



Annual Report 2025 / 26

LAKE BAROON CATCHMENT CARE GROUP

Annual Report 2025/26

Management Committee & Staff	3
President's Report	4
Lake Baroon catchment, vision & goals	6
LBCCG Programs and 2025/26 Outputs	8
Treasurer's Report	10
Local Procurement	11
Manager's Report	12
Agricultural Practice Improvement	14
Agricultural Workshops	17
Riparian Condition Improvement (Water Quality)	18
Erosion & Sediment Control	20
Riparian Condition Improvement (Weeds)	24
Healthy Land & Water Upper Stanley River weeds	26
Department of Transport & Main Roads weeds	27
Seqwater Asset Management	
Bunya Block	28
Ferriday's	30
Bunya Offset	31
Partners	32

LBCCG acknowledges the Jinibara as the traditional custodians of the Maleny area, respecting 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.

*All photos property of Lake
Baroon Catchment Care Group Inc*



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

Life Member

Keith Schelberg

Manager

Rod Johnson

Office Manager

Claire Wynn

Project Development (*July 2025–April 2026*)

Mark Amos

Project Manager

Luke Ferguson

Project Officer

Paul Mackay

Project Officer

Ivan Cafarella



President's Report

Peter Stevens

Welcome to the LBCCG 2025/26 Annual Report.

The most significant event this year was the signing of a new 5-year agreement with Seqwater, our main funding provider. The multi-million-dollar agreement will see LBCCG increase its activity in the catchment over the coming years. Our agreement was one of many other similar agreements signed with other catchment groups in South-East Queensland; I commend Seqwater for their commitment to catchment management as part of delivering clean and safe water to our communities. I would like to thank all staff for their contribution to making this agreement possible, particularly Rod Johnson and Mark Amos.

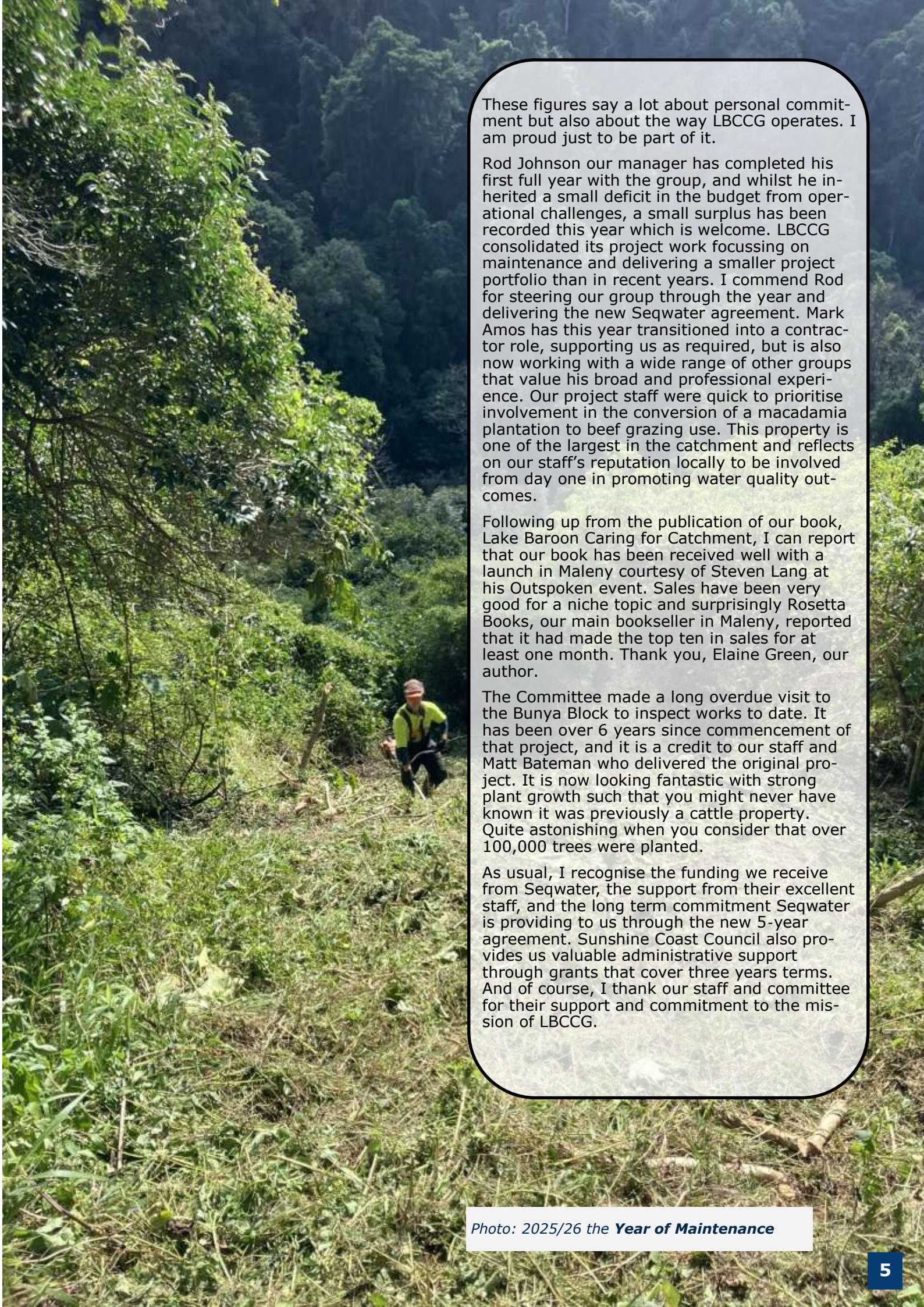
Due to Seqwater's leadership and vision to sustainably manage its catchments, and reflecting on my time at LBCCG, there are some things that have changed.

Perhaps most importantly is that groups in our region under the Seqwater program are now working more collaboratively, sharing information, visiting each other's work sites and utilising similar reporting methods that are assuring project outcomes and improved water quality. This was not always the case, and I would argue that systemically it has been a good change, one that makes groups like ours and others more professional and sustainable.

Not only have groups become more connected, but so also have landholders and farmers who we work with. As an example, I was lucky enough to attend a recent workshop held by LBCCG for local farmers. Over 40 participants attended which included old time farmers, second or third generation farmers, new farmers, and many others. What struck me was how engaged they were, how many questions there were, it was all taken very seriously as a learning opportunity but was so obviously also a social occasion. These types of events are creating a more resilient farmer network but also support the type of work we wish to undertake. As a result, farms are better managed, more productive, supporting the environment. Farm operations and a healthy water supply can be synergistic and productive for all parties.

The reason for my reflections is that (hopefully) next year will be my 25th as President of LBCCG. In my early years with the group project funding was hard to come by, but on further reflection, perhaps funding was the easy bit. Building strong relationships and gaining trust with the farming community was the real work. Developing strong reporting and accountability to build trust with funding organisations was critical. I could not have stayed in my role for long without a dedicated team behind me. I would like to acknowledge the contributions others have made and who have supported me over many years. On the Committee are people like Steve Skull with 20 years, Marek Malter 18 years, Steven Lang 17 years, Heather Spring 10 years, past member Keith Schelberg 8 years; and of our staff, Mark Amos with 16 years, Paul Mackay 9 years.

Photo: Mary River Integrated Project Stakeholder Field Trip



These figures say a lot about personal commitment but also about the way LBCCG operates. I am proud just to be part of it.

Rod Johnson our manager has completed his first full year with the group, and whilst he inherited a small deficit in the budget from operational challenges, a small surplus has been recorded this year which is welcome. LBCCG consolidated its project work focussing on maintenance and delivering a smaller project portfolio than in recent years. I commend Rod for steering our group through the year and delivering the new Seqwater agreement. Mark Amos has this year transitioned into a contractor role, supporting us as required, but is also now working with a wide range of other groups that value his broad and professional experience. Our project staff were quick to prioritise involvement in the conversion of a macadamia plantation to beef grazing use. This property is one of the largest in the catchment and reflects on our staff's reputation locally to be involved from day one in promoting water quality outcomes.

Following up from the publication of our book, *Lake Baroon Caring for Catchment*, I can report that our book has been received well with a launch in Maleny courtesy of Steven Lang at his Outspoken event. Sales have been very good for a niche topic and surprisingly Rosetta Books, our main bookseller in Maleny, reported that it had made the top ten in sales for at least one month. Thank you, Elaine Green, our author.

The Committee made a long overdue visit to the Bunya Block to inspect works to date. It has been over 6 years since commencement of that project, and it is a credit to our staff and Matt Bateman who delivered the original project. It is now looking fantastic with strong plant growth such that you might never have known it was previously a cattle property. Quite astonishing when you consider that over 100,000 trees were planted.

As usual, I recognise the funding we receive from Seqwater, the support from their excellent staff, and the long term commitment Seqwater is providing to us through the new 5-year agreement. Sunshine Coast Council also provides us valuable administrative support through grants that cover three years terms. And of course, I thank our staff and committee for their support and commitment to the mission of LBCCG.

Lake Baroon Catchment, 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 Lake Baroon water quality, but with broader environmental outcomes achieved as a consequence.

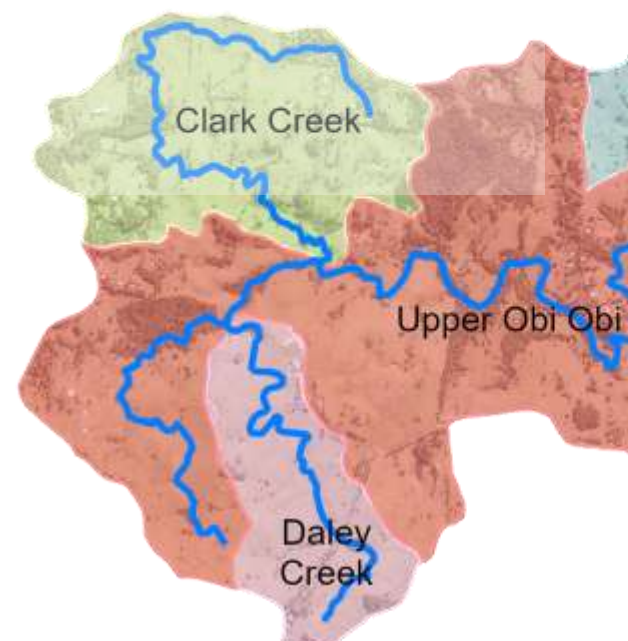
LBCCG's strength is engaging the unengaged, building strong, lasting relationships and developing practical solutions to local issues. LBCCG prefers to deliver large, whole-property projects, however all opportunities to improve water quality are considered.

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



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LBCCG Programs & 2025/26 Outputs

In 2025/26 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. Projects provide 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 biosecurity priority weeds on DTMR road reserve.
- **Healthy Land & Water Upper Stanley River vine weeds** — management of Madeira and Cat's Claw vines.

Works	Program					
	RCI (Water Quality) & API	RCI (Weeds), HL&W & TMR Weeds	ESC	Dairy	Bunya Block, Eden Road, & Ferriday SAM	TOTALS
Fencing	2,404	-	0	50	-	2,454 metres
Revegetation	1,034	-	250	0	2,797	4,081 stems
Revegetation maintenance	23,827	-	50,429	-	79,190	153,446 stems
Off stream water troughs	5	-	0	0	-	5 troughs
Header tanks	-	-	1	-	3	4 tanks
Weed management	-	48.17	5	-	2.5	55.67 hectares
Erosion	-	-	3	-	-	3 hectares
Stream & gully crossings	2	-	-	-	8	10 crossings
Drainage	-	-	4	0	-	4 hectares
Sump wells	-	-	3	-	1	4 wells
New access tracks	-	-	595	-	220	815 metres
Access tracks maintained & improved	-	-	1,225	-	3,300	3,400 metres
Dairy hardstand concreted	-	-	-	280	-	280 metres²
Facilities maintained	-	-	-	-	2	2 facilities
Workshops & other events	5	1	-	-	-	6 events
Workshop attendees	144	25	-	-	-	169 attendees
Community engagement via extension	22	254	60	4	-	340 individuals

Treasurer's Report

Peter Pamment

The 2025/26 financial year has been a successful year for the finances of LBCCG with the year ending with a surplus of \$37,500

Multiple projects were undertaken during 2025/26 year with significant success, with a slight decrease in funding from the 2025 year.

The total budget for 2025/26 was \$1,559,944 including project deficits of \$9,081 carried forward from the 2024/25 budget. Within the budget, \$595,476 was administrative funding and \$964,468 was the project funding. These figures do not include GST.

Our income streams were as follows:

Project Funding

Seqwater Source Protection	\$ 657,882
Seqwater Asset Management	\$ 264,825
Bunya Offset	\$ 20,842
Healthy Land and Water	\$ 30,000
Other Funding and Brought forward	-\$9,081
Total Project Income	\$964,468

Administrative Funding

Seqwater	\$490,850
Bunya Offset	\$ 9,013
Health Land and Water	\$ 10,000
Sunshine Coast Council (Environment Levy)	\$ 53,550
Gambling Grant	\$7,500
LBCCG Book Grants and Sales	\$8,206
Other income (interest, membership, etc)	\$ 16,357
Total Administration Income	\$595,476

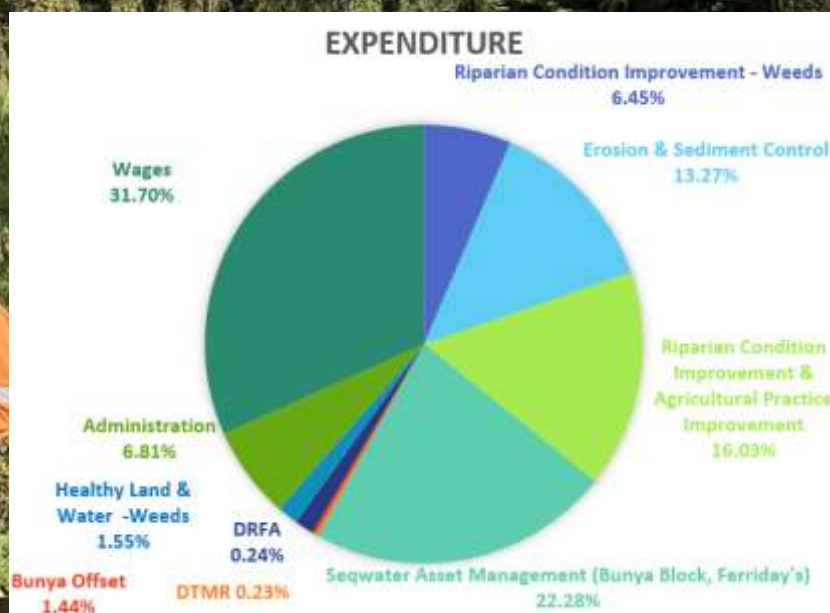
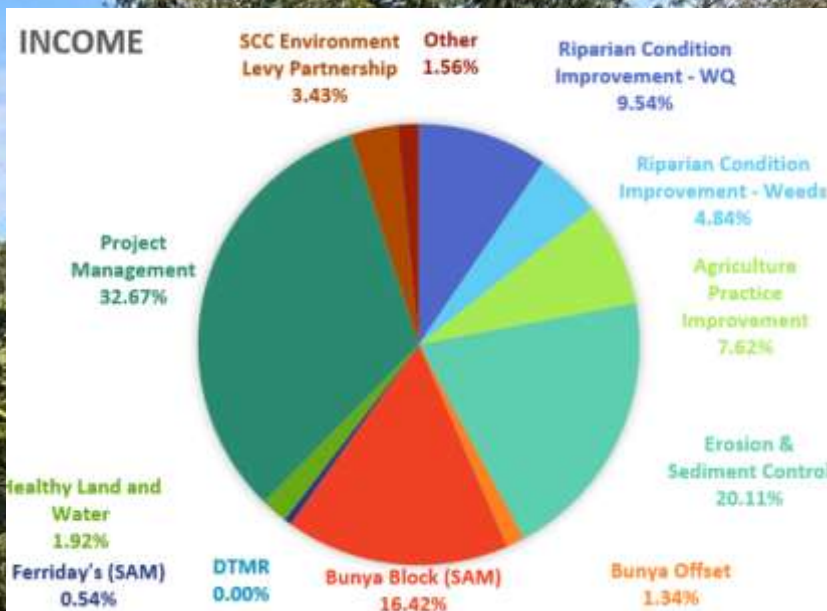
Clearly our main income comes from the Seqwater project areas, with assistance from the Sunshine Coast Council for administration support. Other income was small grants, membership and interest.

The administrative budget covers all salaries for staff and office administration together with motor vehicle cost and general administrative responsibilities.

Total expenditure was \$1,448,154 made up of \$557,712 admin (depreciation included) and \$890,442 project expenses. Salaries and wages made up 75% of our administrative expenses. The operational / administrative expenses are 39% of total expenditure, an increase over past years and reflects the 19% decrease in funding for this year. The committee's financial strategy this year has been to retain our current experienced staff and administration operations to underpin the expanded commitments over the next few years.

Similar to past years, over 85% of our expenditure was spent locally and less than 10% spent outside the district, demonstrating our continuous commitment to local support. Additional local value to projects is the contributions by local landholders in our various projects. The surplus for the year adds to our current assets and ensures the long term viability of the organisation.

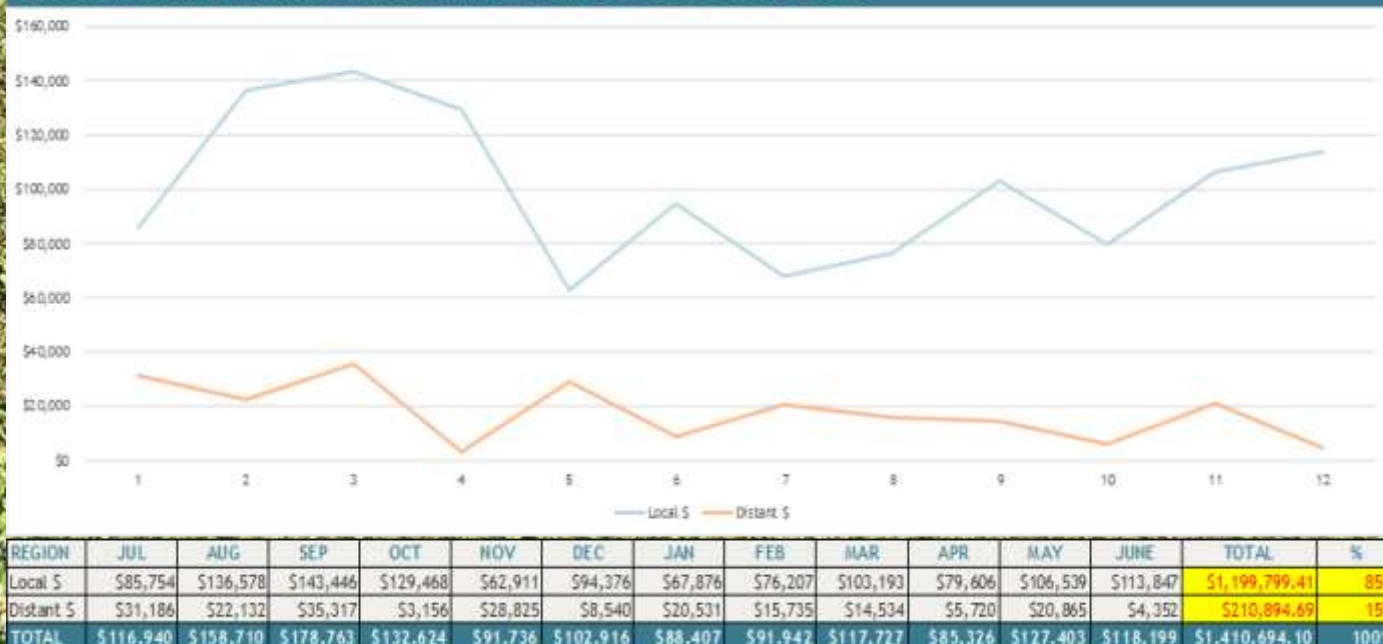
Thanks again to the Committee for all the challenging finance questions and the staff in helping me track and understand the various process involved in the funding of the group and to Claire for her assistance in preparing my monthly reports.



Local procurement

In 2025/26 LBCCG expended just over \$1.4 million (including GST), with 85 percent spent locally (Sunshine Coast Council region). This supports the local economy and the growth and development of local businesses and service providers.

LBCCG LOCAL VERSUS DISTANT EXPENDITURE 2025-2026



Manager's Report

Rod Johnson



Photo: Presenting at MRCCC Find a Frog in February workshop

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LBCCG's financial year 2025/2026 was colloquially named the 'Year of Maintenance'. Our previous year's budget blowout meant that we needed to tighten the purse strings while still maintaining more than 145,000 plants in the ground. This required us to reduce our new on-ground project expenditure for the year by paring back our project numbers, giving us the breathing space for capacity building and allowing us to prioritise planning for a new agreement with Seqwater. By the end of the year we achieved the desired results with the on-ground budget deficit significantly reduced, our administrative costs back in the black and our forward strategy for the next five years in place.

While the LBCCG on-ground project portfolio was subdued, LBCCG still achieved excellent outcomes from the projects it undertook. Luke Ferguson and Paul Mackay were at the frontline of one of the most significant land-use changes in the catchment in recent years, rapidly responding to the conversion of the 134-hectare macadamia farm on the Maleny-Maley River Road to beef grazing. Our workplan was adjusted to protect assets previously implemented on the farm to assist the landholder in operational decision-making toward best-practice management, forging a strong relationship with the new property manager and achieving some excellent outcomes for the Obi Obi Creek as a result. Opportunities to protect the substantial Obi Obi Creek frontage on the property and further influence water quality improvements will be ongoing in the coming years.

Likewise, the weather conditions for the year were relatively mild in contrast to previous years, with good moisture levels maintaining strong plant growth but without the destructive flooding. Maintenance efforts kept weeds in check and there were no significant weather-related setbacks. The downside was we were forced to reduce our maintenance workforce to a core group who remained loyal despite the declining work. Thanks to these contractors for their unwavering faith in LBCCG and ongoing time on the tools without which LBCCG would not achieve its on-ground objectives.

LBCCG Management Committee commissioned local author, Elaine Green, to write a book on the history of the Baroon Pocket Dam and LBCCG. The Group received a Cultural Heritage grant through the Sunshine Coast Council for publication of 'Lake Baroon, Caring for Catchment', which was launched at an Outspoken event in Maleny. This is a great achievement and presents a model for working with farmers and rural landholders that really works and has led to the success of LBCCG in its objective to improve water quality in the Baroon Pocket catchment.

Representatives from LBCCG, including the Management Committee President, Peter Stevens, attended the National Landcare conference on the Gold Coast and presented our work on installing well-sumps for landslip stabilisation at a daytime session. The conference gave us a chance to rub shoulders with colleagues in other organisations from around Australia and learn more about new and exciting techniques and technologies in the land care and catchment management space.

LBCCG worked with Queensland TAFE during the year on a landslip site on the eastern side of the catchment. This was a challenging site but the determined TAFE group put in a creditable effort to plant bunya and hoop pines on the pastoral property, a signature method of LBCCG that stabilises landslip-prone slopes over time while allowing for continued grazing. It was great to see the future crop of bush regenerators at work.

LBCCG hosted our colleagues from the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee (MRCCC) to tour the Bunya Block, a Seqwater property that is being revegetated from its former time as a cattle farm, giving insights into its rehabilitation and management to inform a similar Seqwater project on the Mary River. LBCCG also facilitated a collaborative workshop on managing vine weeds with MRCCC in the Upper Mary River catchment to highlight to residents in that area the importance of correct control methods and consistent effort in preventing the overwhelming vine weed infestations that characterise other areas in the Mary River catchment. This added to the successful landholder workshop series undertaken by LBCCG as part of the agricultural practice improvement program under the Seqwater partnership.

Towards the end of the year, our long-serving former manager and friend, Mark Amos, resigned from staff to pursue contract work. He continues to work under contract with LBCCG managing on-ground activities on Seqwater properties, planning and developing projects as required, while also working with other not-for-profit groups and landholders bringing expertise in land management in the broader region. We look forward to continuing this relationship with Mark in the foreseeable future.

The 2025/2026 reporting year was the final year of our funding agreement with Seqwater, LBCCG's primary funding source for its activities protecting and improving water quality in the Baroon Pocket catchment. To continue the excellent work on private rural properties in the catchment as part of Seqwater's Source Water Protection Program, the Group negotiated a new 5-year agreement with Seqwater from 2026 to 2031 and an implementation plan for the same period, finishing the year looking forward very positively to ramping up the following year's activities.

A huge thank you to LBCCG staff and the Management Committee for all your support and hard work to complete another successful year in the life of this great organisation. Our landholders require special mention, donating their properties and in-kind support to the cause. Finally, thanks to the Sunshine Coast Council for its contribution to LBCCG's operation through the Environment Levy Partnership, and accolades to the Seqwater team for continuing to grow their Source Water Protection program and recognising LBCCG as a strong partner, funding us to carry on this important work in the catchment.

Agricultural Practice Improvement

Luke Ferguson & Paul Mackay

The API program specifically targets catchment graziers, with the key aim of reducing livestock faecal matter entering waterways. Major works include riparian fencing and effluent management, as well as providing alternative livestock water, hardened laneways and formal waterway crossings. API projects generally provide a productivity benefit for graziers. Reducing faecal matter entering waterways also reduces the delivery of microbial pathogens, nutrients and fine sediment to Baroon Pocket Dam.

In 2025/26, the program delivered three new on-ground projects, four LBCCG-led workshops and a presentation at the inaugural Maleny Small Farm Fest.

The **Falls Creek riparian fencing and stream crossings** project continued from the previous year, with the installation of off-stream water and fencing of the riparian zone along a Falls Creek tributary. Although the project was rated as a moderate priority under the new Seqwater Catchment Investment Decision Support System, completion of the fencing has now protected the entire tributary, significantly increasing the project's importance.

Managed livestock grazing continued following fencing in 2026; however, riparian revegetation is planned for early 2027 to establish a riparian buffer and ultimately exclude livestock from the riparian zone.

Once streams are fenced, livestock crossing options become limited. The installation of formal crossings therefore minimises erosion while providing safe and efficient stock movement. Further benefits to the grazier include the creation of two paddocks and a starting point for future paddock subdivision. Once revegetated, the riparian zone will also remove a problematic source of weeds.



Photo: Concrete mat stream crossing and riparian fencing



The **Upper Obi Obi Creek dairy effluent management improvement** project entered its second year, continuing work to improve dairy effluent management.

The Maleny plateau is well suited to dairying, with favourable rainfall and productive kikuyu pastures. However, the local and Queensland dairy industries face several significant challenges. High land prices limit opportunities for expansion and reduce the ongoing viability of local dairy farms, restricting the capacity of some producers to invest in property improvements, including dairy waste management.

While high summer rainfall supports strong pasture growth, it also greatly increases the volume of dairy effluent generated through runoff from hard surfaces into already heavily utilised effluent pondage. Effluent pond overflows pose a very high risk to catchment water quality, with the potential for significant microbial pathogen releases from pondage or contaminated runoff that is not captured.

The project continued from the previous year by extending concrete hardstand areas to redirect runoff to the effluent ponds. Drainage was upgraded, and innovative fencing improved the capture, storage and reuse of effluent. These works have reduced the incidence of effluent pond overflows and improved the ability to reuse both liquid and solid dairy waste on pasture.

Photo: Concreting dairy feed pad for solid and liquid effluent control



The **Upper Obi Obi Creek fencing and off-stream water** project was a last-minute substitution for the Daley Creek riparian fencing project. A change in land use on the Pacific Plantations property, from macadamia orchard to beef grazing, placed previous LBCCG revegetation projects at risk from grazing and uncontrolled livestock access to Obi Obi Creek. The Daley Creek project was consequently deferred to 2026/27.

The property is the second largest in the catchment and has approximately 2.5 kilometres of frontage to Obi Obi Creek, including Kings Lane Weir, with approximately 800 metres of creek frontage incorporating both banks.

It is critical that when catchment properties change land use or are sold, LBCCG engages with landholders and influences property management outcomes. The immediate priority was to fence previous revegetation projects from livestock and assist with the initial installation of alternative livestock water. Equally importantly, LBCCG staff were involved in planning the paddock layout and future infrastructure, considering both water quality and productivity outcomes.

This project demonstrates the value of LBCCG's engagement, planning and practical on-ground skills. The project will continue in 2026/27 with further riparian fencing and off-stream water infrastructure.

Photo: Riparian and remnant vegetation fencing

Agricultural Workshops

Paul Mackay & Claire Wynn



The Agricultural Workshop Program entered its eighth year, with the LBCCG team having now delivered 30 well-received grazer-focused events addressing water quality and best management practice.

The workshops provide landholders with opportunities to hear from a range of industry representatives and share their own experiences. Topics vary widely, with the key aims of providing engaging speakers and creating opportunities for attendees to meet and learn from their peers—often an important catalyst for practice change.

The four 2025/26 events attracted 119 attendees, including several new landholders and long-term landholders attending for the first time.

Workshop topics and presenters included:

What's in Your Creek? — Alan Wynn (local ecologist) and Scott Lowe (Unitywater)

Farm Water Management — Graeme Lister (Gallagher Animal Management)

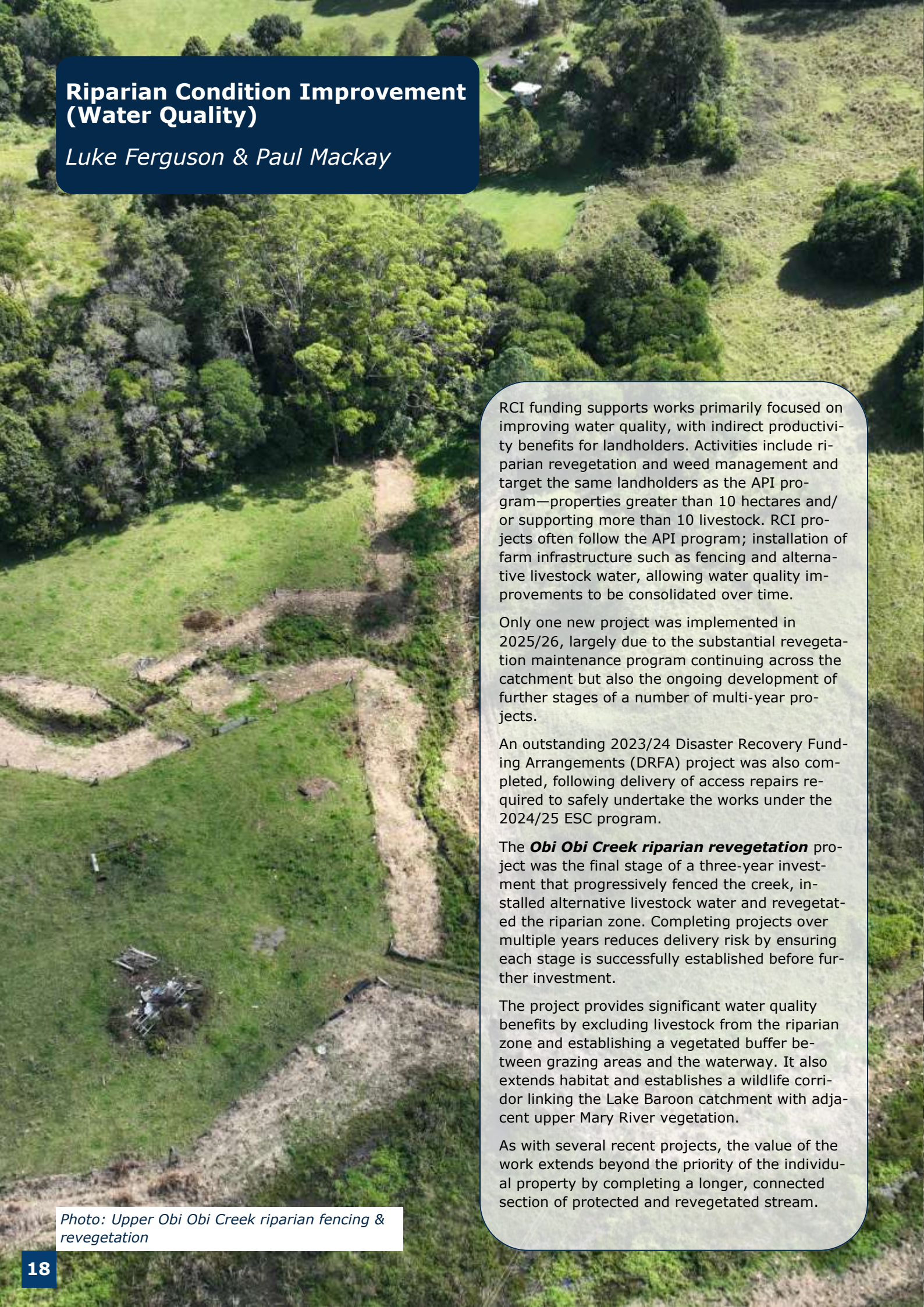
Healthy Pasture — Damien O'Sullivan (Kingaroy grazer and former DPI officer)

Women in Ag — Sarah Bucher (Maleny Cheese)

Paul also presented to 25 attendees at the inaugural Maleny Small Farms Fest, hosted by the Maleny Show Committee.

The workshop program delivered:

- Five events
- 144 attendees

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the upper left, a dark blue rounded rectangle contains the title and authors. The landscape below shows a mix of green grass, dense trees, and a winding creek. A small house is visible in the upper right. The lower right contains a white rounded rectangle with text. At the bottom left, a small white rectangle contains a photo caption. The page number '18' is in a blue box at the bottom left.

Riparian Condition Improvement (Water Quality)

Luke Ferguson & Paul Mackay

RCI funding supports works primarily focused on improving water quality, with indirect productivity benefits for landholders. Activities include riparian revegetation and weed management and target the same landholders as the API program—properties greater than 10 hectares and/or supporting more than 10 livestock. RCI projects often follow the API program; installation of farm infrastructure such as fencing and alternative livestock water, allowing water quality improvements to be consolidated over time.

Only one new project was implemented in 2025/26, largely due to the substantial revegetation maintenance program continuing across the catchment but also the ongoing development of further stages of a number of multi-year projects.

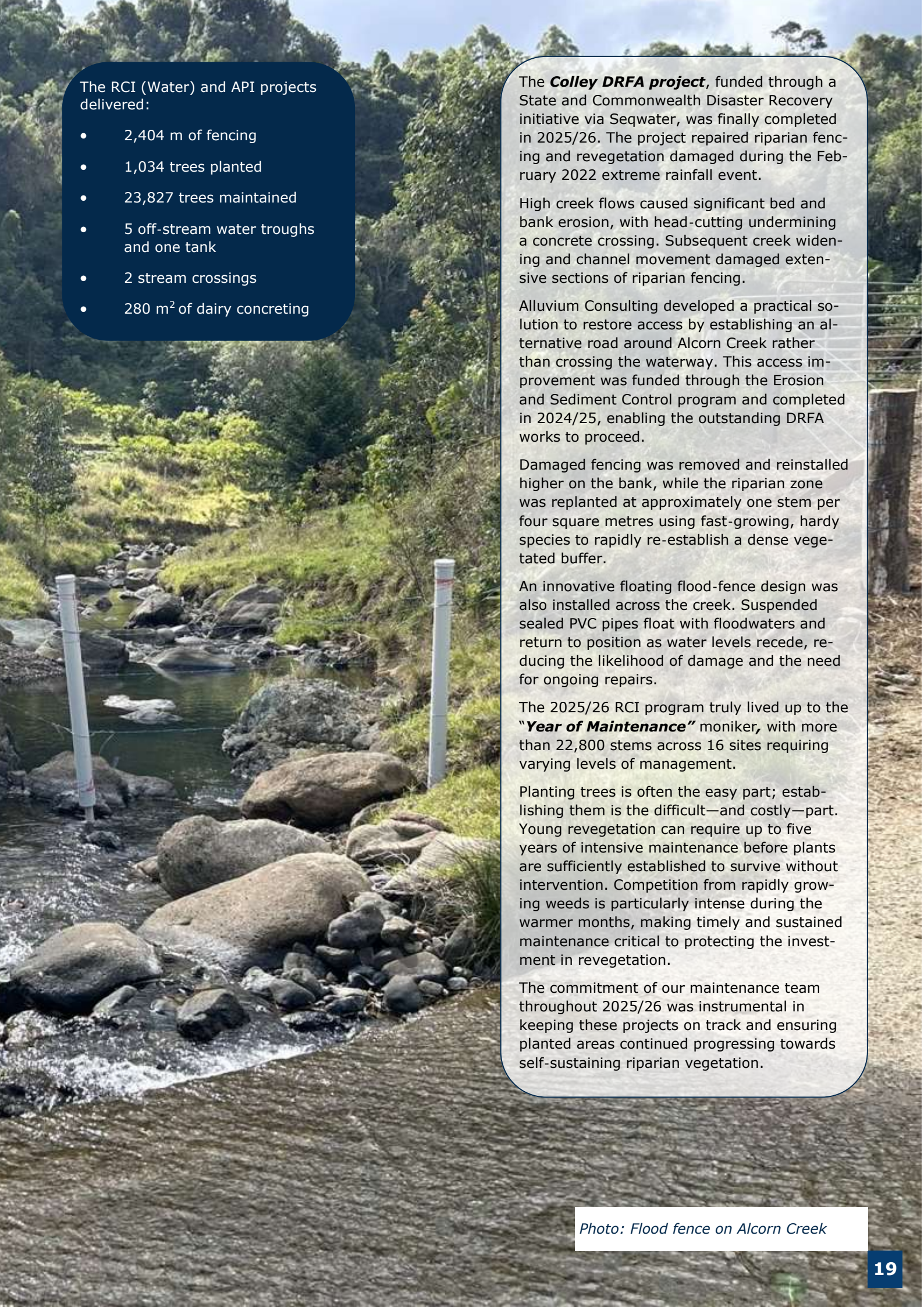
An outstanding 2023/24 Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) project was also completed, following delivery of access repairs required to safely undertake the works under the 2024/25 ESC program.

The **Obi Obi Creek riparian revegetation** project was the final stage of a three-year investment that progressively fenced the creek, installed alternative livestock water and revegetated the riparian zone. Completing projects over multiple years reduces delivery risk by ensuring each stage is successfully established before further investment.

The project provides significant water quality benefits by excluding livestock from the riparian zone and establishing a vegetated buffer between grazing areas and the waterway. It also extends habitat and establishes a wildlife corridor linking the Lake Baroon catchment with adjacent upper Mary River vegetation.

As with several recent projects, the value of the work extends beyond the priority of the individual property by completing a longer, connected section of protected and revegetated stream.

Photo: Upper Obi Obi Creek riparian fencing & revegetation



The RCI (Water) and API projects delivered:

- 2,404 m of fencing
- 1,034 trees planted
- 23,827 trees maintained
- 5 off-stream water troughs and one tank
- 2 stream crossings
- 280 m² of dairy concreting

The **Colley DRFA project**, funded through a State and Commonwealth Disaster Recovery initiative via Seqwater, was finally completed in 2025/26. The project repaired riparian fencing and revegetation damaged during the February 2022 extreme rainfall event.

High creek flows caused significant bed and bank erosion, with head-cutting undermining a concrete crossing. Subsequent creek widening and channel movement damaged extensive sections of riparian fencing.

Alluvium Consulting developed a practical solution to restore access by establishing an alternative road around Alcorn Creek rather than crossing the waterway. This access improvement was funded through the Erosion and Sediment Control program and completed in 2024/25, enabling the outstanding DRFA works to proceed.

Damaged fencing was removed and reinstalled higher on the bank, while the riparian zone was replanted at approximately one stem per four square metres using fast-growing, hardy species to rapidly re-establish a dense vegetated buffer.

An innovative floating flood-fence design was also installed across the creek. Suspended sealed PVC pipes float with floodwaters and return to position as water levels recede, reducing the likelihood of damage and the need for ongoing repairs.

The 2025/26 RCI program truly lived up to the “**Year of Maintenance**” moniker, with more than 22,800 stems across 16 sites requiring varying levels of management.

Planting trees is often the easy part; establishing them is the difficult—and costly—part. Young revegetation can require up to five years of intensive maintenance before plants are sufficiently established to survive without intervention. Competition from rapidly growing weeds is particularly intense during the warmer months, making timely and sustained maintenance critical to protecting the investment in revegetation.

The commitment of our maintenance team throughout 2025/26 was instrumental in keeping these projects on track and ensuring planted areas continued progressing towards self-sustaining riparian vegetation.

Photo: Flood fence on Alcorn Creek

Erosion & Sediment Control

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 treatment. Naturally occurring phosphorus liberated by erosion binds to soil particles and is transported to the dam contributing to blue green algae blooms. Erosion and run-off carry faecal material to the dam - a high risk to water quality and potable water production.

ESC projects have three key aims:

- Stabilise hillslopes (through slope modification, improved livestock management, drainage and revegetation).
- Intercept sub-surface drainage and deliver to stable locations.
- Interrupt and slow surface drainage and divert away from unstable areas.

The Program has four components:

- New projects commenced in the financial year.
- Completion of projects commenced in previous years.
- Repair of works (access roads and fencing).
- Maintenance of revegetation planted in previous years.

In 2025/26, three new projects were completed, one project carried forward from 2024/25 was finished and almost 50,000 trees on 21 sites were maintained.

LBCCG has been undertaking works on the **Richardson** property for several years to stabilise multiple landslips across the upper Alcorn Creek property. The steep terrain, combined with numerous perched springs that maintain high soil moisture throughout the year, creates persistent waterlogging and tenuous slope stability. These conditions are severely tested during periods of heavy rainfall. Previous works have focused on livestock management and surface-water drainage; however, the recent sequence of wet years has demonstrated the limitations of these measures alone.

This year, the approach shifted to sub-surface drainage, using sump-wells and associated French drains to intercept groundwater before it saturates the soil profile. The intercepted spring water is collected and piped to stable discharge points, in this case nearby rocky waterways.



Photo: Installation of a sump-well to reduce hillslope instability and provide water supply for off-stream watering.



By reducing soil saturation and groundwater pressure, the works are designed to improve hillslope stability and increase the rainfall threshold required to trigger further movement.

Three sump-wells were initially proposed to intercept three separate springs. Following excavation and assessment of the sites, the design was refined to two sump-wells, supplemented by carefully constructed French drains to capture and redirect groundwater. Sump-wells can be highly effective at removing groundwater, with individual systems capable of transferring substantial volumes of water—typically up to 10,000 litres per day under suitable conditions.

The project demonstrates LBCCG's ongoing commitment to developing practical and innovative approaches to landslip management, in partnership with experienced earthmoving contractors. A section of new road was also constructed to provide safe and effective access to the sump sites during construction and for future maintenance.

LBCCG has worked closely with **Wittacork Dairies** on the western shores of Lake Baroon for many years, addressing a range of water quality issues. As with many LBCCG ESC projects, the focus has increasingly shifted towards managing groundwater and its impacts on property infrastructure and slope stability.

Numerous natural springs occur across the steep property. Prioritisation identified a spring that was affecting a major property road and restricting access to previous LBCCG projects. A sump-well was installed above the road to intercept and capture spring flows, diverting water to an off-stream livestock watering system downslope. This provides livestock with a reliable source of clean groundwater, reducing the need for pumped water, while excess flows are directed to a stable discharge point.

The works are expected to improve road access, reduce groundwater-driven instability below the road and create more favourable conditions for future revegetation, providing longer-term hillslope stability and water quality benefits.

Further sump-wells are planned for 2026/27 and will be connected to the off-stream watering system. These works will increase the availability of clean groundwater for livestock, further reduce reliance on pumped surface water and continue the shift towards practical groundwater management across the property.



Preventing landslips is an important component of the LBCCG ESC program. Revegetating unstable hillslopes where groundwater-related movement risk is lower provides an effective and relatively low-cost approach to establishing long-term slope stability.

LBCCG has previously delivered riparian fencing on the property through the API Program, significantly reducing direct water quality risks by excluding livestock from waterways and strengthening the riparian buffer. However, the larger property remains inherently unstable, with moderate to very steep terrain and multiple perched basalt aquifers (springs) discharging into poorly defined drainage lines.

The **Engle ESC** project trialed the establishment of advanced hoop and bunya pines across the properties grazed hillslopes. Araucaria species are well suited to this approach because cattle generally avoid their prickly foliage, allowing the planted areas to remain grazed while trees establish. This provides a more practical and socially acceptable stabilisation option for graziers than fully excluding livestock.

Hoop and bunya pines are also well suited to long-term slope stabilisation, developing deep root systems that can extend through the soil profile towards bedrock or impermeable clay layers. Their tolerance of root disturbance allows them to be planted at relatively wide spacings of six to ten metres, with meaningful stabilisation benefits expected as the trees mature over approximately 10–12 years.

To improve establishment, LBCCG grows tubestock on in three-litre bags to produce advanced Araucarias greater than 800 mm in height. These trees are up to three years old at planting and have significantly higher survival rates than smaller tubestock, while their larger size also reduces the risk of damage from livestock trampling.

LBCCG partnered with East Coast TAFE and contractors to plant 250 advanced Araucarias across the property. Planting was challenging due to the steep, rocky terrain, which made hole drilling difficult, while wet conditions restricted vehicle access. Despite these constraints, the project established a significant number of long-lived trees across vulnerable grazed hillslopes, providing a practical pathway towards improved long-term slope stability while maintaining grazing access.

Photo: Growing on Bunyas and Hoops for the ESC program

The **Colley ESC** project, partially delivered in 2024/25, was completed this year with installation of an intermediate header tank in the off-stream water (OSW) system. The OSW system was originally installed in 2015; however, the 180-metre head between the main storage tank and the lowest point of the system placed excessive pressure on fittings, increasing the risk of leaks and system failure. The intermediate tank reduces maximum head pressure to approximately 80 metres, significantly reducing strain on the system and improving its reliability. Completion of the project was carried over from 2024/25 due to material and contractor shortages.

The project demonstrated LBCCGs ability to solve problems and implement innovative, practical and cost-effective rural solutions.

The ESC program also continued its substantial investment in **revegetation maintenance**, maintaining almost 50,000 stems across 21 revegetation sites. These sites are located on unstable, steep hillslopes where revegetation plays an important role in improving long-term landscape stability and reducing erosion risks.

Maintenance of ESC revegetation is particularly challenging due to steep and uneven terrain, poorer soil conditions and slower plant growth, persistent weed competition, limited vehicle access, and wet and slippery conditions. At approximately \$5 per stem per year, revegetation maintenance is both labour-intensive and a significant investment for LBCCG, consuming considerable project expenditure and staff time throughout the year.

The scale and persistence of this work reflects the commitment of the LBCCG team to protecting previous investment and ensuring revegetation projects achieve their intended long-term environmental outcomes. Kudos to the team for the sustained effort required to maintain these challenging sites.

The ESC program delivered:

- 595 metres of new access tracks
- 1,225 metres of tracks repaired
- 5 hectares weed management
- 250 stems planted
- 50,429 trees, shrubs and groundcovers planted maintained
- 4 hectares drainage
- 3 hectares of landslip maintained
- 3 sump wells installed
- 1 header tank

Riparian Condition Improvement (Weeds)

Ivan Cafarella

The RCI (Weeds) program continued to prioritise Madeira Vine and Cat's Claw Creeper management during 2025/26, while increasing the strategic effort directed towards Celtis. Celtis

is continued to be treated opportunistically when encountered during other weed control activities; however, a more targeted approach was undertaken across four areas along Obi Obi Creek progressing downstream from the uppermost point where Celtis becomes prevalent, with the aim of reducing established sources and limiting further spread along the creek corridor.

Madeira Vine remained the primary focus of the program, with 156 sites under active management. Ongoing treatment continued to reduce vine loads at established sites, with the declining density of infestations allowing the program to shift from broadscale maintenance towards more-intensive treatment of larger and more difficult infestations. This included allocating additional effort to sites where Madeira Vine occurred in dense or difficult-to-access areas and where other weeds needed to be controlled first to allow access. This represents an important progression in the program, allowing available resources to be concentrated where they can have the greatest impact and improving the prospects of bringing difficult infestations under long-term control.

Flowering-season surveillance remained an important component of the program and resulted in the identification of several significant new Madeira Vine infestations. These discoveries reinforced the importance of maintaining surveillance in addition to ongoing treatment of known sites. Drones were also used to map potential spread in difficult-to-access areas surrounding known infestations. This identified additional infestations that might otherwise have remained undetected.

LBCCG gained access to several longstanding difficult-to-treat properties through continued engagement with initially apprehensive landholders, changes in property ownership and assistance from Sunshine Coast Council (SCC) in contacting owners of vacant properties on behalf of LBCCG. These efforts help to maintain continuity of treatment across the catchment, particularly where infestations extend across multiple properties or where untreated areas could act as ongoing sources of reinfestation.

Cat's Claw Creeper remains confined to a relatively small number of sites within the catchment. Four established sites remained under management, while three additional infestations were identified during the year and added to the program. Fortunately, the newly detected infestations were not well established, with vines still immature and not yet presenting a significant seeding risk. Their early detection and inclusion in the management program provides a good opportunity to prevent these sites developing into more established infestations.

The program continued to place a strong emphasis on accurate and consistent data collection. Maintaining high-quality spatial records is essential for tracking changes in infestation extent and density, identifying emerging infestations and assessing the effectiveness of management over time. This increasingly detailed data is also supporting more strategic allocation of resources across the catchment.

Management of the aquatic weeds, *Rotala* and *Bacopa*, continued to present significant technical challenges. *Rotala* has not yet been treated because a suitable herbicide, although approved for use in Australia, is currently not readily commercially available. Treatment will therefore depend on the availability and supply of an appropriate herbicide.



The program delivered:

- 29.5 ha of Madeira vine management on 156 sites
- 0.5 ha of Cats claw vine management on 7 sites
- 0.8 ha Celtis management on 6 sites
- Approximately 210 landholders engaged
- One workshop with 25 attendees (supporting Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee)

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



Healthy Land & Water Upper Stanley River vine weeds

Under the 2025–26 funding agreement, vine weed management continued throughout the Upper Stanley River catchment, upstream of Woodford. Funding provided by Healthy Land & Water supported both follow-up treatment of previously established infestations and the expansion of control efforts into newly identified sites. New infestations were located through targeted catchment surveys during the flowering season, as well as through increased engagement with local landholders.

By undertaking the weed control work directly, LBCCG is able to deliver the program efficiently and cost-effectively, while maintaining continuity across sites requiring repeated treatment.

Many of the infestations currently under management are large and well established and will require several years of consistent follow-up to achieve substantial control. A significant proportion of these sites occur along waterways, where flood events can contribute to the downstream spread of vine weeds. These riparian areas are also important for stabilising erosion-prone riverbanks, making continued weed management important for protecting both water quality and riparian condition.

The project delivered:

- 12 hectares of Madeira vine management on 37 sites
- 3.75 ha of Cats claw vine management on seven sites
- 44 landholders engaged



Department of Transport & Main Roads weeds

Ongoing funding support from the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) remained important throughout the 2025–26 financial year, enabling high-priority weed infestations to be managed across state-managed road reserves. These roadside areas can act as important pathways for weed spread, particularly for species such as Madeira Vine, with roadside maintenance, slashing activities and vehicle movement potentially transporting plant material between sites.

During 2025–26, Groundsel was also included as a priority species within the TMR weed control program. Infestations occurring along road reserves were targeted to reduce the risk of further spread and establishment into adjoining properties and natural areas. Roadside populations are particularly important to manage because disturbance and regular maintenance activities can assist the movement and dispersal of weed material along transport corridors.

The inclusion of Groundsel Bush alongside ongoing Madeira Vine and Cats Claw control has broadened the scope of the TMR-funded program and supports a more proactive approach to managing priority weeds before infestations become more widespread and difficult to control.

The project delivered:

- 1.1 ha of Madeira vine management on 10 sites
- 0.5 ha of Cats claw vine management on three sites
- 0.02 ha of Groundsel management on two sites



Seqwater Asset Management Program

Mark Amos

The project:

- Planted 2,180 tubestock (replants)
- Planted 80 advanced vetiver
- Managed 2.3 hectares of weeds
- Maintained over 71,341 trees
- Maintained & improved 3,300 m of tracks
- Installed 8 gully crossings
- Installed 3 tanks for water reticulation



Bunya Block

The Bunya Block project has now passed the halfway point and is well on track to achieving the objectives outlined in the 2021 Implementation Plan. The 115-hectare property has been transformed from a degraded beef grazing enterprise, dominated by weeds and poor-quality pasture, into a significant environmental asset that now provides a substantial water quality buffer along more than 2.5 kilometres of frontage to Baroon Pocket Dam.

Approximately 75% of the planted trees now require little to no ongoing care. The remaining 25% continue to require moderate to intensive maintenance due to poor growing conditions and, in some areas, lower-than-expected survival rates.

Targeted infill planting was undertaken in areas where tree establishment remained below the 75% target. More than 2,180 additional trees were planted to improve establishment and meet project objectives. The replacement plantings consisted primarily of pioneer species, which are fast-growing and play an essential role in initiating nutrient cycling and site recovery, together with hardy, long-lived canopy species that will form the long-term structural framework of the forest.

Property access has remained a significant challenge due to the combination of steep terrain and black cracking clay soils, which become difficult to traverse during wet conditions. Additional funding, transferred from the Weeks Road improvement budget, enabled upgrades to several roads and access tracks across the property. These works have improved access to previously problematic areas while also enhancing emergency access for fire management.

As the revegetation has matured and canopy cover has increased, weed pressure has declined significantly. Most weed species now pose minimal risk to revegetation due to the increasingly shaded conditions. Management efforts are now focused primarily on small-leaf privet in established shaded areas and exotic pasture grasses, including paspalum, *Setaria* and *Sporobolus*, within less established revegetation zones.

With revegetation activities largely complete, construction of the permanent water reticulation network has also been finalised. Three storage tanks have been installed with water in one supplied by a Unitywater drain, another by a sump well drawing from a natural spring, and the third from a nearby permanent drainage channel. This infrastructure will provide a water source during fires and support ongoing property management and maintenance activities.

The eroding gully, which was battered and re-profiled in 2022, was revegetated using vetiver grass propagated on-site. Advanced clumps were planted in rows perpendicular to the direction of flow at approximately 10-metre intervals. These plantings will stabilise the gully bed and banks, reduce flow velocities and minimise future erosion. Once the vegetation is fully established, most of the water flow will be redirected back into the rehabilitated channel, allowing the temporary diversion channel to be restored.

The Newton and Nott riparian fencing project, originally scheduled for 2025–26, has been deferred pending confirmation of the future management and ownership arrangements for the properties.

Ferriday's

The Seqwater-owned Ferriday property project has continued into its fifth year, with most of the revegetation now sufficiently established to be self-sustaining. Approximately 600–700 seedlings on the higher slopes still require moderate to intensive maintenance due to the challenging growing conditions, including thin topsoil, poor soil structure, a northerly aspect and nutrient deficiencies. These areas were also planted later in the project because conditions were frequently either too wet or too dry. The remaining seedlings continue to require management for Velcro vine, glycine and Parramatta grass.

Elsewhere on the property, the revegetation is sufficiently established to provide effective shade, reducing weed growth and allowing natural nutrient cycling processes to become established. The vegetation has also stabilised historic landslips, and the property is no longer considered a high-risk area for landslips, with effectively no soil being lost from the property.

A new section of hardened road, funded through a 2024/25 project variation, was completed in early 2026 and has significantly improved access across the property. Access tracks continue to be mowed regularly to maintain accessibility and support ongoing maintenance activities.

Continuing maintenance includes minor devil fig control, while management of camphor laurel and slash pine has been deliberately delayed until later in the project. These weed trees are currently providing useful site stability and helping to suppress the establishment of weed shrubs and other woody weeds. Approximately 600 revegetation stems are expected to require ongoing maintenance for a further three years, with the Ferriday project to be incorporated into the adjacent Eden Road property.

Vine weed control remains the highest maintenance priority. Access tracks will continue to be mowed through to the end of 2031, coinciding with the term of the LBCCG lease on the Eden Road storage sheds.

The project delivered:

- 220 m new access road
- Over 5,612 trees maintained

Photo: Obi Obi Creek flowing through the Bunya Block

An aerial photograph of a dense, green forest. A dirt road winds through the trees, and a blue vehicle is parked on it. The forest is composed of various types of trees, including tall, thin ones and shorter, bushier ones. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed landscape.

Bunya Offset

In 2024 LBCCG was engaged by Seqwater to restore one hectare of the greater Bunya Block property to Regional Ecosystem (RE) 12.3.1a Gallery Rainforest in accordance with the Onsite Delivery Plan (ODP) prepared by Evolve Consulting.

Gallery rainforest is a distinctive riparian ecosystem that occurs as a narrow band of vegetation along watercourses. It is characterised by a dense, multi-layered canopy with emergent trees, tangled vines and Piccabeen palms fringing wetter areas. Due to its linear distribution along waterways, this ecosystem was extensively cleared historically and remains vulnerable to weed invasion. Without appropriate management, it can also transition into other rainforest or wet sclerophyll communities following disturbance.

The project has continued to exceed expectations, with favourable seasonal conditions and the site's suitability for revegetation resulting in excellent establishment, survival and growth of planted species. Weed invasion and exotic pasture growth have remained lower than anticipated, while no significant flood events have occurred to impact site development.

During 2025–26, revegetation works focused on in-fill planting to increase stem density and establish a diverse shrub and groundcover layer, particularly within shaded areas where competition from grasses and weeds is reduced. These plantings have enhanced the structural complexity and species diversity of the site, while natural recruitment of native groundcovers, ferns and vines beneath the developing canopy has been particularly encouraging. These outcomes are strengthening the site's long-term resilience and supporting the objective of restoring one hectare of RE 12.3.1a Gallery Rainforest.

Site maintenance requirements were lower than originally forecast. Reduced weed pressure meant herbicide use was minimised, lowering overall maintenance costs. Woody weeds were largely eliminated during the first year of the project, with subsequent management limited primarily to hand removal of new germinations. While *Tradescantia* remains a persistent threat, infestations are currently minor and effectively managed through ongoing maintenance.

The risk of flood damage has remained low throughout the reporting period. Recruitment of woody debris—an important ecological process identified within the ODP—has commenced naturally, although currently on a relatively small scale. As the site continues to mature, these processes are expected to further enhance habitat values and contribute to the successful restoration of this important riparian ecosystem.

The project:

- Planted 537 tubestock (trees, shrubs & groundcovers)
- Managed 0.2 hectares of weeds
- Maintained over 2,237 trees



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