



Wildlife Queensland Branch Reports

2022 - 2023



MISSION

Our mission is to be the leading non-government organisation advocating protection and conservation of Queensland's native terrestrial and marine plants, animals and landscapes by educating and engaging communities, influencing decision-making, advancing solutions and connecting people with wildlife.

VISION

People value, respect and support the conservation of Queensland's native wildlife*.

*Wildlife embraces plants, animals and their habitat.

OBJECTIVES

Preserve the flora and fauna of Australia by lawful means

Educate the community in an understanding of the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment

Discourage, by all legal means, the possible destruction, exploitation and unnecessary development of any part of the natural environment

Encourage rational land use and proper land planning of existing and future development, and the use of the natural environment and its management.

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Bayside Branch

Steve Homewood – President

The Branch has continued with its program of monthly speakers. We had 9 general meetings over the year on subjects as varied as Dinosaurs, Sustainable population, Shellfish into artificial reefs, Science under Sail, averaging around 30 in attendance. We also thank Matt Cecil for giving a great overview of WPSQ Wildlife Projects. Our February meeting with Gecko's Martin Fingland, attracted over 60 participants. We are considering having an end of year event this October or November with Geckos Wildlife.

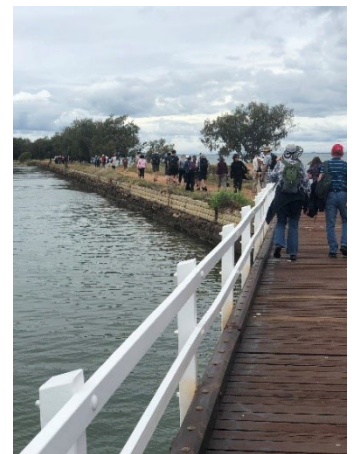
Our monthly newsletter has a mailout list of around 240. It is also sent to all WPSQ Branches and Redland Library and is added to our website - it gets good circulation around the community with information on wildlife issues and local walks. We have an "out and about page" with photos that members have taken, we also encourage our members to send in articles.



We are regular participants at the quarterly Indigiscapes Eco Markets, where we disseminate plenty of information to the hundreds of attendees.

A major event last year was our 60th Anniversary of WPSQ cruise out to St Helena Island - nearly 60 adventurers had a great day out on the Cat 'O' Nine Tails despite the rough weather on the way back. It invoked memories of our past Sea Week annual cruises, Mangrove and Seagrass watch, and our fight against sea cages in the bay.

Our usual Clean up Australia Day event at Redland Bay foreshore had 34 participants including a great team from Mount Cotton Scouts it was a full tide, so we concentrated on area around the island ferry terminal and car park. There was an horrendous amount of rubbish in the car parks around the ferry terminal, mostly fast-food packaging and 138 redeemable drink containers we managed to fill the equivalent of 11 wheelie bins. The ferry car park should be maintained to a better standard - I was told by the local councillor it was an "operational issue", nothing to see here, then.



This year our container deposit scheme, driven by our treasurer Maureen along with other recycling, has contributed \$600 to branch funds. We were able to donate to the Wildlife Land Fund and support other groups as a result of this. So far, we have recycled over 60,000 containers. The State government is inching along with recycling, banning single use plastics and now helium balloons.

For many residents, seeing the vistas and vast natural resources of Moreton Bay reinforces the need to protect these assets from the excesses of a growing population.

The proposed 30-year Toondah Harbour development, a new town of 3600 apartments, IN Moreton Bay wetlands, a Ramsar site, a flyway, weighs heavily on all community groups with considerable resources going to fight this absurd proposal which goes against international conventions. It also treats climate change, our local environment and wildlife, with contempt. June marked 10 years since this PRIORITY development was



announced. Nearly 28,000 submissions were made to the 5,200page EIS -we can only hope that the Federal Environment minister can see the folly of this proposal when it comes before her. After nearly a year the developer has still not submitted an updated EIS.

There are other challenges out there for the Branch with the security of bushland, and consequently our wildlife, threatened with over commercialisation through development and tourism. We have the re-branded white-water rafting proposal - now the “Redlands Resilience Training Centre” - at Birkdale Community land which could be an Olympic venue for Slalom and Canoeing for just 4 days of competition. The proposed \$200 million Heinemann Road sports complex, with the possible loss of around 550 habitat trees, has been referred to the EPBC act mainly due to pressure from the community, this project could take 20 years to complete.

ALL our elected representatives, with a few exceptions, appear to ignore community concerns from residents who have a wealth of experience to offer and yet we are being “stonewalled”.

The Bayside Branch is financially strong, although our sources of income are somewhat limited as our membership has stabilised. Like most groups we need some more input from our many supporters to refresh our brand.

We have more uncertainty ahead whilst governments still appear to not yet take climate change seriously, continuing their quest for endless growth, using the housing crisis as an excuse to destroy more bushland, building in flood-prone areas and wetlands, creating an environmental crisis of their own making.

Local groups need to remain strong, vocal, relevant, and alert to debilitating proposals that erode the green credentials of our city and wider boundaries.

“It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment”.

Ansel Adams

Brisbane Branch

The Brisbane Branch had a robust year of activities featuring some informative presentations to members and guests. Topics included Queensland's beloved wildlife, conservation efforts, and updates about how your Wildlife Protection Society Queensland is involved in efforts to educate, preserve, and protect far into the future.

The Branch began the year with its AGM in September 2022. Branch President Michael Lusic presented about the importance of marine parks and their role in protecting biodiversity, threatened species and habitat as well as about how to best protect them. It was a full house and guests enjoyed a free lunch at Chapel Hill's THECA (The Hut Environmental and Community Association).

A warm January 2023 afternoon and evening saw the Brisbane Branch welcome more than 40 people aboard a Brisbane riverboat from Southbank for a fun and informative Batty Boat Cruise as part of the 60th Anniversary of Wildlife Queensland. A representative from Bat Conservation and Rescue Queensland brought a rescued baby bat and guests enjoyed wonderful food and door prizes while learning more about our unique SE Queensland flying fox and bat population with a commentary from Jo Towsey.



In February, biologist and author Tim Low gave a presentation titled "The New Nature" at the THECA Hut in Chapel Hill. A complimentary lunch was enjoyed by more than 35 guests and Tim sold and signed copies of his books, including *Where Song Began*.

In June, at the Karawatha Environmental Discovery Centre, the Branch hosted another complimentary lunch followed by an informative talk featuring Matt Cecil, WPSQ's Projects Manager. Guests enjoyed lunch and hearing more about our organisation's accomplishments and projects and some guests opted to explore the lovely Karawatha Forrest area.



In addition to these events, members of the Branch executive committee drafted and submitted submissions about the proposed the Lumina Light Show at Mt Coot-tha, Toondah Harbour as well as one about turtles on the Sunshine Coast to the State Environment Minister for World Environment Day. A Queensland Day submission was also made to the Premier featuring suggestions for the 2032 Olympic Games regarding marine parks on the Sunshine and Gold Coasts.

Thank you to all our Brisbane Branch members for your interest, support, and attendance over the past year! We look forward to your engagement this year as well and we hope you will consider taking a position on our Branch executive committee to help further all we are able to offer in the future!

Capricorn Branch

Vice-President Steve Elson and President John McCabe

We have made about 15 nest boxes for a variety of species including squirrel glider, owlet nightjar, pale-headed rosella, cuckoo-shrike, duck, and owl using design guidelines from Alice McGlashan (Australian Native Hollow Using Species Lists & Nest Box Designs) and WPSQ. Some of these have been installed on a member's property at Nankin and the remainder will go to Duckpond Reserve and possibly Capricorn Caves. Plan to make at least another 10 nest boxes this year.

We have engaged with landowners (regenerative graziers) through Fitzroy Basin Association and Resource Consulting Services to explore opportunities to retain regrowth vegetation within grazing land, and the decision making around thinning of regrowth.

We have conducted surveys of semi-evergreen vine thicket (SEVT) on some of these regenerative properties, in conjunction with the property owners, to build knowledge and understanding of SEVT. Suitable SEVT species have been supplied to one property for planting around the homestead and this will be repeated with others in the next few months. A pictorial list of SEVT species identified on each property will be supplied.

Rehabilitation of SEVT is continuing at Mt Etna Caves NP with an area of approximately 1.75ha planted over the last year. The site is challenging due to the need to remove guinea grass, sorghum and leucaena (and the seed bank) from the area before planting with regular follow up (3 weekly) to control weeds. We found a good use for leucaena – it makes good plant stakes. QPWS has supplied the equipment, fuel, and herbicide, and has purchased plants from the Rockhampton Council nursery. Members have also supplied plants.



Semi-evergreen vine thicket © <https://fba.org.au/>

We have assisted with various education and restoration programs at the Capricorn Tourist Caves with various school groups and weekend volunteers. We are probably becoming confirmed advocates against tree planting, having just closed a weedy gap in the old lime works site at Mount Etna last week with a final 300 trees planted. Probably 6 months of weed control and we can then promote our belief that restoration management of regrowth in the Central Queensland environment is the best (only?) way to restore wildlife habitat in our broad, hot CQ.

Therese McCabe has stayed involved with marine turtle issues through the Team Hatchlings Group. The group worked the shoreline residential areas of the Capricorn Coast distributing information to householders about hatchling awareness during breeding season and the programs to reduce light pollution on beaches which have had good support from Ergon.

We have also supported the Yeppoon Inlet Association (who are boat and jetty owners) with ID information on Mangrove and samphire species so that the Association can secure a valid 30-year management lease of section of Ross Creek and Fig Tree Creek. The outcome could be that stronger environmental management has been accomplished in a snug boat harbour which has been a feature of the town of Yeppoon for nearly 80 years.

Far North Queensland Branch

No report provided

Cassowary Coast Hinchinbrook Branch

Daryl Dickson - President

June 2023 – **Retired from CCRC:** Our branch treasurer Judy Murphy has now retired from the Cassowary Coast Regional Council; Judy has represented the council for 25 years at the Tully Nursery. She and her team have developed plant lists for the food trees of the Pied Imperial Pigeons, endangered Cassowary and Mahogany Glider and she has supervised a nursery that has been essential in providing tube stock for revegetation projects for these species. Judy has also ensured that residents could access advice on plantings within the region. We will certainly miss her work at the council nursery – thank you Judy!

Our branch is now represented on NAMAC the Natural Asset Management Advisory Committee.

FNQROC introduce this committee as – *“Natural Asset Management encompasses the activities of Local Government in relation to pest management, landscape repair and restoration, biodiversity conservation and general landscape management practice including fire and catchment management and planning. The Far North region is an agriculturally rich and ecologically diverse landscape which is home to significant natural icons such as the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics Rainforests as well as the vast savannah woodlands, wetlands and plains of Cape York Peninsula and the Einasleigh Uplands. Local Governments and their partners work closely with the community to advance our understanding, appreciation and management of our unique landscape and lifestyle.”* We thought it wise to communicate through this forum if we could.

In June we also took part in the creation of **2 short videos with Terrain NRM** – part of the **Biodiversity Bright Spots: Building resilience in Wet Tropics Woodlands** - link to one of the videos below:

1. Saving the Mahogany Glider - 4 tips for landholders
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJy00U4vXU&t=6s>
2. Recovery Teams – Saving Endangered Species
[Recovery Teams: Saving Endangered Species - YouTube](#)

May 2023 **Innisfail College project:** Judy Murphy (WPSQ CCH Treasure) and Damon Sydes CCRC have assisted Innisfail College to replace barbed wire on their agricultural studies area. An endangered Spectacled Flying Fox was found by Judy when assessing their site for CCRC assisted revegetation and the school enthusiastically accepted Judy’s offer to assist with Wildlife Friendly Fencing education provided by The Bat Hospital and the supply of barbless wire to ensure that this did not happen in the future...a great outcome and wonderful education for students and engagement with the Traditional Owners, Mamu Rangers. They have produced a short video to promote wildlife friendly fencing.

<https://1drv.ms/v/s!At6P46ZajFEUtX4Myw7voZe00iUQ?e=h6iIKE>

Great teamwork across the region!

May 2023 - **Zoo to You:** Once again this year we have invested in the hearts and minds of our young **State School Students:** ensuring that they have had some close contact and good educational presentations of our local wildlife – presented by **Zoo to You**, this year Matt Cornish presented the program to all of our local schools. We attended all presentations visiting Cardwell, Kennedy, Murray Upper and Lower Tully Schools. The branch has organized the visits and covered the costs for all visits this year (with over 190 students attending). The visits were once again hugely successful, and it was wonderful to see the students engaged in

curriculum-based environmental education. We are only too aware of how important early positive encounters and information can be in later attitudes to wildlife and the environment.

March 2023 **North Queensland Threatened Species Symposium 2023** - A 2-day event held in Cairns– We attended (Daryl) attended and delivered one presentation about “the big picture – landscape linkages” and sat on a discussion Panel representing NMGRT & Wildlife Qld.

October-November-December 2022 **Pied Imperial Pigeon counts**: Judy Murphy coordinated the annual **Pied Imperial Pigeon counts 2022**. The coming year may be very challenging, as to date, we are still working to secure a vessel for the 2023 season, but we are still hopeful that a solution will be found. Dr John Winter & CCRC reps are in conversation with QPWS Marine Parks in the hope that they might once again assist this year. The counts are a time consuming and rigorous process that Judy will continue to co-ordinate now that she has retired from the Cassowary Coast Regional Council. She continues with dedication. The count is now in its 58th year - Counts took place in October, November December 2022. Judy does a brilliant job each year in pulling all this together.

Sept 2022 - **Cassowary Day** at C4 Mission Beach the branch was invited to give a talk on the release of the new Wildlife Friendly Fencing Barbless Wire and how fencing affects many species – Daryl attended.

Also in sept 2022 **Cyclone display TC Yasi** presentation: CCRC Cardwell Bush Telegraph Museum launch of the new cyclone display – we were asked to speak about the impact of cyclones on wildlife – Daryl attended and spoke about impact and recovery.

August 2022 – The **Lumholtz’s Tree Kangaroo** has been in the spotlight in the last year here at sea level on the tropical coast. Historically they have been recorded on the coast and in the coastal ranges. In recent decades the only confirmed sightings had been at the foot of the Kirrama Range but in recent months we have had 3 deaths of young healthy Lumholtz’s Tree Kangaroos at sea level near the Bruce Highway. We have retrieved the bodies and taken tissue samples for researchers. One a young healthy female, killed by domestic dogs, one, a young healthy male, road strike south of Cardwell near Seafarm and one, breeding age healthy young female, road strike in the 60K zone on the Bruce Highway entering Cardwell. Dr Roger Martin & Dr Ami Shima from the Tree Kangaroo & Mammal Group are interested in the coastal populations and we have transferred bodies and samples to them (under rehab permits as required DES)

Also, in August the Federal Govt funded Terrain NRM: Biodiversity Bright Spots **Warrami Woodlands Project** is a project the branch assisted in over recent years. Judy & Daryl attended a field visit to Terrain NRM’s Warrami project site to look at the thousands of trees planted to restore the woodland habitat – the visit was attended by project partners, Terrain NRM, federal government, landholders and WPSQ.

WALKS:

July 2022 –Lisa Roeger organized our Bicton Hill Walk, we were joined by members from Townsville Branch and our walk was followed by a lovely social lunch at Bingil Bay Café



Oct 2022 – to Murray Falls – Girramay National Park– only a few of us along but a beautiful walk as always...

General News for the year

National Mahogany Glider Recovery Team – 3 meetings per year: CCH branch president Daryl Dickson continues to represent Wildlife Qld as chair of the recovery team & branch treasurer Judy Murphy who has been the CCRC rep will (post-retirement) continue on the team as our second WPSQ representative. It's a great team of extremely constructive partners working to do what they can through each of their agencies and organisations. TMR continue to install glider pole crossings where they can to ensure corridor linkages along the Bruce Highway. QRail are also assisting with assessing breaks in corridors that their railway lines may cause. All councils in mahogany glider habitat are now active members of the recovery team. We are working with CCRC and have five locations to install glider pole crossings identified. These are locations where barbed wire stranding has occurred with gliders trying to cross local council roads or where mapping has identified gaps caused by council roadways in priority corridors. The crossings will be installed with ERGON, CCRC and our branch working to complete and fund these five crossings. Terrain NRM continues to provide essential support services to the team and our branch in our responsibilities to the recovery team.



A number of **mahogany gliders** have come into care this year, most from barbed wire. All the barbed wire injuries have been recovered but this year we have also had a death of a female mahogany glider with 2 pouch young killed by a cat.

We continue with the recording of **glider sightings** for **Wildnet**, we collect genetic samples for Qld Museum and where required we carry out the capping of barbed wire where mahogany gliders have been injured or killed. We are also continuing to work with Wildnet to add missing sightings and clear incorrect confidentiality labels from listings.

Our branch has assisted with information and images supplied to author Brendan Taylor for his book "**Wildlife Crossings of Eastern Australia**" which includes our glider poles in mahogany glider habitat.

We are working on creating a **wildlife puppet box** for Kennedy School as an education aid to introduce young students to native wildlife. We have purchased wildlife puppets and are preparing age appropriate information sheets for their "little Glider" preschool and junior school students – Geoff has built the box and we have sourced the puppets, Daryl has yet to finish the information sheets for each animal.

Other notes from the year:

- Sadly, Lisa Roeger resigned as secretary at our last AGM with our thanks for her assistance through the year. Geoff Moffatt has taken on the position as our branch secretary.
- We continue to work with Wildlife Friendly Fencing Organisation in the promotion of Whites barbless safe twist wire.
- We have designed and produced a new pull up banner to be used at events **“Wild about the Cassowary Coast”**
- assisted mural artist with the provision of reference photographs and information in preparation for a brilliant large mural in Townsville of a mahogany glider to raise awareness in the southern end of the gliders range. **Mural artist Lavinia Letheby** has been working with our local community & schools in recent years creating wonderful murals - all include local wildlife and endangered species. Daryl did an **ABC Townsville - Cairns Radio interview “Creature Feature”** about art & conservation.

[Daryl Dickson rescues endangered mahogany gliders, and uses her art to educate others - ABC listen](#)

- have started to distribute our **“Meet the Neighbours”** series of DL brochures. We have designed and written these to assist locals in understanding the wildlife that they encounter and particularly to give new residents some idea of what these creatures are. We have brochures on the Mahogany Glider, Melomys, Owls and Antechinus... we hope to add to these as the year progresses. We have now completed the design, text, and production of all 4 DL size brochures and are distributing them in the community to try to get new residents & old to recognize and value of wildlife.
- we have also liaised with CCRC to assist in the replacement of **community signage** providing the image file backup resources that we have held on file to facilitate cost effective reprints of these signs
- continue to maintain a **branch FB page** and **Mahogany Glider FB page** [\(3\) Wildlife Queensland Cassowary Coast - Hinchinbrook | Facebook](#) [\(3\) Mahogany Glider | Facebook](#)

Wild 

about the
Cassowary Coast

their future is in our hands 

a very special place
amazing wildlife
endangered species
birds - over 290 species!
forests - wetland - rivers
oceans - turtles - dugong






want to help?
plant native trees to connect habitat - ask at CCRC nursery - they can help with which trees to plant

keep your pet cat safe inside

ensure your dog is controlled and on your property day & night

take care when disposing of fishing tackle

be CROCWISE in croc country

Remember small actions can make a BIG difference !

Fraser Coast Branch

John Williams, President

Fraser Coast Branch continued to be a strong voice for Wildlife Preservation education and advocacy throughout this year. We have had a significant number of new members joining our Branch and have continued to effectively undertake our wide range of activities. Our Branch has made a number of representations to governments and agencies at all three levels of government on matters of significance, with an increasing focus on opposing loss of essential habitat from development or other activities inimical to wildlife preservation.

Branch membership is in excess of 80 members, and includes 8 family memberships and two organisations amongst the current membership.

Our monthly Nature Walks continue to raise awareness of the natural environment across the Fraser Coast. This year's Nature Walks program introduced several new walks. They continue to be well attended by members and the broader community, giving our Branch an opportunity to inform about some of the wonderful natural areas of the Fraser Coast, and some of the challenges in preserving the unique wildlife that abounds.

Other successful programs including our seasonal Backyard Bioblitz and monthly Library Talks in the Maryborough and Hervey Bay Libraries continue, with a high degree of membership and general community participation. The Branch's *Wildlife Matters* columns, written primarily by members, continued to feature in local papers including the *Maryborough Sun*, *Hervey Bay Advertiser*, *Toogoom Chatter*, *River Heads Review* and the glossy *Fraser Coast Beacon* magazine. Our quarterly newsletter *Wambaliman*, now in its 56th year, provides a very high quality record of and dissemination of Branch news and views.

Events:

- WPS 60th Anniversary *Walk on the Wild Side* event with more than 100 attendees, 3 guided walks of varying length, speakers and BBQ – a fitting marking of the occasion (9 July);
- Beach Nesting birds presentation by Simon Kennedy (Birdlife Australia) (18 September);
- Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centres Sustainability Showcase – stall (30 September);
- Spring Backyard BioBlitz;
- Winter Backyard BioBlitz;
- Autumn Backyard BioBlitz.

Submissions:

- Federal Environment Minister in support of her decision to refuse approval for Clive Palmers open cut mines in CQ;
- Gatakers Landing Hotel Application for Hotel Liquor Licence:
 - Initial objection to hotel licence application;
 - Participation in Objectors Conference;
 - Further submission objecting to licence;

- Great Sandy Marine Park Draft Zoning Plan review – joint submission with AMCS;
- Toondah Harbour EIS;
- FCRC - Domestic Animal Management Strategy;
- FCRC – EOI for representation on Mary to Bay Rail Trail Advisory Committee;
- FCRC – objection to the sale of Council-owned land near Mary River in Maryborough;
- FCRC - objection to motion being put by Cr Jade Wellings re undermining of Tree Management Policy.

Partnerships:

- Greater Glider project – University of the Sunshine Coast;
- University of Queensland – funding radio transmitters;
- Eastern Grey Kangaroo (EGK) Project (USC) - Workshop by Dr Nuala McLernon and Dr Beth Brunton and EGK community survey.

Advisory groups:

- FCRC Mary to Bay Rail Trail

Representation:

- Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council AGM;
- Lower Mary River Land and Catchment Care groups turtle monitoring group;
- FCRC Community Grants Roadshow;
- Bundaberg’s Community Conservation Advisory Group.

Legal action:

The disappointing news that despite the significant opposition from the Branch, Branch members and the local community in the Point Vernon/Gatakers Landing area to the proposal, a commercial hotel licence had been approved by the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming Regulation led earlier this year to the Branch becoming involved in a legal challenge to that decision.

The proposed hotel is located close to a loggerhead turtle nesting site, close to green turtle habitat, near a shorebird wader roosting site and contains habitat containing squirrel gliders. The Branch joined an application by a local resident to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) to have the licence revoked. Lodged in January, the legal action has resulted in

- the Branch being recognised by the Tribunal as a ‘party with standing’ (ie entitled to challenge the decision);
- repeated representations to FCRC, who allowed the hotel application without a planning application or any environmental assessment or consideration;
- several advices being provided by the Environmental Defenders Office; and
- extensive documentation being obtained from FCRC through the lodgement of a *Right to Information Act* application.

The case remains on-going.

Finances

Unfortunately our major fundraising source via a weekly raffle at the Beach House Hotel in Scarness ended in December 2022 following a decision by the hotel’s management. That activity had enabled us to

raise substantial funds over a number of years, much of which was used to financially support local wildlife rescue groups. However, our finances received a very generous donation of \$6000 from the Friends of the Burrum River System Group Inc. Initially founded in 1999, the donation followed the group's winding up at their 2022 AGM and was part of their distribution of funds. Founding member and former President, Dr Tim Thornton, presented a cheque and address to the Branch's April general meeting.

We continue to raise funds (and improve the environment) through the Containers for Change scheme. The Branch intends to actively pursue grant opportunities as they arise.

During the year we have held five Executive Meetings and six General Meetings, as well as our AGM on 18 September 2022. We get considerable positive feedback and genuine enquiries to our Facebook page. We have as at July 2023 1131 followers on the page. Our Webpage is updated regularly by Head Office.

The AGM in September had no nominations for the position of President, and we spent two months without a complete Executive. Despite this, it has been a very full and, I think, successful year for the Branch. I thank the Executive for their support and resolve through the year, and the entire membership for your continued and dedicated commitment to nature conservation.



Gold Coast & Hinterland Branch

We have a great Committee of advocates, in the established tradition of this Branch.

Grateful thanks go to all these caring and conscientious campaigners:

Vice President, Sharon Quinlan, who not only continues her dedicated work for the protection of flying foxes but also is a keen fundraiser and member of animal ethics committees; Secretary, Andrew Stimson, who guides our Facebook page so well and keeps watch on a multitude of causes and submits consistent commentary to the press on environmental issues; Treasurer, Nicole, professional bookkeeper and self-starter who has valuable input re a significant number of local and wider campaigns; Liaison Officer, Rowena Biby, a talented researcher with a great regard and feeling for our natural heritage. Also, key supports of the Branch are Karina Waterman and Nicole Taylor, respected, effective and knowledgeable defenders of koalas; Mariacristina Saraceno, enthusiastic, well informed and thorough citizen scientist; Nancy Sutherland, a past, selfless and generous secretary of the Branch who continues to advise on fauna issues.

The branch is also grateful to past office bearers and loyal members and acknowledges the late Helen Horne, and life member and former treasurer Joan Mc Fadzean, former secretary and treasurer Ann Jurrjens and the many valued members who have supported the branch over the years. Jeannie White, past executive member has commendably launched a comprehensive publication on Gold Coast Wildlife.

Gold Coast Branch in June, along with Wildlife Queensland, became a member of the Fire Ant Prevention Coalition together with Agriculture, Nursery, and other Conservation Groups, to lobby for increased National and State response to this threat. A letter from the Branch to the press has been sent on this issue and campaigning for more adequate funding is continuing.

Ongoing is the issue of the Nerang National Park and the mountain bike trails within it. We expect the release of the Management Plan, arrived at after extensive meetings with stakeholders, that was sponsored by the State Government. We are hoping the outcome of the consultation, which did not contradict the Cardinal Principle, will be endorsed. Our secretary attended the Zoom meeting recently addressed by Peter Ogilvie, our State President, on the issue of the vital importance of the Cardinal Principle.

Lobbying re the above issue and the 'nature' of the guardianship of our National Parks by Government and volunteer bodies has also been a matter of concern and action, particularly by our treasurer and other campaigners. Also, our branch has supported the campaign re Toondah Harbour and the concerns over the status and respect for Ramsar protocols and our Moreton Bay.

Diverse groups were brought together to produce a Model Consultation, sponsored by the State Government, to design a Masterplan for the Spit. It was disappointing recently to have a developer propose a bungy jump tower and other paraphernalia in the botanically valuable Philip Park. Along with other local groups we were active in signalling our disapproval of this attempted private profit on public land scheme and at the time of this report the project appears to have lapsed. Similar opposition was expressed for a recent hotel development on the bayside which has displaced small local businesses, such as the whale watch tour, which

has been generous in its support and accommodation, on its boat, of scientific observers. There also may be some incursion into the sea bed via this development but Council Planning has passed it.

Commendable ongoing work via our koala sub-committee, who, via lobbying, rescue, and research, are endeavouring to tackle the shocking fact that our koalas are vulnerable to extinction. A submission was also sent to State Government re improving SEQ koala habitat regulations and WQ GC & H and Coomera Conservation Group, amongst its many koala protection initiatives, attend regular meetings re the new highway (Coomera Connector) focusing on its environmental impacts. We sent a formal request that the new koala road be considered as one whole entity under the EPBC Act but this was not accepted.

Our members attended the Greening the Gold Coast Forum hosted by GECKO. WQ GC & H attend the Gold Coast Environment Councils fortnightly campaign meetings and are members of the Community Alliance, a collection of local groups working for better planning outcomes. Our secretary liaised with the various climate action groups on the Coast, but we still lack a permanent rep at GCAN meetings, a very concerning problem as this, as well as species extinction, are the critical issues of our times.

Advice re legal matters, if needed, is given by Honorary Solicitor, David Spain, and appreciated, as are the fund-raising efforts of VP Sharon Quinlan who has ensured we are part of the recycling cash for cans scheme. Our parks and public spaces are part of our watch and GCC Council has received correspondence from us stating that a beachside community park is no more acceptable for sitting at a beach bar than the sands, which latter scheme we strenuously opposed.

Since very belated acceptance by some media that climate change is a real and present danger our Secretary, Andrew Stimson, has had success in sending numerous well researched letters to the press on the matter to contradict the sad pseudo-science that, shockingly, is still aired. We have had many requests via our Facebook and other inquiry sources to act locally on such diverse issues as the decapitated kangaroo found in school grounds, dingo trapping, tree clearing, speeding jet skis causing swan kill and many other issues.

The rakali and its nests on the Nerang River was a species of concern to the local River Keepers Group, a sub-committee of the Nerang Community Association and we are grateful to WQ State PlatypusWatch for help on this matter. A comprehensive river study is soon to be released by Council. Water Mining adjacent to the Springbrook World Heritage area is still an ongoing important local issue. A submission to GCC Council was made on this matter early in 2023. WQ member Ceris Ash via the SWAG group has kept vigil on this precious World Heritage Area, including a watch on the revived cable car scheme.

Our Annual General Meeting and Celebratory Dinner took place in March at the Historic Preece House in Nerang, so generously shared with us via the Nerang Community Association, a thirty-year-old local group steered by Derk and Lynn Ogden. Again, this important AGM occurred without our succeeding in updating our constitution, but we live in hope. Our annual Christmas gathering was also held in this charming historic house. Our hosting of the State's AGM and sixtieth anniversary and Southern Branches Get Together at Cedar Lake was a success and was supported by some excellent Guest Speakers. We owe a great debt of

gratitude to the Nerang Community Association for their help in making this a worthy celebration of sixty years of WQ.

Nuclear is an unclear pathway, hazardous, but currently being pushed as an energy solution. Commendations to QLD State Government for some strong alternative policies in place to strengthen our energy future safely and the bioregional planning, also an important initiative. Queensland's historic coal dependence is still a grave problem. Locally the Stop the Quarry at Oxenford, a group we support, continues litigation, in partnership with GC Council, re the Quarry adjacent to the Coomera River and its request for a century more of extraction.

Development interests are eyeing off a failed golf course and WQ members went to the meeting to support the local residents' group who want this haven for wildlife, which has lain idle for a while and become a refuge in the surrounding suburbia, purchased for green space. WQ GC & H continues with this campaign support. Meanwhile WQ GC & H will next year celebrate sixty years of challenging advocacy in an area of poor custodianship, rich in natural gifts. We had a number of members honoured at the GECKO awards night for their part in this challenge.

Hope is the name of a Coomera primary school student who has been going to the park at Coomera on the weekends and selling orange juice, to raise funds to save koalas. WQ GC & H have arranged with the local press to feature her story in an upcoming edition. It is Hope and her generation that we must remember as we, each in the best way we can, carry the Wildlife Preservation aspiration forward.



Ban Beach Bars protest, Kurrawa Beach, Gold Coast.



Kedron Brook Branch

Robert Standish-White, President

You've heard of the saying "Smile, things could be worse. So, I smiled and sure enough..."

Well, we thought we couldn't get much quieter than last year...

We have had ongoing random and disruptive weather events in Brisbane, but perhaps what we really need is an increase in membership to help reinvigorate the branch, much like many others.

We have ongoing events in the catchment, such as the monthly bird walks run by Peter Blackmore, and the amazing long-term work by Lyn and Ann Ellerman up at the Powerlink site at Wahminda Grove, for which we auspice the funds.

Again, our prime event of the year was the Student Catchment Immersion Program (SCIP) held in Kalinga Park in September. A lively group of students from various disciplines joined us to do a "fish snapshot" in Kedron Brook, take an observatory walk through the park and bushland, and help the local bushcare group with some weeding and planting. Following lunch, we got them to undertake an analysis and make recommendations on a local development on the Brook. We all enjoy learning from each other. Thanks to Mark Creyton for conceiving and continuing to support this initiative.

Another longstanding activity has been our fish snapshots at various sites along the Brook. Sadly, we only managed to get one done this year, at Mitchelton. Given we have to get into the water, it needs to be clear and manageable, which has been hard to coordinate during the warmer months when fish are active.

We are in the process reviewing available water testing kits due to the fact that the Horriba machine we have been lent by BCC over the years seems to have reached the end of its reliable life span.

Our vice-president Phil Rowland took advantage of the opportunity to do a first aid refresher course, and Secretary Jen Hocking listened in at the Lord Mayor's forum. In early March we had Robert Price conduct a talk and walk in the bush adjacent Kalinga Park, looking at weed species and how to address them, along with identifying trees. This included a couple of remnant Murrigan (*cryptocarpa*) trees hanging on amidst the copious weed species. He was most complimentary about the area under the care of the Kalinga Park Bushcare Group!

Thanks as ever to our committee Phil, Jan and treasurer Kathy Ran, along with Rachael Williams, and all our partners who put up with monthly meetings, random outings, and background angst! Thanks also to the Brisbane City Council and their cheerful and energetic creek ranger Nomusa Nzama who is so much part of what we do and chivvies us up to do more; we'll try Nom, we'll try!

Scenic Rim Branch

Ronda Green, President

It's been a quieter year this time for the Scenic Rim branch.

We finished the tree-planting and protective fence erection allowed by the grant from the Landcare Bushfire Recovery Grant program and completed the acquittal form. We are however continuing (unfunded) fauna surveys from September to March. This is because we ran out of time and good weather for completing all intended surveys by the end of summer this year. Continuing into the cool months would have complicated things, as reptiles become less active and migratory or nomadic birds move in or out of the district. We need to complete them in the next few months though, while the trees are still small. The idea is to compare species presence/absence and relative abundance as well as overall numbers of native species now with the situation in five- and ten-years' time, to see if our project is likely to have had any real effect.

Our biggest event for the year was the **Wildlife Expo** held at the Outlook in Boonah in August 2022, assisted by a \$1000 grant from central WPSQ to celebrate 60 years of WPSQ's activities.

Displays included: Wildlife of the Scenic Rim: an overview of local mammals, birds and other wildlife; Wildlife Corridors project in the Scenic Rim; History of WPSQ and of Scenic Rim WPSQ; Koala conservation; Brushed-tailed Rock-wallaby Conservation Network; Glider research; Quoll research; Bats; Landcare in the Scenic Rim; Land for Wildlife in the Scenic Rim; Caring for orphaned and injured wildlife; Native plant nurseries; Sustainable Wildlife Tourism; Sustainable population in Australia; Threatened species of the Scenic Rim; Local conservation issues



Presentations given:

- Brief history and poetry of Judith Wright, WPSQ cofounder, Scenic Rim resident for 20+ years
- An Overview of the Wildlife of the Scenic Rim. Ronda Green
- Brush-tailed rock-wallabies (by Hannah Thomas, presented by Karin Cox)
- The Logan Koala Project, and Koala-detection dogs. Ryan Lawrie
- Caring for wildlife. Tara Hunter, WildCare.
- Meet our wildlife. Martin Fingland (Gecko's Wildlife)
- Sustainable population for Australia. Simon Cole
- Citizen science research on koalas. Carney Matheson, Griffith University
- Land for Wildlife in the Scenic Rim. Catherine Madden, Land for Wildlife.
- Flying foxes, our nighttime gardeners. Joanie Lewis, Bats Queensland.
- Private enterprise facilities in National Parks: Sonya Underdahl, postgrad student studying ecotourism in Protected Areas

Activities included:

- how to sketch wildlife
- arts and crafts with native plants
- wildlife puzzle trail – fun for families
- koala-related activities

Committee member Ian Beale has continued to be very active in providing nesting boxes for glossy black cockatoos on his own property and elsewhere, and through Boonah Landcare has been successful in obtaining a grant for training volunteers to erect them (they need to be quite high). Ronda (chair) presented a talk on koala ecology at a workshop by the Fassifern Koala Protection Group in June.

We have become concerned that the main road leading west from Canungra to the Beaudesert-Beenleigh Road nowadays never seems to have raptors perched on the overhead wires, whereas a few years ago it was very common to see brown falcons, black-shouldered kites and nankeen kestrels there. We wrote to Council asking what pesticides are being used there, and received a response that Council were not using any. We have sent another query asking whether it is possible to find out what the turf farms and other agricultural pursuits are using but have not as yet heard back from them.

We also sent a query to Council about Todd Lane, a road reserve of about 4 km with centuries-old eucalypt trees that would be an excellent part of a wildlife corridor between the forests of the Kooralbyn area and the Birnam Range, along with a history of our attempts to find information on the possibility of it becoming an official corridor reserve instead of a road reserve, or whether some compromise was possible. Dale Anderson of LARC (Logan and Albert River Catchments) arranged a walk through the road reserve with the mayor and other councillors, pointing out its value as a corridor and also the historical and cultural value for the Munanjali people. Two committee members (Ronda and Darren Green) participated in this walk and spoke to the Councillors about its value for wildlife.

We are now planning a series of educational webinars about the wildlife of the Scenic Rim - details soon.

Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Branch

Our **branch AGM** was held in February with Claire Brown appointed as President and the other executives continuing in their roles. Sue Aspland and Paul Smith as Vice Presidents, Jude Crighton as Secretary and Judy Burns Treasurer. Helen Kershaw continues to produce our highly informative bi-monthly newsletters and Jenny Gursansky is our minute taker. Past Presidents, John Roberts and Anne Wensley are Committee Members.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all our members for their commitment and time. This year has been extremely busy with many 'Have Your Say' surveys, consultations, meetings, events, and workshops on many and various issues and topics resulting in many hours spent by members researching and contributing to these activities.

At the 2022 State AGM, we were proud and pleased when our Secretary **Jude Crighton** received the **Margaret Thorsborne Award**. In her nomination, Jill Chamberlain characterizes Jude as 'a tireless worker for the environment'. Jude is the branch Secretary and a past President who is also a member of the Sunshine Coast Council's Turtlecare volunteer group, is coordinator of the Watson Park Bushcare Group and is a member of various other dune and bushcare groups. Additionally, Jude organizes and leads free public guided walks during the Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival and organizes information stands at various events throughout the coast. Jude engages with all levels of government and represents Wildlife Queensland at many forums, events and in many reference and stakeholder groups.

Kathleen McArthur Lunch Hour Theatre Podcast Launch – WPSQ representatives and McArthur family members attended the launch event at the Nambour Library. Each week a new podcast is launched drawing from Kathleen's reminiscences and experiences on the Sunshine Coast. They are all now available at <https://shows.acast.com/kathleen-mcarthurs-lunch-hour-theatre-scripts-podcast> or wherever you get your podcasts.

Elaine Green's book "**Piece by Piece: Conservation and development on the Sunshine Coast 1960 - 2020**" has been selling well with over 230 copies now sold.

Branch bookmark – for our 60th year, a bookmark was designed and printed as a promotional and marketing tool for the branch. Featuring Kathleen McArthur's Christmas bells on one side, the bookmark is beautiful and is a great way to introduce WPSQ and encourage involvement. Many thanks to Helen's daughter Myra for the artwork and design.

Bribie Island Breakthrough – over the year, the size and impacts of the breakthrough have become more severe with many meetings and forums held to discuss the ongoing issues from the breakthrough of Bribie Island.

Issues have included the silting of channels affecting Caloundra Coastguard's ability to navigate the Passage and launch rescue boats, people and dogs impacting shorebirds and other wildlife on North Bribie from walking across at low tide, exposure of asbestos along the Onslow foreshore, higher tides with sand now covering walkways and mangroves. An independent report for the DES was delivered and concluded that the breakthrough was natural and not man made. Ongoing monitoring of the impacts from the breakthrough on Pumicestone Passage and the shoreline are continuing.

Caloundra Transport Corridor Upgrade (CTCU) – Jude Crighton represented WPSQ on the TMR Stakeholder Interest Group. Throughout the year there has been continued lobbying and advocacy for a 2-lane option rather than 4 for this proposed road through the southern sector of the Ben Bennett Bushland Park. Many meetings and walk throughs of the park have been

conducted with TMR, Council and consultants to show the significant value of the area, both environmental and social and to highlight issues such as the management and monitoring of runoff from the proposed roadway to maintain water quality in Ben Bennett Park and subsequently Pumicestone Passage which receives flows from the park via overland and piped infrastructure.

Inter-Urban Break – WPSQ has joined with Take Action for Pumicestone Passage (TAPP Inc.), the Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC), Caloundra Residents Association (CRA) and other environmentally conscious organisations to form an Alliance to protect and preserve the Northern Inter-Urban Break (NIUB) between Caloundra and the northern boundary of Greater Brisbane. The Alliance has taken the name of Protect Our Regional Inter-Urban Break Alliance (PORIUBA).

PORIUBA's OBJECTIVE

1. State Government provides statutory protection to the entire extent of the NIUB as defined by the Sunshine Coast Council, i.e., the southern boundary of the Caloundra South PDA (Aura), as a key deliverable of the *Shaping SEQ 2023 Update*.

Meetings have been held with key stakeholders including Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast Councils, Caloundra State Member, Jason Hunt MP and Stockland, owner of Halls Creek.

PORIUBA also focusses on educating the public about the value of a Green Belt between population areas of Brisbane and the Coast.

Point Cartwright Reserve and La Balsa Park Masterplan 2021 – 2041 – Quentin Brown led our response to the draft masterplan including the need for recognition and preservation of 1000 m² of littoral rainforest, acknowledging the Indigenous heritage and environmental significance and the biodiversity of the area. Other issues include taking dogs off-leash areas out of the forests and rocky foreshore, restoring degraded areas of the rainforest, and advocating for an alternative to the rock wall extension.

Sunshine Coast Council Draft Macropod Conservation Plan – on behalf of the branch, Elaine Green responded to the draft plan after discussion with Dr Elizabeth Brunton. Whilst welcoming the plan to conserve macropods, constructive criticism included the document being over-arching and lacking specific targets or measurable outcomes. WPSQ supported protection of macropods and their habitat through Council's planning processes, but action is needed now and not waiting for the new planning scheme. The maintenance and establishment of permanent wildlife corridors is crucial as many populations are currently under threat or are being dispersed from new developments.

Shelly Beach to Moffat Beach Coastal Study – the outcomes of the study were presented in April. The major outcome, with a focus on successful turtle nesting now and into the future, is a 40 metre transect trial across the Shelly Beach dune split into three zones. Cottontrees and their root systems will be removed in the seaward strip and replaced with foredune plantings, they will be managed in the middle section with other species planted to infill and will be retained on the landside area to mitigate light spill onto the nesting beach. The Pilot was submitted to EPBC referral in May with a possible commencement of works being September.

Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve – following many hours advocating and lobbying, we were pleased and relieved in November when the Sunshine Coast Council endorsed the new Caloundra Aerodrome Master Plan 2042 that did not include Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve as an expansion area.

Submissions on Development Applications – Jill Chamberlains forensic response to a proposal for a Tourist Park at Meridan Plains detailed misplacement of the Study Area in the southern Sunshine Coast and Hinterland region, missing vegetation covenants, alienation of rural and agricultural land, threats to wetlands with possible Christmas Bell presence, inadequate addressing of bushfire, flooding and acid sulfate soils and negative traffic impacts on Caloundra Road and Kawana Way. The proposal was subsequently not approved.

In another response, Jill has homed in on inadequacies in the developer’s proposal re bushfire, koala habitat, trapping of fauna prior to clearing and vegetation offsets in a proposal to reconfigure 4 lots into 17 in Palmwoods.

A submission was also written supporting Council’s original condition for developers of multi-storey units at Buddina, which provides for light mitigation features in the units to preserve turtle-friendly habitat on the beach. The developer’s application for material changes has not been approved.

Appropriate design and development to protect sea turtle nesting and hatching – we have sought a commitment from the Sunshine Coast Council to adopt and implement the new State Planning Policy Sea Turtle Sensitive Area Code: a model for Local Government with a favorable response received however, the new Sunshine Coast Council planning scheme has not yet been released.

Climate Risk Roundtable – following the joint Council declaration of a climate emergency, Sunshine Coast and Noosa Councils are working towards a Regional Climate Action Roadmap. We were represented at the Roundtable workshop that discussed disaster scenarios and managing risks.

Waste Management – WPSQ has written to Council urging action on the roll-out of Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) waste collection and to allow bagged soft plastics to be placed in current yellow-lid recycling for collection as happens in other states. A draft Waste Management strategy is currently under consultation.

Maleny Wood Expo – the Expo returned in 2023 and a steady stream of visitors attended the WPSQ stall to engage in our history and present activities. Elaine Green’s short talk covering 60 years of WPSQ including the background to conservation and development in her book *Piece by piece* was well received.

Aura Environment Day – walks through the Blackbutt Forest led by Faunawatch’s Rob Kernot and ecologist Rob Lamot were enthusiastically taken up. There was a strong presence from the Council including Bushcare, Waste Management and Responsible Pet Ownership with other environmental groups such as Mooloolah River Landcare and Barung Landcare in attendance.

Currimundi Climate Watch Trail – members were invited to a walk through with the App publicly launched in August. The council has also installed species information signs on the Trail along the south and north sides of Currimundi Lake.

Wild HeART Student Art Prize and Exhibition was held in September 2022 with 489 student artwork entries were received from north to Cairns, west to Longreach, south to Logan and many Sunshine Coast students and schools. The threatened species prize is named in honour



of Kathleen McArthur, and our branch and individual members have again contributed to the prize money for the award.

USC Environmental Student Prize – there were two recipients of WPSQ’s bursaries this year, Sonnie Flores, and Romney Edwards-Francis, for their respective investigations into the habits of the Red-tailed tropicbird, and Crocodile vocalisations. The 2021 recipient, Matt Mooney, presented a talk to members on his PhD, Rainforest Resilience and the Frontiers of Fire. Matt is in the first year of his PhD and is researching to establish the resilience of rainforest in increasing fire events.

The **Wildflower Festival** was again celebrated in August and September with well-attended walks in Ben Bennett Bushland Park, Isabel Jordan Bushland Reserve, the Golden Beach Mangrove Boardwalk and Kathleen McArthur Conservation Park. Thanks to all members who helped, particularly Sue Aspland, Jude Crighton, Helen Kershaw and Jenny Gursanscky.

Faunawatch – our Faunawatch project has continued with funding from Sunshine Coast Council’s Community Partnerships Program. This year twenty-eight surveys were conducted on Land for Wildlife properties with 297 species recorded. Total species by group:

Group	Species
Birds	148
Butterflies	46
Spiders	9
Frogs	10
Reptiles	14
Crustaceans	4
Invertebrates	18
Mammals	23
Dragonflies	25

Surveys in the Blackbutt Forest area of the Environment Protection Zone at Stocklands Aura continue. Thanks to Paul Smith for all his survey work and continuing to run the public Faunawatch walks on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens and on the 4th Monday of the month at locations across the coast and hinterland.

Highlights from the Monday faunawatch outings this year included the sighting of a pair of Fairy Gerygones, which are rare in southern Queensland in Ben Bennett Bushland Park, a special sighting of a Buff-banded Rail at Coochin Creek and seeing Richmond Birdwing Butterflies in flight at Point Cartwright Reserve.

Workshop to review Branch Operations – following on from the member survey conducted in 2022, a member workshop was held to gain a clearer consensus on the way forward in our 60th year. Members agreed on the Mission and Vision statements, revising, and updating language used but not diminishing the intent of. It was generally agreed that more publicity is desirable, the branch is committed to events and a strategic planning day should be held each year to identify and prioritise issues. The branch Facebook has been reinstated with posts now being added on a regular basis.



Top: Buff-banded rail, Bottom: Fairy gerygone
© <http://sunshinecoastbirds.blogspot.com/>



Toowoomba Branch

Cam Mackenzie

I approached Council a couple of years ago about the challenges of maintaining the incorporation status of our Toowoomba Branch. I indicated I'm a financial member of the Queensland Association of State School Principals (QASSP) that is officially Incorporated, but we have regional Branches across Queensland that are not Incorporated. The Branches do have a President (who simply chairs the meeting), Secretary (who simply takes minutes) and Treasurer (who presents the financial reports that are managed by the Head Office). So the Branch functions as a sub-committee of the Incorporated entity without any of the regulatory requirements under the Incorporation Act and administrative responsibilities through to the Office of Fair Trade.

As a financial member of Wildlife Queensland (since 1980) I pay one subscription to the state body that chooses to distribute a percentage of these membership fees on a pro-rate basis to the Branches. This is done through an actual funds transfer into the Branches bank account, whereas as in the QASSP Branch situation, the pro-rata dispersal is a ledger entry into a spreadsheet as all the funds are held by the Head Office and is therefore accountable for all financial transactions on behalf of the Branch. Therefore, the one entity completes all the Annual Returns with associated audited financial reports to the Office of Fair Trade. This obviously could be an administrative burden on WQ Head Office.

The other possible challenge would be unincorporated Branches could not apply for grants as they would not be incorporated nor have their own ABN; however, they could use WQ Head Office as the auspicing organisation. Again, that could be an administrative burden for WQ Head Office.

We held a Toowoomba Branch meeting in August, and we discussed the issue of the challenges of resurrecting Incorporation status and we decided to survey our current members, which has actually increased over the last few weeks mainly due to the HUGE issue of the Transport and Main Roads proposal for a North South bypass highway around Toowoomba that cuts through significant wildlife habitat. Nothing like a potential HUGE project like this to activate concerned citizens. I haven't created our distributed this survey yet.

Anyway, I look forward to hearing other Branches' comments to this situation.

Townsville Branch

We held our AGM on 26th March 2023 in the now familiar shelter shed in the Palmetum and while a new treasurer was elected, president and secretary stayed the same. There was much discussion about the future of the branch with nothing resolved except to continue. Membership for the year continued fluctuating around 60, though with a much smaller number of active members.

During the year there were the usual monthly walks (avoiding the two hottest months) open to members and non-members, which attracted varying numbers. As car-pooling isn't popular, field trips have been chosen to areas closer to town to reduce our branch carbon exhaust-print.

Some members met with representatives of the Invasive Species Council and other groups in February about the yellow crazy ant infestation and later went on a field trip to an affected property in the Alligator Creek area. They witnessed first-hand how these ants kill and repel wildlife from areas they invade. People were encouraged to photograph ants around Townsville and upload to iNaturalist as part of an ant awareness campaign and as a way to detect new infestations.

Camera-trapping for mahogany gliders *Petaurus gracilis* continued at Mutarnee but only sugar gliders *P. notatus* were photographed on the eastern side of the block, and no gliders on the western side, where we had photographed mahoganies two years earlier. A prolonged wet season shortened the time suitable to put out cameras.

We were helped considerably on one trip by the bush nursery's Skilling Queenslanders for Work trainees and their team leader. They also helped us in a joint effort with a JCU PhD student to put out 20 cameras at Ollera Creek in December. The branch also sent representatives to a workshop about setting up long-term monitoring of mahogany gliders in selected areas in the coming years.



Trip to Little Bohle River, watching a Great Egret © Liz Downes

Upper Dawson Branch

Richard Moffat - President

Overview

The Branch has lost some members through ageing and re-location, and we welcomed a new member in May. Assistance from non-resident member Viola Temple-Watts in planning and executing our major activity for the year has been most encouraging. The PlatypusWatch eDNA local sampling continues under Tamielle Brunt. We continue partnering with Fitzroy Basin and Dawson Catchment Associations, Banana Shire, local newsletters, and local resource companies, and make an annual donation to Environmental Defenders Office. On the initiative of Loraine Hellyer, we have developed the content for a “Birds of the Dawson” book to be printed in July 2023.

Targets achieved:

Target – ***bring a friend*** - Two members brought friends to meetings, and one joined the Branch.

Target - ***responding to threats to wildlife & biodiversity*** – On advice from Dr Matt Currell of RMIT, we wrote to Environment Minister Plibersek opposing SANTOS’s proposed discharge of Coal SeamGas Water into the Dawson River. This proposal was not approved and a full EIS is to be carried out. We also wrote opposing a short-cut to approval for the Towrie Gas project in the Arcadia Valley and responded to the EIS of CTSCo project for a trial injection of captured CO2 into the Precipice Aquifer near Moonie. We were encouraged on learning that representation from the Baralaba ‘Save the Dawson’ group has resulted in a reduction of the proposed Baralaba mine footprint.

Target – ***provide input to wildlife data bases*** from local area - Butterfly weekend recorded 24 species on the Butterflies Australia app.

Target – ***Hold quarterly meetings and annual camp out*** - Achieved



Richard at Boongoondoo

Events

WPSQ 60th Anniversary Butterfly Weekend 15 & 16 October – 30 participants (24 members) With planning by Viola Temple-Watts, financial and design support from WPSQ, funding from Glencore and Aeris, and printing by the Callide Electorate Office, a Butterfly Weekend was held at Taroom and Theodore 15-16 October 2022 led by lepidopterist Mr Cliff Meyer, with thirty attendees and 24 species observed.

Our Branch sponsored a public presentation by Dr Matt Currell of RMIT in Taroom on “The impacts of Coal Seam Gas extraction and effluent discharge on surface and underground water assets of the Upper Dawson” in late October. Ten members attended.

The highlight of the late May weekend outing to Lake Dunn, proposed by John Hay and coordinated by Margery Joyce, was the trail around the lake in which many native creatures were depicted in (mostly) metal sculptures.



Plans for the future

- print “Birds of the Dawson” for sale to members & tourists and inclusion in libraries,
- plan & build bird hide near Taroom,
- hold quarterly meetings and annual camp-outs,
- write monthly reports for local and state newsletters,
- respond to known threats to the wildlife and well-being of the Dawson Valley,
- respond to infrastructure, water & extraction projects that impact on the land, its wildlife, and its biodiversity,
- support the Council in its advanced cat management strategy,
- every member to invite a friend to outings,
- contribute to databases of wildlife.

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