

Annual Report

2024/2025



Lake
Baroon
Catchment
Care
Group

Working with our community...for our waterways

LAKE BAROON CATCHMENT CARE GROUP

Annual Report 2024/25

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All photos property of Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group Inc

LBCCG acknowledges the Jinibara as the traditional custodians of the Maleny area, and respects the role of ancestors and descendants. We acknowledge and respect the crucial role Aboriginal and Torres Strait people play within the wider Sunshine Coast community, understanding that the traditional custodians have cultural, spiritual, social and economic connections, responsibilities and knowledge that are invaluable to LBCCG when working on country.

Management Committee & Staff

President

Peter Stevens

Vice President

Heather Spring

Secretary

Steven Lang

Treasurer

Peter Pamment

Committee Member

Steve Skull

Committee Member

Marek Malter

Committee Member

Thomas Davison

Life Member

Gillian Pechey

Life Member

Steve Skull

Manager (*Jul-Nov 2024*)

Mark Amos

Manager (*Dec—Jul 2025*)

Rod Johnson

Office Manager

Claire Wynn

Project Development

Mark Amos

Project Manager

Luke Ferguson

Project Officer

Paul Mackay

Project Officer

Ivan Cafarella



Vision, Goals and Partners

To work with the community towards improving the health of the Catchment through the promotion of

LBCCG supports landholders (properties over 10 hectares and/or supporting at least 10 head of livestock) in the catchment primarily to reduce risk to water quality, but with broader environmental outcomes achieved.

LBCCG's strength is engaging the unengaged, building strong, lasting relationships and developing practical solutions to land management and water quality issues. LBCCG prefers to deliver large, whole-property projects, however smaller projects where water quality are considered.

Our projects address:

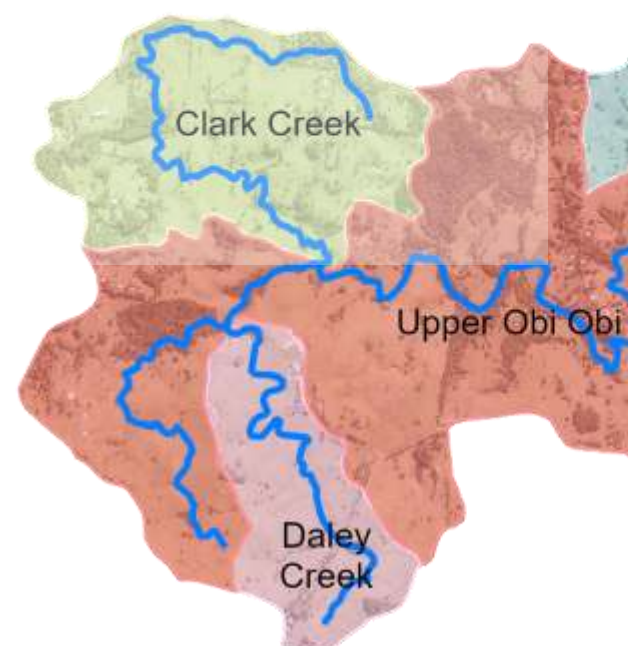
- erosion (bed and bank, landslips, diffuse and point source agricultural)
- inappropriate land use
- livestock access to waterways (nutrients and pathogens)
- herbicide and pesticide use
- agricultural run-off
- biodiversity and threatened species
- awareness raising

To achieve this, we prioritise on-ground works that include:

- riparian and landslip revegetation (including maintenance)
- riparian fencing
- off stream watering
- livestock laneway improvements
- permanent stream crossings that do not impact aquatic passage
- remnant vegetation protection and enhancement
- weed control
- dairy hardstand concreting
- dairy effluent management
- landslip management and rehabilitation
- field walks and workshops

LBCCG maintains valuable partnerships with:

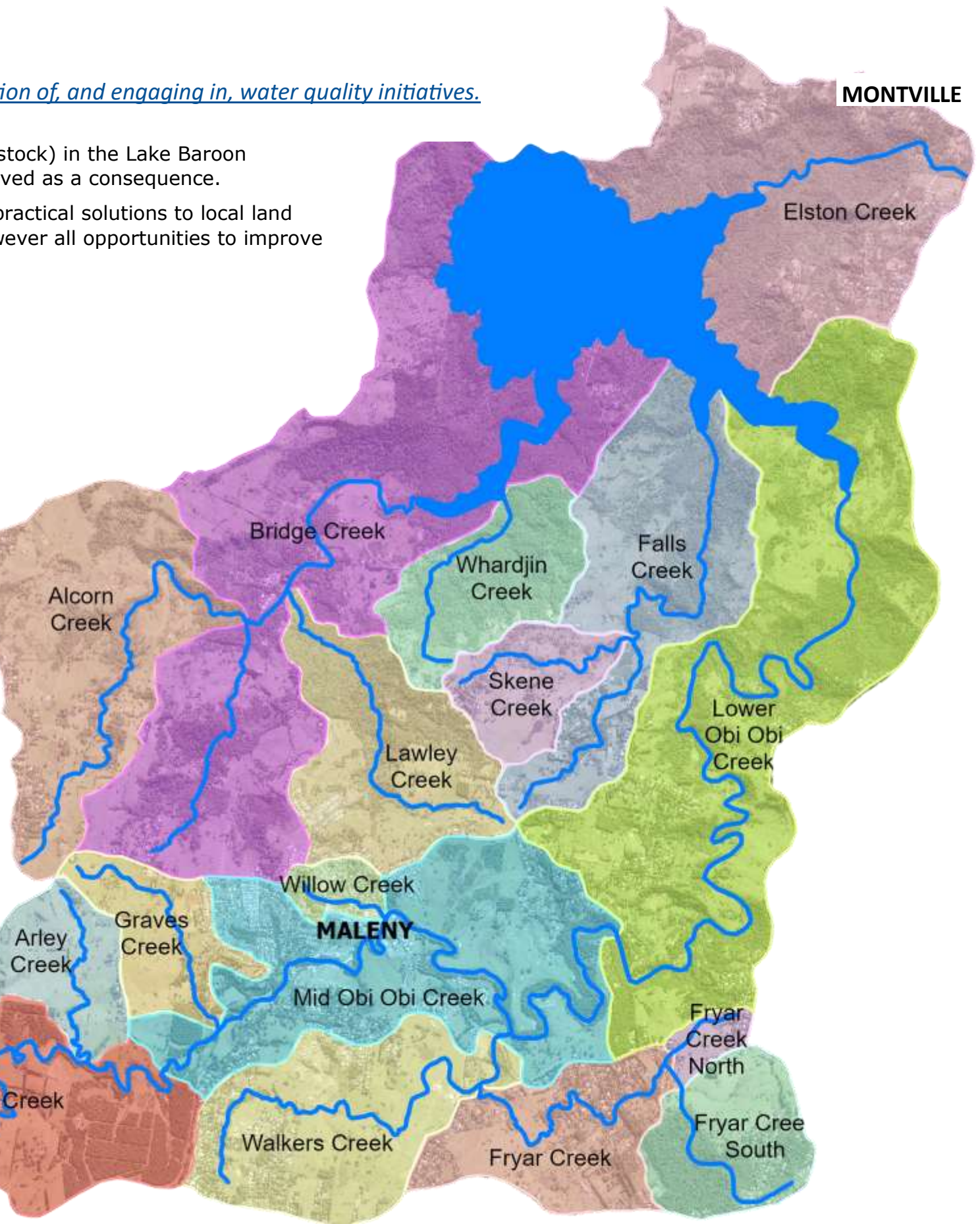
- East Coast TAFE
- Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee
- Barung Landcare
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Healthy Land & Water
- Department of Primary Industries
- Department of Transport and Main Roads



tion of, and engaging in, water quality initiatives.

stock) in the Lake Baroon
ved as a consequence.

practical solutions to local land
ever all opportunities to improve



President's Report

Peter Stevens

Welcome to our 2024-2025 Annual Report

This year our financial performance was similar to last year with total funding of \$1.8 million including \$1.33 million for on-ground project work. Unlike last year, we had a very high annual rainfall between June 24 and July 25, in the region of four metres in fact. This being twice our normal rainfall it has significantly increased revegetation maintenance requirements and created some access issues. In turn this has led to maintenance budgets being much higher than predicted alongside the increased costs of labour and equipment of recent years. Some trimming and reallocation of project delivery will be required in the coming year to stabilise our footing and plan for the future.

Some important staff changes were made this year. Rod Johnson, a local resident with strong skills in project management and report delivery for various government organisations was appointed as Manager LBCCG late in 2024. Rod holds a Bachelor of Rural Science from New England and has over 25 years' experience in environmental management and impact assessment which is a good fit for the type of reporting we are being increasingly asked to deliver. LBCCG has been lucky to find such a good candidate who has lived locally for years and knows the district well.

Our longstanding Manager, Mark Amos, who can be credited with developing and growing LBCCG into the organisation it is today, has taken a new position in LBCCG, Project Development. Mark's passion has always been developing projects, and just as importantly, being out in the field growing relationships with landholders in our area. Indeed, his landholder engagement has been the bedrock on which LBCCG has thrived and his contribution to the success of LBCCG has been and continues to be highly valued.

The above changes in staff roles will provide a good base for project funding and development increases in the coming years and having Mark in project development is the right decision. Similarly, there is an increased need for high level reporting and long-term asset management programs which requires a dedicated role. The new staff structure is working well and there is good support and contribution from every member of our work team, which now rises to six. I would like to thank all our staff for their cooperation and support during the last year as well as delivering our on-ground program of works. I would particularly thank Claire for her assistance with development of the LBCCG book and support during the year.

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I would like to thank Bob Philpot for his long service on our committee of over six years who stepped down this year from the Vice President role and the Committee. Bob was a passionate member of our committee who has also worked to improve our environment through his own endeavours at Dilkusha near Montville. A new committee member, Tom Davison, was elected this year. Tom brings a wealth of agricultural experience in research, management, dairy, and other diverse roles, and is an asset to the committee. This retains the committee at a full complement of seven which remains very stable and experienced. I would like to thank the committee for another year of their voluntary contributions which has made my role easier whilst providing high level support where needed.

On a more project-in-the-works basis, LBCCG commissioned a local writer, Elaine Green, to compile a history of the Baroon Pocket Dam development and the subsequent formation and history of LBCCG itself. The soon to be released book titled Lake Baroon Caring for Catchment, A History, should be published before the end of the 2025 calendar year and is currently in graphic design. The original proposals for a dam at Baroon Pocket date back to 1902, well before its eventual construction. LBCCG itself had its formation in 1992, so a lot of ground to cover and much sorting through old records and people's memories has been required. Elaine has done a wonderful job of telling the LBCCG story and I commend it to you.

As always, we must acknowledge the ongoing financial support we receive from Seqwater, but particularly on-going support and assistance from Julian O'Mara and Tim Odgers who always have the best interests of our group at heart. We also thank Sunshine Coast Council for their ongoing administrative support and partnership which is particularly valuable.

LAKE BAROON

A History
by Elaine Green

CARING FOR CATCHMENT

Photo: LBCCG Book cover

Treasurer's Report

Peter Pamment

The 2024/25 financial year has been a challenging year for the finances of Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group with the year ending with a deficit of \$62,351. During the year the Committee assisted staff to change to preferred roles within the organisation and appointed a new General Manager. Training and upskilling for digital asset management and reporting requirements also

added pressure to the budget. This year of change has enabled the Group to be in strong position to continue delivering high value projects into the future.

Multiple projects were undertaken during the 2024/25 year with significant success, with a slight increase in funding from the 2024 year. The total budget for 2024/25 was \$1,827,990 including monies carried forward from the 2023/24 budget of \$61,581. Within the budget \$481,515 was administrative funding and \$1,346,475 was project funding. These figures do not include GST.

Our income streams were as follows:

Project Funding

Seqwater Source Protection	\$ 700,000
Seqwater Asset Management	\$ 263,000
Bunya Offset	\$ 18,510
Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements	\$ 72,616
Other Funding and Carried forward	\$ 292,349
Total Project Income	\$ 1,346,475

Administrative Funding

Seqwater	\$ 389,138
Health Land and Water	\$ 10,000
Sunshine Coast Council (Environment Levy)	\$ 53,550
Material sales:	\$15,109
Other income (interest, membership, etc)	\$ 13,718
Total Administration Income	\$ 481,515

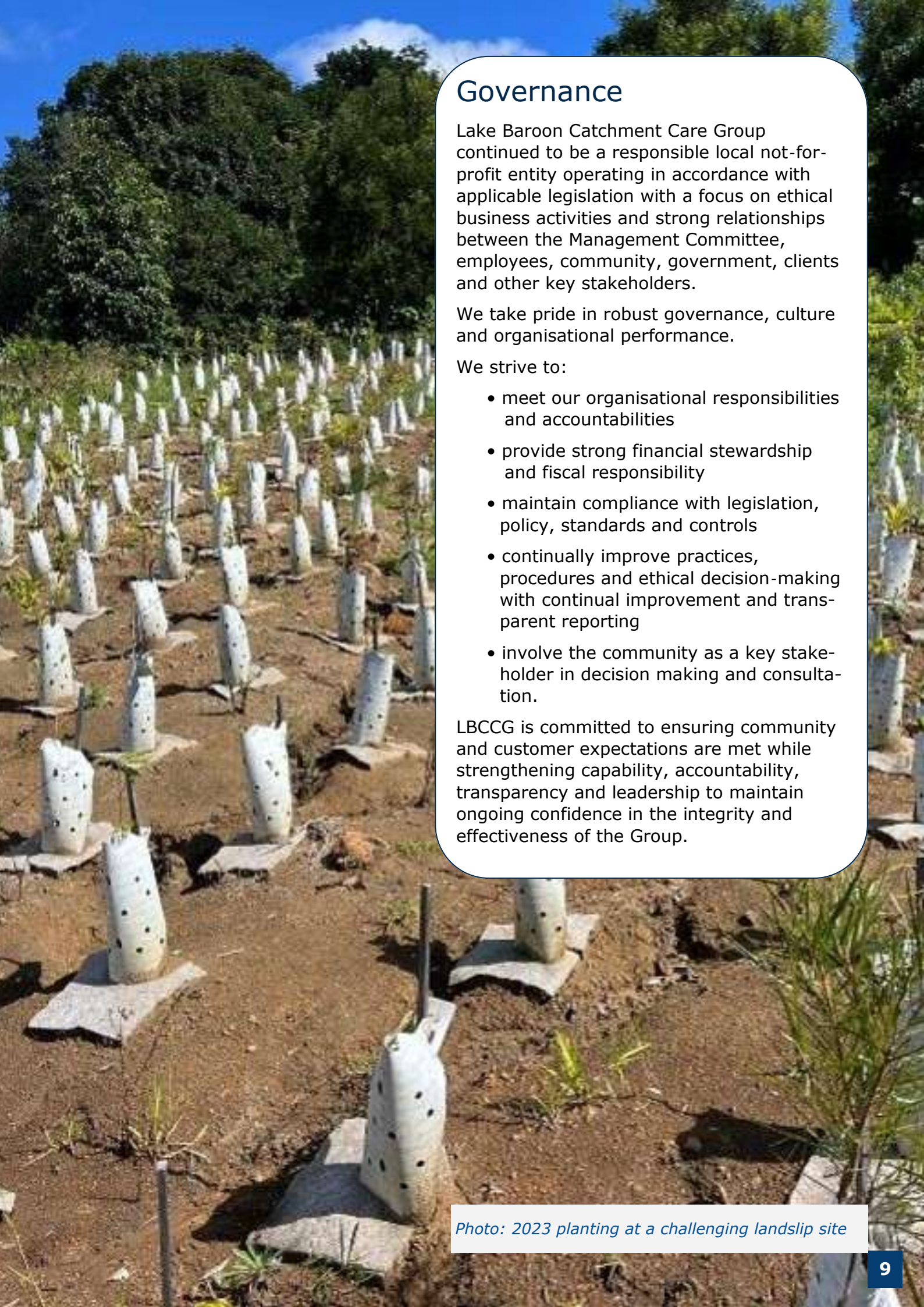
Clearly our main income comes from the Seqwater project areas, with assistance from the Sunshine Coast Council for administration support.

Total expenditure was \$1,890,340.71 made up of \$543,865.71 admin (depreciation included) and \$1,346,475 project expenses. Salaries and wages make up about 68% of our administrative expenses. The operational / administrative expenses are 29.2% of total expenditure, a slight improvement over the 2024 value of 34.2%.

The administrative budget covers all salaries for staff and office administration together with motor vehicle cost and general administrative responsibilities. Like last year 90% of this expenditure was spent locally and 10% was spent outside the district, our continuous commitment to local support. Additional local value to ours, are the contributions by local landholders in our various projects. Part of the deficit was depreciation of assets after our asset review, this non-cash expense added to our loss. The cash reserve expense has meant that we have expended some of our reserves, but net assets are still fair at \$138,654.09

During the year, we changed banking from BoQ to Suncorp to benefit from flexible term deposits that can be enabled by staff online without multiple committee members having to attend a branch appointment.

Thanks again to the Committee for all the challenging finance questions, the staff for helping me track and understand the various processes involved in the funding of the group, and to Claire for her assistance in preparing my monthly reports.



Governance

Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group continued to be a responsible local not-for-profit entity operating in accordance with applicable legislation with a focus on ethical business activities and strong relationships between the Management Committee, employees, community, government, clients and other key stakeholders.

We take pride in robust governance, culture and organisational performance.

We strive to:

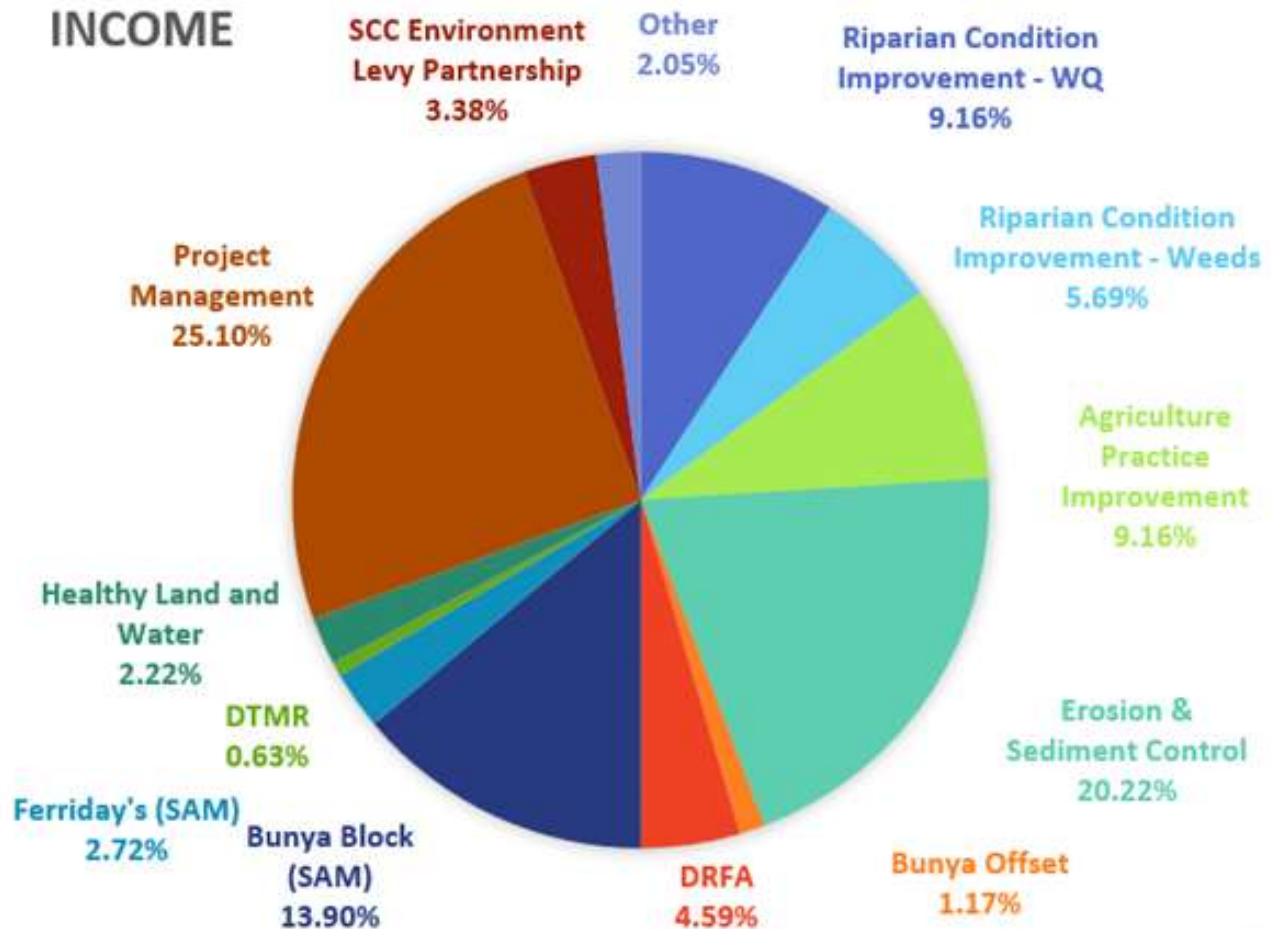
- meet our organisational responsibilities and accountabilities
- provide strong financial stewardship and fiscal responsibility
- maintain compliance with legislation, policy, standards and controls
- continually improve practices, procedures and ethical decision-making with continual improvement and transparent reporting
- involve the community as a key stakeholder in decision making and consultation.

LBCCG is committed to ensuring community and customer expectations are met while strengthening capability, accountability, transparency and leadership to maintain ongoing confidence in the integrity and effectiveness of the Group.

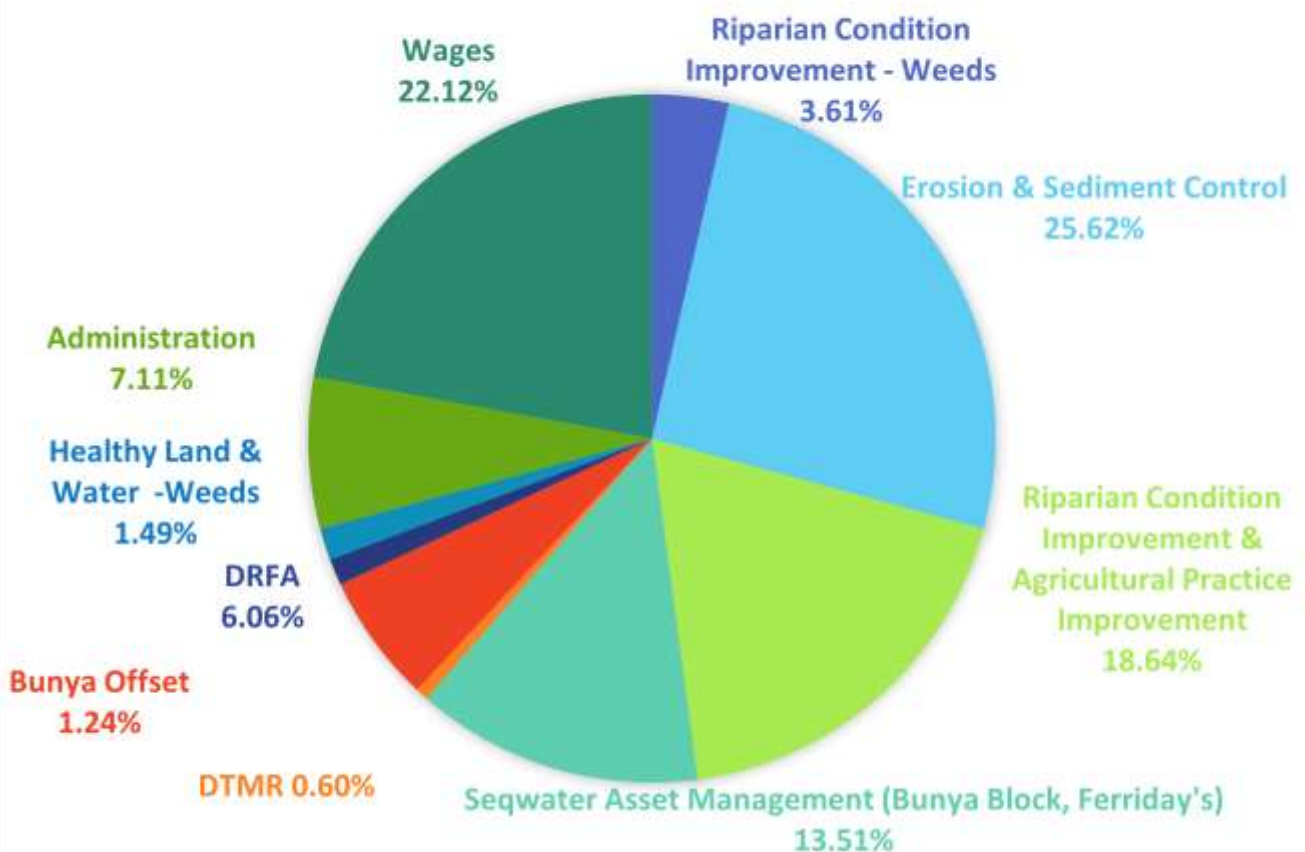
Photo: 2023 planting at a challenging landslip site

Income & Expenditure

INCOME



EXPENDITURE





Local procurement

In 2024/25 LBCCG expended just over \$1.8 million, with 90 percent of our procurement spent locally (Sunshine Coast Council region). This supports the local economy, supports the growth and development of local businesses and service providers.

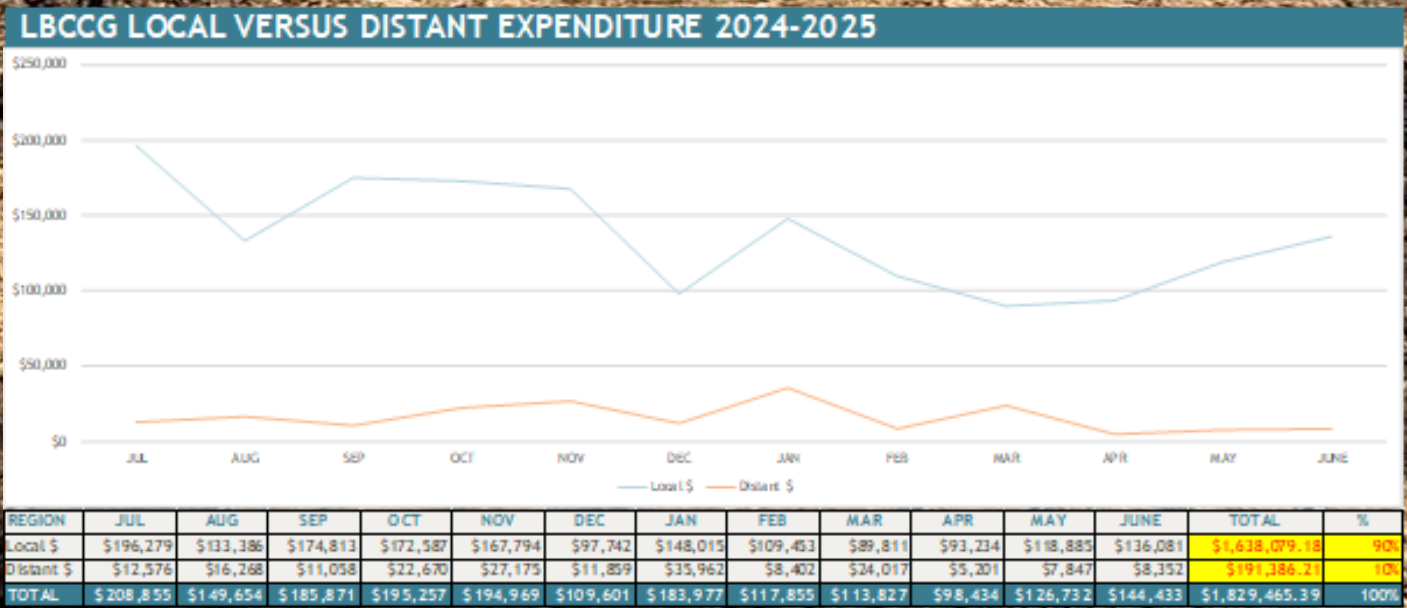


Photo: Concrete mat low-level crossing to minimise ongoing creek disturbance

Manager's Report

Rod Johnson



This year saw a changing of the guard in LBCCG with Mark Amos stepping down as long-serving manager and taking a much-needed break before stepping into the role of Project Development within the group. The mantle of manager passed to me and Mark set the bar really high.

It was a baptism of fire with reporting season well and truly underway when I arrived. Claire Wynn did a stellar job assembling relevant information for annual reporting and preparing the Seqwater Asset Management and LBCCG Members reports all while paying invoices, monitoring the budget and managing staff. In the meantime, I was looking everywhere to find my feet. I had to ask myself,

why does this group need a manager? Clearly though, with the generous funding from Seqwater, there was more work here than the crew could comfortably poke a stick at and an extra staff member was needed.

Luke and Ivan swung shifts droning project sites and keeping the contractors on their toes with revegetation maintenance, Paul continued to smooth the way with landholders and organise workshops, and Luke kept the pedal on the metal to meet the annual work plan project schedule. On Mark's return, he dived straight into doing what he does best, developing the detail behind projects outlined in the Annual Works Plan. The staff have worked together as a team for a few years now and it really shows, both in the group's cohesion and camaraderie, and the seamlessness with which on-ground projects are implemented.

In typical Maleny fashion the weather was generally wet, but with nearly four metres of rain falling in the catchment area within the 2024/25 period, the conditions were especially inclement. Progress was hampered on many projects, particularly the erosion and sediment control program, with access to some of our more difficult work sites limited for long periods. Many access tracks and roads within these properties had to be repaired or upgraded during rare drier spells just to reach some sites. This factor, along with material cost increases, the sheer number of trees that needed to be maintained across the catchment and the excellent growing conditions (for weeds as well as revegetation), put maximum pressure on the budget and we reached the end of the year with a deficit to carry forward.

At the year's end, however, we had completed all planned projects including several brought forward from the previous year, a very pleasing result under the circumstances.

On a personal note, my introduction to the group has been warm and welcoming. The staff and management committee members have been very patient and supportive, and the source protection team at Seqwater has provided plenty of encouragement. I'm looking forward to the years ahead working with this great group of people.



Photo: TAFE tree planting

Highlights 2024/25

- 10,612 trees shrubs & groundcovers planted
- 51.34 hectares of weed management
- 2,307 metres of fencing
- Excluded livestock from 4.05 hectares of riparian zone
- Treated 9.5 hectares of un-stable hillslopes
- Nine erosion points managed
- Improved land management on at least 150 hectares
- Installed 18 alternative watering points (troughs)
- Maintained over 158,000 trees from previous projects
- Engaged over 400 landholders, stakeholders & community members



Photo: Site Monitoring with Seqwater and Ellen Dickinson (GIS specialist)

Riparian Condition Improvement (Water Quality) & Agricultural Practice Improvement

Luke Ferguson & Paul Mackay

LBCCG combines the RCI (WQ) and API programs as both sources of funding are often used on the same property/project. RCI funding is al-

located to works that are purely water quality focussed (riparian revegetation) and provide little direct productivity gains for the landholder. API project works tend to provide some sort of productivity gain, for example, off stream watering, laneways and stream crossings.

The key aims of the program are to reduce livestock contact with natural waterways and establish buffers to agricultural pursuits along waterways to reduce pathogens, nutrients and sediments inputs to streams. Other benefits include establishing wildlife corridors, weed management in riparian zones, aquatic and terrestrial habitat enhancement and remnant vegetation protection.

In 2024/25, six projects were implemented, works were completed on four projects from the previous financial year, the popular workshop series continued and maintenance of a further 18 older revegetation projects continued.

The multi-year **Upper Obi Obi Creek Project** was implemented on a very high priority property to reduce pathogens, nutrients and sediment delivered to Obi Obi Creek and Baroon Pocket Dam (*2021-26 Implementation Plan for the Lake Baroon catchment*). The project continued the successful 2018/19 Dairy Program, improving the dairy effluent system through the capture of run-off generated from the milking parlour, feed pads and yards, and improving the collection of effluent solids. While the effluent system was upgraded in 2022, unfavourable contours, inadequate dairy hardstand and poor drainage, led to a significant proportion of effluent and solids flowing directly to the adjacent paddock. The project installed 160 m² dairy hardstand concrete and 30 metres of fencing, modified an existing LBCCG installed solar pump and installed two off stream water header tanks in Year 1. Year 2 (2025/26) of the project will add a further 155 m² of concrete to complete the hardstand area reporting to the solids pad and effluent pond.

Upper Obi Obi Creek Off Stream Water & Riparian Revegetation Project was implemented across the properties of two landholders in a high priority area, with very high volumes of nutrients, sediment and faecal material (E.coli and pathogens) delivered to Obi Obi Creek and ultimately Baroon Pocket Dam. This was the second stage of a multi-stage project with Stage 1, delivered in 2022/23 on the Martin Property, focusing on installation of riparian fencing to exclude and manage livestock grazing in the riparian zones along Obi Obi Creek. Stage 2 involved the installation of an off-stream watering system on the Martin farm and a small revegetation planting on the adjoining Williamson property. LBCCG invited Nambour TAFE to take part in the planting as a training exercise.

Obi Obi Creek, Stage 2 works were implemented in a moderate priority area, that delivers very high volumes of nutrients, sediment and faecal material (E.coli and pathogens) to Obi Obi Creek. Travis Sayer's 13ha property at the head of the Obi Obi Creek catchment runs between 15 to 20 head of cattle and has 300 metres of frontage to Obi Obi Creek. This project was the second stage of a multi-stage project. Stage 1, delivered in 2023/24, focused on the installation of riparian fencing to exclude and manage livestock grazing in the riparian zones along Sayer's Obi Obi Creek frontage. Stage 2 involved the installation of an off-stream watering system as an alternative to Obi Obi Creek for watering cattle.

Photo: Pacific Plantations

Daley Creek off Stream Water Project was undertaken in a moderate priority area that delivers very high volumes of nutrients, sediment and faecal material (E.coli and pathogens) to Upper Daley Creek. The project will be completed over three years. An off-stream watering system was installed in Year 1 (this project), and riparian fencing will be installed in subsequent years to exclude and manage livestock grazing in the riparian zones on the Daley Property. This project was identified as a priority in the LBCCG Annual Work Plan 2024/25. The Daley's 55 Ha property located on Daley Creek in the Upper Obi Obi Creek catchment is a beef grazing enterprise with 60 cow and calf units run all year round. The property has around 900 m of waterways that feed into Daley Creek, and currently livestock have unrestricted access to the riparian zones.

Arley Creek Project was implemented on a very high priority property aiming to reduce pathogens, nutrients and sediment delivered to Arley Creek and Baroon Pocket Dam (*2021-26 Implementation Plan for the Lake Baroon catchment*). The project involved installation of riparian fencing, extending the fencing that was successfully completed as part of the 2018/19 Dairy Program and preventing cattle from accessing the entirety of one Arley Creek tributary on the property. Troughs were purchased to extend the off-stream watering system but were not installed. These will be installed in the next financial year to complete the project.

Falls Creek Off Stream Water Project was implemented in a high priority area, that delivers very high volumes of nutrients, sediment and faecal material (E.coli and pathogens) to Falls Creek and Baroon Pocket Dam. The project is a multiyear project with works in Year 1 (this Project) focusing on the installation of an off-stream watering system. Riparian fencing and concrete crossings will be installed in Year 2 to exclude and manage livestock grazing in the riparian zones on the Garner Property. This project was identified as a priority in the LBCCG Annual Work Plan 2024/25. Keith Garner's 27.4 Ha property between Falls Creek and Skenes Creek is



Photo: Installing OSW system on Daleys Creek

Riparian Condition Improvement (Water Quality) & Agricultural Practice Improvement *contd.*



Agricultural workshops

The Agricultural workshop and field day Program entered the seventh year with the LBCCG team now having held 24 well-received farmer/landholder-based events with the key focus being water quality but also improved farm management into the future.

These events are an opportunity for our landholders in the catchment to meetup with their neighbours and for many farming industry representatives to discuss all topics farm and water quality.

The four events held this year saw 134 landholders and industry-based people attend with several new landholders to the catchment and some long-term landholders also attending for the first time.

Our workshop topics are varied to cover all aspects of farm and waterway management.

- **Regenerative Farming**— Andrew Zerner, Knowledge to Practice, spoke about increasing biodiversity on farms, decreasing soil disturbance and improving nutrient recycling.
- **Understanding Bunya Dieback**—Spencer Shaw, Brush Turkey Enterprises, spoke about reducing and preventing the spread of phytophthora in Bunya tree populations; Paul Mackay spoke about the important role Bunya pines play in LBCCG projects; and Denis Roe from Crop Consultants Queensland provided an insight into how the Avocado industry deals with Phytophthora.
- **Use of Drones on Farm**—Luke Ferguson, LBCCG Project Manager, described the role Drones play in LBCCG project planning and monitoring. Aaron Parker of Aussie Drones, explained the capabilities of Drones in various agricultural and forestry situations and also gave a drone demonstration on site.

• **Paddock to Plate**—Long time local grazier Ken Coey from Maleny Wagyu spoke of the challenges of a paddock to plate enterprise in the Sunshine Coast hinterland; Paul Mackay spoke about how LBCCG do a similar Paddock to Cup with all the same challenges of Paddock to plate; and Matt Golinski not only demonstrated how to prepare and barbecue particular cuts of meat but also spoke to the importance of provenance and local product.

The workshops once again proved popular with a 10% rise in attendees. Workshops and field days are invite only ensuring local graziers are targeted. Venues are varied with visits to local properties a key focus. A big thank you to the following landholders for providing outstanding venue options for our workshops/field days—Garry Crick's *Cedar Park*, Greg Willim's *Montana Park* and the Maleny Community Centre.'

Thanks to Maleny Bakery for exceptional catering services throughout the year and Maple Street Meats (Sausage sizzle).

The program delivered:

- 550 trees, shrubs and ground-covers
- 26,046 trees, shrubs and groundcovers planted in previous years maintained
- Three hectares of weed management
- 551 metres of permanent fencing
- Four off stream water systems (four solar pumps, five header tanks and 14 troughs) and one upgraded
- 160 m² dairy hardstand concrete
- Three gully and 3 piped gully crossings, and 1 stream crossing
- Four workshops to primary producers, graziers and large landholders.

Photo: Paddock to Plate workshop with Matt Golinski

Riparian Condition Improvement (Weeds)

Ivan Cafarella

The well-established LBCCG weed management program continued through 2024/25 with several refinements. This year, priority was given

to managing infestations of Madeira Vine and Cat's Claw Creeper, with Celtis control limited to opportunistic treatment of immature plants. This strategic decision was made due to the high costs and complexity associated with removing mature Celtis trees.

High rainfall over the past two years has contributed to new Madeira sub-infestations, particularly along waterways. This was attributed to tuber dispersal in floodwaters from core infestations and germination of long-dormant tubers in these locations, due to increased soil moisture.

The area managed for both Madeira Vine and Cat's Claw increased this year. This was partly due to the spread of secondary infestations, but also reflected a more accurate measurement of the total area under active management for each species using ArcGIS.

Although Celtis control was limited, it remains part of the long-term strategy. More intensive efforts will be undertaken once vine infestations are better controlled. Celtis is primarily spread by birds, often resulting in dense seedling thickets across the catchment. When found alongside vine weeds, Celtis seedlings are managed concurrently, a cost-effective approach. LBCCG also worked to educate landholders on Celtis identification and control techniques. Various methods were demonstrated depending on tree size—for instance, "cut and paint" for smaller specimens, and "drill and fill" herbicide application for larger trees. For those reluctant to use chemicals, manual methods such as the "tree popper" for smaller trees were recommended.

Cat's Claw Vine remains confined to four small but persistent sites. Although regrowth typically occurs within six months of treatment, these sites are managed to prevent the vines from reaching maturity and producing seed.

While Salvinia control remains a lower priority, one high-risk infestation was treated in 2024/25. This site was selected based on its potential for eradication or long-term suppression. Salvinia management is particularly challenging as many affected landholders lack the capacity—due to age, limited equipment, or financial constraints—to treat the weed effectively.

LBCCG also revisited the ongoing Bacopa infestation in a series of dams along North Maleny Road. Due to limited success with previous treatments, advice was sought from the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). DPI has offered to demonstrate a herbicide injection technique that shows promise for treating dense underwater Bacopa growth. Additionally, DPI has offered support with management of Rotala, a challenging aquatic weed with no currently approved herbicide. A trial herbicide, currently undergoing regulatory approval, will be supplied by DPI to treat a known infestation in a dam on Mountain View Road.



The program delivered:

- 21ha of Madeira vine management on 109 sites
- 0.1ha of Cats claw vine management on four sites
- 0.03 hectares of Salvinia management on one site
- opportunistic Celtis management on all relevant sites
- Approximately 210 landholders engaged



Photo: Commencing a new site infested with Madeira, Cat's Claw and Dutchman's Pipe

Riparian Condition Improvement (Weeds) *contd.* *Ivan Cafarella*

Healthy Land & Water - Upper Stanley River vine weeds

Under the new funding agreement for 2024/25, vine weed management continued in the Upper Stanley River catchment (upstream of Woodford). This funding, provided by Healthy Land & Water, enabled both follow-up treatments at previously established sites and the expansion of control efforts into newly identified infestations. These new sites were discovered through targeted catchment drives during the flowering season and through increased landholder engagement.

By undertaking the weed control work directly, LBCCG is able to deliver outcomes more cost-effectively and efficiently.

The infestations currently under management are generally large and well-established, requiring multiple years of consistent treatment to achieve substantial control. Most of these sites are located along waterways, where the risk of spread during flood events remains high. These riparian zones are also critical for stabilising erosion-prone riverbanks, making ongoing weed control essential to protecting both water quality and landscape resilience.

The HL&W project delivered:

- 10 ha of Madeira vine management on 34 sites
- 3.75 ha of Cats claw vine management on seven sites
- 41 landholders engaged

Department of Transport & Main Roads weeds

Ongoing funding support from the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) remains critical to ensure that high-priority weed infestations are addressed across all land tenures, including state-managed road reserves. These roadside areas are key pathways for weed spread—particularly for species like Madeira Vine—due to the movement of maintenance vehicles, slashing equipment, and general road activity that can transport tubers and plant fragments.

A recent and important expansion of the program is the inclusion of Giant Rat's Tail Grass (GRT) in the control efforts. GRT has been identified growing along road verges on both Maleny–Landsborough Road and Maleny–Kenilworth Road. This grass poses a significant biosecurity risk, as its fine seeds are easily dispersed by roadside mowing, vehicle traffic, and even cars pulling over into infested areas. Including GRT in the program ensures proactive management before the weed becomes more widespread and entrenched.

TMR-managed roads in the region typically follow ridgelines and intersect a number of creeks and rivers, making untreated infestations a serious concern. In many cases, roadside areas fall into management gaps where no landholder or agency takes responsibility for weed control. This makes TMR's partnership with LBCCG particularly valuable, allowing for consistent, strategic intervention.

The DTMR project delivered:

- 1.1 hectares of Madeira vine management on 20 sites
- 0.5 ha of Cats claw vine management on seven sites
- 0.08 ha of Giant Rats Tail Grass management on two sites

Erosion & Sediment Control Program

Luke Ferguson

The ESC program targets unstable hillslopes in the catchment that deliver or have the potential to deliver high volumes of sediment to Baroon Pocket Dam. Excessive sediment reduces dam capacity and

causes high turbidity resulting in difficult and costly production of potable water. Naturally occurring phosphorus binds to the soil particles and is transported to the dam contributing to blue green algae blooms. Erosion and runoff also carry faecal material to the dam, a high risk to potable water.

ESC projects have three key aims:

- Stabilise unstable hillslopes (slope modification, livestock management, drainage and revegetation)
- Intercept sub-surface water drainage and deliver to stable locations
- Interrupt and slow surface drainage reducing the risk of erosion, diverting water from unstable areas

In 2024/25, LBCCG worked with four landholders on new projects (Richardson, Cork, Kittel and Cavanagh) and completed projects on three properties that were carried forward from 2023/24 (Colley, Cavanagh, Stevens) some of the latter still directly related to the February 2022 rain event. Planned works on two properties, Newsham's and Engle's, were abandoned due to financial constraints. High rainfall throughout the year resulted in the need for unplanned access repairs and the development of new access tracks to allow staff and contractors safe access to the sites.

The extensive number of trees planted previously and throughout the year by contractors, saw the maintenance program maintain over 53,000 trees in the year. The maintenance has been a massive commitment by Lake Baroon and one that has been well met by contractors and staff. This large number of trees in the ground, combined with a very wet year, resulted in a greater than normal requirement for tree maintenance to ensure the success of the plantings.

The **Cavanagh Erosion & Sediment Control** project was implemented as two components; (1) the completion of revegetation carried over from a 2023/24 project and (2) works planned for 2024/25 including new fencing, weed management, revegetation of unstable hillslopes with 300 Araucarias, construction of a new hardened access road to provide almost year-round access for revegetation maintenance, and linking the Crick sump-wells into the existing LBCCG-funded off-stream watering system on Cavanagh's property.

The **Stevens Erosion & Sediment Control** project was implemented on a moderate priority property following on from previous successful projects with excellent landholder support and contributions. The project initially commenced in 2023/24 with livestock exclusion fencing and weed management, with further fencing (259m) and revegetation (2,750 stems) completed in 2024/25. The existing off-stream water system was also extended with a new trough installed.

The **Cork Erosion & Sediment Control** project was implemented on a very high priority property and aimed to support the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) project and continue addressing property instability and livestock management issues. Key works included improving access to current and previous activities (for revegetation maintenance), fencing a significant gully to manage livestock and upgrading the existing off-stream watering system to support extending the water trough network and fencing off waterways.



The **Richardson Erosion and Sediment Control** project aimed to complete three hectares of drainage improvements using surface and subsurface drainage techniques and repair previous riparian fencing damaged by landslips. Originally, three wells were to be installed on the property to divert subsurface water in the soil profile to a stable waterway; however, only one well was partially completed due to wet weather and access issues. The remaining wells will be installed as part of future works in the 2025-26 financial year.

The **Kittel Erosion & Sediment Control** project was implemented on a moderate priority property in the landslip prone reaches of the lower Falls Creek sub-catchment. Key works included installing fencing (largely funded by the landholder), and the replacement of shallow-rooted weed species (lantana, exotic pasture grasses) with a diverse range of locally appropriate vegetation (730 stems) to provide long-term stability.

The **Colley Erosion & Sediment Control** project was implemented on a very high priority property aiming to reduce soil loss from significant landslips, deteriorating access roads and stream erosion. The key element of this project was to re-establish safe access to the back paddocks of the property damaged by the February 2022 rain event to allow for ongoing maintenance of previous ESC revegetation projects. The rain event damaged riparian fencing and riparian revegetation planted in 2021 and irreparably damaged a low-level stream crossing. An alternative to the significant engineering required to replace the stream crossing was proposed by Alluvium and implemented as part of the works.

The program delivered:

- 1,731 metres fencing
- 473 metres of fencing repairs
- 595 metres of new access tracks and 1225 metres of tracks repaired
- Five hectares weed management
- 7,022 stems planted
- 53,479 trees, shrubs and groundcovers planted in previous program years maintained
- 2.5 hectares drainage

Photo: Unstable hillslopes with stock management fencing and Araucaria revegetation

Seqwater Asset Management Program

Mark Amos

Bunya Block

The Bunya Block project is the largest, longest running and most complex project ever undertaken by LBCCG. Five years in and we are now clearly seeing the fruition of the grand vision for the property. The revegetation planted between 2022 and 2024 has largely established with some areas requiring minimal ongoing management, although some trees planted on the poorer soils still require significant maintenance to ensure successful establishment.

As the project has progressed, resource reductions have resulted in the need for agile thinking and adaptation. Revegetation maintenance methods have changed this year with a reduction in brush-cutting and a move towards more efficient maintenance. This coincides with the declining erosion risk and increase in fire risk.

The overwhelming weed growth of the first few years of the project has waned as seed reserves are exhausted, with weed management moving outside of revegetation areas and into regrowth areas. Devils fig and to a lesser extent Lantana continue to require moderate management, however as the revegetation matures and direct sunlight is reduced, the weed threat declines.

A key deliverable of the project was the stabilisation of hillslopes (landslips) and we can confidently claim the implemented works have considerably improved property stability. Even the heavy rainfall associated with Cyclone Alfred resulted in only very minor damage and there were minimal impacts on the project.

Access on the property and to work sites remains an ongoing key action with the network of property roads requiring regular maintenance and in some cases upgrades as the high rainfall years continue.

The Bunya Block project:

- Planted 1,000 tubestock (replants)
- Managed five hectares new weeds
- Maintained over 78,000 trees

Ferriday's

The Ferriday project has transformed a weedy and unstable 10-hectare property into an environmental asset with the establishment of over 5,500 native trees providing property stability and delivering numerous broader environmental outcomes. Like the Bunya Block, weeds have been the key threat to project success but are steadily retreating under the sustained assault of management. The property will never be pristine from a weed perspective however their presence and impact on native vegetation will be limited.

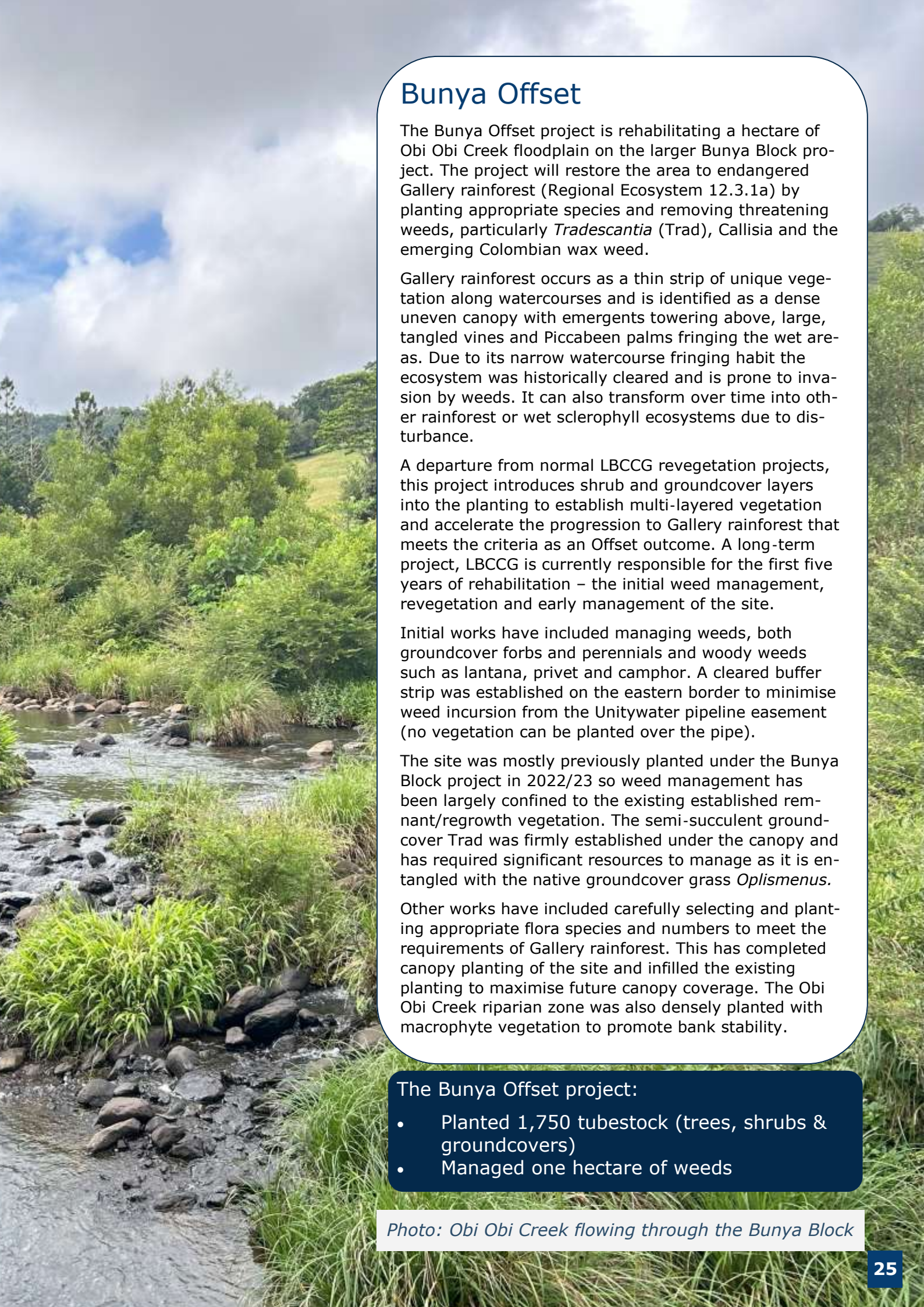
While the revegetation has been very successful, the established, introduced pasture grass *Setaria* has proven to be problematic; very fast growing and competitive with revegetation, it requires control before planting to ensure it does not reduce seedling establishment or adversely impact project budgets.

This property and the adjacent Eden Road property are attracting a rich array of native wildlife, with birds bringing in a diverse range of native seed including groundcovers and shrubs. Wallabies now call the properties home and although they can devastate new plantings, the revegetation is now established sufficiently to resist light grazing.

The project is nearing effective completion with only ongoing weed and revegetation maintenance remaining and some access improvements planned for 2025/26.

The Ferriday project:

- Planted 250 tubestock (replants)
- Maintained over 5,500 trees



Bunya Offset

The Bunya Offset project is rehabilitating a hectare of Obi Obi Creek floodplain on the larger Bunya Block project. The project will restore the area to endangered Gallery rainforest (Regional Ecosystem 12.3.1a) by planting appropriate species and removing threatening weeds, particularly *Tradescantia* (Trad), *Callisia* and the emerging Colombian wax weed.

Gallery rainforest occurs as a thin strip of unique vegetation along watercourses and is identified as a dense uneven canopy with emergents towering above, large, tangled vines and Piccabeen palms fringing the wet areas. Due to its narrow watercourse fringing habit the ecosystem was historically cleared and is prone to invasion by weeds. It can also transform over time into other rainforest or wet sclerophyll ecosystems due to disturbance.

A departure from normal LBCCG revegetation projects, this project introduces shrub and groundcover layers into the planting to establish multi-layered vegetation and accelerate the progression to Gallery rainforest that meets the criteria as an Offset outcome. A long-term project, LBCCG is currently responsible for the first five years of rehabilitation – the initial weed management, revegetation and early management of the site.

Initial works have included managing weeds, both groundcover forbs and perennials and woody weeds such as lantana, privet and camphor. A cleared buffer strip was established on the eastern border to minimise weed incursion from the Unitywater pipeline easement (no vegetation can be planted over the pipe).

The site was mostly previously planted under the Bunya Block project in 2022/23 so weed management has been largely confined to the existing established remnant/regrowth vegetation. The semi-succulent groundcover Trad was firmly established under the canopy and has required significant resources to manage as it is entangled with the native groundcover grass *Oplismenus*.

Other works have included carefully selecting and planting appropriate flora species and numbers to meet the requirements of Gallery rainforest. This has completed canopy planting of the site and infilled the existing planting to maximise future canopy coverage. The Obi Obi Creek riparian zone was also densely planted with macrophyte vegetation to promote bank stability.

The Bunya Offset project:

- Planted 1,750 tubestock (trees, shrubs & groundcovers)
- Managed one hectare of weeds

Photo: Obi Obi Creek flowing through the Bunya Block

LBCCG Programs

In 2024/25 LBCCG delivered five key Programs and several smaller projects:

- **Riparian Condition Improvement (Water Quality)** - on ground projects targeting graziers, horticulture and other large properties, implementing projects that provide environmental outcomes more than direct productivity benefits.
- **Riparian Condition Improvement (Weeds)** - working towards the eradication of Cats claw vine in the catchment (95% completed); ongoing management of Madeira vine (reduction of incidence/mass by at least 70%); strategic management of Celtis; and control of emerging aquatic weeds Rotala and Bacopa.
- **Agricultural Practice Improvement**—targets graziers, implementing projects addressing agricultural best management practice including workshops. Includes direct productivity benefits to landholders.
- **Erosion and Sediment Control**—stabilisation and repair of catchment landslips, raising awareness of landslip causes, prevention and management, and maximising biodiversity outcomes by planting a diversity of species wherever practical.
- **Seqwater Asset Management**—planning and implementation of on ground works on properties purchased by Seqwater.

Other projects included:

- **Bunya Offset**—restoration of one hectare of Gallery rainforest.
- **Department of Transport & Main Roads weeds**—management of priority weeds on DTMR road reserve.
- **Healthy Land & Water Upper Stanley River vine weeds**—management of Madeira and Cat's Claw vines.

2024/25 outputs

Works	RCI (WQ) & API	RCI (Weeds) HL&W & TMR weeds	ESC	Dairy	SAM Bunya Block Ferriday Eden Road	TOTALS
Fencing	551	-	1,731	25	-	2,307 metres
Fencing repairs	-	-	473	-	-	473 metres
Revegetation	550	-	7,022	40	3,000	10,612 stems
Revegetation maintenance	26,046	-	53,479	-	78,684	158,209 stems
Off-stream water —livestock troughs	14	-	4	2	-	20 troughs
Off-stream water —header tanks	5	-	1	-	-	6 tanks
Off-stream water — solar pumps	4	-	1	-	-	4 new + 1 upgrade
Weed management	3	37.34	5	-	6	51.34 hectares
Erosion	-	-	1.5	-	-	1.5 hectares
Stream crossings	1	-	-	-	-	1 crossing
Other crossings	6	-	5	-	-	11 crossings
Drainage	-	—	35	-	-	35
Sump-wells	-	-	1	-	-	1
Access tracks —new	-	-	595	-	-	595 metres
Access tracks -maintained	-	-	1,225	-	-	1,225 metres
Diary hardstand concrete	-	-	-	160	-	160 metre²
Facilities maintained	-	-	-	-	2	2 sites
Workshops/field days/events	4	-	-	-	-	4 events
Event attendees	134	-	-	-	-	134 attendees
Community engagement	22	251	60	4	-	337 people



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