

2022 - 2023

Annual REPORT

PREPARED BY:



PIONEER
Catchment
LANDCARE

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

2023 has been another outstanding year for PCL. Staff numbers have increased as we continue to deliver impressive results on several large projects. We are all extremely proud of the quality of work they all deliver.

The committee are a dedicated group who have worked tirelessly to support the staff in their achievements. Without their support PCL would not continue to advance at the rate it has in the past 12 months. Our other volunteers who help in the nursery and at different PCL community events have enabled us to achieve our goals for the year. These achievements would not have been as substantial without their continued effort.

This year, as well as our larger, flagship projects, PCL has been able to partner with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to monitor quoll numbers in our region. It is exciting to be part of such significant research into threatened and poorly understood animals in our region. This project will add to data collected a decade ago increasing the knowledge bank for the species.

Our vision to implement an integrated, science-based approach to natural resource management through supportive partnerships across our catchment and our mission to empower our community to build biodiverse ecosystems has been possible due to our strong financial position. However membership fees will be introduced in the upcoming year. Our reliance on grants has hindered our ability to nurture our planting sites for as long as required for absolute success. Membership fees will allow PCL to deliver more of the quality work that everyone has come to expect from us.

SHARON DWYER
CHAIR





in photo: SeaToSource National Day of Action with Conservation Volunteers Australia (Feb 2023)

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Community Engagement

As a grassroots environmental organisation, community engagement is at the heart of the work we do at Pioneer Catchment Landcare; assisting and inspiring community members, volunteers, landholders, schools, local businesses and community groups to contribute to a positive future for our natural environment.

Through education and practical on-ground support in the community, Pioneer Catchment Landcare has been able to work towards our goal for a whole of catchment, collaborative approach to environmental management.

Building Relationships

Community partnerships and collaborative projects have allowed us to expand our scope and build enduring relationships with an astonishing number of community groups. These include Birdlife Mackay, Native Plants Queensland (Society for Growing Australian Plants Mackay Branch), Platypus Watch, Mackay and District Turtle Watch, numerous local schools, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Mackay Whitsunday Wetland Working Group, Finch Hatton Progress Association, Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers, Wetlands Walkabout, Habana and District Progress Association, Padaminka Nature Refuge, Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network, Calen's Country Women's Association, Mackay Regional Pest Management Group, North Queensland Dry Tropics and Tangaroa Blue Foundation.

We have also worked with number of local businesses and have plans to expand corporate membership and volunteering opportunities for businesses who wish to support our work.

Great Barrier Reef Clean Up

Funded by Tangaroa Blue Foundation's ReefClean Project, the 'Great Barrier Reef Clean Up' was a collaborative community event centered around the message, "keeping our reef beautiful starts in our rivers." PCL's Sally Stutsel, facilitated members of the Mackay community, staff from Mackay Regional Council, and Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers to attend four popular freshwater recreational areas within the Pioneer Catchment, where litter was collected and audited.

Astonishingly, 84.5 kg of litter was retrieved in just one day. The predominant types of litter collected were lightweight food and beverage packaging and containers, as well as sanitary items, cigarette butts and packaging, florist and celebration items, clothing, and drug paraphernalia. Additionally, some larger items like a lawn mower, metal pieces, and old signage and timber were also removed. These findings provide valuable insights into the types of waste commonly dumped in our freshwater recreational areas. Refreshments were provided for volunteers by the warm-hearted members of the local Calen Branch of the Queensland Country Women's Association.

Landcare Support

Our ongoing partnership with Mackay Regional Council (MRC) has been a key pathway for community engagement through programs including Land for Wildlife, Landcare Support, Gardens for Wildlife, Free Plant Giveaways and hosting weekly nursery volunteering at the Mackay Natural Environment Centre, providing opportunities for PCL to build connections with our community.



in photo above: Native Species Talk at Mirani State School



in photo: Great Barrier Reef Clean Up Volunteers at Platypus Beach, Mirani (Nov 2022)



in photo: Bail out the Bees Event Day, Slade Point State School students with installed bee hotel

Bail out the Bees

Coinciding with Australian Pollinator Week in November 2022, PCL coordinated the 'Bail out the Bees' event, in collaboration with Nanyima Aged Care, Bee Creative and Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens and funded by Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal and BMA. Residents of the Aged Care facility assembled bee hotels, by placing native bee habitats into 12 durable hexagonal bee hotel frames, which were hand cut and assembled by a Pioneer Catchment landholder. The very talented, Bee Creatives sang their Homage to the Bees song which was produced by the Bee Creative and Unheard voices to celebrate World Bee Day.

The completed bee hotels were then installed at various locations including PCL's Garden for Wildlife and Slade Point State School's Indigenous Garden.

Landholder Support

PCL continually works to engage with local landholders to provide opportunities for education through community workshops and assist with on-ground work.

Through the Reef Assist Program, a successful project run in partnership with Reef Catchments and funded by the Queensland Government, PCL Officers were able to assist a landholder in Pinnacle, wishing to restore an old sugar cane paddock into a Koala refuge, improving the water quality of the adjoining creek and rehabilitating the land. PCL assisted by planting Koala fodder trees and installing a sign to deter vandalism.



Bail out the Bees Gallery



Natural Resource Management

Over the past year, PCL has continued to explore opportunities for new and exciting Natural Resource Management (NRM) projects that address a variety of environmental issues. These projects include litter monitoring, environmental restoration and revegetation, invasive weed control, erosion control, citizen science, water quality improvement and wildlife monitoring.

Through these projects PCL has collaborated with several professional and NRM bodies including Mackay Regional Council, Reef Catchments, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), Tangaroa Blue Foundation, Queensland Department of Environment and Science (DES), Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) and Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

Tangaroa Blue Litter Monitoring Project

Over the past year, PCL has been working along the riverbanks and beaches in the Pioneer Catchment, to prevent litter from entering the Great Barrier Reef, as a part of the Tangaroa Blue Foundation's ReefClean Project, funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust. This involved quarterly litter monitoring at Harbour Beach and Pioneer River Estuary, aiming to reduce marine debris and identify key sources of litter pollution.

PCL Officers, led by Taleah Virgona, used the standardised methodology provided by ReefClean, using specific and consistent 4 x 25m long transects to systematically collect and audit litter at both sites, completed on four occasions. Since June 2022, PCL has successfully removed more than 70kg of rubbish from transect sites along the Pioneer River Estuary and Mackay Harbour Beach, covering an impressive 3km stretch. The collected data has been entered into the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) Database which is shared by "over 2,000 partner organisations."

155 kg

*Litter
Removed*



Great Barrier Reef Clean up Gallery





in photo: Janes Creek Diversion Revegetation TMR Site (Jun 2023)

Northern Quoll Monitoring

In 2022, PCL began working with QPWS on a new project, funded by DES, to investigate the presence/absence of the Northern Quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*) at two locations in the Mackay Highlands. Working from previous studies conducted by QPWS in 2010, PCL has endeavoured to add to existing data through quoll monitoring with trail cameras, particularly in response to the controlled burn regime in Homevale National Park and Crediton State Forest. Monitoring cameras have captured images of a variety of native species, including two EPBC (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation) endangered species, the Northern Quoll and Koala.



Commercial Projects

With great success, PCL has continued to grow the commercial arm to the organisation, focusing on native revegetation. These projects provide valuable resources for employment and training, equipment maintenance and administration, and allow us to continue to expand our environmental work at Pioneer Catchment Landcare. Our major commercial contracts have been with Queensland Transport and Main Roads (TMR), to revegetate land along the new Ring Road and bypass in Mackay.

Janes Creek Diversion Site

In March 2023, PCL took over maintenance at the remodelled waterway of Janes Creek, undertaken by TMR as a part of the bypass works. PCL field officers interplanted the area with a variety of local native plant species as well as conducting weed control, watering, mulching, and monitoring of plant growth. The planting is visible from the road on the left-hand side of the bridge crossing Janes Creek as you head towards Mackay along the Bruce Highway. The ongoing care and maintenance at this site has led to the successful revegetation of this important riparian environment.

1,971
*Trees
Planted*

54 HRS
*Community
Groups*

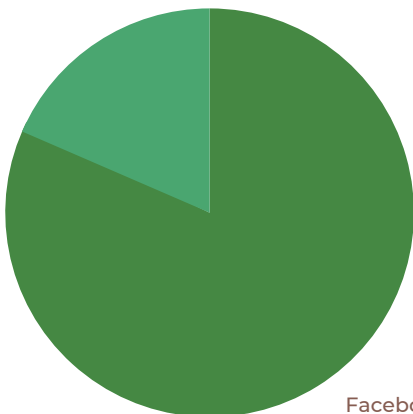
PCL supported local community groups through events and on-ground work

17
Schools

PCL supported 17 schools and kindergartens to achieve their environmental goals

Social Media Engagement

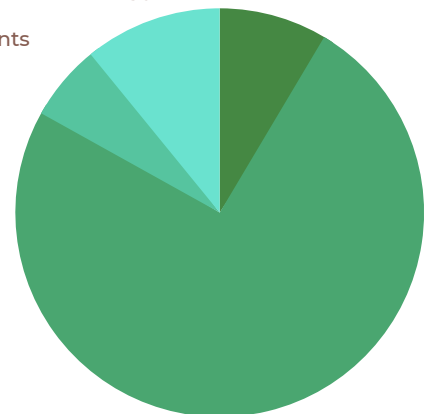
Instagram Followers
295



Facebook Followers
1300

Post Shares
130

Post Comments
72



Post Likes
890

Land for Wildlife (LFW), funded by Mackay Regional Council (MRC), allows landholders to become a part of a growing network of private properties committed to the preservation of our natural environment, providing valuable wildlife refuge areas across the landscape

162.1ha
*Committed to
Land for
Wildlife*

6

**Property
assessments**

Through LfW, PCL visited 6 landholder properties for LfW assessments

280

**Free Native
Plants**

280 native plants were provided to LfW members through MRC's Free Native Plant Program

54hrs

**Support &
Education**

PCL spent 54 hours supporting LfW members by providing advice, educational opportunities and an online platform for knowledge sharing



in photo: North Queensland Dry Tropics Apps and Maps Workshop (Nov 2022)

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Planning

Throughout the 2022-23 financial year, PCL has endeavoured to improve the organisation's capacity to undertake expansive and diverse projects and enhance staff capabilities.

Since the development of PCL's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and new Capabilities Statement, PCL has been using the goals and vision set out by these critical documents to move forward into a new and exciting era of growth.

Staff Training

Investing in the professional development of our staff has continued to be a top priority. and through the Reef Assist Program (RAP), PCL has been able to provide staff with extensive, diverse and relevant training opportunities as well as offering an Indigenous Youth Cadetship.

PCL has supported staff qualifications in Conservation and Land Management, and training in mapping, ecological assessment tools (vegetation analysis, biosecurity and water quality testing), leadership programs, weed removal and erosion control techniques, sustainable grazing, nursery operations and plant propagation, digital marketing, writing and threatened species.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

A Note from the Treasurer

PCL has had another fantastic year, achieving higher than forecast total income and continuing to provide top quality results on our ongoing and new projects.

Overall gross income increased slightly in financial year 2023, with majority of our project funding from our ongoing project work, and some smaller new projects being won during the year.

PCL saw a slight increase in our operational costs, as much like the rest of the country we were not immune to the continuing rise in cost for basically everything. We spent a bit more money than originally budgeted in FY2023 on things like fuel, office equipment and general repairs and maintenance, but we also had some areas where our spends were less than budgeted so overall our expenses remained reasonably in line with what we had forecast.

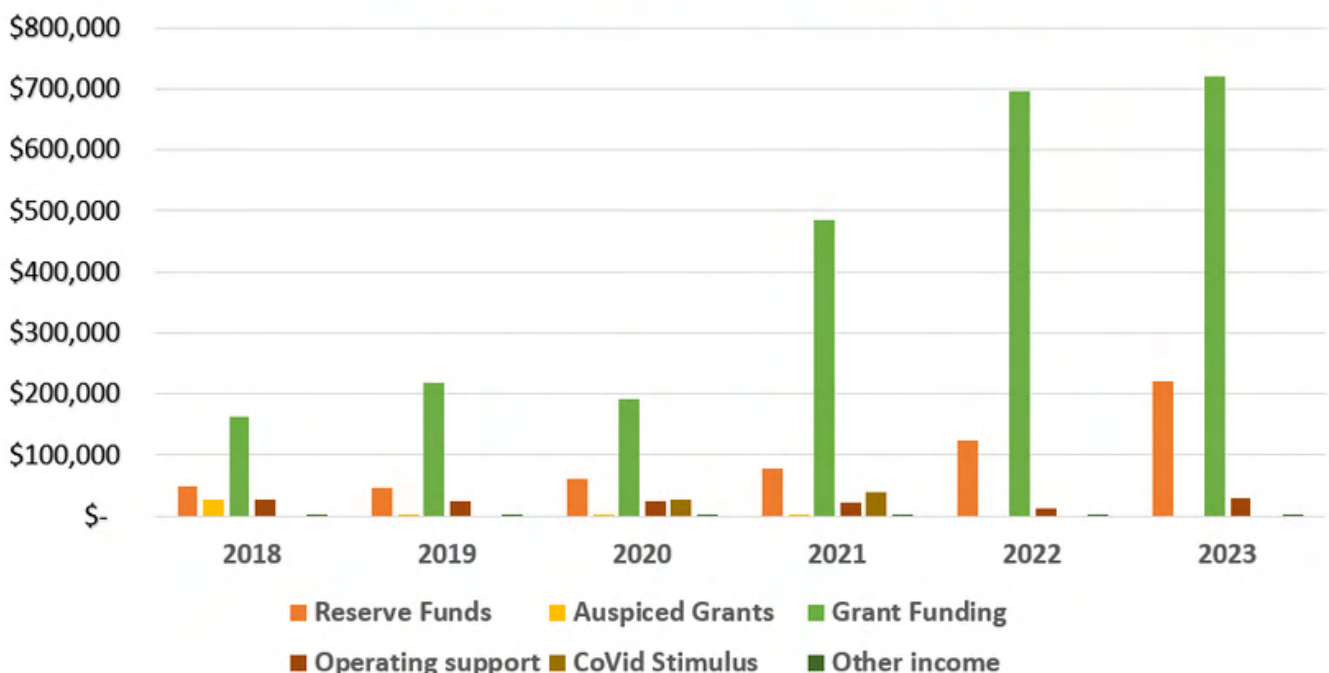
This year's budget accommodates for a slightly higher buffer so that we're a little more protected against volatility in the economy, while the Australian government continues to try to reduce inflation and we're looking at drier conditions across the country.

Overall, another amazing year for PCL which could not have been done without the hard work of our absolutely fabulous staff.

CLAIRE STRIBBLES

TREASURER

Operational Revenue



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pioneer Catchment Landcare would like to acknowledge the Yuwibara people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Pioneer Catchment Landcare would like to acknowledge the many volunteers and organisations that have assisted and supported our work in the Pioneer River Catchment in the 2022-23 financial year, with special thanks to Mackay Regional Council, Native Plants Queensland (Society for Growing Australian Plants - Mackay Branch), Reef Catchments, Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association, Whitsunday Catchment Landcare, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.





CONTACT US

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