



Healthy
Land & Water

Annual Report
FY2022/23

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Traditional Owner Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the place we now live in has been nurtured by Australia's First Peoples for tens of thousands of years. We believe the spiritual, cultural, and physical consciousness gained through this custodianship is vital to maintaining the future of our region.

Welcome from the Chair

As we reflect on the achievements of Healthy Land & Water over the past year, it is clear that we've been operating at an unprecedented pace. We are responding to a dynamic landscape shaped not only by societal demands and population growth, but increasingly by the climatic pressures facing South East Queensland and our nation as a whole.

Our work to help nature respond to climate extremes, which in turn makes our natural systems more resilient, has never been more important.

Our environmental realities have shifted quickly. We are seeing firsthand the acceleration in the cycle and intensity of floods, fires, and droughts. The once predictable timeline from flood to dry, which historically took several years, has condensed dramatically.

Wherever we are in South East Queensland, we are seeing it. I'm in the Scenic Rim, where we've been fighting fires, while the nearby Western Downs, is now facing electric storms. The frequency of these climatic events underscores the urgency of addressing the climatic challenges that confront us. These occurrences serve as stark reminders of the evolving nature of our climate and the imperative to adapt swiftly to protect our communities and natural ecosystems.

On the ground, in the aftermath of the disaster-scale flooding earlier in 2022, our team certainly rose to the occasion. Our rapid and comprehensive response highlighted the critical role Healthy Land & Water plays in providing essential assessments and valuable insights to government agencies, enabling effective responses in times of need.

Our commitment to science-driven planning and management actions is more critical than ever, as we collaborate with partners to safeguard and improve our natural assets.

The demands on our expertise have grown exponentially, with an increasing call for our expertise and thought leadership not only at the regional level but on the national and international stage. This is set to continue in the coming year, with stakeholders keen to learn more about our newly developed ESG strategy. This approach marks a strategic cornerstone that not only reflects our commitment to environmental, social, and governance principles but also guides our trajectory toward sustainable and responsible business practices.

This was just one of many strategic targets we set for ourselves in the first year of our bold new *Strategic Plan (2023-2027)*. Our new guiding plan, which was developed in collaboration with our extensive stakeholder network, signifies a definitive shift from 'supporting' change to 'leading' it. More detail on our new guiding approach is set out on page 5 of this report.

The achievements of Healthy Land & Water would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the multitude of individuals, partners, and collaborators who have exceeded our expectations. The influence we wield is a testament to the forward-thinking leadership of our partners, who collectively fund and support our vital work for the region. We extend a special acknowledgement to the dedicated individuals who volunteer on our working groups and committees, playing a pivotal role in shaping our evidence-based actions. It is through this broad collaboration and extensive networks and input that our organisation continues to deliver evidence-based action for the benefit of South East Queensland and beyond.

We are more focused than ever on our commitment to supporting First Nations, acknowledging the rich cultural heritage and wisdom they bring to the forefront. By fostering genuine partnerships, embracing inclusivity, and actively engaging in initiatives that promote economic empowerment, education, and community development, we can contribute meaningfully to the advancement and wellbeing of First Nations peoples.

I express my sincere appreciation to my fellow Board Directors for their invaluable contributions, and on behalf of the Board, extend our thanks to CEO Julie McLellan, the Executive of Healthy Land & Water and our team for their dedication to the long-term liveability and prosperity of South East Queensland.

As the Olympic and Paralympic Games approach Brisbane and South East Queensland in 2032, we are excited about the potential transformative impact on the region's sustainability. Healthy Land & Water has actively collaborated with members, Traditional Owners, the broader community, scientists, and policymakers to contribute to state-of-the-art regional monitoring and natural resource management planning.

We recognise that our next challenge lies in scaling up our efforts to build a healthier, more resilient region. There is much to be done, and we are committed to bringing even more partners, action and investment together to protect this region on behalf of our biodiversity and people.



Stephen Robertson
Chair

Chief Executive Officer's report

This year has been monumental for us, marked by the successful conclusion of the 5-year Regional Land Partnership (RLP) Program, delivered in collaboration with the Australian Government. This program, a cornerstone of our work, addressed critical threatening processes to the Moreton Bay Ramsar Wetland, supported Landcare groups, Indigenous communities, and industry, and championed projects that contributed to the sustainability of our region.

We are working with government to build on this success, looking to secure an extension of our regional delivery partnership for another five years. This continuation will allow us to amplify our impact and build upon the foundation of over 15 years of dedicated service.

Our commitment to delivering on-ground work in targeted areas remains unwavering, further solidifying our position as a leader in natural resource management.

Participation in scientific conferences and forums has allowed us not only to showcase our work but also to tap into innovation forums. The collaborative effort of our team and partners has resulted in a strong trajectory of project growth, with over \$15 million in on-ground projects and numerous training and community programs delivered in South East Queensland.

This year, Healthy Land & Water has concentrated on defining our strengths and enhancing our operations. Our proactive efforts include a climate active baseline assessment, implementing a robust communication and engagement strategy and establishing a commercial partnership team. With our new strategic plan has come a keen emphasis on customer-centricity. We aspire to grow not just in scale but in our capacity to deliver greater value to the South East Queensland community, ensuring the preservation of our cherished lifestyle. Our commitment to expanding and fortifying our business is exemplified by the introduction of new Partnership Manager roles.

Our customer-centric focus is not just external-facing, it also extends to our organisation and staff. Our focus on people and culture is demonstrated through wellbeing programs, extensive learning and development opportunities, and investment in our people leaders to foster a positive culture of change. The establishment of a Portfolio Management Office underscores our commitment to delivering innovative projects efficiently. This extends to prioritising continual improvement and commitment to Work Health & Safety. We are proud of our year-on-year improvement in the Quality Management System, and retention of ISO 9001:14001 certification.

In alignment with our commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles, we have developed a comprehensive ESG Strategy, aiming to achieve climate neutrality by 2027. Our Climate Risk Matrix evaluates the feasibility and impacts of climate change on our works in South East Queensland, ensuring strategic investments for climate resilience.

As we look ahead, our ESG strategy is poised to take off, reinforcing our position as a leading natural resource management body. The integration of material ESG factors into our decisions and operations is a testament to our mission to create strong returns for our investors, drive value, and create better outcomes for the people and communities in South East Queensland.

I am particularly proud of our involvement in groundbreaking projects such as the Brisbane River Nature Positive initiative, in collaboration with Landscape Finance Labs. Other highlights include our partnership with Earth Security to investigate and assess suitable coastal areas for the restoration of mangroves to protect significant infrastructure across South East Queensland, with the additional opportunity for blue carbon credits. Also working with modelling experts and our own internal knowledge research team to develop innovative tools like the Bayesian Network for threat abatement and habitat restoration. Our reimagining of the Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program and contributions to the legacy initiative for the Olympic and Paralympic Games further exemplify our commitment to cutting-edge solutions.

This undertaking is guided by our unwavering commitment to our organisational values and nurturing Healthy Land & Water's culture, marking a pivotal chapter in our journey towards a more sustainable and resilient region. I extend my deepest gratitude to our partners, collaborators, and the incredible Healthy Land & Water team. Your dedication and support have been instrumental in our success this year. I would like to pass on a special thanks to my Executive Team and our supportive Board for their trust, guidance, and commitment. Thank you for another year of success, collaboration, and impactful contributions to the wellbeing of South East Queensland.



Julie McLellan
CEO

Strategic Plan

We are proud of our bold new Strategic Plan (2023-2027)

The new plan was driven by our stakeholders and has an overarching purpose which encapsulates who we are, what we do and why we do it.

We are excited to be **leading the change that will deliver an environment for future generations to thrive.**



Directing the investment into South East Queensland's environmental future

Green Games 2032 | With our partners we are shaping and delivering strategies towards a more sustainable Olympic and Paralympic Games.

ENVestor | Underpinned by our region's environmental plan, we are developing a go-to platform for informed investment to bolster and improve environmental works in South East Queensland.



Delivering transformative environmental + community change

Go-to voice | Advocating for the environment and championing evidence-based investment to support liveability in South East Queensland.

Creating value | Connecting people with targeted, innovative, and impactful on-ground works programs that improve the environment.

Sought out | We are independent and trusted partners, bringing environmental credibility to those who collaborate with us to achieve impactful outcomes for our region.



Creating connections between people, place + culture

Stakeholders | Our strength is achieved by bringing strong multi-faceted partnerships together. We have meaningful relationships with First Nations and our staff are innovation leaders in natural resource management.

Power partners | We have an ever-growing network of power partners who amplify the influence of our network and who advocate and co-invest.

PURPOSE

Lead the change that will deliver an environment for future generations to thrive.

VISION

To be recognised regionally and globally for our innovative pathways that deliver positive environmental change.

On ground impact, underpinned by science & evidence.

About us



ABOUT US

Expert knowledge. Enviable partnerships.



Science + research

We are experts in research, monitoring, data analysis and designing environmental solutions.

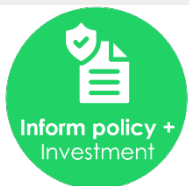
We help people understand the condition and threats to our environments so we can ensure the sustainable use of our natural environment long into the future.



Training + capacity

Tailored training and development workshops, awareness-raising campaigns and capacity building.

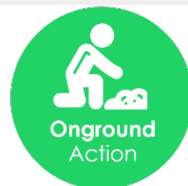
We educate and empower people and communities on the best ways to improve and protect the environment for future generations to thrive.



Informing policy + investment

Driving and influencing decisions, policy and actions to improve the environment.

We have 23+ years of data and expertise which is used by governments setting policy, communities deciding action, and corporate investors seeking genuine sustainable investment options alike.



On-ground action

Targeted, innovative and impactful on-ground works that improve the environment.

We have led many thousands of projects to restore waterways and landscapes, improve native habitats, manage weeds, protect native species, and improve the sustainability and liveability of built environments and urban areas.



Collaboration + people power

Bringing together partnerships to co-create and leverage outcomes utilising insights and experiences.

We are known for our enviable and growing networks that underpin our ability to work in partnership with Traditional Owners, government, private industry, utilities and the community.

Healthy Land & Water is the **peak environmental group for South East Queensland**. For over 20 years it has been dedicated to investing in and leading initiatives to build the prosperity, liveability, and sustainability of our 'future region'. **Healthy Land & Water is focused on delivering an environment for future generations to thrive.**

Our success and strength stems from our extensive knowledge, science and evidence which informs investment in our environment. We are experts in research, monitoring, evaluation, and project management. Our team has led many thousands of projects to restore waterways and landscapes, improve native habitats, manage weeds, protect native species, inform policy, and educate communities on the best ways to improve and protect the environment.

Working in partnership with Traditional Owners, government, private industry, utilities and the community, Healthy Land & Water delivers innovative and science-based solutions to challenges affecting the environment.

Through a combination of scientific expertise and on-ground management works, Healthy Land & Water **leads and connects through science and actions that will preserve and enhance our natural assets and support resilient regions long into the future.**

Big data: driving decisions

Big data, world-leading analytics, and on-ground experience spanning 23+ years.

Our region is one of the few in the world to have access to such a wealth of long-term knowledge about environmental health.

Few people know that SEQ's monitoring and Report Card model was one of the first globally, and has subsequently been used as the base for report cards which have been developed across Australia and the world over the last two decades.

South East Queensland is loved for its beautiful and biodiverse landscapes and iconic waterways and coastal areas. As people flock to live, work and play in South East Queensland, the pressures on our region are rising and much more needs to be done to protect waterway and landscape health – and our community's quality of life.

While advances in technology and best practices are underpinning the development of an array of new cutting-edge tools and systems to help turn this around, we also need to attract more investment and partnerships so we can do more faster.

Directing every bit of investment to the places it will yield the biggest return for our region is essential and will increasingly see Healthy Land & Water called on for data, advice, and on-ground deployment of key works.

NRM Plan

The SEQ NRM Plan encompasses the community's priorities that drive strategic action.

South East Queensland's projects are all guided by our region's Natural Resource Management Plan, which is a 'living document' that evolves with changing awareness, priorities and issues. The Australian Government's National Landcare Program supported the recent review of local priorities by grassroots local organisations across South East Queensland.

Trusted advisors

As trusted advisors to government across all levels, Healthy Land & Water is well placed to guide, act and facilitate change, providing evidence-based solutions to drive and influence decisions, policy and actions.

Healthy Land & Water unites key stakeholders from over 300 state and local government organisations, industry bodies, research institutions and community groups to drive the delivery of tangible on-ground natural resource management actions.

There is no more pressing challenge than the impacts of a changing climate and population growth on people, livelihoods, and our environment. We work closely with our partners to carry out important projects on the ground. At the same time, we focus on conducting vital research to better understand environmental impacts. We prioritise sharing knowledge, creating innovative solutions, advocating for policy changes, and building strong networks of stakeholders. All of this is part of our mission to promote stewardship and collaborative action.

Why it's **important**

Maintaining healthy landscapes and waterways is not just important for wildlife and ecosystems.

A healthy environment also supports a vibrant economy, strong livelihoods, great lifestyles and the happiness and wellbeing of the community.



Protecting and enhancing our wildlife and ecosystems



Supporting the lifestyles, happiness, and wellbeing of our community



Ensuring we remain a destination of choice for our visitors



Underpinning jobs, livelihoods, and a vibrant economy



Ensuring priorities support our communities in the best way possible



Our region



OUR REGION

One of Australia's most desirable & fastest growing regions

South East Queensland attracts people from around the world because of its climate, liveability, economic opportunities, quality education, biodiversity, natural assets and affordable living.

It is home to around 3.5 million people and is expected to grow by almost 2 million people over the next 25 years.

This growth is exciting, but it brings with it some inherent challenges in managing the region to ensure all the demands on these resources are balanced, so future South East Queensland can continue to be a frontrunner as a region where people love to live, learn, work, invest and visit.



A biodiversity hotspot

Our region is a biodiversity hotspot with unique and ecologically important areas, including Moreton Bay, Ramsar wetlands, two adjoining UNESCO Biosphere Reserves (Noosa and the Sunshine Coast), and many outstanding natural assets. These areas are not only of immense environmental value but are also essential to our local economies, cultural heritage and resilience.

South East Queensland is known for being beautiful, biodiverse, populated and climate change affected.



\$40 billion
estimated annual value of
SEQ's ecosystem services



~2400
native fauna species



~6000
flora species



40% of Queensland's
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander population



9 years
until we showcase
SEQ to the world



\$14 billion
tourism industry in
SEQ per annum



1.65 M
number of jobs



67,000
average annual
population growth

Getting ready to showcase the region

The Olympic and Paralympic Games will showcase us to the world in 2032.

Our aim is to direct investment and action to flip the narrative from decline to opportunity and position our beautiful region for success in the lead up to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and well beyond.

Biodiversity



BIODIVERSITY

Threaded through all our projects is the protection of biodiversity

The vast majority of our work has a positive impact on biodiversity and the protection of native and threatened species. Expertise is embedded across each of our teams to ensure biodiversity outcomes are delivered in tandem with the environmental and sustainability objectives each project is seeking to deliver.

Activities that support biodiversity can take a wide variety of forms, such as habitat restoration, conservation initiatives, sustainable resource management, and education and awareness programs.

Targeted biodiversity outcomes

We also deploy targeted conservation efforts that ensure the survival and flourishing of threatened and endangered species.

This year was the final year of a major 5-year Australian Government initiative which supported vital targeted biodiversity conservation action.

This National Landcare Program drove the deployment of biodiversity-specific projects aimed squarely at safeguarding critical habitats, promoting species recovery, and supporting research that contributes to a deeper understanding of our natural world.

It included a substantial environmental program focused on the conservation of marine and coastal environments, the protection of cultural landscapes, flood recovery assessments, community and landholder-based capacity building programs, the restoration of critically endangered ecosystems, and shorebird protection. It also dovetailed with a series of related works under the Queensland Government Natural Resource Investment Program.

We are currently briefing key governmental departments on their essential role in continuing to support biodiversity and conservation outcomes for Australia.

All these efforts are essential for preserving the rich diversity of life on earth and ensuring the wellbeing of ecosystems.

Read on for a snapshot of a few of our biodiversity initiatives in the 2022/23 financial year.



Ecosystem health and resilience

Ecosystems are the foundation of biodiversity, and their health and resilience are paramount to the wellbeing of all living organisms (including people!). Throughout the year, we have worked to restore and maintain the vitality of diverse ecosystems, from wetlands to forests, and marine habitats to grasslands. These efforts not only enhance biodiversity, but also strengthen the ecological services that these ecosystems provide.



Community engagement and education

Our commitment extends to fostering a sense of responsibility and connection within our communities. We believe that by engaging with the public and imparting knowledge about the importance of biodiversity, we can inspire individuals to become stewards of the environment. Through educational programs, public outreach, and partnerships, we have empowered people to take action and make sustainable choices that benefit biodiversity.



Measuring impact

Data is essential in assessing our efforts. By measuring the impact of our conservation programs and initiatives, we gain valuable insights into their effectiveness. This data-driven approach allows us to adapt and refine our strategies to maximise positive outcomes for biodiversity.



Partnerships and collaborations

Collaboration is fundamental to our success. We have worked alongside government agencies, NGOs, First Nations communities, and other stakeholders, fostering partnerships that leverage diverse expertise and resources. Together, we have achieved significant inroads in preserving biodiversity and restoring natural habitats.

Eastern Bristlebird bushfire recovery

Eastern Bristlebird bushfire recovery

The sound of an eastern bristlebird was reported for the first time in three years in Queensland.

It was music to the ears of researchers when they captured the audio at one of the few unburnt locations after the Black Summer bushfires, which had greatly impacted eastern bristlebird distribution.

The discovery was made by BirdLife Australia, who deployed acoustic monitors as part of surveys supported by Healthy Land & Water through funding from the Australian Government.

No fewer than 350 eastern bristlebird calls were recorded by five monitors in July and August 2022.

It was welcome sound to the ears of conservationists.

In a bid to protect this endangered species, Australian Government funding enabled Healthy Land & Water to collaborate with private landholders to clear weeds from 37 hectares of crucial eastern bristlebird habitat.

In addition, Queensland Parks and Wildlife conducted ecological burning in a nearby national park. These efforts collectively enhanced the condition and size of the habitat, which was especially beneficial for the continued existence of dense native grass tussocks used by the birds for nesting.



The endangered eastern bristlebird singing in the hills of SEQ after not being seen or heard here for three years.



Callan Alexander (BirdLife Australia) with an acoustic monitor which records eastern bristlebirds.

**37 hectares of
priority eastern
bristlebird
habitat
improved**



Restoring fish habitat

Fishers restoring fish habitat

Restoring the once-thriving fish populations of iconic SEQ rivers.

This initiative came from a community desire to improve fish stocks by restoring fish habitat to multiply local fish stock and increase biodiversity.

In collaboration with OzFish, First Nations peoples, and Councils, Healthy Land & Water successfully managed the first subtidal shellfish habitat restoration trial in Queensland.

The project, which was supported by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, included the development, creation, and deployment of artificial shellfish reef structures to regenerate the once-prevalent ecosystem. On top of that, was the erection of erosion control structures and regeneration work completed on key saltmarsh and wetland areas. This included installing fencing and natural vehicle deterrent structures, which not only prevented vehicle access but also provided fish habitat. These measures allowed for the natural regeneration of the site.

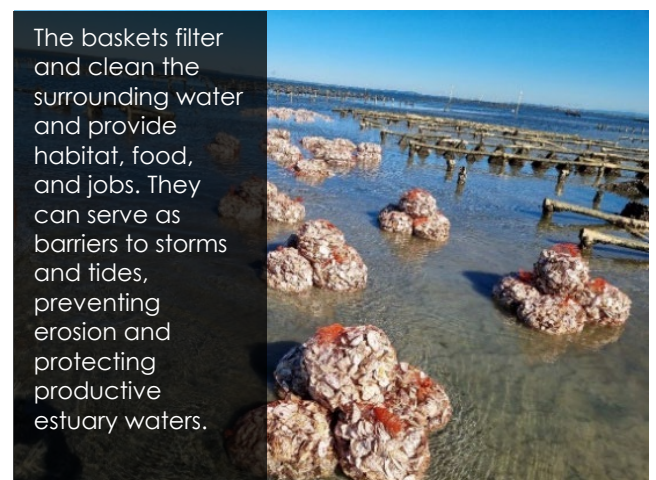
The project also included targeted planting in key areas amongst a range of other activities such as a wetland training day and educational signage deployed to enhance community awareness and skills.

Activities were deployed through three Fishers for Fish Habitat chapters, formed to progress locally specific initiatives, including: Central Moreton Bay, Logan Albert River and Maroochy, and Northern Moreton Bay.

The project's success was sped along by the large collaborative effort, which has fostered ongoing engagement with the fishing community. The fish habitat projects left a lasting legacy of collaboration and restoration while setting the stage for future rehabilitation efforts.



One of the activities included a novel project trialing artificial oyster shellfish reefs to improve marine habitat and increase fish biodiversity.



The baskets filter and clean the surrounding water and provide habitat, food, and jobs. They can serve as barriers to storms and tides, preventing erosion and protecting productive estuary waters.

Moreton Bay

Ramsar wetland

Work to protect our internationally significant Ramsar wetland

We are fortunate to have an internationally recognised wetland of significance in our backyard.

This year marked the fifth and final year of a large-scale initiative tackling threats to and building resilience into Quandamooka (Moreton Bay).

Moreton Bay is a popular destination for tourists and locals, and is home to some of Australia's most significant wetlands. Parts of the bay are listed as a Ramsar site, which is an official listing as a wetland of international importance.

The area includes the vegetated sand islands of Bribie, Moreton, and North and South Stradbroke. It contains habitats supporting a huge array of biodiversity, including many iconic native species and a number of threatened plant and animal species.

The initiative was supported through funding from the Australian Government and has been an incredible opportunity to connect Traditional Owners, passionate stakeholders, land managers and the community for effective collaboration that enhances the natural assets and tackles threats posed to the Ramsar site. Just two of the Moreton Bay Ramsar Stakeholder Network meetings this year involved over 35 organisations, fostering valuable learning and information sharing.

The projects led on-ground are something that we are extremely proud of.

Some recent project highlights



2,400 hectares managed for pests, including targeted control of feral pigs on Mulgumpin (Moreton Island) and fox populations on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). Monitoring indicates a significant reduction in both pests, benefiting coastal ecosystems and native wildlife.



60 hectares of Ramsar restored and 50 hectares of coastal wetland ecosystem maintained through a combination of weed removal, maintenance and/or planting. These efforts have been key for enhancing Ramsar coastal ecosystems, including mangrove areas, saltmarsh communities and sub-coastal flood plains. These habitats are crucial for threatened flora and fauna species including migratory shorebirds and wader birds, acid frogs, koalas and our keystone pollinators, grey-headed flying-foxes.



Sediment held on farm with a novel erosion control trial with pineapple farmers using a polymer. Analysis of monitoring data confirmed the effectiveness of the polymer in preventing soil loss. This project also helped improve monitoring methods, particularly in measuring microtopography using drones.

Migratory shorebirds

Migratory shorebird species rely on South East Queensland's coastal wetlands for food resources and seven of the 38 species are nationally threatened.

Protecting migratory shorebirds

A 3-year project focusing on conserving migratory shorebirds in Moreton Bay has seen a suite of priority on-ground actions implemented. As the project came to a close this year, some great new signage has been erected informing people about how to interact with their landscapes to protect this important species which is in global decline. There have been targeted track closures at 47 priority sites to reduce disturbance. Habitat conditions have been enhanced at eight sites.

The Australian Government funded program underpinned successful collaboration with Traditional Owners, governments, community, industry and researchers. This enhanced knowledge and regional conservation efforts for roosting and foraging habitats, surpassing what could be measured solely by the project's official goals.

Some of the achievements included:

- **A bay-wide census:** The findings provided a comprehensive understanding of species diversity and numbers along the entire coast. The census found 4,500 fewer birds in Moreton Bay compared to a similar one in 2008, signalling that ongoing conservation action and monitoring is needed.
- **The trialling of two floating roosts in Moreton Bay:** While resident pied oystercatchers used these structures, migratory shorebirds were seen foraging nearby at low tide and flew over the site at other times, but were not seen roosting on them, likely due to the timing of the installation. This great collaboration with OzFish and Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation (QYAC) from February to June 2023 attracted oysters and marine invertebrates, with a large number recorded at the Pumicestone Passage site.
- **New research:** In partnership with the Queensland Wader Study Group and The University of Queensland, the improved knowledge of foraging habitats found significant differences in the responses of individual species to sediment composition and penetrability and distance from roost sites.
- **Habitat mapping developed:** This mapping will play a vital role in the Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning review and state and local government planning and supports implementation of targets in the *South East Queensland Natural Resource Management Plan*. The mapping was developed with data from Queensland Wader Study Group, Gold Coast Shorebirds and Healthy Land & Water.
- **Support for ongoing shorebirds monitoring and capacity building:** This included support to Queensland Wader Study Group and Gold Coast Shorebirds.



Land



LAND

Our work is focussed on land conservation, sustainable agriculture, and restoration

This essential work not only focusses on healthier more resilient, more productive land, but also supporting the wellbeing of our communities.

Land use in our region is diverse, with urban and industrial areas, forestry in native and plantation forests, national parks, and dryland and irrigated production of sugar, dairy, beef, grain, fruit and vegetables.

Our Sustainable Agriculture team remains devoted to supporting land managers in improving landscape health and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. By doing so, we ensure that agricultural production areas continue to provide long-term benefits to our community and the environment.

Our Land Restoration program provides systems-based solutions for landscapes, including deploying targeted on-ground works, to help landholders better understand and improve soil health while also helping them to develop solutions to address climate resilience, water retention, and water quality, particularly in drought-prone regions.

Through our work with partner organisations, we have showcased innovative tools and techniques that are being used to inform sound land management decisions and improve the production value of landscapes by reducing erosion risk, improving soil health, and protecting groundcover.

Through our support for on-ground trials and research, we are finding better management approaches for drought-affected landscapes, and through our workshops and training events, we are bringing farmers together to help strengthen networks and share experiences.

Read on for a snapshot of a few of our land restoration initiatives in the 2022/23 financial year.



Sustainable agriculture

Providing productivity, profitability, and sustainability services for farmers is crucial for supporting agricultural practices that are efficient, economically viable, and environmentally responsible. These services aim to help farmers increase their yields, optimise resource use, and ensure the long-term sustainability of their operations.



Soil health & vegetation

Supporting land managers to improve soil condition and manage vegetation cover to improve natural values, biodiversity, and production outcomes while mitigating emerging risks.



Resilient landscapes

On-ground action directly improving and protecting landscapes including gully repair, the implementation of in-stream engineered erosion control structures, promoting changes in landholder behaviour, large-scale weed control initiatives, and the preservation of koala and lungfish habitats.



Empowered landholders & communities

Building the capacity of land managers and communities to address the risk of adverse events, protect natural capital, and take advantage of opportunities for production industries in the face of challenges such as climate change including floods and droughts, weeds, pests, and diseases.

**Productivity.
Profitability.
Sustainability.
Community.**

Sustainable agriculture



Healthy Pastures field day at Yandina

Sustainable agriculture

Agriculture in South East Queensland plays a vital role in food security and the economic wellbeing of our region, contributing significantly to the local economy and the fabric of rural communities.

As the dominant land-use in South East Queensland, agriculture is a key contributor to the region's economy and social fabric of our rural and hinterland communities.

South East Queensland's primary producers are stewards of significant land resources.

Our farmers are on the front line playing a key role in food security and the economic productivity of our region.

Our sustainable agriculture team are well known faces out in the field, as they move around the region sharing the latest best practices with land managers across SEQ.

Landholders focus on increasing their productivity while improving landscape health and managing natural resources sustainably. The aim is to ensure sustainable production and build resilience within the agricultural sector.

Our work focusses on sustainable use of resources such as soil and water. Our efforts to improve productivity, profitability and resilience incorporate best practice principles of natural resource management.

Best practice sustainable agriculture helps to ensure our agricultural production areas can continue to deliver long-term benefits for our community and the environment.

These landscapes also offer various ecosystem services to the broader community, including water quality maintenance, scenic beauty, and biodiversity preservation.

Building best practice knowledge

Healthy Land & Water's sustainable agriculture team works with landholders, farming communities, and groups across the region to support and promote practices that enhance soil health, land quality, and native vegetation.

A wide range of topics are covered in these activities, spanning soil health, erosion control, equine grazing management, pasture management, carbon farming, forage budgeting and fire management planning.

This year, we had a particular focus on delivering a local soil health subprogram, carbon farming extension, and establishing demonstration sites to showcase grazing best practice, improved soil condition and erosion control in action. Despite a challenging start to the year coming off the back of the severe flooding events in early 2022, our sustainable agriculture team hit the ground running and achieved a great deal in 12 months.

Regional Land Partnerships – Agriculture

2022/23 was the final year in the 5-year ‘Increasing adoption of improved land management practices through soil and vegetation services - SEQ’ program, funded by the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program.

Participants were surveyed about what they gained from being part of the 5-year project, **and the results speak for themselves:**



Productivity & sustainability

91% reported increased long-term sustainability and production



Preparedness & resilience

91% reported increased resilience of their enterprise and natural assets to cope with climate change



Helpful best practice solutions

95% said participation in the project assisted them in managing their land challenges



More practice change in the wings

50% of landholders planning further changes to improve natural asset condition over 63,500 ha



Capacity building

59 workshops and field days, involving 1,569 landholders managing over 92,400 ha



Partnerships & collaborations

45 partnerships with organisations including 13 Landcare, industry groups, 11 Councils, 8 agribusinesses, QFBC, Seqwater, universities and several state agencies



Property visits

20 property visits to assess erosion and provide detailed erosion control reports



Property and/or fire plans

184 property management and/or fire management plans developed



Resources & advice

198 communications materials including fact sheets and case studies
168 farmers provided with advice



Soil health

5 local soil health programs
172 on-farm soil samples across 94 farms



Soil health trial sites

9 soil health trial sites



Erosion demo sites

5 erosion control demo sites

Drought preparedness: Drought Resilient Soils & Landscapes project

Our work in drought preparedness has been in demand. One of the projects is focussed on promoting grazing and land management practices that enhance drought resilience and natural capital, and ultimately support agricultural productivity.



Soil testing

Funded by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund, this Drought Resilient Soils & Landscapes project (July 2022 – June 2024) has involved the establishment of 20 trials and on-ground projects, along with various workshops, field days, case studies, and a regional forum to accelerate the adoption of practices that enable landholders to better prepare for and manage drought.

Ongoing agriculture expertise: Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators

A key initiative which deploys sustainable agriculture expertise across our region is the Australian Government's Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators program. This year marked the final year of this initiative funded by Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

In the past year alone, our Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators (Bruce Lord, Marc Leman and Vanessa Smolders) supported:

- 125 sustainable agriculture and community events around the region.
- 600+ landholders and over 100 organisations receiving information, resources, event promotion and regular newsletter updates.

South East Queensland's landholders have access to four regionally focused Healthy Land & Water agriculture experts:



**Bruce
Lord**



**Vanessa
Smolders**



**Marc
Leman**



**Renee
Ould**



Restoration

Delivering priority works to repair, protect and improve landscapes across the region.

Our on-ground land restoration team is delivering priority works to repair, protect and improve landscapes across the region.

We've seen demand for these services growing, particularly as people have experienced the devastation of disaster-scale events firsthand, and can see for themselves what happens when degraded, fragile landscapes are challenged by disaster events such as drought, flood, and fire.

Building catchment resilience is fast establishing itself as the best way to better prepare our landscapes to deal with the extremities that climate change brings. This includes the more intense, more frequent disaster-scale events which we've been hit with in recent years, and which experts are predicting we will continue to see a lot more of.

Our on-ground team is deploying a variety of projects to address landscape and biodiversity hotspots.

Just some of these include gully repair, the implementation of in-stream engineered erosion control structures, promoting changes in landholder behaviour, large-scale weed control initiatives, and the preservation of koala and lungfish habitats.



Weed control in Mulgowie

We've selected a few of our projects in the 2022/23 financial year to show how targeted on-ground work is making a tangible difference.



Land Restoration

We undertook a diverse range of projects, from gully repair to in-stream erosion control structures, landholder behaviour change, large-scale weed control, and the protection of koala and lungfish habitats.



Nutrients Offset – Decade Analysis

We conducted a comprehensive study of the Logan River nutrient offset site, evaluating its resilience to the 2022 floods and its long-term performance in reducing erosion. The site significantly exceeded expectations in sediment and nutrient load management.



Koala Habitat Protection

We delivered programs across Areas of Regional Koala Significance, achieving on-ground outcomes that protected over 500 hectares of koala habitat. This addressed threats such as weed invasion and improved fire access and landholder education to enhance koala conservation and habitat restoration.

Koala habitat protection



Koala habitat protection

Our work to protect koala habitats not only protects koalas. It also helps preserve a huge number of other native and threatened species and builds resilience into local landscapes.

This year was the final year for two significant multi-year koala protection projects that we've been leading for the region. The work was deployed in four of the highest ranked official Areas of Regional Koala Significance (ARKS) in South East Queensland.

Spatial analysis and a cost-benefit analysis identified priority habitat restoration areas within the four ARKS, including Flinders Peak, North Pine, Grandchester, and Lake Manchester.

The two koala Australian Government-funded programs delivered on-ground outcomes across more than 500 hectares of koala habitat.

Healthy Land & Water worked with landholders to control weeds and upgrade fire access tracks to improve proactive fire management and better control bushfires. We also ran a series of workshops to share koala conservation knowledge with landholders and funded fencing and revegetation of key areas to protect, extend, and connect koala habitat. Trees were planted to help reconnect fragmented habitats.

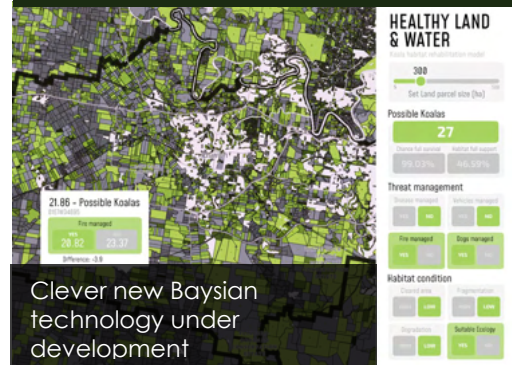
This work aligns with the SEQ Koala Conservation Strategy and National Koala Recovery Plan and was delivered in partnership with the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science, Seqwater, Queensland Trust for Nature, Councils, local Landcare groups, and landholders. We've also been working on developing a clever new koala bayesian network and visualization tool with QUT. Stay tuned for more on this exciting initiative in the coming financial year.

The invasion of weeds like lantana and cat's claw into natural bushland can physically prevent koalas from accessing areas and in some cases, stop them being able to climb food and habitat trees.

Weeds also prevent new trees from germinating and can change the way fire impacts native vegetation.

In addition, historical clearing has resulted in fragmented habitats.

Without corridors connecting the habitats, koalas are inhibited from being able to move freely between areas in search of food and breeding opportunities.



Clever new Bayesian technology under development

Laidley Creek Master Plan



Laidley Creek Master Plan

A coordinated program to build resilience into our rivers over a larger scale: far more cost effective and efficient, with potential for replication.

This Laidley Creek Master Plan is decade-long initiative delivering works along Laidley Creek, a major tributary of Lockyer Creek. Since the project's inception after the 2013 flood, works have been deployed over three reaches of the creek. The project has included the installation of grade control structures at critical locations along Reach 1, 2 and 3 to prevent bed lowering which triggers further streambank erosion.

Restoration works have battered stream banks, where vertical banks six meters in height have been reprofiled to a more stable angle, to allow re-establishment of native vegetation. Dense native vegetation protects stream banks from erosion and slows water velocity during flood events as well as protecting the adjacent high value horticultural land. Works of this nature at sufficient scale have the potential to reduce flooding risk in downstream areas. They also improve the quality of the water within Lockyer Creek, which helps reduce water treatment costs at the Mt Crosby Water Treatment Plant on the Brisbane River and ultimately reduces the impact of sediment on seagrass and marine life downstream in Moreton Bay.

Improving water quality, also helps our iconic fauna species such as lungfish and platypus, while restoring and reconnecting native vegetation supports our terrestrial species such as koalas who use our waterways for food, habitat, and transport corridors.

The next stage of the Laidley Creek Master Plan will guide the works for the next 15 km of Reach 2 and 3. During planning, we pinpointed specific areas with a heightened risk of erosion, characterised by steep banks demanding advanced engineering solutions for stabilisation. We've also identified relatively stable sections with intact riparian vegetation, where the primary need may be weed control. Sites falling in between these two categories, require a balanced approach to restoration and protection.

The success of this long-term program means that Healthy Land & Water is not only looking to extend this work beyond Reach 3 and restore Laidley Creek through to the upper tributaries to build resilience throughout the entire system, but also to replicate this approach in other river systems in SEQ.



Water



WATER

Through our water program, we work to safeguard and enhance the condition of our region's aquatic assets

This includes freshwater rivers, wetlands, estuaries and coastal and marine ecosystems.

Our Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program assesses the condition of waterways in the South East Queensland region.

With support from a large collaboration of partners, we integrate a range of data from different monitoring programs to provide ratings for freshwater, estuary, and marine environments, as well as human dimensions including cultural heritage value, social and recreational value and urban water management.

Read on for a snapshot of a few of our water focussed initiatives in the 2022/23 financial year.



Informing decisions with science-backed evidence

Water quality report cards are crucial tools for assessing and safeguarding the health of our water bodies, impacting both the environment and public wellbeing. They play a vital role in informing and engaging the public, supporting environmental and public health, guiding resource management and policy development, and promoting transparency and accountability in efforts to protect and improve water quality.



Urban water capacity building

Increasing awareness, facilitating collaboration and building state-wide capacity to deliver best practice applied science in sustainable urban water management.



Empowered landholders & communities

Building the capacity of developers, land managers and communities to address the risk of adverse events, protect natural capital, and take advantage of opportunities for urban industries in the face of challenges such as climate change including floods and droughts, weeds, pests, and diseases.

**Ecosystem health.
Resilience.
Community.**

Monitoring & reporting



Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program

By understanding how climate, population, development and land use affect our waterways at a regional level, we can inform targeted responses and actions tailored to our local area.

Having 23+ years of data gives our region an enviable and valuable foundation for understanding the region's catchments and waterways and their changes over time



Freshwater monitoring

76 sites annually



Estuarine/marine monitoring

186 sites



Seagrass depth range assessments

18 sites



Catchment loads assessment

18 catchments



Waterway pollutant loads

2,563 samples



Freshwater stream health assessment

1,064 samples



Estuarine/marine water quality

23,250 samples



New indicators

Riparian habitats and fish community health

Report Card

detailed insights

Decision makers have 23+ years of data on SEQ's environment

Report Card

Empowering change through the SEQ Report Card.

The Report Card presents a comprehensive analysis of the year's monitoring and provides detailed insights into the condition and trend of the health of waterways of the region.

It supports land and water managers and policymakers by enabling them to make evidence-based decisions on environmental policies and regulations.

Equipped with a deeper understanding of the current state of the environment, policymakers can implement targeted strategies for conservation and restoration of catchments and waterways to drive positive change and safeguard our precious natural assets. It offers comprehensive, valuable long-term monitoring data. This dataset enables scientists to monitor environmental changes, identify emerging issues and research priorities, and formulate innovative solutions.

Environmental condition

The Report Card plugs the annual Environmental Health Monitoring Program data into a publicly accessible online platform so people can look up freshwater stream health, catchment pollutant loads, and marine water quality.

Community benefits from waterways

The socio-economic component of the Report Card gauges the benefits that our communities derive from our waterways and catchments. This year 3,227 SEQ residents generously took 20 minutes to complete the comprehensive survey. Now in its ninth year, strong trend data is building for the region. Social science is a rapidly evolving discipline and each year the program is enhanced to improve effectiveness and understand how our natural areas are being used.

The Report Card arms us with an enviable set of baseline data to help inform good decisions



It highlights where more action is needed



It shows where actions are working



It informs best bang for buck spend to prioritise investment across the region

Sustainable urban water management

Improving approaches to water sensitive urban design.

Our sustainable urban water management initiative, best known as **Water by Design**, is the leading water sensitive urban design initiative in Queensland.

We work with individuals and organisations to identify and fill knowledge gaps and facilitate the uptake of improved practice. We also draw together a network of practitioners committed to improving water sensitive urban design.

The initiative delivers a suite of programs that promote innovative practice and help to build regionally consistent approaches. By facilitating information exchange, networking, and constructive debate, practitioners are enabled to deliver high quality urban environments.

It is guided by a Steering Committee which has been in place since 2005, focussed on overseeing the delivery of urban water management capacity building and strategic planning in South East Queensland with the aim of improving the ecological condition of our waterways.

The Steering Committee is also focused on engaging with Water by Design members from across SEQ to increase awareness, facilitate collaboration and build capacity to deliver best practice applied science in sustainable urban water management.

In 2022/23 Water by Design provided capacity building support to local governments and industry across the SEQ and Great Barrier Reef (GBR) regions.

Capacity building in urban stormwater and erosion control

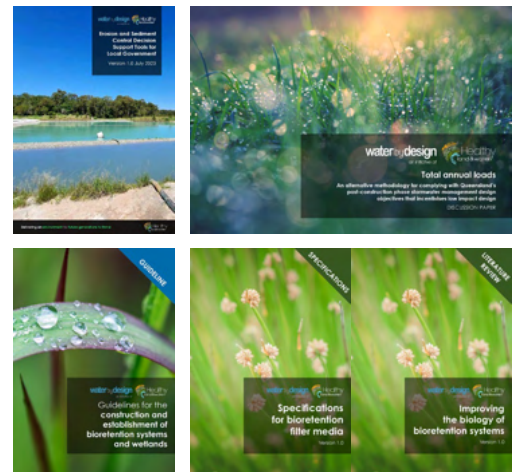
We have been delivering erosion and sediment control and urban stormwater management capacity building in SEQ since 2005.

The program is well respected and in recent years we have been tasked with rolling out some of our key initiatives in the GBR region.

The program works together with stakeholders across Queensland including government, industry, and the land development sector to develop, promote, and adopt policy and best management practices that facilitate urban development while minimising sediment emissions into Queensland waters.

The Queensland Government Department of Environment and Science (DES) is a key supporter in this work, recognising that building the capacity of a wide range of stakeholders will be required to deliver sustainable water sensitive cities that are adapted to climatic conditions and enhance quality of life and liveability for both residents and visitors alike. Activities are supported through a dedicated Steering Committee that includes representatives from all local governments across the region, the Queensland Government, the major water utilities, and the bulk water supplier.

In South East Queensland, the program delivered workshops, field days, and community of practice events with a focus on building participants' skills and capabilities in best practice, this year upskilling 263 attendees across 103 organisations. In addition, Water by Design developed a suite of water sensitive urban design and erosion and sediment control policy and decision support tools this year, aimed at supporting local governments to implement best practice and improve the consistency of compliance across the region.



Living Waterways on-ground projects

Working together with local community, catchment groups and local government, we delivered six Living Waterways projects in the Lower Brisbane area this year.

Living Waterways is a best practice environmental management approach that assists practitioners and government to deliver enduring and affordable outdoor spaces which engage the surrounding communities.

The Living Waterways approach has been developed to support implementation of water sensitive urban design by encouraging and incentivising design solutions that embody the natural, historical, and cultural elements of a site. Our Living Waterways projects promote interaction with water to inspire, promote adventure and discovery, and educate visitors about the delicacy of our ecosystems.

Six waterway intervention initiatives were delivered in the Lower Brisbane area this year, in partnership with the Australian Government through the Environment Restoration Fund. Some of the projects we completed included a Water Wise Street Tree demonstration in Nundah, a mulch bay redesign and raingarden at Northey Street City Farm, a two-stage waterway restoration at Cicada Park Chapel Hill, and a swale and activation project at Gizeh Street Enoggera.

Some before shots



Some after shots



Clean Up program: expanded for flood recovery response

When the floods hit in early 2022, Healthy Land & Water was in a great position to respond immediately to deploy its Clean Up program.

We were called on to deploy our well-respected program to help tackle the enormous amount of litter and debris strewn across our catchments during the disaster-scale flooding events.

Healthy Land & Water was able to immediately stand up an expanded program and get to work removing harmful pollutants from waterways mitigating their ability to harm.

Immediate removal of these pollutants represents a significant threat abatement to marine and freshwater environments.

It is worth noting that while litter and debris issues are highlighted during floods, litter is persistent in our environs year-round, and ongoing efforts to remove pollutants from targeted waterways should remain an ongoing priority for government support.

The annual program delivery

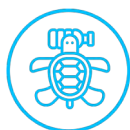
During the 2022/2023 financial year, our Clean Up program delivered the following key mitigation activities:



60+ tonnes of litter removed from waterways overall from targeted waterways, largely consisting of lightweight plastic pollution



50+ tonnes of floating and bank bound litter removed from flood impacted and litter hot spot sites across the Brisbane, Bremer, Logan and Caboolture Rivers



10+ tonnes of post-flood marine debris from coastal waters and banks across Quandamooka Country in partnership with the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation

Marine (and coastal) debris is identified as a key threatening process for threatened and endangered vertebrate fauna in Australia. As Australia's population grows along the coast, the release of solid waste, such as plastic, into coastal habitats continues to increase.

The expanding stock of debris along Australia's coastlines increases the risks to habitats and fauna, posing a range of threats to organisms and ecosystems health. For example, among 1,733 seabirds of 51 species, a significant dose-response relationship was found between ingested marine debris and death (based on mortality data).

Waterway and marine litter and debris originates from many places, but we know approximately 80% comes from land-based sources. This litter causes a wide spectrum of environmental, economic, social, health and cultural impacts. The very slow rate of degradation of most waterway and marine litter items, especially plastics, together with the ever-growing quantity of litter and debris being disposed, is leading to a gradual increase in litter found in our waterways, at sea and on our shores. Marine debris has direct consequences for human wellbeing, including economic impacts (e.g. tourism, fishing), impacts on navigation, health impacts (e.g. ingestion of plastics), and social and cultural impacts.

The Clean Up program, now in its twenty third year, is working together with our partners from all levels of government to strengthen partnerships between not-for-profit NGOs, governments, industry, and the community to mitigate the impacts of marine debris and waterway litter on our local waterways, catchments, and marine environments.

Preparedness



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

With the changing climate bringing more frequent and intense weather events, preparedness efforts are crucial

In a year marked by environmental challenges, the need for proactive climate adaptation has become more critical than ever.

Declines in our natural resources, including biodiversity loss and disruption to ecosystem services, are continuing, and often increasing in intensity. There is an urgent need to protect the integrity of our region's living systems.

Healthy Land & Water has been assisting our communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

For over 20 years we have been working with our partners to help build resilience within communities and across landscapes to prepare for a changing climate. Collectively we recognise that we must respond to mitigate impacts, adapt, and actively work toward a positive future.

This year we are profiling our fire preparedness work, and then we go on to look at some of flood preparedness.

Read on for a snapshot of our work on this important preparedness initiative in the 2022/23 financial year.





Fire preparedness

From its regional roots focussed on SEQ, the well regarded training and services provided by the Queensland Fire & Biodiversity Consortium (QFBC) are increasingly being sought out by stakeholders across Queensland.

The growing interest in fire preparedness by communities across Queensland was really spurred along following the devastation of the Black Summer bushfire season of 2019/20 and the previous wildfire events in 2018.

Shortly after the Black Summer fires, the Australian Government allocated a multi-million-dollar package of much-needed funding to Healthy Land & Water to help support building community resilience and landscape-scale collaborative approaches to fire management.

Healthy Land & Water is delivering these initiatives through its QFBC program.

The objectives of the grant are closely aligned to our own vision for fire-preparedness, including:

- Improving community safety and protecting life and property through implementation of coordinated, whole of landscape (community) priority fire management actions in areas affected by the Black Summer bushfires, namely in South West and Central Queensland.
- Complementing and building on the successful model of community resilience building through a landscape approach to fire management in partnership with five targeted communities across Queensland.
- Providing additional support to stakeholders and communities impacted by the Black Summer bushfires through an engagement and extension program to enhance their resilience to bushfire.
- Addressing the need for a coordinated and consistent planning and implementation approach to bushfire risk and hazard within targeted communities.
- Delivering a suite of priority on-ground fire management works to mitigate bushfire risk and build resilience of local communities affected by the Black Summer bushfires.
- Engaging key land use planning decision makers and managers within communities to exchange knowledge, and plan and implement practical measures and fire management actions to enhance bushfire resilience.

Queensland Fire & Biodiversity Consortium

The Queensland Fire & Biodiversity Consortium (QFBC) is dedicated to improving fire and biodiversity management outcomes.

It supports and disseminates fire ecology research, facilitates partnerships between key stakeholders, and builds the capacity of land managers and private landowners to address issues of fire management.

Established in 1998, it has established a reputation for building land managers and private landowners' capacity to address issues of fire management, adding to Australia's fire ecology research, facilitating partnerships between key stakeholders and building capacity and biodiversity across Queensland.

The QFBC seeks to deliver improved fire management outcomes that promote biodiversity and cultural heritage enhancement and protection.



500+ attendees



8 major guidelines delivered



45 workshops across Queensland



23 fire information nights



22 fire planning workshops



Our property fire planning workshops

QFBC work assists landholders and land managers to reduce the threat of bushfires/wildfires to life and assets on their property. The fire management fire planning workshops also impart information about achieving this whilst protecting and enhancing the diversity and abundance of native plants and animals, with considerations for primary production. On completion of the workshop, landholders will have developed a fire management map and action plan tailored to individual properties, priorities, and circumstance.

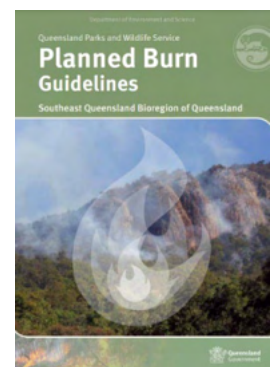
8 major guidelines delivered: Pivotal fire resources

Over the year, QFBC contributed our scientific and practitioner expertise to the below key resources and publications.

SEQ Planned Burn Guidelines

Our QFBC team provided key scientific expertise and support to deliver a collaborative review and update to the *SEQ Planned Burn Guidelines* on behalf of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service & Partnerships (QPWS&P).

The update included a literature and technical review, revision of broad vegetation groupings, addressing identified issues and gaps, with development of an expert panel to inform the content, as well as delivery of coordinated project workshops with key stakeholders and parks personnel.



QPWS Introductory Volume to Planned Burning

In addition to updating the *SEQ Planned Burn Guidelines*, the QFBC, alongside key experts, provided scientific expertise and collaborative practitioner input to the development of a new guide in partnership with the QPWS&P called the *Planned Burn Guidelines: Introductory Volume*.

This document provides background information and guidance around common issues with planned burning across the state.



Dashboard Fire Management Guidelines

Six easy-to-read dashboard guides were produced for regions across Queensland, to show how to best manage landscape types (based on vegetation and topography) in terms of fire management for conservation and grazing purposes.

- Brigalow Belt South.
- Brigalow Belt North.
- Burnett Mary.
- Cape York Peninsula.
- Capricorn Coast.
- Clarke Connors Range.



These were developed in partnership with the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, expert fire practitioners, and Mackay/Whitsunday NRM, Reef Catchments.

Flood preparedness

Healthy Land & Water undertakes dozens of projects every year which contribute to our region's resilience to disaster-scale flooding. Here is a snapshot of just a few of them:

Natural Resources Regional Recovery

We've been leading a program aimed at enhancing landscape resilience by increasing the adoption of sustainable land management practices and addressing key threats to vegetation and soil health.

Funded by the Queensland Government's Natural Resource Recovery Program (NRRP) (March 2023 – June 2024), the program actively engages in capacity-building activities and on-ground efforts.

The program's primary goal is to boost the adoption of sustainable land management practices, leading to improved land condition and the enhancement of native vegetation.

In addition, it seeks to address significant challenges such as declining pasture condition, soil health issues, hillslope erosion, inappropriate fire practices, and the control of invasive weeds, all of which have a detrimental impact on important vegetation communities. By tackling these issues, the project aims to enhance landscape resilience.



Gully repair

10-year river rehabilitation

A restoration project, which has been running since early 2014, has shown significant outcomes are achieved through targeted long-term works and demonstrated benefits for longer-term performance in reducing erosion, including resilience to disaster-scale flooding.

The Logan River nutrient offset site, a pilot initiative delivered by Healthy Land & Water in partnership with Urban Utilities, involved bank reprofiling, pile field installation, rock toe emplacement, and reforestation. Since then, maintenance activities such as minor earthworks, replanting, and weed management have been conducted regularly to ensure the project's longevity. One of the notable successes of the project has been the reestablishment of mature native woody vegetation.

The resilience of the site has been tested through repeated high magnitude floods in 2015, 2017, 2021, and 2022. Despite these challenges, the site sustained a relatively minor level of erosion, aligning with the predicted performance outlined in the planning stages. A multi-faceted approach was used, including LiDAR change analysis and on-site observations to gain a comprehensive understanding of the site's development since its inception.

Successful river rehabilitation and ecosystem restoration over 10 years offers valuable insights for similar projects and environmental initiatives in SEQ and beyond.



The project site held up during the disaster-scale flooding in 2022

Lower Caboolture restoration works

An ambitious \$8 million program features innovative green engineering solutions to prevent riverbank erosion and the consequent sediment and nutrient loads entering the waterways. The project is aimed at building resilience along the Lower Caboolture River, from the upper reaches of the catchment to the estuaries of the river. Funded by long-standing partner Unitywater, it involves extensive riverbank restoration and revegetation works covering 2.4 km of the Lower Caboolture River, with works to be carried out at nine sites.

By stabilising riverbanks, we help prevent their erosion and the consequent sediment and nutrient loads entering waterways. At the same time through revegetation, we will increase biodiversity along the waterways and provide natural resilience to future flood and waterway erosion. In addition, native vegetation and some of the nature-based solutions implemented in the works will improve water quality, biodiversity and promote aquatic ecosystem health, as well as enhance terrestrial habitat for wildlife and regeneration of riparian vegetation.



This project is aimed at building resilience along the Lower Caboolture River

Partners



MORE PARTNERS, PROJECTS & STORIES

To do more faster hinges on forming even more partnerships, attracting more investment and educating our communities about what they can do

With traditional funding sources becoming ever tighter, we are focussed on maximising effectiveness and developing innovative strategies to attract investment and partnerships so we can amplify our work to create environmental change for the region.



Customer & engagement focus

Customer-focused approach that builds trust and increases influence: sharing vital information for widespread change – from boardrooms to living rooms.



Business development and diversifying investment sources

Maximising investments, attracting new funding partnerships to amplify our work and impact.



Partnerships

Expanding our influential partner network, dedicated to advancing environmental, cultural, and social sustainability goals.



Communications & storytelling for change

Creating compelling narratives to show how our work drives resilience and benefits the environment, to get more people involved in bringing about change.



Empowered communities

Educate and inspire people to bring about positive environmental change.

**Partnerships.
Investment.
Community action.**

Ramping up our customer & engagement focus

Increasing investment and partnerships are pivotal to our ability to deliver increased action for the region.

Included in the strategic priorities in the new 5-year *Strategic Plan*, which launched at the start of this financial year, are ambitious targets to grow and diversify revenue, as well as expanding Healthy Land & Water's role as a trusted leader and advocate for the environment, delivering value and making a positive impact in preserving our natural resources.

This major shift in the organisation's approach driven by our partners, has refocused us from the traditional support role we have been playing, to actively leading change.

To achieve this, a customer and engagement team has been formed during the year to deliver on three inter-linked outcomes: 1. Stakeholder and collaboration growth; 2. Profit and revenue growth; 3. Public identity growth.



The future of environmental monitoring and landscape scale investment with international experts and thought leaders Bill Dennison & Paul Chatterton

Stakeholders and collaboration growth

We are building on our robust and influential network of partners who are empowered to support our collective environmental, cultural, and social sustainability objectives. This network plays a central role in amplifying the positive impact we make.

During the year, we have brought on board a dedicated team to support and develop our partnership network. This is aimed at enhancing our service delivery and providing ongoing support for the current and emerging needs of our key stakeholders, as well as developing new relationships and funding opportunities.

Profit and revenue growth

Strategic, impactful investment has been brought in throughout the year.

We are focussed on developing new business to diversify the Healthy Land & Water investment portfolio and underpin our core service offerings.

In order to build a thriving business, we seek to develop our business in three primary areas:

- Growing recurring revenues via the enhancement of our monitoring and maintenance solutions.
- Diversifying our customer base by proactively engaging with corporates that have actively been signalling a commitment to environmental, social and governance (ESG) projects.
- Developing a new scaled landscape offering in partnership with the Landscape Finance Labs - a coalition of the willing including Australian/state/local governments, First Nations, community entities and industry partners.

Corporate interest in meeting ESG goals is growing, and Healthy Land & Water is well-positioned to assist them in a targeted, defensible, and nature-positive manner.

Reach & influence

Integral to our customer-focused approach is expanding our reach and reputation. The more people who know and trust us, the more we can impart key information that will help influence increasingly more people to be part of making change - from the board room to the party room, to the living room. Some of the work we've been ramping up in this space is presented in the communications section to follow.

Communications & storytelling for change

We've concentrated on crafting engaging content with a storytelling focus to show the impact of our work in delivering greater resilience for the region.

Underpinned by our new Strategic Plan, we have been working on bringing ever more people into the tent to help bring about the ever-greater amounts of impact needed to build the health and resilience of our region.

This has meant ramping up our work to educate and inspire people to bring about positive environmental change. Fortunately, the growing desire of the public to access valuable and authoritative information about the environment is driving increased engagement on our digital platforms year on year.

Given the strong and increasing demand for information about Healthy Land & Water's work in environment and liveability for SEQ, we have commenced a staged upgrade of our digital presence during the year.

This has included a website upgrade to make it easier to find out more about the environmental projects we are involved in, the latest news, informative factsheets and so much more. This, together with an increased focus on our **social media channels**, has driven increased traffic to Healthy Land & Water's **five websites: Healthy Land & Water website, Report Card website, Water by Design website, QFBC website & our training portal.**



Iris Tsoi giving school kids a talk on the importance of the environment as part of her role as a 'Flying Scientist' this year

Conferences, thought leadership & media

Healthy Land & Water has been highly requested as a featured speaker at conferences and prominent forums throughout the year. Being a focal point in a diverse range of professional gatherings allows us to spotlight the remarkable initiatives undertaken by our team and our numerous partners and collaborators, as well as fostering partnerships and vital relationships.

In addition to a growing media presence, we have witnessed a growing trend of requests for our guidance in decision-making processes, the contribution of expert insights through submissions, participation to high-end committees for the South East Queensland region, and the creation of thought-provoking articles for prestigious publications and influential forums.

This collaborative effort broadens the scope of our message, extending it beyond our traditional audience to reach a vast array of influencers. As these influencers gain a deeper understanding of the critical issues at hand, they are more inclined to get involved and contribute to the positive transformation of our region.



Digital footprint
▲ 25%

671,165 views



Website & socials engagement
▲ 30%

88,000 engagement
82,000 users



Events run
▲ 40%

110 regional events with the year characterised by major regional consultations and end of project workshops



Conferences & thought leadership
▲ 90% increase

45 presentations thought leadership and presentations at conferences getting information to an audience of 12,000+

Our partners

We can only continue to achieve what we do thanks to the continued support and recognition of our partners who help us achieve our vision of building the prosperity, liveability, and sustainability of our region.

First Nations

Thank you to the First Nations of South East Queensland and beyond who we are so privileged to work with to expand the recognition of their rights and interests to lead the management of Country.

Advisory committees

Our appreciation is also extended to the individuals who contribute so generously of their time, input and thought leadership across our various committees, panels, and steering groups.

Project partners

A special mention to our many project partners, community and environmental groups, Landcare and Coastcare groups, schools and volunteers, who partner with us to deliver meaningful projects across South East Queensland.

Australian and Queensland Government

Healthy Land & Water partners with the Australian Government and Queensland Government, as a trusted non-government partner to deliver natural resource management activities across South East Queensland. Funding from the state and federal government builds local capacity and strengthens communities.

Owner members

Thank you to our owner members, the South East Queensland Council of Mayors, utilities (including Unitywater, Seqwater, and Urban Utilities) and the community through the South East Queensland Catchments Members Association (SEQCMA).

South East Queensland Catchments Members Association

The South East Queensland Catchments Members Association (SEQCMA) is an alliance between community, government and industry. SEQCMA works closely with Healthy Land & Water to identify and develop strategies that build resilience into the region's landscapes and waterways.

The SEQCMA Community Consultative Committee provides advice, guidance, and advocacy support regarding strategic natural resource management issues.

Council of Mayors (SEQ)

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) membership consists of the 10 South East Queensland councils: Brisbane, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Logan, Moreton Bay, Redland, Scenic Rim, Somerset, Sunshine Coast, and Toowoomba.

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) works closely with Healthy Land & Water on a number of projects, delivering a coordinated approach to catchment management.

Water utilities

Seqwater, Urban Utilities and Unitywater work in tandem with Healthy Land & Water to improve and protect the region's catchments and waterways. The region's water utilities are crucial partners as we aim to make South East Queensland a healthier place to live.

Our work with First Nations

Healthy Land & Water has a strong commitment to reconciliation with a vision to facilitate the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the delivery of natural resource management in South East Queensland.

To deliver our vision, we are engaging with First Nation leaders across many locations in SEQ as we endeavour to embed culturally appropriate engagement as business-as-usual.

Healthy Land & Water recognises the importance of traditional knowledge, value, and practices, which have shaped and protected the significant environmental and cultural values of SEQ for over 65,000 years. Working in partnership with Traditional Owners and First Nations peoples, our aim is to provide better environmental, social, and economic outcomes for all, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Healthy Land & Water has actively rolled out our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) since 2021, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation while developing and piloting innovative strategies. It is an action based plan including 17 actions and 90 deliverables.

This financial year was the last in our first 3-year RAP. It has driven an enormous amount of change throughout our business. Some deliverable proved easier than others. In this short period we were able to achieve 67% of the deliverables, embed 16% into business-as-usual and partially complete 16%. The 1% which had not been able to be actioned within the period will be considered as we plan out actions for our next 3-year RAP.

A key success of the Innovate RAP has been the work to engage and establish relationships with Traditional Owners and First Nations peoples, with 1 formal and 7 informal partnerships formed in the past year.



Artwork and story by
Belinda Close,
Quandamooka woman



Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Seeing the story threaded through the artwork

Our story is to share, care and love our ancient, living, breathing culture and Country in this world.

Protect our sacred lands, salty seas, healing waters, wildlife and everything that grows within.

Nurture the waters, animals, plants and each other from the north, south, east and west.

Come together to share and understand the knowledge and respect of Mother Earth and our Ancestors that have passed on. Elders and Ancestors that are still with us today, sharing their ways on Country.

When you look into this story, you see Ancestor Spirits standing together, strong, in a circle, looking over us, sending their love, knowledge, strength and blessings.

We work together on Country, crossing waters to share knowledge, lending a helping hand during bushfires – which you can see burning in the bottom left of the story.

In the centre, the belly of the story, begins new life, new beginnings, next generations. Fern life and plant life encourages new creek life and sprouts new creations.

The purples of our mountains, gullies and hills burst with wild rainforest – forests and bushlands that can never be replaced as they are as ancient as the Dreamtime.

Together, let's maintain a clean, healthy, happy natural environment for all generations to come.

organization



ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The ability to continue our pivotal work for the environment is underpinned by a business model focussed on strong, effective performance



Strong governance structure

Our business is led by a professional skills based board, and has hundreds of experts on its technically based committees providing advice and guidance.



People & culture

Investing in the right people and the right skills.



Safety

Implementing fit-for-purpose systems and training to ensure the highest levels of safety for staff and contractors.

Governance

Our Board



Stephen Robertson
Chair



Cameron Costello



Rhett Duncan



Melissa Impiazzi



Nadia O'Carroll



Nikki Poteri-Collie



Simon Warner

People & culture

Investing in the right people and the right skills

In the 2022/23 financial year, we saw our headcount grow by more than 20%, largely in our on-ground project teams and closely followed by our science monitoring team. We benefitted from the introduction of an Applicant Tracking System (ATS), streamlining the recruitment and onboarding process, removing paper, reducing administration, and offering candidates a simple, digital, branded experience. Internally, we saw development and career opportunities reach an internal mobility rate of 18.03% – results of direct efforts to invest in our people, career development, and learning opportunities.

The organisation invested in extensive People Leader training through an online learning platform, consultation with leaders, facilitating career development training and tools, executive coaching, career development policy, talent assessments, and succession plans. In addition to investing in development, the organisation focused on reward with the introduction of shout outs in our HRIS, a structured performance review platform, expanded employee benefits, a Q1 bonus from the ELT awarded to employees for their dedication and efforts in defining our strength, and a remuneration framework that enabled an average salary increase higher than the public sector.



Improving diversity and inclusion

Critical to Healthy Land & Water's success is the inclusion of diverse people, skills, experiences, and backgrounds. The organisation developed a diversity and inclusion framework which includes pillars under gender, ethnicity, accessibility, LGBTQIA+, and generation.

At the end of the financial year, Healthy Land & Water reached total female representation of 66.15% with the Executive Leadership Team composition being 50% female. With data improvements introduced via the HRIS, Healthy Land & Water was able to establish and improve representation of culturally diverse heritages and the age composition of our growing workforce. This year saw an increase of 12.01% for culturally and linguistically diverse employees. Through external recruitment efforts, the organisation also increased employment in the 18-30 age group by 25%, enabling the organisation to build talent pipelines as well as mentoring opportunities for long tenured staff.



Focuses on gender, ethnicity, and generation will continue as the business designs initiatives to also improve awareness and inclusion.



Innovation



Integrity



Care



Collaboration



Courage

Our values are at the heart of what we do. As such, they aren't posted on a wall in our office, they are lived by our employees, each day in their work. Our values have been built into our employee lifecycle through interview guides, position descriptions, self-assessments, individual development plans, performance reviews, shout outs, conduct, and through our value awards. We practice our value behaviours and reward role models because the "how" is just as important as the "what".

Implementing employee engagement initiatives

Employee engagement initiatives took place throughout the year as Healthy Land & Water set ambitious targets for the Employee Engagement Survey in three key areas – workplace health and safety, recruitment and promotion decisions, and collaboration. The organisation exceeded each set target and achieved an overall engagement score of 72% and participation rate of 89%.

Engagement Initiative	2023 Result
There is adequate focus on workplace health & safety	92% (+15)
Recruitment & promotion decisions are transparent & celebrated	52% (+16)
Other departments collaborate well with us to get the job done	57% (+30)

Workplace health & safety

In the 2022/23 FY, we engaged a dedicated in-house Workplace Health & Safety Lead who commenced an extensive and consultative program to design a fit-for-purpose WHS management system, re-designed WHS inductions, introduced timely and relevant alerts, and drove reporting.

To further improve the score, Healthy Land & Water introduced a new and improved EAP provider which includes 24/7 service, multiple languages, financial advice, nutritional advice, and legal advice, in addition to confidential counselling. With a focus on employee health and wellbeing, the organisation also introduced two trained mental health first aiders.

The recruitment and promotion score was improved through tools and resources being made available to employees, including a recruitment process map, success profile, interview guide, and question library. In addition to this, the organisation developed the Career Development Policy and delivered career development training and tools to better support employees and improve understanding of decision-making processes.

Goal setting – Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)

This financial year saw the introduction of goal setting methodology, Objectives and Key Results (OKRs). This enabled alignment to strategy, transparency, accountability, and collaboration opportunities. To further strengthen collaboration, a group of Executive Leaders and Senior Leaders from all teams met monthly to improve information sharing and collaboration.

Annual staff retreat

The annual staff retreat was also designed around connection and collaboration, with the team heading to O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat for two days to relax, connect, and collaborate with each other while admiring the natural environment.

Staff connected with each other and the environment through photography sessions, quiz masters, flying fox rides, glow worm experiences, wildlife encounters, nature journaling, and guided rainforest walks.

Here's what staff have to say about our annual retreat...

"Meet others from very different working groups... understand what they do and how our roles connect..."

"Connect with everybody in a comfortable and relaxing environment in a beautiful setting..."

"Connecting with colleagues in beautiful surroundings..."

"Helped with team building and mindfulness/mental health..."

"Build our connection and reinforce our amazing culture..."

Our financials

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 30 June 2023



Profit and loss

Total revenue
\$19,494,872

Total expenditure
\$18,149,797

Loss after allocation to reserves
(\$231,325)



Reserves

Movement in reserves increase / (decrease)

CNAIR
(\$75,922)

Project Reserve
\$1,652,322



Reserves balance

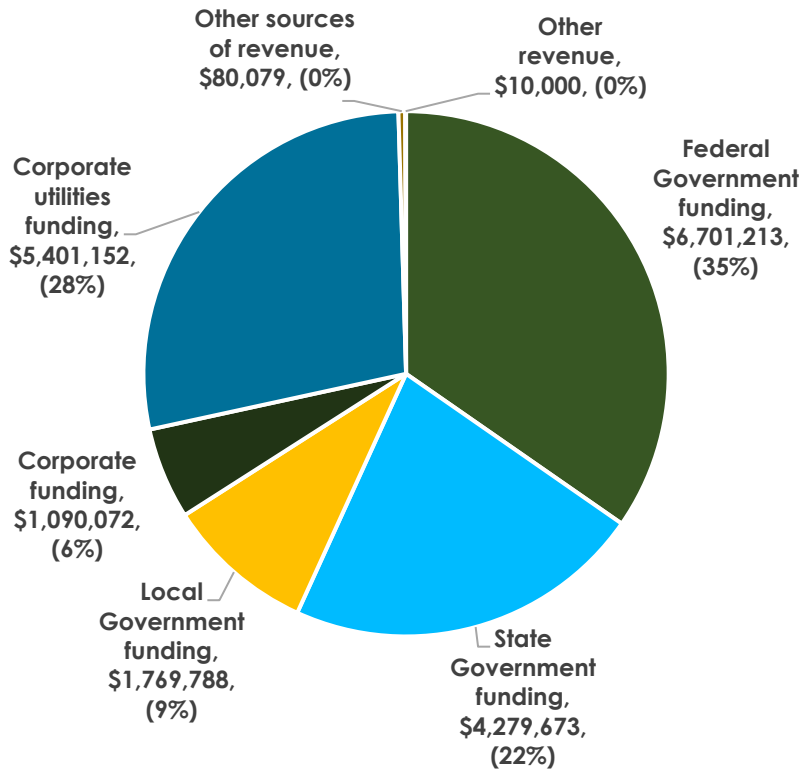
as at 30/06/2023

CNAIR
\$1,599,306

Project Reserve
\$5,812,015

	Consolidated Group		Company	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Revenue and other income	19,331,977	17,635,374	24,297,977	17,635,374
Cost of sales	(12,262,067)	(9,282,282)	(12,262,067)	(9,282,282)
Gross profit	7,069,910	8,353,092	12,035,910	8,353,092
Operating and administration expenses	(2,028,993)	(1,559,351)	(2,028,643)	(1,558,780)
Employee expenses	(3,492,776)	(3,205,422)	(3,492,776)	(3,205,422)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	(358,511)	(360,598)	(358,511)	(360,598)
Results from operating activities	1,189,630	3,227,721	6,155,980	3,228,292
Finance income	162,895	112,246	126,606	49,111
Finance costs	(7,450)	(138,990)	(7,450)	(138,990)
Surplus before income tax	1,345,075	3,200,977	6,275,136	3,138,413
Income tax benefit (expense)	-	-	-	-
Surplus for the year	1,345,075	3,200,977	6,275,136	3,138,413
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	1,345,075	3,200,977	6,275,136	3,138,413
Total comprehensive income of the Group and Company is carried forward to future years to be applied as follows:				
Transfer (from)/to Community Natural Asset Investment Reserve	(75,922)	(17,702)	(75,922)	(17,702)
Transfer to Project Reserve	1,652,322	3,303,386	1,652,322	3,303,386
Transfer (from)/to Strategic Reserve	-	(175,000)	-	(175,000)
Surplus retained for general working capital	(231,325)	90,293	4,698,736	27,729
	1,345,075	3,200,977	6,275,136	3,138,413

Income underpinning our activities



Leading the change
that will deliver an
**environment for future
generations to thrive**

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