

# ANNUAL REPORT



Hinterland Bush Links

# 2022



connecting



restoring



protecting



## THE 2021-2022 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President:	Liz Saunders
Secretary:	Fergus FitzGerald
Treasurer:	Rachael Stacy
Committee Members:	Marilyn Fisher
	Michael Scott
	Elaine McKean

## HINTERLAND BUSH LINKS STAFF

Manager:	Tammy Kowitz
Project Officer:	Sue Brieschke

## TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Hinterland Bush Links region, the Kabi Kabi, Jinibara and Wakka Wakka People. We pay respect to elders past, present and emerging.

## HINTERLAND BUSH LINKS INC.

ABN 12314200850  
[www.hinterlandbushlinks.org](http://www.hinterlandbushlinks.org)





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# PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

Liz Saunders  
President



It is my pleasure to present the President's report for July 2021 to June 2022.

If you were like me, the year provided times to reflect about the future we are creating; to wonder if and how we will be able to protect our landscape and the people within it, through the confronting challenges that a changing climate will bring. One common thread comes through all; the need to increase the size and connectivity of protected and regenerated areas, which will be key to saving native species and the habitats they live in.

Hinterland Bush Links has managed to continue through the last financial year the good work laid down in our Strategic Plan. We have been fortunate to have on board from last November, Tammy Kowitz as our new Manager. Tammy brings a wealth of knowledge in environmental planning and in grant applications from government and the private sector, together with an enthusiasm for continuing to achieve our long-term goals. We welcome her wholeheartedly and thank her for the efforts she has put in to date and the positive outlook she brings to the team.

Sue Brieschke, our Project Officer, has also been a source of continuing effort and stability throughout the year and ensured our work has proceeded despite lockdowns, weather and Covid. We thank her wholeheartedly too, along with our wonderful Committee members. We know that both Tammy and Sue put in time way beyond their remuneration.

Our partnerships have continued with Barung Landcare, Sunshine Coast Council, Great Eastern Ranges Initiative and many other local and regional organisations. These connections remain very important to Hinterland Bush Links as they allow the sharing of knowledge, resources,

co-ordination of activities and ensure our long-term conservation strategies. In particular, we hope to strengthen our ties with Barung Landcare to better streamline our activities and events for our local communities.

We would like to particularly thank the Sunshine Coast Council for their continuing funding support to run Hinterland Bush Links with funding through the Environment Levy Partnership. This allows us to carry on with the projects and activities outlined in our Strategic Plan.

Our Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project has continued throughout the year with the support of Burnett Mary River Regional Group, the Mary River Catchment Co-ordinating Committee and Qld Department of Transport and Main Roads in tackling Weeds of National Significance; Cat's claw creeper, Madeira vine etc. These ongoing treatments are ensuring the sustainability of the riparian zones along the Mary River, ably carried out by the Barung Natural Areas Services crew and advised by Matt Bateman who does an amazing job. As any landholder knows, these weeds require frequent visits to ensure eradication.

Most landholders know us through our Roving Restorers program which has continued throughout this last year despite Covid/flu and weather events. It is an important activity for Hinterland Bush Links to continue in order to assist landholders with revegetation projects, weeding and planting and restoring connectivity through our landscape. It gives an extra fillip to these landholders and keeps the community connections going on a social level as well as keeping us fit! Our group of volunteers has expanded with Tammy's recruiting prowess to make this a productive and enjoyable activity. Well done and thank you to all those who volunteer. Most of our volunteers are also involved with other Bush Care Groups too.



We have received continued funding from Noosa Regional Council to run our Roving Restorers Noosa Hub led by the very able Tamara Kubica and we thank her for all her efforts.

A major strength of the organisation is the commitment, goodwill and enthusiasm shown by all our donors both large and small. The achievements of Hinterland Bush Links are a result of their ongoing generous contributions and I would especially like to thank our major donors – Libby & Marek Malter, Ian and Chrissie McMaster; and our corporate sponsor, Range of Motion Physiotherapy. Every dollar is put to sustaining and expanding this successful conservation program which continues to make a difference.

We also encourage bequests. If you, or someone you know would be interested in leaving a gift to Hinterland Bush Links in your will, your contribution, no matter the size, will benefit future generations and provide inspiration for them to care for our natural environment.

Finally, we invite any non-members to join our organisation. There is no membership fee and we would love you to become part of Hinterland Bush Links. It will keep you in touch with not only volunteer activities but workshops, news and progress.





# MANAGER'S STATEMENT

Tammy Kowitz  
Manager



In 2021-22 there has been much rain and plants emerging, sprouting and flourishing.

The workings at Hinterland Bush Links have emulated nature with a year of energy and growth.

The Sunshine Coast Hinterland has a tremendous diversity of wildlife and habitats from mountain rainforests to coastal heathlands. It is a recognised national biodiversity “hotspot”, affirmed by its recent international recognition as a Biosphere by UNESCO. We have a responsibility to uphold its ecological values and in times with so many environmental issues, also improve the situation.

It is uplifting to join a passionate, community-led, grass-roots organisation whose members are doing practical on-ground work in our local natural environment. Although we are small, every little bit counts and gives hope!

This year we continued our wonderful community program - Roving Restorers. This program encapsulates all the focus areas for Hinterland Bush Links. It restores habitat, it involves the community, it provides education and is a sustainable program. From Roving Restorers, not only is great work done for nature, but I have also witnessed firsthand the benefits for people of comradeship, support and learning.

The committed volunteers who come along regularly to Roving Restorers to assist landholders are inspirational. The volunteers are passionate, friendly, inclusive and generous human beings, willing to get their hands dirty to make a positive difference with our natural environment, leaving a sustainable legacy.

We are grateful to the landholders who choose to carry out conservation work on their properties

and pleased our little community can provide a wee bit of support and encouragement.

In addition to Roving Restorers, we continue the long-term project to control Madeira vine and Cat's claw creeper in the Upper Mary Valley catchment area across 30 properties. To keep this project going we source funds from over five (5) funding bodies each year through grants. It is a big achievement for all those who have been involved in Hinterland Bush Links over the time, that this project has been continuous since 2013. It is no easy feat sourcing funds through grants.

We refined our Strategic Plan and set out directions for the next five years. Our focus areas are: habitat restoration, community involvement, education, and organisational sustainability.

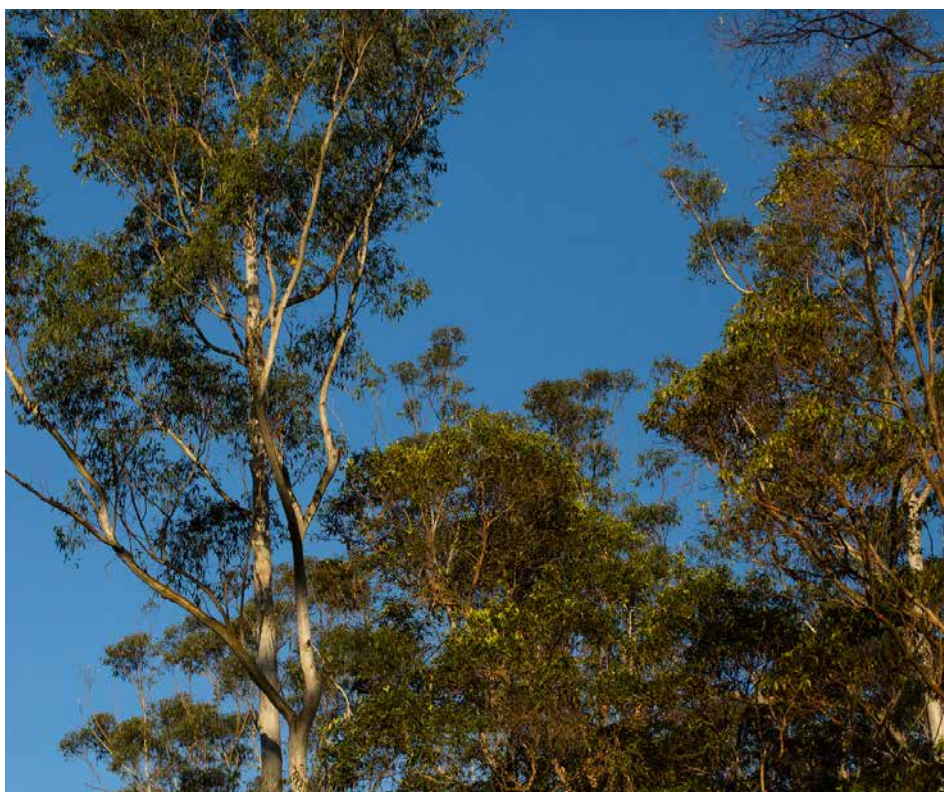
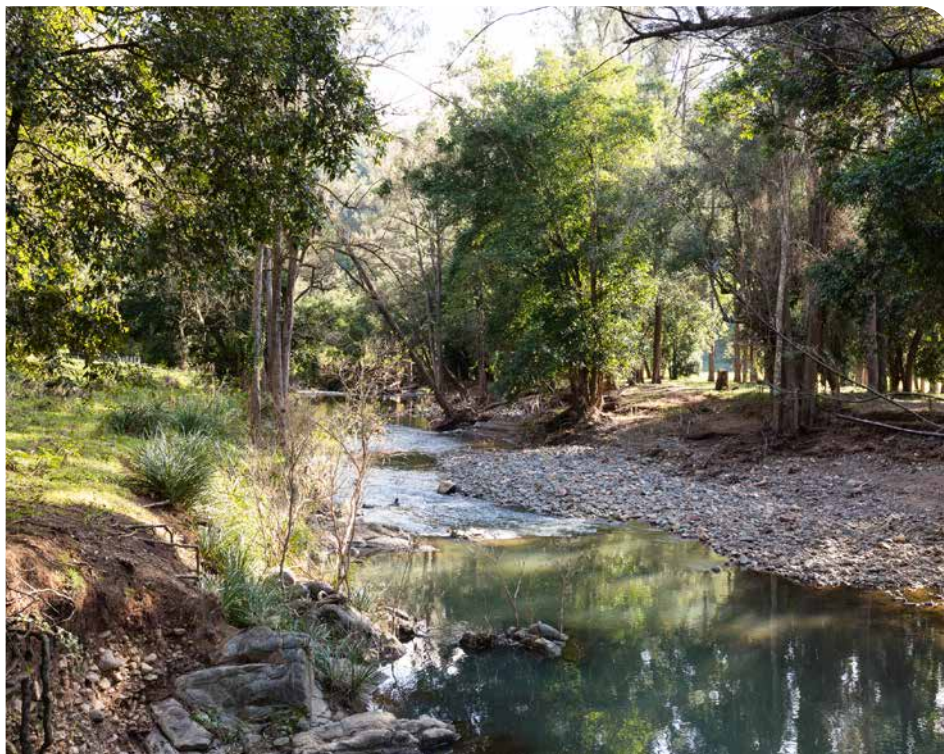
We have continued to apply for multiple grants to bring investment in conservation projects in our area. We are always grateful for the donations in addition to grants, which help us sustain our operations. Without them we could not operate.

We have the aspiration to have excellence in our organisational sustainability. To do this we have explored opportunities for social business enterprises, continued our efforts in reaching out to the community and upheld Hinterland Bush Link's culture of creating a positive and supported experience for all those involved with us.

We have defined a Hinterland Koala Habitat Restoration Project this year and in the early phases of attempting to secure funding for this project. We see this work as urgent if we are to have a chance to retain a koala population in our local area.

This year also saw the return of planning for a 2022 four day Subtropical Forests Ecology Course. It was a thrill to have thirty eager participants when it was run in August/September 2022, six on the wait list and more enquiries coming in as the course progressed.





Sadly, we could not accommodate everyone who wanted to attend this boutique course in 2022 as we limit numbers so the presenter/learner ratio is such that people have a high-quality experience. All the extra enquiries provide us with encouragement to run this course, possibly every second year. Next time it is run, if you are interested, avoid disappointment and register early.

I thank our funders, Sunshine Coast Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Qld Community Benefit Fund, Maleny Credit Union Charitable Trust, Burnett Mary Regional Group, Seqwater (through Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee) and Department of Transport and Main Roads, our donors in particular our major donors - Libby & Marek Malter, Ian and Chrissie McMaster and Range of Motion Physiotherapy, our partners, in particular Barung Landcare and Bellthorpe Progress Association, my committed and skilled co-worker Sue Brieschke, our volunteer Management Committee and all the incredibly generous volunteers. Without all of you, we would not be able to do the important and urgent work that we do.





# HIGHLIGHTS 21/22



Weed management  
**65 hectares**  
across  
**45 properties**

Protection of  
riparian zones  
**18 km** of creek  
protected of weed-vine  
infestations

**\$110,000 cash  
investment** in  
on-ground works

Planning for the  
**Subtropical  
Forests  
Ecology  
Course**  
in 2022 – provides  
education for 30  
participants

**45 property  
landholders**  
involved in our projects  
during the year

**11 monthly**  
educational bulletins  
issued

**1,500**  
volunteer hours  
@ \$45/hour, total value  
**\$67,500**

**70 individual**  
volunteers

Our reach for sharing  
of knowledge and  
building a like-minded  
community

**f 1100** followers

**@ 137** followers

**350** members

**15** organisations  
we collaborate with  
on projects



\*All the figures noted  
exclude the involvement  
and work by the Noosa  
Roving Restorer Hub.



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022–2027



## Vision

Landscape-scale conservation to connect, restore and protect native vegetation.



## Mission

To empower and support local landholders to protect, connect and restore native vegetation, ultimately improving landscape-scale wildlife corridors and helping secure biodiversity for all of nature for longevity.



## Focus Areas

The core areas of focus for Hinterland Bush Links, as outlined in our Strategic Plan are:

- Habitat restoration**
- Community involvement**
- Community education**
- Organisational sustainability**





# HABITAT RESTORATION

A key focus area for Hinterland Bush Links is strategic habitat restoration in wildlife corridors.

We carry out practical on-ground weeding and tree planting work through Roving Restorers, the Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project and initiating a Hinterland Koala Habitat Restoration project .



# ROVING RESTORERS

Achievements	Total	Hinterland	Noosa
Number of volunteer events	37	17	20
Number of properties assisted	28	15	13
Total volunteer hours	1270	770	500
Value of volunteer hours	\$57,150	\$34,650	\$22,500
Approximate area of weed removal (ha)	16	8	8
Number of trees planted	1200	-	1200





## Roving Restorers continued their excellent volunteer assistance to landholders throughout the year.

The locations of our activities ranged from Mooloolah to Kin Kin and Reesville to Kenilworth. Across the Hinterland, our travelling band of volunteer bush regenerators weeded and planted to assist 15 different landholders with their restoration projects. We had 17 Roving Restorers' events putting in over 770 volunteer hours, weeding approximately 8 hectares of land. This is over \$34,650 worth of volunteer contribution, at a contractor rate of \$45/hour.

In 2019 our Roving Restorer program extended beyond the Hinterland and we applied for and were successful in securing funding from Noosa Regional Council to start up a Noosa Hub. We have worked with Noosa Landcare since 2019 to deliver the Noosa Hub of Roving Restorers and in the past year they have undertaken a further 20 activities supporting 13 different landholders and 2 Bush-Care groups, in addition to the Hinterland group.

It is a wonderful program founded by Susie Duncan in 2011 and inspiring many other areas to undertake similar work. Bundaberg, Kilcoy and Moreton Bay Regional councils have mentioned they are considering starting up similar programs in their areas, having heard of our Roving Restorers.

Susie founded a positive culture and built an inclusive community of volunteers, who gain a sense of purpose and well-being by making a positive impact on the environment. They meet new friends, stay healthy and active, learn new skills and connect with nature.

We are grateful to Sunshine Coast Council for its financial support of the Roving Restorer program on the Hinterland. This partly covers our expenses, with the remaining being covered through donations.





## Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project

Smothering weed-vines pose a major threat to the remaining native habitat in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

Cat's claw creeper, Madeira vine and Dutchman's pipe are three of the worst weed-vines in the area. They destroy the environment they inhabit by smothering and killing native vegetation. Smothered trees often collapse into waterways resulting in a loss of habitat for both land and aquatic wildlife. They also have seeds and tubers that remain viable in the soil for over 10 years and spread readily through wind and water movement – making them efficient in their destruction.

Hinterland Bush Links has been driving the Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project for over 8 years to eradicate the three highly invasive species of weed-vines – Cat's claw creeper, Madeira vine and Dutchman's pipe. Left unchecked, these would spread throughout the region and progressively invade rainforests, causing irreversible damage. This strategic work is restoring and protecting areas of rainforest by stopping these devastatingly noxious and fast-growing weeds from smothering the forest and killing the vegetation

along riverbanks. In turn, this has protected water quality and enhanced habitat for animals including many threatened species.

The Mary Valley catchment is a biodiversity hotspot and supports the Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia which is listed as Critically Endangered.

The region is home to an abundance of animals, including threatened and endangered species listed under the *Australian Government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*, such as the Mary River turtle, Oxleyan pygmy perch and the Giant barred frog.

We are grateful for the funding we receive through Burnett Mary Regional Group, Seqwater (through Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee), Sunshine Coast Council and Department of Transport and Main Roads. This project is a \$100k+/year project.

It is no easy feat to keep this project sustained, applying for and acquitting four separate grants per year to enable the financial resources to engage Barung Landcare's Natural Areas Services team to carry out the on-ground work.

Over the past year, through the funds Hinterland Bush Links has acquired, we have enabled:

- 1,456 labour hours of contractor weed vine removal
- Across 30 properties
- Along Harper Creek, Mary River (above Conondale) Elaman Creek, Cedar Creek, Little Yabba Creek and various road reserve sites owned by Department of Transport and Main Roads.

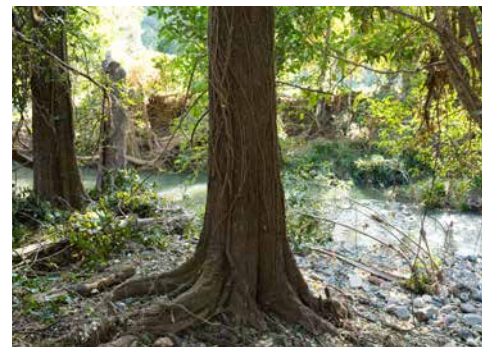


Photo: Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee



Achievements	Total
Number of contractor hours	1456
Cash investment in on-ground works	\$110,000
Number of landholders assisted	30
Approximate area of weed removal (ha)	16
Benefits	<p>Protection of Upper Mary Valley catchment, important catchment for water supply and water and sediment flow into the Great Barrier Reef</p> <p>Helps protect riparian zones and avoid further erosion, in turn helps protect water quality</p>
Creek systems where work undertaken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harper Creek</li> <li>• Mary River (above Conondale)</li> <li>• Elaman Creek</li> <li>• Cedar Creek</li> <li>• Little Yabba Creek</li> </ul>



Photo: Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee



Photo: Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee





# Hinterland Koala Habitat Restoration Project

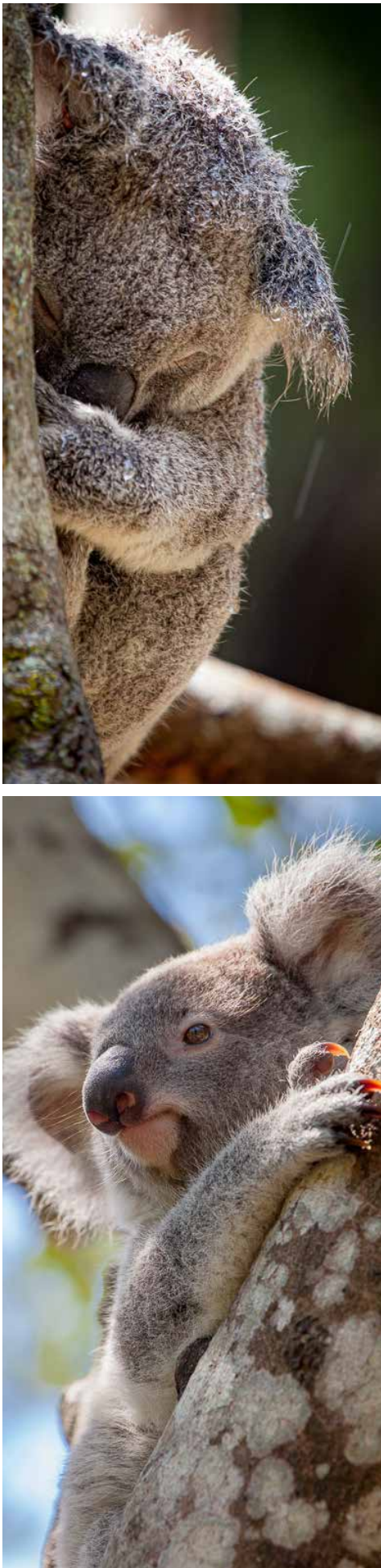
Achievements
Engaged with 58 landholders who are interested in being involved
Mapped properties and formed priority areas and a detailed project plan
Sought funding through grants – awaiting outcomes
Developed a relationship with Barung Landcare, Koala Action Inc, Koala Crusaders Inc, Bunya Bunya Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council to collaborate on this project
Koala Action Inc and Koala Crusaders Inc committed to \$13k cash investment into the project
Explored opportunities with GreenCollar for “Nature Credits”

The Sunshine Coast Hinterland provides valuable habitat for the koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*). It is recognised through on-ground surveys, Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science’s koala mapping and landholder sightings that there is still a healthy and relatively abundant population of koalas in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland area to protect and enhance habitat for.

Hinterland Bush Links is proud to be leading a Hinterland Koala Habitat Project aimed to protect, restore, and increase koala habitat on the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. The work is urgent. Koalas were listed as “Endangered” under the *Environment Protection and Conservation Protection Act* in February 2022.

Hinterland Bush Links ran an expression of interest process in May 2022 seeking landholders who are interested in being part of a Hinterland Koala Habitat Project. We received 58 responses and mapped these properties to prioritise areas where we will work.

We have prepared a detailed project plan and submitted applications for a number of grants. We are still awaiting the outcomes of some applications; the ones we have heard back from have been unsuccessful, unfortunately. Notwithstanding, we will endeavour to continue to put effort in to raise funds for this important project and consider also corporate sponsorship and ‘Nature Credits’ in addition to grants.









# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Achievements	Total
Volunteer contribution	1,500 hours
Volunteers involved	70 individuals
Properties and associated landholders involved	45
Members	350
Social media network	1,300+
Collaborations	15+ organisations

We build strong relationships with private and government landholders and encourage and support them to carry out conservation work on their land.

This year we worked on-ground with over 45 landholders.

We have a strong following of over 350 members and 1,100 informally on social media.

Collaboration is at the core of everything we do. We have worked with over 15 organisations to bring our programs and projects into fruition. These include: Sunshine Coast Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, QLD Community Benefit

Fund, Maleny Credit Union Charitable Trust, Burnett Mary Regional Group, Seqwater (through Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee), Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Great Eastern Ranges Initiative, Qld Water and Land Carers, Barung Landcare, Ecollaboration, Bunya Bunya Aboriginal Corporation, Koala Action Inc, Koala Crusaders Inc and Bellthorpe Progress Association.

Hinterland Bush Links would like to thank Paul Magee and Kim Holcroft for hosting our annual end-of-year celebration. We enjoy a wonderful afternoon of connecting, chatting and celebrating our year's work.

We are very grateful to Bevin Neil of BJN Graphic Design for the pro-bono design and layout of this annual report.

Although we are small, we aim to create a ripple effect by reaching out and engaging with many people.









# COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Achievements	Total
Educational Bulletins issued	11
Volunteer weeding events (Hinterland Roving Restorers)	17
Planning for Ecology Course (Aug/Sept 2022)	30 participants benefited

## We value increasing the community's knowledge of conservation.

We provide a monthly Bulletin, active social media education campaign and facilitate a Subtropical Forests Ecology Course for landholders and those working in the field. There is also informal education provided at Roving Restorer events, in particular, education on bush restoration and plant identification.

The Subtropical Forests Ecology Course has been going since 2016. Over 85 people have attended our course prior to 2022.

We undertook the planning for the Ecology Course this financial year and it was run again in August/September 2022, with a further 30 course participants in addition to the 85 from past years.

The 2022 Subtropical Forests Ecology Course is a non-profit event, made possible by:

- The fees collected through ticket sales
- Donations from private individuals to Hinterland Bush Links
- A grant from Moreton Bay Regional Council – for approximately 25% of costs
- In-kind donations of time from many generous individuals

It is a four-day immersive experience set in the natural beauty of the Sunshine Coast Hinterland and with a diverse team of passionate experts.

This course covers:

- How geology, soils and water influence the distribution of vegetation
- What makes up the building blocks of a vegetation community

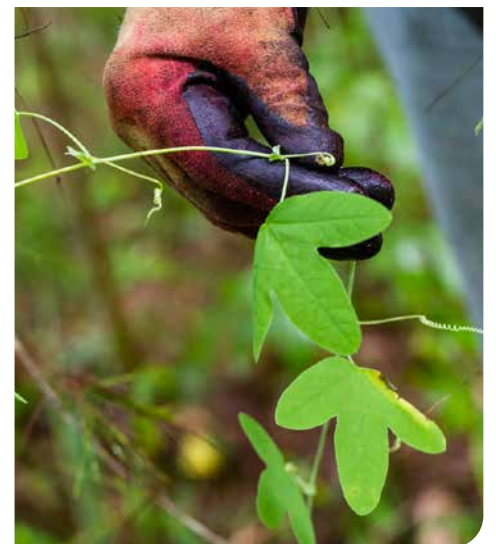
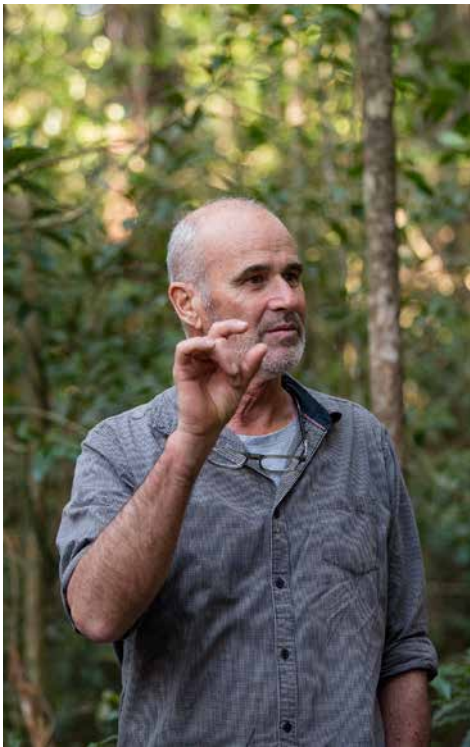
- Which wildlife lives where in subtropical forests and why
- How natural and human disturbances affect the ecology of these forests
- How to plan strategically for restoring and connecting habitat to conserve biodiversity

This course goes deeper than learning, it connects participants with a like-minded community and evokes passion in conservation and natural regeneration.

We would like to thank all those involved in the 2022 course, in particular Bellthorpe Progress Association for its support.









# ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

## Achievements

- Strategic Plan updated
- Active and committed volunteer Management Committee
- Social business enterprises explored, and grants applied for
- Funding received for first aid training for volunteers
- Funding received for new website

## We strive for organisational excellence.

We have strong governance, leadership and business performance enabling effective delivery of our programs and projects.

Hinterland Bush Links is governed by a Management Committee and staffed by a Manager and Project Officer. We are also fortunate to have significant volunteer support beyond the Management Committee in bush regeneration and office duties. We are proud that Hinterland Bush Links has sustained operations for 11 years. We seek to continue the positive culture of Hinterland Bush Links where people find being involved with the organisation, a positive experience.

Our volunteer Management Committee has done a wonderful job this year in supporting the vision and goals of Hinterland Bush Links and have ensured that great work is happening on-ground to safeguard the future of our amazing natural environment on the Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

We are grateful to Sunshine Coast Council's Environment Levy Partnership 3 year grant. These funds cover some of the wages and essential operational costs.

Notwithstanding, there is a shortfall with all grants to cover our full operational costs of wages, subscriptions, website hosting, travel and book-keeping. In the past, this shortfall has been supported by donations. Hinterland Bush Links has now decided to enhance its financial viability, in addition to donations, by:



- Looking for efficiencies of operation
- Including some project management costs in grant applications to partly cover wages
- Pursuing opportunities for social business enterprises

We need funds to sustain the good work we do. We aim to make "profit for purpose" in a social business enterprise. We were successful in a recent grant application to help develop a new plan for a social business enterprise.

We have updated our social media networking to help strengthen our reach in the community. We encourage you to join our new Facebook page, Instagram and LinkedIn. We have also received funds from the Queensland Community Benefit Fund for first aid training for our volunteers and for a new website, which is coming soon! Stay tuned!







Photos: Christine Bull, @caughtincolour1



# TREASURER'S REPORT

Rachael Stacy  
Treasurer



Although our donation income this financial year was significantly less than previous years, we are fortunate that generous donations in past years have given us a good buffer to carry us through.

This reduction in donations is due to changed circumstances for one of our major donors.

Overall, the total income for the 2021-2022 year was \$223,664 and our total expenses were \$217,672. We completed the year with a profit of \$5,991.

Sunshine Coast Council's Environment Levy Partnership grant continues to provide core funding to cover part of our wages and essential costs with a 3-year grant of \$39,000 per year. 2021-2022 was the first year of these three years. These funds are to support our Roving Restorers program and the Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project.

We were successful in obtaining \$23,620 from Noosa Council to continue the Noosa Hub of Roving Restorers for the 2021-2022 financial year. Many thanks to Noosa Landcare and particularly to Tamara Kubica who manages this program.

Burnett Mary Regional Group continues to support our Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project funding weed control works in the Cedar and Elaman Creek catchment with a grant of \$30,145. Seqwater fund works in the Little Yabba Catchment through MRCCC with \$15,000 received with a final payment of \$5,000 to be paid. We expect that both of these funding arrangements will continue in the 2022-2023 financial year. The Department of Transport and Main Roads continues to provide a small amount of funding to control Madeira vine and Cat's claw creeper on TMR land.

In addition, Sunshine Coast Council provided funding of \$25,000 for on ground weed control work in the Harper Creek and Mary River area near above Conondale.

Thank you to our donors both large and small. Every donation helps us to pay our wages and keep our projects running successfully.

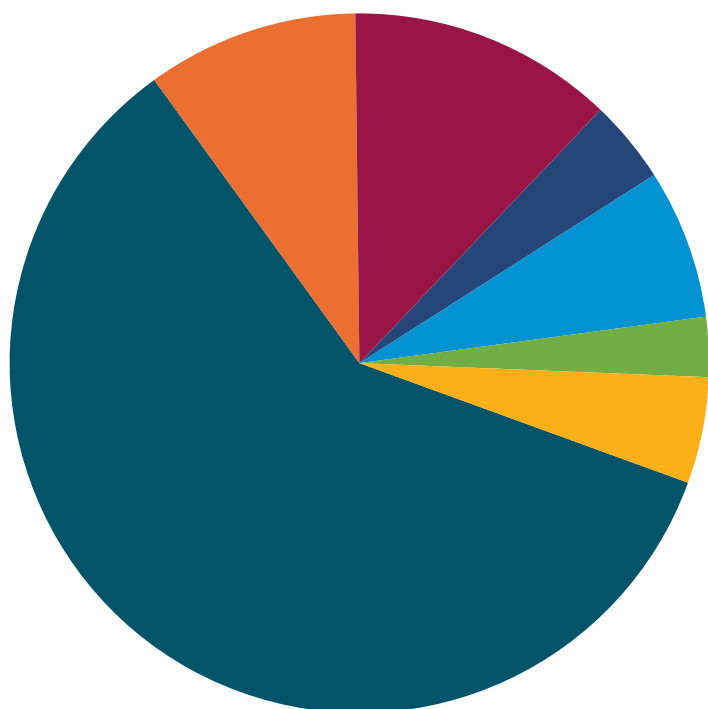
Thank you to Queensland Water and Land Carers for providing our insurances for the year. These are all appropriate to our work and up-to-date.

Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers. In the 2021-2022 financial year, our volunteers provided a huge 1,500 hours of free labour at a value of \$45/hr. That's a whopping \$67,500 worth of labour to support landholders and the environment in the Hinterland Bush Links project area.

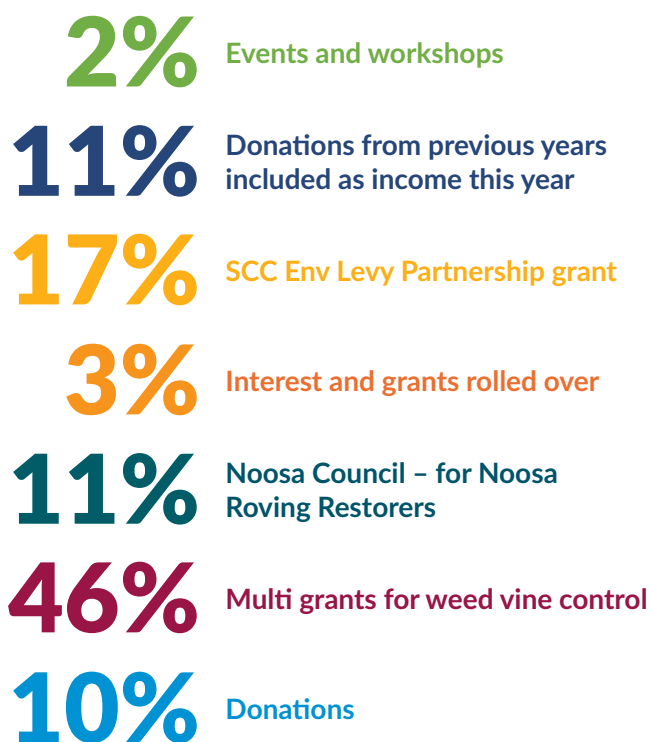
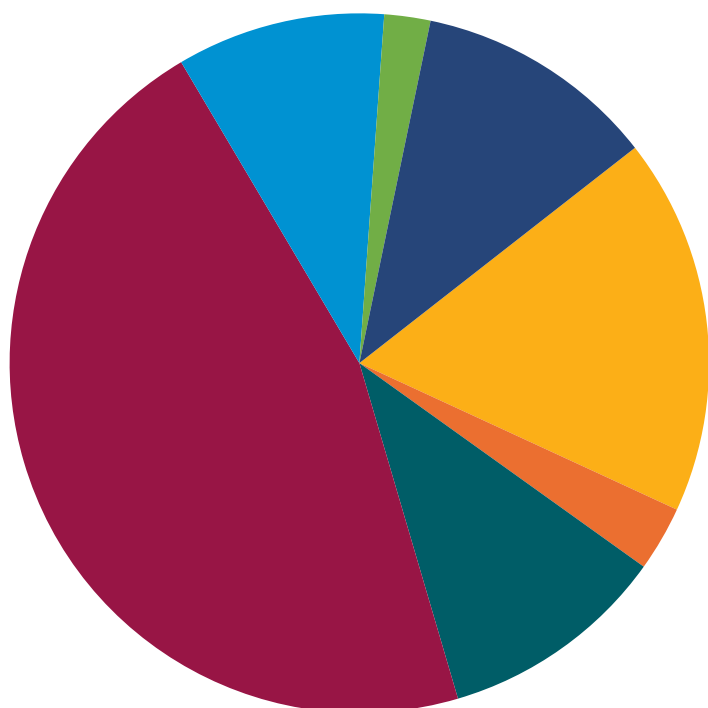




## Expenses 2021-22 – \$217,672



## Income 2021-22 – \$223,664





# SPONSORS AND IN-KIND SUPPORTERS 2021-22



WORKING FOR OUR FUTURE



**HINTERLAND BUSH LINKS INC.**

ABN 12314200850  
www.hinterlandbushlinks.org

