

ANNUAL REPORT

NRM Regions Queensland
2025-2026



NRM
REGIONS
QUEENSLAND



Acknowledgement of Country

Queensland’s regional NRM organisations recognise First Nations People as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work.

We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the ongoing connection to Country and more than 60,000 years of stewardship of our natural resources by Indigenous Australians.

We acknowledge and value the contribution that First Nations People continue to make to the sustainable management of our natural assets as well as the value that Traditional Knowledge brings to our sector.



What is NRM?

Natural Resource Management is the protection and improvement of the natural assets that underpin our quality of life – our soil and water, the climate, landscapes and biodiversity.

NRM Regions Queensland is the peak body for natural resource management in the state, supporting and promoting its members – the 12 regional natural resource management organisations of Queensland.

Cover photo: Gulf Savannah NRM and Kuku Djungan Murtiki Rangers at Kondaparinga Station as part of the Together for Country Weed Management Program, funded through the Queensland Government’s NRM Expansion Program.



Reef Catchments is delivering the Cattle Creek Restoration project in the Pioneer Valley through the NRM Expansion Program, restoring streambanks and reducing sediment flowing to the Great Barrier Reef.

Contents

About NRM Regions Queensland	4
Chair’s Report	6
CEO’s Report	7

Section 1: Value	8
NRM Regions Queensland Strategic Plan	8
NRM Expansion Program	10
NRMEP project snapshot	11
SWIF: Expanded framework strengthens state-wide NRM reporting	12
Tracking improvements to koala habitat	12
Improving grazing land across Queensland	13
Cape York rangers protecting marine turtles	13
Listening for the elusive night parrot	14
Smarter mapping for more efficient grazing	14
Seaweed trial improving aquaculture water quality	14
Industry-first field guide helps identify rare native grass species	15
Restoring endangered sawfish habitat	15
Building farm resilience from the soil up	15

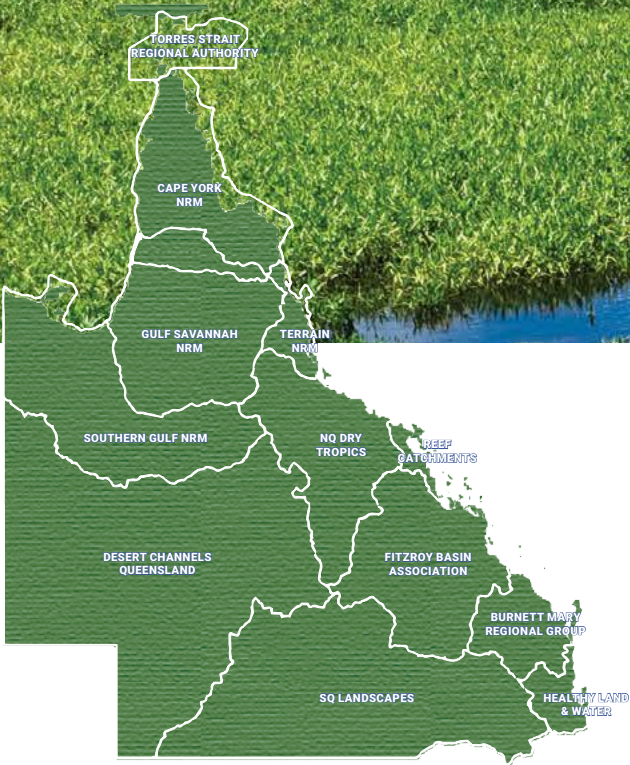
Section 2: Partnerships	16
Biosecurity Queensland	17
Landcare	18
Heads of Mission visit	18
Primary Industries Prosper 2050	18
National Soil Monitoring Program	19
Working with agriculture’s peak bodies	19
Paddock to Reef	20
Local Government Association of Queensland	21
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service	21
Koala Recovery Team Board	22
Queensland Wetlands Program	22
Water Engagement Forum	23
Queensland Decarbonisation Hub	23

Section 3: Capacity	24
NRM Leadership Framework	25
Building board capacity	25
Launching the National NRM Mentoring Program	26
Communities of Practice	28
Lunch & Lead	28
NRM Leadership Capabilities	29

Section 4: Financials	30
------------------------------	-----------

NRM REGIONS QUEENSLAND IS SUPPORTED BY:





About NRM Regions Queensland

There are 12 regional natural resource management (NRM) organisations in Queensland, each working with local communities to protect and improve the state’s natural assets: land and soil, water and biodiversity.

NRM Regions Queensland is the peak body for NRM in the state, established more than 20 years ago by the sector. Our goal is to amplify our members’ voices, influence policy and support and promote their work.

We are passionate about the sustainable management of Queensland’s natural resources and support our members to work with their communities to develop place-based Regional NRM Plans underpinned by science, data and local knowledge.

These plans guide our collective efforts to secure investment for

on-ground action that mitigates threats to the environment and economy and improves the condition of our natural assets.

Partnerships underpin all our work. We’ve built important strategic state-wide alliances to support the sector and maintain strong relationships with government to contribute to policy and secure investment. Regional NRM organisations also work closely with communities on the ground, collaborating with land managers, Traditional Owners and local groups to take action where it is needed most.

We also help our members to deliver nature-positive outcomes through state-wide workforce development programs that increase leadership capacity at all locations, at all levels and at all times.

Guided by the NRM Regions Queensland 2023–26 Strategic Plan, we are committed to delivering positive environmental and social change at the regional level, across the whole of Queensland.

NRM Regions Queensland is a company limited by guarantee, governed by a Board comprising the chairs of 11 regional NRM organisations and one associate member.

In total, there are 54 regional NRM organisations across Australia, collectively covering the country’s land, estuarine, coastal and marine areas. Our national peak body is NRM Regions Australia.



Queensland’s NRM sector is the state’s largest on-ground professional conservation network, with deep connections to First Nations communities.



Every \$1 invested in regional NRM in Queensland generates an additional \$4.20 in cash and in-kind support.



Queensland’s NRM sector employs approximately 490 staff (around 380 full-time equivalent positions) working across 29 regional offices.



NRM projects stimulate regional economies by strengthening supply chains, supporting local businesses and generating local revenue.



We are community engagement experts, working with more than 10,000 land managers every year.



We are independent and often bridge the gap between policy and practice.



We bring more than 25 years’ experience delivering outcomes on the ground.



TERRAIN
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



BMRG
Ecosystem Resilience



Cape York
Natural Resource Management



desert channels
GROUP



Gulf Savannah
NRM



Southern Gulf
NRM



REEF
CATCHMENTS



fba



NRM
REGIONS
QUEENSLAND



NQ DRY TROPICS



Australian Government



TSRA
www.tsra.gov.au



Healthy
Land &
Water



Southern Queensland
LANDSCAPES
GROUP



CHAIR'S REPORT

**Julie Boyd, Chair
NRM Regions Queensland**

Over the past year, NRMQ and the wider sector have further strengthened their relationship with the Queensland Government through regular engagement with Ministers, their teams, Directors-General and senior Departmental staff.

This follows a concerted effort by the Board, CEO and regional NRM leaders to connect with government and build understanding of the sector's value, supported by data and practical examples of how our members are delivering outcomes on the ground.

This engagement has supported the rollout of the \$117.84 million NRM Expansion Program (NRMEP). Having secured this unprecedented investment last year, our focus has shifted firmly to delivery.

All 12 regional NRM organisations have stepped up to the mark, working closely with Departmental staff to finalise projects aligned with government priorities and community needs. Work is now underway across hundreds of NRMEP project locations, with more to come.

Strong relationships open doors, but evidence of NRMEP's impact will be

critical to securing future investment. Ahead of the 2028 Queensland election, NRMQ will work with its members to capture and communicate these outcomes and strengthen the case for continued and expanded investment in regional NRM.

Renewing our Memorandum of Understanding with the Local Government Association of Queensland was another important moment this year. Regional NRM organisations already work closely with councils, and this agreement strengthens collaboration while supporting local government to advocate for regional NRM in their communities.

Our strategic relationships with agricultural industries and farming organisations are equally important because land and soil, water, weeds, pests and flood recovery cut across our collective work.

Our investment in people is another area where the sector continues to innovate. This year, Queensland's mentoring initiative grew into the National NRM Mentoring Program through a partnership with our national peak body, NRM Regions Australia. The program now connects more than 130 regional NRM staff

through mentoring partnerships across Australia.

Helping staff build skills, share knowledge and connect with people in other regions and states supports their development and helps retain talented people.

I would like to thank my fellow directors, the chairs of Queensland's regional NRM organisations, for their ongoing support. Their ability to think strategically and act as one voice has again been key this year.

Sincere thanks to Stephen Robertson, Dan Yates and Kevin Kane, whose directorships concluded this year, for their contribution to our sector. I also warmly welcome Trevor Evans (Healthy Land & Water), Michael Thomson (FBA) and Craig Doyle (Reef Catchments) to the NRMQ Board.

Finally, I thank CEO Chris Norman and Company Secretary Janelle Mohr, who are the backbone of our organisation, along with the whole NRMQ team for their commitment and achievements this year.

CEO'S REPORT

**Chris Norman, CEO
NRM Regions Queensland**



This year has been about moving the Queensland Government's \$117.84 million NRM Expansion Program from planning to delivery.

Thirty-five projects are now being rolled out across 468 project sites covering more than 1.13 million hectares. Reaching this point has required Queensland's regional NRM organisations to meet tight timelines repeatedly while continuing to deliver existing programs and respond to extreme weather events and workforce pressures. I thank everyone, including the staff from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development, for their efforts to get us to this point.

With projects underway, our attention is now on measuring what they achieve. This year we developed an evaluation framework and began the work to measure our on-ground outcomes and socio-economic impact as well as the effectiveness of program processes and partnerships. The NRMEP Delivery Forum, to be established early in 2027, will support this work by bringing project leads together to monitor progress and continually improve delivery.

The State-wide Indicators Framework (SWIF) will provide consistent data across the NRMEP. Combined with stories from the on-ground projects, it will allow us to present the first state-wide narrative of a single NRM initiative of this scale. This gives me confidence that we can clearly demonstrate the program's impact and build a strong case for future investment.

Supporting this progress has been the growth and collegiality of Queensland's

regional NRM CEOs group. Their ability to work through difficult issues, make collective decisions and operate as one sector is central to what we have achieved to date.

This collective approach is also increasing the sector's influence. We now receive regular briefings with Ministers and Directors-General, and I represent the sector on many committees and forums. This year, that included an invitation to join the Queensland Government's Prosper 2050 Industry Working Group. NRMQ and the wider sector have also helped shape policy including through submissions on the Private Protected Area discussion paper, Queensland's Environmental Offsets Framework and proposed reforms to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Renewing our relationship with Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA) has been another highlight. During my visit to Thursday Island in November, I met TSRA's Chair, CEO and Land and Sea Management Unit and saw first-hand the impact of their work. TSRA has since joined the NRMEP through its project to reduce the impact of Crown-of-thorns starfish outbreaks. Its staff are also participating in our Communities of Practice and sector events, bringing TSRA into much closer contact with the Queensland NRM sector.

One of the achievements I am most proud of this year is seeing our mentoring scheme expand nationally. After two successful years in Queensland, we partnered with NRM Regions Australia to launch the National NRM Mentoring Program, involving staff from 35 of Australia's

54 regional NRM organisations.

Looking ahead, our focus in 2026–27 will be on the continued delivery of the NRM Expansion Program, collecting the data needed to evaluate its impact and telling a strong story about what is being achieved.

We undertook governance skill audits across the sector this year and will use these findings to deliver a governance training program. We will also develop further training for emerging leaders and carry out a sector-wide analysis to improve our ability to attract and retain staff. Other priorities include developing our 2027–32 Strategic Plan and preparing for the 2028 state and federal elections.

I would especially like to thank Chair Julie Boyd and the NRMQ Board, together with the regional NRM CEOs, for their leadership and support throughout another very busy and successful year. I also recognise the amazing contribution from outgoing regional NRM CEOs Scott Crawford and Leanne Kohler and NRM Regions Australia's outgoing CEO Kate Andrews. I look forward to warmly welcoming Damien Jones, David Phelps and Marnie Lassen to their respective new roles.

A special thank you goes to the NRMQ team for their commitment and hard work this year: my staff Lee Blacklock, Belinda 'Billy' Thomson and our new Director Strategy and Policy, Maria Rosier, alongside key contractors Janelle Mohr, Samantha Morris, Steve Titman, Penny Scott, Shannon Mooney, Hannah Kaluzynski and Stephen Berkeley.



Value

NRM Regions Queensland Strategic Plan

The 2023–26 Strategic Plan guides NRM Queensland in how it influences, supports and promotes the work of its 12 member organisations.

The Plan has three key delivery areas: value, partnerships and capacity.

Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Dale Last announced the first NRM Expansion Program projects at the National NRM Knowledge Conference in Cairns in September 2025. L-R: CEO Chris Norman, Member for Barron River Bree James, Minister Dale Last, Member for Mulgrave Terry James and Chair Julie Boyd.



VIEW OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Value

the NRM sector knows its value and so do others

- 1.1 Strong and clear value proposition for the NRM sector
- 1.2 Resilient regional NRM organisations
- 1.3 Strong and identifiable brand for the NRM sector
- 1.4 Regional NRM Plans have the appropriate profile
- 1.5 Collective impact is measured and promoted

Partnerships

the NRM sector has a solid reputation and influences where it matters

- 2.1 Strong strategic state-wide partnerships that support regional collaboration
- 2.2 First Nations knowledge is valued
- 2.3 Government policy is influenced
- 2.4 Alliances with the private-sector are built

Capacity

the NRM sector is innovative and forward-looking

- 3.1 Capable Boards leading the sector
- 3.2 Collective knowledge and experiences are shared between regional NRM organisations
- 3.3 Co-delivery of strategic projects across regions
- 3.4 Strong business acumen across the NRM sector
- 3.5 Courageous leadership at all levels
- 3.6 New investment covers the true cost of delivering projects



READ ABOUT
ALL NRMEP
PROJECTS



NRM Expansion Program

The Natural Resource Management Expansion Program is the largest single investment ever made by the Queensland Government into regional natural resource management.

Running from 2025–2028, the \$117.84 million program supports practical, on-ground work to improve land and soil, water and biodiversity across Queensland.

Delivered by Queensland’s 12 regional NRM organisations, the program invests in projects that repair landscapes, restore and manage habitat, improve water quality and increase the productivity and sustainability of agricultural land. This work builds long-term capacity for healthy,

resilient regional economies and environments.

Projects across the state have been informed by place-based Regional NRM Plans developed by regional NRM organisations in collaboration with their communities. Local delivery involves partnerships with a range of stakeholders, including landcare groups, landholders, primary producers, local governments, scientific organisations, industry, Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers and First Nations groups.

The NRM Expansion Program is a collaboration between the Queensland Government and NRM Regions Queensland.

35 projects

468 on-ground project location sites *
(as at 30.06.26)

Working across more than 1.13 million hectares

NRMEP project snapshot



Green Connections

TERRAIN NRM
The Green Connections project is working with landcare and conservation community groups to restore and reconnect rainforest habitat across the Wet Tropics of Far North Queensland, one of the most biologically diverse landscapes on Earth. Work targets degraded areas near the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area through revegetation and assisted natural regeneration, strengthening biodiversity and climate resilience.

75ha of native vegetation and rainforest habitat being improved

64ha of restoration works, including weed and pest control



Cool Burn Squad

BURNETT MARY REGIONAL GROUP

The Cool Burn Squad brings together landholders, Traditional Owners and fire agencies to deliver coordinated, low-intensity burns across prime agricultural landscapes in the Burnett Mary region. The project reduces fuel loads, creates strategic buffers and protects high-value crops including macadamias, avocados and citrus. Carefully managed fire also helps restore ecological function by improving vegetation structure and soil health.

500ha of cool burns being delivered

150 land managers trained in fire management practices



Climate Ready Coastlines

NQ DRY TROPICS

Across the Lower Burdekin, the Climate Ready Coastlines project is protecting coastal and wetland ecosystems by reducing threats from weeds, pests and bushfires. In collaboration with local community groups, activities focus on improving fish passage and the condition of wetlands, streambanks, coastal zones and beach scrub. This work helps these ecosystems function more naturally and recover faster after extreme weather events.

60ha of freshwater wetlands being improved

20km of streambanks being improved

SWIF: Expanded framework strengthens state-wide NRM reporting

Queensland's State-wide Indicators Framework (SWIF) helps regional NRM organisations consistently measure and report the impact of land, water and biodiversity projects.

SWIF combines outcome logic, monitoring methods, mapping and data collection tools to produce consistent, credible data and demonstrate the collective impact of NRM investment across different programs. Data is combined into state-wide datasets and presented through an online dashboard and various report cards.

During 2025–26, NRM Regions Queensland expanded SWIF through the Queensland Government's NRM Expansion Program, while continuing to support organisations delivering projects through the Natural Resources Recovery Program. This expansion has broadened SWIF's scope, making it suitable for a much wider range of NRM projects and programs.

New Condition Assessment Tools (CATs) and other monitoring methods were developed to support NRMEP, including KoalaCAT (see sidebar) and StreambankCAT. Both were finalised following consultation with government and practitioners and made available for field data collection. StreambankCAT provides a practical way to assess streambank condition and measure change following restoration works.

Increased activity under NRMEP led to 12 face-to-face visits by the SWIF team to provide regional NRM organisations with SWIF 101 and method training. More than 30 online sessions also provided general SWIF guidance and GIS support.



NRMRO conducting KoalaCAT training with Southern Queensland Landscapes near Toowoomba.

Use of the Engagement and Event Tracker also expanded, recording project engagement with landholders, community organisations, First Nations People, local and state government officers, industry representatives and science partners.

Since January 2025, when state-wide engagement tracking began, 371 events and engagement activities have been recorded, attracting over 2,680 participants from across Queensland.

This engagement data helps tell a more compelling story about the reach, scope and intensity of regional NRM work across Queensland.

"Everybody in this sector knows that it's all about people," SWIF team lead Penny Scott said.

SWIF was developed by NRM Regions Queensland's Lee Blacklock and consultant Penny Scott, in collaboration with the Queensland Government.



Credit: Charley Geddes

Tracking improvements to koala habitat

Projects improving thousands of hectares of key koala habitat are being supported by a new monitoring tool, KoalaCAT. It uses practical indicators to track short-term improvements, including:

- Koala food and habitat tree recruitment.
- Weed impacts on koalas and their food trees.
- Observations of predator activity.



SCAN TO READ MORE ABOUT KOALACAT

ON-GROUND HIGHLIGHTS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

Improving grazing land across Queensland

Queensland graziers are improving land management across more than 300,000 hectares through the Queensland Government's Natural Resources Recovery Program.

Since 2022, regional NRM organisations and other not-for-profit groups have worked with graziers on more than 200 projects, supporting more sustainable approaches to stocking, grazing rotation and pasture recovery.

At Cunnyana Station near Dunkeld in the Maranoa, Adam and Tiffany Black are restoring their 12,300-hectare property with support from Southern Queensland Landscapes. They have upgraded fencing to improve stock management and installed new water points to distribute grazing more evenly.



Southern Queensland Landscapes is working with the Black family to restore their grazing property.

Cape York rangers protecting marine turtles

Ranger groups on Cape York Peninsula are tackling key threats to threatened marine turtles through on-ground action and long-term monitoring.

In March, more than 70 representatives from Indigenous ranger groups, government agencies and conservation organisations came together in Cairns for the largest-ever annual meeting of the Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance (WCTTAA), hosted by Cape York NRM.

Predation by feral pigs remains one of the biggest threats to turtle nests and eggs. Rangers reported culling 7,493 feral pigs during the recent season.

WCTTAA is supported by Cape York NRM through funding from the Australian and Queensland Governments' Nest to Ocean Turtle Protection Program.



Apudthama Land and Sea Rangers, part of WCTTAA, monitor a hawksbill turtle nesting on Jardine Beach, near Bamaga on Cape York Peninsula.



FOLLOW US ON LINKEDIN TO GET THE LATEST NRM NEWS IN QUEENSLAND

Listening for the elusive night parrot

Desert Channels Queensland is monitoring the critically endangered night parrot (*Pezoporus occidentalis*) across western Queensland.

Dozens of bioacoustic recorders are listening for the bird's distinctive 'ding ding' piping call, while targeted feral cat control is helping reduce one of its most significant threats.

Funded through the Australian Government's Saving Native Species Program, the project involves 12 organisations, including pastoralists, Traditional Owners, conservation groups and government agencies, supporting research and conservation of the species.



Night parrot © Steve Murphy.



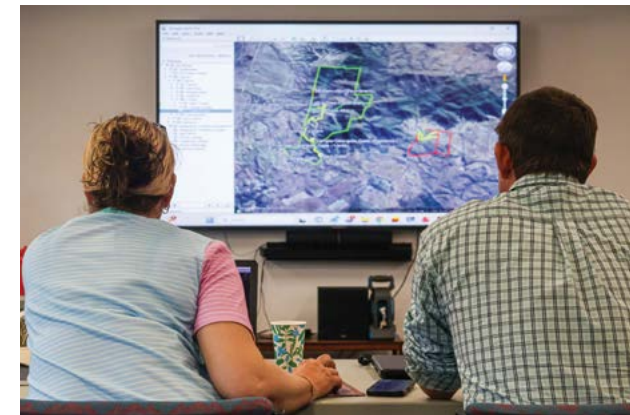
Courtesy of Tassal.

Seaweed trial improving aquaculture water quality

Reef Catchments is working in partnership with the local aquaculture industry to deliver an innovative trial at the Proserpine Prawn Farm, exploring how green seaweed (*Cladophora*) can be used as a natural biofilter to improve water quality.

With support from Queensland University of Technology, the trial uses seaweed to convert excess nutrients into biomass. Early results show the potential to remove up to 11.7 tonnes of dissolved inorganic nitrogen from the water each year.

The initiative is also exploring how the resulting seaweed could be transformed into bioplastics, biochar and cattle feed supplements, supporting circular economy opportunities. The project forms part of the \$5.5 million Reef Place-Based Integrated Projects initiative, funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program.



Smarter mapping for more efficient grazing

From satellite imagery to phone-based maps, digital tools are changing the way graziers manage country, helping protect staff and improve efficiency.

More than 30 landholders attended Gulf Savannah NRM workshops in Croydon and Georgetown in November 2025, gaining hands-on experience with modern mapping applications.

These platforms can help landholders plan more effectively, monitor paddocks and track hazards across remote landscapes. Participants said the workshops demonstrated how useful the applications could be for improving sustainable grazing outcomes.



FBA Land Management Officer Sheree Johnston inspecting King Blue Grass.

Industry-first field guide helps identify rare native grass species

FBA has released a pocket-sized field guide to help land managers across central Queensland identify King Blue Grass (*Dichanthium queenslandicum*) in their paddocks.

The perennial native grass plays a vital role in maintaining healthy grassland ecosystems by supporting biodiversity and stabilising soils. However, the species has experienced a significant decline in its distribution

and knowing how to identify it has proven to be challenging.

Developed through a project funded by the Australian Government's Saving Native Species Program, the guide uses clear descriptions and detailed photographs, making it easier to distinguish the species from similar-looking grasses. Accurate identification will help land managers better protect and manage this endangered native grass.

Restoring endangered sawfish habitat

The critically endangered largetooth sawfish (*Pristis pristis*) relies on Southern Gulf rivers for vital nursery habitat. Riverbank erosion, excess sediment and nutrient runoff are placing these areas under pressure.

With funding from the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust, Southern Gulf NRM is working with CSIRO and landholders to restore priority habitat in the Leichhardt, Gregory and Nicholson River catchments.

The project will install 30 km of riparian fencing and provide off-stream watering points which will support paddock spelling and sustainable grazing, helping riverbanks and vegetation to recover while improving water quality and protecting sawfish habitat.

Largetooth sawfish © CSIRO/Richard Pillans.



Building farm resilience from the soil up



Healthy soil underpins productive farms, resilient businesses and Australia's future food security.

Healthy Land & Water's Agricultural Soils Forum 2026 brought together 83 producers, researchers and industry professionals in Gatton to explore practical, science-backed approaches to healthier soils and farming systems. Discussions covered nutrient management,

erosion control and cover cropping.

Keynote speaker and Queensland Food Farmers' Commissioner Rachel Chambers highlighted how healthy soils support agricultural productivity and thriving regional communities. The forum formed part of the Australian Government's Climate-Smart Agriculture Program, funded through the Natural Heritage Trust.



Healthy Land & Water's Threatened Species Resilience project is improving wildlife habitat on a 2,250-hectare grazing property through the NRM Expansion Program, including installing species-specific refugia.



DELIVERING QUEENSLAND'S BIOSECURITY STRATEGY THROUGH REGIONAL ACTION

Biosecurity Queensland

Working across more than 29 regional and remote locations, Queensland's regional NRM organisations support landholders, local governments, Indigenous ranger groups, industry and communities to address some of the state's most significant biosecurity challenges.

NRM Regions Queensland contributed to Queensland's biosecurity priorities throughout 2025–26, representing the regional NRM sector in policy development, preparedness planning and industry forums.

This included contributing to the development and implementation of the Queensland Biosecurity Strategy 2024–2029 and Queensland Invasive Plants and Animals Strategy 2025–2030 through NRM Regions Queensland's representation on the Queensland Invasive Pest Advisory Committee and Queensland Invasive Plants and Animals Committee.

CEO Chris Norman presented at the June 2026 Biosecurity Partners Forum, outlining the role of regional NRM organisations in biosecurity planning, preparedness, response and recovery and highlighting biosecurity projects being delivered through the NRM Expansion Program.

NRM Regions Queensland also delivered a preparedness exercise to test the response of regional NRM organisations to simulated H5 avian influenza (bird flu) outbreaks. Funded through the Queensland Government's Biosecurity Boost Grants Program, with additional funding from NRM Regions Queensland, the exercise highlighted the important role the sector plays in early detection and surveillance within Australia's Emergency Animal Disease Framework.



Chris Norman was a keynote speaker at the Biosecurity Partners Forum, held on 19 June 2026. L-R: Niki Ford (CEO AgForce), Tony Perrett MP (Minister for Primary Industries), Jo Sheppard (former CEO Queensland Farmers' Federation) and Chris Norman.



SHOWCASING LANDCARE'S
NRMEP CONTRIBUTION

Landcare

In August 2025, NRM Regions Queensland joined the 21st anniversary celebrations of Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC), marking more than two decades of support for landcare and environmental volunteers across the state. NRM Regions Queensland CEO Chris Norman also served on the 2025 National Landcare Conference Steering Committee, helping shape the September event on the Gold Coast, which attracted around 650 delegates.

Landcare and catchment groups are playing an important role in delivering the NRM Expansion Program (NRMEP), with more than 25 per cent of approved on-ground projects involving the landcare sector in activities including native plant production, bush restoration and citizen science.



Queensland Premier
David Crisafulli speaking
at the reception
event.



A grazier working with FBA.

Heads of Mission visit

NRM Regions Queensland attended a Brisbane reception honouring the official visit to Queensland by European Union and Member States Heads of Mission, providing an opportunity to highlight the NRM sector's work to international representatives and Ministers.

Primary Industries Prosper 2050

NRM Regions Queensland has been an active partner in Prosper 2050, a 25-year blueprint for Queensland's primary industries to thrive and be economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

CEO Chris Norman is a member of the Industry Working Group, representing the Queensland NRM

sector in the development of state-wide and regional actions.

In March 2026, Chris attended the Prosper 2050 Partnerships Forum in Brisbane, where he presented the sector's key achievements and challenges, highlighting the role of regional NRM organisations in delivering the initiative's objectives.



Healthy Land & Water taking
samples as part of the National
Soil Monitoring Program.

National Soil Monitoring Program

Queensland's regional NRM organisations are supporting the National Soil Monitoring Program (NSMP), an Australian Government initiative funded through the Natural Heritage Trust and delivered in collaboration with CSIRO. The program is sampling approximately 3,000 sites, providing nationally consistent data to improve

understanding and management of soils.

NRM Regions Queensland CEO Chris Norman is the National NRM Lead for the NSMP and a member of the National Soil Strategy Implementation Steering Committee. The NSMP is building soil expertise within regional NRM organisations while demonstrating

the value of the sector's regional presence and capacity to deliver a major national monitoring initiative.

The sector is also developing future soil science capability through the Queensland Soil Science Graduate and First Nations Engagement Program, coordinated by Burnett Mary Regional Group.

Working with agriculture's peak bodies

Our long-standing relationship with the Queensland Farmers' Federation includes co-sponsorship of the Environmental Stewardship and Natural Capital Markets Community of Practice, alongside a range of other shared activities. In September 2025, CEO Chris Norman attended the National Farmers' Federation's AgXchange Australia conference on the Gold Coast.



CEO Chris Norman with NRM Regions Australia's
Chair Emma Jackson at AgXchange Australia.



Top: NRM Regions Queensland's Cross-Regional Paddock to Reef Coordinator Belinda 'Billy' Thomson co-lead a strategic workshop in December 2025, where policy and science practitioners reviewed the program and discussed priorities for its future direction.

Bottom: Cape York NRM held Reef Fest 2026 in Cooktown as part of Paddock to Reef activities.

Paddock to Reef

Established in 2009 as a joint initiative of the Australian and Queensland Governments, the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program (Paddock to Reef program) spans paddock, catchment and marine environments and brings together government, industry and research partners.

The program tracks changes in land management practices, catchment condition, pollutant loads and marine condition. The findings help assess progress towards the Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy targets for improving water quality flowing from catchments to the Great Barrier Reef.

In 2025–26, NRM Regions Queensland supported the six Reef regional NRM organisations: Cape York NRM, Terrain NRM, NQ Dry Tropics, Reef Catchments, FBA and Burnett Mary Regional Group. This work included regional integrated science forums, training in Paddock to Reef monitoring and evaluation tools, regionally tailored communication products and coordination of industry pesticide application data for program modelling. These activities raised awareness of the Paddock to Reef program and supported improved land management practices.



Local Government Association of Queensland

This year, NRM Regions Queensland strengthened its partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland through a renewed Memorandum of Understanding.

The agreement enhances the coordination of land, water and biodiversity projects and establishes a schedule of joint activities, including monthly strategic meetings and shared advocacy on priority NRM matters.

NRM Regions Queensland Chair Julie Boyd said the MOU builds on years of successful collaboration.

"From the Wet Tropics to the south of the state, we can see what's possible when we work together. In the north, Terrain NRM is partnering with Tablelands Regional Council and Traditional Owners to control toxic wild tobacco bush, protecting native species and livestock," Ms Boyd said.

"In Southeast Queensland, Healthy Land & Water collaborated with Brisbane City Council and the local catchment group to transform a neglected urban creek into a vibrant ecological corridor at Cicada Park. These successes show how councils

and regional NRM organisations are already delivering for the environment and our communities, and this new agreement will only strengthen that impact.

"Local government is also a key partner for initiatives funded through the Queensland Government's Natural Resource Management Expansion Program," she said.

"The LGAQ and NRM Regions Queensland have a common interest in improving the coordination of natural resource management activities across Queensland," LGAQ President and Gladstone Mayor Matt Burnett said.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

QPWS is a key partner for Queensland's NRM sector, with biosecurity a particular focus.

Engagement during 2025–26 included discussions about the draft Feral Pig Action Plan and QPWS participation in NRM Regions Queensland's H5 avian influenza preparedness exercise in Brisbane. NRM Regions Queensland has also provided updates on the NRM Expansion Program.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



6 regional events

50+

presentations delivered



≈340 total people attending

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

5 regional training workshops delivered

Across 7 sessions / locations

Koala Recovery Team Board

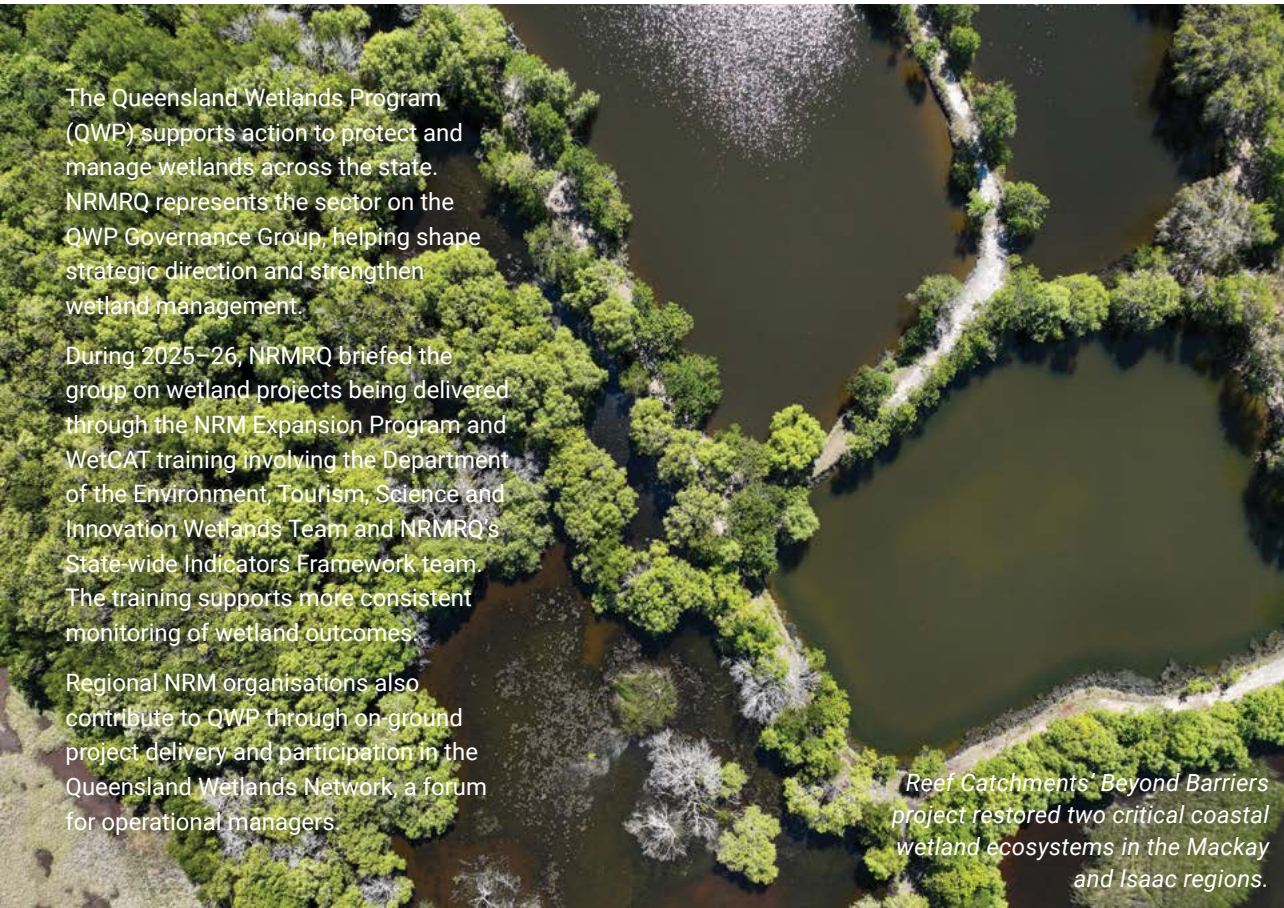
Through its CEO, NRM Queensland represents the sector on the National Koala Recovery Team Board, which works to halt the decline in koala populations through a coordinated national recovery plan.

At the November 2025 meeting, NRM Queensland updated the Board on work by FBA, Reef Catchments and Healthy Land & Water funded through the Australian Government's Saving Koalas Fund and highlighted four koala projects under the NRM Expansion Program. The meeting also covered the development of KoalaCAT under the State-wide Indicators Framework (SWIF), a method for monitoring improvements in koala habitat.



Southern Queensland Landscapes is delivering one of several NRM Expansion Program projects to improve koala habitat.

Queensland Wetlands Program



The Queensland Wetlands Program (QWP) supports action to protect and manage wetlands across the state. NRM Queensland represents the sector on the QWP Governance Group, helping shape strategic direction and strengthen wetland management.

During 2025–26, NRM Queensland briefed the group on wetland projects being delivered through the NRM Expansion Program and WetCAT training involving the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation Wetlands Team and NRM Queensland's State-wide Indicators Framework team. The training supports more consistent monitoring of wetland outcomes.

Regional NRM organisations also contribute to QWP through on-ground project delivery and participation in the Queensland Wetlands Network, a forum for operational managers.

Reef Catchments' Beyond Barriers project restored two critical coastal wetland ecosystems in the Mackay and Isaac regions.

Water Engagement Forum

The Water Engagement Forum draws on expertise from industry, academia and government to advise the Queensland Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers on strategic water issues, policy, planning and priorities.

NRM Regions Queensland CEO Chris Norman represented the regional NRM sector on the Forum throughout 2025–26, contributing to discussions on the development of Queensland's new Water Security Plan. This representation brings the sector's regional knowledge and on-ground experience into Queensland's water policy and planning.



Queensland Decarbonisation Hub



A presentation at the Hub's Research Showcase.

The Hub is a partnership between the Queensland Government and the state's leading universities, combining research, knowledge and expertise to inform Queensland's transition to a decarbonised economy.

NRM Regions Queensland CEO Chris Norman sits on its Advisory Committee, working with other members to ensure its work reflects the challenges and opportunities facing Queensland.

During 2025–26, Chris contributed to a mid-term review of the Hub's work and the development of priorities for future research. He also chaired a session at the 2026 Research Showcase, which featured projects examining regional impacts of the energy transition, renewable energy development and carbon storage.



Cape York NRM's Wildfire Resilience project has undertaken planned early dry season burns across more than 46,000 hectares. Funded through the NRM Expansion Program, the project is helping protect native vegetation and reduce the risk of destructive wildfires.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR NRM LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK



Queensland's NRM sector presented 16 papers at the National NRM Knowledge Conference, including on the NRM Leadership Framework.

NRM Leadership Framework

In September 2025, representatives from Queensland's NRM sector gave a presentation on the NRM Leadership Framework at the National NRM Knowledge Conference in Cairns.

The Framework was developed by Queensland's regional NRM organisations to strengthen leadership at all locations, at all levels and at all times. Co-designed through extensive consultation with NRM staff and supported by five core leadership capabilities (see page 29), it provides a shared approach to developing leadership across the sector.

Presenters from the NRM Regional Leadership Working Group included Ali McNiven (Healthy Land & Water), Thijs Krugers (NQ Dry Tropics) and Stephen Berkeley (Flyntrok Consulting). They highlighted how the Framework is being embedded through practical initiatives, including the sector's mentoring program, monthly Lunch & Lead webinars and Communities of Practice, which provide opportunities to learn from colleagues across the state.

"Our people lead every day, from the paddock to parliament, and this Framework is developing leaders at all levels to make the biggest impact where it matters most."

— Chris Norman, CEO, NRM Regions Queensland

Building board capacity

During the past 12 months, most boards across the NRM sector undertook self-assessments of their skills and expertise. These identified areas of strength as well as opportunities to build capacity.

In response, NRM Regional Leadership Working Group will fund and support governance training for

boards across all 12 regional NRM organisations in 2026–27. Delivered in five locations across Queensland, the training will bring board members together to share their experience and learn from one another.



Photo: FBA

Launching the National NRM Mentoring Program

In February 2026, Australia’s natural resource management sector launched the National NRM Mentoring Program, bringing together 71 mentor-mentee pairings from 35 of the country’s 54 regional NRM organisations.

More than 130 staff are now building new relationships, sharing knowledge and supporting the health of Australia’s landscapes through the program.

The national rollout builds on the successful program delivered by Queensland’s NRM sector in 2024 and 2025. In the Queensland program, all mentors reported improved coaching and leadership skills, while almost nine out of ten mentees said their performance improved as a result of the experience.

“In just two years, more than 20 per cent of Queensland’s NRM workforce took part in our mentoring program.”

— Chris Norman,
CEO, NRM Regions Queensland

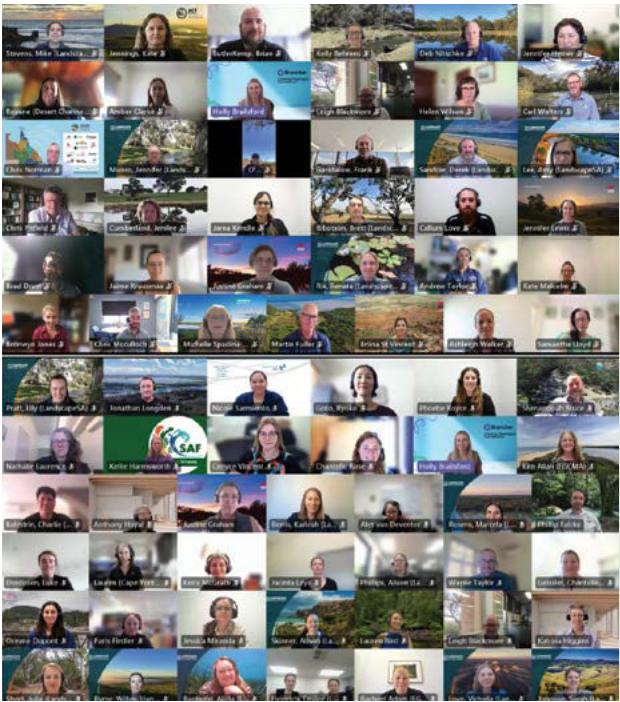
71
pairings

35
organisations

130+
people



LEARN MORE
ABOUT THE
NATIONAL NRM
MENTORING
PROGRAM



Results: 2025 Queensland NRM Sector Mentoring Program

100%
mentor-mentee matching satisfaction

100% of mentors improved their coaching and leadership skills
86% of mentees increased performance in their role

The 2026 national program runs through to October and includes online training, interactive workshops and regular mentor-mentee catch-ups.

Designed around the sector’s NRM Leadership Capabilities, the mentoring program aims to strengthen leadership and career development across all roles, locations and career stages. Participants are matched using a science-based algorithm to ensure alignment of goals and expertise.

Justine Graham, Principal Program Manager NRM for Local Land Services (NSW), is participating in the national initiative as both a mentor and mentee. She said the program is proving to be a valuable opportunity.

“It’s a fantastic chance to connect with NRM colleagues and support career development across our national sector,” Justine said.

The program is being delivered in partnership with national peak body NRM Regions Australia (NRM RA)

and facilitated by mentoring partner Brancher, who have played a key role in developing the initiative.

NRM RA’s Nature-based Solutions Lead Sarah Hoyal said that while mentoring initiatives typically focus on outcomes for mentees, mentors also benefit.

“There is significant documented evidence that shows mentors get almost as much value out of mentoring programs as the mentees,” Sarah said.

“The skills I’ve learnt through this program will be with me during my whole life.”

— Marcela Rosero, Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board (SA)

“It’s good to lead by example as a manager and participate ... I just love sharing my knowledge with other people.”

— Kelly Behrens, North East Catchment Management Authority (VIC)



Communities of Practice

The sector's Communities of Practice (CoPs) connect employees from Queensland's regional NRM organisations around shared areas of expertise. Collectively, the CoPs and state-wide Working Groups have more than 150 members who meet up to five times a year to learn from each other and develop solutions to common challenges.

Outcomes from a recent CoP review were released in 2026, identifying opportunities to maximise their value. Recommendations included clearer roles and responsibilities, consistent meeting and reporting processes, and an annual face-to-face training opportunity.

The success of the CoPs can be seen in their practical outcomes and the way they help regions work together rather than in silos. Julie Funnell from NQ Dry Tropics described the MERI CoP as the "engine" driving the ongoing development of the State-wide Indicators Framework, including its tools and



The sector's Communications Community of Practice at their annual face-to-face meeting in September 2025.

methodologies. She said the CoP helped ensure regions were "not reinventing the wheel all the time", with members able to share solutions and draw on collective experience.

The benefits also extend to professional development. Southern Gulf NRM communications officer Nicole Sarmiento said the Comms CoP gave her a sense of belonging.

"Being encouraged by the CoP has helped build my confidence. I've grown not only in my technical communications skills but also in collaboration and willingness to put myself out there professionally," Nicole said.

NRMRQ provides support for six Communities of Practice and three Working Groups.

Lunch & Lead

Monthly Lunch & Lead webinars are another NRM Leadership Framework initiative. Hosted by regional NRM organisations, each session focuses on a technical topic or project with state-wide relevance and is followed by a facilitated Q&A.

In 2025–26, 10 Lunch & Lead events attracted more than 500 attendees. Topics included Indigenous partnerships for working on Country (Gulf Savannah NRM), the Warul Kawa makas (rat) eradication project (Torres Strait Regional Authority) and assessing land

condition using drones and machine learning (Southern Gulf NRM).

NRMRQ also worked with Southern Queensland Landscapes and the Environmental Defenders Office to produce the *Guide to NRM Laws in Queensland*, which was presented as a Lunch & Lead webinar.

Sessions continue to be rated positively, with more than nine in ten respondents reporting an improvement in their understanding of natural resource management, demonstrating the program's value in building knowledge and capability across the sector.



NRM LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK



Building our capacity to lead

These five core Capabilities (and associated descriptors) are considered key success factors for delivering natural resource management across Queensland and have been sourced from those developed for public sector organisations/Not-for-Profits (and relevant commercial organisations) across Australia and the UK capturing contemporary thinking and approaches to leadership capability appropriate to the NRM sector.

Their purpose is to:

- Define what leadership should look like in the NRM sector so we have common language.
- Create a tool used to assess (benchmark) our current capabilities and identify areas for improvement/development.
- Provide a framework to shape discussions and guide the development of future leadership initiatives across the NRM sector.

THINKS STRATEGICALLY

- Sets a clear sense of purpose that connects and inspires others.
- Realises organisational goals by setting direction that considers the big picture.
- Identifies data to inform strategic decisions and measures impact.
- Builds capacity, including commercial acumen, and systems to meet the future needs of the organisation.
- Anticipates and responds to future trends and challenges.
- Encourages innovation and divergent thinking.

BUILDS PRODUCTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

- Creates and supports a safe workplace where views and opinions can be openly shared.
- Forms diverse teams with a mix of styles, perspectives and experiences to achieve organisational goals.
- Fosters a positive team environment that builds trust, shares ideas and recognises everyone's contribution.
- Facilitates effective networks and partnerships, bringing stakeholders together at all levels to achieve organisational goals.
- Applies sound engagement principles when working with stakeholders.

ACHIEVES RESULTS

- Recognises the importance of data and information and uses this to support day to day decision making.
- Develops initiatives to deliver on strategic objectives that create new opportunities.
- Selects and utilises relevant resources to do the job.
- Evaluates and reviews systems and processes to ensure continuous improvement.
- Invests in and supports the development of individual and team capacity through education, experience and exposure to achieve organisational goals.
- Seeks to achieve multiple benefits from work activities.

DISPLAYS PERSONAL DRIVE & INTEGRITY

- Leads by example through continuous self-awareness and modifies behaviour through reflection and feedback.
- Keeps perspective, maintains composure and focus whilst adapting to change.
- Is accountable and takes responsibility.
- Shows initiative and takes on challenges.

COMMUNICATES WITH INFLUENCE

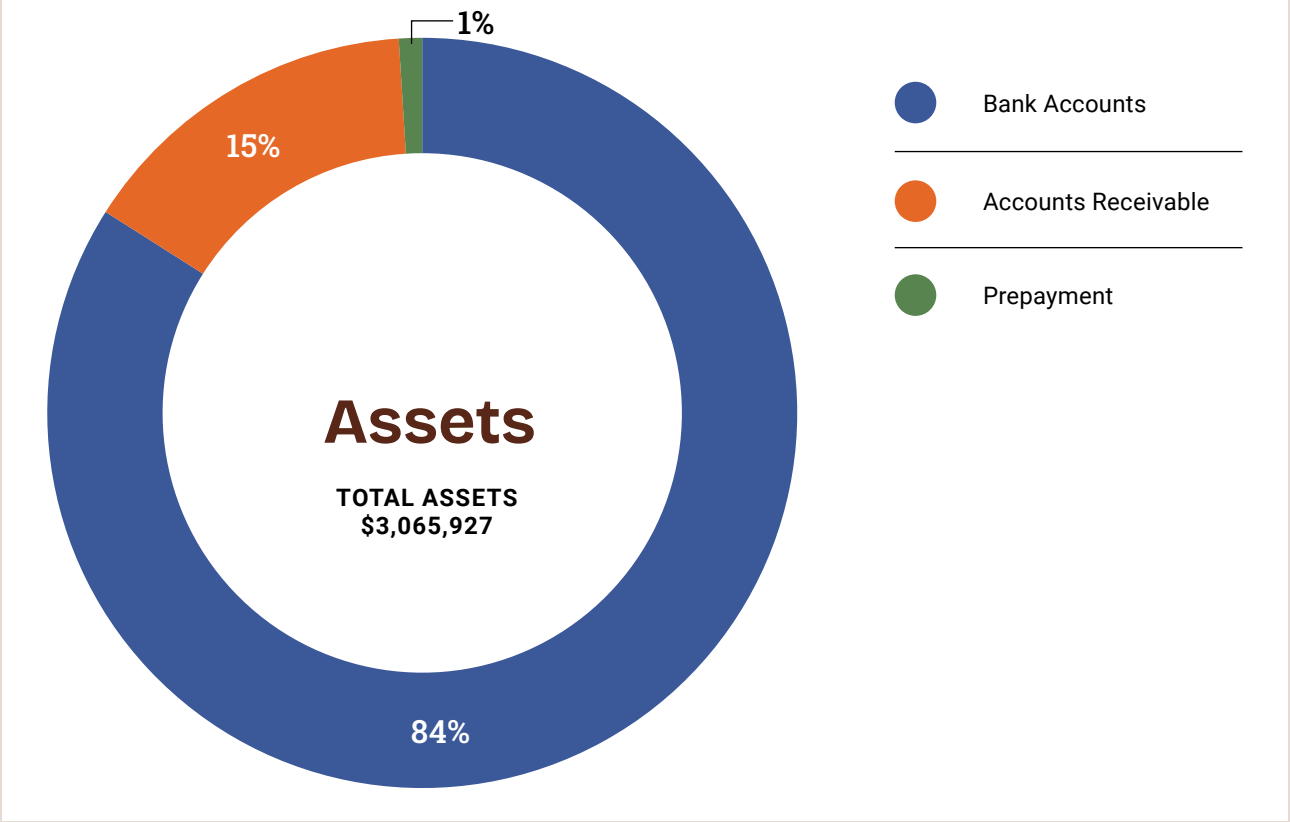
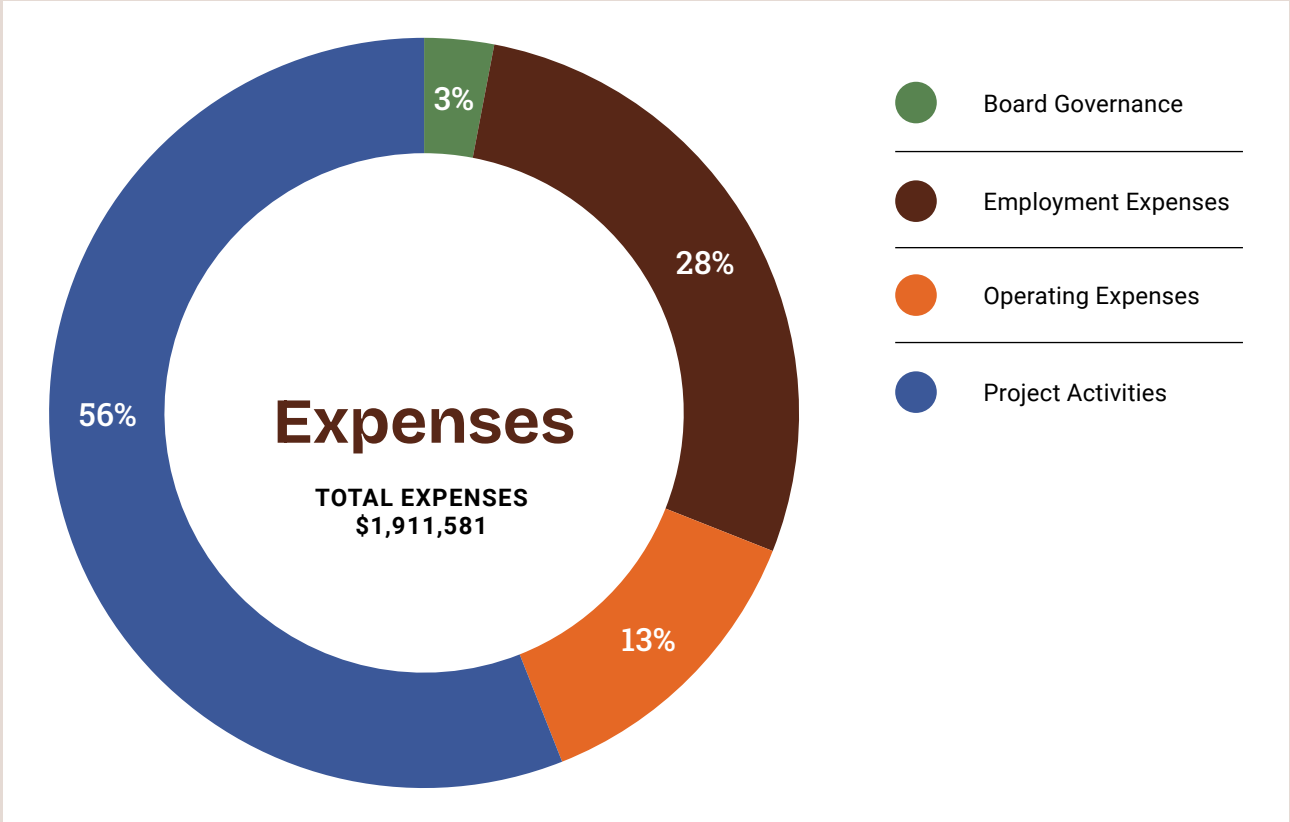
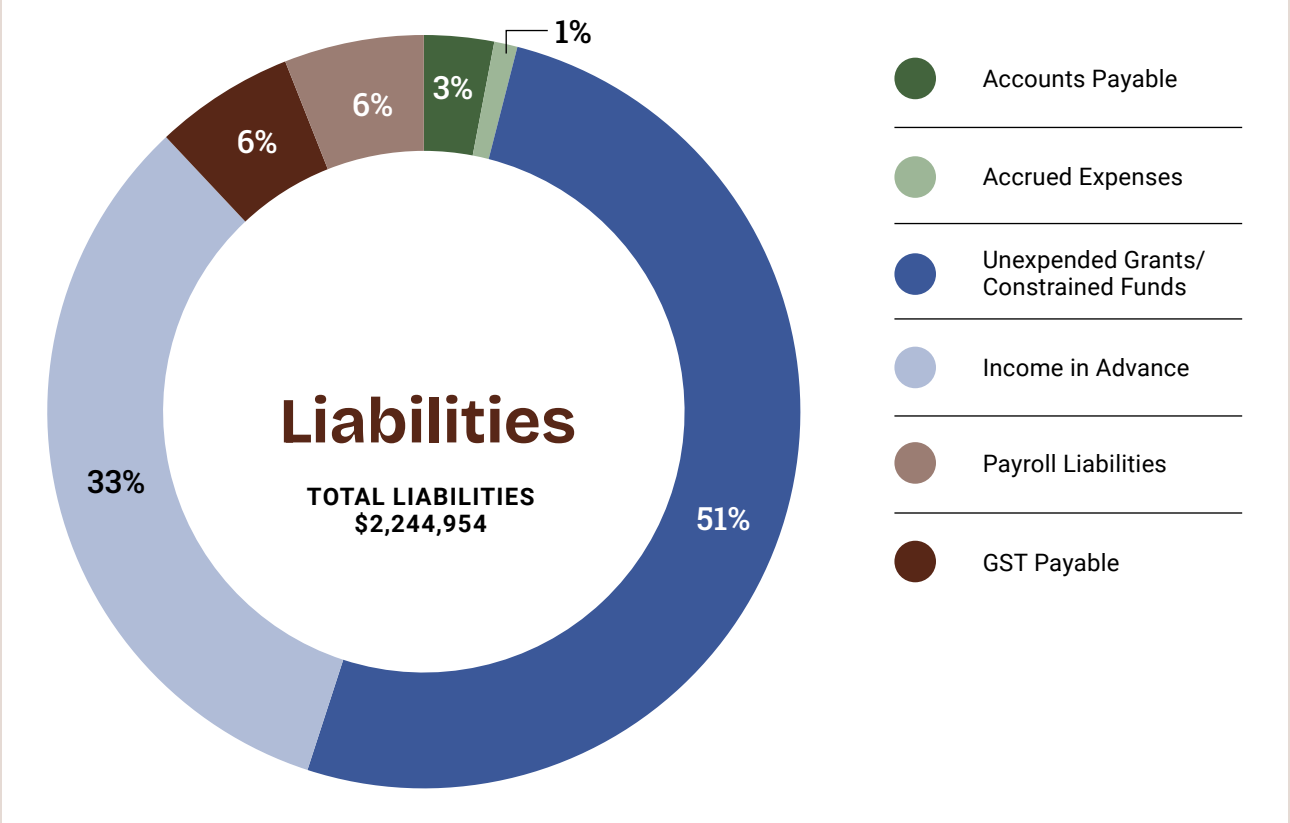
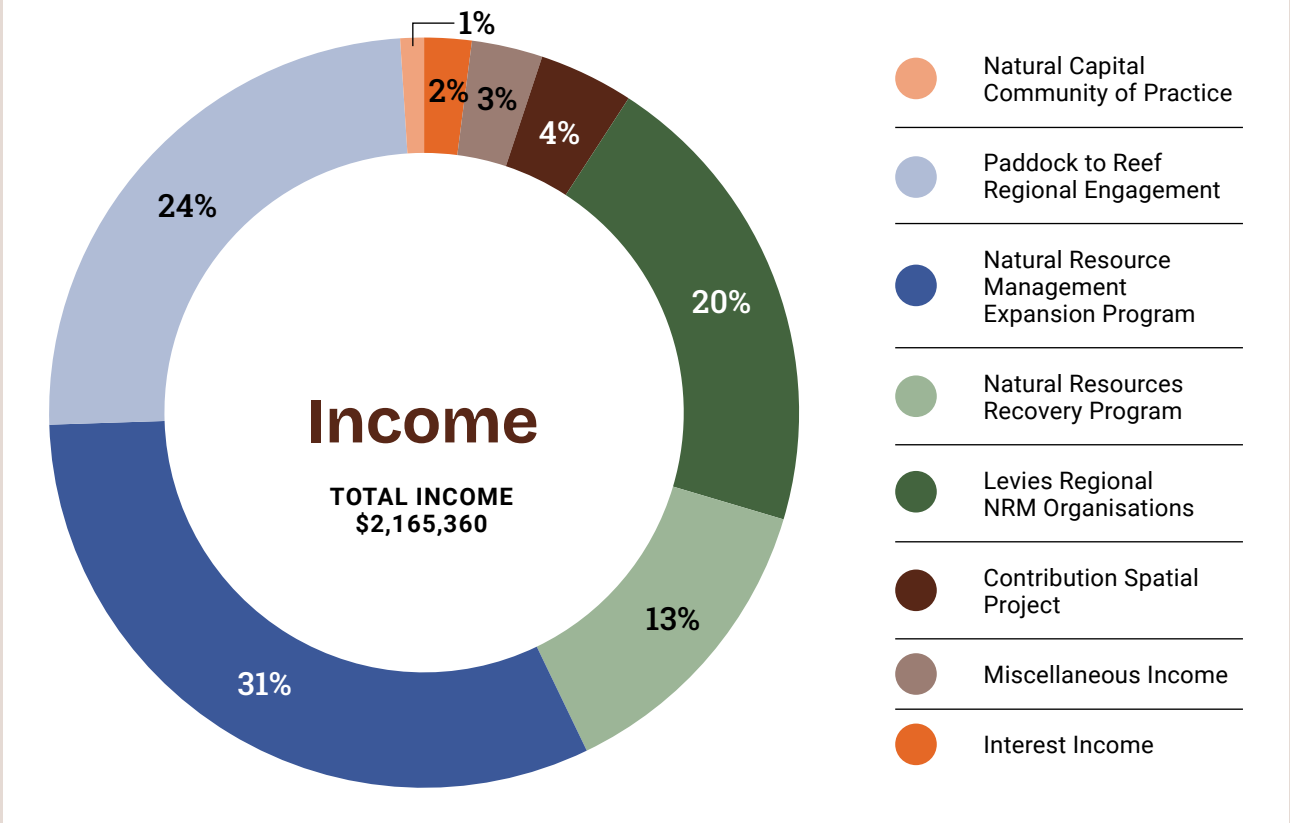
- Practices self-awareness in the moment, observes responses to communication and adapts accordingly.
- Respects diversity, tailors communication style and delivers clear and consistent messages.
- Enters negotiations with a clear understanding of key issues and listens to different perspectives and explores solutions.

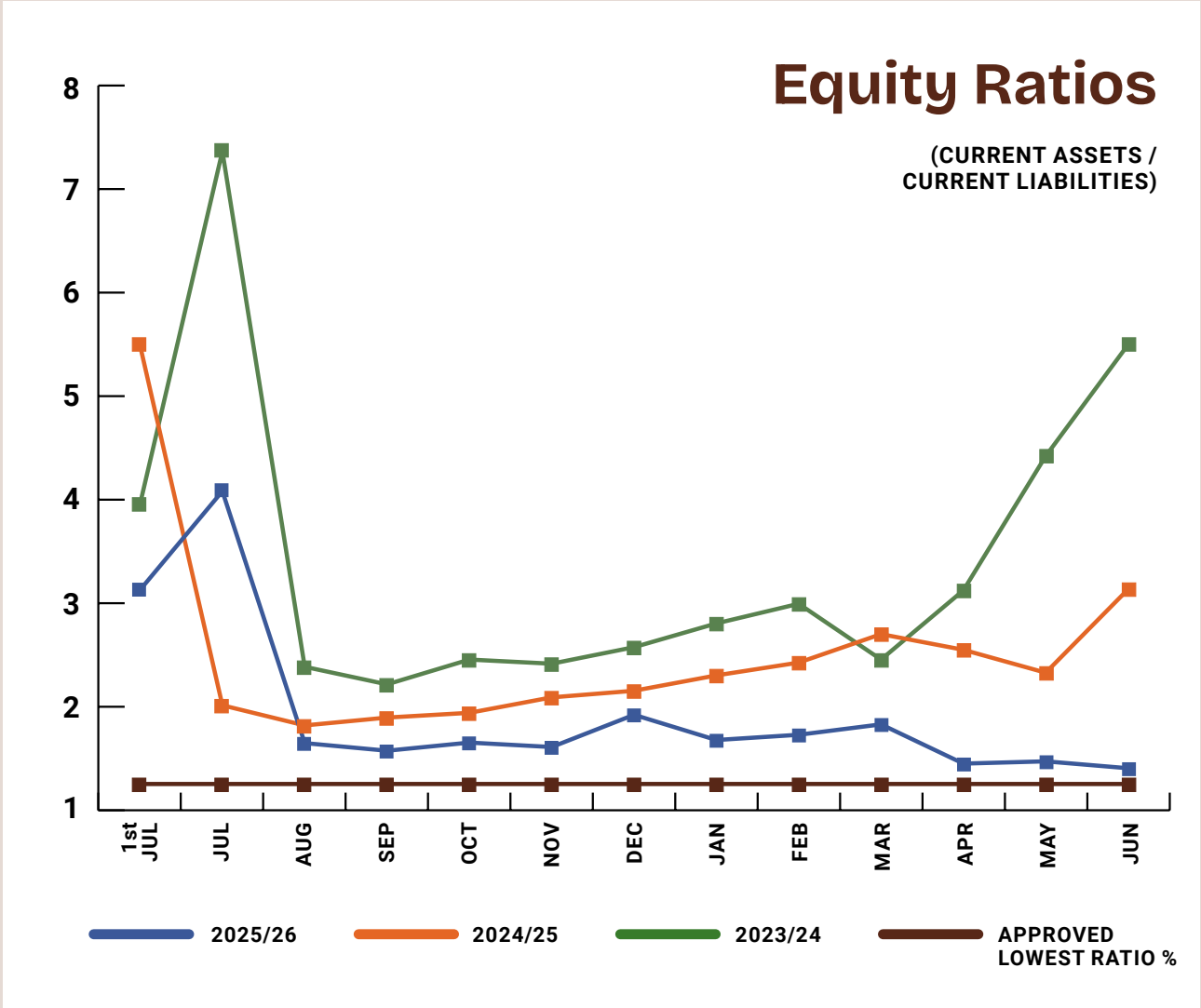




2025–2026 Financials

Southern Gulf NRM's Protection of the Gulf Snapping Turtle project is working with Waanyi Traditional Owners, landholders and conservation partners to reduce threats from feral animals and protect nesting sites through the NRM Expansion Program. Credit: Lochman Transparencies.





Gulf Savannah NRM is tackling invasive neem trees in the Gilbert River catchment through the NRM Expansion Program, aiming to improve land condition across 1,560 hectares and restore 100 hectares of native riparian vegetation by June 2028.



Australian Government



TSRA
www.tsra.gov.au



TERRAIN
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



PO Box 4608 Toowoomba East QLD 4350

nrmrq.org.au