

Inquiry into volunteering in Queensland

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Submission to enquiry into volunteering in Qld

February 2025

QUEENSLAND WATER AND LAND CARERS (QWaLC)
*Volunteers actively supporting community-based nature
conservation & sustainable land management in Queensland*

OVERVIEW

WHY:

The WHY of joining to volunteer is in the name: fundamentally people volunteer with QWaLC member groups because they care about a local creek, beach, parcel of scrub or bush, the health of a river, the habitat of a fish or a bird, beetle, bush, bandicoot, bat or bettong.

The WHY of staying is in the outcomes and results: satisfaction of making a visible difference to landscapes and wildlife, connection to nature and to people, collaboration and cooperation with others, learning and building new knowledge and skills, feeling valued, enjoyment, physical activity, fun.

QWaLC was:

- founded 2003 - Ministerial Directive from Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Hon. Stephen Robertson,
- created in response to the need for a peak body to support the work of natural resource management volunteers across Queensland
- a response to a very significant change in insurance for not-for-profits that threatened the existence of many groups
- a unifier for 200 + volunteer groups working together to ensure flourishing Queensland landscapes

QWaLC is:

- lead by a very small staff and powered by a very large number of volunteers
- comprised of landcare, coastcare, bush, river, creek and catchment care groups, young and old
- supporting work on beaches, mudflats, in mangrove forests, in the bush, on farms, along waterways, roadways, rivers, creeks, floodplains and deserts
- a unifying and connecting impetus that supports local solutions, designed and delivered by local people

QWaLC does:

- restore native habitats
- eradicate and contain pests, weeds and invasive threats
- educate and build capacity to strengthen biosecurity
- promote regenerative and sustainable land management
- contribute to scientific research
- uphold First Nations knowledge and care for country and seas
- build community knowledge, practical skills,
- work inclusively for everyone's personal well-being and everybody's social cohesion.

INVESTMENT & OUTPUTS

The current commitment from the **Queensland Government of \$400,000 per annum** is an investment that returns very impressive value to the government and the people of Queensland, and to the care of the state's natural capital.

Supporting the work of over **62,000 individual volunteers in 496 member groups** from the Cape to Camooweal to Coolangatta based on volunteer hours, QWaLC volunteers create close to **\$96 million in in-kind value**.

This represents an outstanding return on the investment of \$400,000 made by the government which in turn yields significant further grants and partnerships creating this overall value.

The information summarised here is taken from the Annual Health of Landcare Report. The most recent report is appended to this document.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

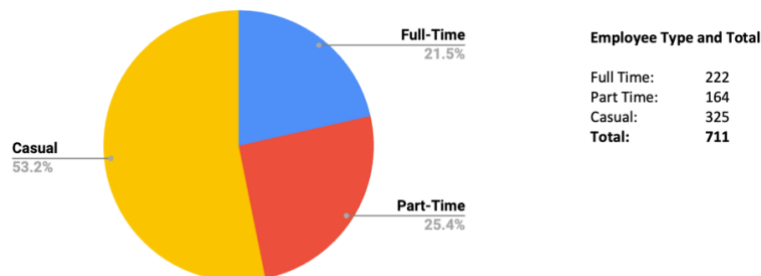
Member groups

- incorporated associations 87.90%
- not-for-profit companies limited by guarantee 4.84%)
- indigenous corporations 4.44%
- unincorporated groups 2.02% are and are.
- a mix of trusts and cooperatives 0.81% of
- incorporated groups auspicing other groups in their region 11.56%

EMPLOYMENT

20.89% of member groups employ a total of 711 staff increased from previous year total of 568.

Employment types are broken down as follows: Full Time 222, Part Time 164, Casual 325, Total 711. 397 of employees are in SEQ and Burnet Mary regions; 40 employees are in the Wet Tropics region. A further 89 are located in Cape York.



JOBS and SKILLS

Financial support to employ Regional Landcare Co-ordinators would enable QWaLC to provide improved access for people with diverse needs and would support pathways to employment for youth, and for those who need to develop confidence, English language capacity, work-readiness or social skills.

We have identified opportunities also to build employment readiness with micro-credentials and equipment certifications for young people in general, and in First Nations communities these can create valued pathways to employment for school leavers.

VOLUNTEERING demographics & data

The majority of Member Groups rely solely on volunteers that are 45 years or older. 79.11% of member groups do not have any paid staff; of the 20.89% with paid staff, just over 30% have full-time employees.

Volunteers are vital to Landcare. They contribute over 179,121 hours per month in order to achieve outcomes for their natural environment and the wider community. In 2023-2024 volunteers contributed 2,149,452 hours of their time estimated at ABS rate in-kind financial value of \$89,675,137.

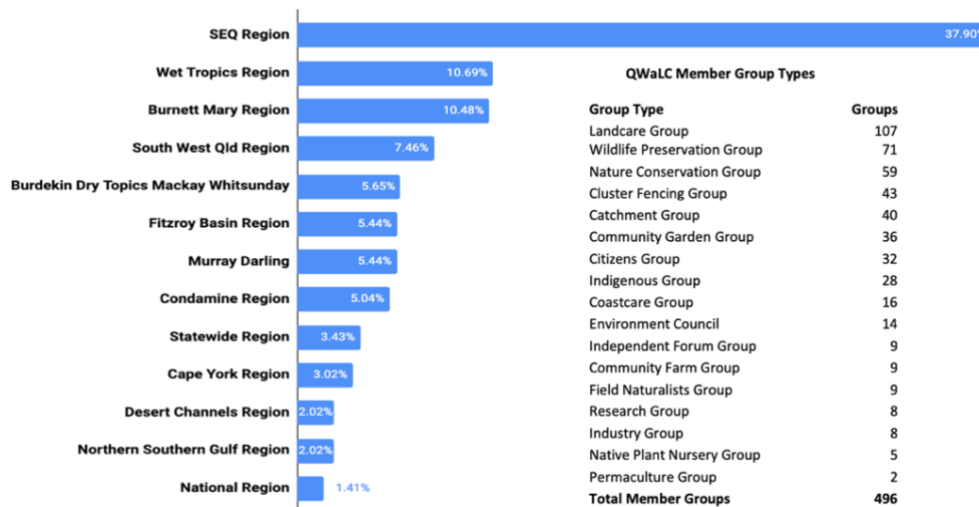
64.44% of groups reported volunteer number as stable; 12.89% reported volunteer number decreased; 22.67% reported increased number. Volunteers are equal in terms of female and male participants.

- over 2,000 individuals participate on management committees
- an average group has 5 committee members responsible for governance
- most have expertise in business, accounting, marketing and environmental management
- are representative of specific sections of their local communities

Landholders make up over 60% of all committee members, underscoring Landcare's connection to and influence on sustainable land use practices.

Distribution in the graph below, shows approximately 63% of members are outside of SE Qld. An analysis of the types of groups is also provided.

Graph 4: Distribution of QWaLC Member Groups in Each Region & Group Types



Members engage in this range of activities to protect our natural resources and involve the wider community and to generate income to do more.

Activities attract new members and volunteers. Collectively in 2023-2024 member groups engaged with 518,738 people across Queensland – 10% of the population.

Vegetation management, primarily on-ground works (46.41% of activity overall), and education and training activities (35.18% of activity overall) including field days are core activities. Other activities (18.41% of overall activity) contribute to mapping, monitoring and research outcomes.

Landcare - On-ground Activities		Education & Training (Landcare Related)	
Vegetation Management	9.78%	Workshops/Field Days	11.43%
Wildlife Monitoring	0.00%	Education/Outreach Services	11.08%
Litter Removal	5.49%	Publication of Printed Materials	5.79%
Feral Animal Control/Monitoring	4.59%	Annual Expo or Conference	4.04%
Sustainable Agriculture Practices	3.84%	Eco-Tourism Activities	2.84%
Production of Native Plants	3.84%	Total Educational	35.18%
Community Gardening	4.74%	Other Activities	
Wildlife Rescue/Rehabilitation	3.79%	GIS Mapping Services	1.60%
Fencing	2.89%	Consultancy or Advocacy	8.03%
Marine Area Conservation	2.94%	Scientific Research	3.94%
Fire Management	2.59%	Hiring/Facilities or Equipment	2.45%
Production of Edible Plants	1.90%	Others	2.40%
Total On-Ground	46.41%	Total Other Activities	18.41%

Vegetation management results in the reduction of weeds and extension of native riparian plantings improving waterway health and strengthening native animal and bird habitat. Groups create and circulate printed materials, advisory services, produce native plants, organise conferences and expos.

Further activities include:

- Monitoring programs including marine mammal and water quality,
- Fencing to protect natural habitat from feral animals and reduce waterway erosion,
- Establishing and developing programs for farmers and land managers,
- Marketing
- Event management
- PR and social media campaigns

- Wildlife clinics and native animal rescue and rehabilitation,
- Community gardens that provide produce for local,
- Participating in and/or organising citizen science events, and
- Clean-up events.

BUILDING EASIER ACCESS AND REDUCING ADMIN BURDENS

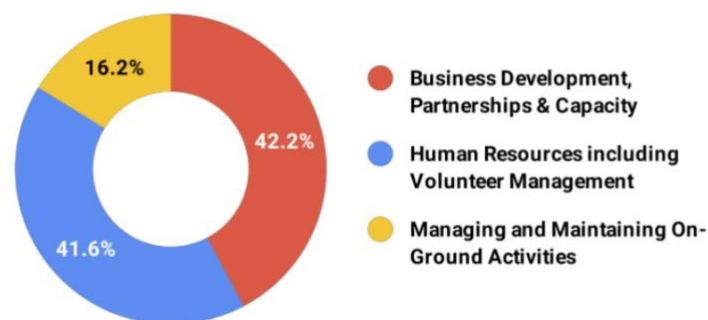
- An app for volunteer registration and ID confirmation (secure and protected)
- Improved platforms for essential WHS learning and on-boarding
- Funding to develop an app for volunteering input and outcome data capture (locations, hours, activities and events, GIS data for mapping results and projecting change)
- Resourcing to support engagement for those unable to engage on-line so they are not excluded
- Secure funding to engage landcare coordinators in regions
- Government commitment to support First Nations coordinator to build practical reconciliation, sharing knowledge systems, work together on-ground

GROWING ENGAGEMENT AND IMPROVING RECOGNITION

Survey data identifies the following top priorities to reduce barriers to volunteering reported by QWaLC 496 member groups for 2023-2024. All of these connect to financial support and resourcing at a fundamental level – security and stability being essential to enable strategy and planning.

- Attracting new volunteers - note volunteers are aging as people have to stay longer in workforce, take care of family including grandchildren and ill or aged family members, and costs of volunteering e.g. fuel, protective clothing etc
- Groups securing income to support basic organisational functions or develop new projects which also attract and retain volunteers
- Maintaining volunteers – providing the appropriate support to provide engaging activities, educate and enable their skills
- Engaging with community to build out support and connection

We analysed the data to identify the analysis below of the kinds of challenges groups currently face:



We run annual State based Landcare Awards with experienced and professional judging panels.

<https://qwalc.org.au/2023-2024-qld-landcare-awards/>

Successful entrants represent Qld in the National Landcare Awards.

<https://landcareaustralia.org.au/landcare-awards-2023/>

Local community and wider acknowledgement and recognition is important because it:

- creates positive role models
- shows what can be done
- rewards extraordinary efforts by ordinary people
- celebrates and champions our success and
- encourages others to participate.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO VOLUNTEERING

QWaLC has worked closely with Volunteering Queensland and made extensive use of their training and support materials. We recognise that this support can be invaluable to groups that face different challenges at different stages of their establishment, growth and development.

Once a network matures the specific needs to build capacity and overcome challenges must address the goals and ambitions and values of that particular group whether its focus is sport, welfare, cultural, environmental, community development.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE SUPPORT TO VOLUNTEERING & TO DELIVER QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Through investment to create hard infrastructure for the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics – build community ownership through engagement with QWaLC volunteer groups. This would make the 2032 build and legacy about the growth of community capital and regrowth of vital green space that will form a crucial legacy element of this investment, building natural capital and social capital as well as contributing to community cohesion.

Three aspects stand out as **opportunities not to be missed**:

1. Engage the services of volunteer run landcare native plant nurseries to propagate large volumes as part of landscaping plans for all new infrastructure including transport – starting in 2025 to grow reliable mature specimens in good time
2. Engage local landcare groups to undertake and maintain mass plantings for enhanced public amenity and aesthetic impact during construction completion phases for example road and rail corridors where applicable, newly-created public spaces, venue surrounds – strengthening volunteer groups, building practical on-ground collaboration and building community ownership of outcomes
3. Draw on those existing volunteer groups to be trained and supported as event volunteers at local venues across the state – strengthening and valuing existing groups whose volunteering activity is already episodic (therefore not disrupting normal activity patterns)

How QWaLC group volunteers work to tackle Queensland's current and future challenges:

- 1 **Biodiversity Conservation:** Queensland's unique land and sea-based flora and fauna, recognised in the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for Queensland*, is threatened or endangered. QWaLC groups act to protect and restore habitats, monitor habitats and advocate in local communities. State project funds can optimise efforts to protect this rich biodiversity for future generations.
- 2 **Strengthening biosecurity:** QWaLC has engaged significantly with its land-owner and farmer members to deliver education about bio-security risks and to provide practical advice about management strategies for pests and weed threats. This is a critical element in building the resilience of the state's agriculture sector.
- 3 **Cost-Effective Environmental Management:** Volunteer groups efficiently tackle environmental issues, contributing **2,149,452 hours equivalent to \$89,675,137 of financial value, engaging 518,738 people**. More investment can leverage this capability without substantial new spending.
- 4 **Enhancing Disaster Preparedness and Response:** Volunteer groups are always and everywhere crucial in preparing for and responding to natural disasters like cyclones, bushfires and floods. Our groups are **organised, knowledgeable and positioned** to immediately activate critical connection, support and practical response post-event, for example knowing accessible road access alternatives, local supply options, cleaning up debris on beaches after cyclones. Using QWaLC capacity will cost effectively bolster Queensland's disaster resilience.
- 5 **Build capacity and strengthen governance for First Nations groups:** Landcare groups can play an important role in building organisational capacity where appropriate. By supporting QWaLC stewardship and collaboration the state can deliver both environmental and socioeconomic co-benefits to communities by promoting and respecting traditional ways of caring for country, engaging traditional owner groups through employment opportunities.

- 6 **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:** Climate change challenges community and individual well-being and the state's financial productivity and sustainability of agricultural production. Targeted project funds for planting projects that sequester carbon or community initiatives build climate resilience. State support could scale these initiatives, contributing to Queensland's climate goals.
- 7 **Community Engagement and Education:** Volunteer environmental groups work locally building environmental and STEM literacy and sustainable practices: educating to reduce plastic and chemical pollution of our fish breeding habitats and oceans, planting to build waterway viability, improve water quality and enhance threatened habitats. Targeted funds could amplify community awareness and engagement in science delivering on Pillar 5 of the *Future Qld Science Strategy*.
- 8 **Active Involvement in Citizen Science:** Increased funding to QWaLC groups for citizen science projects will help achieve the goals of the *Engaging Queenslanders in Science Strategy*. More involvement in scientific projects, further builds STEM capabilities and interests improving biosecurity, improving knowledge and understanding about soil, water, flora, fauna and their interconnection for stronger ecosystems.
- 9 **Support for Rural and Remote Communities:** Many groups operate in rural and remote areas where government services are limited. By supporting these groups, the state government can extend its reach, ensuring that even the most isolated communities whether inland or along our vast coastline, have access to resources and support for environmental stewardship.
- 10 **Promoting Social Cohesion and Well-Being:** Participation in volunteer environmental activities can strengthen social cohesion and support individual well-being. The opportunities for community members to connect with one another and the natural environment fosters belonging and purpose. Government support for these groups builds stronger, healthier communities.
- 11 **Boosting Tourism and Recreation:** Volunteer groups demonstrate tangibly the value communities place on their local environment. The landscapes they care for attract tourists whose presence boosts local economies. Targeted support can focus on care for our iconic natural legacy, supporting the tourism industry and engaging visitors.
- 12 **Facilitating Partnerships and Collaboration:** Directly and indirectly building community resilience, government support can facilitate partnerships between volunteer groups, local businesses, schools, and other community organizations. This resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and collective action creates local and innovative environmental solutions and builds local economies.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE VOLUNTEERING

Alongside the state's well trained and supported SES volunteers and the professional entities involved, there are many ways in which QWaLC member groups can effectively and strategically be used to augment and improve disaster preparation, planning and response efforts.

- Prevention and preparedness: strategic planting especially in riparian flood zones can efficiently and effectively mitigate some of the worst impacts acting as a break on flow and binding soil through root networks.
- Local disaster management groups and plans typically overlook the knowledge, capability and networks of local landcare groups who know the behaviour of creeks and rivers, understand access cross-country and road routes, understand the fire risks in local vegetation and bush, undertake weed control reducing fuel to fires.
- We note that even local recovery and resilience plans which state an intention to recognise the 'long-term multi-layered social and developmental process of preparation, resilience and recovery' mostly ignore the capacity and practical skills of local Landcare groups, their knowledge of local resources and equipment, landscapes and infrastructure.
- This formal lack of acknowledgement and engagement of locally available and willing people and know-how is disempowering and frankly, alarming.

Here are examples of past bush-fire ecological recovery efforts undertaken by QWaLC groups:

<https://qwalc.org.au/cooroibah-north-shore-fire-zone-ecological-repair-project/>
<https://qwalc.org.au/understories-restoring-ecological-communities-in-the-tallebudgera-valley/>

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES VOLUNTEERING

4.44% of QWaLC member groups are indigenous corporations. This proportion is steadily increasing. This is how they speak with us about their caring for and involvement with their country.

Hopefully you can get the message across. Talk to us properly. They don't need another mob of shiny rings who achieve nothing at all for us in Cape York.

Welcome to your country -

We have a very special homeland in Cape York that welcomes you all . We hope you'll join our elders and ancestors, and future generations on our Looking After Country Journey. With hard work , respect for our country and people, we can share our very special place we call home.

We ...look forward to being a voice to carry the message that your elders' stories need to be documented for future generations. Research needs to find out who the T/O's are for every bit of country, not the government Token ones. As usual all forms of government take the easy way. and identify one who will toe the line. We know who we are.

We would hope that our very real elders can tell us their story and how it does affect us today. All the proper custodians and their stories and knowledge should be recorded for the future as it gives us insight into our country, which is a Living Being. We need their knowledge to be used to heal and repair our country and to leave a legacy for future generations.



- 'volunteering' not especially a widely held concept in First Nations communities and language
- giving and sharing responsibility, respect or caring for country may be closer
- key ingredient to build engagement and shared understanding is time.
- Time to be together, time to listen, time to understand another perspective.
- Time not a readily translatable concept informing project support and funding

QWaLC First Nations engagement:

- built collaboration with local custodians of the land at the grass roots level
- happens where and when there is potential of working together on country
- can be a way of building pathways to meaningful local employment
- can be supportive of caring for country activities with local cultural significance
- may also generate employment and income for local communities.

To strengthen both collaboration and improve outcomes for culture, reconciliation, country:

- invest to develop a set of practical principles for collaboration and knowledge sharing with first nations land and sea people
- undertake co-design of specific place-based collaborations engaging key stakeholders from regional leadership, local Indigenous communities, landcare groups and QWaLC regional representatives as appropriate
- could engage with First Nations landcarers, Indigenous Land & Sea Rangers, NRM Indigenous Participation Communities of Practice, and Country Needs People
- recognise that to be successful, this needs to be an indigenous-led process building respect, knowledge-sharing and cooperation into a comprehensive and coordinated effort.

QWaLC has supported First Nations engagement with Federal government as per attached Message Stick to Canberra.

APPENDICES:

2023-2024 Health of Landcare Report
Message Stick to Canberra

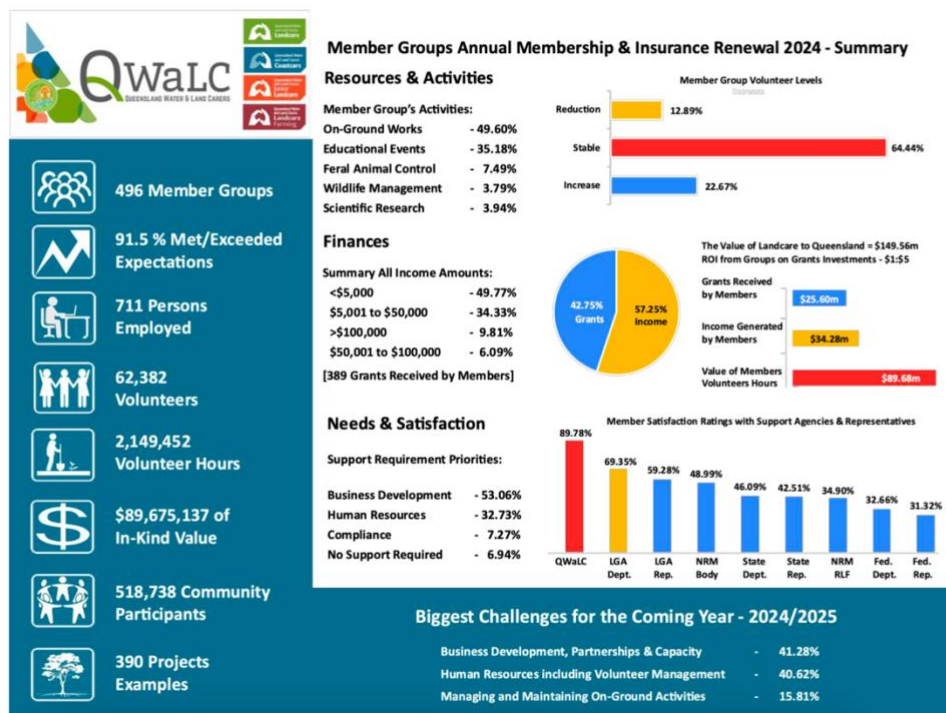


QWaLC Health of Landcare in Queensland Report 2023/2024

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Executive Summary

Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC) is the peak body for community based natural resource management (NRM) volunteer groups in Queensland. QWaLC's roles include representation, advocacy, promotion, networking and insurance administration. QWaLC's board includes representatives from each of QLD's regions. Our membership consists of **496 groups and 62,382 volunteers** spread across 13 NRM regions in QLD. Members undertook a total of 390 projects during 2023/2024.

Through extensive research and engagement with its member groups this report presents a comprehensive picture of the overall health of Landcare in QLD in 2023/2024 and an overview of existing resource levels state-wide within each NRM region. In summary the health of Landcare in QLD, although facing many challenges, is in reasonable shape and continues to meet the expectations of the majority of Member Groups.

Member Group volunteers contribute over **2,149,452 hours** annually equating to **\$89,675,137** in-kind financial value. During 2023/2024 Member Group activities engaged **518,738** people across Queensland. This represents almost 10% of the States' population. Landholders continue to play an active role in member groups and account for the majority of all management committee members.

The majority of Member Groups rely solely on volunteers which are mostly 45 years or older. 79.11% of Member Groups do not have any paid staff. 68.78% of Members with staff have no full-time employees. 20.89% of Member Groups in QLD **employ a total of 711** staff this is an increase from last's figure of 570. Employment types include full-time, part-time and casual.

It was found that, Member Groups with a mixture of paid staff and volunteers tend to achieve greater levels of engagement with the wider community and as a consequence generating greater outcomes. This is reinforced by evidence from other Australian States that have highly successful paid community coordinator programs that support community-based Landcare groups.

49.77% of all revenue (government funding and self-generated income) are for amounts less than \$5,000 while amounts between \$5,001 and \$50,000 accounts for 34.33% and amounts greater than \$50,001 accounts for 15.89% of all income. 4.89% of groups depend exclusively on government funding this is similar to the previous year. Member Groups also generate income from other sources such as fee for service activities (on-ground work, training and plant sales) public donations, membership fees and other sources. Collectively member groups raise 57.25% of their funds. Government funding accounts for 42.75% of all revenue: of this Local Government Authorities (LGAs) provided 6.16% of all revenue, regional NRM bodies provided 2.44%, State Government 25.41% and the Commonwealth provided 8.74%.

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Commercial sales by member groups generated 27.95% of all revenue while the State Government was shown to be the largest supporter of Landcare in Queensland with respect to funding, providing over 59.44% of the grant amounts. Local Government provided the greatest number of grants however they were for smaller amounts. The majority of revenue raised by groups came from self-generated activities including public donations and other sources. 389 grants were received in 2023/2024 which is more than last year's total of 353.

Introduction

Our members, primarily Landcare Groups in QLD, are an important part of the community. Our 496 Member Groups have 62,382 community volunteers that contribute over 2,149,452 hours annually. This figure is a significant increase from the previous year (1,145,828). 22.67% of member groups reported an increase of volunteers from last year. Volunteer efforts, this year, equate to \$89,675,137 of financial value, a significant increase from the \$60,611,984 of value achieved in the previous year. The amounts are calculated using the Australian Bureau of Statistics volunteer equivalent hourly rate of \$41.72 if paid labour was engaged to provide the same service as our community volunteers. During 2023/2024 QWaLC member group activities engaged with 518,738 people across Queensland.

Through extensive research and engagement with its Member Groups QWaLC presents a comprehensive picture of the overall Health of Landcare in QLD, an overview of existing resource levels state-wide and in each NRM region. In summary the Health of Landcare in Queensland, although facing many challenges, is in reasonable shape and continues to meet the expectations of Member Groups.

This report provides detailed information regarding Member Groups:

- Human resource demographics (paid staff and volunteers),
- Income sources and levels (Government and other sources),
- Performance and contributing factors,
- Satisfaction levels with networks, support agencies and elected representatives,
- Core activities undertaken by groups,
- Partnerships with local business and other groups, and
- Level of support requests.

The information contained in this report is outlined at State level and Regional NRM levels. The data is presented and analysed to show the distribution of Member Groups across the State according to NRM region including the level of resources in each region in correlation to

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numerous key categories. The following sections provide a narrative of the Health of Landcare in Queensland supported by substantive quantitative data presented in this report. It details statistical information regarding Member Groups human resources, work activities, finances, performance and satisfaction level with support networks.

Human resource demographics (paid staff and volunteers)

The most popular legal structure of groups is an incorporated association at 87.90%. A small minority (4.84%) are not-for-profit companies limited by guarantee, 4.44% are indigenous corporations, 2.02% are unincorporated groups and 0.81% are a mix of trusts and cooperatives. 11.56% of incorporated groups auspice other groups in their region.

The majority of Member Groups rely solely on volunteers that are 45 years or older. 79.11% of member groups do not have any paid staff and 68.78% of members, with paid staff (20.89%) have no full-time employees. The majority of paid staff are either casual or full-time. Volunteers continue to play a vital role in Landcare. They contribute over 179,121 hours per month in order to achieve outcomes for their natural environment and the wider community.

Member group volunteers contributed 2,149,452 hours of their time annually. The in-kind financial value of community volunteering is \$89,675,137. 64.44% reported that volunteer numbers are stable, 12.89% reported that their volunteer numbers decreased and 22.67% reported an increase in numbers. Community volunteers are equal in numbers in terms of female and male participants.

Collectively member groups have over 2,000 individuals that actively participate on management committees. Each group has, on average, 5 committee members responsible for organisational governance. The majority of committees have individuals with expertise in business, accounting, marketing and environmental management as well as being representative of specific sections of their local communities. For example, Landholders make up over 60% of all committee members. This highlights the importance of Landcare and its connection to and influence of sustainable land use practices.

20.89% of member groups in QLD employ a total of 711 staff an increase from last year's total of 568. They are made up of the employment types as shown in the table below. 397 of those employed are located in SEQ and Burnett Mary regions. Another 40 employed by Member Groups in the Wet Tropics region. A further 89 are located in Cape York although the majority of these employees are part-time or casual.

Employment Type							
Full Time	222	Part Time	164	Casual	325	Total	711

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Generally, it was found that Member Groups that have a mixture of paid staff, volunteers and local partnerships tend to achieve greater levels of engagement with the wider community. Organisational capacity is largely dependent on human resources. The majority of Member Groups meet or exceeded their expectations. 91.78% of Groups meet or exceeded their expectations. Last year that figure was 91.20%.

Income sources and levels (Government and other sources)

This section provides an overview of the types and levels of government funding received and income generated by member groups overall in Queensland and within NRM regions.

49.77% of all revenue amounts received (government funding and self-generated income) were for amounts of \$5,000 or less while amounts between \$5,001 and \$50,000 accounted for 34.33% and amounts greater than \$50,001 accounted for 15.89% of all income. Many groups are unable to rely exclusively on government funding. Member Groups generate income from other sources such as fee for service activities (on-ground work, training and plant sales) public donations and other sources. Self-generated income is 27.95% of revenue while donations from the general public account for 7.38% and other sources 21.92%. Collectively Member Groups raise 57.25% of their funds. Government funding accounts for 42.75%. This is a decrease from the previous year (46.02%) of all revenue. Local Government Authorities (LGAs) provided 6.16% of all revenue and the Commonwealth provided 8.74%, Regional NRM Bodies providing 2.44% (last year that figure was 4.92% of all funding while the State Government provided 25.41%.

The State Government awarded a total of \$15,218,187 for 121 grants. 28 grants (23.14% of total grants awarded), were for more than \$100,000 each, amounting to \$12,644,501 which represents 83.09% of the total amount of funding. 7 of the 28 grants were awarded a total of \$7,855,986 which represents 51.62% of the total amount of funding.

The Commonwealth Government awarded a total of \$5,231,736 for 64 grants. 13 grants (20.31% of total grants awarded), were for more than \$100,000 each amounting to \$4,085,357 which represents 78.09% of the total amount of funding. 1 of the 13 grants awarded was a total of \$704,302 which represents 13.46% of the total amount of funding.

Regional NRM Bodies awarded a total of \$1,463,272 for 49 grants which was significantly less than the previous year of \$2,308,316 for 58 grants. 3 grants (10.34% of total grants awarded) were for more than \$100,000 each amounting to \$602,893. 53.06% of the grants awarded were for amounts of \$10,000 or less.

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Local Government awarded a total of total of \$3,688,446 for 155 grants. 9 of the 155 grants (41.27 % of total grants awarded) were for more than \$100,000 each amounting to \$1,522,206. 57.42% of grants awarded were for amounts of less than \$10,000.

389 grants were awarded amounting to a total of \$25,601,640. 12 member groups (2.67% of the 450 members surveyed), received 50.36% (\$12,891,838) of total funding amount. 150 member groups (33.33%) reported that they received no government funding. In addition to the 8 groups that received the majority of the funding while 228 groups shared in receiving the balance of funding of \$12,709,802. 210 groups (46.67%) reported that they received no grants.

Member groups received \$34,284,651 of income from commercial sales, public donations and other sources. This is an increase of almost than \$10m from the previous year. \$16,737,638 of income was generated from commercial sales of good and services. 7 member groups (1.56%) generated 74.09% of sales income. 11 member groups (2.44%) received 60.96% of the \$4,420,598 donated by the public. A total of \$8,393,357 was received by 12 member groups (2.67% of all members) this was 63.94% of the total of \$13,126,415 income received from received from other sources. 32 member groups (7.01%) received a total of \$27,185,925 of income which represents 79.29% of the total of all income received. 139 groups (72.70%) received a total of \$7,098,726 of income which represents 26.11% of all income received. 83 groups (18.44%) reported that they received no income.

61.10% of income amounts raised by Member Groups, excluding Government funding, were for amounts of less than \$5,000. 27.67% were for amounts from \$5,001 to \$50,000 and 11.24% were for amounts greater than \$50,000. 29.05% of Government grants amounts received by member groups were less than \$5,000 while 46.53% were for amounts from \$5,001 to \$50,000. Amount received in ranges exceeding \$50,001 amount to 24.42% of granted amounts received. A total of 389 grants were received by QWaLC member groups during 2023/2024 compared to 353 grants received in the previous year.

Of the Government funding received by member groups LGAs provided 14.41% which is a slight increase from the previous year. Regional NRM bodies provided 5.72. This is less than the grants given in the previous year (10.69%). The State government provided 59.44% of the total grants. This is an increase from the previous year (48.62%). The Commonwealth government provided 20.44% of the total government funding which is less than the previous year (26.51%).

51.56% (last year 51.26%) of Member Groups received Government funding while 48.44% of groups did not receive any. 4.89% of Members relied solely on Government funding, 48.44% had a mixture of grants and self-generated revenue and 33.33% existed solely on self-generated revenue. 60 member groups reported (13.33%) they received no revenue.

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The majority of Member Groups raise and receive small amounts, of less than \$5,000, and still managed to achieve positive outcomes for their local natural environment thereby enabling them to meet their expectations. A small number of groups, 8.22%, had not meet their expectations during 2023/2024.

Performance and Contributing Factors

The performance of groups is influenced by numerous factors. Their ability to meet or exceed their expectations is largely determined by how successful they are at securing and managing human and financial resources. It is also dependent on the availability of resources such as government funding together with a service and advice support network such as that provided by QWaLC and other organisations.

In 2023/2024 91.78% of member groups met or exceeded their expectations while 8.22% (8.79% in the previous year) member groups did not meet their expectations. 60 groups (13.33%) reported that they received no funding or income. This is reasonably consistent from the previous year.

Groups that are engaged with their community in partnerships with local business and other groups benefit through low or no cost provision of additional resources to support their organisational aspirations and activities. This also results in greater engagement with the wider community providing the ability for others to support Landcare in their local area. Some of the benefits include Volunteer labour or services free or discounted use of facilities, free or discounted materials, cash donations, free or discounted use of equipment, free or discounted advertising or discounted labour or services.

Identified Support Requirements

Member groups were asked the type of support their group required to maintain and improve their performance. The top priorities were:

Year	2023/2024	2022/2023
Business Development	53.06%	55.18%
Human Resources	32.73%	30.80%
Compliance	7.27%	6.88%
No Support Required	6.94%	7.14%

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Core Activities Undertaken by Groups

Our member groups undertake an extensive range of activities that generate income, protect our natural resources and engage with the wider community. Vegetation management, primarily on-ground works, and training programs such as field days and works are activities that many member groups undertake. Vegetation management results in the reduction of weeds and extension of native riparian plantings that improves the health of waterways and provides habitat for native animals and birds.

Groups also develop and provide printed materials, advisory services, produce native plants and conduct conferences and expos. These activities and many others act to help manage and protect our natural resource while resulting in the sharing of knowledge of sustainable land-use practices and raising the awareness of the work that Landcare does in local communities. These activities attract new members and volunteers. Collectively member groups engaged with 518,738 people across Queensland.

Some of the other activities carried out by member groups include:

- Monitoring programs including marine mammal and water quality,
- Fencing to protect natural habitat from feral animals and reduce waterway erosion,
- Establishing and developing programs for land managers,
- Wildlife clinics and native animal rescue and rehabilitation,
- Community gardens that provide produce for local,
- Participating in and/or organising citizen science events, and
- Clean-up events.

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The section below details the type of level of activities undertaken by member groups during 2023/2024.

Landcare - On-ground Activities		Education & Training (Landcare Related)	
Vegetation Management	9.78%	Workshops/Field Days	11.43%
Wildlife Monitoring	0.00%	Education/Outreach Services	11.08%
Litter Removal	5.49%	Publication of Printed Materials	5.79%
Feral Animal Control/Monitoring	4.59%	Annual Expo or Conference	4.04%
Sustainable Agriculture Practices	3.84%	Eco-Tourism Activities	2.84%
Production of Native Plants	3.84%	Total Educational	35.18%
Community Gardening	4.74%	Other Activities	
Wildlife Rescue/Rehabilitation	3.79%	GIS Mapping Services	1.60%
Fencing	2.89%	Consultancy or Advocacy	8.03%
Marine Area Conservation	2.94%	Scientific Research	3.94%
Fire Management	2.59%	Hiring/Facilities or Equipment	2.45%
Production of Edible Plants	1.90%	Others	2.40%
Total On-Ground	46.41%	Total Other Activities	18.41%

Member Group Project Examples 2023/2024

This year members have provided 390 project examples.

Project Category	Number of Examples
On-Ground	243
Educational	148
Total Examples	391

[Click here to view types and locations of projects](#)



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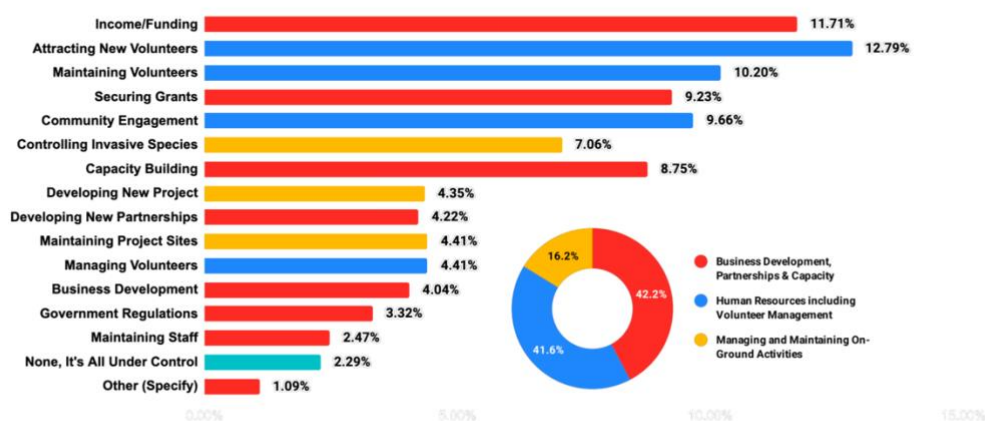
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Member Group Challenges for the Year Ahead

Member groups were asked the following open-ended question: "What are the biggest challenges your group faces in the coming year?" The responses showed that maintaining and recruiting members and volunteers and securing and maintaining sufficient funding are top priorities for 2024/2025. On-ground work challenges and climate also rated as concerns among member groups as shown in the graph below.

Graph 1: QWaLC Member Groups Biggest Challenges for 2023/2024



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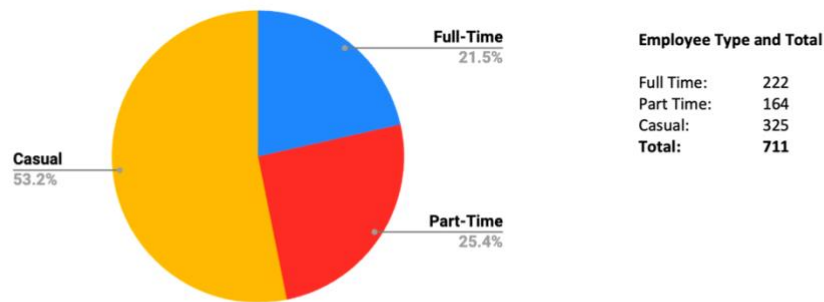
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Data Presentation

Member Groups and Human Resources

Graph 2 shows that 79.11% of Member Groups do not have any paid staff and rely solely on their members and volunteers to achieve outcomes for their natural environment and the wider community. The majority of employees are either part-time or casual (68.78%). 20.89% of Member Groups in QLD employ a total of 711 staff which 143 more than last year. SEQ, Burnett Mary, Wet Tropics and Cape Yorks regions employ 73.98% of those employed by member groups. Employment types and associated amounts as shown in below.

Graph 2: QWaLC Member Group Paid Staff Status

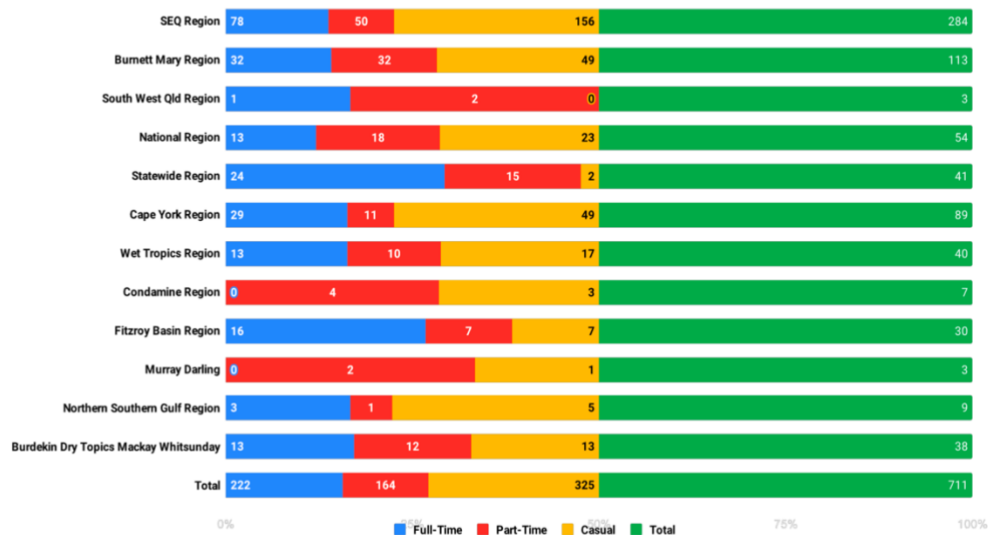


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Graph 3: QWaLC Member Group Employee Type Numbers by Region

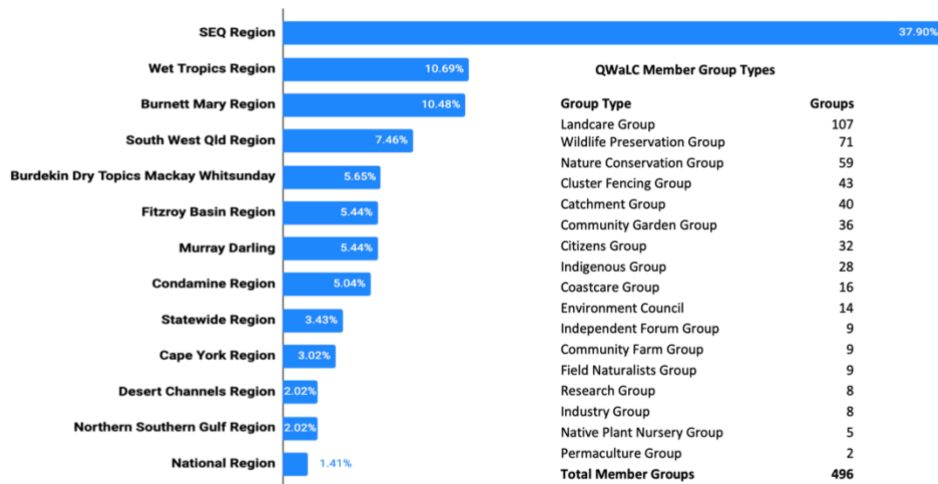


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Graph 4: Distribution of QWaLC Member Groups in Each Region & Group Types



The above graph outlines the distribution of Member Groups according to NRM regions. 37.90% of member groups are located in SEQ, while the others are spread across Queensland in coastal, rural and remote areas. The vast majority of groups are focussed on restoration, protection and conservation of the natural environment in their local areas.

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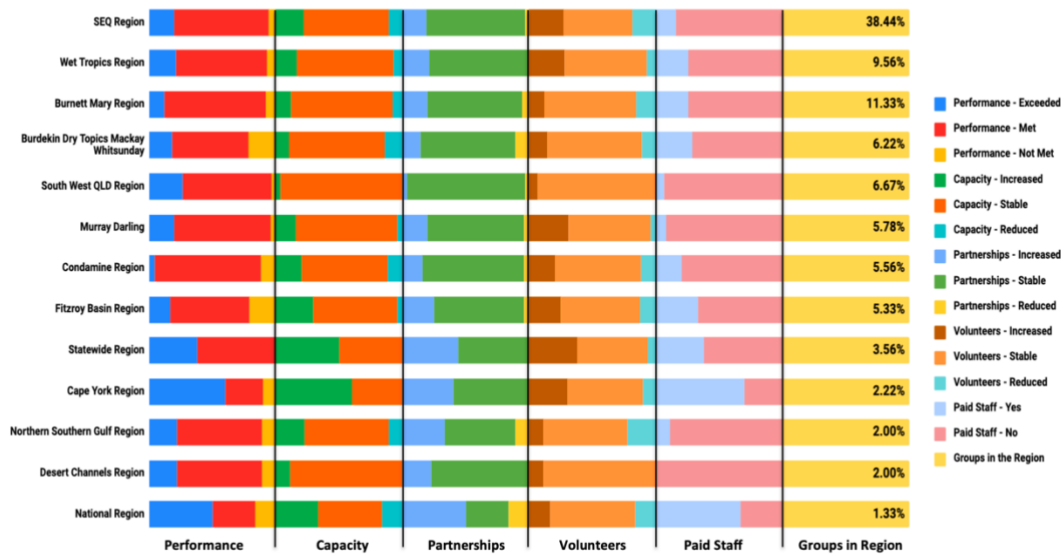
Table 1: Wider-Community Engagement by Region from 2021 to 2024

QWaLC Region	2023/2024	2023/2022	2022/2021
SEQ Region	428,046	103,483	192,807
National Region	24,937	3,865	1,830
Burnett Mary Region	18,467	19,609	68,849
Wet Tropics Region	12,536	12,108	11,402
Statewide Region	8,750	104,288	13,365
Condamine Region	6,710	4,074	6,397
Burdekin Dry Topics Mackay Whitsunday	4,299	3,877	6,109
Murray Darling	4,271	1,894	1,344
Northern Southern Gulf Region	3,652	1,025	741
Cape York Region	2,604	2,427	535
Fitzroy Basin Region	2,216	4,964	1,407
South West Qld Region	2,022	3,086	3,036
Desert Channels Region	228	236	91
Total Community Engagement	518,738	264,936	307,913

The above table shows Member Groups wider community engagement from 2021 to 2024

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Graph 5: The Correlation of Employment and Other Data Categories by NRM Region



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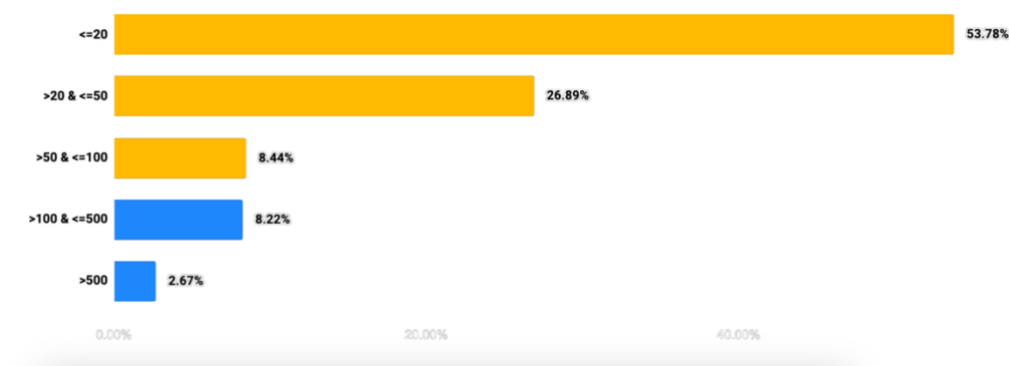
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The above graph provides the opportunity to assess and compare the performance of member groups surveyed in each NRM Region. For example, although Member Groups in Wet Tropics have limited paid staff, they managed to generate a balance of income, grants, capacity (levels of Volunteers) and wider community engagement. While in Cape York have a small number of Member Groups with high levels of paid staff, grants and low levels of volunteering and self-generated income together with limited wider community engagement.

Member Groups and Volunteers

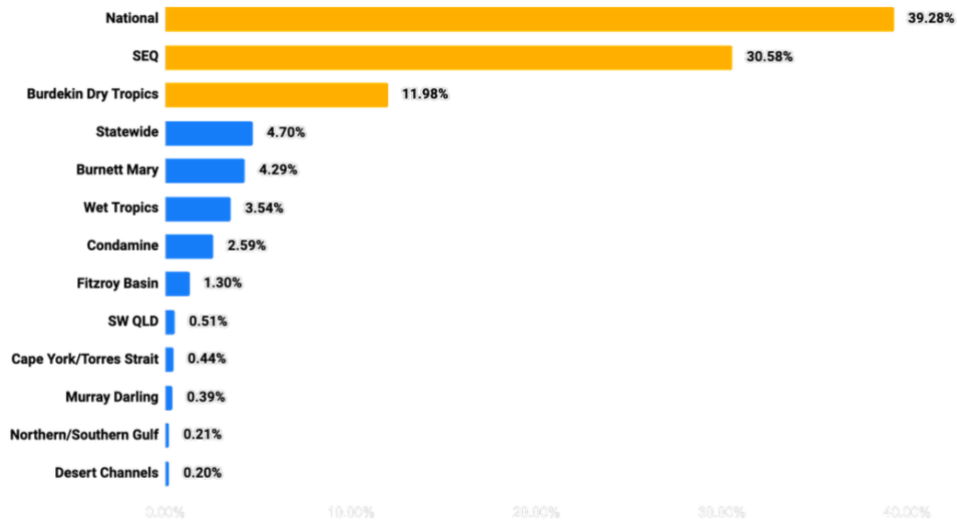
QWaLC Member Groups have 62,382 volunteers. 53.78% have 20 volunteers or less. While 26.89% of member groups have between 21 and 50 volunteers. 8.44% of groups between 51 and 100 volunteers, 8.22% have over 100 volunteers and 2.67% have over 500 volunteers. Each month these volunteers provide 179,121 hours or 2,149,452 hours annually. This equates to an annual in-kind value of \$89,675,137 in labour and other support services. This contribution amount was calculated using the Australian Bureau of Statistics rate of \$41.72/h (2019).

Graph 6: Member Group Volunteer Numbers - 2023/2024



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Graph 7: Member Group Volunteer Numbers by QWaLC NRM Region - 2023/2024



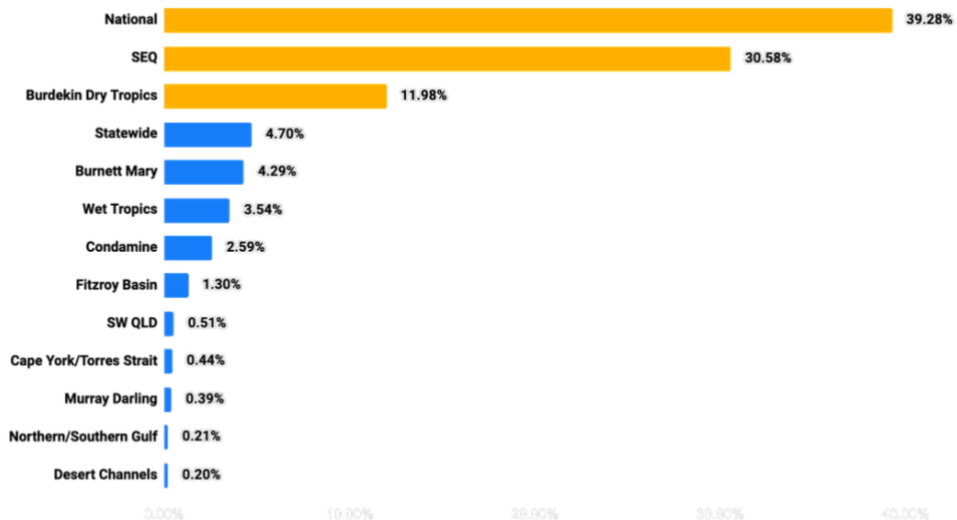
The above graph shows that 39.28% of volunteers were engaged through QWaLC national member groups that conduct activities in Queensland. 30.58% of volunteers were engaged in the SEQ region given that 37.90% (188) of QWaLC member groups operate in that region.

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Graph 7: Member Group Volunteer Numbers by QWaLC NRM Region - 2023/2024



The above graph shows that 39.28% of volunteers were engaged through QWaLC national member groups that conduct activities in Queensland. 30.58% of volunteers were engaged in the SEQ region given that 37.90% (188) of QWaLC member groups operate in that region.

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Member Groups and Activities

The range of work activities undertaken by member group's volunteers and paid staff are outlined in the table below. There are a wide range of activities related to natural resource management, either directly through on-ground work or presenting information through education events such training sessions, workshops and field days. A greater awareness Landcare is promoted through conferences and expos.

Table 2: Work Activities Undertaken by Member Groups		% of Total
Workshops/Field Days		11.43%
Education and/or Outreach Services		11.08%
Vegetation Management		9.78%
Consultancy or Advocacy		8.03%
Development/Publication of Printed Materials		5.79%
Litter Removal		5.49%
Community Gardening		4.74%
Feral Animal Control/Monitoring		4.59%
Annual Expo or Conference		4.04%
Scientific Research		3.94%
Sustainable Agriculture Production Practices		3.84%
Production of Native Plants		3.84%
Wildlife Rescue/Rehabilitation		3.79%
Hiring Out of Facilities or Equipment		2.45%
Marine Area Conservation		2.94%
Fencing		2.89%
Eco-Tourism Activities (Cultural or Nature Based)		2.84%
Fire Management		2.59%
Other (Specify)		2.40%
Production of Edible Plants		1.90%
GIS Mapping Services		1.60%

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Member Groups and Organisational Performance Factor Impacts

Factors that affect member group's performance include the availability of organisational resources such as the number of paid staff, access to support services, the number of member/volunteers, the number of partnerships with local business and the amount of income generated from activities other than grants funds. The level of support and funding available from and provided by key agencies such region NRM bodies and all levels of government can also impact whether a group meets, exceeds or failures to meet their expectations.

The graphs on the follow page show that:

Group Expectations – Graph 8.1

91.78% of member groups met or exceed their expectations for 2023/2024 as opposed to the previous year when this figure was 90.98%.

Group Capacity Levels – Graph 8.2

71.78% reported that their capacity levels were stable while 20.00% reported an increase.

Group Partnership Levels – Graph 8.3

Stability of local partnerships was stable at 75.78% while 20.22% reported an increase in levels.

Group Volunteer Levels – Graph 8.4

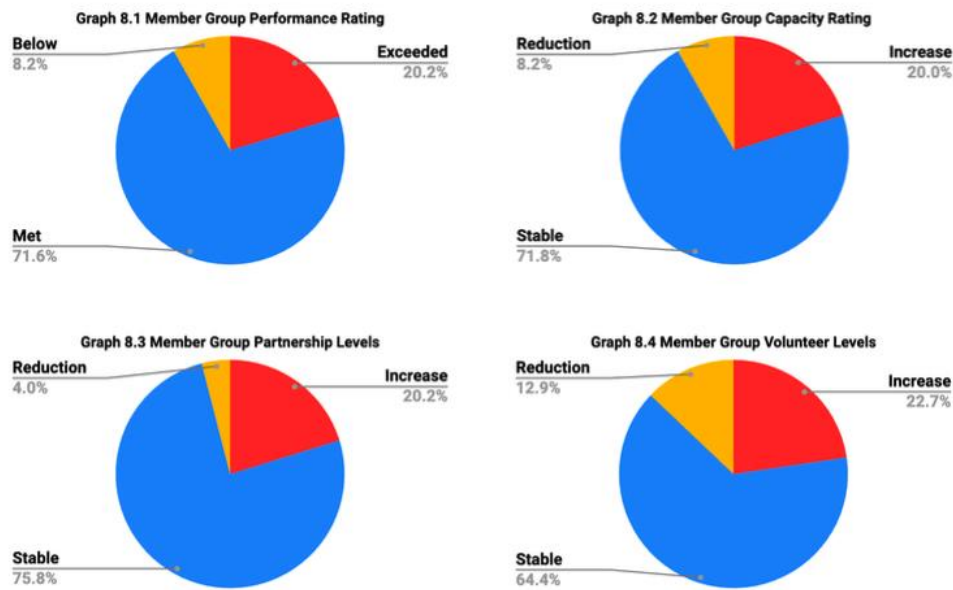
The majority of groups (64.64%) reported volunteer numbers were stable with 22.67% reporting an increase in numbers. The balance of 12.78% reported a reduction in numbers. This same trend was show in last years reported figures.

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Graph 8: Member Group Performance – Expectations, Capacity, Partnerships and Volunteer Levels

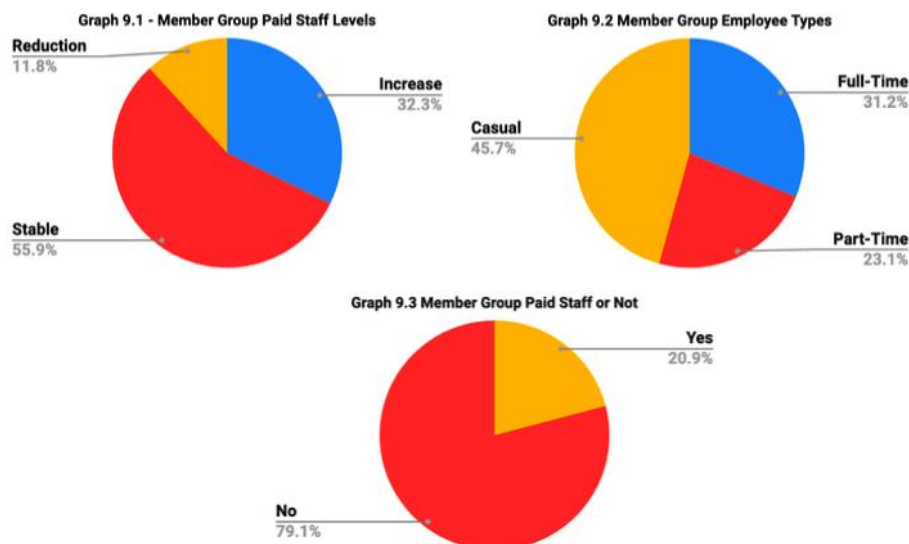


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Graph 9: Member Group Performance – Groups with Paid Staff and Staff Levels



The above graphs show that there was a 32.3% increase in staffing levels for the 20.05% of member groups that have paid employees. 68.78% of those employees are either part-time or casual. 79.1% of member groups have no paid staff relying solely on volunteers.

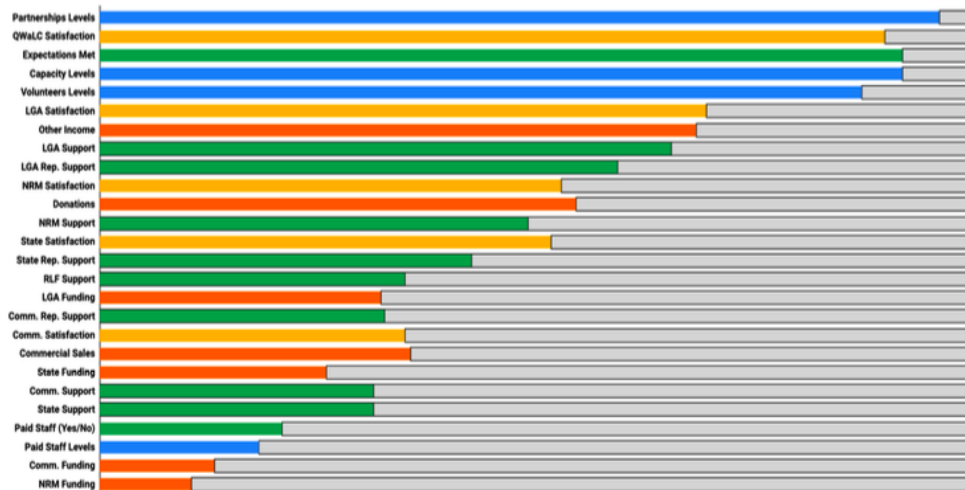
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Graph 10: Factors That Influence Member Group Performance

The graph below provides a representation of the factors that influence Member Group performance. These include volunteers and member numbers, maintaining organisational capacity and local partnerships, sources of income and grant funding and levels of support. Essentially, the length of the coloured bars (from left to right) indicate the levels reported by member groups in each category. For example, NRM funding levels were very low in comparison to the level of local partnerships which were rated as high.



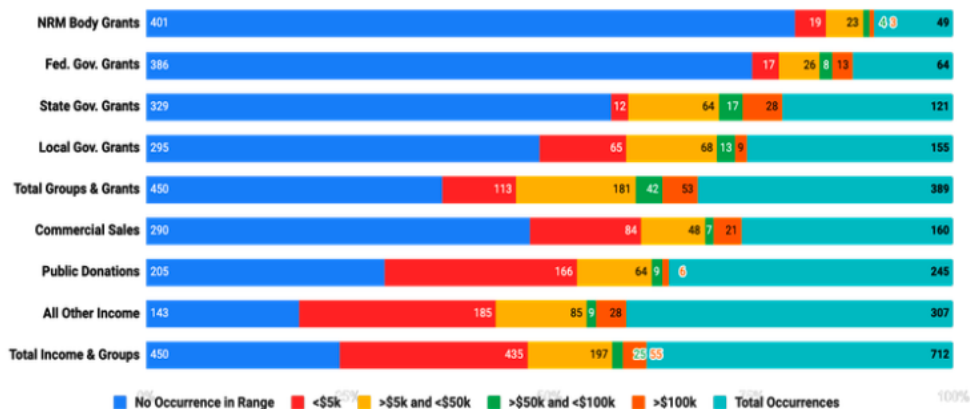
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Member Groups and Funding/Income Sources

Graph 11: Member Group Sources of Income/Funding - 2023/2024



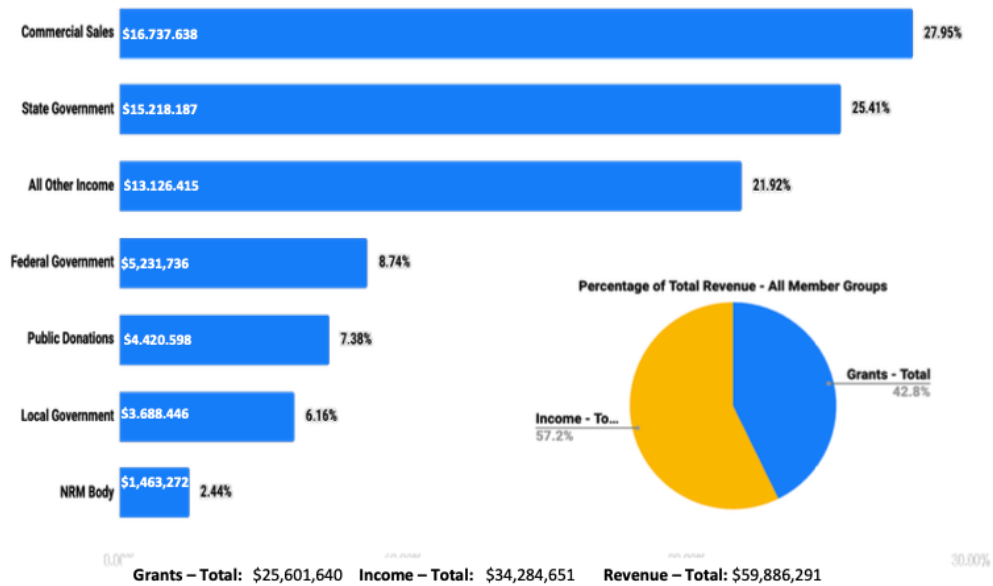
The above graph shows the level and type revenue generated income or received through grants and member groups. Member groups are reliant on income and grants.

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Graph 12: Sources and Proportions of Funding and Income Received by Member Groups - 2023/2024



MESSAGE STICK TO CANBERRA

My name is Temaleti Matasia and I would like to welcome the National Custodians of Country Gathering to the Tjungundji, Yupungathi, Warranggu, Mbakwithi, Thanakwith, Teppethiggi, Alngith, Peppan, Wathyne, Anathngyth, Wik and Wik Waya Country of Cape York.

We acknowledge our elders of the 11 Traditional Owner groups of the past, present, and emerging for their continuous commitment and contributions in Caring for our Country.

We look forward to being a voice for our people to carry their message to you to help us empower.

- Self-determination and representation in Caring for Country through Cultural Lore, Seasons, and Traditional Practices.
- Education and Protection of sacred sights and story places.
- Preserve endangered species and natural habitats.
- Recognise Cultural Heritage significance and values of our country threatened by Tourism, Commercial Development and Mining.
- Implementation of future consultation and land management processes.

The names of the people in the picture are Teppethiggi traditional owner: Temaleti Matasia, Thanakwith elder: Grace John, and Yupungathi elder: Gladys Wheeler at Clough landing waiting to go up the river with the Mapoon Land & Sea rangers to show case our Wenlock River to The Nature Conservancy visitors as part of our 2022 Caring for Country project.

