

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

OVER
5400

*NATIVE PLANTS
ESTABLISHED IN
OUR REGION BY PCL*



Our mission

Implement an integrated, science-based approach to Landcare through supportive partnerships across our catchment.

We are innovative and driven by action at a grassroots level.



**PIONEER
Catchment
LANDCARE**

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

2023-24 has been a transitional year for PCL, with very positive developments.

We acknowledge with great thanks the contribution of Sharon Dwyer as Chairperson, who left in April 2024. Sharon took on the role in 2020 after serving as deputy chair. She worked hard to ensure PCL's governance and policies were fit for purpose, and to broaden PCL's financial base.

Deep thanks go to Judith Wake, who stepped up with characteristic calm and wisdom to fill the Acting Chair role while the committee recruited a new Chair, on top of meeting Secretary duties. For many years, Judith has offered her extensive professional knowledge of ecology and conservation, and of NFP governance, to the PCL committee. She plans to step away from the Secretary role at the 2024 AGM and enjoy a more consultative role on the PCL management committee.

With the Council elections in March, PCL Secretary Fran Mann lost her position on the Mackay Regional Council. Ms Mann was the council-appointed representative to the PCL Management Committee and who took on the Secretary role to assist. We thank her for her service.

One of the critical factors that has always made PCL succeed, is the diligence and hard work of our team, who are to be congratulated on another year of developing and delivering some great projects. Senior Project Officer, Donna Jackson and Projects Coordinator, Nancy Pratt have worked hard to design, fund and deliver projects across the catchment. Habitat and biodiversity projects around quolls, water mice and koalas, weed eradication, streambank remediation and revegetation activities on private and public land have benefitted the health and biodiversity of our local environment. The Edward Lloyd Park River Access Revegetation Site at Marian was a community engagement project, whereas our ongoing work on TMR planting sites and other tendered work has enabled ongoing employment for the team.

Work with school groups from daycares and kindies, up through primary and high schools has included garden and planting workshops and information sessions. It's a great way to grow a love for the natural world and understanding of how it works. The environmental workshop program has also engaged members and the community, in areas as diverse as streambank rehabilitation, to small engines to bonsai.

Partnerships, collaborations and customer relationships are also an important part of PCL. We continue to work with Reef Catchments, Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers, community and environment groups, Tangaroa Blue, Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads and Mackay Regional Council. Council has a dual relationship as a key base funding source for PCL through Landcare Support and Land for Wildlife funding. Further, the MRC Mackay Natural Environment Centre team, with whom we share space, ideas and work with volunteers. We value the close and enduring connection to a valuable community resource committed to locally native plant species. We are a member of the Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership and serve on its Management Committee.

Going forward, we will be continuing to develop our publicly funded programs, developing corporate sponsor relationships, memberships and fee-for-service work. This last has been an ongoing priority in recent years, as a means to cultivating a stable financial base for the team and projects, complementing funding. We thank our member base. This is your organisation, and your financial support helps PCL as a community of like-minded people meet shared goals for our natural environment. Active involvement in volunteer programs, workshops and the committee is always warmly welcomed!

KIRILI LAMB
CHAIR



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Change in Strategic Direction

PCL is embarking on an exciting new strategic direction, shifting from reliance on government grants toward a more sustainable, fee-for-service model. This shift is vital for the long-term growth and stability of the organisation, ensuring PCL can continue its important work without relying on the uncertainties of grant funding. With an increasing number of dedicated not-for-profit groups across Australia competing for limited grants, this transition allows PCL to thrive independently while expanding its impact. PCL's environmental services portfolio has grown significantly, now including large-scale restoration and revegetation projects, bushland maintenance and effective invasive species control. By building expertise in these areas, PCL has strengthened its capacity to meet the environmental obligations of industry, making it a reliable partner for businesses aiming to enhance their environmental stewardship. Moving forward, PCL plans to extend its offerings further with fauna spotter/catcher services, flora and fauna surveys, land and vegetation condition assessments. This expansion supports our mission to protect and restore the environment while providing reliable, professional services to meet the evolving needs of industry and community.



Workforce Planning

Over the past year, PCL's Committee has laid the foundation for an ambitious new direction, crafting a Business and Organisational Plan through dynamic workshops led by Deb Rae Solutions. This plan focuses on key growth areas, from bridging skills gaps in leadership and commercial oversight to bolstering staff support. To bring fresh energy and expertise to the team, the committee is ramping up recruitment, reaching out to the community, utilising LinkedIn, attending Chamber of Commerce events and creating compelling recruitment packages. Retention efforts focus on making meetings engaging, nurturing skills and building strong, collaborative relationships. Succession planning is also front and center, with strategies to expand committee membership and mentor future leaders. For the year ahead, PCL's goals are clear: secure financial sustainability, deepen connections with members and volunteers and diversify income with an expanded fee-for-service portfolio—an exciting move toward greater community impact and self-sufficiency.

Staff Training

We have continued to provide our team with extensive and diverse training opportunities ensuring their skills are both relevant and up-to-date. Examples of these include:

- AUSMAP (Australian Microplastics Assessment Project)
- First Aid (HLTAID011)
- Chainsaw Training and Felling Small Trees
- Inspect and Clean Machinery Tools and Equipment to Preserve Biosecurity
- Vegetation Condition Assessment Training
- Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control (ACDC)

Environmental Services: Current clients



Department of Transport and Main Roads



BUILDING CAPACITY

PCL continues to strengthen its assets and enhance service delivery by strategically investing in essential equipment. This investment enables our team to operate more efficiently across various projects, from large-scale revegetation and habitat restoration to supporting landholders and community groups. By expanding our resources, we not only increase our operational capacity but also ensure we can offer even greater assistance to those managing natural resources. This commitment to growth allows us to further the regeneration of nature throughout the catchment.



2024 Honda Side by Side with 250Ltr Marshall UTV Spray Tank



Vehicle mounted Rapid Spray Unit 360L Spray Scout Buddy



Hustler zero turn mower - Fast track SDX



2,000ltr Water Trailer with Honda GX 200 2" fire fighting pump



Conservation and Land Management Equipment



Mitsubishi Triton Ute & Isuzu DMAX

LAND FOR WILDLIFE

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.

60.12ha

Committed to
Land for
Wildlife

199

Properties dedicated to the
regions LfW program

120

Free Native Plants

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

112hrs

Support & Education

Providing members with
advice, educational
opportunities and an
online platform for
knowledge sharing

This year, the Land for Wildlife (LfW) program has provided property owners in the Mackay region with valuable resources and support for conserving and restoring their land. By joining the program, landholders benefit from expert advice through property assessments, tailored management plans, and access to workshops that provide practical tools for enhancing biodiversity. These efforts not only improve the ecological health of their properties but also contribute to larger regional conservation goals by creating wildlife corridors and protecting habitats. With the program's continued expansion, property owners are playing an essential role in preserving local ecosystems, while gaining economic, social and environmental benefits. The collective impact of these efforts is helping to safeguard the region's biodiversity for future generations.

Recognition at the Queensland Landcare Awards

An organisational highlight was receiving the “Highly Commended” award at the Queensland Landcare Awards, a significant achievement that honours our organisations continuous efforts in environmental conservation. This recognition underscores our commitment to preserving and enhancing the natural ecosystems of our region. It also serves as a testament to the hard work, passion and dedication of our team and volunteers, who tirelessly contribute to initiatives such as habitat restoration, sustainable land management and community education.



New Membership Levels

PCL introduced new membership levels to better engage with individuals, businesses and community groups. This initiative was developed to offer more tailored opportunities for our supporters to get involved and contribute to the protection and restoration of our local environment.

The new membership structure allows people from a range of demographics to join our growing community of environmental stewards. Whether through direct participation in conservation projects, attending educational workshops, or supporting our mission in other ways, each membership makes a difference in the future of our natural landscapes.

By creating accessible options, we’ve made it easier than ever to join PCL and take part in our efforts to create positive environmental change.





in photo: Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) picture from monitoring camera for Water Mouse (*Xeromys myoides*)

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Water Mouse (Xeromys myoides) *Sandringham Bay*

This year, our "Water Mouse Conservation and Monitoring" project at Sandringham Bay has made significant strides in understanding the challenges faced by the vulnerable Water Mouse species (*Xeromys myoides*). Despite the unusually wet summer preventing scheduled burns, we continued our efforts by conducting thorough camera monitoring and habitat assessments in collaboration with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), the Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers, and community members. Through education and hands-on engagement, participants learned essential skills, such as camera setup and habitat identification, while raising awareness of this important species. Although no Water Mice were sighted, the presence of predators like foxes and pigs highlighted the need for ongoing predator management and habitat restoration. This project not only underscored the challenges but also strengthened community involvement in protecting this unique species and its ecosystem.



in photo: Feral Pig (*Sus scrofa*)



in photo: Danny setting up monitoring camera



in photo: an example of an eroding creek bank targeted through the Reef Assist Program.

Mackay Whitsunday Streambank stewardship program

This year, our participation in the Reef Assist 2.0 Program has yielded impressive results across multiple sites within the Pioneer River Catchment. Through streambank restoration, invasive weed removal and the planting of over 1,120 native species, we have successfully rehabilitated 3.16 hectares of riparian zones. These efforts have not only improved soil stability, water quality and reduced fine sediment runoff, but also enhanced biodiversity and built resilience against future environmental challenges. The collaboration with landholders and various community members has fostered stronger environmental stewardship and contributed to a sustainable legacy for the region. This project underscores our ongoing commitment to protecting and restoring vital ecosystems and supporting the health of our Great Barrier Reef.



in photo: Angus and Elijah constructing 'whoa-boys' aimed to slow the velocity of water runoff.

1,120

Native species planted

3.16

Hectares of riparian zones rehabilitated

3644

Hours dedicated to reducing sediment runoff into the GBR

The Mackay Whitsunday Streambank Stewardship Program is funded through the Queensland Government's \$33.5 million Reef Assist program under the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program and delivered in partnership between Reef Catchments, Pioneer Catchment Landcare, Whitsunday Catchment Landcare and Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association.



in photo: Participants of Clean Up Australia Day March 2024



Tangaroa Blue Litter Monitoring Project

PCL has continued its work along the riverbanks and beaches of the Pioneer Catchment, preventing litter from entering the Great Barrier Reef as part of the Tangaroa Blue Foundation's ReefClean Project, funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust. This initiative involved quarterly litter monitoring at Harbour Beach and the Pioneer River Estuary, aiming to reduce marine debris and identify key sources of litter pollution.

PCL officers followed ReefClean's standardised methodology, using consistent 4 x 25m transects to systematically collect and audit litter at both sites. Over the course of four monitoring sessions, PCL successfully removed more than 165.8kg of rubbish from the transect sites, covering a 3km stretch along the Pioneer River Estuary and Mackay Harbour Beach. All collected data was submitted to the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) Database, which is shared by over 2,000 partner organisations.

Clean Up Australia Day

Clean Up Australia Day 2024 was a tremendous success, with an extraordinary community effort resulting in the collection of 101 kilograms of litter from just one beach. This achievement highlights the significant impact that collective action can have on protecting our environment and preserving our coastline.

The event was also supported by a range of dedicated partners. Coles generously supplied breakfast for our volunteers, keeping them energised for the task ahead. Attended by the Yuwi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC, who played a vital role in the day's activities and Mackay and District Turtle Watch, who provided an informative stall to raise awareness about local turtle conservation efforts.

Additionally, we were thrilled to have Mackay North State High School join us, with enthusiastic students helping to lead the way in fostering a sense of environmental responsibility among younger generations.

Landcare School Support

Pioneer Catchment Landcare has been supporting school projects throughout the region for many years. Our efforts include developing native gardens, delivering educational class talks and hosting school outings, all aimed at fostering a love for nature among children. This year, we visited a total of 18 schools and kindergartens in the catchment, providing engaging activities that connect students with their environment. The Landcare School Support Program, funded by the Mackay Regional Council's Natural Environment Levy, enables us to create enriching experiences for students and promote environmental stewardship.

Children's Flora and Fauna Activity Book

PCL published a new educational book to enhance our Landcare School Support visits. This resource offers a fun and engaging way for students to learn about the native flora and fauna in our catchment.

Amber W, a talented local primary school student designed the front cover, which beautifully sets the tone for our exploration journey. This collaboration highlights community involvement and inspires young minds to appreciate and protect the environment.

We aim to strengthen business sponsorships to support ongoing print runs of educational materials, ensuring valuable resources remain available for schools in our region.



in photo above: C&K Marian visit



in photo: Bushtucker talk, Mirani State School

18

Schools

PCL supported 18 schools and kindergartens to achieve their environmental goals



in photo: Participants of Healthy Horse, Healthy Land Workshop

Healthy Horse, Healthy Land Workshop

PCL, in partnership with Whitsunday Catchment Landcare Inc., hosted a successful workshop at Bloomsbury Soldiers Memorial Hall, focusing on sustainable equine pasture and land management. Led by Stuart Myers, co-creator of Equiculture and renowned author, the event explored how horses can thrive within an ecosystem-friendly framework. The Equiculture system promotes meeting the natural needs of horses by integrating them into landscapes in ways that support environmental health.

The workshop attracted local participants and delivered a highly engaging and informative experience. Stuart's insights offered practical strategies for managing horses sustainably, keeping participants engaged throughout the day. Feedback highlighted the relevance and value of the session, reinforcing the importance of adopting holistic approaches to animal and land care.

The event reflects PCL's ongoing commitment to promoting sustainable practices across various land uses. With support from partners like Farmacist and Whitsunday Catchment Landcare, the workshop successfully advanced knowledge-sharing within the region, helping landholders adopt practices that benefit both horses and the broader environment.



in photo: Leigh Donkers WCL, Brodie Reynolds WCL, Kayla Simpson WCL, Stuart Myers Equiculture, Donna Jackson PCL



photo: 2020 Before revegetation activities -Sites 7a & 7b, adjacent to the Pioneer River, Mackay Ring Road



photo: 2024 After revegetation activities -Sites 7a & 7b, adjacent to the Pioneer River, Mackay Ring Road

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Going from strength to strength

Revegetation Projects at Scale

The Department of Transport and Main Roads, Mackay Ring Road Mass Container Planting project stands as a testament to PCL's dedication to ecological restoration and collaboration. Tasked with rejuvenating 9 individual sites along the Ring Road, PCL worked to project specifications and client requirements to deliver a revitalised landscape. Each site was carefully prepared and planted with native species, bringing resilience and biodiversity back to these vital areas.

PCL's adaptability was crucial: when heavy rains and floods disrupted plantings, the team quickly responded to replant and stabilise affected zones.

Through meticulous attention to detail, from staking and pruning to ongoing maintenance, PCL has transformed these spaces, creating vibrant, sustainable ecosystems that support wildlife, combat invasive species, and strengthen the region's natural beauty. Now, these green corridors are flourishing, offering habitat for wildlife, and setting the stage for long-term environmental benefits in Mackay's landscape.



photo: Site 7a June 2022



photo: Site 7a January 2024



in photo: Site meeting with landholders on handover day

Janes Creek Waterways - Treatment Chain Wetlands

PCL was contracted by Reef Catchments to deliver their Janes Creek Chain of Ponds Stage 2 project. Active since 2017, the project focused on capturing and processing fine sediments, nutrients and some pesticides before they enter the Janes Creek catchment.

Stage 2 saw the PCL field crew restore a further 220m of existing degraded cane drain along the Janes Creek tributary. The site complements existing restoration works by linking existing vegetation on the waterway through the cane paddock to Janes Creek itself, therefore creating an uninterrupted wildlife corridor.

The on-ground works, completed in collaboration with the Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers and local landholders, included bank stabilisation through reprofiling of the creek banks, insertion of rock walls to manage water flow and the planting of over 2,700 native tube stock. Despite setbacks due to an extended wet season, all plants were established by mid-March and are now thriving. Our team also installed irrigation and conducted regular weed management to support the newly planted vegetation.

Moving forward, the site's restored riparian vegetation will continue to capture sediment during flood events, playing a critical role in reducing sediment loss and improving water quality. On completion of PCL's contract the landholder has taken over stewardship of the site, ensuring its long-term sustainability.

This project demonstrates the quality of our Environmental Services and the power of partnerships between PCL, the Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers and local landholders to protect our natural environment and support the health of the Great Barrier Reef.



In photo: PCL and Yuwi teams working together to plant over 2,700 native tube stock

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OUR GROWTH BY NUMBERS



478.2%

Increase in Reserve Funds since 2018

479.6%

Increase in Grant Funding since 2018

430.3%

Increase overall since 2018

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

CLAIRE STRIBBLES
TREASURER

The 2024 financial year has shown PCL’s ability to maintain revenue streams despite economic challenges. The efforts of the coordinators and staff in securing contracts and funding have been crucial in supporting operations.

The breakdown of revenues is as follows:

- Operational Revenues: \$789,942
- Other Income: \$5,199

Total expenses for the financial year 2024 amounted to \$601,791, which were managed to ensure they did not exceed revenues. Detailed expenses are outlined below:

- Motor Vehicle Expenses: \$22,538
- Marketing Expenses: \$6,491
- Administration Expenses: \$68,917
- Employee Related Expenses: \$503,845

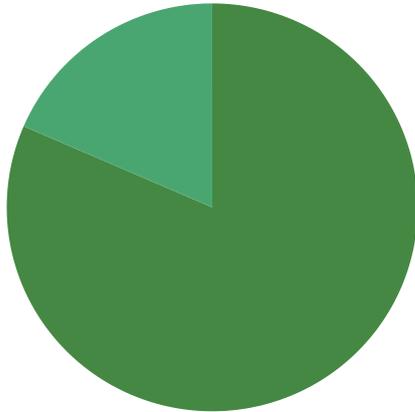
PCL finished the year with Provision for Future Project Income of \$164,524 and Provision for General & Discretionary Reserves: \$234,444.

Income generated from new projects was reduced in FY2024. With funding accessibility becoming increasingly difficult, diversifying income streams remains important. All community members can help PCL increase its income through commercial avenues related to land management and environmental care. PCL aims to continue building capacity and diversification with the same level of commitment in the coming year.

Social Media Engagement

2022-2023

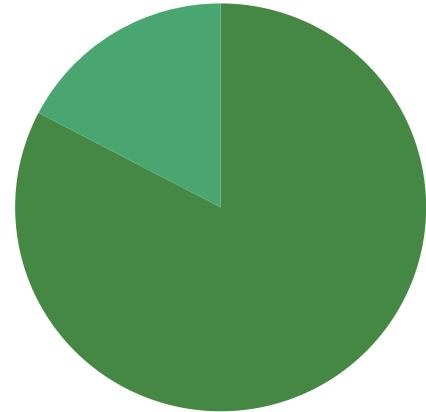
Instagram Followers
295



Facebook Followers
1300

2023-2024

Instagram Followers
326



Facebook Followers
1555

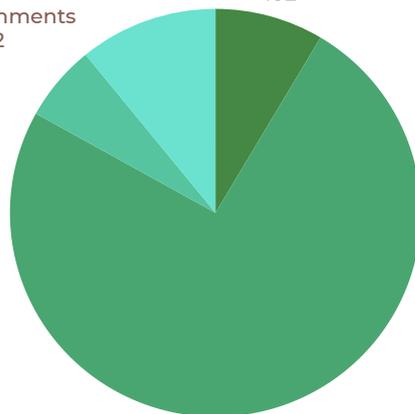
In the 2023-2024 year, we experienced a significant increase in our Facebook followers, with a remarkable growth rate of 19.615% compared to the previous year (2022-2023). This growth demonstrates our expanding reach and the heightened engagement of our community. We appreciate the continued support and enthusiasm from our followers, which plays a crucial role in supporting our mission and increasing our visibility.

2022-2023

Post Shares
130

Posts
102

Post Comments
72



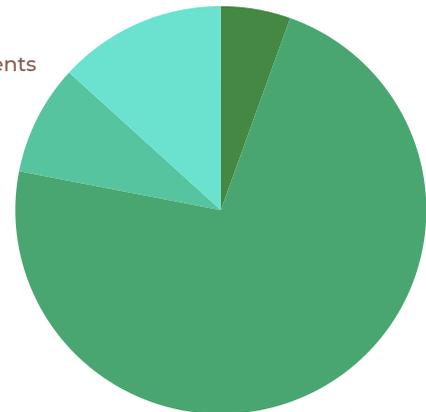
Post Likes
890

2023-2024

Post Shares
306

Posts
127

Post Comments
202



Post Likes
1680

In the 2023-2024 year, we observed substantial increases across all engagement metrics:

- Comments rose by 250%, reflecting a higher level of interaction and discussion.
- Post Shares increased by 135%, showing greater content distribution and reach.
- Posts grew by 24%, indicating more frequent content updates.
- Post Likes saw an 89% increase, highlighting enhanced content appeal and engagement.

These improvements underscore our successful efforts in boosting community interaction and expanding our online presence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PCL 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.

PCL would like to acknowledge the many volunteers and organisations that have assisted and supported our work in the Mackay and greater region throughout 2023 - 2024. Special thanks to the Mackay Natural Environment Center for hosting our office, equipment and staff, Native Plants Queensland (Society for Growing Australian Plants - Mackay Branch) for your advice, wisdom and support and our project partners, Reef Catchments, The Department of Transport and Main Roads, Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association, Whitsunday Catchment Landcare.

A heartfelt thank you to each committee member for your incredible dedication, passion, and expertise. Your contributions have not only strengthened our mission but have also fostered a culture of support and collaboration that uplifts everyone involved. Through your hard work, thoughtful insights, and unwavering commitment, you've helped us make meaningful strides towards our goals, creating lasting impacts and inspiring those around you. We are deeply grateful for your efforts, and it's an honour to work alongside such a remarkable group of individuals. Together, we're making a real difference in our community and for our environment! - from the PCL staff.



MEMBERSHIP

Why join us?

By becoming a member, you're not just joining an organisation—you're actively contributing to the regeneration of nature and the preservation of our unique environment.



General Membership

\$ 25.00

For \$25, you will enjoy the following benefits:

- Voting privileges contributing to our future as an organisation.
- PCL Newsletter delivered directly to your inbox.
- Exclusive deals and discounts for community events & workshops.
- Be among the first to hear about volunteer opportunities.
- Attend the yearly BBQ & Mingle with likeminded members.
- Participate at informative gatherings.
- Free native plant.



Land Carer Membership

\$ 100.00

For \$100, you will enjoy the following benefits:

- Voting privileges contributing to our future as an organisation.
- Mackay and Whitsundays Weed book at \$35 value.
- PCL Newsletter delivered directly to your inbox.
- Exclusive deals and discounts for community events & workshops.
- 6 Free native plants.
- Be among the first to hear about volunteer opportunities.
- Attend the yearly BBQ & Mingle with likeminded members.
- Participate at informative gatherings.
- Personalised property vegetation plan.
- Option to upgrade - see Land Carer Upgrade.



Land Carer Upgrade

\$ 200

Interested in enhancing your Land Carer package?

Seize this opportunity to enrich your land management journey and elevate your experience by opting for an upgrade. Unlock a valuable four-hour visit from two of our skilled field officers at your property. Benefit from their specialised guidance and support tailored to landholders like you. During the visit, our experts can lend a hand or provide advice on a range of on ground aspects including:

- Walk and talk through your property.
- Assistance in implementing effective weed control strategies.
- Support in helping you facilitate successful revegetation initiatives.
- Advice on species choice.
- Guiding you through essential property upkeep.

*Upgrade only available to land carer members.

