

2021

ANNUAL REPORT

Wildlife Preservation
Society of Queensland



Wildlife Queensland Annual Report 2020–2021



Cover image: Rainbow Lorikeet (*Trichglossus haematodus*) The Spit, QLD. 24/1/13
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Wildlife Queensland is a leading, state-wide wildlife conservation organisation providing practical community programs to enhance knowledge of wildlife and its habitat.

Wildlife Queensland influences decision makers to make the right choices for Queensland's wildlife.



MISSION

Our mission is to be the leading non-government organisation advocating protection and conservation of Queensland's native terrestrial and marine plants, animals and landscapes by educating and engaging communities, influencing decision-making, advancing solutions and connecting people with wildlife.

VISION

People value, respect and support the conservation of Queensland's native wildlife*.

*Wildlife embraces plants, animals and their habitat.

OBJECTIVES

Preserve the flora and fauna of Australia by lawful means

Educate the community in an understanding of the principles of conservation and preservation of the natural environment

Discourage, by all legal means, the possible destruction, exploitation and unnecessary development of any part of the natural environment

Encourage rational land use and proper land planning of existing and future development, and the use of the natural environment and its management.

President's Report

Peter Ogilvie, State President, Wildlife Queensland

When people are threatened, particularly medically and financially, matters relating to wildlife conservation tend to fall off the agenda and drop to the bottom of priority lists. COVID-19 and its financial consequences have created a diabolical storm that has consumed many other issues. This is not surprising. However, we do need to be alive to the possibility of governments using these circumstances as a smokescreen for not meeting commitments or quietly proceeding with matters that the conservation sector doesn't believe should happen.



Some years ago, the Queensland Government committed to 17% of the state being set aside as a category of protected area. This is in line with the recommendation of the 2010 meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan. So, what has the government done to enlarge the protected area estate? By and large, almost nothing. The percentage of protected area on 30 June 2020 was 8.24%; the percentage a year later on 9 July 2021 was 8.26%. Of particular concern were the figures for national parks, the most highly protected class of protected area. On 30 June 2020, there were 312 national parks covering 5.41% of the state; on 9 July 2021, there were still only 312 national parks, constituting 5.43% of the state. Other figures show that Queensland is the most poorly performing of all Australian states when it comes to areas set aside for wildlife conservation.

The issue that is flying under the radar is the government's program to allow the establishment of privately owned tourist resorts inside national parks. It has already happened in Main Range National Park and is progressing in the Cooloola section of Great Sandy National Park. Suffice it to say, the danger (and stupidity) associated with weakening the resilience of our national park system by allowing settlement well into wilderness areas needs to be more widely appreciated. Many of these areas will suffer impacts from climate change and tourist facilities will only exacerbate those effects. The potential for the increased incidence of wildfire in the Cooloola area should give pause to any such development.

Despite the COVID-19 chaos, our projects have continued apace thanks, in no small part, to funding from local governments and donations. As I have said on other occasions, the project work we do on the ground contributes in a very practical way to the conservation of threatened wildlife and distinguishes us from many other conservation groups. Our activities during 2020–21 are detailed in the sectors of this report, but here is a brief outline as to how we've been travelling as an organisation.

While continuing its conservation efforts for the greater glider, the Queensland Glider Network has also commenced work on the yellow-bellied glider species in south-east Queensland. PlatypusWatch has been particularly successful. Several local governments have funded survey work, and a Queensland Government Citizen Science grant was provided for two community education workshops in Taroom and Theodore.

The Quoll Seekers obtained a Community Sustainability Action grant to undertake spotted-tailed quoll surveys involving detection dogs and infra-red cameras in the Mary River catchment. The species was also the subject of a webinar. The Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network continues its valuable work developing two major birdwing butterfly corridors – Woodford to Samford, and Tamborine Mountain to Mount Cotton.

In terms of communication, increased emphasis has been placed on our social media, with substantial increases in both our Facebook and Instagram followers. The monthly *my.Wildlife* eBulletin keeps members and supporters informed about our news and issues, and our website upgrade is nearing completion. COVID-19 constraints reduced the number of funding appeals during the year. The two we did run were a Christmas 2020 appeal and an EOFY appeal during May–June 2021.

Our postponed symposium, Protected Areas Matter Symposium, finally happened on 23 May 2021. It was a successful event which highlighted the plight of national parks and other protected areas in Queensland. Of similar success was our brand-new Talking Wildlife webinar series. Five webinars were held during the year, all of which were well attended and prompted much positive feedback.

Our 57th AGM was held on 26 September 2020 at the Redland City Lions Club in Cleveland despite attendee numbers being seriously limited due to COVID-19 constraints. Two awards were announced at the function: The Margaret Thorsborne award and the award for community engagement and/or education, which went to the Upper Dawson Branch.

Emphasis has been placed on the following campaigns during the year: protected area estate, waste and plastics, stock route network legislation, wildlife management, and state marine parks. The protected area circumstances have been discussed earlier. The war on plastic waste is progressing well. The legislation banning a number of plastic products came into force on 1 September 2021. Wildlife Queensland has been invited to be represented on the Stock Route Network Working Group. We have been strongly advocating for a marine park from Noosa north to the Great Sandy Marine Park. Unfortunately, our efforts to have opera house traps banned have not been successful. These traps are responsible for drowning platypus, native water rats and freshwater turtles. Industry placement university students have been involved in preparing new policy material and upgrading existing policies.

Our signature publication, *Wildlife Australia*, is still operating at a loss despite the editor donating half of his fee back to our organisation. Unfortunately, attracting sufficient advertising to help break-even has proved difficult to date.

The operations manager role is the glue that holds the organisation together. These tasks include but are not limited to: reports, human resources, financial management, membership matters, general administration, support for projects and networks, IT requirements, volunteer coordination, and merchandise sales. Handling these matters amidst the COVID-19 chaos, including office closures, has added an extra dimension to the job.

The WPSQ Council is presently devoting every second monthly meeting to addressing certain existential issues. Foremost amongst these are financial issues and organisational structure. The latter has relevance to the situation where some branches have had difficulty filling the elected positions that are necessary to maintain their incorporated status under Queensland law.

Finally, this report provides me with an opportunity to publicly thank the staff, contractors, councillors, volunteers and other supporters for their tremendous contribution to our organisation. My heartfelt thanks to Janelle Devery (Operations Manager), Des Boyland (Policies and Campaigns Manager and Secretary to Council), Matt Cecil (Projects Manager), Amanda Little (Communications and Marketing Officer), Mike Sullivan (WAM Editor) and Doreen Payne (Membership Support Officer). My thanks also goes to our many dedicated volunteers who give their time and energy for the sake of our organisation.

Policies and Campaigns

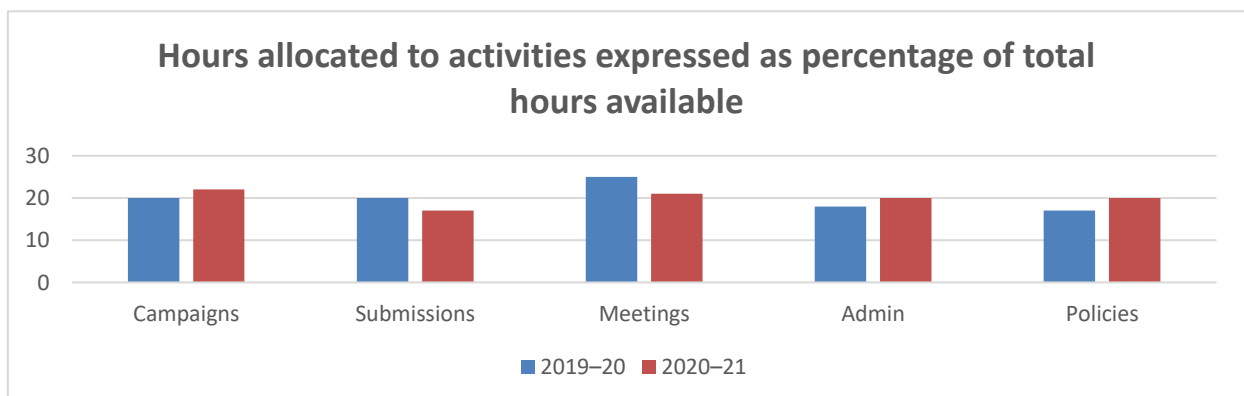
The 2020–21 financial year was another disappointing year. Positive outcomes for the environment and its wildlife were few and far between, and the revised zoning plan for the Great Sandy Marine Park has still not been released. But it's not all bad news. The Palaszczuk Government's ongoing commitment to addressing plastic waste has continued and funding to protect the Great Barrier Reef increased. While inadequate funds have been provided for the Protected Area Estate expansion and enhanced management, the funding is an improvement on more recent years.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The war on plastic continues, with plastic straws, stirrers, plates, bowls and cutlery now banned, and other products still being considered
- Wildlife Queensland accepted an invitation to serve on the Stock Route Network working group
- Efforts to save air-breathing fauna such as platypus from drowning by banning opera house traps have been unsuccessful, though SA has indicated a ban will be introduced from June 2023 and the Freshwater Fishery working group is to consider the matter later this year
- Meetings occurred with the Minister's Office advocating for the release of the zoning plan for the Great Sandy Marine Park and enquiries about the review of the Moreton Bay Marine Park management plan
- Spotter-catcher policy is being informed with advice from the Environment Defenders Office and liaison with Biodiversity Australia and the RSPCA
- Meetings with the Minister Scanlon's staff were held to discuss crocodile reports, opera house traps and budget highlights. Meetings were also held with Biodiversity Australia concerning spotter-catcher policy
- Wildlife Queensland participated in various meetings with other conservation groups
- We continue to strive for the expansion of the Protected Area Estate and enhanced management of national parks while opposing certain commercialism.

ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE DIVISION

Of the hours available within the division, there was a 10% increase in time committed to campaigns. Time devoted to meetings – virtual and face-to-face – decreased by 20%. Submissions consumed about 15% less than the previous year.



CAMPAIGNS

Protected Area Estate Campaign

There was a slight decrease in the overall extent of the Protected Area Estate, mainly due to a reduction in the number and extent of resource reserves. The commitment to expand the Protected Area Estate to 17% is a long way from being achieved. The Government appears not to be taking positive action to expand the Protected Area Estate, although funding was provided in the last budget. When combined with the ongoing construction of private tourist infrastructure in national parks, it is very frustrating. Opposition to this strategy and our requests to reinstate the key principle of management of national parks continue to fall on deaf ears.

Type of Protected Area	Number		Area (ha)		% of QLD	
	30/6/20	30/6/21	30/6/20	29/6/21	30/6/19	30/6/20
National Park Type						
National Park (scientific)	9	9	53,189	53,189		
National Park						
National Park (CYPAL)	275	275	7,138,301	7,176,441		
	28	28	2,171,852	2,171,852		
Total national park	312	312	9,342,686	9,363,341		
Tenured Protected Areas						
Conservation Parks	234	235	83,548	83,548		
Resources Reserves	47	46	345,885	231,029		
Total tenured protected areas	591	593	9,768,676	9,791,208		
Non-tenured Protected Areas						
Nature Refuges						
Special Wildlife Reserve	534	541	4,474,340	4,418,479		
Coordinated Conservation Areas	0	i	56392	56392		
		2	2,121	2,121		
Total non-tenured protected areas	522	536	4,455,878	4,455,878		
Total Protected Areas in QLD	1129	1137	14,224,658	14,195,224	8.25	8.20

Projects

Over the years, the main networks have consistently delivered beneficial conservation projects, and 2020–21 was no different. The team have worked hard to expand current projects and implement new conservation programs for each key species. Our efforts have been greatly assisted through volunteer help, WPSQ donations and local government project funding.

QUEENSLAND GLIDER NETWORK

Queensland Glider Network (QGN) welcomed the Yellow-bellied Glider Project to the current and future list of glider conservation projects. This project focuses on recording species occurrence data to further understand the yellow-bellied glider population in south-east Queensland.

A contract with the Logan City Council to undertake a broad project on greater gliders in the Logan Council region has been established. Work undertaken included spotlight surveys, community workshops, nest box installation and monitoring, and a webinar on greater glider conservation. Greater gliders were observed during the community spotlight surveys held at



Cornubia and Park Ridge.

The team also participated in a Wildlife Queensland run webinar, a glider symposium with Biolinks Victoria and a greater gliders documentary with Natura Pacific.

PLATYPUSWATCH

PlatypusWatch continued environmental DNA (eDNA) monitoring in waterways across the greater Brisbane region. The collection of six years of consistent platypus data is providing Wildlife Queensland with an accurate idea on the occurrence and non-occurrence of platypus in the south-east region. Samples were collected in the Logan and Ipswich local government areas.

PlatypusWatch was awarded a Queensland Government Citizen Science grant to undertake eDNA surveys and community observation surveys in the Dawson River over two years. The grant also funded two community education workshops on platypus conservation. The project is a partnership with the Wildlife Queensland Upper Dawson branch.

QUOLL SEEKERS

Wildlife Queensland and Quoll Seekers Network were awarded a Community Sustainability Action grant to undertake spotted-tailed quoll focused community engagement and surveys (detection dogs and infra-red camera) in the Mary River catchment. Work has been underway on this project with a Quoll Discovery Day being held in Kenilworth, in conjunction with the Mary River Catchment coordinating committee.

Wildlife Queensland and Quoll Seekers Network held a webinar on the conservation of spotted-tailed quolls. This webinar was very well received, indicating the level of interest in the species.

RICHMOND BIRDWING CONSERVATION NETWORK

The Richmond Birdwing Conservation Network (RBCN) continued working on the development of two major birdwing butterfly corridors: Woodford to Samford, and Tamborine Mountain to Mount Cotton.

The RBCN worked with Moreton Bay Regional Council Land for Wildlife to provide birdwing butterfly vines to strategic properties as part of the corridor creation. Vines were provided to participating Land for Wildlife property owners at planting workshops run by the RBCN. Over 400 vines were distributed. Another 600 vines will be available for planting in 2021–22.



The RBCN has continued to work with Logan City Council to plant and maintain birdwing butterfly vines at key locations within the Albert River catchment. Vines were planted across a range of council owned land as part of the corridor development program.

STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

Wildlife Queensland continues to hold Department of Environment and Science Scientific Purpose Permit WA0009377, Animal Ethics Approval (through DAF Animal Ethics) CA 2020/07/1395 and Scientific User Registration SUR000216.

Birdwing butterfly vine seed collection became an issue that the RBCN worked hard to manage in 2020–21. The RBCN now has over 16,000 fresh birdwing vine seeds in safe storage.

RBCN committee members and Wildlife Queensland staff spoke at numerous community meetings to discuss the conservation of the species. Of note was the Swallowtail and Birdwing trust's 'World Swallowtail Day' international conference. This was an online event that brought together a number of experts on swallowtail and birdwing butterflies from across the world. The RBCN committee's Dr Ian Gynther and Wildlife Queensland's Projects Manager, Matt Cecil, both presented on the work being undertaken by the RBCN to conserve the Richmond birdwing.

Wildlife Australia magazine

The articles within the most recent editions of Winter 2020, Spring 2020, Summer 2021 and Autumn 2021 were universally applauded by our readers, who appreciate the selfless contributions by authors of contemporary stories about Australia's wildlife.



Wildlife Queensland has negotiated a further agreement with Business Acumen until December 2022 to secure the continued publication of *Wildlife Australia*. While the income increased during the financial year, the expenditure for the same period was even greater so an audited loss is expected for 2020–21.

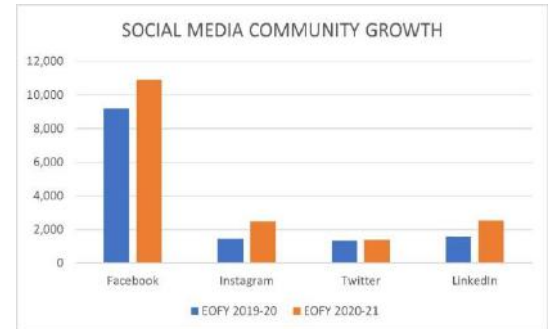
Last financial year, editor of *Wildlife Australia*, Mike Sullivan, returned half of his editorial fee as Business Acumen's donation towards Wildlife Queensland conservation activities. Wildlife Queensland is thankful for the donation.

It is important to highlight the contribution of subscribers to *Wildlife Australia* in the fundraising efforts of Wildlife Queensland. Most *Wildlife Australia* subscribers are members of Wildlife Queensland. However, we need more members to be subscribers and conversely, we need more subscribers to become members. It is the efforts of members, subscribers and supporters who help drive Wildlife Queensland's wildlife conservation programs.

Communications

SOCIAL MEDIA

Growing and engaging Wildlife Queensland’s social media audience has remained a focus throughout 2020-21. We have seen consistent growth across our social networks. Our Facebook following increased 17.5% while our Instagram followers almost doubled.



MY.WILDLIFE EBULLETIN

The monthly *my.Wildlife* eBulletin remains an effective means of keeping members and supporters up-to-date and engaged with the Society’s latest news and views, informing them of upcoming events, rallying their support, sharing our successes, and directing them to the Wildlife Queensland website for further information. While the number of subscribers to *my.Wildlife* has decreased since the end of the previous financial year, the average open rate of the eBulletin has remained consistent during 2020–21, as has the average click rate.

WILDLIFE QUEENSLAND WEBSITE

Wildlife Queensland’s website remains entirely under in-house management. The upgrades to the website were 95% complete at EOFY 2020–21. The launch plan are as follows:

- Phase one: Website launch – mid-late 2021
- Phase two: Rollout of new direct debit payment gateway – late 2021.

FUNDING APPEALS



CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2020 – QUOLL QUEST – NOV-DEC 2020

- ~ 1000 flyer/order forms distributed in outgoing mail
- ~ One launch and three update emails sent to 4,789 recipients
- ~ Design: in-house; Printing: professional
- ~ 123 donations



EOFY APPEAL JUNE 2021 – NOW’S THE TIME TO LOVE WILDLIFE

- ~ 1000 flyer/order forms distributed in outgoing mail
- ~ One launch and three update emails sent to 4,669 recipients
- ~ Design: in-house; Printing: professional
- ~ 133 donations

The EOFY 2021 Appeal raised 107% of its fundraising target.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

GREATER GLIDER EVENT SERIES: LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

- Greater Glider Workshop (29 May 2021) – 53 tickets sold
- Nocturnal Animal Spotlighting (11 June 2021) – 14 tickets sold
- Greater Glider Workshop (12 June 2021) – 24 tickets sold
- Nocturnal Animal Spotlighting (18 June 2021) – 11 tickets sold
- Greater Glider and Nest Box Building Workshop (19 June 2021) – 27 tickets sold

PLATYPUSWATCH IN THE UPPER DAWSON WORKSHOPS

- Workshop (26 June 2021) – 7 tickets sold
- Workshop (26 June 2021) – 16 tickets sold

PROTECTED AREAS MATTER SYMPOSIUM

- 23 May 2021 – 60 tickets sold

BATTY BOAT CRUISES

- 28 February 2021 – 35 tickets sold (sold out)
- 14 February 2021 – 36 tickets sold (sold out)
- 31 January 2021 – 36 tickets sold (sold out)
- 6 December 2020 – 37 tickets sold (sold out)

TALKING WILDLIFE WEBINAR SERIES

In July 2020, Communications launched the Society's new Talking Wildlife webinar series. The purpose of the series is to:

- improve community knowledge & interest in wildlife
- inspire individuals & communities to support local wildlife
- highlight Wildlife Queensland's successes
- raise awareness of, and interest in supporting, Wildlife Queensland's work.



Webinar Title	Date	Registrations
GLORIOUS GLIDERS	22 July 2020	320 registrations
PROTECTING THE PLATYPUS	23 September 2020	290 registrations
QUEENSLAND'S QUOLLS	25 November 2020	230 registrations
THE RICHMOND BIRDWING BUTTERFLY	24 March 2021	240 registrations
GREATER GLIDERS	16 June 2021	153 registrations

THE YEAR AHEAD

Areas of communications targeted for further development in the coming year include:

- a more strategic approach to social media marketing
- more targeted email communications
- timelier website news and focus on website engagement.

Members, Branches and Administration

It has been a difficult year for many, with lockdowns and restrictions making the holding of meetings and events difficult. The Society lost a number of long-term and active members this year. This is a great loss to our organisation, which relies on these dedicated members to bring the message of conservation to the community.

2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & SOUTHERN BRANCHES GET TOGETHER

The 57th Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 26 September 2020. Member attendance was limited due to COVID-19 constraints, but sufficient for the AGM to meet its obligations. Reports from the branches were distributed to attendees and were well received. Branches without a representative present were sent the reports by email after the event. President, Peter Ogilvie, presented his report on the Society's activities and projects for the 2019–20 year, and outlined future plans.

Annual Awards for the year July 2019 to June 2020

The Margaret Thorsborne Award acknowledges members who have made an outstanding contribution to Wildlife Queensland, conservation and the community.

Winner: **Liz Downes, Vice President of Townsville Branch of WPSQ**



Award for a Wildlife Queensland branch for community engagement and/or education

Winner: **Castle Creek Bird Hide – Theodore (Upper Dawson Branch)**

ADMINISTRATION

Branches have struggled with the usual public apathy. Events are a good opportunity to advertise the Society and its aims, to attract members, and encourage subscriptions to *Wildlife Australia*. However, events were restricted in many areas in the last financial year.

The head office newsletter is compiled and edited by the administrative staff, and is produced in both electronic and print formats to cater for all our members. It provides reports from branches as well as wildlife or environmental stories, activities at the head office, projects and campaigns, and the Wildlife Land Fund Limited.

A thank you lunch for volunteers was held on 10 December. This annual celebration is a way of expressing our thanks to the volunteers for their valuable work during the year.

MEDIA

Media coverage last year for two categories remained constant but while radio interviews helped immensely, overall coverage is still nowhere near where it used to be. We maintain very good coverage on social media.

Operations

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

It goes without saying that the Society could not run efficiently or effectively without dedicated staff and volunteers. We appreciate all the amazing people who give their time to us and take on tasks with enthusiasm. All volunteers have their key areas of work, with each role being important to the efficiency of the office. A special thanks to our regular office volunteers and a huge thank you goes out to those willing members who always help at the mail-out of magazines, newsletters and major appeals.

FUNDING

We have been fortunate to benefit from some substantial bequests, including the final distribution from a bequest shared with Animals Australia and WWF. Our ongoing 'adoptions' are becoming increasingly popular as sustainable gift ideas. With great marketing via our communications team, we have increased our adoptions at the end of this financial year. We have also increased our range of general merchandise, with social media marketing contributing to our increased sales. Merchandise is not intended to bring in huge revenue but rather is a method of increasing our reach. We also have businesses who have listed products with us and give us a commission or percentage of sales as a donation, or provide discounts to our supporters in return.

The Wildlife Protector program donor numbers continue to decrease. In 2019, we negotiated with an external provider to develop a recurring payment option to increase monthly recurring donations. The aim was to have this completed by early 2020, with an anticipated launch in late March. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our agreement with the external provider.

EVENTS

The Batty Boat Cruises are still popular. In 2020–21, we ran cruises on four separate dates from December 2020 to February 2021. At the close of the cruise season, we donate funds to BCR to assist with the care of injured and orphaned bats.

Our only event in 2021 was a one-day symposium - Protected Areas Matter – originally scheduled for March 2020. Some of Queensland's top conservation and wildlife experts came together to explore and discuss the importance of protected areas for wildlife conservation.

Holly Bryant Award Winner

In honour of Holly Bryant, the 2020 award was given to Jacob Slinger. He completed his project to a high standard and delivered an Environmental Management Plan that is currently guiding the ongoing environmental restoration of the Neil Holloway Reesville Nature Refuge.

FUTURE PLANS

- Document procedures and policies to support both the CRM and website (ongoing)
- Work with *Wildlife Australia* committee and consultant to increase revenue, find partnerships, advertising and marketing opportunities
- Actively seek out marketing opportunities for both the Society and magazine
- Work with the Management Team and communications officer to increase awareness and to develop partnerships
- Liaise with consultants as required for strategic planning, fundraising and events.

Wildlife Land Fund Limited

The Wildlife Land Fund Ltd (The Fund) Vision is to contribute to an ecologically sustainable future for people and wildlife by conserving Queensland's natural environment.



The Fund was established in 2001 to help secure the Bukkulla Conservation Park. Lands under our stewardship now also includes Witta Nature Reserve and Neil Holloway Reesville Nature Refuge in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, and Weranga Scarps Nature Reserve in the Western Downs. The Fund continues to actively invest in the repair and management of these lands. By the end of June 2021, our land and cash on hand assets approached \$900,000, providing a very sound base on which to build in our 21st year.

In April 2021, Matt Cecil unfortunately had to step aside as Chair for family reasons but will be able to continue as a Board Director. Incoming Chair, Stacey McLean, looks forward to working with members, supporters and partners to continue to see our Vision realised.

WITTA NATURE REFUGE

Funding from the Sunshine Coast Council through their Voluntary Conservation Agreement (VCA) program continued, enabling us to engage contractors to undertake targeted weed removal and follow-up management. Witta also benefited from three working bees across the year.

NEIL HOLLOWAY REESVILLE NATURE REFUGE

As with Witta, we were again successful in continuing a VCA with the Sunshine Coast Council. Weed management this past year focussed on continued maintenance of the ridgeline revegetation site, broadleaf privet management in the lower gullies and management of the 2019 revegetation site. The Sunshine Coast Council has undertaken both wild dog and deer control on or near the holding.



BUKKULLA CONSERVATION PARK

Stock grazing continued again this year. The Board has also continued to liaise with the Queensland Department of Environment requirements regarding installation and maintenance of on-ground assets including windmills, fencing and structures.

WILDLIFE LAND FUND LIMITED BOARD

The Board of Directors met formally three times during the 2020–21 financial year. Sally Spain and Lynn Ogden were appointed Directors at the December 2020 meeting, bringing a wealth of experience. Disruption to Board business due to COVID-19 restrictions was minimised through the use of email flying minutes and telephone conferencing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The on-going support and assistance from The Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland Inc. is very much appreciated and acknowledged. Thanks also to the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland Inc. Bayside Branch for their generous donations.