



# Healthy Land and Water 2021 Annual Report



Attendees at a gully erosion repair and pasture management field day at Mulgowie  
Yuggera Ugarapul Country

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### About Healthy Land and Water

Healthy Land and Water is the peak environmental group for South East Queensland. For over 20 years it has been dedicated to investing in and leading initiatives to build the prosperity, liveability, and sustainability of our 'future region'.

We are experts in research, monitoring, evaluation and project management. Our team has led many thousands of projects to restore waterways and landscapes, improve native habitats, manage weeds, protect native species, inform policy and educate communities on the best ways to improve and protect the environment for future generations.

### Traditional Owner acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the place we now live in has been nurtured by Australia's First Peoples for tens of thousands of years. We believe the spiritual, cultural and physical consciousness gained through this custodianship is vital to maintaining the future of our region.

### Contact details

For further information about Healthy Land and Water [www.hlw.org.au](http://www.hlw.org.au), please email [info@hlw.org.au](mailto:info@hlw.org.au) or telephone **(07) 3177 9100**.

## Chair report

Healthy Land and Water has continued to deliver through another year of COVID-19, as the region begins recovering from the bushfires of 2019/20 and years of prolonged drought. I thank all of our stakeholders for your continued support throughout what have been some difficult times.

Virtual meetings have become the norm, including our 2020 Annual General Meeting, which saw the appointment of new Director Amanda Creevey, representing the water utilities, who has a wealth of diverse leadership, program and risk management experience across many sectors. Amanda's appointment was followed by independent Director Melissa Impiazzi joining the Board. Melissa brings a diverse skill set encompassing financial services, asset management, recruitment and change management that has added to the strength of Board decision making.

My thanks are extended to Cameron Jackson, who has been a valuable Board Director representing Utilities since 2017. Cameron's term concluded at the 2020 Annual General Meeting. We also farewelled long-serving contributor and Board Director Victor Atwood. Victor, a former Deputy Mayor and Councillor from Ipswich, has been involved in Healthy Land and Water governance since 2006. We thank him for his dedication to this organisation. My thanks also go to Christine Williams who has been a long-serving contributor to our Science Committee.

Directors also recognise and appreciate the commitment, support and advice of our other advisory committees: Risk and Audit Committee (RAC), Indigenous Engagement Strategy Committee (IESC), our Science Committee, the Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Committee (MESC) and associated expert panels, along with the critical community perspective provided by South East Queensland Catchments Members Association (SEQCMA).



**"I thank all of our stakeholders for your continued support throughout what have been some difficult times."**

Stephen Robertson, Chair

It is through this broad collaboration and input that our organisation continues to deliver evidence-based action for the benefit of South East Queensland and beyond.

In February, the Board endorsed the strategic direction for the Community Natural Asset Investment Reserve established in 2020. Principles and clear objectives were developed that will ensure the reserve is applied for the long-term benefit of South East Queensland's natural assets and the communities that depend on them.

The Board was proud to celebrate endorsement by Reconciliation Australia of our *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)* this year and look forward to working with the CEO and our Indigenous Engagement Strategy Committee to oversee its implementation.

In particular, we look forward to the appointment of an Indigenous Director which follows the constitutional amendments endorsed earlier in the year. These amendments were made to ensure that the voices of First Nations peoples are represented and heard around the board table and throughout the organisation.

In closing, I extend my appreciation to my fellow Board Directors for their valued contributions and support this year. On behalf of the Board, I also thank our CEO Julie McLellan and her team for their dedication to the long-term liveability and prosperity of South East Queensland and meeting the challenges of the past year so efficiently and innovatively ensuring the ongoing safety and welfare of all of Healthy Land and Water's fabulous staff.

Stephen Robertson, Chair



The Healthy Land and Water Board of Directors Stephen Robertson, Mayor Karen Williams, Nadia O'Carroll, Melissa Impiazzi, Nikki Poteri-Collie and Simon Warner (missing - Amanda Creevey)

### Director's meetings

Director	Board meetings	
	Number of meetings attended	Number of meetings eligible to attend
Stephen Robertson (Chair)	8	9
Karen Williams	7	9
Nikki Poteri-Collie	7	9
Nadia O'Carroll	9	9
Simon Warner	9	9
Cameron Jackson	4	4
Victor Atwood	4	4
Amanda Creevey	4	5
Melissa Impiazzi	3	3

Other meetings or events attended by Directors, included a Strategic Planning workshop regarding the Community Natural Asset Investment Reserve, and Risk and Audit, Indigenous Engagement Strategy, and SEQCMA committee meetings.

### Our committees





Honeymoon Bay on Mulgumpin (Moreton Island)

Quandamooka Country

## CEO report

At the time of release of this *Annual Report*, Healthy Land and Water will have successfully delivered its 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations. 2021 also marks five years since the merger of our two parent organisations, and ushers in the final year of our current *Strategic Plan*. Several major initiatives have been progressed this year in line with the current strategic plan and our organisational values.

In May 2021 Reconciliation Australia officially endorsed Healthy Land and Water's *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)*. The RAP has been in development for the last two years and has driven initiatives such as our Indigenous Employment Strategy and constitutional amendments to appoint an Indigenous Director.

Another highlight of the year has been the collaboration demonstrated in the refresh of the *South East Queensland Natural Resource Management Plan (NRM Plan)*. Our team used an innovative approach to design a consultation survey that enabled our community to engage with science and data and respond to our call for input in a way not tried before, with great results. The draft of the revised *NRM Plan* will be out for consultation as we move towards the Annual General Meeting.

Further innovation is being applied to re-imagining the Report Card for the Environmental Health Monitoring Program (EHMP). After 21 years, we recognise that the Report Card has come of age and have invested in creating a new tool that will combine the planning, action and monitoring components of the *NRM Plan*, EHMP and Report Card to better support decision-making, and reward effort. We are excited to reveal 'Future Card' at our showcase event in November.



**"I am extremely proud of the courage and integrity demonstrated by our organisation as the first NRM group in Queensland to receive endorsement of its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)."**

Julie McLellan, CEO

Engagement is one of the most important platforms of our work. This year saw the development of an Engagement Strategy and continuation of strategic engagement with stakeholders. Our Report Card briefings to mayors and councillors were moved online due to COVID-19. Meetings were held post the Queensland Government election with Ministers Stewart and Scanlon, highlighting our combined investment in the enhancement and protection of our natural capital of South East Queensland and beyond.

At the federal level, we continue to work closely with Minister Ley and her office on key projects protecting the biodiversity of South East Queensland and in response to the devastating 2019/20 bushfires. Ongoing dialogue and project partnerships continued with our owner members the South East Queensland Council of Mayors, water utilities (including Unitywater, Seqwater, and Urban Utilities), and the community through SEQCMA. The fruits of these partnerships and advice are reflected throughout the report.

Impact on the ground through care for the environment and our community is evidenced throughout the *Annual Report* – from a round of small grants awarded to six community groups early in the year, totalling \$29,119, to the extension of the koala recovery project signed in June totalling \$2 million for work to be completed

by 2022. This year, our team worked with over 809 stakeholders on 74 projects and delivering outcomes for the region's environment and liveability.

A review of our workforce, capacity and systems has seen a refinement of our structure and strategic human resources framework, introduction of a dedicated business development arm, renewed focus on our operational teams, an information technology upgrade and commencement of work towards improved business systems underpinned by a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Our staff demonstrated strong engagement with a 91% response rate to the inaugural staff survey. We are pleased to report a \$886,000 profit, of which \$792,000 was returned to strategic and project reserves.

All of this would not be possible without the dedication, passion, skill and commitment of the Healthy Land and Water team. I thank my Executive for their shared contribution to the leadership of this great organisation and a huge thank you to the whole team who work tirelessly to ensure our natural assets are preserved and enhanced. To my dedicated and engaged Board of Directors, thank you once again for the trust you place in me and the team to realise your vision and plan for the region.

Julie McLellan, CEO

## COO report

Healthy Land and Water has tracked the health of waterways and ecosystems of South East Queensland for over 20 years. The evidence tells us that despite considerable efforts, the trajectory of many of our natural assets are in decline, threatening the natural values that underpin the lifestyle that we enjoy in this beautiful region.

Exactly what we enjoy about South East Queensland also makes it attractive for people to move here. As we anticipate our population to grow by 1.5 million people by around 2040, Healthy Land and Water is working closely with our partners to explore the state-of-the-art regional monitoring, and collaborative and engaging approaches to natural resource management planning working with Traditional Owners, the broader community, scientists, and policymakers.

Healthy Land and Water and our partners are delivering science-driven planning and management actions to protect and improve our natural assets. As the Olympics and Paralympics head to Brisbane and South East Queensland in 2032, ambitious sustainability objectives have been set that have the potential to transform the region, including an overall climate positive target.

This year, despite the continuing challenges of COVID-19 and drought in South East Queensland, we have delivered projects and programs for all levels of government, water utilities and corporates that have had significant impact, but we can't rest on our laurels – there is much to be done, and we are committed to work together to protect this region on behalf of its biodiversity and people.

## Future Card

The design and function of the Report Card is being reimagined, in close collaboration with stakeholders, funding partners and leading scientists. Future Card will be a dynamic tool that encompasses the *NRM Plan* and the Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program and an expanded Report Card with a broadened focus on all natural resources in South East Queensland.

The new program will be a mechanism to help us understand not only how our natural assets are tracking, but how decisions on NRM actions can provide benefits to our region. Integration of the *NRM Plan* will increase transparency, accountability and engagement. Our vision is to inspire positive action and drive investment, reporting annually on environmental condition and providing rewards for our stakeholders for the next 20 years and beyond. Crucially, Future Card creates a mechanism for decision-makers, investors and community members to be recognised and rewarded for efforts that align with regional needs that are based on weight of evidence.



**“Through the application of systems thinking, social network analysis, and serious gaming technology, we are setting out to revolutionise Natural Resource Management (NRM).”**

Andrew O'Neil, Chief Operating Officer

The current phase of the project is to deliver a proof-of-concept in the Logan region. The next stage of the process includes undertaking social network analysis of the pilot system. Mapping the connections between people and communities will provide insight into the social dynamics of the region and helps to identify influential players who may be important in driving future change.

The small-scale working concept delivered through this project will then be rolled out across the entire region. Healthy Land and Water's Future Card proof-of-concept for the Logan area was revealed during our 2021 showcase event in November 2021.

## Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program and Report Card

In 2020, Healthy Land and Water commenced a stakeholder engagement process to inform a review of the Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program (EHMP). We are responding to member feedback and undertaking a detailed review and reshaping of these core programs to ensure they meet the needs of the region and our members.

The EHMP review aims to provide a better understanding of whether the program is meeting its objectives and goals and reflecting the needs of the organisation's stakeholder community. We are also investigating how the EHMP can better align with its member's programs to reduce overlap and improve monitoring efficiency.

Healthy Land and Water has delivered a series of online workshops and interviews with its members and has been working with member representatives to gain insights into how we can continue to support and understand the health of the environmental values of South East Queensland through the EHMP.

A key direction for improvements through Future Card will be to extend the EHMP to include the natural assets encompassed by the *NRM Plan*, while maintaining the vital compliance role the EHMP plays for partners.

The review is being guided by Healthy Land and Water's Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Committee (MESC), Science Committee, and multiple science expert panels. The feedback provided by members during the workshop sessions has been very enlightening and will be instrumental in shaping the future of the program. The team is in the process of drafting reports from the preliminary findings of these activities to be communicated back to the membership. The EHMP review is on track to be completed by early 2022.

## NRM Plan

The five yearly review of the *South East Queensland Natural Resource Management Plan (NRM Plan)* is well underway. A rigorous review of available data was completed, informing analysis of the condition of our natural assets. Progress towards the baseline targets set in 2009 was assessed in the production of the 2021 Asset Status Report. The *NRM Plan* is informed by the best available science and is reflective of the social and economic values of the communities in our region.

A map-based online survey, six sub-regional workshops, one whole of region workshop, and a cross-cutting high-level visioning workshop were undertaken to gather valuable feedback and insights on the progress towards achieving targets outlined in the *NRM Plan*. Information on threats and priority actions for improved management of our region's natural assets has also been collected.



**“We have collected stakeholder views on progress, threats and aspirations and more importantly, a demonstrable willingness for communities to be more involved in the planning and implementation of actions for the maintenance of our natural assets”**

Dr Grace Muriuki, Strategic Science Manager

A broad cross-section of stakeholders were engaged and significant interest was generated for future action planning for implementation of the plan to support the economic growth, social wellbeing and sustainable use of our natural assets in South East Queensland. At the time this *Annual Report* was written, the review of the *NRM Plan* was still underway and on track to be completed in FY22.

*This project is supported by Healthy Land and Water through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.*

# Our impact

**74** 

Projects being delivered across South East Queensland



**6.8 tonnes**  
of litter collected

**890+**

stakeholders and landholders **engaged**

**89**

technical, studies, guidelines and project **reports**

Total project delivery funds =  
**\$11,305,871**

## **44+ collaborations**

with industry and Landcare, research affiliations, First Nations, & all levels of government

Between

**10,000 - 12,000**

tonnes of sediment prevented from polluting waterways each year



**424 ha.**  
of **weed control**

**75% of respondents**

had made changes to their management practices as a result of involvement in project activities.

**462** knowledge decision support products

**92 % of respondents**

said that participation in project activities influenced implementation of planned management practice changes.

**346 events delivered**

with industry and Landcare, research affiliations, First Nations, & all levels of government



**699** site visits and **monitoring** activities

# Knowledge Research

Team Leader - Shannon Mooney

Vital science support continues to underpin all projects across the organisation. Data and information gathering, monitoring and mapping, and analysis and reporting was undertaken to inform regional initiatives including the EHMP, Report Card and NRM Plan, along with specific projects and long-term programs.

The Knowledge Research team has turned over 20 years of available data collated through the NRM Plan and EHMP into online data dashboards and interactive maps for greater use by our partners, available on our website:

- Report Card 2021 Interactive Map.
- Freshwater Data Dashboard.
- NRM Plan 2021 Online Atlas.
- Aligning catchment works in Lower Brisbane.
- Citizen Science for koala awareness in Scenic Rim.



**"It continually surprises me the sheer breadth of work our organisation delivers. The Knowledge Research team provides data science interpretation and support across the majority of our 70+ active programs, including our signature programs – the Environmental Health Monitoring Program, the Report Card and NRM Plan."**

**We have been heavily involved in projects for fire management, building cultural understanding, working to protect our internationally significant Ramsar wetlands and using citizen science wherever we could throughout the year."**

Shannon Mooney, Team Leader - Knowledge Research



Quandamooka Country

Science Under Sail participants collecting data for the EHMP



Quandamooka Country

Healthy Land and Water Principal Scientist Dr Emily Saeck during field work

## Strategic Science

Strategic Science Manager - Grace Muriuki

Providing strategic support to teams, enhancing efficiency, and strengthening the scientific basis of our work has been the focus for the year. Some of the activities this year have involved raising awareness on ethics and intellectual property. We are also re-invigorating an internal peer review mechanism to sustain confidence in our published technical works and assure their scientific integrity and accuracy before external publication.

We have promoted lateral and cross-team learning and demonstrating impact from research collaborations with academia and other stakeholders through very successful monthly lunchtime talks that cover topical issues of interest. We strengthened learning and collaboration by hosting a cohort of final year interns from Griffith University, and a second cohort from The University of Queensland is on track to join us during the summer of 2021.

Healthy Land and Water collaborates on many innovative research projects. Many of these are funded by the Australian Research Centre (Linkage stream).

Notable projects this year include:

- Analysing wastewater during the Census 2021.
- Unravelling how aquatic coastal networks regulate nitrogen removal.
- Innovative tools needed for market-based nutrient offsetting.
- Modelling surface water availability to inform water security for freshwater biodiversity and human society in a changing climate.

## Case studies

### Mulgumpin Fire Management Strategy (TFMS and Jarlo)

Working with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC), the team is supporting the development of fire management plans for townships on Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) protecting economic, ecological, social and cultural assets.

Healthy Land and Water is delivering this work for the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) and the Queensland Department of Environment and Science.

### Migratory Shorebirds

Monitoring data to investigate the significance of Moreton Bay Ramsar for shorebirds. Over 244,000 records across 256 sites were assessed by international criteria. 18 roost sites were identified, which meet two or more criteria, being of international significance.

This project is supported by Healthy Land and Water through funding from the Australian Government's Environment Restoration Fund.

### Post 2021 Flood Monitoring

In March 2021, an extreme multi-day rainfall event occurred along the South East Australian coastline resulting in major flooding in the lower Logan-Albert and Upper Bremer catchments. The Knowledge Research Team took the opportunity to assess and monitor the flood impacts toward the EHMP.

The results from this work suggest the flood in the Logan-Albert catchments transported significant sediment, nutrients and organic material to the lower estuary and Southern Bay. By contrast, below minor flood levels in the Brisbane-Bremer catchments had a relatively minor impact on water quality.

### Brisbane Catchment Network Mapping Tool

The Brisbane Catchment Network Mapping Tool is making it possible to get a holistic "whole of catchment" view to identify potential threats and opportunities for on-ground projects across Meanjin (Brisbane).

The new GIS-based tool is designed to assist catchment groups with project design, providing transparency between groups and local government on project proposals.

In partnership with Brisbane City Council, Healthy Land and Water delivered 11 training workshops in 2020, teaching members of the Brisbane Catchments Network and Habitat Brisbane groups how to use the new tool. Since the tool has been rolled out, Brisbane Catchment Network members have uploaded 263 proposed projects.

This project is supported by Healthy Land and Water, through funding from the Australian Government's Environment Restoration Fund.

### Social Survey

A survey was developed to provide a snapshot of social and economic benefits of waterways and beaches of the Sunshine Coast. The results reported that very high numbers of residents were satisfied with the usability and accessibility of their waterways, and the level of personal connection within the local community with nature was very high.

# Reconciliation

## Relationships

We have an established history of seeking relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commit to learning from past efforts with the aim of creating strong and lasting relationships.

## Respect

We are aware that many Traditional Owners were displaced from their Country in South East Queensland. We respect and honour the cultures, knowledge and custodianship of Traditional Owners and the historical and current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of the region.

## Opportunities

Our Mission and Vision focuses on the natural assets and people of South East Queensland. Much of our project work can be structured to gain more opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through direct involvement, partnerships, capacity building and other support as outlined in the deliverables listed in this Action Plan.

## Governance

Our commitment to good governance and accountability will be progressively demonstrated through our Indigenous Engagement Strategy Committee (IESC) and associated project teams. With the Healthy Land and Water Chair and Chief Executive Officer as key members of the IESC, our commitment to delivering on this important aspect of our *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)* cannot be understated.



## Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed

In April 2021 Reconciliation Australia officially endorsed the Healthy Land and Water RAP, which demonstrates our commitment to reconciliation through our team's values and actions. The RAP is supporting our continued development of understanding and appreciation of the role of Traditional Owners in managing Country.

This living and public document details the actions we will take to enhance our organisation's ability to foster Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and participation in managing the culturally significant landscapes of the South East Queensland region and beyond.

Our vision is of a Healthy Land and Water that provides leadership to enable respectful and appropriate inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the delivery of natural resource management activities and strives for equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.



**"This is a major milestone in Healthy Land and Water's journey of appropriately respecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and bolstering our ability to support further empowerment of First Nation's peoples across South East Queensland."**

Julie McLellan, CEO

Our RAP is recognised as an "Innovate" plan, meaning its actions work towards achieving our organisation's unique vision for reconciliation. It focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This RAP is particularly significant for us, as it brings together past activities and lessons into a renewed commitment to recognising the contributions made by the Traditional Owners of South East Queensland.

The Healthy Land and Water RAP is the first RAP for a Natural Resource Management Group in Queensland.

Our RAP is available at [hlw.org.au/rap/](http://hlw.org.au/rap/) and on the Reconciliation Australia website at [reconciliation.org.au](http://reconciliation.org.au).

## Advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy has been developed and is being implemented, following Board endorsement. This work follows Australian Human Rights Commission guidance which aims to increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The approach has already resulted in positive recruitment outcomes, and we hope that our efforts will see Indigenous employment numbers increase and inspire other stakeholders to advance similar recruitment activities.



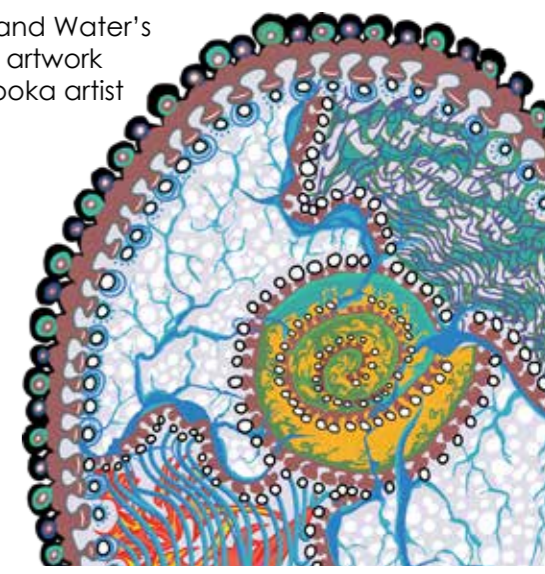
Quandamooka Country

The re-signing of the MoU between Healthy Land and Water and QYAC

## Memorandum of Understanding re-signed

In November 2020, the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) and Healthy Land and Water renewed their strong commitment to work together during a special ceremony, marked at the re-signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the groups. Initiated in 2014 the MoU was the first of its kind between a recognised First Nation organisation and a natural resource management group in Queensland. We are proud of our collaboration with QYAC and have been privileged to assist and work with the Quandamooka People on a variety of important projects and programs across Quandamooka Country.

Healthy Land and Water's Reconciliation artwork by Quandamooka artist Belinda Close.





# Land Restoration

Team Leader - Dennis Gannaway

A range of projects across the region ranging from gully repair, broadscale weed control and koala and lungfish habitat protection were delivered. New contracts have seen a significant increase in the program over the past twelve months requiring the employment of two new project officers growing the team to a total of six members.



## Case studies



### Koala Project and the South East Queensland Bushfire Recovery Koala Habitat project

The project has been focused on protecting, restoring and increasing priority koala habitat, and improving understanding of local koalas. A steering committee was formed with representatives from all levels of government, local non-government organisations and other groups. An expression of interest process and regional events were held, calling for local landholders in the area to be involved in the project, generating responses from 24 landholders.

An additional \$2 million was announced for the project, expanded our efforts into the Lake Manchester, North Pine and Grandchester areas.

*The Protecting Koalas project is supported by Healthy Land and Water, through funding from the Australian Government's Environment Restoration Fund.*

*The Bushfire Recovery project is supported by the Australian Government's Bushfire recovery package for wildlife and their habitat.*

### Riparian Weed Control project

This project is addressing major threats to the quality of water for people in the region through the suppression of emerging weeds and protection of areas under management in the long term. The project is now entering a maintenance phase.

A biological control agent, the Jewel Beetle, has been released to protect areas under manual management from reinfestation and slow the growth of weeds. Field observations suggest the agents are establishing and beginning to move naturally across the environment, despite impacts from adverse weather conditions.

*This project is supported by Moreton Bay Regional Council and Seqwater.*

### Lungfish Habitat Restoration Project

Healthy Land and Water, Seqwater, and Griffith University have teamed up to deliver this project. Now in its second year, planting has been undertaken across three sites in the Mid-Brisbane River at Burtons Bridge, Fielding Road Reserve and Atkinson's Crossing. After mixed results of the first round of planting and facing a shortage of plants, the team has been especially innovative this year, growing their own plants and monitoring growth via remote cameras. This has significantly reduced the need for travel to the growing ponds.

This habitat rehabilitation program forms part of a broader strategy that Seqwater has developed to ensure the long-term survival of the Australian lungfish in South East Queensland rivers.

The Lungfish program received media attention this year, featured on an episode of ABC's Gardening Australia and Natura Pacific's Back from the Brink.

*This project is delivered in partnership with Seqwater.*

### The Healthy Catchments program

The focus of the program has moved from large instream structures to the repair of hillslope gullies above streams to reversing gully erosion and stopping sediment before it enters the stream network. Project work includes the management of newly developed eroding gullies and the maintenance of erosion control structures built under previous iterations of the project. The team has been collaborating with graziers to address erosion and improve grazing practices to prevent future gullies forming.

Assessments have shown that between 10,000 and 12,000 tonnes of sediment have been prevented from polluting waterways each year as a direct result of the Healthy Catchments Program. The sediment savings from the repair and stabilisation of actively eroding gullies and stream banks in the priority focal areas has been estimated at 9,072 tonnes annually, with a soil replacement value for this loss of approximately \$272,160 (at \$30/t). Healthy Land and Water has become a leader in the design, implementation, and oversight of instream earthworks projects.

*This project is delivered by a partnership between Healthy Land and Water and the Department of Environment and Science.*

# Biodiversity Conservation

Team Leader - Paul Donatiu

The Biodiversity Conservation team delivered on-ground and capacity building projects that represented a \$2.6m investment in natural resource management. Projects are focused on shorebird protection, the restoration of critically endangered ecosystems, the conservation of marine and coastal environments and the identification and protection of cultural heritage landscapes. As a Ramsar listed wetland, Moreton Bay is a major focus for the program, supported by the Australian Government. Activities delivered this year included coastal habitat restoration, shellfish reef creation, cultural landscapes management, erosion control, marine debris removal and feral animal control.

Using core funding provided by the Queensland Government (Natural Resources Investment Program) and Australian Government (Regional Land Partnerships), the team was able to provide key support to community organisations and landholders to improve natural resource management outcomes. A highlight of the year was being able to work with Traditional Owners (Kabi Kabi and Joondoburri people), the Queensland Fire and Biodiversity Consortium, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Turnstone Archaeology to map, survey and protect the culturally rich landscapes of Bribie Island.

*The Moreton Bay Ramsar Wetland project is supported by Healthy Land and Water, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.*



Kombumerri, Ngaraghwal, Mununjali, Wangeriburra Country

## Bushfire Recovery

Phase 1 of the Bushfire Recovery project was launched, targeting bushfire affected areas within the Queensland component of the Gondwana World Heritage Rainforests area. This phase was focused on removing select weeds from the Illinbah section of Lamington National Park.

Phase 2 of the project also commenced, with an additional 210 hectares of land being restored. This work is facilitating natural regeneration and accelerating canopy closure in fire affected vegetation communities. Works also include boundary fencing to stop cattle from trampling sensitive rainforest and upland vegetation communities.

Like the first, the second phase of the program is focused on protecting and restoring habitat for more than 20 state and nationally listed threatened species and one very rare vegetation community. To date, almost 40 hectares of habitat for threatened species has been restored, building upon Phase 1 outcomes.

*This project is supported by the Australian Government's Bushfire recovery package for wildlife and their habitat.*

## Moreton Bay Migratory Shorebirds

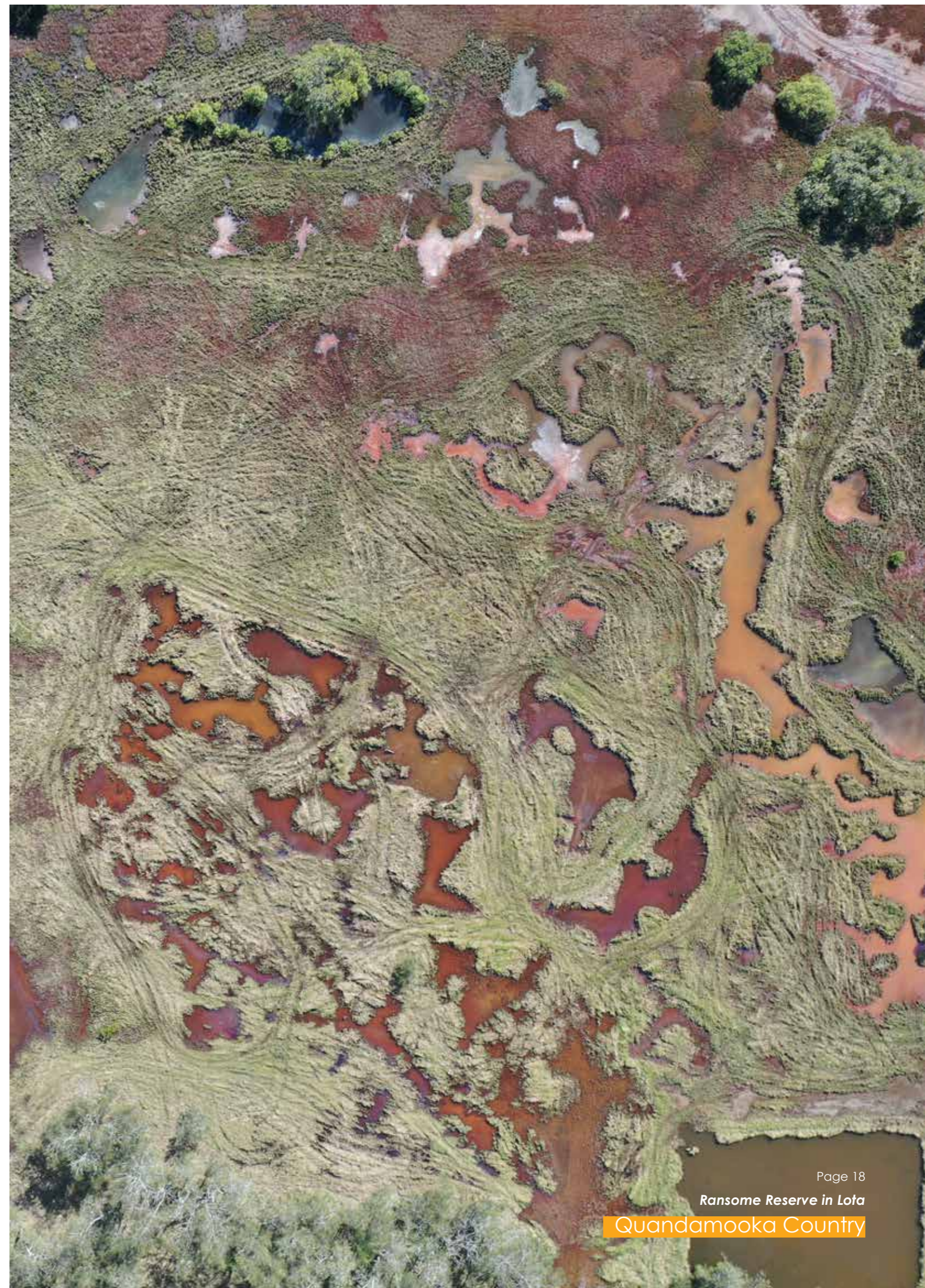
Regional threat and bird data was compiled and assessed; a working group involving stakeholders from across the coast was formed and the Bay-wide Census; the most comprehensive single count of shorebirds since 2008 was completed.

During the February survey, 106 sites were visited, and 25,921 migratory shorebirds and 2,761 resident shorebirds were recorded. Compared to the 2008 Census, 4,300 fewer birds were found despite many more sites visited. The Census was a collaborative effort between Healthy Land and Water, the Queensland Wader Study Group, Gold Coast Shorebirds, Marine Parks and Moreton Bay Regional Council.

*This project is supported by Healthy Land and Water through funding from the Australian Government's Environment Restoration Fund.*



Quandamooka Country



Quandamooka Country



# Sustainable Agriculture

*Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators Bruce Lord and Susie Chapman*

As the dominant land-use in South East Queensland and an important contributor to the economic and social fabric of our rural areas and hinterland, the Sustainable Agriculture program protects a vital natural asset. It involves working with landholders and farming and community groups to implement practices which improve soil health, land condition and native vegetation. A range of activities, including workshops, field days, demonstration sites and tailored information was offered to land managers and landholders this year, despite facing significant setbacks due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The team delivered workshops and hosted field days on a range of topics including soil health, erosion control, managing streams and gullies, pasture management, riparian condition and land capability assessment. The focus this year was the delivery of local soil subhealth programs, a hillslope erosion program, and a native vegetation subprogram. Working with industry, community groups, extension officers and researchers, various agricultural forums were supported, workshops and field days facilitated, funding opportunities promoted, and relevant best practice information and support provided to landholders.

*This project received funding through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, and the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science's Healthy Catchments Program.*

## Grazing Best Practice Management

This year, the project built on three years of work with 180 grazing businesses to deliver Grazing BMP self-assessment workshops, follow-up training workshops and field days, one-on-one property visits, and supporting the establishment of local demonstration sites to highlight the adoption of best practice. This project has been significantly impacted by severe drought conditions and COVID-19 restrictions. Despite these challenges, a comprehensive mid-season survey indicated that an overwhelming majority of participants were influenced to change their management practices.

- 75% of respondents had made changes to their management practices as a result of involvement in project activities.
- 92% of respondents said that participation in project activities influenced implementation of planned management practice changes.

# Climate Adaptation

Team Leader - Rachael Nasplezes

A new Climate Adaptation program was established, bringing together two existing programs to better meet the needs of our changing environment.

For over 20 years we have been working with our partners to build resilience within communities and across landscapes to prepare for a changing climate.

Climate Adaptation provides a focused and targeted lens across which Healthy Land and Water can expand understanding of the impacts of climate change to our region's natural resources and communities. This includes what steps we can take to reduce and adapt to these impacts to ensure the region has a strong and viable future.

The challenge now is scale. A massive increase in work is needed if our region is to retain and protect the world class natural assets and lifestyle that has attracted the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics to the region.

## Water by Design

The Water by Design Steering Committee has been re-established and several key actions have been progressed, with a formal Terms of Reference and Chair, Rebekah Kenna from Redland City Council, now in place.

Water by Design's Davidson Street 'Living Waterways' urban development project won the 2021 Stormwater Awards for Excellence in Education and Policy and was a national finalist. The Water by Design team presented at the conference, discussing projects which are helping to inform and drive innovation in the field of sustainable urban water management. Understanding and research insights have been shared across the Water by Design Communities of Practice across the State regarding Low Impact Design solutions and Integrated Water Planning.

Multiple local government embedding activities, field days, workshops and online resources were delivered in South East Queensland and across the reef regions as part of the Erosion and Sediment Control and Urban Stormwater Capacity Building programs.

## The Clean Up Program

The Clean Up Program, now in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year, removed over 16 tonnes of rubbish from five catchments across the region. Funders of the program include the Australian Government, Brisbane City Council, Ipswich City Council, Logan City Council and Moreton Bay Regional Council.



**"Improved knowledge of our role in building our natural and social systems resilience and adaptation to climate change is critical"**

**We are actively seeking to ramp up our understand and knowledge sharing capabilities to enable and support a region that is in deep transition toward a positive future."**

Rachael Nasplezes, Team Leader - Climate Adaptation

The program supported a Paddle Against Plastics community event where kayakers collected floating and bank bound rubbish together at Breakfast Creek. This event was held in partnership with Brisbane City Council, Ocean Crusaders, Save Our Waterways Now and the Australian Government.

The program recently received a Queensland Government grant which will increase the number of days the Clean Up Program crew can spend servicing South East Queensland waterways, immediately removing floating and bank bound litter from our

*The Living Waterways program is supported by Healthy Land and Water, through funding from the Australian Government's Environment Restoration Fund and our members including local government, state government, and water utilities.*

*The Clean Up Program is supported by Healthy Land and Water, through funding from the Australian Government's Environment Restoration Fund and Brisbane City Council, Logan City Council, Ipswich City Council, City of Gold Coast, and Moreton Bay Regional Council.*

*The Erosion and Sediment Control program is supported by Healthy Land and Water, through funding from the Department of Environment and Science.*



Yuggera Ugarapul Country

Attendees at the Clean Up Program Paddle Against Plastics event. Photo credit: Save Our Waterways Now

## The Queensland Fire and Biodiversity Consortium

QFBC Manager - Dr Samantha Lloyd

In 2020 the South East Queensland Fire and Biodiversity Consortium transitioned to a new name, the Queensland Fire and Biodiversity Consortium (QFBC). This change reflected the increasing demand for its services by stakeholders and the community across Queensland and the state-wide interests of some of its partners.

The QFBC developed relationships with new project partners including Livingstone Shire Council in the Fitzroy Basin Association region.

The QFBC property fire management planning workshops and fire information nights have been very well received by community and stakeholders in the region.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the QFBC delivered its annual Fire Science Seminar virtually, showcasing the latest science and information on fire preparedness, fire ecology and fire management. With the theme of 'Facing Fire in a Changing Climate'. The online event featured 14 presentations, delivered by 18 presenters and was attended by over 500 people.

The QFBC has successfully delivered another year of over-subscribed engagement events, including information nights, workshops and overall fuel hazard assessment training across Queensland. QFBC Manager, Dr Samantha Lloyd co-authored a paper published in the *Journal of Ecological Management and Restoration* titled *Facilitating Collaborations between Researchers and Practitioners in Ecosystem Management and Restoration*.



The QFBC was awarded Highly Commended for its property fire management planning workshops at the Queensland Resilience Awards.



QFBC Coordinator Craig Welden and Manager Dr Samantha Lloyd

### Bushfire Recovery - Phase 2

Targeted capacity building programs for landholders and communities affected by the 2019 bushfires in the Noosa Catchment, Carneys Creek and Rosevale Tarome areas in the Scenic Rim Catchment, were facilitated. Fire information nights and property fire management planning workshops have been delivered to 147 landholders across six events. Landholders have been supported to develop 30 property fire management plans across more than 7,800 hectares.

The QFBC is working with Tarome Rural Fire Brigade to develop a sub-catchment fire management plan aimed at mitigating wildfire risk across the sub-catchment and building resilience.

In addition, 16 communication materials were produced and collaboration occurred with nine stakeholder groups and government agencies to deliver these outcomes. In the Noosa River Catchment, the QFBC is engaging with Kabi Kabi First Nation on the project and supporting landholders to protect Cultural Heritage values.

*This project is supported by the Australian Government's Bushfire recovery package for wildlife and their habitat.*

### Planned Burn Guidelines

The QFBC is working with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) to review and update their critical fire resource, the *Planned Burn Guidelines* for the South East Queensland bioregion. The *Planned Burn Guidelines* describe key concepts and values associated with planned burning for the ecological health of the different broad fire vegetation groups which are common to the South East Queensland bioregion.

As part of this project, the QFBC is chairing a South East Queensland bioregion expert panel workshop and is developing a new introductory volume that supports all planned burn guidelines across the state and covers topics fundamental to undertaking burns for conservation purposes on QPWS estate. The QFBC looks forward to sharing the final resources with partners and stakeholders.





# Business Development

General Manager - Scott Jose



There have been exciting developments in the Environmental Offsets space with Healthy Land and Water being involved with the 'leading edge' of potential nutrient offset methodologies.

Scott Jose, General Manager - Business Development and Growth

Business development processes and focus was identified as an improvement opportunity for Healthy Land and Water. After a process review and more dedicated resourcing, bid development processes and a business development register that generates business insight information were formalised. Further progression is planned for next year with a focus on business development prospecting and its integration into a Customer Relationships Management system.

We have been involved in wetlands investigations for Unitywater at Blue Heart on the Sunshine Coast. Facilitation of extension of such wetland methodologies for nutrient offsetting has commenced with select water utilities and the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science. Wetlands may prove viable for nutrient offsetting following the release of the draft *Point Source Water Quality Offsets Guideline 2019* in which a receiving waters perspective is considered by the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science

Healthy Land and Water established the Community Natural Asset Investment Reserve. This initiative enables us to invest in environmental matters that provide a return to the business, which we can invest in our natural assets. Following dedicated Board and executive team sessions early in the year, an investment development process was approved by the board. This process is being implemented with the goal of having a suitable investment presented to the board next financial year.

## Offsets

Healthy Land and Water's pilot nutrient offset site at Beaudesert was installed in 2013 and helped inform what is now known as the Point Source Water Quality Offsets Policy 2019. It has been tested through numerous high flow events and has been maintained and monitored by Healthy Land and Water since installation.

Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) has been employed to derive digital elevation models which determine changes in the shape of the banks over time. The integrity of the site has not been compromised despite events that have challenged other sections of the Logan River, providing evidence of the role of healthy streambank vegetation in stabilisation and erosion prevention.

*This project is delivered in collaboration with Urban Utilities, Unitywater, the Department of Environment and Science, Logan City Council and the City of Gold Coast.*



Yugambah Country

Cedar Grove Offsets site



# Corporate Affairs

General Manager Corporate Affairs - Suzie Christensen

A refreshed strategic approach to engagement is one stream of the organisation's new integrated strategy for communications and stakeholder engagement.

In line with the strategic plan, investigation of a customer relationship management (CRM) system requirements triggered a functional analysis of our business systems. The review identified the need for an integrated approach that will see improvements to our finance and project management systems as well as a CRM, along with greater capacity to report on organisational performance. We look forward to that project commencing in FY22.



**“At the core of these new long-term strategies is an inherent focus on strengthening partnerships with and between stakeholders, including members, all tiers of government, scientists, industry, Traditional Owners, staff, and our community.”**

Suzie Christensen, General Manager Corporate Affairs

## Communications

Team Leader - Suzi Moore

It has been a year of strong and increasing demand for information about Healthy Land and Water's work in environment and liveability for South East Queensland. Despite the ongoing uncertainties and event cancellations and postponements due to COVID-19 restrictions, agile work-around solutions achieved better than anticipated engagement results across the board.

The readership of our monthly e-news, *Nurture*, has been enhanced, with the re-invigorated monthly e-newsletter now reaching an engaged audience of 6,313 regular readers. A revitalised focus on crafting engaging content with a storytelling focus has resulted in solid growth in our digital reach - both through our website, but more notably, through our social media channels.

The Report Card website was accessed a record number of times this year, up 139% page views, despite the traditional launch being forced online due to COVID-19 restrictions. Report Card promotion was ramped up using digital media platforms, resulting in a 31% increase of users accessing the Report Card site.

This year, we recognised the impressive actions delivered for South East Queensland over the past 20 years. A refocused approach will ensure that we are future-ready, in preparation for ensuring the region can deliver a 'green' Olympics and Paralympics in 2032.



**“The growth in engagement is the result of a re-invigorated approach focused on profiling headline stories and the impact of our work through partnerships to deliver greater resilience for the catchment.”**

Suzi Moore, Team Leader - Marketing and Communications

6,313

subscribers  
monthly e-news, Nurture

169,587

Facebook reach  
374% increase in reach

118,044

Healthy Land and Water page  
views

5% increase in information accessed from the Healthy Land and Water website, and a 22% increase in users

47

project communications packages

made up of articles, social media posts, media releases, newsletters, posters, videos and more

62

newsroom

articles published

7,944

Instagram reach

652% increase in reach

30,728

Report Card page views

139% increase in information accessed from the Report Card website, and a 31% increase in users

37

events

promoted on the Healthy Land and Water website (down significantly due to COVID-19 restrictions)

# Business Services

Chief Financial Officer - Michele Clatworthy

The Business Services team embraced FY21 with renewed energy, following a review of organisational structure and systems, and the appointment of several new team members. The new team is squarely focused on enabling the operational arm of the business achieve the great results it is known for.

Risks to the business continue to be identified and mitigated, under the guidance of our Risk and Audit Committee (RAC). A cyber security review was undertaken, and an information technology upgrade and strategy put in place. Multi Factor Authentication has been adopted, increasing the security of our information.

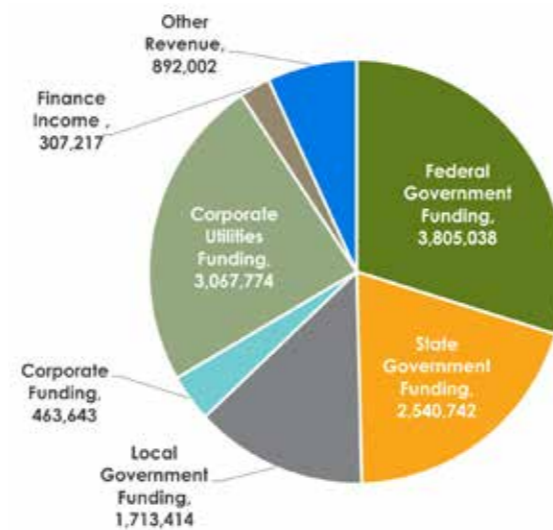
The Annual General Meeting in 2020 saw the appointment of a new financial auditor, in line with good governance. An external audit was also undertaken which saw renewal of Healthy Land and Water's JAS-ANZ International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9001:2015 certification for quality. The continued benefit of having JAS-ANZ accreditation and use of the ISO logo provides external stakeholders with assurance that Healthy Land and Water is competent, credible and meets internationally recognised standards.

## Finance report

Healthy Land and Water had a solid year from a financial perspective, with a total income of \$12,789,831. The majority of Healthy Land and Water's income is derived from federal, state and local government funding and we thank them, the water utilities, and our corporate supporters for their continued recognition of us as the recognised and preferred NRM service delivery body.

A healthy growth in revenue was delivered through our Australian Government partners. Two iconic regional assets benefitted from the injection of funding in bushfire recovery for our Gondwana rainforests and koala recovery. This growth balanced slight declines in membership and corporate revenue.

The company continued to maintain a healthy balance sheet with adequate reserves to buffer the challenges of reliance on government and grant funding. While low return was experienced on liquid assets, consistent with the global economic climate, funds under management returned a growth in equity of 26.1%. Expenditure in 2021 was primarily towards projects, with the cost of sales and project expenditure both increasing slightly to deliver on the new contracts.



## Operating result

Healthy Land and Water's activities resulted in total comprehensive income of \$886,385 for the year. Aligned with the organisation's objectives as a for-purpose charity, surpluses have been applied to three reserves. Firstly, an additional contribution to the Community Natural Assets Investment Reserve, established in FY2020, to bolster the organisation's ability to protect and enhance natural assets in the South East Queensland community for a resilient future. Scoping work has been undertaken that should lead to the first project funded from the reserve in FY2022.

Secondly, a strategic reserve, to implement Board-identified business priorities that deliver on the Strategic Plan. Investment will be made in FY2022 from this reserve in implementation of the RAP endorsed in FY2021, and in improved business systems that will increase efficiency and effectiveness across the organisation. Lastly, a projects reserve has been established to accommodate expected timing differences between recognition of revenue and expenditure to be incurred in project delivery that has fallen over financial years. This reserve ensures successful completion of multi-year projects without compromising cash flow.



"Looking forward, Healthy Land and Water is in a sound position to leverage its core funding base and balance sheet through strategic initiatives and partnerships to grow the business and ensure a prosperous and liveable South East Queensland."

Michele Clatworthy, Chief Financial Officer



The Healthy Land and Water team during a cultural immersion retreat on Minjerribah



Healthy Land and Water Payroll and Finance Officer Chai Lee Chan, Chief Financial Officer Michele Clatworthy, Senior Finance Officer Cathy Brinkley and Project Accountant Tim Lloyd



Healthy Land and Water staff enjoying a cultural diversity lunch in celebration of A Taste of Harmony



Healthy Land and Water General Manager - Corporate Affairs Suzie Christensen speaking at an International Women's Day event

## People and culture

The Risk and Audit Committee and Executive continued its focus on work health and safety of our staff, meeting our targets of 175 leadership interactions. Safety shares have become standard agenda items at team meetings, and a healthy culture and attitude toward safety is evident across the business. Our team participated in a staff survey, with 91% engaging in the exercise. The review supported the key improvements being undertaken regarding the human resources strategy, policies, systems and workforce planning through an external consultant, driven by the CEO. Our staff retreat in April saw us immerse ourselves in Traditional Owner knowledge and experiences on Minjerribah as we continue our reconciliation journey and respect for culture and Country.



# Finance story in numbers

## Profit and loss

Revenue =

**\$12,789,831**

Surplus =

**\$886,385**

Expenditure =

**\$11,903,446**

## Reserves =

(Movement in FY21 - increase)

CNAIR =

**\$192,930**

Project reserve =

**\$423,643**

Strategic reserve =

**\$175,000**

## Reserves =

(Balance at 30/6/21)

CNAIR =

**\$1,692,930**

Project reserve =

**\$423,643**

Strategic reserve =

**\$175,000**

## Balance sheet

Current assets =

**\$11,560,886**

Total assets =

**\$15,140,444**

Current liability =

**\$4,295,226**

Total liability =

**\$4,555,542**

Total reserves =

**\$2,291,573**

Cash =

**\$9,051,491**

Total equity =

**\$10,584,902**



Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator Susie Chapman at a Woorim Beach tree planting day

Kabi Kabi Country

## Our partners

We would like to acknowledge the continued support and recognition of our partners who help us achieve our vision of building the prosperity, liveability, and sustainability of our region for future generations.

Thank you to our owner members, the South East Queensland Council of Mayors, water utilities (including Unitywater, Seqwater, and Urban Utilities) and the community through the South East Queensland Catchments Members Association (SEQCMA).

A special mention to our many project partners, community and environmental groups, Landcare and Coastcare groups, schools and volunteers, who partner with us to deliver meaningful projects across South East Queensland.

Our appreciation is also extended to the individuals who contribute so generously of their time, input and thought leadership across our various committees, panels, and steering groups.

### Australian and Queensland Governments

Healthy Land and Water partners with the Australian Government and Queensland Government, as a trusted non-government partner to deliver natural resource management activities across South East Queensland. Funding from the state and federal government builds local capacity and strengthens communities.

### South East Queensland Catchments Members Association

The South East Queensland Catchments Members Association (SEQCMA) is an alliance between community, government and industry. SEQCMA works closely with Healthy Land and Water to identify and develop strategies that build resilience into the region's landscapes and waterways.

The SEQCMA Community Consultative Committee provides advice, guidance and advocacy support regarding strategic natural resource management issues.

### Council of Mayors (SEQ)

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) membership consists of the 10 South East Queensland councils: Brisbane, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Moreton Bay, Redland, Scenic Rim, Somerset, Sunshine Coast, and Toowoomba.

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) works closely with Healthy Land and Water on a number of projects, delivering a coordinated approach to catchment management.

### Water Utilities

Seqwater, Urban Utilities and Unitywater work in tandem with Healthy Land and Water to improve and protect the region's catchments and waterways. The region's water utilities are crucial partners as we aim to make South East Queensland a healthier place to live.





Kabi Kabi Country