2025 Report

Saving endangered

GREATER GLIDERS

of the Burnett

BCCA

BURNETT CATCHMENT CARE ASSOCIATION

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- Page 3 (Rescued juvenile greater glider during bushfire): Donna Dingle
- Page 4 (Arborists creating carved tree hollows and installing nesting boxes): BCCA
- Page 5 (Greater glider): Nadia Campbell
- Page 6 (Greater glider nesting box & carved hollow inset): BCCA
- Page 6 (People with carved nesting box inset): Nadia Campbell
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- Page 10 (Newspaper articles): North Burnett News
- Page 11 (Greater glider nesting box): BCCA
- Page 12 (Arborist climbing a tree): BCCA, (greater glider): Jono Dashper
- Page 13 (Carved living hollow): BCCA, (Pole camera monitoring): BCCA
- Page 14 (Greater glider nesting box): BCCA
- Page 16 (Greater glider): jairand18
- Page 17 (Land manager and BCCA officer talking in field): BCCA
- Page 18 (Carved hollow): BCCA, (Greater gliders): Misty Neilson, (Squirrel glider): Nadia Campbell
- Page 19 (Rescued greater glider after bushfire): Donna Dingle, (Greater glider caught on fence): Jesse Kalwij
- Page 21 (Glossy black cockatoo in hollow): Daniela Parra via Greening Australia
- Page 22 (Greater glider): Jono Dashper
- Page 23 (Greater glider): Josh Bowell
- All other photos: Stock images via Canva

CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country:

Burnett Catchment Care Association acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Barunggam, Butchella, Kabi Kabi, Goreng Goreng, Taribelang Bunda, Wakka Wakka and Wuli-Wuli peoples lands and waters that our work supports and we recognise their continued spiritual, cultural and physical connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, who hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of their peoples. We celebrate the traditional knowledge of the world's oldest continuous culture and their ongoing contribution to Australian life, culture and identity.

Conservation in production systems

Biodiversity, the intricate web of life encompassing all living organisms, plays a crucial role in maintaining the health and stability of ecosystems. In productive landscapes, such as agricultural systems, the conservation of biodiversity is becoming increasingly vital. These landscapes, while primarily utilized for human activities, often harbour a variety of species essential for ecosystem functions, including pollination, pest control, and nutrient cycling. Recognizing the significance of biodiversity conservation within these landscapes is imperative for ensuring long-term sustainability. Sometimes they are also the last strong holds for threaten species facing extinction.

As climate change accelerates, preserving biodiversity in productive landscapes becomes even more critical. Many species are already facing unprecedented challenges due to shifting climate patterns, habitat loss, and fragmentation. Conservation efforts focused on protecting threatened species while sustainably producing food not only safeguard vulnerable populations but also contribute to climate resilience. By maintaining diverse ecosystems, we enhance their capacity to adapt to a changing environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change on both wildlife and human communities. Therefore, integrating biodiversity conservation practices into productive landscapes is essential for promoting sustainability and fostering resilience in the face of a rapidly changing world.

This project aims to do just that.

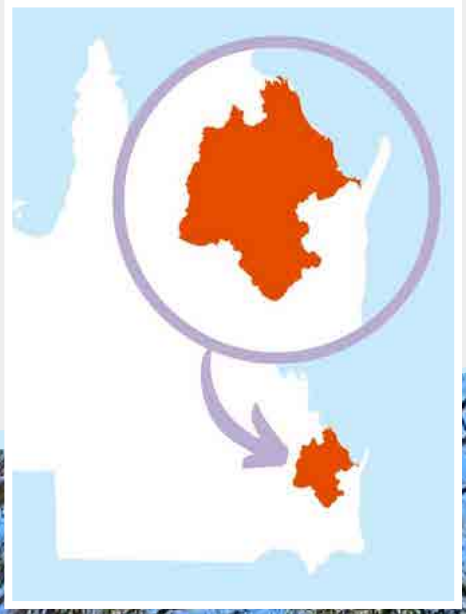
Burnett greater gliders

The Burnett region encompasses the drainage basins of several rivers, including the Burnett, Baffle, Boyne, Burrum, and Kolan. It covers an area of 43,450km^2, which is 25% larger than the South-East corner of Queensland (35,248km^2) and approximately two-thirds the size of Tasmania (68,401 km^2).

The primary land use in the region is agriculture, accounting for 67% of the land. Within this agricultural portion, 85% is dedicated to grazing, and there is also private forestry that is not formally protected. The region is proud to have 17% of its land designated as protected areas, which is 8% higher than the Queensland state average.

Over the past 20 years, the population of Greater Gliders have become endangered to extinction, experiencing a significant decline of 80%. As a result, the quality of the remaining private forestry habitats, often on grazing lands, has become increasingly crucial for their survival.

Greater Gliders exhibit distinct regional preferences for specific tree species that serve as their food sources. These may include spotted gum (Corymbia citriodora subsp. variegata), pink bloodwood (C. intermedia), narrow-leaved red ironbark (Eucalyptus crebra), and forest red gum (E. tereticornis). Protecting and preserving these habitats is of utmost importance to support the remaining Greater Glider populations.



Flushes of new growth are believed to offer higher nutritional value and are more commonly observed on large, mature trees compared to younger, less established ones. This could be attributed to the deeper root systems of older trees, which allow them to access groundwater and exhibit greater resilience during periods of drought and bushfire events.

The presence of large hollows in old-growth forests is crucial for these gliding arboreal mammals, as they are quite sizable, measuring over 1m in length (from tip to tail) and weighing up to 1.7kg. Greater gliders are capable of gliding distances of up to 100m and display a variety of colours, ranging from dark grey or dusky brown to light grey or nearly white. While some isolated populations may consist of a single colour morph, others exhibit multiple colours within the population, even among related individuals.

Greater gliders are solitary creatures and have been noted to exhibit a preference for dry ironbark forests within the Burnett Mary region. However, they can also be found in eucalypt forests, open woodlands, and gum-topped box forests spanning from Queensland to Victoria. Research suggests that the greater preference for dry ironbark forests in the Burnett Mary catchment may be directly linked to the abundance of hollow-bearing trees (HBTs) in these forests, rather than being solely influenced by preferred feeding tree species.

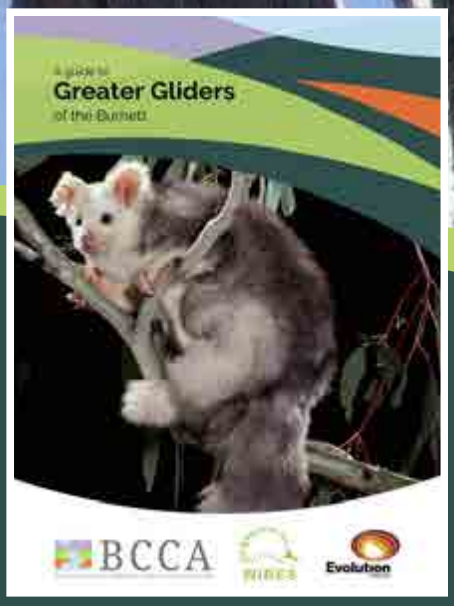
About the program

Due to the ongoing threats imposed on the endangered greater glider by habitat clearing through development, agriculture, forestry, and mining, the significant habitat potential of the Burnett region has become increasingly important for the conservation of this endangered species.

The "Saving the Greater Glider" project was initiated as a grassroots community education and habitat protection/restoration initiative with the primary goal of aiding the recovery of the species, particularly in the Upper Burnett region.

The project's main mission was to enhance the presence, abundance, reproductive outcomes, and overall recovery of the hollow-dependent Greater Glider (Petauroides volans) by addressing its key threats through increased nesting habitat and landholder education. This included efforts to reduce habitat clearing and promote the retention of feed and hollow-bearing trees on private lands within the Upper Burnett catchment.

The understanding of Greater Glider populations and priority habitat areas has also been enhanced through the projects monitoring efforts and the systematic documentation of community observations.



Program activities

Field and information guide

A comprehensive 12-page Field & Information Guide was developed to support citizen scientists eager to explore the world of greater gliders in the Burnett region. The guide is designed to enrich the communities awareness of habitat health, aid in the identification and documentation of greater glider presence and activities throughout the Burnett catchment.

For convenient access, the guide has been disseminated through various channels. It is accessible online via the BCCA website, Burnett Ag Hub, and various social media platforms. Moreover, physical copies have been printed and distributed at workshops and events for those who prefer tangible resources.

Discover the guide by following this link.

Habitat enhancement

Living hollows are anticipated to endure for the lifespan of the host tree, which can potentially exceed 100 years. In contrast, marine ply boxes have an expected lifespan of 20-30 years, while natural wood boxes have an expected lifespan of 10 years. By enhancing the preservation of existing hollows, their longevity can align with that of the tree, potentially exceeding 100 years.

Conservation arborist specialists installed a total of 48 carved living hollows across six sites, including pastoral properties and a mining rehabilitation site. Additionally, 21 nesting boxes were installed across seven sites. The combined property area dedicated to habitat enhancement amounts to approximately 8080 hectares.

The nesting boxes were constructed using recycled and donated natural timbers by the local Monto Men's Shed. This approach was preferred over purchasing commercial boxes, as it made it more feasible for other landholders to replicate the process. The design of the nesting boxes followed the design by Drew Liepa of Greening Australia. This design plan was shared widely through workshops, events, and the online guide.

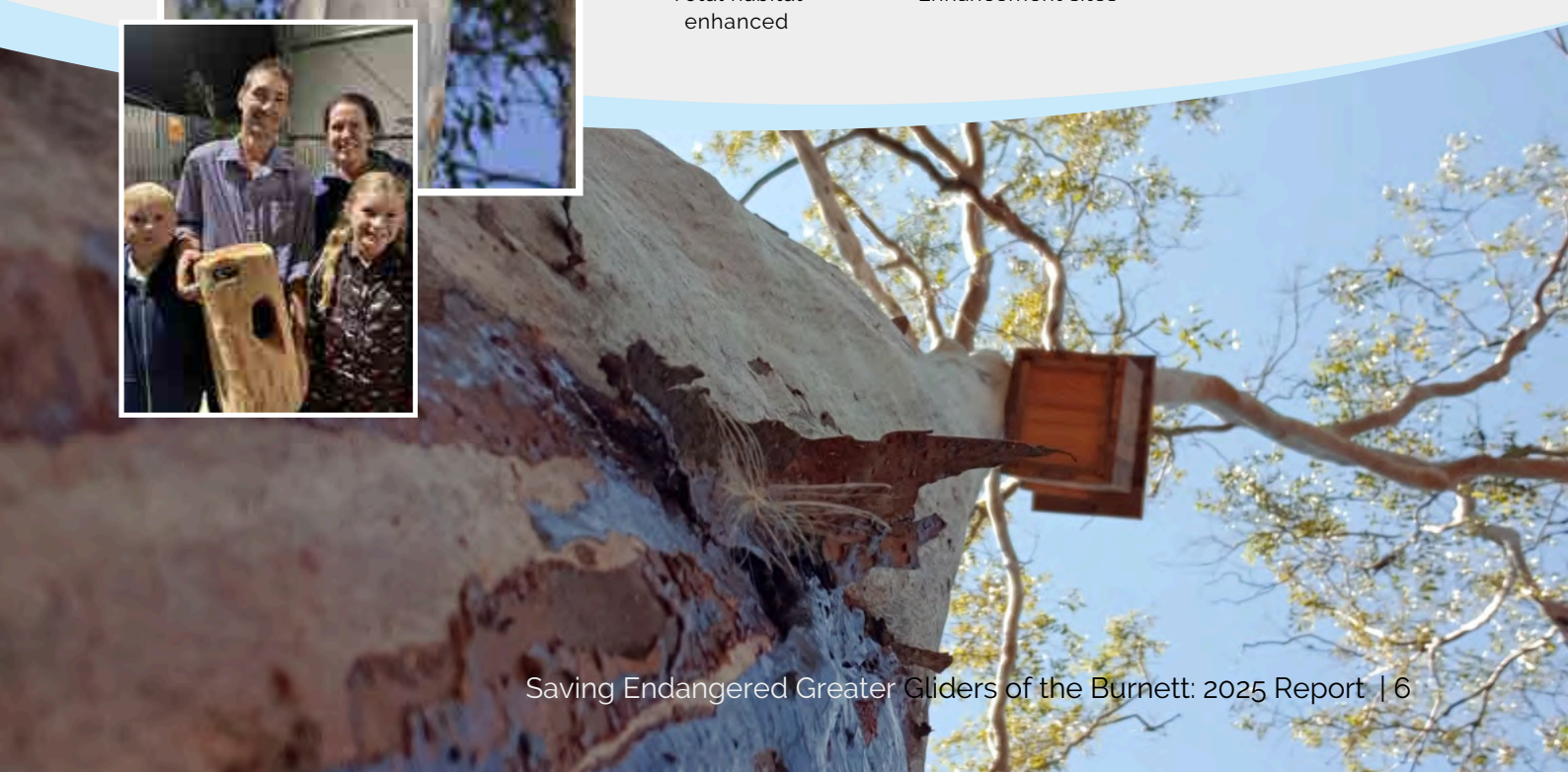
A carved nesting box was donated to support the Monto Show Society's Goondicum Grassfed Award, which promotes sustainable beef production and environmental conservation in the Upper Burnett region. Boogal Cattle Co Brahmans, the winner of the award, received and installed the nesting box on their property.

These habitat enhancement activities not only benefit greater gliders but also support owls, various other glider species, and glossy black cockatoos, fostering broader biodiversity values and ecosystem health.

8080 hectares
Total habitat enhanced

11 Locations
Enhancement sites

69 Den sites



Workshops and events

Two workshops on greater glider conservation in grazing production systems were conducted, both in-field and online, attracting 95 participants. The sessions also featured presentations from Accounting for Nature and the Monto Men's Shed.

The online workshop was recorded and is now accessible on YouTube, extending its reach beyond the project's duration to a wider audience. View the recording here.

In addition, community engagement was expanded through stalls at local shows and expos, connecting with an additional 169 participants. The project was also showcased at the Private Land Conservation conference (PLC23) in Canberra to a national audience.

Multiple events
Incl. workshops, shows, expos and conference presentations

264 Participants
Not incl. conference attendees

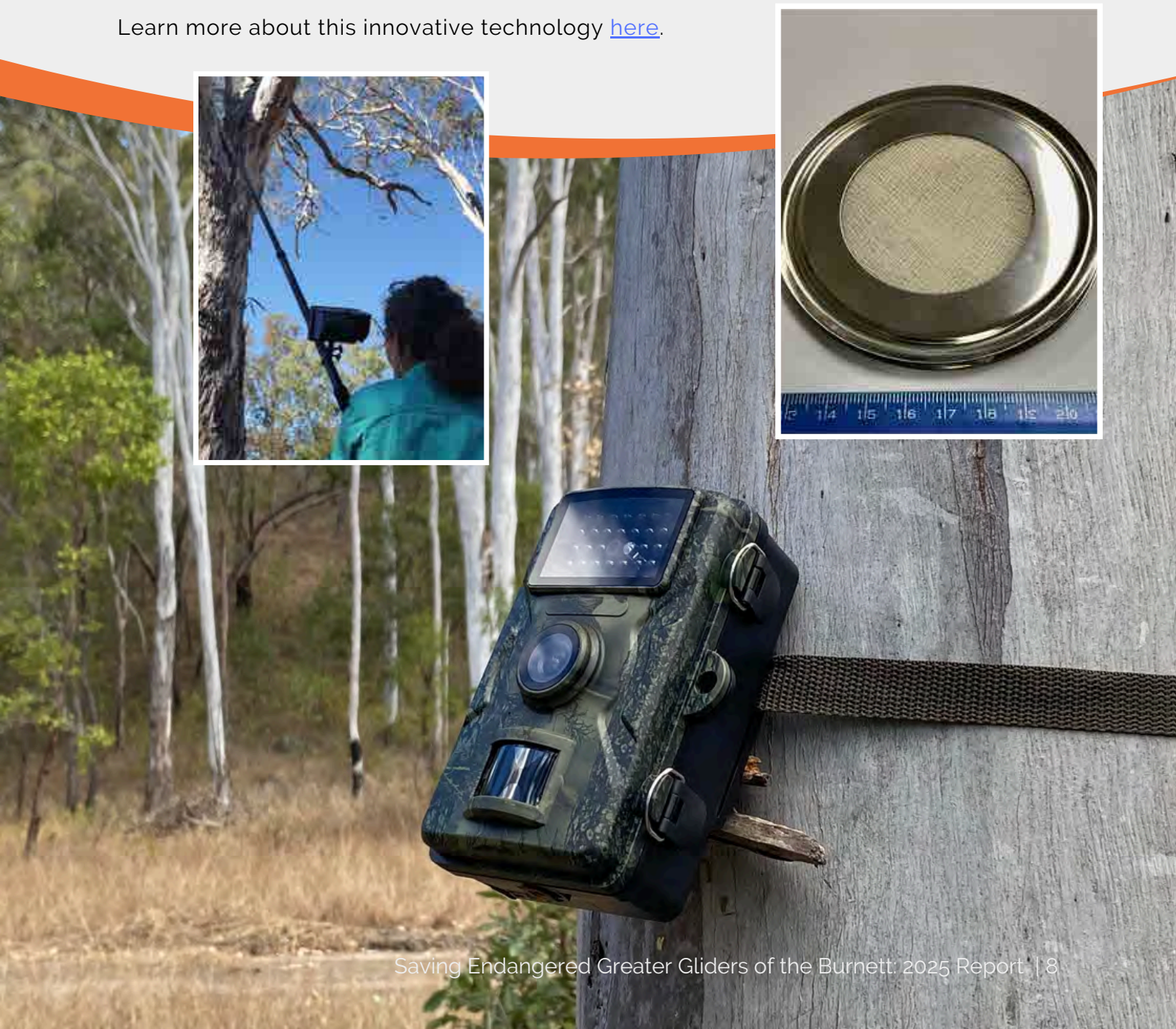
Monitoring:

Monitoring took place across multiple habitat enhancement sites, including 10 pastoral properties and one mining rehabilitation area. A range of techniques were used to detect wildlife, including wildlife cameras (baited with real Canadian maple syrup as a lure), camera poles, spotlighting, thermal monoculars, and night vision equipment.

Hollow-dwelling arboreal species recorded at enhanced habitat sites included greater gliders, brushtail possums, sugar gliders, squirrel gliders, feathertail gliders, and yellow-bellied gliders.

To further strengthen these activities and advance collaborative conservation goals for greater gliders, we partnered with the University of Queensland to trial innovative, non-invasive air eDNA monitoring technologies across five locations. This approach detected a total of 11 species, including five native species and six non-native domestic species (see Table 1).

Learn more about this innovative technology here.



Community observation records

Citizen scientists in the Burnett region were encouraged to document sightings of greater gliders, resulting in 35 additional observations beyond formal monitoring efforts. You can view all project-related greater glider observations, including those from monitoring activities, here.

The in-field workshop also welcomed Traditional Owners from the River Nations Indigenous Corporation. They actively participated in the field day and contributed to the project by integrating greater glider monitoring into their existing koala project. Their involvement, including providing observational records and locations, has enriched the dataset of greater glider observations.

These contributions from citizen scientists help improve our understanding of the species in the Burnett catchment and assist in prioritizing future conservation efforts.

81% of all records

public access observation records since 2010 for greater gliders in the region (Table 3)

Community education campaign

In addition to the development and dissemination of the field and observation guide and the delivery of workshops (in-field + online), an education campaign covering the project and all things greater gliders was executed across social and print media, radio, email and YouTube. A summary of the community reach and engagement is presented the table below.

Table 1: Education campaign results

MEDIA	REACH	REACTIONS	CLICKS	COMMENTS	SHARES
Facebook & Instagram	15,518	210	33	3	110
LinkedIn	3,556	201	526	7	21
Email (incl. surveys)	229	-	36	17	-
Radio	50,665 (2 interviews)	-	-	-	-
Print	43,900 (4 articles)	24	-	1	4
TOTAL	**164,533**	**411**	**595**	**27**	**131**

164,533 Reach
Community education campaign

1,163 Interactions
Known campaign interactions

Greater Gliders in the

Have you seen a Greater Glider in the Burnett? Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA) wants to know about it!

This endangered hollow dependent arboreal is the world's largest gliding marsupial at approximately 1m in total body length. It is a eucalyptus feeding specialist, with a diet similar to that of koalas but unlike the koala, Greater Gliders (Petauroides volans) greatest limiting factor to survival is hollow and den space.

Much like the housing shortage experienced all over Queensland, these mostly solitary animals are experiencing a similar situation. However, instead of just 1 den site they require up to 20 in a 1-9 hectare home range. This is presumably to evade their greatest predator, the powerful owl, who will stake out hollows waiting to take the up to 1.7kg gliding dinner to return. Imagine having a huge flying carnivore waiting for you at your front door every night you came home.

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

Greater Glider populations have decreased by 80% over the last 20 years and the quality of remaining private forestry habitats are now more important than ever. This species has some of the best opportunity to live sustainably within grazing production and private forestry systems, if managed with this mind, allowing the Burnett region the unique ability to meaningfully contribute to survival and recovery of this elusive species.

Through a series of workshops, the installation of living hollows and nesting-boxes, habitation monitoring and the development + distribution of educational-resources, this project will assist land managers to contribute to the long-term recovery of Greater Gliders within the Upper Burnett catchment.

You can download BCCA's Greater Glider guide and learn more about the 'Saving the endangered Greater Glider' project by visiting www.betterburnett.com/saving-the-greater-glider

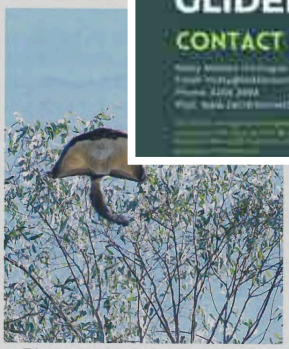


Photo credit: Sami Raines via WWF

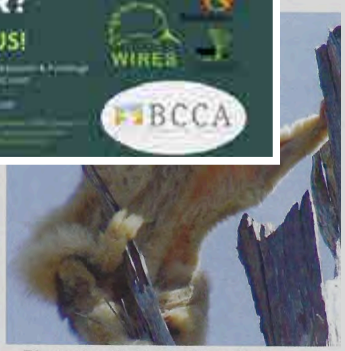


Photo Credit: Nadia Campbell (Goondicum Pastoral Co.)

To submit your sightings of greater gliders contact BCCA's ecologist:
Misty Neilson
Email: misty@betterburnett.com
Phone: 07 4166 3898

This BCCA program is currently funded by WIRES National Grants Program and Evolution Mining, and is being delivered in collaboration with Habi-Tec. It is also proudly supported by The Men's Shed (Monto), Goondicum Pastoral Co., Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (WPSQ), Accounting for Nature (AfN), Safe Haven - Australian Animal Care & Education (AACE).

You can make a tax deductible donation to this and other BCCA programs by visiting: https://betterburnett.com/about/

Key findings & results

The project covered the entire Burnett catchment, including its sub-catchments, which span a vast area of 43,450 km^2. For easier analysis, observation data was specifically assessed within the local government areas (LGAs) of North Burnett, South Burnett, Cherbourg, and Bundaberg, totaling 34,483 km^2 (see Figure 1).

Although the combined area of these LGAs is similar to that of South East Queensland (SEQ), the human population density in the Burnett is much lower—96% less (see Table 2). Due to the lack of accurate greater glider population monitoring data, the likelihood of incidental sightings in the Burnett is significantly lower compared to the densely populated areas of SEQ, regardless of the actual species abundance.

Figure 1: Local government areas (LGA's) of North Burnett, South Burnett, Cherbourg and Bundaberg.

Table 2: Human population density of Burnett local government areas (LGA's) and South East Queensland.

REGION	AREA (100HA)	POPULATION	POPULATION/100HA
North Burnett	1,967	10,702	0.5
South Burnett + Cherbourg	838	32,555	3.8
Bundaberg	643	96,914	15
TOTAL BURNETT LGA'S	**3,448**	**140,171**	**4**
SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND	**3,525**	**3,800,000**	**107.8**

Approximately 17% of the Burnett region is designated as State forests and reserves, including National Parks—an allocation that exceeds the state average by 8%. This figure does not include forestry on private property, such as areas within grazing production properties, which account for over 50% of the land use in the region.

The combination of low human population density and extensive forested and protected areas likely reduces the chances of incidental greater glider sightings. This makes it challenging to accurately represent the species' relative abundance in the region compared to the more urbanized South East. Additionally, land clearing, including clear felling and logging, has likely had a significant impact on greater glider populations in the area.

Although the region's relatively low human population reduces the likelihood of incidental sightings, it is interesting to note the rudimentary observation probability for each local government area (LGA) of the Burnett catchment:

Table 3: Publicly recorded greater glider observations per LGA from 2010

REGION	Project (community)	Other public records	Total	* Observation probability
North Burnett	33	5	38	1 in 282
South Burnett + Cherbourg	3	2	5	1 in 6,511
Bundaberg	8	3	11	1 in 8,810
TOTAL BURNETT LGA'S	**43**	**10**	**53**	**1 in 2,644**
Recorded by this project outside LGA's	12	N/A	12	N/A

* Calculated by dividing the LGA population (Table 2) by the total greater glider observations in Table 3

Table 4: Habitat enhancement sites and den installation details.

SITE	NO. OF TREES ENHANCED	NO. OF HOLLOWS INSTALLED	NESTING BOXES INSTALLED	TOTAL (HOLLOWS + BOXES)
Pastoral Site 1 (C1)	12	17	N/A	17
Pastoral Site 2 (C2)	4	6	4	10
Pastoral Site 3 (C3)	4	6	N/A	6
Pastoral Site 4 (C4)	5	6	N/A	6
Pastoral Site 5 (O)	4	4	1	5
Pastoral Site 6 (R1)	3	N/A	3	3
Pastoral Site 7 (R2)	3	N/A	3	3
Pastoral Site 8 (L)	7	N/A	7	7
Pastoral Site 9 (B)	1	N/A	1	1
Pastoral Site 10 (W)	1	N/A	1	1
TOTAL PASTORAL	**44**	**39**	**20**	**59**
Mining Rehab Site 1	10	9	1	10
TOTAL MINING REHAB	**10**	**9**	**1**	**10**
TOTAL SITES	**54**	**48**	**21**	**69**

Figure 2: Habitat enhancement areas are shown in light blue for pastoral sites and dark blue for mining rehabilitation sites. The total area involved in habitat enhancement activities is approximately 8,992 hectares. Protected land areas are shown in green.

Additionally, 9 living hollows and 1 nesting box were installed at the mining rehabilitation site (see Table 4). These habitat enhancement activities took place on a private land area of about 8,992 hectares (see Figure 2).

Community observations recorded by the program for the LGA's of North Burnett, South Burnett, Cherbourg, and Bundaberg, account for approximately 81% of all public records for these areas to date (Table 3).

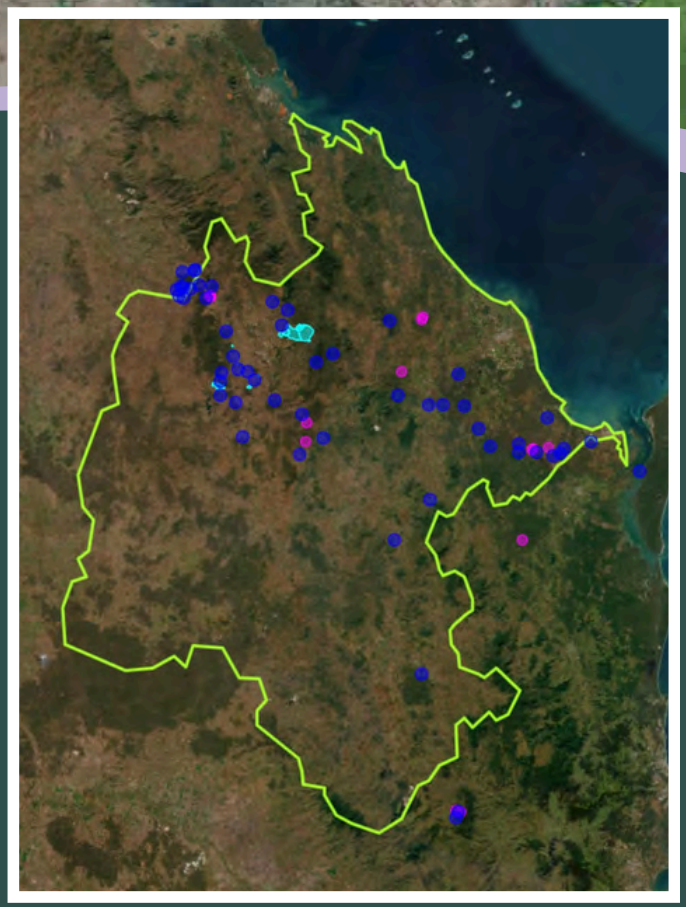


Figure 3: All public greater glider observations from 2010. This project (dark blue), all other records (pink). Habitat enhancement area (light blue).

Table 4: Species detected by UQ airbourne eDNA technology

SITE	NUMBER OF SPECIES	SPECIES
1	10	**Native species:** common brushtail possum, flying fox species 1, flying fox species 2, koala. **Introduced species:** cattle, chicken, pig, human, dog, sheep.
2	7	**Native species:** common brushtail possum, flying fox species 1, flying fox species 2, koala. **Introduced species:** pig, human, dog.
3	6	**Native species:** common brushtail possum, flying fox species 2, koala. **Introduced species:** human, dog, chicken
4	8	**Native species:** common brushtail possum, koala, swamp wallaby, crow **Introduced species:** human, dog, pig, cow
5	5	**Native species:** common brushtail possum, flying fox species 2, koala. **Introduced species:** dog, chicken
TOTAL	**11**	**Native species:** common brushtail possum, flying fox species 1, flying fox species 2, koala, swamp wallaby **Introduced species:** cattle, chicken, pig, human, dog, sheep.

Discussion

This project demonstrates that community-led conservation in productive landscapes can make a meaningful difference for endangered species like the greater glider. While observation data remains limited due to low human population density and fewer incidental sightings in the Burnett compared to more urbanised regions, this project has generated 81% of all public observation records for the species in the region since 2010. The critical role of targeted surveys, innovative monitoring tools, and citizen science in building the evidence base for conservation is crucial.

Using this data to inform habitat enhancement is equally valuable. By installing carved living hollows and nesting boxes across pastoral properties and a mining rehabilitation site, the project has directly increased the availability of den sites essential for glider survival and reproduction. These actions also benefit a broader suite of hollow-dependent species, reinforcing the importance of habitat-focused interventions.

These measures in conjunction with community engagement, workshops, educational resources, and the involvement of Traditional Owners have expanded local awareness and skills, creating stronger networks for long-term conservation. Importantly, the project demonstrated that practical, replicable solutions—such as community-built nesting boxes—can empower landholders to actively participate in species recovery independantly and sustainably into the future.

This project and outcomes build on and complement the findings of the 2018 'Greater Glider Habitat Resource Assessment in the Burnett Mary', which highlighted both the species' strong reliance on dry ironbark forests with abundant hollow-bearing trees and the extent of historical habitat loss across the region. While that study provided critical habitat mapping and highlighted population declines, this BCCA project aimed to translate those insights into practical action, restoring den sites, expanding monitoring capacity, and mobilising community support. Together, these efforts show how regional-scale research, citizen science and grassroots implementation can work hand-in-hand to protect and recover greater glider populations.

Overall, the project highlights that while the Burnett region presents challenges for monitoring and data collection, it also holds significant opportunity. With 67% of the land in pastoral agricultural use, and many remnant forests located on private properties, the future of greater gliders here depends on integrating conservation practices into working landscapes. By combining scientific monitoring, habitat restoration, citizen science and grassroots community action, this project provides a model for how endangered species can be supported within production systems.

These lessons provide a strong foundation for identifying what Burnett greater gliders need now.

What Burnett greater gliders need now

Despite greater gliders being reclassified from vulnerable to endangered, there hasn't been significant financial investment in their conservation or habitat. While Victoria has an Action Statement in place, Queensland still lacks a specific conservation strategy for greater gliders.

To guide future investment effectively, the Burnett 'Saving the Endangered Greater Glider' project has aligned its Priority Actions with the targets set in the Australian Government's conservation advice. This alignment aims to support the achievement of these national conservation goals.

The four 'Priority Action Areas' identified are:

1. Population surveys and habitat monitoring over time
2. Community led habitat restoration
3. Threat reduction
4. Community engagement

Burnett greater glider: Priority action areas

	ACTION AREA	DESCRIPTION
1	**Population surveys and habitat monitoring over time**	Population surveys and habitat monitoring over time (mapping, monitoring, research and reporting) including habitat mapping and spatial modelling.
2	**Community led habitat restoration**	Identify community and private property led restoration opportunities and partner with community and stakeholders to support the delivery of these projects.
3	**Threat reduction**	Identify priority areas for threat abatement and partner with local government and community to deliver threat abatement opportunities (incl. the use of innovative tools and technologies).
4	**Community Engagement**	Identify opportunities and partner with community and stakeholders to support the delivery of engagement projects (incl. citizen science, volunteering & education etc.)

Priority Action Area 1: Monitoring Program
Conducting population surveys and monitoring the habitat over time enables a comprehensive analysis of the population trends of greater gliders. This assessment helps determine their presence, distribution, and whether their population numbers are stable or experiencing a decline. It also helps identify priority locations for action areas 2, 3 and 4.

Priority Action Area 2: Habitat Restoration
By identifying restoration opportunities led by the community and collaborating with stakeholders, the implementation of restoration projects across landscapes can be a highly effective and efficient approach to achieving long-lasting restoration outcomes.

Priority Action Area 3: Threat Reduction
In order to ensure the effective long-term recovery of greater gliders in the Burnett region, it is crucial to identify priority areas for threat reduction and establish partnerships with local government and the community to implement threat abatement opportunities, tools and technologies. This approach is essential in addressing the challenges faced by the species and promoting their sustainable population recovery in the region.

Priority Action Area 4: Community Engagement
Enhancing community engagement, awareness, and education can play a crucial role in fostering community involvement and guiding collaborative efforts towards greater glider conservation. By providing opportunities for input and information sharing with government and other stakeholders, these initiatives can effectively facilitate on-ground action, particularly on private lands. Such efforts empower communities to actively contribute to the conservation of greater gliders and ensure a coordinated approach towards their preservation.

Community-driven projects have the potential to amplify on-ground impact significantly. The collective efforts of a thousand individuals working toward a single objective can achieve far greater results than one person or organisation attempting a thousand different tasks representing an opportunity for funding efficiencies. The QWaLC Health of Landcare Report 2023–2024 illustrates this clearly: 496 Landcare groups across Queensland mobilised more than 62,000 volunteers, who contributed 2.15 million hours of work in a single year—a contribution valued at nearly AUD 89.7 million (QWaLC, 2024). These figures highlight the immense value of grassroots conservation capacity, both in terms of effort and economic impact—precisely what this greater glider project has sought to harness through local workshops, citizen science initiatives, and collaborative landholder engagement.

Habitat restoration for greater gliders offers multiple environmental co-benefits, including enhanced natural capital, provision of habitat for a range of species and ecosystems, erosion control, improved water quality and soil fertility, pest management support, increased carbon sequestration, and new income diversification opportunities for landholders. Mechanisms such as the Nature Repair Market, alongside tools and methods from organisations like BeImpact and frameworks such as Accounting for Nature®, support emerging pathways to embed these actions within market structures. This approach not only delivers ecological outcomes but may also connect landholders to financial opportunities—an important lever for scaling conservation across private production landscapes.

However, dedicated investment and leadership from government is essential. Long-term funding and policy support ensures that community capacity, emerging markets, and restoration science are not just celebrated but embedded as core pillars of conservation, securing a future where greater gliders, other endangered species and the ecosystems they depend on can thrive.

Conclusion

The significance of citizen scientists and the conservation of private lands should not be overlooked. Citizen science projects hold the potential to augment scientific data by providing previously unattainable information, while conservation efforts on private land have the capacity to greatly enhance conservation outcomes. Considering that approximately 60% of Australia's land mass is privately managed (51% managed for agriculture), focusing on conservation initiatives in these areas can have a substantial impact on overall conservation efforts.

The successful implementation of effective recovery activities for endangered species, such as the greater glider, relies on the ongoing support and collaboration of the community, land managers, and citizen scientists. However, it is equally crucial for the government to demonstrate a dedicated investment in order to prevent the permanent disappearance of greater glider populations in regional areas like the Burnett.

By prioritizing the sustainable long-term recovery of endangered species in regions that are less impacted by urban development, we are not only securing the future of these species, but also safeguarding the overall biodiversity. These species, including the greater glider, have the potential to thrive within healthy grazing agricultural production systems, ensuring the preservation of our natural world and our own future.

References and further reading:

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