



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

THE 2024-2025 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President:	Fergus FitzGerald
Secretary:	Donna McCarthy
Treasurer:	Damian Hooper
Committee Members:	Elaine McKean Apostolis Hadoulis Liz Saunders

HINTERLAND BUSH LINKS STAFF

Manager:	Aleisha Keating
Project Officer:	Louise Court



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





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PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

Fergus FitzGerald
President



In preparing this annual statement I find it instructive to step back and remind myself of all that's happened in the last 12 months and reflect on the challenges we've faced and what we have achieved through the collective efforts of many committed people.

I have a real sense of pride when I talk with people outside HBL about being associated with such a dynamic group that is making a real difference to the long-term biodiversity of this important region.

The Koala Habitat Project epitomises how we have helped to create landscape-scale connection, restoration and protection of habitat to support our native wildlife. We achieved this by bringing together the essential elements of committed landholders, energetic volunteers and skilled staff working together within important wildlife corridors to provide long-term habitat connectivity.

We successfully completed this two-year project during the year, having worked with 35 landholders, planting 5140 habitat seedlings,

running over 38 volunteer events, including onsite workshops and producing very useful resources to help guide others. Many of the landholders have demonstrated their commitment by not only maintaining the plantings but undertaking additional planting. Several have excitedly reported back to us koala sightings on their land.

But it's more than just these impressive statistics. It's the intangible benefit from everyone involved in this project of working with like-minded people to achieve a lasting positive legacy in our region. A particular highlight for me was at the community planting event at the Tuan Environment Reserve in the Mary River valley last September. Here, so many of these important elements came together in a fun-filled family orientated and productive morning working with the traditional custodians through the Bunya Bunya Country Aboriginal Corporation, who jointly manage the area with the Sunshine Coast Council. The joy of working alongside young children planting their first tree was palpable for me.

Our long-term project, the Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project (UMVWVP), reached a critical stage during the year. This initiative was established by our founder, Susie Duncan, in 2012 with the core objective of controlling serious weed vine infestations in the upper Mary Valley River catchment that are degrading local threatened ecosystems and contributing to re-infestation of restored areas further downstream. The scope and scale of this project was quite bold for a fledgling community group, and yet it exemplifies what HBL stands for and what we can achieve.

After more than a decade of committed effort and working with many partner organisations (including Sunshine Coast Council, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, Burnett Mary Regional Group, Seqwater, Department of Main Roads and Transport, Barung Landcare) and individuals, it was time to undertake a strategic review to help guide the future direction of this project. This included a

helicopter aerial survey of the area during the main flowering season, on-ground checking, and systematic compilation and assessment of the vast amount of data collected over the life of the project. This work was led by Matt Bateman, who's involvement in the project since its inception has been exceptional. Matt's comprehensive report is a testament to this work.

The strategic review highlighted the many challenges of undertaking this project, including difficult land access in this rugged and often relatively remote areas; tenuous communications with landholders some of whom were not always supportive of the project; funding through a mix of short-term grants from multiple sources that required a significant amount of unfunded administration; and health and safety considerations. In recognition of these challenges, we have decided that the safe and effective delivery of UMWVVP is now beyond HBL's capacity at this time and we will be unable to continue this project.

The comprehensive data gathered however will provide a valuable resource for future work in the important Mary River catchment by other groups. At the same time, HBL has built a well-earned reputation as a very credible organisation in undertaking important environmental management that is recognised in South East Queensland and beyond.

The breadth and depth of this recognition has continued to grow during the last year. Our social media presence has increased, coinciding with many more people joining HBL, offering their properties and volunteering at our public events. Our monthly e-Bulletin is a quality publication prepared by Louise Court, our Project Officer that is increasing this reach.

Louise also manages the long-running and popular Roving Restorers program, which now has a more strategic focus on where we work and includes occasional talks from experts on

interesting subjects. As a long-term enthusiastic supporter of Roving Restorers, I'm very encouraged to see new and younger volunteers joining us, as some of our stalwarts are aging and are less agile.

I also want to acknowledge Aleisha Keating, our Manager, for her professional leadership in managing risks, strengthening relationships and partnerships and seeking funding, all essential to achieving our core objectives. Securing sustainable, long-term funding remains a priority with efforts directed toward major grants, partnerships, sponsorships and developing a social enterprise model to sustain and grow HBL.

The generosity of our many donors has been essential for the UMWVP strategic review, and I want to acknowledge that this generosity, for some substantial amounts over many years, has enabled HBL to sustain operations and pursue new opportunities to achieve our core objectives.

I also want to acknowledge the important contribution from my fellow Management Committee members who have dealt with the different challenges we have faced during the year with great commitment and skill: Donna McCarthy, Secretary; Damian Hooper, Treasurer; and committee members Liz Saunders, Elaine McKean and Toli Hadoulis. I want to particularly thank Damian who is standing down as Treasurer. He has not only brought a sharp business focus to the role but has also been an enthusiastic landholder hosting events and meetings on his and Melinda's property. I would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution that Mary Meadows has made to HBL over many years, particularly in relation to financial matters.

Finally, I want to thank all those wonderful people who support HBL in so many ways. Being part of this special community and what we are achieving is what motivates and rewards me on a regular basis.



MANAGER'S STATEMENT

Aleisha Keating
Manager



Hinterland Bush Links has had another incredible year, and it has been fulfilling for me to continue to lead such a committed community of volunteers, landholders and members.

I have cherished working with so many people and organisations who share our vision of improving wildlife corridors to enhance biodiversity across the Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

Completing our Koala Habitat project was a highlight this year, keeping us very busy until December 2024. This project really solidified our presence in the Sunshine Coast and Hinterland area as leaders in community-based habitat restoration. We developed many new relationships with landholders, who are continuing to expand and regenerate habitat for koalas following the project's completion. I have enjoyed

continuing to receive updates from landholders when they spot koalas on their properties and sharing how their trees are growing. Partnerships with other organisations doing similar work were also instrumental to the success of this and future projects. Of particular note was our collaboration with Bunya Bunya Country Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council to deliver a tree planting event at Tuan Environment Reserve in September 2024. The combination of learning about cultural heritage, Koalas, Glossy black cockatoos and habitat restoration was a brilliant educational opportunity for our community.

Conducting a strategic review of our long-term Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine project was another significant part of this year. While we had intended that the strategic review would assist us with prioritising future works on this project in the future, the overall outcome for our organisation has been vastly different. We are extremely proud of everything this project has achieved and the contribution it has made to restoring native vegetation along the creeks and rivers in the upper catchment of the Mary River. It is with regret that we cannot continue this project, but I am grateful for the progress we have made with the support of partners and funders. I pay tribute to Matt Bateman for his drive and involvement in this project over many years, as well as his input into the detailed and extremely valuable strategic review. His contribution to the region's environment is monumental. We are hopeful that larger groups may continue aspects of this work using the data collecting during our review.

Our core Roving Restorers program has continued to thrive this year, under the leadership of our Project Officer, Louise Court. While the first half of the financial year the group focused on helping with the delivery of the Koala Habitat project, during the second half of the year we have connected with

several new landholders. It has also been uplifting to revisit some of the properties on which we planted trees on over the past few years. Thank you to all the Roving Restorers volunteers, regular and new, who provide essential support to landholders assisting with weeding and tree planting. Your can-do attitude and smiles make these events enjoyable for all.

The Noosa Roving Restorers program continues to be a mainstay of Noosa and District Landcare's contribution to local landholders and habitat restoration in the Noosa region, which is pleasing to see.

Our educational bush walking tours with our founder Susie Duncan have now become a regular feature of our community education program. These walks are a fantastic way to learn about our local ecosystem in a fun and interactive way and seem to draw new people into our community as well.

Louise Court, our Project Officer has been instrumental in the successful delivery of these projects and programs this year. Not only in the thriving Roving Restorers program, but also in completing the Koala Habitat project to such a high standard. Her organisational skills behind the scenes are exemplary and leadership at events commendable. Louise's involvement in speaking in a conservation panel for the Sunshine Coast Biosphere further contributed to the sustainability of our region, providing inspiration to many in the audience to become involved in conservation activities.

A big thank you to all our funders and donors during the year. I am particularly grateful to Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Sunshine Coast Council, Seqwater (through the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee), Noosa Council and Greening Australia for supporting our work. Thank you also to our delivery partners, especially Barung Landcare and Noosa and District Landcare.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Hinterland Bush Links Management Committee (MC) is a committed and cohesive team. Meeting bi-monthly and often volunteering at our events, their leadership and guidance are invaluable. We are deeply grateful for their contributions of time, energy and enthusiasm. They are also supported by the Gift Fund Committee (GFC), who oversee the spending of the fund.



Photo caption: Janet Carew (GFC), Elaine McKean (MC member), Liz Saunders (MC member), Donna McCarthy (Secretary), Marilyn Fisher (GFC), Fergus FitzGerald (President, GFC), Apostolis (Toli) (MC member), Damian Hooper (Treasurer)

STAFF

This year we employed two paid part time staff members who have successfully delivered our projects and programs:



Aleisha Keating MANAGER

MSc Education for Sustainability, BSc (Hons) Physical Geography

Aleisha managed the organisation, reporting directly to the Management Committee, as well as overseeing all our projects, programs and grant applications and acquittals.



Louise Court PROJECT OFFICER

BSc Environment & Sustainability and Plant Agricultural Science, Diploma in Project Management

Louise led the Hinterland Roving Restorers program, oversaw the Noosa Roving Restorers program and contributed to delivering other projects.

HIGHLIGHTS 2024-2025

KOALA HABITAT PROJECT

- **1,575** trees planted for koala food and habitat on 3 private properties and 1 public property
- **1.6 ha** of lantana cleared on 4 properties
- **273** volunteer hours



ROVING RESTORERS (Hinterland & Noosa)

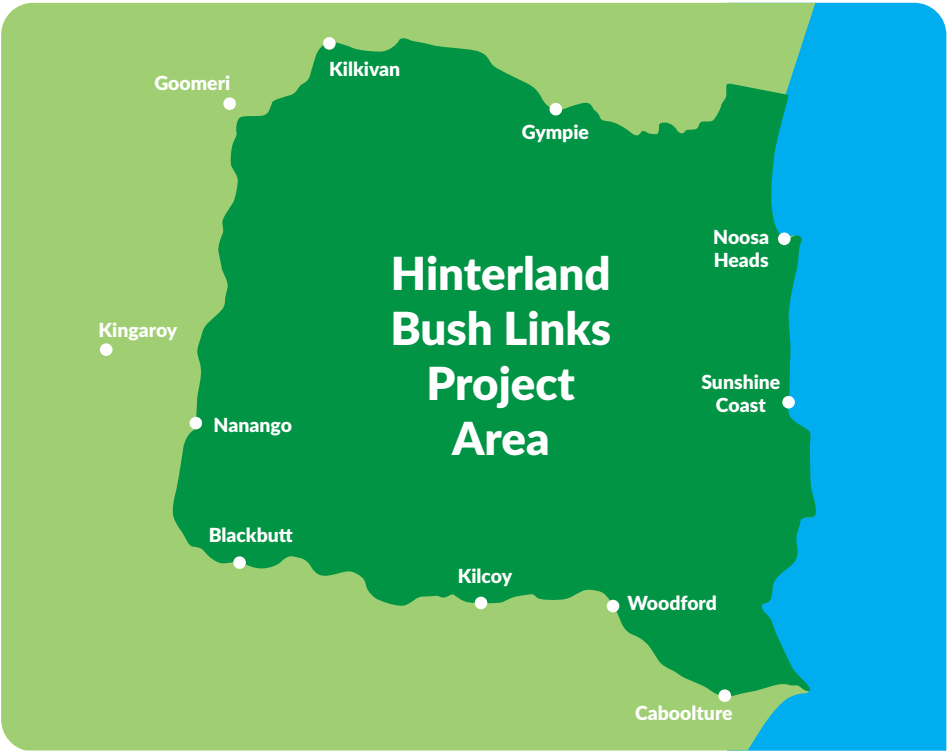
- **35** weeding and tree planting events over **32 properties**
- **954** volunteer hours
- **1,255 trees** planted
- **9.3 ha** of land weeded
- Over **\$47,000** of in-kind labour provided by Roving Restorers volunteers

UPPER MARY VALLEY WEED VINE PROJECT

- Weeds of National Significance treated across **28 properties** (Cat's claw creeper, Madeira vine, Dutchman's pipe)
- **6.65 ha** of land treated for invasive weeds
- Worked with **15** private landholders
- **Weed control** in three sub-catchments of the Mary River

COMMUNITY & LANDHOLDER EDUCATION

- **1 x World Environment Day** Plant & Learn:
 - **100** native trees planted
 - Demonstration by Cedar and Austin from Detection Dogs for Conservation
- **3 x educational** walking tours with Susie Duncan
- **12 x monthly** e-Bulletins sent to members
- Girls in the Wild Koala Habitat Restoration field day
- Sunshine Coast Biosphere forum panel
- Launch of Hinterland Bush Links' blog



BECOME A MEMBER

As a Member of Hinterland Bush Links become part of a passionate, fun and inclusive community interested in caring for native vegetation in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

You'll have access to volunteer opportunities, a way you can make a real difference in protecting, restoring and connecting native vegetation

<https://www.hinterlandbushlinks.org/membership/>

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

Creating strategic wildlife corridors is a top priority for Hinterland Bush Links; it is imperative that our bush regeneration work contributes to improving connectivity across the landscape.

We achieve this by actively restoring habitats through on-the-ground efforts like weeding and tree planting in or adjacent to areas of existing habitat. Our impact is delivered through two Roving Restorers programs, community tree planting days, and the Koala Habitat project, which specifically focuses on areas where koalas are known to live. Our Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine project targets Weeds of National Significance in several sub-catchments in the

Upper Mary River Valley, helping to restore riparian corridors in the biodiverse upper catchment. Our habitat restoration work links with our other focus areas of community involvement and education, building community capacity to continue restoration work, contributing to boosting biodiversity and creating more resilient landscapes.

Koala Habitat Project

This project aimed to expand and restore native vegetation in areas of koala habitat and known koala populations across the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. We finished the project in December 2024, making a significant contribution to koala conservation over the two-year project.

Across the whole two year project, we collaborated with 35 landholders to plant 5140 trees within and adjacent to koala habitat areas, revegetating an area of almost 4 hectares and removing invasive weeds from 11.5 hectares of koala habitat.

We ran a total of 38 volunteer events (22 weeding and 17 tree planting), with an average of 20 volunteers per event, amounting to a total of 1728.5 volunteer hours. We also delivered a landholder workshop, developed a resource for landholders and held a community koala talk. This project was a significant achievement for our organisation, one that we are extremely proud of.





2024-25 Koala Habitat Project statistics

Volunteer tree planting events	4
Volunteer weeding events	5
Volunteer hours	420
Koala food and habitat trees planted	1,575
Number of properties trees planted on	4
Area revegetated (ha)	0.95
Number of properties lantana cleared on	4
Area lantana cleared (ha)	1.6

A highlight during the 2024-25 financial year was a collaborative planting with input from Bunya Bunya Country Aboriginal Corporation and Sunshine Coast Council at Tuan Environment Reserve. We planted a huge 1000 trees adjacent to Chinaman Creek, with the area being home to a significant local Koala population as well as Glossy black cockatoos.

Over 40 volunteers turned their hands to the soil, also learning about the cultural significance of the site and cultural artefacts from Kabi Kabi elder Kerry Jones. Integrating cultural knowledge with hands on environmental action was insightful and interesting for our community.

Collaboration was a core feature of this project. Our partners included:

- Sunshine Coast Council - Tuan Environment Reserve planting, landholder workshop, tree planting species selection and site visits
- Bunya Bunya Country Aboriginal Corporation – Tuan Environmental Reserve planting
- Koala Action Inc., - community koala talk and landholder resource
- Barung Landcare – landholder workshop, landholder resource, contractor lantana removal and tree planting, support of community tree planting events, provision of tubestock.

This work was largely funded by a grant from the Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, as part of the Saving Koalas Fund Community Grants program. Additional financial/in-kind support was provided by Queensland Koala Crusaders, Koala Action Inc., Sunshine Coast Council and Barung Landcare. Alongside this, the input from numerous dedicated landholders and volunteers was instrumental to the success of this initiative.

Roving Restorers

The Roving Restorers, a formidable group of dedicated volunteers, are a cornerstone of our organisation. Their deep commitment to protecting the region’s landscape is evident in the invaluable time and energy they give to support native flora and fauna in vital habitat corridors, while also providing crucial assistance to landholders with land restoration.

This year, the group was instrumental in helping deliver the final stretch of the Koala Habitat project, playing a pivotal role in weeding and tree-planting activities. They also provided critical support during weekend community tree-planting events, often arriving early to help with additional tasks and guide less experienced volunteers.

Their impact extends beyond the habitat restoration legacy. By consistently showing up, they inspire landholders to continue conservation, long after each event. The group’s success is also built on a fundamental social element, giving volunteers an important chance to connect with each other while working on tangible conservation projects.

Achievements	Total	Hinterland	Noosa
Number of volunteer events	35	15	20
Number of properties assisted	35	15	20
Total volunteer hours ¹	760.5	475.5	285
Value of volunteer hours	\$36,382	\$22,748	\$13,634
Approximate area of weed removal (ha)	12.2	5.9	6.3
Number of trees planted	2,465	1325	1140



In the 2024-25 financial year, we hosted 35 Roving Restorers events across the Sunshine Coast Hinterland and Noosa District regions. With an average of 15 volunteers attending each event, their commitment contributed an impressive \$36,382 in volunteer labour toward the restoration of local ecosystems. Thank you to our dedicated team of Roving Restorers for their passion and unwavering commitment to the Hinterland and Noosa District ecosystems.

These efforts have had a significant impact, promoting natural regeneration across a total of 12.2 hectares of weed control and planting 2,465 trees. This work has contributed to the restoration of koala habitat and improved the connectivity of fauna habitats, enabling native species to move more freely across the landscape in search of food and mates.

We supported 35 landholders with native vegetation restoration on their properties. Collaborating

with landholders fosters a sense of pride and stewardship, providing encouragement to continue sustainable conservation and land management practices. We are grateful to all landholders who hosted the Roving Restorers this year, admiring their deep commitment to land stewardship and conservation. We are proud to be able to support landholders with weed control, which continues to be a significant challenge, and expanding areas of habitat through planting trees.

In the Hinterland region, we held 15 successful Roving Restorers events, clearing environmental weeds from over 5.9 hectares of land and planting a total of 1,325 trees, contributing \$22,748 in volunteer labour toward the preservation and restoration of the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. Many of these activities were part of our Koala Habitat project, expanding and enhancing koala habitat areas, while also strengthening connective corridors to boost local biodiversity.

¹ Based on Volunteering Queensland calculator (median age 55-64 years)

The Noosa Chapter of Roving Restorers was coordinated by Ered Fox from Noosa and District Landcare, providing volunteer bush regeneration services to Land for Wildlife, Nature Refuge, and Voluntary Conservation Agreement properties. The Noosa Roving Restorers visited 20 properties and held 20 events, undertaking weeding over 6.3 hectares and planting 1,140 trees. Thank you to Ered, Noosa and District Landcare and our amazing community of volunteers, who contributed 285 labour hours to benefit the Noosa Shire environment.



Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project

A significant part of this year has been a strategic review of the Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project.

Since 2012, Hinterland Bush Links has led this project within the upper Mary River catchment, a critically important biodiversity hotspot. The catchment supports the Lowland Rainforest of Subtropical Australia and numerous endangered and vulnerable species, including the Mary River turtle and Australian lungfish. Its waters are also ecologically connected to the Great Barrier Reef.

This strategic project aimed to combat Madeira vine, Cat's claw creeper and Dutchman's pipe, three Weeds of National Significance in the upper catchment of the Mary River. By strategically focusing our efforts on the waterways in the upper catchment, the project aimed to reduce weed spread downstream, protect water quality and enhance habitat for native wildlife. It required long-term and consistent control of weeds on many properties, mostly private, within the upper catchment.

Due to changes in the location and severity of weed vines, gaps in knowledge and mapping data, changes in landholders and a

decline in funding availability, Matt Bateman was commissioned to undertake a strategic review of the project. This involved a helicopter survey in September 2024, which Sunshine Coast Council and Barung Landcare also contributed to, ground truthing and collation of mapping data to provide a current status of the location and severity of weed vines. An updated stakeholder engagement plan and a new prioritisation plan for the future of the project were developed.

Overall, the review highlighted the effectiveness of on-going management, with the severity of both Cat's claw creeper and Madeira vine reducing in areas that had been continually treated. An overall increase in the extent of all three weed vines was noted, which is mostly attributed to the larger survey area compared with original surveys.

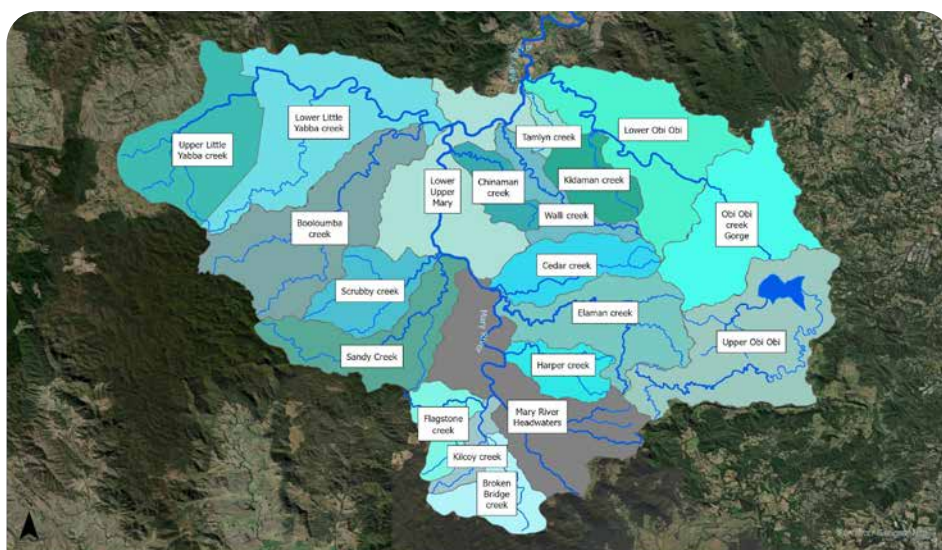
Due to several reasons including our resource capacity, funding availability, health and safety concerns and challenges in landholder liaison, the Management Committee made the difficult decision to not continue this project. The Management team are exploring possibilities for the project to continue in some shape or form through input from many

stakeholders also invested in the project and its outcomes.

Alongside this strategic work, treatment continued in Harper Creek, Little Yabba Creek and the Mary River Headwaters this year. Funded by Seqwater (via the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee) and Sunshine Coast Council, Barung Landcare's Natural Areas Services team were engaged to undertake on-ground works using a combination of mechanical and chemical treatments. We treated invasive weeds across 28 properties in Harper Creek, Elaman Creek and Mary River Headwaters, assisting 15 private landholders.

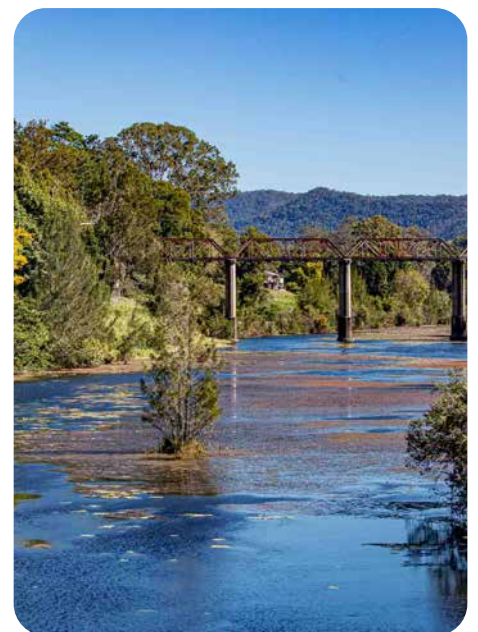
This project has been supported by many funders and stakeholders over the years, through grants and donations. Notably, funds from our Environmental Gift Fund were invested in this year's strategic review.

Funding and support from Sunshine Coast Council, Seqwater, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, Burnett Mary Regional Group, Queensland State Government and others have been instrumental in the success of this project. A special thanks to Matt Bateman for his input into the project over the past year.



Upper Mary Vine Weed Project
Sub catchments

0 1.88 3.75 7.5 11.25 15 Kilometers



Achievements	Total
Amount of contractor labour	511 hours
Cash investment in on-ground works	\$47,000
Number of landholders assisted	15
Number of properties	28
Approximate area of weed removal (ha) (chemical herbicide, manual removal)	6.65
Sub-catchments where work undertaken	• Little Yabba Creek • Harper Creek • Mary River headwaters



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Achievements	Total
Volunteer contribution	1,048 hours
Volunteers involved	>130 individuals (306 instances)
Properties and associated landholders involved	43
Members	420
Social media network	• 1948 social media followers (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn) • 1052 Facebook group members

Community involvement is at the heart of everything we do. We highly value the input of community members and love creating opportunities for people of all ages to get involved in conservation activities.

Our strong relationships with local landholders are integral; their commitment to restoring ecosystems is the foundation of our projects and programs. Without our community, we wouldn't have the widespread impact we do.

Our community is committed, generous and inclusive. This year, over 130 individuals contributed their skills and knowledge, logging a total of 1,048 volunteer hours. People of all ages actively participated in our bush regeneration efforts through the Roving Restorers and Koala Habitat projects. We were delighted to welcome many new faces, especially at our popular weekend community planting days and we're just as grateful for our long-time volunteers who continue to show up week after week.

A dedicated team of volunteers has been instrumental in our work, supporting us with various activities which are key to our operations. Our volunteer Management Committee and Environmental Gift Fund Committee provide essential oversight, meeting regularly to guide the organisation. A special thank you to the following

individuals for generously sharing their time and expertise with us over the past year:

- Mary Meadows – providing financial administrative support, member of the Environmental Gift Fund Committee
- Marilyn Fisher – member of the Environmental Gift Fund Committee
- Janet Carew - member of the Environmental Gift Fund Committee
- Katie Johnston – mapping support
- Susie Duncan – leading educational walking tours
- Bevin Neil – graphic design (including this annual report!)
- Geoff Saunders – event barista
- Cedar Staggard - University of Sunshine Coast Detection Dog guest educator

We have continued to enhance and establish relationships with 43 landholders to run our Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine project, Koala Habitat project, Roving Restorers program and community tree planting events. We welcomed many new landholders to our organisation this year; we have enjoyed getting to know them and have been inspired by their passion and dedication. We know that our support for landholders provides them a moral boost as well as builds their capability and confidence to continue important habitat restoration work on their properties.

Collaboration is key to our success and helps us all achieve more for the environment and community. Over the past year, we've teamed up with numerous community organisations and stakeholders to deliver our projects and programs, and we've also been active participants and supporters at many of our partners' events. Our key partners and stakeholders have included: Great Eastern Ranges, Barung Landcare, Bunya Bunya Aboriginal Corporation, Koala Action Inc., Queensland Koala Crusaders Inc., Noosa and District Landcare, Queensland Water and Land Carers, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, Sunshine Coast Environment Council, Mooloolah River Landcare and Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group. We also worked with and/or received funding from Sunshine Coast Council, Noosa Council, Seqwater and Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water and Greening Australia.





COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Achievements	Total
Educational bulletins issued	12
Educational talks, walks & workshops	5
Guests at educational events	48
Attendance/presentations at partner events	7

We aim to educate our community on the imperative value of protecting, restoring and connecting healthy native bush. Pairing this understanding with practical skills and confidence supports landholders and volunteers to actively restore habitat. A diversity of educational programs makes this possible.

Hands-On Learning and Special Events

We integrate education directly into our hands-on events, allowing participants to learn practical skills from our team. We hosted a “Plant and Learn” event for World Environment Day in 2025, which included a koala scat dog talk and a tree planting session.

We were also proud to be part of the “Girls in the Wild” school holiday program facilitated by Mooloolah River Landcare, engaging young girls in koala conservation activities. Participants had a live demonstration with a scat-sniffing dog to learn how these animals help identify wildlife in the field and planted native trees to improve koala habitat.

Expert Talks and Guided Walks

Throughout the 2024-25 year, we hosted a variety of guest speakers who shared their specialist knowledge with our community. Guided ecological bush walking tours with our founder, Susie Duncan, have become a mainstay

of our educational program. This year, Susie led tours in Curramore and Bellthorpe forests and a rainforest and tallowwood walk. These walks are a fun and engaging way to connect with our local landscapes and learn about the ecological relationships between plants and wildlife.

Further events included:

- **Cedar Staggard and Austin the dog, Detection Dogs for Conservation** – shared about their important work in monitoring koalas and gave a demonstration on finding koala scat.
- **Kerry Jones, Kabi Kabi elder, Bunya Bunya Country Aboriginal Corporation** – shared



traditional knowledge about cultural artefacts in the region at our community planting event at Tuan Environment Reserve

- **Ben Green, Sunshine Coast Council** – spoke about Glossy black cockatoos and their habitat at our community planting event at Tuan Environment Reserve

Digital and Community Outreach

We kept our members and the broader community informed through our popular monthly Bulletin and an active online social media presence.

We utilise platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Humanix to not only promote events but also to share insights about our local environment, significantly increasing our reach and engagement. This year, we also attended and spoke at many partner events, such as the Sunshine Coast Biosphere Forum, koala forums and weed vine workshops, to share our mission with the broader community and collaborate with other environmental groups.



ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Achievements
New partnerships with University of Sunshine Coast and Greening Australia
Invested in Information Technology equipment
Invested in storage shed
Invested in marketing and promotional items

Hinterland Bush Links is committed to organisational excellence, driven by strong leadership, governance and business performance.

This foundation allows us to effectively deliver our successful programs and projects. Our success is supported by a dedicated volunteer Management Committee that provides consistent oversight of the organisation and its key initiatives. The committee met bi-monthly this year, with many members also attending many of our volunteer and education events. The Environmental Gift Fund Committee has diligently managed and overseen the strategic use of all donated funds. Together, these committees ensure that Hinterland Bush Links stays true to its core mission and operates in a sustainable manner.

Hinterland Bush Links’ operations continue to be sustained by a three-year grant from the **Sunshine Coast Council’s Environment Levy Partnership**, which helps cover wages and essential operational costs. Additionally, donations from our generous supporters, many of whom have been with us for years, continue to provide vital funding for our projects and programs, also covering some of our wage costs. A further grant from Sunshine Coast Council enabled us to purchase a marquee, education equipment and tools for bush regeneration, which have allowed us to enhance our community-based work.

We are continuing to work on diversifying our income streams to improve our long-term financial stability.

Two new partnerships have been critical to underpinning the success of our operations this year. We signed a three-year partnership agreement with University of Sunshine Coast for their Student Work Placement program. This fantastic program provides students of environmental degrees experience within an industry placement, which is a mandatory part of their degree. We have been lucky to have two brilliant students, Sari Van Klaveren and Jessie Maclean, support our operations this year. They have assisted at many of our volunteer and education events, as well as providing vital administrative support to ensure the effective delivery of our operations. Moreover, they have also brought innovative ideas and solutions to our organisation. Thanks Sari and Jessie for your commitment. We wish you all the best for your future careers.

Our partnership with Greening Australia has been integral to our habitat restoration activities through our Roving Restorers and community tree planting days. This funding, provided to Greening Australia by IGA Australia, has partially paid for trees and planting supplies, helping us to continue to deliver these popular community events.

This year, we invested in several items to help staff better undertake their work. A storage shed has

provided a space for our tools, equipment, tree planting supplies and promotional materials. Phones, laptops and a tablet for field work have enabled our two staff to better undertake their professional roles.

To continue to improve awareness of our brand and promote our work, we created supporter signs which are now adorning many gates and homes around the Hinterland. We also invested in marketing campaigns and developed a partnership proposal for businesses. These investments are critical for helping us to attract necessary sponsorship and donations to fund our operations, projects and programs. Going forward, we intend to expand our partnership network to secure our financial sustainability.

We are grateful for the support of our partners who contribute to our organisational sustainability by providing professional services. A special thank you to the following local businesses; we truly value your expertise, which helps us streamline our processes and maintain a professional image.

- BJN Design – website and graphic design by Bevin Neil
- Suncoast Web Solutions – website hosting and IT support led by Neil McNulty
- Darcy Bookkeeping and Business Services – bookkeeping services



Sari Van Klaveren and Louise Court



Sam Duggan



Jessie Maclean

TREASURER'S REPORT

Damian Hooper
Treasurer



This year our total income was \$208,045 and expenses were \$322,765 delivering a deficit of \$114,720. Note that the total income includes unexpended grant funds of \$63,590 that were carried forward from the 2023-24 financial year. The unexpended grant funds carried forward relate to funding received from the Noosa Council (\$2,409) and Sunshine Coast Council for our Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project (\$57,341).

Approximately 67% of our income was derived from grants, with the majority of these funds targeting our Roving Restorers work. Donations made up a sizeable 29% of our income this year.

Expenses peaked in 2025 with the major costs being contractor costs for the Koala Habitat Project, Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project and Noosa Roving Restorers (\$122,215) and our employment related costs (wages, superannuation, Workcover, travel costs) of \$164,197 accounting for the majority of expenses. This included the completion of the remaining work in the Koala Habitat Project.

Ongoing support in the way of grants from Seqwater (\$22,000) and Sunshine Coast Council (\$25,000) has been crucial to enable ongoing works being undertaken in the Upper Mary Valley Weed Vine Project during 2025. Costs were also allocated to undertaking a strategic review of this project during 2025 and 2026. This very important review has resulted in the decision by HBL to not continue with this project as outlined in the Manager's Report. This will result in a significant reduction in expenses during 2026 onwards.

Sunshine Coast Council's Environment Levy Partnership grant has continued with 2025 being the first year of a new 3-year agreement. This grant is \$40,170 per year. These funds are vital in providing support for running of our Roving Restorers program and other projects and educational work not covered by grants.

We also received a further grant from Sunshine Coast Council to purchase tools and equipment for our volunteers and education events.

Noosa Council have continued their fantastic support of the Noosa Roving Restorers Program, we have now completed year 2 of a Multi-Year Environment Collaboration Grant of \$24,682 per year for 3 years to continue to fund the important work undertaken in the Noosa region by the Noosa Roving Restorers Group.

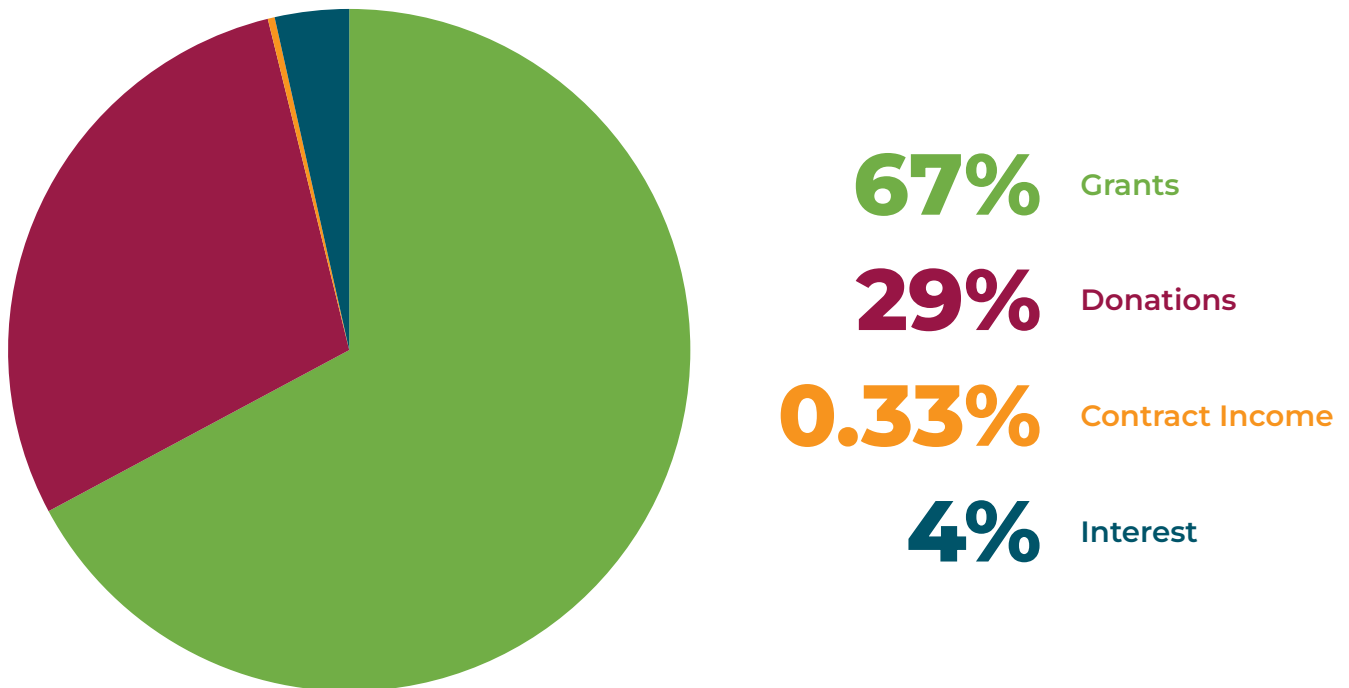
Greening Australia have provided valuable support of our tree planting activities, contributing \$3,416 this year. This has enabled us to continue planting trees with the Roving Restorers and Community Tree Planting events.

Donation income grew to \$60,310.36 this financial year. This increase has largely been due to the fantastic ongoing support of our many long term donors as well as a number of new social media marketing initiatives that continue to increase the HBL profile which is generating additional donations. In addition, a small portion of donations are derived from event attendance and container for change. These funds support our on-ground works and running our projects. Thank you to all our donors both large and small. Every donation helps us to pay our wages and keep our projects running successfully.

Thank you once again to Queensland Water and Land Carers for providing or insurances for the year, which is essential for running our organisation and on-ground work.

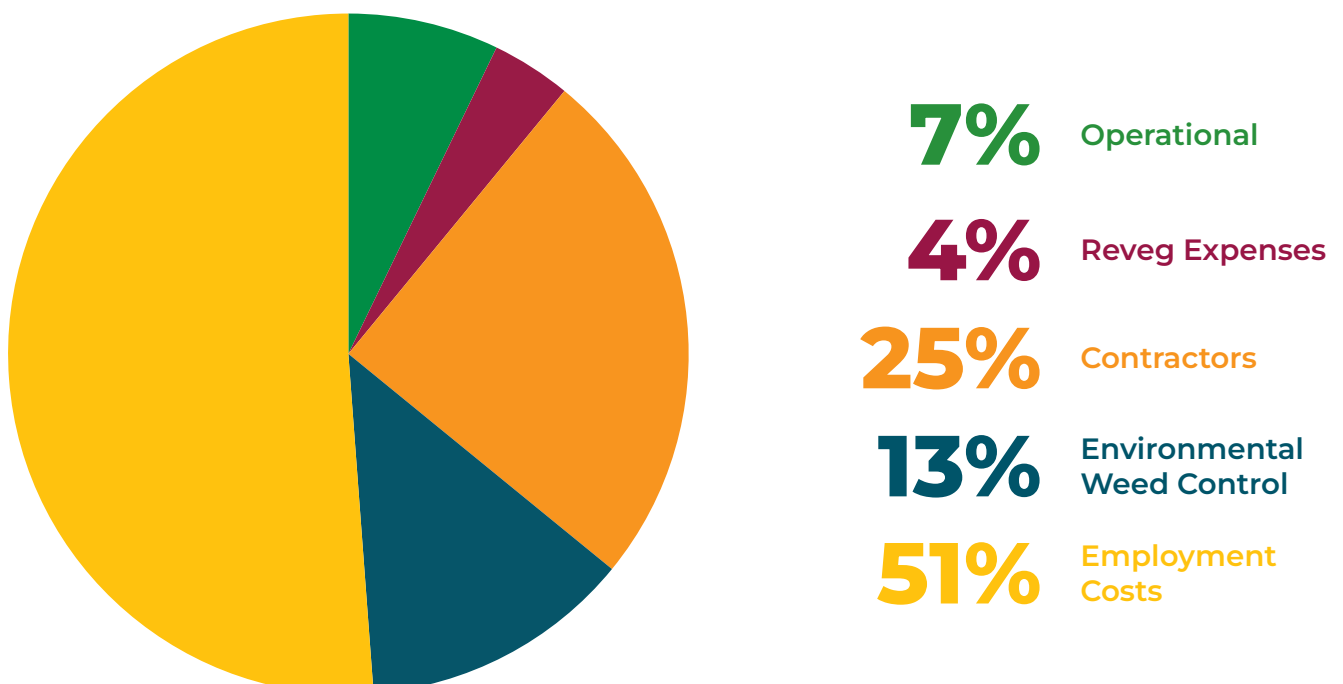
Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers. In the 2024-25 financial year, our volunteers provided a huge 1,048 hours of free labour at a value of \$49.66/hr (based on 55-64 age bracket). That equates to an incredible \$52,047 worth of labour to support landholders and the environment across the Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

Income 2024-25



Expenses 2024-25

Note: Employee costs include wages, superannuation, travel expenses and workcover.



SPONSORS AND IN-KIND SUPPORTERS 2024-25



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