Custodians.

The second project was funded by Healthy Land and Water through the Commonwealth Government's Saving Native Species grant. The multifaceted Southern Pink Underwing Moth project saw the Barung contracting team deliver plantings of 5200 trees over two properties, and weed control of 6 hectares across 5 properties with remnant rainforest Southern Pink Underwing Moth habitat.





Top right: Allie Hayes' stunning photo of a Pink Underwing moth caterpillar, runner up in the Spring in the Mary photo competition, Wildlife category
Below: The Noosa Hinter Hub in Pomona –outlet for all things environmental and locally produced

Our community also contributed to this project, delivering two rainforest microforests of 500 trees each through the Education and Community Engagement program, while the Nursery collected and propagated 2000 host plant caronia seeds and incorporated caronia vines into the microforest plantings.

Noosa Landcare

Noosa & District Landcare Group (NDLG) is a community-based charity established in 1992 that delivers practical environmental solutions across Noosa and the surrounding catchments. Employing more than 45 staff, NDLG combines ecological restoration, native plant production (over 350,000 native plants sold annually), environmental consultancy, conservation training and community engagement. Our projects restore habitats, protect threatened species, increase biodiversity, improve water quality, and strengthen landscape resilience. Working alongside landholders, Traditional Owners, governments, industry and research organisations, NDLG brings together local knowledge and technical expertise to deliver projects from individual properties to whole landscapes. As a verified People and Planet First social enterprise, NDLG reinvests profits from its environmental services, wholesale nursery, and Hinter Hub retail nursery back into conservation, education and community programs, creating lasting environmental, social and economic benefit. For more details, visit www.noosalandcare.org

Cooloola Coastcare

Cane Toad Bust

January started off with this new event, a competition sponsored by Watergum. Twenty Cooloola Cove residents turned out to learn about this invasive species. They collected 353 toads at one location in one evening, and reported to Watergum.

Urban Wildlife

Do you know what animals live in your backyard? Coastcare and community members responded enthusiastically to the offer of having camera traps mounted in their yard to find out. This helped to raise awareness of all the reptiles, birds and mammals who visit our gardens and birdbaths when we aren't looking.



Meet your creek with Keishia Duffy

Tech in the Field

The 2026 BioBlitz was not the usual Cooloola BioBlitz. This year the focus was on teaching participants about using technology in the field. Twenty participants arrived on Friday, 27 March, for three days of learning and fun. Friday night was all about mapping. Attendees learned about some Google Maps tricks, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and did a deep dive into the offline mapping tool called Avenza. After dark, fun was had in the park where teams of two went on a scavenger hunt, commonly called Geocaching, to find poker chips hidden throughout the park at the Hall using GPS coordinates. The rest of the weekend was spent honing offline mapping skills in the Cooloola Section of the Great Sandy National Park.

Turtlecare

Volunteers and members of the public regularly monitored the beach near Rainbow Beach from November through April. Both Green and Loggerhead turtles laid at least seven nests. QPWS monitored activities on Teewah beach, reporting 34 nests. They requested that Turtlecare restrict their activities to observation only until the new accreditation procedures could be undertaken, so there was no relocation of nests at risk. There was a report of a 4WD running over hatchlings, which is a continuing risk on this busy beach.
There were fewer strandings, and only four rescues taken to Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital.

Waterwatch

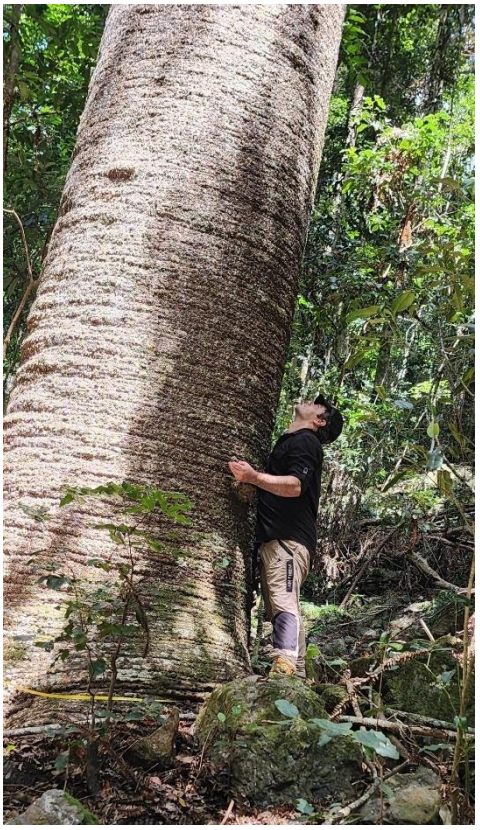
Volunteers continue to monitor 21 sites every two months. Use of a purpose designed ruggedised tablet and app makes entry of data and photos easy. Many residents showed up for a Meet Your Creek day, which featured an event at one creek in each community: Tin Can Bay, Cooloola Cove, and Rainbow Beach. Keishia Duffy and a Waterwatch volunteer explained the importance of healthy waterways and demonstrated the process. The macroinvertebrates activity had everyone involved. Many new residents were keen to volunteer for Waterwatch, which was the goal for our succession planning.

Habitat regeneration

The Tin Can Bay foreshore is flourishing with health while the committed crew of weeders persist with their killer instincts. The group at Rainbow Beach continues to work away at the corky passion vine crop on the track to Carlo Sandblow, with the support of QPWS.

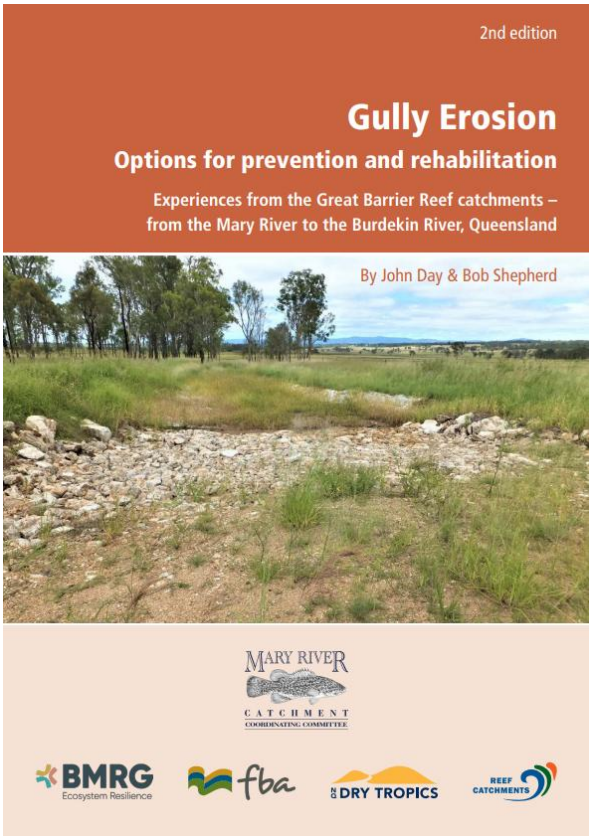
National Register of Big Trees

This year we located some incredible trees around the region, from K'gari to Imbil and beyond. We had the opportunity to meet with Bruce Pascoe and some of the Butchulla elders for a walk along Broutha scrub track, to see some of the potentially culturally significant marker trees. Several surveys were taken with Noosa council to identify and measure champion trees in the Noosa
area for their significant register, while other treks were made to seek out potential Champions.



Right: Sam Mitchell with a Bunya pine (Auracaria bidwillii) *in Amamoor Forest measuring in at 4.65m circumference at breast height (1.4m) and at a whopping height of 58m, average crown spread of 12m. This gives the tree a point score of 376 making it the second largest bunya pine by points on the National Register of Big Trees.*

Gully Erosion – Options for prevention and rehabilitation 2nd Edition



The very useful and much sought after "Gully Erosion, Options for prevention and rehabilitation" publication, first printed in 2019, has become a rare commodity with the last copies of the original print run disappearing from shelves across the state. The publication is widely used by the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Natural Resource Management and sub catchment groups from Gympie to Townsville.

Lead author John Day was contacted by some of the groups regarding updating the publication and getting another print run into the pipeline. With support from the MRCCC, the process was supported and has recently come to fruition.

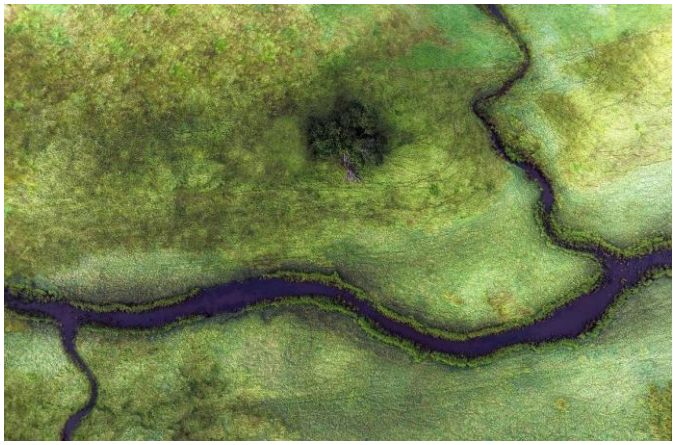
John Day and co-author Bob Shepherd once again collaborated to edit and update the publication to bring the messages up to date with current advances in soil conservation techniques and methodologies. The manuscript was then edited and readied for print by the original editor Cindy Benjamin, a freelance writer and editor of agricultural literature based in Bundaberg.

Printed by Gympie Graphics, 4,000 copies of the second edition are now being distributed across the state. MRCCC have retained over 1,000 copies to be provided to the local region as needed to support soil conservation and reef water quality projects with the ever-expanding clientele of landholders embracing best practice land management in the Mary River catchment.

Thanks to innovative management of resources within MRCCC the publication is available free of charge to project participants and interested landholders along with another publication on erosion control printed in 2023. MRCCC staff and management continue to strive for best practice sustainable land management as well as best practice catchment management and the organisation is widely recognised as a leading proponent in these pursuits. The new publication will help support the good work into the future. The publication can also be downloaded from the MRCCC's website.

Spring in the Mary Photo Competition 2025 – Winning Entries

Sponsored by Noosa Landcare, Barung Landcare, Kenilworth Rural Supplies, BMRG, Greater Mary Association



Overall winner – Mary River, Paul Vallier



Rivers and Creeks Winner – Mary River Southside, Paul Vallier







Above left: Wildlife winner – Python SSSSpring, Michelle Honey, Centre: Rural Winner – Ballooning over the Mary Valley, Peta Hempsell, Right: Coastal Winner – Pelican at Dawn, Debbie Polley. Below: People's Choice and Junior Winner – Tawnies, Reef Van



MRCCC Activities 2025-2026

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 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*
October 2025	Tiaro Landcare meeting	Charles Darwin University, MRCCC	*Discussion on Charles Darwin University research findings about blue catfish movements in the Mary River barrage*
October 2025	DETSI water quality monitoring training	Department of Environment, Tourism, Science, Innovation, MRCCC, citizen scientists	*Refresher training for MRCCC and citizen scientists WQ monitoring by DETSI WQ staff*
October 2025	Barambah Environmental Education Centre open day	MRCCC Waterwatch and bug club program	*Participation in the Barambah Environment Education Centre open day*
November 2025	MRCCC bug club	MRCCC and Waterwatch volunteers	*Bug club visit to Home Park, lower Mary River*
November 2025	Codference, Cooroy, HinterNoosa Hatchery	BMRG, Griffith University, MRCCC, DPI, HinterNoosa Hatchery	*Mary River Cod conference, with Australian Freshwater Cod experts from Qld, NSW, Victoria. MRCCC presented on Mary River Cod community activities over the past 20 years*
November 2025	Gympie Region Water Quality Report Card presentation	MRCCC, Gympie Regional Council, Waterwatch volunteers	*Presentation of water quality report card results to the Gympie region Waterwatch volunteers*
November 2025	Fox control workshop, Mary Valley	Gympie Regional Council, Noosa Council, Upper Mary Rivercare, Tiaro Landcare	*Speakers on fox control techniques targeting Mary River Turtle nesting banks in the Mary Valley and Tiaro reaches*
November 2026	Upper Mary catchment tour	Sunshine Coast Council	*Tour of project sites to share knowledge with new SCC Senior Conservation Partnerships Officer and Conservation Officers*
November 2025	Moy Pocket cats claw vine control open day	Upper Mary Rivercare, SEQW, MRCCC	*Cats claw vine control open day at Moy Pocket*
November 2025	Project evaluation workshop with UQ-OGBR	University of Qld, OGBR, MRCCCC	*Workshop to review and evaluate key elements of the Mary River Place-based project with OGBR*
November 2025	Sunshine Coast Council Tuan Reserve, Mary River field-day	Sunshine Coast Council and MRCCC	*Tuan Reserve, Mary River open day. MRCCC stall at open day*

December 2025	Urban Rivers Steering Group meeting	Gympie Regional Council, Gympie Landcare, Kabi Kabi, MRCCC	*Steering Group meeting for Gympie town reach Urban Rivers project*
December 2025	Bunya Block tour	Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group	*Awareness tour for MRCCC staff and LBCCG*
January 2026	Gympie Land for Wildlife – turtle workshop	Gympie land for wildlife participants, Gympie Regional Council, MRCCC	*Freshwater turtle workshop for Gympie Land for Wildlife participants*
February 2026	Ireland-MRCCC interchange	Irish catchment management groups	*World Wetlands Day Ireland – MRCCC interchange webinar workshop*
March 2026	Clean up Australia Day	MRCCC, members of public, landholders, Gympie Regional Council	*Clean up of Traveston Crossing, Mary River*
March 2026	Madeira Vine control workshop	Crystal Waters community	*Madeira vine workshop with Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group at Crystal Waters, Mary River*
March 2026	Borumba Dam high school student tour	Gympie State High School year 12 students	*MRCCC organized a tour for year 12 students of Borumba Dam, Yabba Creek to understand the pumped hydro proposal*
March 2026	Roving Restorers at Conondale	Joint Hinterland Bush Links – Upper Mary Rivercare Program	*Jointly organized Roving Restorers day at Conondale property in the Upper Mary Rivercare Program*
March 2026	Upper Stanley River fish surveys	Jinibara Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, MRCCC	*Fish surveys in the upper Stanley River with Jinibara rangers and Moreton Bay City Council*
March 2026	Urban Rivers Steering Group meeting	Gympie Regional Council, Gympie Landcare, Kabi Kabi, MRCCC	*Steering Group meeting for Gympie town reach Urban Rivers project*
March 2026	Widgee Creek fish surveys	Gympie Regional Council, landholders, MRCCC	*Fish and turtle survey of mid Widgee Creek with Gympie Regional Council*
April 2026	Ireland-MRCCC interchange	Irish & Australian catchment management groups	*Ireland – MRCCC interchange aquatic ecology workshop*
April 2026	Project evaluation workshop with UQ-OGBR	University of Qld, OGBR, MRCCCC	*Workshop to review and evaluate key elements of the Mary River Place-based project with OGBR*
April 2026	Noosa River catchment action planning	Noosa Council, Resilient Rivers	*Noosa River Catchment Action Plan, technical data input*
April 2026	Burgess Creek action planning	Noosa Council, Unitywater	*Burgess Creek technical data input*
May 2026	MRCCC bug club	MRCCC and Waterwatch volunteers	*Bug club visit to Amama Park, Amamoor Creek*
May 2026	Upper Mary River Integrated Project – stakeholder workshop	Office of Great Barrier Reef, HQ Plantations, Noosa, Barung Landcare, Jinibara, Australian National University, James Cook University	*MRCCC OGBR Place-based project stakeholder day at Adams Creek unsealed roads demonstration site and Mary River revegetation project site.*
May 2026	Women in Agriculture	Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group, Maleny Cheese, various groups	*Networking and highlighting Women in Ag.*
May 2026	Moy Pocket cats claw vine control open day	Upper Mary Rivercare, SEQW, MRCCC	*Cats claw vine control open day at Moy Pocket*

May 2026	Upper Mary Waterwatch training day	Upper Mary and Kenilworth Waterwatch volunteers	*Refresher training for Waterwatch volunteers in the Upper Mary and Kenilworth districts*
May 2026	Showcasing Autumn pastures fieldwalk, Conondale	Upper Mary Rivercare	*Showcasing best grazing land management & Autumn pasture management practices – beef grazing*
May 2026	Gympie Waterwatch training day	Gympie Waterwatch volunteers	*Refresher training for Waterwatch volunteers in the Gympie networks*
May 2026	Ireland-MRCCC interchange	Irish & Australian catchment management groups	*Ireland – MRCCC interchange international threatened species day workshop*
May 2026	Tiaro Fishing Competition	Freshwater Fish Stocking Assoc Qld, MRCCC, Tiaro Landcare	*Tiaro fishing competition at Petrie Park, Tiaro targeting removal of exotic tilapia fish*
May 2026	Cool burn workshop, Imbil	Marrapatta Environment Education Centre, Upper Mary Rivercare, Kabi Kabi, Gympie Council	*A fire workshop targeting landholders of the Upper Mary Rivercare program*
May 2026	Kenilworth family fun day	Kenilworth Progress Association	*MRCCC stall provided kids with microscope to view aquatic macro- invertebrates and water quality information*
May 2026	Corridors of Green contractors Skills Day	Noosa, Gympie, Barung Landcare, Kabi Kabi, Jinibara rangers,	*Sharing learnings and skills day with contractors working on Corridors of Green projects with MRCCC*
May 2026	DPI Gatton experimental farm tour	MRCCC, OGBR	*Tour of the DPI Gatton experimental farm and observe the protected fertilizer trials*
June 2026	Bug Day Out	Mooloolah River Landcare	*Bug workshop with Mooloolah River Landcare*
June 2026	Moy Pocket cats claw vine control open day	Upper Mary Rivercare, SEQW, MRCCC	*Cats claw vine control open day at Moy Pocket*
June 2026	**250th MRCCC meeting, Cooroy**	**MRCCC General Meeting celebrations**	***250th meeting held at Hinternoosa hatchery, Cooroy with over 100 attendees***



Over 100 people attended the 250th General Meeting in June 2026 at Darren and Marie Knowles' Hinternoosa Hatchery

June 2026	MRCCC bug club	MRCCC and Waterwatch volunteers	*Bug club visit to Mothar Mountain Rockpools*
July 2026	Mary River Festival, Kandanga	Save the Mary River Group	*Water testing, creek walk and general catchment information provided.*
July 2026	Noosa hinterland catchment crawl	Kabi Kabi, Jinibara rangers, Noosa Council, Noosa Landcare	*Aquatic macro-invertebrate and water quality sampling at 12 sites throughout the Noosa hinterland*

July 2026	Biocontrol forum, Gympie	EcoInsects, Biosecurity Qld, SEQW, Pine Rivers Catchment Group, Mooloolah River Landcare, local government	*Annual biocontrol forum on cats claw and Madeira vine learnings and research progress – focused on the cat's claw leaf-tying moth translocation*
July 2026	Environment Minister project showcase	Andrew Powell, Environment Minister, SEQW, MRCCC	*Showcase of Mary River rehabilitation projects funded through the Office of Great Barrier Reef, in the upper catchment.*
July 2026	Forage budget practical demonstration, Conondale	Upper Mary Rivercare participants	*Practical demonstration of how to prepare a forage budget for small area grazing landholders, Conondale*
July 2026	Showcasing riparian revegetation on Elaman Creek	Uniting Church, Maleny	*Showcasing riparian revegetation projects on Elaman Creek in the upper catchment*
July 2026	Natural Resource Management groups gathering, Bokarina	Sunshine Coast Council, various groups	*Presentation on Cod Logs*
July 2026	Kidaman creek Landscape Repair Project	BMRG, Sunshine Coast Council, MRCCC	*Tour of riverbank restoration site on Obi Obi Creek*
July 2026	Stormwater source pollution social science workshop	Canberra University, Gympie Council, Noosa Council	*Understanding stormwater impacts in the Great Barrier Reef catchments*
August 2026	Fox control coordination	Gympie, Noosa, Sunshine Coast Council, MRCCC	*Coordinated fox control with councils*
August 2026	MRCCC presentation	Gheerulla Garden Club	*Presentation on MRCCC activities in Upper Mary to the local garden club*
August 2026	Mary River tour	Marty Hunt MP	*Mary River tour of upper catchment for Marty Hunt MP*
August 2026	Freshwater turtle training	Gympie Council, Gympie Landcare, MRCCC, citizen scientists	*Freshwater turtle training on the Mary River at Curra*
August 2026	Freshwater turtle training	Kabi Kabi, Jinibara rangers, MRCCC, citizen scientists	*Freshwater turtle training on the Mary River at Kenilworth*
August 2026	Planning for annual WQ catchment crawl	KKPAC, JPAC, BNTAC, MRCCC	*Stakeholders involved in organizing the annual catchment crawl*
August 2026	MRCCC bug club	MRCCC and Waterwatch volunteers	*Bug club visit to Coondoo Creek*
August 2026	Cod log monitoring	Kabi Kabi, Jinibara rangers, Noosa Council	*Monitoring of the cod logs to detect if spawning had occurred*
August 2026	Wetland talk	Noosa Parks Association, Friday forum	*Wetlands talk including Cooloola National Park at Wallace House, Tewantin*
September 2026	Upper Mary – Jinibara catchment crawl	Jinibara rangers, MRCCC	*6 site water quality monitoring run with Jinibara rangers in Upper Mary catchment*
Sept 2026	Urban Rivers Steering Group meeting	Gympie Regional Council, Gympie Landcare, Kabi Kabi, MRCCC	*Steering Group meeting for Gympie town reach Urban Rivers project*
Sept 2026	Water quality training with Kabi Kabi rangers	Kabi Kabi rangers	*Water quality monitoring training with Kabi Kabi rangers on the Mary River*
Sept 2026	World Rivers Day – Urban Rivers Community Awareness	Gympie Regional Council, Gympie Landcare, Kabi Kabi, MRCCC, Gympie Lions	*Community awareness day for the Urban Rivers project at The Sands, Gympie Mary River*

ept 2026	ABC Landline story on ICM in the Mary River catchment	ABC Landline, landholders, SEQW Kabi Kabi & Jinibara rangers	*An ABC Landline story showcasing ICM in the Mary River catchment over the past 30 years – dairying, river restoration, Waterwatch, cod logs etc*
Sept 2026	Dairy Australia presentation	Dairy Australia, DPI, Subtropical Dairy Program	*Presentation on water quality improvements on dairy farms in the Mary catchment at Gatton College*
Oct 2026	Australian Koala Foundation meeting	MRCCC, Sunshine Coast Council, landholders	*Meeting to collaborate with Australian Koala Foundation in the Mary River Catchment*
October 2026	Unsealed roads contractor day	HQ Plantations, Australian National University, MRCCC	*Contractor day to showcase the unsealed roads demonstration site in HQ Plantation estate in Conondale Ranges*
October 2026	Upper Mary Rivercare Introduction Workshop, Cooroy Mt	SEQW, Noosa Landcare, MRCCC	*Joint introductory workshop for landholders willing to join the program, organized with Noosa Landcare, source protection program at Cooroy Mountain.*
October 2026	**MRCCC Annual General Meeting**	**MRCCC delegates and stakeholders**	***MRCCC Annual General Meeting at the Pavilion, Gympie showgrounds***

Education including school visits

Date	**What activities**	**With whom**	***notes***
July 2025	Discussions	Sunshine Coast University	*PhD internship possibilities*
Jan 2026	Frog monitoring training and survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	*Kirby Road Environment Reserve*
Jan 2026	Frog monitoring survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	*Annie Hehir Environment Reserve*
Jan 2026	Frog monitoring survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	*London Creek Environment Reserve*
Jan 2026	Frog monitoring survey	Sunshine Coast Council Upper Mary Waterwatch volunteers	*Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve, Maleny*
Feb 2026	Frog presentation	Noosa and District Landcare	*Skilling Queensland group*
Feb 2026	Frog & platypus workshop and surveys – mini BioBlitz (frogs)	Upper Mary Rivercare, Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group, Sunshine Coast Council	*Obi Obi Creek stream frog and platypus workshop at Obi Obi Hall*
Feb 2026	Frog monitoring training and survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	*Kirby Road Environment Reserve*
Feb 2026	Frog monitoring survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	*Annie Hehir Environment Reserve*
Feb 2026	Frog monitoring survey	Jinibara People Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council	*London Creek Environment Reserve*
Feb 2026	Frog talk and quiz prize presentation. Monitoring transect installation	Kandanga State School	*Kandanga and Kandanga Creek*
Feb 2026	Frog workshop	Maryborough public and Waterwatch volunteers	*Maryborough public library*
Feb 2026	Frog talk and survey	Noosa District State High School	*Frog monitoring on Cooroora Creek, Pomona*
Feb 2026	Frog talk and survey	Maleny State School	*Frog monitoring on Obi Obi*
Feb 2026	Frog workshop and survey	Cooloola Coastcare mini-bioblitz	*Cooloola Recreation Area & Rainbow Beach & Tin Can Bay*
Feb 2026	Frog workshop and survey	Gympie Regional Council and public	*Frog surveys along Curra Creek*

Feb 2026	Frog workshop and survey	Kin Kin community and Noosa Shire Council	*Frog surveys on Kin Kin Creek*
Feb 2026	Frog talk and survey	Fraser Coast Council and Tinana State School	*Class session and frog survey*
Feb 2026	Frog talk and survey	Tewantin State School and community	*Frog surveys in Heritage Park, Tewantin*
Feb 2026	Frog workshop and surveys	Fraser Coast Regional council and public	*Surveys around wetlands of the Toogoom area*
Feb 2026	Frog talk	Coolum Coastcare	*Coolum*
June 2026	Frog monitoring information session and site investigation	Chancellor Park State School	*Sippy Downs*

Conferences

When	**What**		***notes***
October 2025	Australian Citizen Science Association Conference 2025	Presentation	*Presentation and poster – talking MRCCC Citizen Science programs forwards*
September 2026	12th Australian Stream Management Conference, Richmond / Tweed Rivers	Attendance	
September 2026	Annual Freshwater Turtle Symposium, Adelaide – Community Freshwater Turtle conservation activities	Presentation	

Representation of MRCCC

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, WBBEC, Save the Mary River group	*MRCCC representative on GREAT committee*
All year	Integrated water quality program	Noosa Council	*MRCCC representative on water quality program committee*
All year	Noosa River Expert Advisory Panel	Resilient Rivers	*Representative on panel to provide technical reports, information etc*
All year	Gympie Region Biosecurity Steering Committee	Gympie Regional Council, MRCCC, Gympie Landcare etc	*meetings with the steering group to prepare Gympie Biosecurity Plan*
	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	Bio-fuel steering group, Private Forestry Qld Services	Burnett Catchment Association, MRCCC	*MRCCC representative on PFSQ biofuel steering committee*
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	Queensland Wetlands Network	DETSI Wetlands	*MRCCC representation on network*

Research

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	Charles Darwin University, 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 impacts on 'acid' habitat frogs and freshwater fish by the 2019–2020 Black Summer bushfires*
Long-term frog monitoring	Sunshine Coast Council, Noosa Council	*Four stream transects monitored for threatened stream dependent frogs 2004 to present*
Individual identification of Giant barred frogs		*Use of body patterns to determine individuals for ageing and habitat use*
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*
Dairy effluent system pilot	University of Qld Australian Centre for Water and Environmental Biotechnology	*Drought resilience through repurposing dairy effluent into high quality water*
Understanding dissolved inorganic nitrogen pathways through a dairy landscape	James Cook University, TropWater	*Designing a water quality monitoring program to understand dairy nitrogen losses across the dairy landscape*
Rewarding riparian stewardship – piloting an environment market methodology	University of Qld, Reef Catchments Science Partnership	*Co-design of a riparian stewardship market methodology in the Mary River catchment*
Protected fertilizer trials at DPI Gatton research farm	Qld Dept of Primary Industries	*Testing of fertilizer options on a variety of pastures in research farm environment to determine water quality improvements*

Submissions

Date	**To**	***Issue***
October 2025	Australian Government, Dept of Environment	*Submission on the draft Lungfish Recovery Plan*
November 2025	DETSI	*Permit users submission for feedback and improvements*
April 2026	Tony Perrett & Andrew Powell	*Concerns about jetboats on the Mary River – Traveston Crossing to Kenilworth*
April 2026	Primary Industry Minister, Tony Perrett; Environment Minister, Andrew Powell; Natural Resources Minister, Dale Last	*Deputation to key ministers at Caloundra Community Cabinet on rehabilitation of Traveston Crossing on the Mary River*
April 2026	DETSI Wetlands	*Submission to the Ramsar Information Sheet for the Great Sandy Strait Ramsar site*

Sept 2026	Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan	*MRCCC comments and recommendations for the draft Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan*
Sept 2026	National EPA, Qld Coordinator General, Qld Hydro	*Requesting information on the proposed changes to the Borumba Pumped Hydro Power proposal, requesting review of the proposal under the EPBC Act if there are substantial changes to the original proposal*

Waterwatch Network	**Waterways monitored 2025 -2026**	***Waterwatch volunteers***
Upper Mary (Mapleton, Maleny to Conondale)	Mary River, Fryers Creek South, Lagoons at Russell Family Park, Scrub Creek, Skene Creek, Picnic Creek, Kilcoy Creek, Harpers Creek, Pencil Creek.	*Eric Anderson, Peter Watson, Annette and John Sinclair, John and Mary King, QPWS Maleny - Michelle Skinner*
Kenilworth (Brooloo, Belli Park, Coolabine, Obi Obi)	Mary River, Coonoon-Gibber Creek, Little Yabba Creek, Booloumba Creek, Lobster Creek, Coolabine Creek, Obi Obi Creek.	*Steve Dennis, Ian Mackay, Mary Bowe, QPWS-Kenilworth - Bronwyn McAdam, Paul Russell, Richard and Alice Bassett, Georgina Cooper, Des King*
East Gympie (Gympie, East Deep Creek, Traveston, Mother Mountain, Woondum)	Mary River, Deep Creek, Peter and Paul Watton Gully, Glastonbury Creek, Woondum Creek, Amamoor Creek, Greens Creek.	*Bob and Lorraine Hood, Jude Coates, Richard Park, Rebecca Couche, QPWS Gympie - Gary Hearle*
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, Jeanette Mcguire*
Yabba Creek (Imbil, HQ Plantations)	Araucaria Creek, Caseys Creek, Derrier Creek, Yabba Creek, Little Bella Creek, Bella Creek.	*HQP - Kath Nash, Brisbane Girls Grammar - Kim Wood, Carol Harris, Arna Love*
Widgee & Wide Bay Creek (Sexton, Kilkivan, Lower Wonga)	Mary River, Fat Hen Creek, Six Mile Plain Creek, Wide Bay Creek, Widgee Creek.	*Rob Newcombe, Anette Bambling, Jeanette and Brad Parke, Stephen Horseman, Mick Bambling*
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 Creek (Brooweena to Glen Echo)	Calgoa Creek, Chinamans Gully, Dry Creek, Eel Creek, Munna Creek, Sandy Creek, Teebar Creek.	*Cam and Lisa Hughes, Iain Lewis, Helen Rogers, Spencer and Leslie Innes, Kerrie Dixon, Ross Kinbacher, Brett and Tammy Marsh, Sue and Ken Pyke*
Tinana (Bauple, Glenwood, Goomboorian)	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 Creek, 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, KKPAC and Noosa Council staff and volunteers*
Jinibara, Upper Mary Catchment reserves	Obi Obi Creek, Dry Creek, Elaman Creek.	*Jinibara Ranger Team*

Long-term Waterwatch Volunteers	**Waterway Monitored**	***Duration of monitoring***
Bob and Lorraine Hood	Deep Creek	*24 years*
Cam & Lisa Hughes (retired)	Teebar, Dry Creeks	*24 years*
Iain Lewis (retired)	Munna Creek	*24 years*
Kev & Helen Rogers (retired)	Munna Creek	*24 years*
Ross Kinbacher (retired)	Sandy Creek	*24 years*
Spencer & Leslie Innes (retired)	Eel Creek	*24 years*
Brett & Tammy Marsh (retired)	Calgoa Creek	*24 years*
Mick and Evonne Bambling	Wide Bay Creek	*20 years*
Brian Thomas (retired)	Wide Bay Creek	*20 years*
Stephen Horseman (retired)	Fat Hen Creek	*20 years*
Ian Mackay	Mary River, Moy Pocket	*19 years*
Dennis Family	Coonoon-Gibber	*19 years*
Des King	Mary River, Moy Pocket	*19 years*
Leslie and Craig Hanson	Kandanga Creek	*16 years*
David Wilson (retired)	Ross Creek/ Hines Creek	*14 years*
Anette Bambling	Mary River	*13 Years*
Owen & Lynda Thompson (retired)	Goora Creek	*12 years*
Ross & Gail Smith (retired)	Mary River, Tiaro	*12 years*
Kevin Jackson	Tinana Creek	*11 years*

Retired volunteers in 2025/26:

Kerri Dixon, Gigoomgan, Munna Creek

Brian Carter, Tiaro, Chinamans Creek

Ian Smith, Gympie, McIntosh Creek

Robin Yule, Gympie, McIntosh Creek

Richard Parke, Gympie, Six Mile Creek

Social Media Marketing Report as at 14/10/2026 Lesa Bell



Insights

Facebook	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Views	79.2K	28.2K	83.6K	54.9K	40.1K	96.1K	80.3K	177.6K
Viewers	24.5K	11.7K	41.1K	20.7K	16.4K	32.7K	28.6K	52.2K
Interactions	1.5K	683	772	574	519	1.4K	1.2K	2.9K
Link clicks	66	2	143	58	74	86	127	143
Visits	1.5K	720	1K	1.2K	998	1.6K	1.3K	2.4K
Follows	55	39	95	63	39	59	54	147

Instagram	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
Views	2.7K	729	14.3K	2K	2.7K	16.3K	22.3K	11.5K
Viewers	0	3	150	150	101	301	381	418
Interactions	102	20	23	20	16	62	83	139
Link clicks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Visits	29	29	12	21	7	18	31	60
Follows	2	14	10	8	7	10	13	12

Top Post Interactions - 2026

Feb 27	FB Clean up Mary post – turtle images	(24 shares)
	Insta FFF	(54 love)
Apr 20	FB Fishing Competition Date claimer – boy fishing	(29 shares)
May 7	FB Waterwatch training	(10 shares)
May 25	Insta World Turtle Day	(24 love)
June 23	FB Hinterland Hatchery 250th General Meeting	(13 shares)
June 16l	Insta Bug Club	(35 love)
July 7	FB Platypus speaker for Mary River Festival	(133 likes – 9 shares)
Jul 22	Insta Tawnies People Choice competition winner	(67 love)
Aug 18	FB Bug Club!	(83 love 14 Shares)
Aug 18	Insta Bug Club	(95 love)
Sept 26	FB Urban Rivers community day	(33 like 12 share)
Oct 26	FB Six Mile Creek catfish nest video	(435 likes, 70,283 views)

MARY RIVER



CATCHMENT

COORDINATING COMMITTEE