

ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23



**BURNETT CATCHMENT
CARE ASSOCIATION**

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Chairperson's Report

Paul Lobegeier

It is good to see Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA), in this ever-changing climate of Natural Resource Management, have been able to secure sufficient projects and funding to maintain our core staff. We have been busy applying for funding grants and adapting to the direction our funders are prioritising.

It is encouraging to see the great success of our Burnett Koala Program: Establishing baseline data for koala populations, coordinated by Misty. It has established evidence that there are more koalas than what we originally thought in the Inland Burnett. This validates the additional investment for BCCA to investigate population dynamics and overall health of the Burnett koala populations. The community collaboration has been paramount to the success of this project.

Our biocontrol project *'Bugs, Beetles & Biocontrol - Transforming landscapes in the Burnett through innovative management practices'*, will continue for an additional season due to an extension in our contract. Melinda will breed Jewel Beetles for another season at the Biocontrol Facility in Monto. This is encouraging as the use of biocontrol agents to control invasive weed species is a way forward, considering the cost of chemical and the fall in cattle prices.

The importance of improving our soils is also a focus of one of our projects - *'Invest in the Test'*. Marisa and Katie have been busy this financial year running workshops, conducting soil testing and interpreting soil test laboratory results for producers. An informed management decision based on soil test results will assist producers to be more profitable and monitor the impact of changes they make to their practices.

Hayley Webster has been a great addition to our team. She has taken on some new projects which will commence in the next financial year.

BCCA has established a great relationship with The Department of Agriculture & Fisheries (DAF), collaborating to deliver drought preparedness workshops in the Burnett. Attending these free workshops, producers have access to the latest knowledge on drought support and awareness of current government assistance. These government grants improve the drought preparedness of their properties, which is a more proactive approach than what was the previous direction and response by government. I can attest to the fact that these workshops have been well attended by landholders.



Biosecurity and the threat of exotic diseases, especially those that affect our cattle industry in the Burnett are still a real threat. The recent detection of lumpy skin disease (LSD) of Australian cattle arriving in Indonesia caused a scare and trade issues with Indonesia. As it turned out, the cattle contracted LSD en-route, as extensive testing of 1000 cattle in Australia found no trace of the disease.

Warmer and drier conditions are predicted with the declaration of an El Nino, so it is back to tough conditions for producers and the wider community.

Thank you to the members and board for their continuing support. If you would like to take on an executive role within BCCA, please consider attending our AGM.

Paul Lobegeier



Participants at the DAF workshop in Monto.

Treasurer's Report

Melinda Clarke



The Burnett Catchment Care Association's financials have been independently audited by Moore Audit Team—Chartered Accountants based in Monto.

BCCA received a total of \$602,787 in contracts for the 2022/23 financial year through contracts from the Australian Government, Queensland Government and Wildlife Information Rescue and Information Services (WIRES). Grants income from contracts increased by \$280,508 compared to last financial year. This is due to new projects commencing in the latter half of the financial year and we also received the final payment for the Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) - Agricultural Strategy for the Western Burnett.

The association recorded a consolidated total surplus of \$51,500 for the year compared with a deficit of \$10,107 in 2022, which was due to the Building Better Regions Fund project final payment being paid in arrears.

The graphs below illustrate the breakdown of income and expenditure for the financial year. The income graph includes contracts, interest, membership, donations and services.

Total expenditure has increased by \$82,455, reflecting the costs associated with delivering projects and services. The increase in expenditure is due to new projects for the 2022/23 financial year and the cost associated with their delivery.

BCCA will continue to attempt to source more funding to carry us into future years. As a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) we now have more funding opportunities and we have been promoting our DGR status.

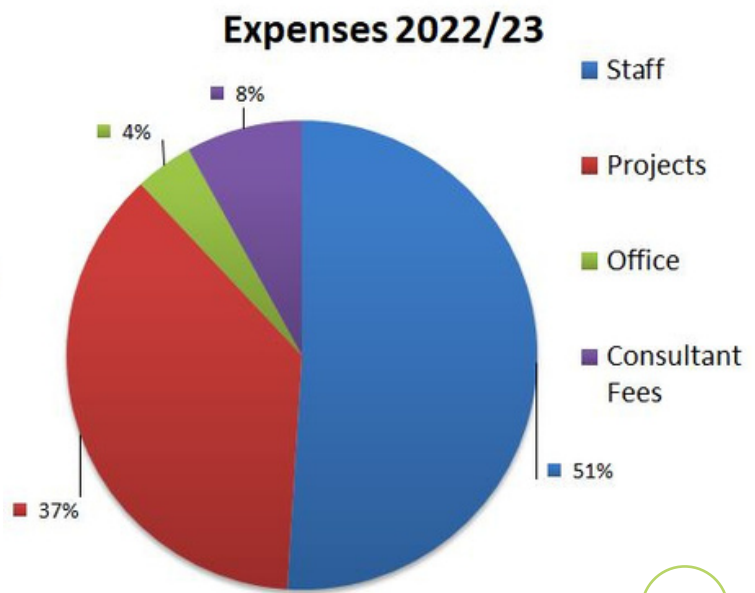
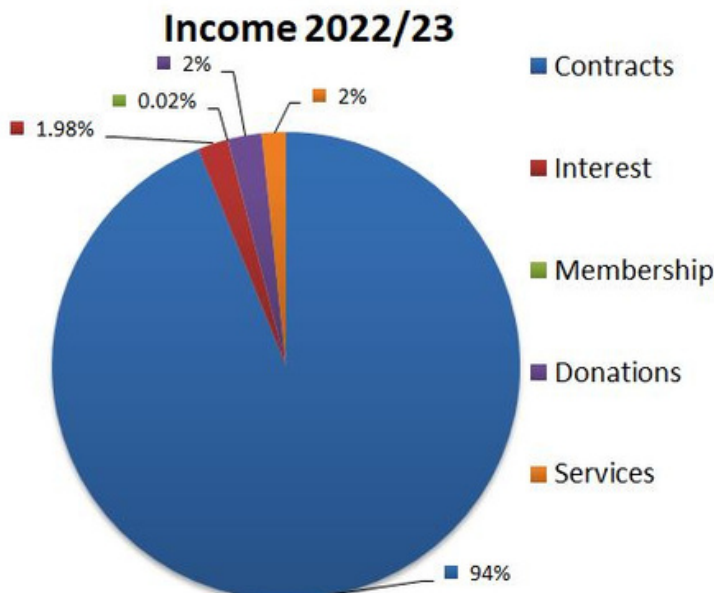
I would invite any member of the BCCA who wishes to view the full financial reports of the Association the opportunity, to do so, by appointment with the Associations Treasurer/ Administration Manager.

Audit Statement—Moore

"We confirm that in respect of the audit of the financial report for the year ended 30 June 2023, we have maintained our independence in accordance with requirements and provisions of Accounting Professional and Ethical Standard 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)".

"The books and records were again presented to a high standard and we commend the staff for the preparation of the accounts and minutes."

Melinda Clarke



General Manager's Report

Katie Muller

The 2022/23 year has been another busy one for BCCA. As usual, our small, but mighty team has excelled in delivering onground projects right across the Burnett region.

This financial year saw the finalisation of two projects including the initial Burnett Koala Project where we saw recorded koala sightings in the Burnett more than double thanks to the projects photo competitions and the projects awareness raising activities. The other project completed during this year was the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) Monto Graziers Network project where we were able to support graziers in building their skills and knowledge in pasture budgeting, grazing management and soil health as well as initiate and foster peer-to-peer learning.

This year saw the continuation of our Bugs, Beetles and Biocontrol project whereby Melinda has bred and released another season of beetles for Cats Claw Creeper control right across the catchment. The Community Action Plan for the Burnett/Baffle coastal region was refined during this year and involved significant consultation with community. The Invest in a Test soil testing project continued this year also with soil testing focusing on the North Burnett.

This year was the first year in my time (16 years) that we did not have a contract with Burnett Mary Regional Group (BMRG) to deliver projects for the Burnett. As disappointing as that was, it was encouraging that we were still able to successfully obtain funding for our region from other sources. This year, we began our second Burnett Koala project where we are DNA testing koala scats to obtain baseline data, we delivered our first Greater Glider project through WIRES and began delivery of our 2 year Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought - Community Impact Project through FRRR. All of this was on top of successful project submissions under the Queensland Government's Natural Resources Recovery Program and other yet to be announced disaster resilience projects for the 2023/24 year.

BCCA has also been privileged to support the Queensland Government's Department of Agriculture & Fisheries mixed farming and grazing teams who deliver the Farm Business Resilience Project and the other drought resilience projects. We support DAF to ensure our producers in the Burnett are given the best opportunity to take advantage of these great projects and support being offered by the government.



BCCA was happy to assist another new partner, CRATER this year. In March, BCCA facilitated the delivery of two Natural Capital workshops in Monto and Gayndah on behalf of CRATER. Workshop participants heard from experts from Resource Consulting Services (RCS), GreenCollar and Accounting for Nature, to learn more about how to increase farm productivity, resilience and nature capital.

As always, I am so grateful for my dedicated team. Melinda is the glue that holds our team together and has been for over 12 year now. Hayley has been a very welcome addition to the team and Misty has done wonders with our many environmental projects. Marisa has now been with BCCA for 10 years and how lucky have we been to be able to keep her with us for so long. Marisa joined us to assist with the flood recovery efforts of ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald. It is hard to believe that was a decade ago as we brace for what might be a very dry time ahead.

Thank you to the unwavering support from our executive and we look forward to supporting our members and the Burnett region as a whole in the coming year.

Katie Muller



Katie & Marisa undertaking soil testing in the Mundubbera region

Burnett Baffle (Reef) Community Action Plan

Misty Neilson



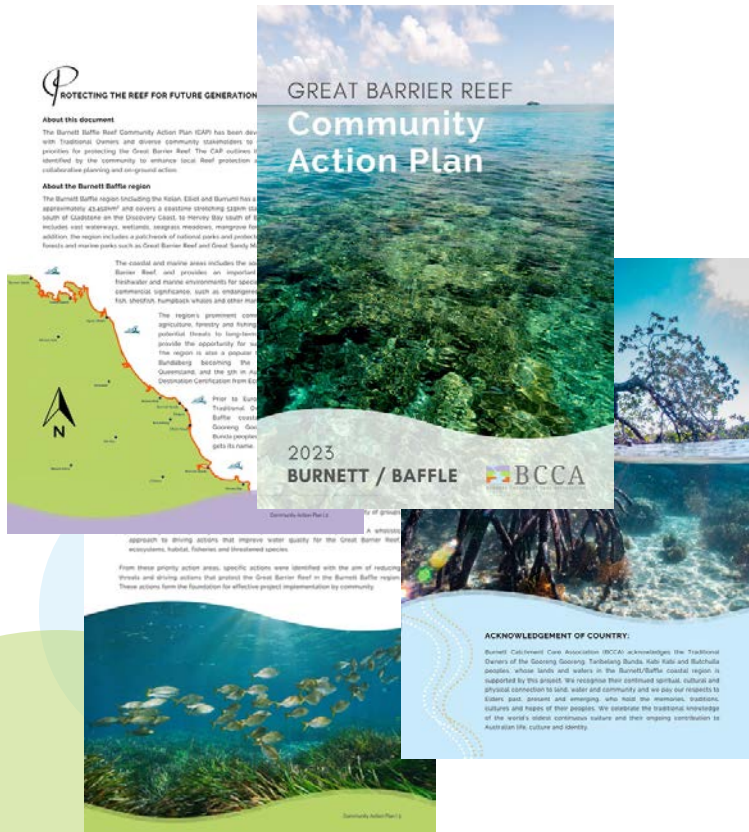
The Burnett Baffle Reef Community Action Plan (CAP) was developed in collaboration with Traditional Owners and diverse community stakeholders to capture the collective priorities for protecting the Great Barrier Reef. The CAP outlines the key priority actions identified by the community to enhance local Reef protection and outcomes through collaborative planning and on-ground action.

These collective priorities have addressed the need for creating a pathway for practical and effective on-ground actions that are achievable, while also supporting other stakeholders and funding bodies to better understand the needs of the community regarding reef protection in the Burnett/Baffle region.

The community identified gaps in their organisational capacity and five workshops were delivered targeting the identified topics of funding and grants, social media and community engagement.

Two community on-ground action projects are currently being delivered including the Queensland Marine Turtle Network's inaugural forum (for which BCCA is a member of the steering committee) and the Bundaberg 4WD club's 'Driving in the right direction' project. Other collaborative on-ground projects are currently in the development and application processes, and include Traditional Owners, tertiary institutions and community.

This project is supported with funding from the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and the Australian Government's Reef Trust Partnership.



The Old Marine Turtle Network Forum established under the Burnett Baffle Community Action Plan

Misty Neilson

Burnett Baffle Reef Community Action Plan



Great Barrier Reef Foundation



Australian Government



Invest in a Test - Soil Extension

Katie Muller & Marisa Young



The Invest in a Test project aims to enable farmers to confidently invest in soil testing regimes, appropriate to their production system, by demonstrating the tangible benefits and value. This 2.5 year project is funding by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - Smart Farms Small Grants.

Investing in soil testing will help landholders to be well-placed to use this information to inform management decisions that are both profitable for their business and sustainable through enhanced resource condition. The project will encourage and support landholders to incorporate routine soil testing into their management to inform management practices, to monitor the impact of any changes made and adjust practices accordingly.

The focus will be the diverse Inland Burnett region of Queensland (North Burnett Regional Council & South Burnett Regional Council areas). The project will focus on beef cattle grazing, dryland & irrigated grain, pulse and hay cropping including many mixed farming enterprises.

This project achieved significant outcomes over the 2022/23 financial year. We hosted three Understanding Soils workshops across the inland Burnett in Mondure, Kumbia and Murgon. The workshops were delivered by experienced agronomist, David Hall. The workshops covered:

- how to interpret soil test results
- discussing results from the local soil tests
- the implications for management and nutrition requirements for improved pasture/crop production and soil health

The participants were also encouraged to bring along soil test laboratory results and have them interpreted by the experienced agronomists.

In addition to these workshops, 42 landholders from right across the inland Burnett have had soil tests conducted on their properties and then comprehensive analysis and recommendations for improved soil management provided.

Feedback we have received from a South Burnett hay producer was that "felt they may have been 'conned' and were extremely grateful to have advice from someone who was independent and not trying to push a product or sale".

Another South Burnett producer said after having soil tests conducted on his property and an interpretation report provided that it was "the first time he understood the results of a soil test".

The project is to be finalised in Feb 2024 and the BCCA team will spend the rest of this project time delivering more workshops, developing case studies and encouraging and supporting producers to undertake soil testing as part of their best management practices.

Katie Muller & Marisa Young



Participants at the Kumbia Understanding soils workshop

Bugs, Beetles & Biocontrol

Melinda Clarke



The Bugs, Beetles & Biocontrol project is funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. The project aims to create a long-term and sustainable management of Cat's Claw Creeper (CCC) and Parthenium in the North & South Burnett via the production and distribution of effective biocontrol agents.

This financial year, 5157 Jewel Beetles were harvested from our biocontrol breeding facility located at Monto State High School. Thirty-five landholders, North Burnett Regional Council Land Protection Officers, two Landcare groups (Monto Landcare Group & Kingaroy & Districts Branch Native Plants Qld) and Queensland Parks & Wildlife Services (QPWS) received bottles of 100 Jewel Beetles for release. These were released at 45 sites in the Inland Burnett covering over 45,000 hectares of land managed by landholders. The release sites were spread over 21 different creek systems. Thirty-five of the sites were second release sites, 10 sites were new landholders and QPWS sites.



Winter Rust evident on Parthenium

Landholders involved in releasing Jewel Beetles last season were asked to do some basic monitoring before they release the beetles for a second season. The monitoring sheets received to date indicate 75% of the second release sites identify the presence of Jewel Beetles and/or activity (leaves eaten, leaf mining, pupal discs etc.). Sites where there was no sign of Jewel Beetles or Jewel Beetle activity indicated major flooding event caused by disaster event - SEQ Rainfall and Flooding (Feb - Apr 2022)/ Southern Queensland Flooding (May 2022).

Monitoring was conducted on the 17 Parthenium biocontrol release sites by the Project Officer, Landholders and Council. The total area of land managing was over 17,000 ha. No presence of Parthenium leaf feeding beetle - *Zygogramma bicolorata* was observed at the 11 release sites in Spring/Summer 2022. Summer Rust released at five sites was present in only small quantities. Winter Rust, which was released just north of Monto, was evident in only small amounts at the release sites.

BCCA had a trade stall at the local Monto Show in April. Landholders were able to view a tent of Cat's Claw Creeper vine with actively breeding Jewel Beetles. They were able to see firsthand the affect the biocontrol beetle has on the invasive vine and receive an informative brochure about the beetles. Landholders also had the opportunity to become part of the CCC biocontrol program, with jars of 100 beetles available for release. Forty-three individuals visited our trade stall, with new landholders signing up to the CCC biocontrol program.

Melinda Clarke



Katie Muller, Misty Neilson & Melinda Clarke at the Monto Show 2023

Burnett Koala Program

Misty Neilson

CITIZEN SCIENCE

The first stage of the Burnett Koala Program was delivered over a two year period and concluded in December 2022. This project was primarily a citizen scientist-based project aimed at raising awareness regarding the significance of regional koala populations and habitat health, in addition to contributing to understanding koala distribution, presence, activity and habitat health in the Burnett catchment region.

BCCA designed a field guide to support citizen scientists in building their knowledge and awareness regarding regional koala's and their habitat requirements, in addition to assisting in the identification and recording of koala presence and activity in the Burnett. A tree planting guide for koala habitat in the Burnett Catchment and a 'Fun Facts' guide (resource for Primary Teachers) was also produced.

124 koala observations were recorded by community under this project equating to 55% of all public records as of December 2022. This was assisted by two region wide photo competitions.

The programs education activities included social and print media, radio interviews and member emails, with an estimated total reach of over 340,000.

Eighty-three schools registered for the STEM activity that included a colouring competition, access to the fun facts guide plus 61 koala ecology learning resources and documents to assist teachers in further exploring the topics of koala conservation & ecology. Prizes for winners of the colouring competition were issued to multiple age groups across three schools.

At the conclusion of the projects activities a Burnett Koala Program Report for 2021-2022 was produced. This report outlined the projects findings and highlighted five regionally specific 'Priority Action Areas' that strategically aligned with Queensland Government's 'South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025' and the Queensland Koala Expert Panel's Report.



This report assisted to justify investment from the Australian Government for BCCA to develop a baseline dataset for Burnett koala populations commencing January 2023.

This project was supported with funding from the Queensland Government: Department of Environment and Science and proudly supported by Goondicum Pastoral Co., Australian Koala Foundation, Wide Bay Burnett Environmental Council, Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld, Bunya Peoples Aboriginal Corporation, Safe Haven – Australian Animals, Care & Education, Central Burnett Landcare, Burnett catchment citizen scientists and generous community donations.

Misty Neilson



Female Koala and joey, observed by Tracey Litfin (November 2022)



Burnett Koala Program

Misty Neilson



ESTABLISHING REGIONAL BASELINE DATA

The continuation of the Burnett Koala Program (BKP) commenced in January 2023 and remains the first and only large scale koala conservation program in the Burnett Catchment. This next phase of the program will be delivered over two years and is a community-led multi-stakeholder collaborative project aimed at better understanding population dynamics and health of inland Burnett koalas.

This project will develop the regions first baseline dataset of koala population dynamics and health via the DNA testing of scats, non-invasively collected by the community.

Current activities build upon and extend previous citizen science engagement activities including the recording, collating, and sharing of incidental koala observations across the region that were performed during 2021-2022.

Four workshops were delivered across the region to inform and train community in scat collection, koala conservation, and the Burnett Koala Program more broadly. This is in addition to ongoing education campaigns.



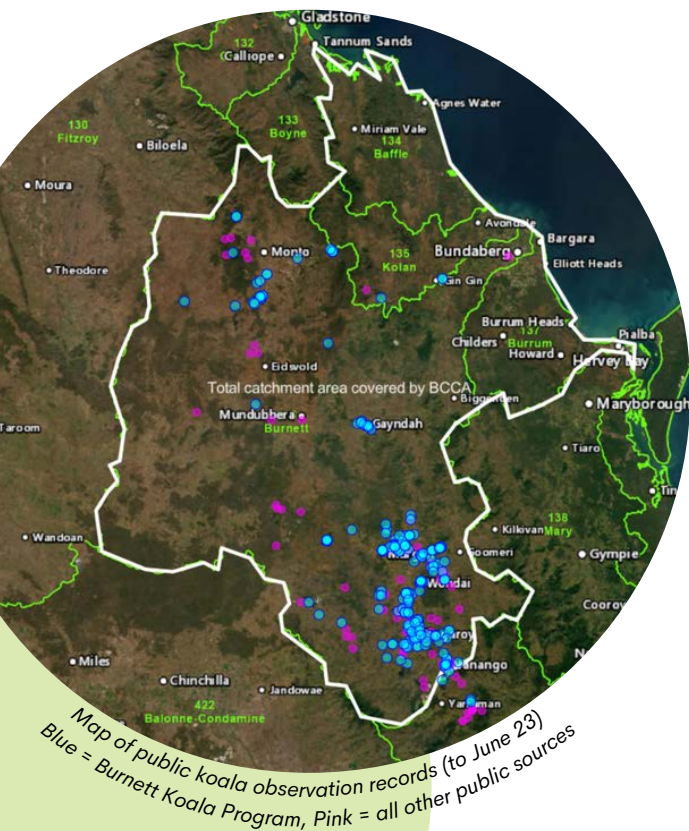
Community workshops

These workshops have resulted in exceptional community engagement with the current number of scat samples collected exceeding the projects initial ambitions. Community scat collection will continue until the end of December 2023 with a key focus on extending the geographical spread of sample collection. DNA testing and analysis of the collected scats will occur in early 2024.

247 community observations across the Burnett catchment (up to June 2023), have been recorded under the Burnett Koala Program, equating to ~70% of all public koala presence records in the Burnett from 2000 to EoFY (23 years).

CSIRO liaison, in addition to collaborative landholder engagement & STEM activities are planned for 2024.

This project is supported with funding from the Australian Government's Department of Industry, Science and Resources and is proudly supported by WildDNA (Federation University Australia), OWAD Environment, Goondicum Pastoral Co and Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council Inc.



Australian Government

Misty Neilson

Sharing Models of Successful Groups

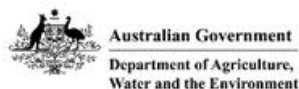
Hayley Webster

Sharing Models of Successful Groups project aims to establish community led producer groups which aid in peer-to-peer learning and support. The project covers the entire Burnett region and with possibility of extending into the Western and Darling Downs.

With the contract signed late this financial year, we will be engaging with community leaders next financial year.

This project is funded by the FRRR through the Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Program – Community Impact Program.

Hayley Webster



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Water and the Environment



Saving the Endangered Great Glider

Misty Neilson

Saving the Greater Glider project is a grassroots community education and habitat protection/restoration and enhancement project aimed at assisting the recovery of this endangered species in the Burnett region.

The project aims to improve the presence, abundance, reproductive outcomes and recovery of the hollow dependent Greater Glider (*Petauroides volans*) via habitat enhancement, community awareness and citizen science activities.

Two workshops targeting greater glider conservation in grazing production systems were delivered both in the field and online. A total of 95 participants attended the workshops which included presentations by Accounting for Nature and the Monto Men's Shed.



Fifty-four carved hollows and five nesting boxes have been installed across multiple grazing properties and a mining rehabilitation site. Another 15 nesting boxes are due for installation on additional grazing properties in coming months with monitoring currently underway. A total of 27 community observations have been recorded to date.

This project is supported with funding from WIRES National Grants Program and sponsorship from Evolution Mining (Mount Rawdon Gold Mine). It is proudly supported by Australian Men's Shed Association (Monto), Goondicum Pastoral Co, Wildlife Queensland and the Queensland Glider Network, Accounting for Nature Ltd, Safe Haven - Australian Animal Care and Education and Habi-Tec.

Misty Neilson



Habitat enhancement activities include carved hollow & nesting box installation across multiple grazing properties & a mining rehabilitation site



Greater Glider conservation in Grazing Production Systems' workshop & field day



BURNETT CATCHMENT CARE ASSOCIATION

