



# Annual Report

July 2014 – June 2015.



Maroochy Waterwatch  
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## **1.0 Board Report**

It would be more traditional for me to title this presentation the Chairman's Report or the President's Report, but to me this is no longer the relevant banner. In today's world the strength of an organisation lies in its board or management committee, executive management and members working together to achieve their shared goals and deal as a team with the difficulties of this as they arise. Hence – Board Report.

I am proud to have been the chairman of the board in 2014-2015 and to see the achievements of our members, our community programs and our business units.

The external environment in which we operate has in recent years been very testing. Governments at all levels, with the notable exception of the Sunshine Coast Council, do not seem to be able to recognise that community organisations plays an ever increasing role in achieving a resilient landscape and the resilience of their local communities.

In some instances you could be forgiven for thinking that Governments believe that community groups should undertake public benefit projects entirely with their own resources. I make no apology for stressing our statement of goals to emphasise the focus of the public benefit we deliver.

The reality, which they overlook, is that for every dollar we receive in grants we collectively contribute a further six dollars of our own funds achieving public as well as person benefits. This very large financial multiplier was publicly acknowledged by the Sunshine Coast Mayor at the 2015 Environment Forum.

Business often sees us as competitors and is slow to acknowledge our achievements. Community groups are sometimes portrayed as somehow being less than professional in their operations and achievements. This flies in the face of the obvious professional, technical and business skills and experience which we collectively devote to our projects and administration.

Under these circumstances your board must strive to ensure that it fosters the best possible use of the resources of the organisation. For its own part it must apply the best governance practices and continually seek to improve their application. Our push to better understand the skills and experience required to do this and to recruit to the board people who match these requirements is a continuing need.

We have been many changes in how we do things in terms of budgeting, governance and procedures which have meant that we are in a much better financial and operational position than many of our fellow organisations.

This has been an evolutionary process over more than just the past year. However, it has become increasingly evident that to fully achieve our goals we need to break away from the image of us, and that of our fellow organisations, held by business and the broader community of just a group of friends doing good works.

You will today be asked to agree to a resolution for the organisation we presently call Maroochy Waterwatch to change its legal status from that of a community organisation, under the Queensland Associations Incorporations Act, to a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Act. Concurrent with this action our group name will become ECOllaboration Ltd.

Our present community based activities will be nested within a Branch of this company called Maroochy Waterwatch with its own Charter. Our business units will become business units of the company. Your board believes that this is the way forward, particularly in regard to our image out there in the world of government, finance and business and in terms of our competitive position for the funds we need to achieve our goals.

There is more to this process than just a change in legal status and name. It will give us a point in time to undertake promotional activities to establish a new position in the public arena and funding competition. The proposed Constitution includes the capacity to establish other branches which are consistent with the achievement of our objectives. This could include other groups who can see the benefits of merging with us to spread administrative and similar costs and avoid duplication. ECOllaboration would develop a Charter for any new branch, fully prescribing how it will operate and its obligations and responsibilities.

This may in many ways seem very mechanistic. However, its target is to allow you as volunteers undertaking water testing, river patrol or community clean up and planting to get on with the activities which were the reason you joined us and fully support you in these endeavours. A charter will need to be developed for Maroochy Waterwatch and the board will be looking for assistance and advice from those directly involved. Ongoing consultation arrangements can be built into the charter, so that the Branch can act as a coherent part of the overall organisation.

I would like to thank all of you who have supported our organisation to the stage that it now has a strong reputation and future in the community sector. You are being asked to agree to expand that future to ensure that we have increasing strength to fully achieve our objectives on an ongoing basis and evolve to the next phase.

John Dillon, Chairman

## **2.0 CEO's Report**

As I look back on the year, it is with a sense of accomplishment that I look back on the works and projects undertaken. We have worked as a team, both staff and volunteers alike, to deliver our service to the community, our clients and funding providers.

The year however was not without its hiccups, with key people moving on to other challenges. Our succession planning though was robust enough so that the transition was relatively smooth for the incoming volunteers and staff.

External pressures from declining grant funding to deliver community based programs continued to escalate with the majority of government departments adopting the 'vegemite approach' where they spread the funds so thinly amongst competing organisations that achievements are minimal in comparison to what could be achieved with sufficient funds for community operations and projects.

Our major source of operational partnership funding from council was more than halved which has resulted in reduced reporting to match the funding. We were however successful in some Federal and State Government project funding to offset the reduction but this is a once off win and we need to find other ways to support our community programs such as community water testing, frog monitoring, River Patrols and volunteer involvement in administration.

On the other hand though, we have strongly delivered programs and projects in the commercial sector with the profits being used to supplement the reduction in grant funding for community projects. When change is a foot and there are concerns about financial viability, there are two options available. Either reduce costs or increase revenue. We have basically chosen the harder path of increasing revenue by way of fee for service delivery of projects.

Associated with this is our proposed restructure as outlined in the Chairman's Report. As with our changing business model, our proposed operating model has been years in the making, with extensive research and communication on the best structure to place us at a strategic advantage into the future.

I am quietly confident about the future with the consistent changing environment that we work within. We have secured some good long term contracts in Catchment Services and are developing our environmental monitoring portfolio, eco education and tour services, and we are back into extensive labour market programs providing training for natural areas

employment. We are not an organisation that sits and waits in the hope that something will come along. We are actively and strategically looking at ways of doing business but still providing the community support that is needed in the region.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has supported the organisation throughout the year. There are too many people to name individually, but I would like to highlight some of the activities we worked on:

- Community water quality monitoring
- Amphibian surveys
- Maroochy and Mooloolah River Patrol and litter surveys
- Natural area management
- Biocontrol programs
- Dune, riverine and land revegetation programs
- Water and air monitoring
- School and community education programs and guest speaker at community and other forums
- Coolum Community Native Nursery
- Research programs
- Ecotourism programs
- Accredited training programs (business and conservation)
- Friends of Parks program
- Work for the Dole programs
- Science awards judging
- University program reviewing (science and business)
- Community group supervision in conservation

Continuing these projects and building our scope of works further in achieving Resilient Landscapes with Resilient Communities is the forward plan for the future. Our restructure will continue to deliver efficient and effective programs to the region for the enhancement of our environment and community.

I look forward to working with the Board, staff and volunteers of the new company and achieving significant outcomes into the future.

Cerran Fawns, Chief Executive Officer

### **3.0 Operational Reports**

#### **3.1 Volunteering**

Since the position of Community Engagement Officer was created in November 2014 it has supported 300 odd volunteers involved in Maroochy Waterwatch and ECOllaboration' s vast programs. The large number of volunteers represents the strong ties that the organisation has with the community and indicates the integral role that volunteers play in the success of our programs.

##### **3.1.1 Friends of Parks**

The Friends of Parks program was highly successful at delivering volunteer hours into National Parks. Volunteers assisted Park Rangers with conservation and maintenance activities at the Glasshouse Mountains, Currimundi Lake (Kathleen McArthur) Regional Park, Dularcha National Park, Conondale National Park, Elanda Point, Teewah Beach, and Fraser Island.

Over 100 individual participants responded to ECOllaboration' s media releases, radio interviews, flyers, social media, and newsletter articles for the weekly Wednesday outings. The two major motivating factors for volunteers were vocational experience and personal interest. Volunteers were further incentivised by the provision of transport from Nambour.



These weekly outings were logistically demanding as volunteers preferred not to RSVP until 1 or 2 days prior. There was also competing interests between promoting the Wednesday outings, special weekend events, and the Fraser Islands Eco-Tours. By the end of the program there were 8-10 regular volunteers attending the Wednesday outings, reducing the need for weekly promotion.

To complement the regular Wednesday outings, two special weekend events were held during the program. The first was a hike to Artist's Cascades at Conondale National Park. This was very successful with 24 participants

removing approximately 60m<sup>3</sup> of Lantana and staying afterwards for a BBQ. The second was the Double Island Point Beach Clean Up in May, which was held in partnership with Surfrider Foundation. An estimated 150 people collected 2 tonnes of rubbish as well as 15 bags of weeds from the beach during the event.

The environmental benefits achieved by the Friends of Parks program have been summarised in the table below. Separate from the Fraser Island Eco-tours and Campground Hosting, these events amounted to the delivery of approximately 3400 volunteer hours (or half of the program's KPIs). As a result, at least 150 bags of weeds were removed and 1500 seedlings were planted. Other work completed includes painting of infrastructure, track maintenance, turf laying, and nursery work.

Location	Volunteer Hours	Weed Bags	Seedlings Planted	Other
Maleny Region (Conondale National Park, Glasshouse Mountains, Currimundi Lakes)	2114	72	869	Painting, Track Maintenance, Laying Turf
Elanda Point & Teewah Beach	1968	59	480	Rubbish Collection, Nursery Work
Fraser Island Eco-Tours	984	-	-	-
Campground Host (Fraser Island)	2000	-	-	-

Alongside the environmental benefits, it has also been satisfying to observe the social impact of the program, with several long-term friendships being created between volunteers. Because the Friends of Parks Program was not extended, three of the regular volunteers have independently continued to volunteer together at Elanda Point on a monthly basis.

### **3.1.2 Frog Monitoring Volunteers**

The 2014-15 Frog Monitoring program with Maroochy Waterwatch was conducted late January to late March 2015. A media release, email campaign, and social media (Facebook) attracted nearly 45 interested individuals with just over half attending at least one event.

Although it was intended that each of the five sites be monitored three times each during the season, three of the sites were only monitored twice. This is because weather conditions and changes in volunteer availability



often caused events to be cancelled at the last minute. This has been an ongoing issue for the frog monitoring program and this year some changes were made in an attempt to reduce cancellations:

- A Survey Monkey questionnaire was successfully used to obtain detailed information about volunteer availability. This allowed a suitable roster to be created from the beginning of the program and saved on time spent going back and forth with volunteers.
- We attempted to roster more than the minimum required number of volunteers for each event, in an attempt to account for last minute cancellations. While this worked well initially, it appeared to burn out returning volunteers by rostering them too often and we struggled to maintain volunteer numbers towards the end of the program.
- As frog monitoring is a weeknight activity, volunteers have expressed preference for monitoring close to home. Sites that are in less populated areas (particularly Eerwah Vale) tend to attract about half as many willing volunteers, and we try to address this by offering transport from our Nambour office.



While we will implement the Survey Monkey questionnaire again this year, we will limit the number of times that volunteers are rostered per fortnight to avoid causing burn out. We will also consider a second round of volunteer recruitment midway through the season.

A summary of volunteer hours is provided in the table below.

Site	Volunteers	Site Visits	Volunteer Hours
EJ Foote Reserve, Buderim	10	2	60
Noosa National Park (Peregian Section), Coolum	11	2	66
Yaroomba Bushland Reserve, Mt Coolum	10	3	90
Private Property, Eerwah Vale	10	3	90
Private Property, Dulong	9	2	54

### **3.1.3 Water Monitoring Volunteers**

At the end of the 2014-15 Financial Year there were 58 volunteers with Maroochy Waterwatch. Three long-term volunteers dropped out of the program at the end of 2014 due to ill health, however an equal number of new volunteers were inducted into the program at around the same time.

Once the Friends of Parks program was completed on 30 June 2015, my availability for training and site risk assessments greatly increased and the majority of (now 60) volunteers will have been re-trained by end of 2015.

Spending one-on-one time with volunteers during training has allowed the organisation to better appreciate their changing circumstances and needs. In close consultation with the volunteers, gradual changes were made to the roster to reduce delays and instances of people missing out at the end of the month. This helps to keep volunteers in the program as inconsistency can lead them to feel undervalued and seek to fill their time with other interests.

Since 30 June 2015, another two monitors have dropped out of the program, however we have already lined up a volunteer to take over monitoring at their site from early next year. We have also recruited four new monitors to the Coolum Region, where there has previously only been one. This has greatly increased the coverage of Stumer's Creek with the creation of five new sites, and another site planned for 2016.

As a result of the site risk assessments, two sites have been decommissioned due to concerns about access. The buckets and adjoining length of rope were changed to reduce the risk of injury, as well as gloves and high visibility vests added to every kit. Revisiting all of the monitoring sites has also allowed them to be rephotographed, marked by GPS, and described. This will feed into the database and improve interpretation of results.

### **3.1.4 Mooloolah River Patrol**

Mooloolah River Patrol under the auspice of ECOllaboration was established late 2014 following the generous donation of a boat by Thiess. Initial patrols were conducted by nine regular volunteers spread across two crews. In March, the volunteers recognised that there was a need for more volunteers

as many of the existing crew were travelling mid-year. It was a very successful drive with seventeen people registering their interest, and twelve of the new volunteers inducted by the end of the Financial Year. From 18 November 2014 to 30 June 2015, 158 volunteer hours were spent removing over 20 bags of rubbish from the river. This occurred over 21 patrols. Items of note include a pallet, shopping trolleys, cushions, a blood filled syringe, council signage, a PVC floor panel, a bike, and plywood.

## Volunteers on the lookout to clean up Mooloolah River

THE fate of the Mooloolah River is in the hands of eco-group MooWatch.

About 25 volunteers are working hard to clean up and maintain the popular and busy river.

The group was established late last year operating under the support of ECOllaboration.

Member Don McBryde said it was an "eclectic group of people" doing their bit to help the environment.

He said MooWatch was a great way to meet new and like-minded people and give back to the community.

"We are surprised at how tidy people keep the Mooloolah River," Mr McBryde said.

"But we are finding a lot of plastic bottles, a few shopping trolleys, beach balls and



**HEALTHY WATERWAYS:** MooWatch volunteers John Thorpe and Ross Christie, in the boat, join Don McBryde in keeping the Mooloolah River as clean as possible. PHOTO: KRISTY MUIR

quite a few left foot thongs.

"The main things we are pulling out of the water is fishing bait bags and (tack-

le)," fellow member Ross Christie said.

"We would like to ask fishermen to not drop their rub-

bish into the water.

"Various volunteer organisations were working together; Mooloolah Yacht

Club, ECOllaboration and Surf Life Saving Sunshine Coast to help the environment," Mr Christie said.

ECOllaboration CEO, Cerran Fawns said a 4.8m poly boat was donated by Thiess to get the crew on the water and some funding for fuel and repairs had been sourced through the State Government's Everyone's Environment Grant and the Australian Government's 25th Anniversary Landcare Grant.

"The boat is housed thanks to the generous support of Surf Life Saving Sunshine Coast," she said.

"The MooWatch volunteers cruise the Mooloolah River in search of rubbish and as always it never ceases to amaze me the amount and type of rubbish collected.

"It all started with a conversation around how great it would be to have a volunteer group cleaning up the Mooloolah River similar to what occurs on the Maroochy River.

"It has since snowballed and we now have more than 20 people who have expressed interest in being involved.

"It is a great testament on the community's appreciation for our waterways and willingness to look after them.

"We will soon be looking at getting the boat sign written and there will be opportunity for corporate sponsorship to keep the program running."

■ For further information telephone 5476 4777 or email info@ECOllaboration.org.au.

The frequency of travel by the majority of volunteers has caused a break in continuity and unfortunately the number of patrols has dropped considerably since the end of the financial year. It is a major goal to increase and maintain the patrols to 3-4 outings per fortnight in 2015-16.

### 3.1.5 Maroochy River Patrol

**Overview:** The Maroochy Waterwatch River Patrol has been successfully operating since January 2007 under the direction of Maroochy Waterwatch with Cerran Fawns as CEO. Our modest 4.4 meter vessel powered by a 2009 year model Yamaha 50 HP Four Stroke Engine is kept in a compound at the Maroochy River Resort at BliBli, thanks to the generosity of the Management Team at the Resort, for whom we are forever grateful for this goodwill gesture, plus the fact that we have a rubbish disposal skip available exclusively for our purpose – cleaning up the Maroochy River & it's tributaries – Coolum; Eudlo & Petrie Creeks & accessible drains.

**Operations:** River Patrol currently consists of 25 volunteers with all Skippers holding current boat licences, operating (generally but not always) 5 days per week, weather & maintenance issues permitting. For safety purposes, the regular crew is a mandatory minimum of two (2) & some crews comprise 3 members. For Insurance purposes, all are members of Maroochy Waterwatch Inc. A daily report sheet is completed after each

outing, which records the relevant information of items retrieved from the river, mangroves & river banks, including incidental or unusual sightings. There have been no reported accidents to date. Safety is paramount. A monthly report is provided to the Board Members of Maroochy Waterwatch Inc.

**Coverage:** River Patrol Crews cover from the Maroochy River entrance & all navigable creeks upstream to Dunethin Rock & occasionally into the downstream canal system adjacent to Chambers Island & Picnic Point. The Maroochy river system encompasses over 350 kilometres of shoreline & is a major tourist attraction & asset to the Sunshine Coast & our mandate is to achieve & sustain this status as a pristine environment. Commencing late 2014, Maroochy Waterwatch instigated operation of another vessel on the Mooloolah River, carrying out river clean-ups on a smaller scale.



#### **Statistics during this period:**

- 1,320 volunteer hours (the same period last year was 1,741 hours).
- Retrieved 401 bags of general rubbish – estimated volume 20,050 litres.
- Retrieved 112 bags of recyclable rubbish - additional & not included in the above - estimated volume 5,600 litres.
- Removed 128 rusted & broken; derelict; discarded; unmarked & hazardous crab pots.
- Used a minimum of 884 litres of fuel (this is a very conservative estimate because statistics are only available for a portion of this period).
- Additional to the above we have retrieved many items, not included in the collection bags. These comprise : navigational hazards resulting from rain & tidal influence; removed illegal & deserted camp sites including tarps; apparel & rubbish left; mattress's; flotsam debris; varieties of chairs; plastic crates & buckets; car & 4WD wheels & tyres; fishing line; misc. lengths of rope; cushions; pieces of ply & timber; footwear; wheelie bins; planter tubs; furniture; TV sets; car panels & trim components; tractor & machinery

components; styrene & foam pieces; toys; micro wave ovens; many plastic containers ranging in capacities of 5 litre to 25 litre & the occasional drum full of used engine oil – fortunately no leakage; plus the individual empty 200 litre metal drum; lengths of hose – both garden & larger industrial; submerged dinghy's; bicycle frames; esky's; oxy acetylene bottle (full size; rusted & water growth – evident of being immersed for some time); building materials; shopping trolleys; electrical goods; whipper snippers; beach & regular umbrella's; garden tools; awnings; rubber mats.....& the occasional dead cow !

- The predominant rubbish retrieved is volumes of plastic in the form of bags, bottles, plastic sheet & huge quantities of broken glass.

**Summary:** We have provided community awareness about "what we do" by handing out brochures to people on shore & passing boats whose occupiers have stopped & asked about Maroochy Waterwatch. We have notified vessels towing water skiers of the dangers of floating logs & 'other' debris following heavy rains. We have also provided assistance & input to unusual sightings to Fisheries Dept. & Council; i.e. dead wild life & fish; navigation hazards; removal of fallen tree's to land owners; dumping of large industrial equipment. Additionally, we have provided transport & assistance to Council doing Mangrove Revegetation monitoring & river bank erosion observation. We continually locate; retrieve & dump unusual findings buried in the mud at low tides, such as lengths of steel & industrial machinery pieces; broken glass; more plastics; rope, chain & fishing line & more recently, a suit case containing jewellery which we handed over to the local police & advised of location, the latter investigated by police, where a makeshift tent remained. We have also been in discussions with a similar operation being considered at Noosa.

Funded by the Sunshine Coast Councils Environmental Levy Partnership

### **3.2 Environmental Projects**

A big year for ECOllaboration with an expanding repertoire of activities in our project portfolio. With a conscious effort of moving away from a reliance on grants to a more commercial focus, we have had both some success and failure. As we gain our footing in a competitive market and continue to find our niche products, I am sure the strong group of staff we have will continue to lift the organisation to the next level.

#### **3.2.1 Grant Funded Work**

### **3.2.1.1 Community Water Quality**

Water Quality collected in this program has shown a great increase in reliability since Janine has been re-training each volunteer. Many volunteers had been introducing some level of error into the data for a variety of reasons including jumping in the streams before taking a reading or taking readings from a variety of different locations and depths.

The data overall has shown slight reductions in water quality across the catchment this year. Dissolved Oxygen levels have been low and turbidity often high. Patterns that we see every year have again been noticed. After significant rainfall turbidity and dissolved oxygen levels increase. The North Maroochy continues to display poor results. The estuary did see an improvement.

Funded by the Sunshine Coast Councils Environmental Levy Partnership and SEQ Catchments

### **3.2.1.2 Frog Monitoring**

The following list details the tolerance of some of the species we located within this survey:

#### *High Tolerance Species*

Striped Marsh Frog (*Limnodynastes peronii*)  
Cane Toad (*Bufo marinus*)  
Eastern Sedge frog (*Litoria fallax*)

#### *Medium Tolerance Species*

Bleating Tree Frog (*Litoria dentata*)  
Peron's Tree Frog (*Litoria peronii*)  
Whistling Tree Frog (*Litoria verreauxii*)  
Great Barred Frog (*Mixophyes fasciolatus*)

#### *Low Tolerance/Sensitive Species*

Leaf Green Tree Frog (*Litoria phyllocroa*)  
Giant Barred Frog (*Mixophyes iteratus*)  
Tusked Frog (*Adelotus brevis*)





The 2014/2015 survey has shown that there continues to be some decline in frog species on the Sunshine Coast. Three of the five sites that were monitored this year will be monitored again in the 2015/2016 survey with two new sites being monitored. In 2013/2014 we saw a strong decline of cane toads in each site, however this year they returned with a vengeance. It is predicted they will be prevalent again in the 2015/2016 survey with many toadlets already spotted in the waterways.

Maroochy Waterwatch aims to continue to raise awareness in the community about amphibian conservation and the important role frogs play in our environment.

Funded by the Sunshine Coast Councils Environmental Levy Partnership

### **3.2.2 Scientific Consultancies**

Maroochy Waterwatch T/A\_ECOllaboration over the last twelve months has had much success for a fledgling commercial entity in what is known to be a very competitive market. We still believe that we have a niche product in what we offer and that there is a lot more opportunity to be found. Over the last twelve months we have had a number of successful tender applications for scientific and stakeholder consultation work. Some of these tenders involved purely being accepted onto state government panels which may or may not produce any income.

It is worth re-iterating that all projects delivered by ECOllaboration, irrespective of whether they are grant funded or consulting projects must be consistent with our organisational objectives. While it is true that this significantly limits the number and type of consulting projects that the organisation is eligible to bid for, it is excellent for keeping the organisation focussed on delivering positive environmental project work to the highest scientific standard, and for ensuring our staff remain motivated by the

knowledge that their professional efforts will continue to directly improve regional environmental management.

### **3.2.2.1 Stormwater Monitoring**

This stormwater monitoring program that began somewhat as a gesture of goodwill from the Sunshine Coast Council to us in a chance meeting between colleagues, in 2015 became something much stronger. The program is broken into two separate projects which are detailed below.

#### **3.2.2.1.1 Stormwater Monitoring – Industrial**

The highlights of this program are:

- \$28,000 income
- An annual survey involving the assessment of 100 drains
- 15 of these drains were then monitored annually
- An education program involving 15 schools across the region
- An industrial survey (30 land users surveyed about their knowledge of the stormwater system in their region).
- 3 additional drain sites were added throughout the program at the request of council
- 1 site had heavy metals analysed at the request of Council

From recommendations in the final report, in 2016 Council have now requested the following additions:

- reporting on potential infrastructure upgrades
- the use of a health scorecard system
- introduction of macro invertebrate monitoring

These three additions will bring the estimated revenue of this project to approx. \$37,000 per annum.





#### **3.2.2.1.2 Stormwater Monitoring – Urban**

Sunshine Coast Council were required as part of their town year development plan to identify locations of stormwater outlets that may require upgrading if development in that area was to proceed. This was a tender released to only 4 organisations.

We were successful in the tender process due to our pricing, strong methodology, value for money and experience in the stormwater monitoring network due to the urban project detailed above.

The highlights of this program are:

- \$45,000 income
- An initial survey that assessed 125 drain sites
- 25 hotspots were selected and monitored weekly over a 3 month period

#### **3.2.2.2 Caloundra Waste Site Water Monitoring**

\$1500.00 income

For the second year in a row we have been contracted by Sunshine Coast Regional Council to conduct water testing at a number of sites at an extension of the waste management centre in Caloundra. This is a four year project and we were contracted after Council were unhappy with the previous consultant.

#### **3.2.2.3 M&K Pipeline Water Quality**

\$2000.00 income

A small water quality project that involved testing 4 sites upstream and downstream of a unity water pipeline in Maleny. We were required to go to the site daily during construction.

#### **3.2.2.4 Friends of Parks**

The Friends of Parks Program was a great learning curve for us. Right from the outset it was difficult to gauge whether it was going to be a success as even National Parks staff were unsure of how the program was going to run and be managed. Right up to the final months, some projects were still being finalised which made it very difficult to manage. The greatest success

we had was the Ecotourism trips to Fraser Island. These trips assisted in us reaching 100% of our renegotiated KPI's.



Over 12 months we ran five trips to Fraser Island. Details on each trip are listed below. The reasons these trips were so successful was the interaction with the rangers, people being able to explore parts of the island that they wouldn't normally see and being able to get access to the island without a 4WD for a budget price. The reason we have not been able to continue these trips is that they are not viable at the price point we had set. The only way that these trips could continue in their current format would be to get further supportive funding.

#### September 2014

- 11 volunteers, 2 staff
  - Most marketing for this trip was done through University's so the majority of volunteers were students
  - Based at the ranger station at Central Station (no charge for accommodation)
  - Work involved clearing tracks, painting picnic tables and weeding in and around Central Station and Lake MacKenzie.

#### November 2014

- 24 volunteers, 3 staff
  - Based in private accommodation at Orchid Beach
  - Work involved clearing tracks, clearing trees, cleaning and painting infrastructure at Waddy Point Campground
  - Momentum had begun to build with these trips and from this point forward most trips had waiting lists. The Facebook page we created had got over 400 likes in just a few months.



#### February 2015

- 15 volunteers, 2 staff
  - Based in private accommodation at Orchid Beach
  - Work involved clearing tracks, clearing trees, cleaning and painting infrastructure at Waddy Point Campground.

#### May 2015

- 16 volunteers, 2 staff
  - Based in private accommodation at Happy Valley
  - Work involved clearing tracks, clearing trees, cleaning and painting infrastructure at Happy Valley Campground.

#### June 2015

- 25 volunteers, 3 staff
  - Based at the University Camp in Dilli Village
  - Work involved clearing tracks, clearing trees, cleaning and painting infrastructure at Central Station, Dilli Village, Lake McKenzie, Lake Birabeen

### **3.2.2.5 Nitrous Oxide and Soil Testing**

This was the final year in the Nitrous Oxide program for SEQ Catchments under the Australians Government's Carbon Farming Initiative. This year provided the sampling team with particularly harsh conditions. We dug over 90 cores for soil sampling three times over the summer in extremely hot conditions in amongst mature cane plants. Two of our staff were forced to rest to avoid heat stroke on the first survey so during the second and third surveys the digging was done in shifts to give staff time to recover. Thanks must be extended to Sky Thorby, Marcelo Atique and Sam Richardson for stepping up to help on this difficult project.



#### *Facts and figures:*

- 64 nitrous oxide samples taken twice a week for 3 months – equal to over 1500 individual samples
- 90 soil core samples taken 3 times over 3 months.
- Temperatures of up to 42 degrees were recorded in the cane field when the cane was at full height.
- 2 full time, 4 casuals and 5 volunteers helped on this project

#### **3.2.2.6 Plans for the following years**

##### Woodford Bio blitz

We have touched base with the Woodford Folk Festival Organising Committee to try and coordinate a Bio Blitz during their planting festival in May. This involves volunteers getting involved in a full biological survey of all fauna and flora at the site. Currently Australia Geographic sponsors these events, so we would expect to be able to get some funding from them, as well as from Woodford organisers.

##### Stormwater Monitoring

We would like to offer the Stormwater Monitoring model that we currently manage for Sunshine Coast Council to other Councils in the region. We have begun to make contact with them and hope to begin expanding this program further over the next 12 months. This will include now a macroinvertebrate survey at any freshwater sites.

##### Consulting

As we slowly work out our product niche and who to offer those products too, we have great confidence in ECOllaboration' s ability to continue to

grow and expand into the Environmental Consulting space over the next 12 months.

### Ecotourism

If we can find a financial partner or sponsor, we would like to see the Fraser Island Voluntourism trips resume in 2015/2016. Additionally we are in the process of forming a partnership with Live It Tours to provide an ecotourism service to corporate clients.



### **3.3 ECO Education**

This year we invested in promoting our services to schools throughout the region. This required considerable lead up time in developing databases and materials with the service now starting to pay dividend with schools booking in early for 2016. Work has included:

- Setting up the Eco Education website and linked the Eco Education brochures
- Developed Eco Education brochures for Early Learning, Primary and High School – hard copy and PDF links
- Set up contact databases for Early Learning Centres, Outside School Hours Care facilities, School Camp facilities. Emails sent to school camp facilities on the Sunshine Coast and Early Learning Centres with relevant brochures. Various centres which responded received workshop presentations through the education aspect of the urban stormwater initiative.
- Set up school contact lists – for North Coast (100 school contacts), Metropolitan (50 school contacts) and Darling Downs (31 school contacts) Education Qld Regions

- Set up data base of Head of Departments (HODs) contacts for Science and Humanities by phoning schools and asking for the name and email address of the relevant HODs. Sent emails to HODs (150 emails) with Eco Education Services information
- Collect and file information relating to our school field trips and workshops to enable greater learning exchange for presenters within our organisation and for those that may follow. Scanned hard copy school field trip booklets provided by schools into our electronic files for future reference
- Seeking feedback from the field trips and workshops delivered to school
- Set up a Booking form for Eco Education Services to schools
- Developing greater knowledge of the curriculum connections with Eco Education Services particularly with high school Science, Marine Science and Geography subjects
- Investigating approaches of other environmental education school programs

Other Eco Education initiatives and work has included:

- Healthy Waterways Litter Education Audit proposal developed in partnership with Mary Rowlands
- Supported Siena College with their School Environmental Management Planning
- Environmental Education Expo for teachers display and presentation
- Kids in Action Event Coordination submission
- Unity Water Education Partnership proposal development
- Registered Eco Education Services with School Workshops Finder website





Education workshops have continued to be successful and have continued to grow over the last 12 months with 25 excursions and incursions held. Of note have been:

#### August 2014

Montessori School – Year 11s

Pacific Lutheran College Full Day Excursion – Year 10s

#### September 2014

Ecology School Holiday Workshops for Sunshine Coast Council x 2

#### February 2015

Pacific Lutheran College Ecology Excursion – Year 12's

#### March 2015

Matthew Flinders mangrove Ecology Excursion – Year 12's

#### April 2015

Ecology School Holiday Workshops for Sunshine Coast Council x 2

#### May 2015

Burnside School Talk – Year 12's

Mount Tambourine School Catchment Excursion – Year 11s

NCC School Incursion – Year 5s

Unity College Chemistry Incursion x 2 – Year 11's

Matthew Flinders Catchment Tour – Year 12's

Nambour Christian College Catchment Tour – Year 11s

Chancellor College Catchment Excursion – Year 12's

Noosa District State School Fraser Island Camp – Year 12s

Burnside State School Catchment Excursion – Year 12's

Glennie School Catchment Excursion – Year 12's

#### July 2015

Cotton Tree Kindergarten Incursion  
Chancellor Park Kindergarten Incursion

#### October 2015

Kingfisher Resort School Camp  
Agnew College Catchment Excursion  
Maroochydore State School Excursion

#### November 2015

Kingfisher Resort School Camp

### **3.4 Coolum Community Native Nursery**

The nursery is a partnership between Maroochy Waterwatch and Coolum District Coast Care Group and is unique in its structure and operation. The land and infrastructure are now owned by the Palmer Resort and the condition of operation now rests with Sekisui House as part of Lend Lease's original development approval. As a result of all these changes, the nursery partnership has no long term leasing arrangements with a new lease yet to be realised. The uncertainty of tenure however has not affected operations to date with the nursery making a profit of over \$9000 from a total income of \$114 000.

The nursery operates in a niche market selling salt harden local native species for both wholesale and retail customers. Retail custom has significantly grown to account for over 40% of sales which has been surprising as the target market has largely been wholesale sales. Miscellaneous sales of bagged products and books also continue to increase possibly due to the increased traffic from local retail buyers.





Volunteers are the backbone of the nursery with over 60 registered volunteers contributing approximately 6000 hours to the nursery in seed collection, propagation and nursery maintenance.

The partnership and management of the nursery look forward to a productive relationship in the coming years providing quality tubestock for coastal revegetation projects.

### **3.5 Catchment Services**

Jim Stuart started back at Maroochy Waterwatch at the beginning of April and hit the ground running. Hetti Malone departed in March as Natural Area Manager leaving a good reputation with SCC and other Contractors as well as a very competent bush regenerator team of 3 to 4 personnel.

The SCC natural areas panel contract was winding down with all scheduled works to be completed by the 20th June. We were servicing about 30 sites as part of this contract. The new Service Provider tender was yet to be released leaving us very unsure of business direction in the interim.

However, the Muller Park Tender for Sunshine Coast Council had been successful so one of our first jobs was to gear up and liaise with the Bunya Bunya Aboriginal Group and coordinate a start date of 13th April preparing the site. The contract was to eradicate all weeds and plant out 3900 trees on the mangrove riparian zone at the southern end of Muller Park. As the regional ecosystem is endangered we had to specifically plant out a Casuarina/Melaleuca over-story with a Hibiscus and myoporum understory to the SCC specifications. Initially we had thought the site was clean however once we had removed the weeds found out the site had been a dumping ground of fill from cement broken slabs, and other dumped material. Due to the rubble still being in heaps the amount of trees we planted were reduced to 3000. It has been a challenging site however as we have a 3 year maintenance period it should revegetate well.

During that month we also did a couple of site surveys for SEQ Water for cat's claw and Madeira on the Blackall range. We couldn't carry out the treatment works due to not being on their board of providers however we've been assured that all their future works will go out to public tender.

June rolled on and the SCC gave us a 2 month extension on the panel while the new tender was advertised. The new Contract was quite different to the old Contract in that the Shire was divided into management zones with 6 making up the whole region.

We submitted the tender for the new service provider arrangements for the whole shire and fortunately were successful in gaining the largest site of the

Hinterland North. This consisted of about 45 Council Reserves with the inclusion of doing site surveys and half day works at another 34 sites. Overall with extra sites added we are now servicing 79 Sites.



Along with winning this tender we also won the Sunshine Coast Council's Constructed Lakes and Wetlands Zone 1 North area which consists of 9 small wetland and small lakes mainly in the Coolum area.

So logistically it has been a huge challenge organising the various servicing of these sites which stretch geographically from Peregrine Beach to our furthest western site of Tuan Environmental Reserve on the road from Kenilworth to Maleny just on an hours travel time from our base.

In the beginning of scheduling these services we also won the Maroochy River Rehabilitation Project tender to rehabilitate a 2 km stretch of the North and South Maroochy River at their confluence. This spans a riparian zone of 9 landowners who have agreed to fence of a 25 m buffer zone to the river. We will have 11000 native trees to plant later in March next year. At present we are poisoning many standing Camphor laurels and other mid story privet, celtus and ochna species. We have a maintenance period for this project of 3 years.

With all these extra contracts we have secured another vehicle and extra staff to be able to complete the tasks so are now operating with a workforce of up to 6 people per day.

Throughout the year we also monitored and treated Cat's Claw Creeper throughout the Petrie Creek catchment and we also secured another year of funding from SEQ Catchments for works predominantly in areas bordering the Triunia Environmental Reserve.

Amidst the flurry of activity we have also won the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program which involves training 24 unemployed persons for 21 weeks, 10 in Conservation related activities and 2 in Business administration roles within the office. The first team commenced on the 23<sup>rd</sup>

November. We are using one the Catchment Services skilled staff Marcelo Atique to be team leader for the crew and training will occur 3 to 4 days at SCC sites and another day on private landowner sites of significance within the area. Marcelo will train the team in Cert I Conservation and Land Management and Jim Stuart will carry out the assessments towards the end of their traineeship.

Over all we are currently carrying out bush regeneration and maintenance on approx. 100 sites within the Sunshine Coast Council.

#### **4.0 Audited Financial Statements (Maroochy Waterwatch)**

#### **5.0 Audited Financial Statements (Coolum Community Native Nursery)**