

# Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc.

## Annual Report 2012/2013



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Chair's Annual Report 2012-13 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Regional Landcare Facilitator's Report.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PCL Project manager's Report.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PCL Projects and Activities in 2012/13 .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 Mackay Regional Council Funding .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Land for Wildlife.....	5
1.2 Workshops and Field Days.....	5
1.3 Promotions and Displays .....	7
1.4 Working with Stakeholders to Develop and Support Projects .....	8
1.5 Support for Local Schools .....	9
1.6 Environmental Awareness Days .....	9
1.7 Pioneer Nursery Team .....	10
1.8 Newsletter .....	11
<b>2 Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network .....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Backyard Explorer Workshops.....	12
2.2 Social Media and Corporate Governance Training.....	12
<b>3 Landcare Facilitator/Reef Catchments Components .....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Coasts and communities.....	13
3.2 Healthy Waterways.....	13
3.3 Peri-urban Program .....	13
3.4 Carbon Farming Initiative Workshops .....	14
<b>4 Funded Projects.....</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Pioneer Riverbank Restoration Project.....	15
4.2 MacKillop Wetlands Community Project.....	15
4.3 Reliance Creek Palm Vine Forest Rehabilitation.....	15
4.4 Ruellia Control Trial Project .....	16
4.5 Vegetation management and rehabilitation of Leila Creek tributary, zones 1-4 of Pond Apple Project.....	17
4.6 Land for Wildlife Nest Cylinder Project.....	17
4.7 Building Biodiversity Resilience and Connectivity: Peri-urban Weed Partnership in Upper Pioneer Catchment .....	18
4.8 Community Coastcare in the Mackay Whitsunday Region.....	18
4.9 Building community environmental leadership and waterway health restoration – Upper Pioneer Catchment and Owens Creek.....	19
4.10 Carbon Farming Futures 'Action on the Ground' Program – The clean energy benefits of tropical agricultural management systems .....	19
<b>5 Other Grants.....</b>	<b>20</b>
5.1 Grant to Purchase Computer & IT Equipment.....	20
5.2 Grant for Administrative Support .....	20
5.3 Grant to Purchase Vehicle .....	20
<b>6 Administration Matters .....</b>	<b>21</b>
6.1 Membership.....	21
6.2 Management Committee .....	21
6.3 Finances .....	21
6.4 Facilities .....	23
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Project funding & other contributions by:.....	25
<b>Appendix 1 .....</b>	<b>26</b>

## CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

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Once again the big challenge for the year was managing change.... and there was a lot of it. At the same time there was also a lot of landcare and catchment management activity. Dallas Milburn finished with us in September 2012 and he was replaced by Kate Steel, who started work at Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group (PCL) in February 2013. During this time Claire Bartron, the Regional Landcare Facilitator (RLF), worked hard to keep everything going, while still delivering her commitments to Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Ltd. Claire finished as RLF in February and was quickly replaced by Iona Flett. Iona and Kate, both new to our group, worked really hard to make up for the time lost by not having a project officer for nearly 4 months, and to get their heads around the range of projects that we have to deliver. PCL very much appreciates the support from Reef Catchments during this time of upheaval.

The changeover of officers is the hardest thing. When we lose an officer we lose so much – all the knowledge that is in their heads and the relationships they have built. They are wonderful people, very committed and very hard workers. During the year we were able to improve things for our officers; not by reducing the workload but by providing a larger office. Our thanks go to Mackay Regional Council for agreeing to swap 'dongas', allowing us to use the larger one on site and provide three work stations, near new desks, shelves and a little space to move around. Council moved into the one that we have occupied, purchased by us about 8 years ago. Our officers now have a much more comfortable workplace.

Mackay Regional Council (MRC) continues to be a principal partner providing us with Landcare Support Funding which allows us to engage with our community and build capacity to deliver natural resource management outcomes. Also with this funding, and with the leadership of Dallas Milburn, the nursery program developed, and working with a team of volunteers, we provided thousands of plants to the community and to projects, ours and Council's. When Dallas left I took over the role of managing the nursery program, supported by Kate when she started. The Land for Wildlife program, also funded by Council, continued to grow and this year was supported by a Field day at Padaminka and the provision of local native plants to each landholder.

Our agreement with Reef Catchments (Mackay Whitsunday Isaac) Ltd to host the Landcare Facilitator in our organisation was in the final year of a three year contract. Under this agreement we continued to deliver the Peri-urban program, support the Pond Apple project and contribute to the regional Healthy Waterways initiatives at the direction of Reef Catchments. A third of this officer's time was directed by PCL and this was devoted to adding value to the activities of the project officer and delivering a range of smaller projects. All officers contributed to planning for future projects and submitting funding applications.

We received a big boost with the approval of funding from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for the purchase of a new vehicle. The old ute was "on its last wheels" and the \$35,000 received allowed us to buy a new Mitsubishi Triton which should give us trouble free operation for some years. The Gambling Community Benefit Fund also provided much-needed funds to upgrade our IT system. Three projects that involve PCL were funded by the Queensland Government through Everyone's Environment Fund, and we have submitted an application for the second round of this fund. We also received a small grant from the Australian Government providing support for administration, and submitted an application for further support.

This year we formalised our arrangements with three community groups, developing a Memorandum of Understanding to guide the relationships. These agreements allow us to

provide insurance cover through Queensland Water and Landcarers for these sub-groups, as well as financial management of grants. They also strengthen the relationships and facilitate our support for on-ground works.

In the last 12 months members of the Management Committee have been a very important part of our group. As usual the Mackay Regional Council delegate, Cr Theresa Morgan, plays a big role helping to manage the very important relationship with Council. All committee members have particular roles to play and I thank them for being so generous with their time. Irene Champion, who also been involved 'for ever' helps us with native plants and has been generous with her time and expertise supporting the nursery activities; Di Williams has taken over as delegate to Natural Environment Advisory Committee and looked after some of our nursery stock while the MNEC nursery was being redeveloped; Di Salau has revamped our IT system, developed a new contacts data base, devised a simple system for renewing memberships and worked with me to manage the move to our new office. Deputy Chair Dave Hunter does a wonderful job representing us at conferences and working with stakeholders to drive improvements in soil health. John Atkinson joined during the year and has been an important friend of PCL as a stakeholder in the Reliance Creek Project and providing facilities for our plants while the MNEC nursery was being rebuilt. A very big 'Thank You' to all of these wonderful Landcare people.

A highlight for me this year was working with the nursery volunteers – these wonderful people helped us grow and provide more than 2000 plants to projects and landholders, as well about 1400 plants growing on for the next planting season. This was in spite to not being able to use the nursery for two periods during year – one due to Myrtle Rust and one because of the redevelopment of the MNEC. We look forward to moving our plants and nursery mornings back to the MNEC and being able to work in a great nursery facility.

I wish to pay special tribute to Wendy Eiteneuer, our Office Manager. Wendy's commitment, good humour and thorough management of our finances has provided stability through quite difficult period of change. Thank you, Wendy. Kate Steel, a valuable addition to the team, has established good relationships with land managers and is working steadily to deliver our projects.

We moved into 2013/14 with Wendy and Kate to deliver our commitments to our various funding bodies. This will be hard, as Kate's time is fully committed to projects and Wendy cannot get everything we would like to have done in the 15 hours a week for which she employed. For three years we have had the equivalent of one third of an officer, the Regional Landcare Facilitator, to deliver PCL priorities. Without this officer we have little flexibility to respond to new requests for assistance, to plan projects and prepare funding applications for the future. So we have to find ways to meet this challenge. One way will be to develop a new working relationship with Reef Catchments. We have been active in this community since 1992 so I am assuming we will meet this challenge and continue to offer community based natural resource management in our catchments well into the future.



**Margaret Lane**  
**13 August 2013**

## REGIONAL LANDCARE FACILITATOR'S REPORT

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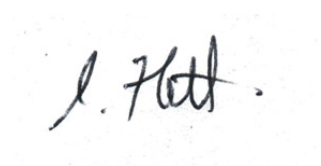
The past year has seen PCL involved in many important ongoing programs, as well as beginning some fantastic new projects, and experiencing a few changes to staff, facilities and operations – well we wouldn't want life to be boring!

When previous Project Officer Dallas Milburn moved on, he was replaced by the very experienced and capable Dr Kate Steel. Kate has worked with other Landcare groups in the past and is extremely knowledgeable about community engagement strategies and on-ground land management techniques. Her most recent position was with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in Townsville, which has allowed PCL to strengthen links with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) Reef Guardians network.

Kate also oversaw the transition from one RLF to another in March, when Claire moved to the Reef Catchments Coasts and Communities program full time, and I started. I would like to thank Kate personally for all her help and advice, and also to point out what an asset she is to PCL – experience like that doesn't grow on trees!

PCL is involved with some really excellent projects at the moment, which I hope you will enjoy reading about in this report. I have especially enjoyed working with the (coincidentally named) Iona West Men's Shed on the nest cylinders, the Marian Community Working Group on the Pioneer River Improvement project, and the other Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network (CQCLN) groups on the activities we have managed together.

The Regional Landcare Facilitator (RLF) program has undergone a restructure as of July 2013, and unfortunately this means that in our region, the RLF position no longer sits with the Landcare groups. This effectively means that PCL has one less officer to deliver projects, but Kate will no doubt manage admirably with guidance from Margaret and assistance from Wendy, and I will be able to continue working alongside PCL in my new role as the Water and Waterways Officer at Reef Catchments.



Iona Flett

July 2013



## PCL PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT

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It has been a full force first six months for me at the Pioneer Catchment & Landcare with more change than tangible at times. It's been fast learning and I am really grateful to everyone who has openly shared their knowledge and ideas with me getting up to speed with what happens in this region. Externally, working with folk such as Peter Alden (Biosecurity), Shelley Molloy (MRC), Meryl Ritchie (Mackay Tree Factory) and Caitlin Davies (Conservation Volunteers) are exceptional as are Saskia and Margaret at Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Assn (SLCMA). These are generous people who don't mind going the extra step to help make things happen. Iona Flett started one week after I did in March and for a newby from down South, she really got swinging. Without Iona, there would have been many things left undone this year. Huge Thanks Iona!

A few exciting changes are underway on the Swayne St site – In April, with great effort we moved about 8m into a larger and much more comfortable office space. Thank you to Di Salau, Margaret Lane and the Council team for making this happen. We have new flooring, aircon and furniture, and room for visitors and volunteers. The nursery upgrade began in earnest and will hopefully be ready for us to get the next generation of seedlings flourishing for Spring, and ready for the 2013-14 wet season planting. We WILL have an official opening one day!

In 2012-13 there has been great progress made with a number of projects finishing up, others ongoing and a handful of new projects starting. Since I started in mid-February we oversaw the delivery and planting of at least 2000 native indigenous seedlings. These trees and shrubs mainly went along riparian areas in the Upper, Mid and Lower Pioneer Valley and tributaries, distributed amongst Land for Wildlife members, and as give-aways at Pioneer Valley Show and other environmental events. I expect we will need to more than double our output in the coming year to around 5000 plants for revegetation activities directly delivered by Pioneer Catchment & Landcare, plus any other orders from partners.

I look forward to the next 12 months and expect things will only get easier as we work out the kinks and bumps together. I thank Wendy for her patience and the Committee for hanging in and believing in the future of Landcare. It is definitely not unnoticed - we need your experience and careful guidance!



Kate Steel

August 2013

## PCL PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES IN 2012/13

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### 1 MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL FUNDING

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Mackay Regional Council (MRC) generously supports PCL by funding our Project Manager to deliver several key programs and activities, including the operation of the community nursery. The council also provides the space we use as an office at the Swayne Street Natural Environment Centre, prints our monthly newsletter, and generally helps us out in many small ways as required! This partnership strengthens PCL's capabilities and is very much appreciated.

#### 1.1 LAND FOR WILDLIFE

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Land for Wildlife is one of those programs that are always a pleasure to work on, unless it involves dealing with the digital database that underlies the program. By my estimate we have 1,108ha currently registered as Land for Wildlife with around 74 properties in the Pioneer Catchment & Landcare area, including schools, golf courses, council land and private properties.

The program continues to grow and, between Pioneer Catchment & Landcare and Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Assoc., we are working on better ways to engage and inform the participants. We held a field walk at Padaminka Nature Refuge in May (see below). MRC expanded funding this year so that we could produce a small local Land for Wildlife newsletter (4 per year). Our revisit program is ongoing and plans are afoot to link more closely with the Nature Refuge Network into 2014.

#### 1.2 WORKSHOPS AND FIELD DAYS

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##### Padaminka Field Day May 2013



Native Revegetation showing promising signs of overshadowing weedy grasses at Padaminka



Glider crossing poles and native revegetation at Padaminka



Ian Gottke discussing the expansion of kangaroo grass on the property through careful management

Around 28 landcarers gathered at Padaminka Nature Refuge in June for a relaxed walk through the property and a first-hand update on the progress of environmental repair happening.

### ***Glider Poles***

Tina Ball presented her work evaluating the use of glider poles, established on the property in 2008 and supplemented by native revegetation for long term habitat connections. At least 20 squirrel gliders have been observed using the poles as staging posts during monitor events. The planted trees will eventually provide a corridor across the 70m gap.

### ***Habitat Renewal***

Over the years more than 12,000 trees have been planted at Padaminka and a substantial wetland was created through old drainage lines. Patricia Julien provided an insightful review of the history and natural features of the property, noting that the bird species count has more than tripled over the time since the program began.

### ***Nest Cylinders launched***

The Pioneer Catchment Landcare Group launched the products of the Nest Cylinders for gliders, microbats and small parrots project (see Page 18).

## **EcoExpo Mackay August 2012**



Dallas Milburn presents Landcare information at Mackay EcoExpo 2012

## **Gooseponds Day June 2013**

Our involvement with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Parks Authority's Reef Guardian "Gooseponds Community Project" culminated in a community engagement day at the public land along the Gooseponds near Malcomson St. Pioneer Catchment & Landcare provided locally relevant information on weed and pest management particularly focussing on urban and peri-urban pest species and control measures, as well as potential garden escapees. Kate was involved in a hands-on activity with children from Glenella School and their parents planting local indigenous species for revegetation. The event also gave us opportunity to gauge the interest in community volunteers around the Gooseponds.



Glenella School at the Gooseponds



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### 1.3 PROMOTIONS AND DISPLAYS

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Attending community events is an important way of engaging the public and offers a good tool for promotion of projects and programs as well as broadcasting new information to landholders on various land management issues. The Pest Education Trailer, managed by the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group, proved to be a drawcard for several of our displays.

**Farleigh Palm Fete** – Held annually at Farleigh State School, PCL's stand was set up alongside the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens and Society for Growing Australian Plants displays, and once again included the Pest Education Trailer. Quite a few people turned up for a chat or to get some land management advice.

**Ag.Trade.Life** – Formerly known as the BSES Field Day, this two-day event targeted rural landowners, particularly cane farmers and graziers. Joining with SLCMA and the Mackay Regional Pest Management Group, we provided information to landholders on a wide range of Landcare issues, including the management of pest species, as well as giving away 200 native trees.



*Landcare and Pest Group stalls at Ag.Trade.Life*

**Reef Catchments Grazing Forum** – PCL participated in the second annual Grazing Forum sponsored by the Federal Government's Reef Rescue Program and held at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre. The Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network stall provided land management information and material about the Federal Government's Carbon Farming Initiative, and we also distributed 50 free native plants at this event.



*Iona Flett at the Grazing Forum's CQCLN stall*

**Pioneer Valley Show** – This year was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this very popular show held at Finch Hatton showground. 19,000 people attended, giving PCL a great opportunity to engage with a large number of community members and local landholders. Kate and Iona, with the assistance of Di Williams and regular nursery volunteers Robyn Law and Nicole Murphy, gave away 500 native plants to a very enthusiastic crowd, as well as promoting Landcare and providing land management and pest management advice.



*Di Williams and Robyn Law at the Pioneer Valley Show*

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## 1.4 WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP AND SUPPORT PROJECTS

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Pioneer Catchment and Landcare provides varying support for community groups. Marian Community Working Group, the Friends of the Morag McNichol Reserve, the Friends of MacKillop Wetlands, and the Skull Knob Beach and Bush Group are all active groups that are associated with PCL and work to look after their local environment.



*The Marian Community Working Group in action*

PCL staff members have also been involved in local community development activities organised by the Queensland Wetlands Program (QDAFF), Mackay Community Gardens, Fauna Rescue Whitsunday, Birdlife Mackay, SGAP, EcoBarge Clean Seas, and the Mackay Conservation Group, among others. In a community like Mackay, it is important to take every opportunity to get to know those who might be interested in the Landcare movement.

Since weeds are such a pervasive element of the Central Queensland Coastal landscape, it is critical that a coordinated approach is taken towards trying to manage weeds. The Mackay Regional Pest

Management Group (MRPMG) is a consortium of local and regional operators who work together to battle the weed menace of the region. The Group consists of Reef Catchments staff, Mackay Regional Council, Landcare Groups, Ports Authority, Main Roads, Biosecurity and other State Government agents. Kate Steel has a seat at the MRPMG table and represents the Landcare Network on the Committee. One of the most valuable aspects of this group is the fantastic information and resource sharing from experienced local operators.

Through education and awareness in the community, and practical resource sharing activities the group provides a united approach to weed management. The majority of actions PCL has been involved with this year with the MRPMG are representations at various events with the Pest Management Trailer. A number of projects are being developed with the group, including help with *Ruellia* infestation at Reliance Creek, management of Demoylan's Lagoon and ongoing action on Pond Apple in the region.



*Kate Steel inspects Water Hyacinth at DeMoylan's Lagoon on a Wetlands fieldtrip.*

This year, we undertook a small project with Department Transport and Main Roads and Biosecurity to deliver a spray program at a site along Yakapari-Seaforth Road near the Leap, where a small outbreak of Class 1 *Thunbergia fragrans* occurs. We engaged with the landholder whose property borders the roadside site and arranged for contractor spraying at the site.



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## 1.5 SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS

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We have continued to be an important resource for some of the region's schools, providing support to teachers and interacting directly with students to increase their environmental awareness and knowledge of biodiversity, waterways, catchment care and sustainable living.

PCL offers schools a portfolio highlighting opportunities to promote further understanding on a range of catchment and NRM related topics. The most sought-after advice is about:

- Revegetation plots and butterfly gardens
- Water quality testing
- Macro invertebrate identification and analysis
- Wetland/rainforest educational walks
- Urban encroachment
- Weed management presentations
- Shorebird management/identification



*Kate Steel and Tim Marsden (Reef Catchments) at the Gooseponds with Gargett School students*

We also support the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority's Reef Guardian Schools Program, attending meetings and partnering in the annual Future Leaders Eco Challenge.

In the past year we have worked with Andergrove State School, Fitzgerald State School, Holy Spirit College, Glenella School, Pioneer State School, Gargett School and Northview State School. As well as these visits, the Backyard Explorer workshops engaged a number of other students and teachers from other schools as participants.

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## 1.6 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS DAYS

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In August 2012, PCL organised a Coastal Communities Field trip, which involved 31 delegates from Mackay Regional Council, Reef Catchments, Conservation Volunteers Australia, Mackay District Turtle Watch, GBRMPA and SLCMA. The participants visited several coastal sites to hear about recent projects and plans for future work.



*Participants in the Coastal Communities Field Trip hear about local projects.*

September 2012 saw PCL celebrate Queensland Weedbusters Week by holding a free weed identification workshop at Bucasia Nursery, giving a chance for all community members to bring in those unknown plants for formal identification and specialist management advice. Biosecurity Queensland representatives and Mackay Regional Pest Officers were also on hand for discussions on weeds and other land management issues.

Each year, PCL supports the Great Northern Clean Up in September. The 2012 event was held on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, and attracted at least 41 volunteers who collected 35 bags of rubbish, 20 bags of recyclable materials, 12 tyres, and various other pieces of household rubbish from Riverside Drive. Saint Patrick's teacher Eddie Weiss returned but student turnout was down on previous years due to the change in date and student exams. Families from Pioneer State School did however join the event and had a good turnout, and alongside other members of the public.



*Rubbish and recycling (yellow bags) collected during the Great Northern Clean Up in September 2012*

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## 1.7 PIONEER NURSERY TEAM

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By the end of June 2013 the nursery had produced about 3400 plants, of which about 2000 had been distributed to projects and landholders. The nursery is a relatively new venture for PCL, funded by Mackay Regional Council and hosted within the facilities of Mackay Natural Environment Centre (MNEC). It was well under way in July 2012, under the leadership of Dallas Milburn, and by the end of the year we had 10 active volunteers registered, with up to 8 attending on Tuesday mornings.

The arrival of Myrtle Rust mid-year closed the facility at the MNEC and nursery activities continued at a private residence until later in the year. When Dallas Milburn resigned in September, Margaret Lane took over running the nursery in a volunteer capacity; this was an interim measure until a new project officer was appointed but in fact continued to the end of the financial year. In May we again had to move out of the MNEC when work started on the nursery reconstruction. Our plants were all relocated to National Parks greenhouse at Slade Point and Di Williams' place at Eungella, and nursery activities once again were held at the private residence. We hope to be back at the MNEC in the wonderful new facility at end August 2013.



*Local Volunteers at the Swayne St nursery*



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## 1.8 NEWSLETTER

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Production of the Pioneer Catchment & Landcare News newsletters in 2012/13 was jointly funded by Mackay Regional Council and Reef Catchments.

Eleven newsletters per year are published, and are currently distributed to more than 550 residents. The newsletter provides information about PCL projects and events, local Biodiversity and Biosecurity information, and provides a calendar of NRM events and activities in our region.

## 2 CENTRAL QUEENSLAND COAST LANDCARE NETWORK

PCL continued collaborating with the CQCLN network on a range of projects. The network is a strong asset to Landcare in the region, allowing us to share knowledge and resources, widen the impact of land management information and improve the visibility of Landcare in the community. Three successful project proposals in the Everyone's Environment Grant program (See Section 4.8 and 4.9 below) are a good example of the way that the CQCLN works together, with each group delivering different elements of a project and supporting the other groups.

### 2.1 BACKYARD EXPLORER WORKSHOPS

These workshops were organised after a similar series proved very successful in 2011. The Backyard Explorer program is run by the Queensland Museum and aims to enable school teachers to include entomology and ecosystem assessment units in their teaching. Strongly curriculum linked, the program is currently run



*One of the sample vials collected by students during their biodiversity assessment*

by Dr Christine Lambkin, and the workshops in May 2013 were a hit in the CQCLN area again. In total, 48 students, 6 teachers and 22 other community members attended one of the Mackay workshops, where they learnt about entomology, biodiversity, and had practical training on how to conduct insect sampling for biodiversity assessments. It was an engaging program with useful practical advice for teachers.



*Northview State School students examine insects during the Backyard Explorer workshops*

Marjorie Ross provided valuable facilitation assistance during the workshops, and Northview State School should also get a special mention for hosting the Thursday workshop at quite short notice.

### 2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE TRAINING

Wombat Creative was engaged in June 2013 to run two of their training units aimed at Landcare and Community Groups. Fourteen of the CQCLN's volunteers and staff heard about how corporate governance can work for community groups, which will hopefully allow us to manage our systems and strategies more efficiently into the future.



*Trainees at the Corporate Governance Workshop*

The afternoon session was about social media. Landcare surveys show that more and more land managers and community groups access web technologies to gather information, and they have also highlighted a potential gap, with the 'Under-30s' poorly represented in community-based environmental awareness. Wombat Creative had some advice about how to effectively work with this demographic more, and we hope to implement some of their communications advice over the next year.

## 3 LANDCARE FACILITATOR/REEF CATCHMENTS COMPONENTS

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### 3.1 COASTS AND COMMUNITIES

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The Coasts and Communities Project is jointly delivered by Reef Catchments and Mackay Regional Council. Providing a strategic and coordinated approach to coastal management, the project has developed management plans for a number of beaches within the Mackay region and more are in progress. PCL has continued to support the Coasts and Communities Project through provision of plant species for revegetation, attendance at Coastal Community Activities and the promotion of these events in monthly newsletters and on the Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network website. Claire Bartron now works full time on this project, which is excellent for facilitating collaboration between the Coasts and Communities Project and PCL.

### 3.2 HEALTHY WATERWAYS

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*The St Helen's Creek monitoring site where Sharon Taylor measures water quality parameters each month*

This year PCL continued its involvement with the Healthy Waterways program. Our primary role has been coordination of volunteers, who undertake regular water quality monitoring at a number of sites within the Pioneer Catchment. In June, new water quality monitoring equipment was purchased by the Healthy Waterways program, so we hope that water quality monitoring will be easier and more fun for our volunteers in the coming year!



*Claire Bartron measures water quality at the Wetlands Walkabout on Keeley's Road*

PCL also continued our involvement with the Healthy Waterways Alliance, which brings together expertise from across agricultural, urban and ecosystem fields, with the RLF acting as community representative and secretariat for the Ecosystem Think Tank. PCL will no longer provide secretariat services to the Healthy Waterways Alliance, but will continue to be involved in consultations about our catchment's water quality issues.

### 3.3 PERI-URBAN PROGRAM

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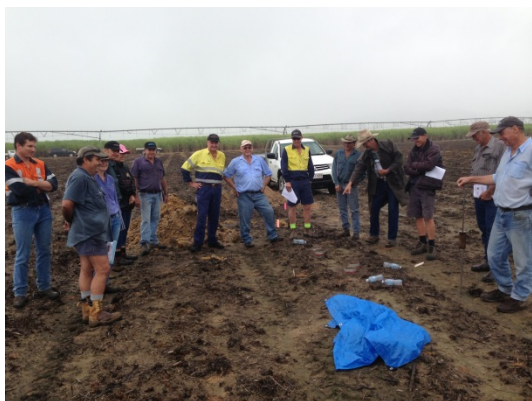
We have again worked with Reef Catchments, SLCMA and WCL to deliver the peri-urban program within the Mackay, Whitsunday and Sarina regions. The program focuses on delivering land management assistance to landholders in the peri-urban sector and also enables PCL to identify interest areas and knowledge gaps, and to refer landholders to funding opportunities. Landholders receive a property assessment, information pack and land management plan focused on pest and weed control, revegetation strategies, erosion control and improving soil health. The project is regularly promoted at field days and other engagement activities, continues to receive interest from community members and is well received with various forms of positive feedback.

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### 3.4 CARBON FARMING INITIATIVE WORKSHOPS

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Two series of workshops funded by the Australian Government's Carbon Farming Initiative were held in the last financial year, one series in February 2013 and one in June 2013. Both sets of workshops were very well attended, with a total of 56 farmers attending in January and a total of 75 farmers attending in June. The workshops had similar aims, and were all presented by John Hughes and Dr Ross Coventry. They focused on educating farmers about soil physical and chemical properties, with a view to improving soil productivity while reducing fertiliser use for economic and environmental benefit. The workshops also provided an opportunity for the farmers to learn about the CFI and other projects looking to reduce the impact of agricultural activities on the climate.



*Farmers learn about soil health during a compaction demonstration at John and Helen Pastura's farm.*



*Ross Coventry demonstrates a slaking test at the Camilleri Brothers' farm.*



## 4 FUNDED PROJECTS

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### 4.1 PIONEER RIVERBANK RESTORATION PROJECT

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(REEF CATCHMENTS PUBLIC FUND)

It has been another successful year for this ongoing project, working with the Marian Community Working Group to rehabilitate a popular section of the bank of the Pioneer River.

The Marian Community Working Group has been active at the site, holding working bees, liaising with MRC and weed contractors about their plans, and organising themselves to work on the riverbank in their own time.

This stage of the project has been called 'Stage 2' by the Community Group, and has mainly involved the poisoning and removal of *Leucaena* trees (which are unfortunately very well established all along the riverbank), thick patches of Singapore Daisy, and the planting of native trees. The area that has been worked on is very visible from the new bike track/walking path constructed in the last year, and once the trees are established, will be a really pretty part of the river and an asset to the community.

Funding has been secured for the Stage 3 of the Community Group's plan, and we will get started with that work in the coming wet season.



*Members of the Marian Community Working Group plant trees at the Pioneer River Stage 2.*

### 4.2 MACKILLOP WETLANDS COMMUNITY PROJECT

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(REEF CATCHMENTS PUBLIC FUND)

The Friends of MacKillop Wetland is a small community group working together to keep their local council-owned bushland healthy. The group has regular meetings and is focused on weed control, and this small grant has allowed them to pay for a professional weed contractor to do some of the heavier work, as well as buy gloves, sunscreen and other bits and pieces to make their work easier.

### 4.3 RELIANCE CREEK PALM VINE FOREST REHABILITATION

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(AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE BIODIVERSITY FUND)

This project aims to rehabilitate the Reliance Creek National Park and adjoining areas of private land. The forest is classified as an endangered Palm Vine forest, and is subject to chronic infestations of Cats Claw Creeper (*Dolichandra unguis-cati*) and *Hymenachne amplexicaulis*. Both weeds are classified as Weeds of National Significance.



*Cat's Claw Creeper at Reliance Creek*

Conservation Volunteers Australia have been engaged from August 2012 to control vines affecting the forest canopy. A private spray contractor is also engaged to deal with foliar applications of regrowth vine. Treatment involves cutting a section of each vine and a herbicidal gel applied which kills the roots, tubers and understorey mats, significantly reducing weed regrowth. Use of the gel greatly reduces non-target poisoning which is critical in an endangered habitat. Cleared areas will be revegetated. Mackay Regional Council and Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service will be engaged to treat infestations of *Hymenachne* in their respective jurisdictions.

Through writing Weed Management Plans and engaging with neighbouring landholders about weed management in general, we aim to expand the scope of the project into other private properties and encourage the identification and control of environmental weeds up and downstream of the major site. The project is scheduled to run to 2015

and will value-add to the tingid moth bio-control released some years ago. Additional Bio-control options may become available during this time as a Jewel Beetle is currently available for release.

#### 4.4 RUELLIA CONTROL TRIAL PROJECT

(MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL, NATURAL ENVIRONMENT LEVY)

Last year, a proposal to the Mackay Regional Council was approved for the trialling methods of control on the weed *Ruellia* (*Ruellia tweediana*). *Ruellia* is an invasive weed of riparian zones where it develops thick monocultures and hinders natural recruitment of native species. The project, focussed on a *Ruellia* infestation near Reliance Creek National Park, got started in 2012/13, with stands of *Ruellia* mapped out, marked, photographed and the different treatment methods planned and applied for the first time. A review of trials undertaken in the Whitsundays Shire shows that chemical applications are more effective than mechanical means, and that a range of chemical treatments may be best. As a result, herbicide applications will take place over the next year and then the results will be analysed. On-ground works have been hindered by a late wet season in 2013.



*Ruellia at Reliance Creek*



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#### 4.5 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION OF LEILA CREEK TRIBUTARY, ZONES 1-4 OF POND APPLE PROJECT

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(SUB-FUNDED THROUGH REEF CATCHMENTS' "CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY" PROGRAM)

The first phase of the Leila Creek Pond Apple was successfully completed at the end of the wet season in 2013. Pond Apple is a declared Class 1 weed which was identified in the area in 2011. The infestation has been removed, and this project was created to remove other weeds from the tributary affected, to revegetate the area, and to generally assist with improving the land management practices of the landholders near the site of the infestation. PCL staff liaised with the landholders and arranged for an electric fence to be installed along part of the creek, both for erosion prevention and for protection of the revegetation site.

Weed control was carried out and then 900 native tube stock from the Mackay Tree Factory and the Pioneer Catchment Nursery Team were planted with special tree guard kits to protect the little plants as they get established. Next wet season, more weed control and planting will take place along another private property riparian area. We are expecting a great improvement in both the appearance and the ecosystem health of this creek.



*The revegetation site at the tributary of Leila Creek where an infestation of Pond Apple was cleared last year.*

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#### 4.6 LAND FOR WILDLIFE NEST CYLINDER PROJECT

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(MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL, NATURAL ENVIRONMENT LEVY)

This project was developed in consultation with Tina Ball from Queensland National Parks primarily to help improve the remaining suitable habitat for squirrel gliders, a locally uncommon species that requires continuous corridors of eucalypt woodland with mature, hollow-bearing trees for breeding. The nest cylinder project fits into PCL's Land for Wildlife activities, since both programs are supported by Mackay Regional Council, and both aim to encourage landholders to provide suitable habitat for wildlife. An interesting element of the project is the involvement of the Iona West Men's Shed, a group of men



*Kim Kleidon is thrilled to have the first of 30 squirrel glider nest cylinders constructed by the Iona West Men's Shed installed on her Habana property*

who have been engaged to build the nesting cylinders. Three types of nesting cylinders are being constructed, designed for squirrel gliders, parrots and bats. Each design is made from durable PVC pipe, but has features to make it suitable for the different species that we hope will soon be using the cylinders.



*Chris McAdam at Iona West Men's Shed is leading the construction of 50 nest cylinders*

The next phase of this project is to distribute and help Land for Wildlife members place the cylinders in the correct habitat areas. This is proving to be a great educational opportunity and a good way to reconnect with Land for Wildlife members.

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#### 4.7 BUILDING BIODIVERSITY RESILIENCE AND CONNECTIVITY: PERI-URBAN WEED PARTNERSHIP IN UPPER PIONEER CATCHMENT

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(REEF CATCHMENTS)

Over the past financial year, this project has delivered land management advice and on ground activity support to landholders in the Upper Pioneer catchment target area. Designed to revegetate riparian areas and thereby reduce erosion, the project has resulted in ten separate landholders engaged over the agreement duration; Nine site visits completed with up to date Land Management Plans delivered to 8 landholders. Six of these landholders undertook rehabilitation efforts within the timeframe of the project. The landholders all manage properties along key systems in the Owens Ck/Finch Hatton Ck areas, as per the brief for the project, and the contacts will be valuable for future project actions.



*Tubestock planted in the Owens Ck area to stabilise creek banks and provide riparian habitat (K.Goodwin)*

Approx. 750 plants were distributed to these six landholders to rehabilitate riparian and hill slope country related to creek systems. All specimens are provided based on reference to regional ecosystem specifications. The weather provided excellent planting conditions well into the drier season, such that a successful establishment is expected. A follow up monitoring is planned for late 2013 with each landholder to determine on-ground success.

Another benefit of the project has been the identification of new members, and landholders who may be interested in undertaking more substantial collaborative projects with PCL in the future.

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#### 4.8 COMMUNITY COASTCARE IN THE MACKAY WHITSUNDAY REGION

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(EVERYONE'S ENVIRONMENT GRANTS, QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT)

This project is managed by Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association and is an example of the way the Central Queensland Coast Landcare Network is working together to improve land management outcomes. Several coastal areas have been identified as target beaches to focus community activities on, with Far Beach in Mackay being PCL's main responsibility.

The project has just started at the end of the 2012/13 financial year, but already we have worked with CVA and Mackay Regional Council to plant 250 native trees on the dune barrier at Far Beach, and held a successful Community Day where local residents came along to hear about the native birds, plants and turtles that use the beach, as well as to help with weeding, rubbish collection and tree planting. Over the coming year, more weed control will be carried out, more trees will be planted to stabilise the dune barrier, and hopefully, local schools and community members will take up the opportunity to get involved with the Coastcare activities that are on offer.





*Participants at the Far Beach community day (I.Flett)*

#### 4.9 BUILDING COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AND WATERWAY HEALTH RESTORATION – UPPER PIONEER CATCHMENT AND OWENS CREEK

(EVERYONE'S ENVIRONMENT GRANTS, QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT)

Known as the Owen's Creek Engineered Log Jam Project, this is a collaboration between PCL and Reef Catchments which was just approved and started in May 2013. Working with Dr Andrew Brooks from the Australian Rivers Institute, a series of Engineered Log Jams (ELJs) are being designed to reduce erosion on part of Owen's Creek. These structures work on the principal that returning woody debris to the river will slow the water flow, prevent ongoing erosion at particular points on the bank, and create habitat for fish and other aquatic species. As well as the log jam structures, weed control and revegetation of the riparian zone will be carried out, and fencing will be installed to prevent stock accessing the creek. This is an experimental erosion control method which has not been tried many times on tropical rivers. If successful, the construction of ELJs may become another tool in the 'resource kit' of waterways managers trying to prevent erosion in the Great Barrier Reef Catchments.

#### 4.10 CARBON FARMING FUTURES 'ACTION ON THE GROUND' PROGRAM – THE CLEAN ENERGY BENEFITS OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

(AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY)

This project is a large research project run by Reef Catchments with the support of Qld Dept Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry and Farmacist Pty Ltd. Agricultural scientists are experimenting with the amount, timing and application methods of different fertilisers on different soil types in the Mackay region. PCL is involved in some of the extension and publicity activities associated with the work, and will also be participating in some of the research over the coming years. Overall, the aims of the project are related to reducing the greenhouse emissions (nitrous oxide) of sugar cane farming to the atmosphere, to increase carbon stored in soil, and promote innovative practices amongst farmers.

## 5 OTHER GRANTS

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Over the past financial year, PCL has been busy applying for funds to update our office, vehicle and equipment infrastructure.

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### 5.1 GRANT TO PURCHASE COMPUTER & IT EQUIPMENT

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(GAMBLING COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND)

A grant application requesting funds of \$1,691 for the purchasing computer equipment was approved by the Gambling Community Benefit Fund in November 2012. This allowed PCL to provide officers with a laptop computer, a more efficient modem router and upgrades to software, all of which improved general office efficiency. It was also a significant improvement having a laptop instead of a desktop computer, allowing officers to take it out of the office when necessary.

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### 5.2 GRANT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

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(GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS  
(GVESHO) PROGRAM)

PCL's application to the GVESHO Program was approved in February 2013. This program funds salaries, rental office accommodation, office supplies, some capital equipment, utilities and communications charges, staff and volunteer training, insurance, printing and travel for Voluntary Environment, Sustainability And Heritage Organisations. In our case, \$2,000 was received and it was put to good use providing salary support for our Office Manager position.

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### 5.3 GRANT TO PURCHASE VEHICLE

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(GAMBLING COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND)

A second grant application asking for funding for a new vehicle was approved by the Gambling Community Benefit Fund in May 2013 – we couldn't believe our luck in receiving \$35,000 towards a new ute! As the old vehicle was starting to have engine trouble almost every time it was used, this was a very timely windfall. PCL officers are very appreciative of the comfort and reliability they now have with the new 'You Beaut' Ute.

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## 6 ADMINISTRATION MATTERS

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### 6.1 MEMBERSHIP

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The year began with a revamp of the membership record-keeping and renewals processes.

With the help of Committee member Di Salau, PCL now has a new membership database, and a more efficient renewals process, with an easy-to-use email renewal now developed. At the end of the year we had 58 members, but maintain regular contact with many more people through our monthly newsletters – See Page 12.

### 6.2 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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The Management Committee conducted monthly meetings and comprised the following people:

- Mrs Margaret Lane (Chair); Organisation Member representing *Society for Growing Australian Plants Mackay Branch*
- Mr David Hunter (Deputy Chairman): Ordinary Member
- Ms Dianne Williams (Acting Treasurer): Ordinary Member
- Ms Wendy Eiteneuer (Secretary): non-voting Member
- Mr John Atkinson: Ordinary Member
- Ms Irene Champion: Ordinary Member
- Cr Theresa Morgan: Organisation Member representing *Mackay Regional Council*
- Ms Di Salau: Ordinary Member

**Our thanks and appreciations** go to all members of the Management Committee for their ongoing contributions to the running of Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc. They provide vital strategic direction, as well as passion and dedication to community-based natural resource management in our region and ultimately ensuring our ongoing success as a community NRM organisation.

### 6.3 FINANCES

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Financial statements for the 2012-13 financial year were audited in August 2013 by the appointed auditor, Bennett Partners Chartered Accountants. Appendix 1 contains the Independent Audit Report on the Financial Report, with the full financial statements being available as a separate document on request.

Page 22 shows a table that provides a full summary of PCL's financial position and an overview of income, expenses and final balances to 30/06/2013.



<b>DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS Budget/Actuals for June 2012/13</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>BUDGET 2012/13</b>	<b>ACTUALS</b>		
		<b>Income to 30/06/13</b>	<b>Expenses to 30/06/13</b>	<b>Balance at 30/06/13</b>
<b>AUSPICED GROUPS</b>	<b>9,791</b>	<b>9,791</b>	<b>5,042</b>	<b>4,749</b>
Friends of McKillop Wetland	3,000	3,000	2,053	947
Friends of Morag McNichol Reserve	3,791	3,791	594	3,197
Marian Community Group	3,000	3,000	2,395	605
<b>FUNDED PROGRAMS</b>	<b>105,361</b>	<b>115,889</b>	<b>90,103</b>	<b>25,786</b>
Land for Wildlife (MRC)	10,000	15,600	10,300	5,300
Motor Vehicle (RC MWI)	16,003	33,703	33,703	0
MRC Landcare Support (2012)	36,667	23,894	23,894	0
MRC Landcare Support (2013)	40,000	40,000	19,514	20,486
Operational Support (RC MWI)	2,691	2,692	2,692	0
<b>GRANTS</b>	<b>164,953</b>	<b>144,693</b>	<b>71,212</b>	<b>73,481</b>
Computer & IT	1,691	1,691	1,691	0
Don Meyers WQ Monitoring	2,877	2,877	0	2,877
Gooseponds Community Day	909	909	909	0
GVESHO Admin Grant	2,000	2,000	2,000	0
LfW Nest Boxes	4,065	4,065	896	3,169
Log Jam Project	62,920	37,920	3	37,917
Motor Vehicle	31,818	31,818	31,818	0
Pond Apple / Leila Creek	24,332	24,322	8,975	15,348
Reliance Creek Rehab	15,120	22,680	13,453	9,227
Ruellia Trial	6,714	2,214	0	2,214
TMR <i>Thunbergia</i> Project	5,864	5,864	3,135	2,728
Upper Pioneer Project	8,333	8,333	8,333	0
<b>NURSERY OPERATIONS (MRC)</b>		<b>1,078</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>680</b>
<b>PCL DISCRETIONARY FUNDS</b>	<b>23,784</b>	<b>41,292</b>	<b>36,092</b>	<b>5,200</b>
Business Support	2,875	10,059	9,602	457
Interest	0	2,787	2,787	0
Member Support	0	1,722	1,722	0
Nursery	3,258	3,258	200	3,058
Office Manager	17,651	23,466	21,781	1,685
<b>PROJECT MANAGER</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>28,329</b>	<b>25,304</b>	<b>3,025</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>	<b>33,606</b>	<b>53,734</b>	<b>2,795</b>	<b>50,939</b>
Asset Replacement (MV)	24,140	24,140	0	24,140
General	9,466	26,070	2,795	23,275
Management Committee Support	0	3,524	0	3,524
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>382,495</b>	<b>424,755</b>	<b>260,895</b>	<b>163,860</b>

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## 6.4 FACILITIES

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**Vehicle:** Our most pressing requirement for the year was a new vehicle, and in May 2013 we received news that we were successful in our application to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, allowing the purchase of a new ute. We subsequently purchased a Mitsubishi Triton from Carlisle Motors, Mackay, and so our vehicle worries are over for at least 5 years.

**Office Move:** Also in May 2013 there was a small but important change for PCL staff, when Margaret Lane's negotiations with Mackay Regional Council came to fruition. We were able to swap 'dongas' with the MRC bush crew, and we updated our office equipment thanks to a cheap sell-off of office furniture at the old Ergon building.

**Nursery:** The Mackay Regional Council's Natural Environment Centre facilities at Swayne St are getting a serious upgrade. At the end of the process, PCL and MRC will share the renovated plant nursery facilities that now allow water recycling and the ability to adjust watering rates separately in each of the nursery sections. In the meantime, our nursery work has slowed down, and what's left of the nursery is being hosted by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service at their facility at Slade Point, thanks to Committee Member, John Atkinson.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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In addition to those people and organisations already acknowledged in the body of this report, many other people have contributed to the achievements of the organisation during the year:

- **Our Volunteers.** First to get a big thank you and acknowledgement that 'we really couldn't do it without you' is **Di Salau**, IT Helper Extraordinaire. Di works tirelessly on our database, server and backup systems, IT procedures and helped move from one office to another, all while serving on the Management Committee and supposedly being retired! Wow! Other important volunteers over the year have been the **Healthy Waterways** volunteers and the **Pioneer Nursery Team** volunteers. **Gerard Masters** has helped every month with the folding and distribution of the newsletters, which is very much appreciated. Our thanks go to all of you for your contributions.
- **Reef Catchments Mackay Whitsunday Isaac Ltd**, for generous support of our core activities through the Regional Landcare Facilitator program, and the provision of technical support and resource sharing
- **Mackay Regional Council** for housing our operations and assisting with knowledge sharing, general support and facilitation. Specifically, we need to thank the Natural Environment team including **Lisa, Jonathon, Richard and the Bush Crew**, the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens staff (especially **Maya Harrison**), and the Pest Control Officers who have collaborated and generously shared their knowledge.
- **Sarina Landcare Catchment Management Association** and **Whitsunday Catchment Landcare Inc.**, for their support and collaboration.
- **Meryl Ritchie** of the Mackay Tree Factory for assistance far beyond just the commercial supply of plants for our projects.
- **Department of Natural Resources and Mining (formerly Department of Environment and Resource Management) and Biosecurity Queensland** staff, for their generous technical support and collaboration on field events
- **Marjorie Ross**, who collaborated on the Backyard Explorer workshops and generously shared time, knowledge and contacts throughout the year.
- The range of **local organisations, government agencies and their staff** who have contributed to events held and who have provided technical advice
- **Other donations** of time, money or resources were received from the following people or organisations, who have our deep appreciation for their contribution:
  - **Margaret Lane** volunteered to manage our Nursery Volunteer program
  - **Bennett Partners Chartered Accountants** and **Phil Doring Insurance Brokers** discounted professional fees
  - **Ruth Croker** generously makes donations with her membership renewal each year
  - **Rita & Harry Kupke** and **Marguerette Bane** donated nursery supplies
  - **Meryl Ritchie** of Mackay Tree Factory and **Irene Champion** of SGAP Mackay Branch donated plants for schools projects
  - **Mackay Consolidated Plastics** and **Shadforth's Civil Engineering** donated materials for the nest boxes project
  - **Hans Kupfer** put his expertise to use fixing our faulty filing cabinet

*Natural resource management in our community is enriched by your contribution, thank you!*



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## PROJECT FUNDING & OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS BY:

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## APPENDIX 1

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### Independent Audit Report on 2012/13 Financial Reports