



Our region.  
Healthy.  
Smart.  
Creative.

Your Environment  
Levy in action

# Environment Levy Annual Report 2018-2019





## Acknowledgement of Country

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the traditional Country of the Kabi Kabi Peoples and the Jinibara Peoples of the coastal plains and hinterlands of the Sunshine Coast and recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance. We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging – and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the Sunshine Coast community

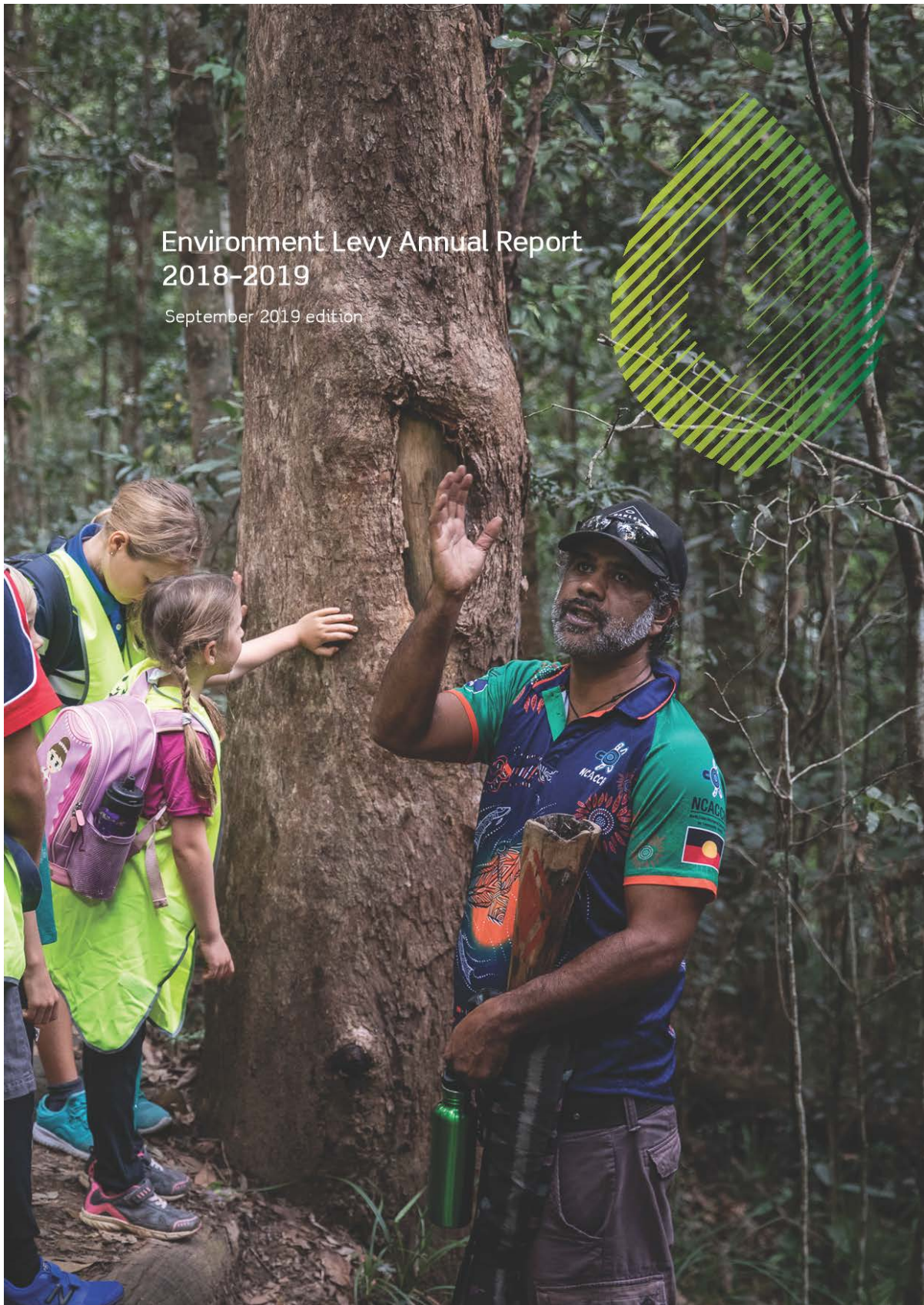
### Disclaimer

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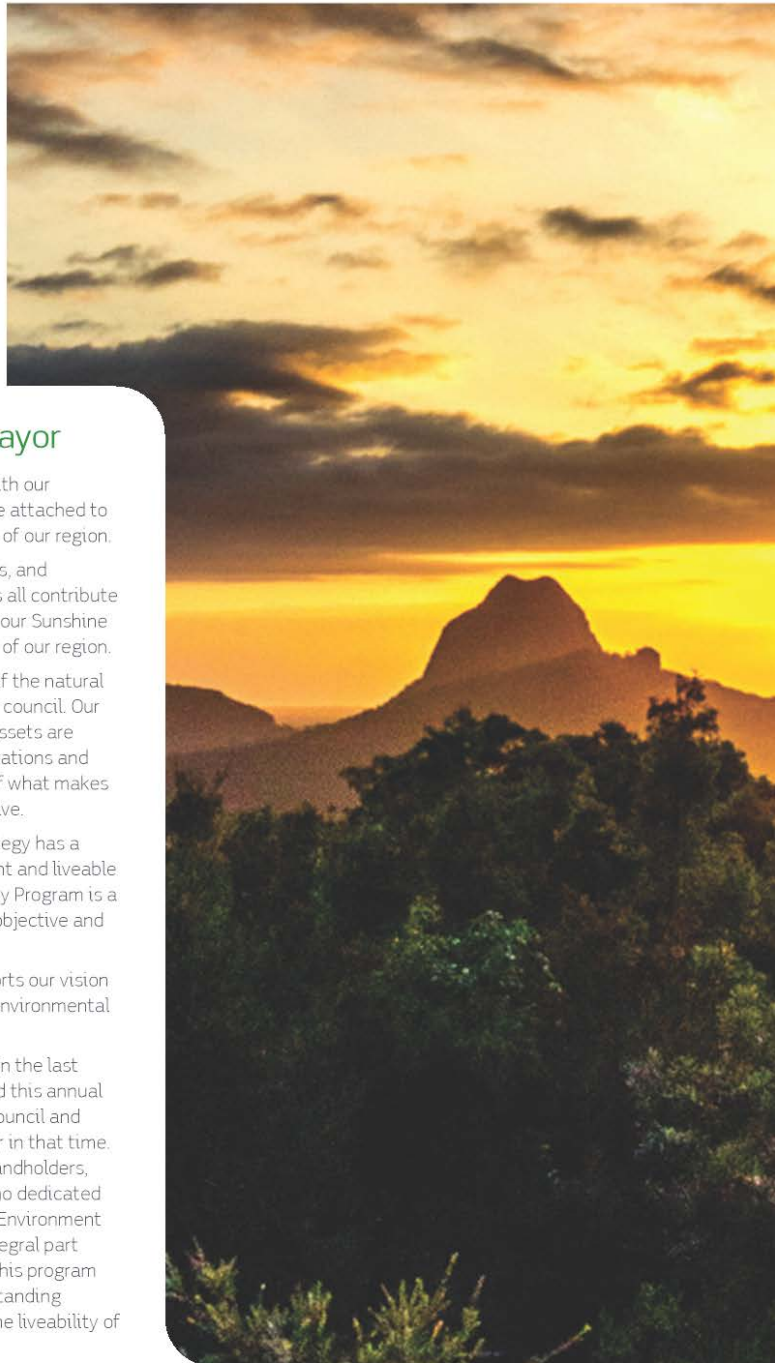
Sunshine Coast Council would like to acknowledge the following who contributed images to this document:

Hermann, L. Glasshouse Mountains Lookout Sunrise (page 4/5), Axelsen, T. Kondalilla Falls (page 6/7), Gillett, A. Koala release (page 7), Cody, M. Maroochy River Mouth (page 7), Getty Images Long-nosed potoroo (page 8), Gardiner, R. USC Detection Dogs (page 12), Ellis, B. UQ Koala Researchers (page 12), Australia Zoo Wildlife Hospital, Hermione the koala (page 12/13), University of the Sunshine Coast, Wildlife monitoring images (page 13), Amos, M. Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group Inc award (page 15), Water Technology. Blue Heart (page 17), Nolan, A. Summer Salt Spray (page 18), Harrison, R. Alexandra Headland (page 18/19), Farquharson, E. Coastal Pathway (page 19), Tiaro and District Landcare Group, Mary River Turtle & eggs (page 20/21), O'Connor, J. Flying fox images (pages 23/25), Svensson, F. Maroochy River (page 24), O'Connor, J. Eastern sedge frog (pages 24/25), Queensland Museum. Black-breasted button quail (page 24).









## Message from the Mayor

Our Sunshine Coast Council shares with our community, the value and importance attached to the outstanding natural environment of our region.

Our waterways and coastal foreshores, and diversity of native plants and animals all contribute significantly to the attractiveness of our Sunshine Coast and maintaining the liveability of our region.

The preservation and enhancement of the natural environment is a major priority of our council. Our council wants to ensure our natural assets are available for current and future generations and that they remain an important part of what makes the Sunshine Coast a great place to live.

Our Environment and Liveability Strategy has a vision to deliver a healthy environment and liveable Sunshine Coast. The Environment Levy Program is a key funding source for pursuing this objective and is critical to the strategy's success.

The Environment Levy Program supports our vision while at the same time, creating an environmental legacy for today and for the future.

Our activities and our achievements in the last 12-months have been substantial and this annual report provides a snapshot of what council and our partners have been able to deliver in that time. We owe our thanks to the students, landholders, community groups and volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to support the Environment Levy Program. Their efforts are an integral part of what we seek to achieve through this program and I wish to acknowledge their outstanding contribution to our community and the liveability of our region.

Council is pleased to showcase the actions and outcomes that this important program has realised in the last 12-months and we look forward to the coming year.

MAYOR MARK JAMIESON



### Message from Councillor McKay

As the Environment Portfolio Councillor, I am proud to showcase what is being delivered each year through the Environment Levy Program. The Environment Levy enables council and our community to achieve so much for the Sunshine Coast's natural environment.

Not only is protecting, maintaining and enhancing our environment a key priority for council, it is also a vital element in preserving the liveability of our region and the prosperity of our community well into the future.

The past 12-months has proven most successful for the Environment Levy Program. Council has purchased land for conservation, invested in projects to build our knowledge, continued restoring land and riparian areas and partnered with Sunshine Coast students, landholders and community groups to educate and deliver on-ground environmental improvements.

Our network of partnership groups magnifies and extends council's reach and efforts to preserve and maintain our natural environment.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge our partnership groups. Thanks to their enthusiasm, passion and commitment we've been able to implement a range of outcomes in support of the region's biodiversity, waterways and coastal foreshores.

The collective outcomes achieved supports our vision to be Australia's most sustainable region - healthy, smart, creative.

**Councillor Jenny McKay (Environment Portfolio)**







## Transforming the Sunshine Coast

From our hinterland to our coastline—the Sunshine Coast’s natural areas not only support a diversity of plants and animals, but provide the foundation for the Sunshine Coast way of life.

Sunshine Coast Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing our region’s natural assets, liveability and environmental credentials.

The Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017 articulates council’s strategic approach and long-term vision for shaping the future of our region. It also sets clear biodiversity; waterways and wetlands; and coastal targets for the year 2041.

The strategy responds to the challenges and opportunities our region faces into the future. It guides growth and supports a strong economy whilst protecting and enhancing our natural assets.

The Environment Levy is a key funding source for achieving this balance. It assists in delivering a number of the Environment and Liveability Strategy’s Transformational Actions.



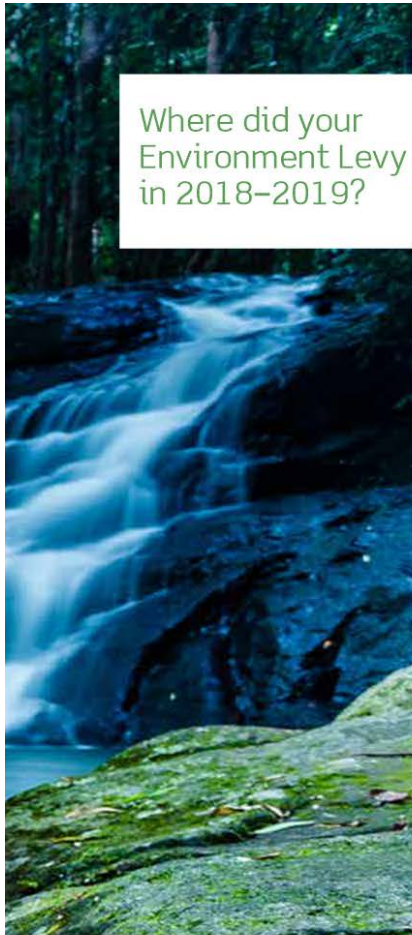
Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017  
Transformational Actions



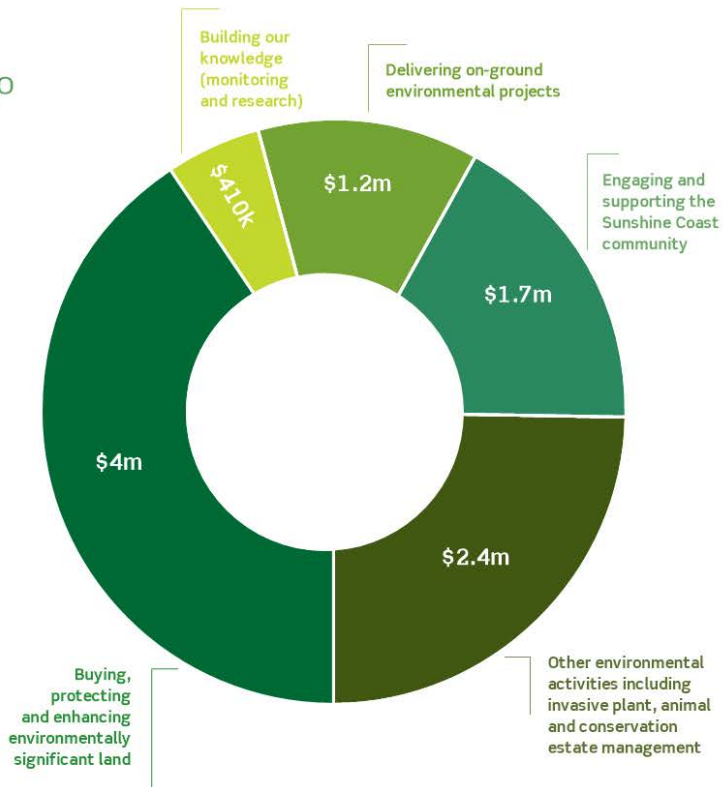
Connecting nature and people



Maintaining the blue by protecting the green



Where did your Environment Levy go in 2018–2019?



Total spend: \$9.7m



### The Natural Environment

#### Biodiversity

Our native plants, animals and habitats are healthy, resilient and valued by the community.

#### Waterways and wetlands

Waterways and wetlands are healthy, resilient to change and valued by the community.

#### Coastal

Our coastal areas are healthy, resilient to climate change impacts and support sustainable use.



Healthy coast



Managing our invasive plants and animals



An involved community

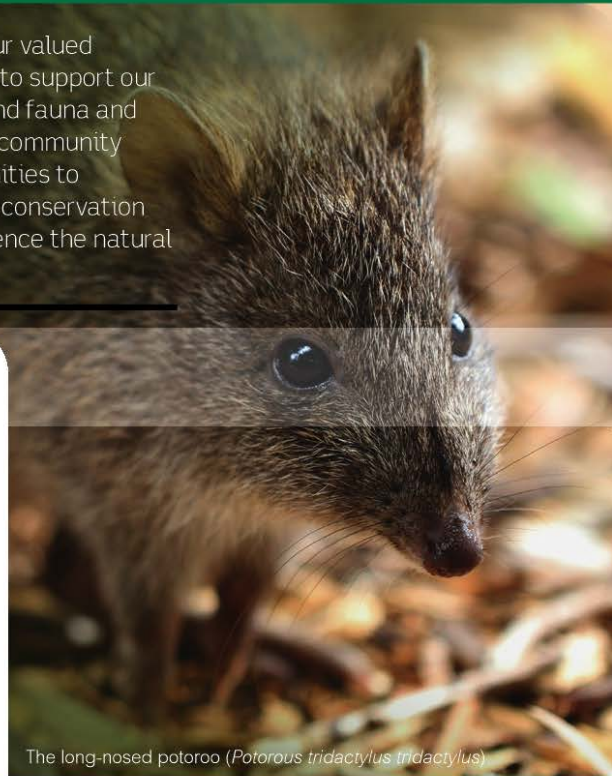


Building our knowledge



## Connecting nature and people

Connecting our valued habitat areas to support our native flora and fauna and providing the community with opportunities to participate in conservation and to experience the natural environment.



The long-nosed potoroo (*Potorous tridactylus tridactylus*)

### Land acquisitions for conservation

Each year the Environment Levy provides significant investment towards land acquisitions within our local government area to:

- protect, preserve and enhance our natural environment
- consolidate and expand council's conservation network
- preserve native plants and animals
- protect and enhance wildlife corridors.

**3**  
properties  
acquired

**56ha**  
across  
3 catchments

**\$2.28m**  
invested

**\$714k**  
to maintain the  
Environment Levy  
conservation  
estate

**\$570k**  
invested  
in establishing  
Environment  
Levy  
acquired  
properties

### A unique and rare critter

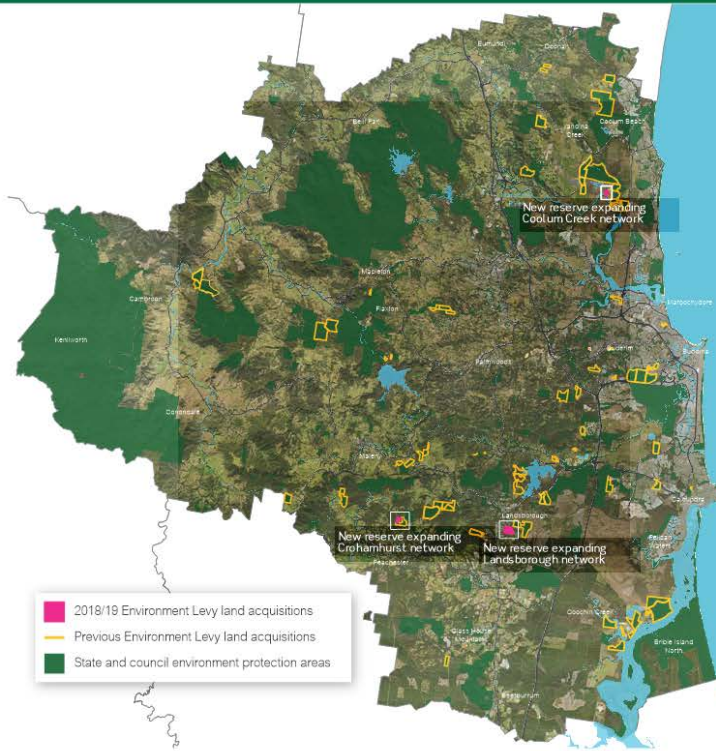
The long-nosed potoroo is a small marsupial that is part of the rat-kangaroo family and uniquely hops with its body almost horizontal. It is a solitary animal that is rarely seen due to its nocturnal habits. It prefers sclerophyll forest, coastal heath and woodland where there is dense understorey to shelter. Potoroos forage in more open areas for fungi (a major component of their diet), flowers, fruit, seeds, leaves, stems, roots and bulbs.

Long-nosed potoroo populations are highly fragmented—impacted by a range of threats including loss of habitat and predation by feral cats and European red foxes. Through the protection of potoroo habitat and targeted landscape control of invasive species—council is contributing to the conservation of this species, listed as vulnerable under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.



The long-nosed potoroo caught on camera

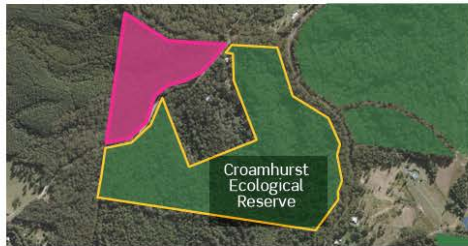




### Maroochy-Noosa Wallum Area

Council has continued to invest in the Maroochy floodplain area with the acquisition of a 9 hectare property on the Maroochy River. This acquisition expands on nearby Coolool Creek Environment Reserve network, Unitywater’s Yandina Creek Wetland and the state managed Coolool Creek Conservation Park. This network of protected areas provides for the protection and enhancement of the Maroochy-Noosa Wallum Area—a corridor comprising a diversity of remnant habitats of coastal lowlands and floodplains.

This latest acquisition will provide opportunities for riparian restoration projects, water quality improvements and future recreational outcomes.



### Expanding Crohamhurst Ecological Reserve

The acquisition of a 10 hectare parcel of land at Cemetery Road, Crohamhurst has expanded Crohamhurst Ecological Reserve to almost 35 hectares. The acquisition builds upon the London Creek Environment Reserve network—an area of significant Environment Levy investment.

This land supports endangered rainforest and vulnerable eucalypt habitat and protects habitat for the threatened long-nosed potoroo—a species that is highly restricted in the Sunshine Coast local government area due to habitat loss and land use changes. The presence of potoroos on the site has been confirmed through fauna surveys (see page 8).



### Expanding Landsborough’s reserve network

Landsborough’s environment reserve network has been expanded with the acquisition of a 37 hectare site in close proximity to Racemosa Environment Reserve—purchased by the Environment Levy in 2005.

The new reserve provides habitat for significant vegetation communities including Commonwealth listed critically endangered lowland rainforest. The acquisition comprises 700m of riparian habitat as well as state significant wetland which provides habitat for the threatened tusked frog (*Adelotus brevis*), wallum rocketfrog (*Litoria freycineti*) and wallum froglet (*Crinia tinnula*).

## Activation of Environment Levy acquired properties

Environment Levy land acquisitions allow council to engage with the community through a number of different events hosted on these lands. Whilst not all the events are funded by the Environment Levy, they add value to Environment Levy acquired lands through habitat restoration or replanting, and assist to connect people with nature in new and exciting ways. The activities create a sense of local pride and ownership in the surrounding community and school groups who are invited to be involved.

**7**  
**events**  
held on Environment  
Levy acquired  
properties

More than  
**800**  
**community**  
**members**  
engaged

**3,240**  
native  
trees  
planted



## Ninderry Bushcare Group takes action to restore Environment Levy land

This year the Mt Ninderry Bushcare Group was formed. They have been working to restore areas in the Mt Ninderry Environment Reserve purchased through the Environment Levy in 2013.

To assist in the protection of threatened rainforest and eucalypt vegetation communities the group has removed weeds such as lantana (*Lantana camara*) and corky passionflower (*Passiflora suberosa*). They have also planted native species such as Richmond birdwing butterfly vine (*Pararistolochia praevanosa*) which is the main food plant for larvae of the vulnerable Richmond birdwing butterfly (*Ornithoptera richmondia*).



## Buderim Forest Network Neighbours Day

An inaugural planting day was held on the Buderim property purchased through the Environment Levy in 2018. The property protects and enhances the Buderim Forest Network, a mosaic of environment reserves totalling more than 100 hectares.

The Buderim Forest Network Neighbours Day resulted in the planting of 700 rainforest trees to support the restoration of native vegetation and habitat at Brecon Crescent. More than 70 local community members attended the event — fostering a greater community connection to the Buderim Forest Network.





### Doonan Open Data Expo

The first Doonan Open Data Expo took place on Doonan Creek Environment Reserve — a 250 hectare reserve purchased through the Environment Levy in 2013. This innovative event focused on connecting nature and people through technology. Using the reserve as a microcosm for the greater Sunshine Coast, the event aimed to inspire thought and interest into how technology can assist when caring for and restoring the environment, and how it may be used to predict and prepare for the future.



### Annie Hehir Enviro Workshop

For the second year in a row almost 60 students from Peachester State School attended the Annie Hehir Enviro Workshop. The event was held on Annie Hehir Environment Reserve — a 45 hectare property purchased through the Environment Levy in 2011 and further expanded in 2017. Students learned about the Jinibara People's strong connection with plants and animals and took part in a range of activities relating to conservation and land management.



## Koala conservation

Environment Levy funding has continued to support the implementation of the *Sunshine Coast Koala Conservation Plan 2015*. The Plan covers a range of actions including better understanding where koalas live on the Sunshine Coast, their health and genetic diversity.

Actions undertaken during 2018/19 include:

- planting of 500 food trees through various events in the Witta/Reesville areas
- completion of a project focusing on understanding the characteristics of Sunshine Coast

koala populations including locations and genetic diversity

- ongoing tracking and health monitoring of koalas in the Maroochy Bushland Botanic Garden and Reesville.

**\$100k**  
provided to  
**6 fauna groups**  
and hospitals  
that provide care to  
sick or injured wildlife

**\$75k**  
invested into  
koala  
conservation,  
management  
and research

## Building our understanding of koala populations

A key component of effective koala conservation management is the collection of robust scientific data to better understand koala populations on the Sunshine Coast as well as the threats that are having the greatest impact.



### University of the Sunshine Coast partnership

A three-year koala research project in collaboration with University of the Sunshine Coast's Detection Dogs for Conservation unit has been completed. The project focused on increasing knowledge of the distribution and genetics of the koalas on the Sunshine Coast through the use of koala scat detection dogs and next-generation genotyping.

In particular the project sought to establish the locations of previously unknown koala populations and determine their genetic diversity and genetic connections to other populations. Report findings have provided evidence to inform future koala conservation and management actions and highlighted the need for the implementation of longitudinal monitoring to better understand factors affecting population distributions.



### University of Queensland partnership

Council has continued to work in partnership with the University of Queensland to track and monitor the health of koalas in the Maroochy Bushland Botanic Garden and Reesville area. Findings from this research enables council to adaptively manage and enhance habitat in identified hot spot areas.





### Planning for improved fauna movement

A two-year project is underway to better understand fauna movement across the Sunshine Coast local government area.

The project deliverables include:

- a **background research report** to inform council on the latest research surrounding road infrastructure impacts and fauna mitigation infrastructure
- **monitoring** a number of existing fauna infrastructure sites being led by the University of the Sunshine Coast
- **landscape scale spatial modelling** to understand fauna movement for selected fauna groups and comprehensive field surveys at identified priority sites.



Above and below:  
Wildlife captured on camera traversing infrastructure being monitored.



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### Connecting through conservation

Through the Environment Levy, council supports a number of programs that provides funding to a range of not-for-profit community groups and private landowners to deliver natural environment outcomes across our region.

Powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*)

#### Environment Levy grants

Birdlife Australia has received funding support to coordinate a citizen science project to continue building our understanding of the threatened powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*). The project aims to determine powerful owl breeding locations across council's environment reserve network. It will engage more than 100 citizen science volunteers and provide opportunities for community members to connect with nature. The data will be used to develop an initial species distribution model that will help to inform decision-making to protect powerful owl habitat and ensure the ongoing successful breeding of this species.

#### Landholder Environment Grants and Voluntary Conservation Agreement Program

Financial assistance was provided to private rural landholders to undertake projects on their properties as well as to support the establishment of Voluntary Conservation Agreements and ongoing maintenance on environmentally significant private land.

#### Environment Levy Partnerships

**\$609k**  
 provided to  
**22**  
 partnership  
 groups

#### New and re-newed 2018/19 Partnerships:

**Koala Rescue Queensland Inc.**  
**Friends of Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens Inc.**

**Wildlife Rescue Sunshine Coast Inc.**  
**Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group Inc.**

**\$13k**  
 provided in  
 Environment  
 Levy grants to  
**4**  
 not-for-profit  
 community  
 organisations

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LBCCG members receiving their award

**Land for Wildlife program incentives**

The Land for Wildlife program has celebrated its 20th anniversary. The Sunshine Coast Land for Wildlife program has the largest membership of any other local government area participating in the national program. Across our region more than 1,000 landholders are collectively restoring more than 8,000 hectares of land.

**Partnership group honoured with national recognition**

The Environment Levy has provided partnership funding to Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group Inc. (LBCCG) to support their ongoing work reducing risks to water quality in the Lake Baroon catchment.

LBCCG was recognised at the 2018 National Landcare Award for Excellence in Sustainable Farm Practices.

The Environment Levy partnership funding assists LBCCG to work with landholders through workshops and awareness raising events as well as to manage the implementation of a range of projects including on-ground restoration. LBCCG also provides professional services to the Maleny and district community.

**5**  
 new VCAs  
 bringing total to  
**80**  
 - protecting  
**1,222**  
 hectares

**\$270k**  
 Landholder  
 Environment  
 grants  
 provided to  
 88 private  
 landholders

Land for Wildlife incentives:

**162**  
 nestboxes  
 on  
**54**  
 properties

**30,550**  
 seedlings  
 on  
**118**  
 properties

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## Maintaining the blue by protecting the green

Our local government area comprises five catchments – areas where water is collected by the natural landscape topography and makes its way to our coastline via a network of rivers, creeks and wetland areas.

As well as supporting a range of habitats for diverse wildlife, our waterways and wetlands provide a range of ecosystem services that contribute to the liveability of our region.

Riparian zones are the lands (and the vegetation) adjoining rivers or creeks. Healthy riparian zones are generally nutrient rich and provide high quality habitats complex vegetation structure. The health of our catchments (and their waterways

and wetlands) is intrinsically linked to riparian zone health through the flow of water and nutrients. When riparian zones are degraded waterway health is impacted in a variety of ways including the acceleration of nutrient flow into our waterways and streambank erosion.

There is **12,000km** of waterways in the local government area



Currimundi creek riparian restoration site



The five major catchments of the local government area

### Currimundi Creek rehabilitation

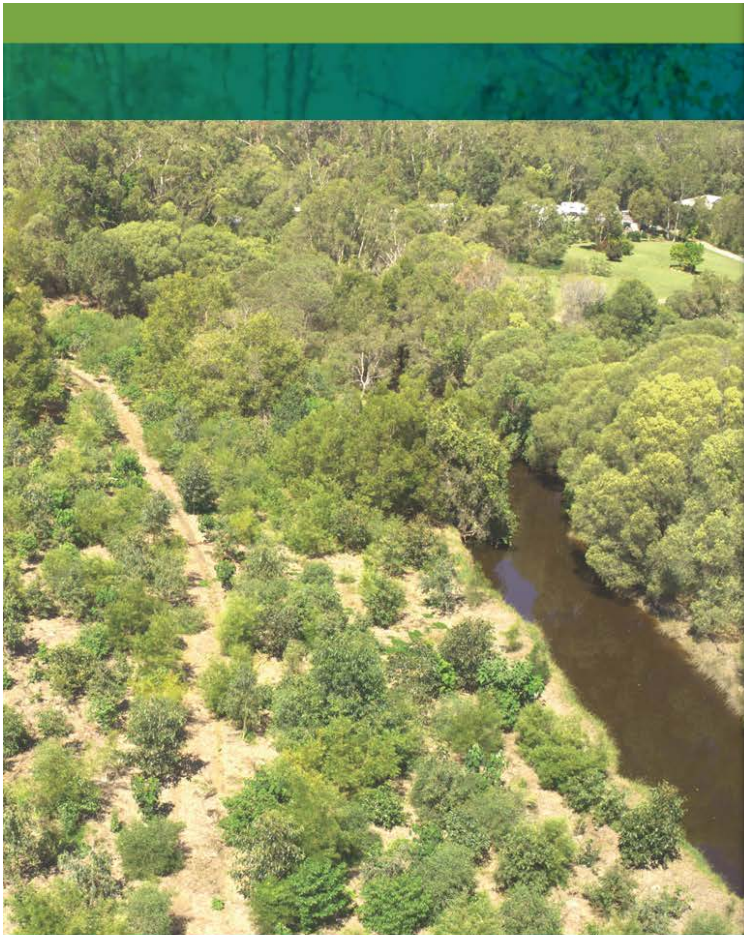
Four year project – second year

**6,000m<sup>2</sup>** of riparian habitat under restoration

**1,650** native plants maintained

**\$13k** invested (\$34k to date)





Yandina Creek floodplain study area

### The Blue Heart Partnership

The Blue Heart is an area of more than 5,000 hectares in the Maroochy River catchment. It contains important environmental features and acts as a critical flood storage area to protect the catchment from flood impacts.

The Blue Heart project aims to protect and manage the most critical areas of the floodplain. At a regional level it enables council to:

- take a proactive approach to understand and manage the impacts of coastal hazards
- establish a significant and complex wetland and floodplain for our region
- enhance water quality of the Maroochy River system.

At its core is an area of around 1,200 hectares, which is under the care and control of Blue Heart partners:

- Sunshine Coast Council
- Department of Environment and Science
- Unitywater.

This year the Environment Levy funded a project to better understand the hydrology and ecology of the core Blue Heart area to inform the long-term management of these lands and enhanced habitats to deliver water quality improvements.

The Environment Levy catchment restoration projects focus on restoring riparian areas to a natural (or well-managed) state through weed removal and planting of native species to improve overall riparian structure and diversity.

#### Mooloolah River rehabilitation

Four year project – second year

**6.5ha**  
of riparian habitat  
under restoration

**43,000**  
native plants  
maintained

**\$173k**  
invested  
(\$300k to date)

#### Mary River rehabilitation

Four year project – third year

**6ha**  
of riparian habitat  
under restoration

**45,000**  
native plants  
maintained

**\$61k**  
invested  
(\$469k to date)



## Healthy coast

Providing a strategic and coordinated approach to the protection, sustainable use and enjoyment of our dunes, beaches, rocky shores and near-shore marine waters.

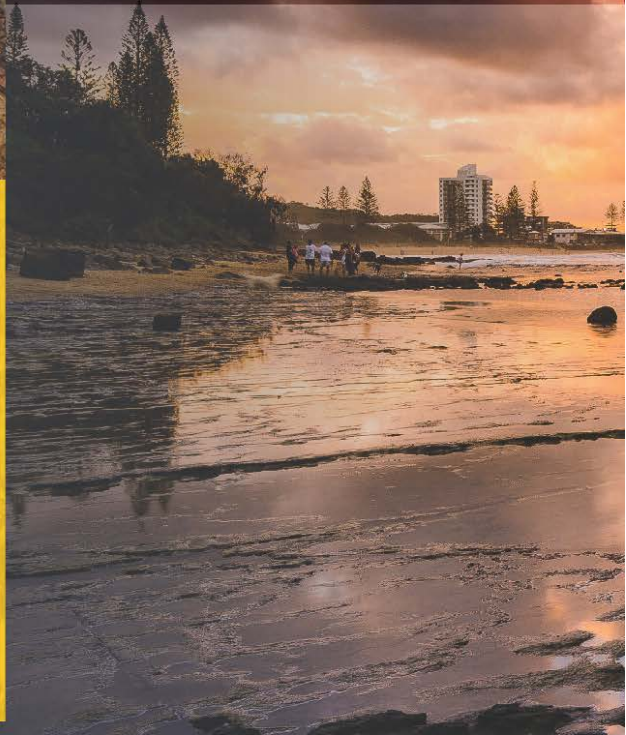


### Healthy Coast Report Project

Further investments have been made into council's Healthy Coast Report project, a multi-phased project to establish a monitoring and reporting framework focused on the environmental condition and beneficial use of our coastal areas.

Multiple organisations have contributed to the development of the framework, including the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), Healthy Land and Water (HLW) and Griffith University. Council is working with USC and HLW during the baseline phase to develop the first Coastal Health Report in 2021.

The project will provide a consolidated region-wide understanding of coastal health to inform and guide effective management responses to coastal pressures, including population growth and climate change.



### Healthy Coast reporting themes:

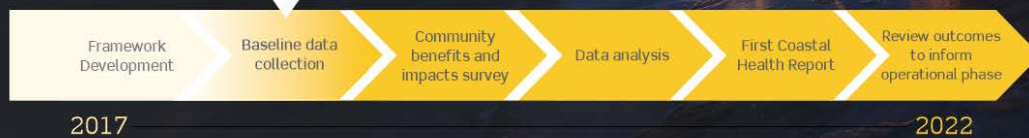
**Coastal zone context**  
 The broad-scale values and influences that affect the coastline.

**Coastline condition**  
 The physical and ecological state or health of beaches, headlands, lower estuaries and coastal lagoons.

**Community benefits and impacts**  
 Community access, use and perceived value of the coast.

**Council and community actions**  
 Strategic and on-ground actions that support coastline condition, beneficial use and coastal community resilience.

#### Project phases:



2017

2022





## Protecting our beaches and headlands

Environment Levy funding has continued to support the delivery of a range of on-ground activities to protect and enhance our coastal areas, including our coastal foreshore reserve network extending from Stumers Creek Bushland Conservation Reserve in the north to Happy Valley foreshore in the south.

These activities include:

- native revegetation and regeneration
- invasive plant management and control
- embellishment and maintenance
- BushCare support.

Works are undertaken in accordance with council's Bushland Operational Assessments and support the implementation of council's Shoreline Erosion Management Plan to help preserve our coastal areas.



Almost  
**300ha**  
managed through  
the coastal  
foreshore network

**\$845k**  
invested into  
coastal dune  
rehabilitation and  
shoreline erosion  
management



## Managing our invasive plants and animals

Providing a collaborative, effective and efficient response to the management of invasive plants and animals to reduce their social, economic and environmental impacts.

Mary River turtle (*Elusor macrurus*)



Salvinia weevil (*Cyrtobagous salviniae*)



Wick wiper trailer used to treat giant's rat's tail grass

### A pesticide-free approach

Council has continued to work with landholders in managing invasive plants using biocontrol agents — a method of controlling pests through the use of organisms rather than pesticides.

One invasive plant targeted through biocontrol is salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*) a free-floating aquatic fern that forms thick 'mats' — that smother habitats and degrade water quality.

The salvinia weevil burrows into the stems and buds of the invasive fern — weakening it and causing it to sink. With assistance from community groups, who breed the weevils at their specialised facilities, council has introduced weevils into water bodies across Sunshine Coast catchments with many treated sites seeing a substantial reduction in salvinia.

### Collaborating with the community

A new biosecurity event was held this year to foster collaborative management and control of pasture weeds such as giant rat's tail grass (*Sporobolus pyramidalis*, *S. natalensis*).

The event was held in partnership with AgForce, Biosecurity Queensland and the Coochin Creek Fruit Growers Co-operative and was attended by more than 100 rural land holders.

Attendees learned about recent trials and research undertaken into pasture weeds and services provided by council to assist in invasive plant management.





Mary River turtle eggs

### Protecting the Mary River turtle

The Mary River turtle is endemic to the Mary River catchment and is vulnerable to a range of threats including nest predation by European foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*)—a major contributor to population decline.

The Mary River Turtle Program is a collaboration between Sunshine Coast Council, Tiaro Landcare, Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, Gympie Regional Council, Noosa Shire Council and Fraser Coast Regional Council and is the first of its kind in our region.

Council is providing support to the program through monitoring and the provision of fox control measures and to minimise impacts on nesting turtles and their habitats.

### Award for excellence

Council's Feral Animal Education and Control Team received the *Queensland Pest Animal Team Award for Excellence in Pest Management* from the Queensland Weed Society. The award recognises the team's outstanding contribution and exceptional results for pest animal management.

The Feral Animal Team continue to work in collaboration with multiple research organisations including Biosecurity Queensland (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries), University of the Sunshine Coast, Deakin University and the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions to develop and deliver innovative pest control responses across the region.

More than  
**1,200**  
invasive  
animals  
removed

**14**  
community  
education  
and  
engagement  
events and  
workshops

**\$610k**  
invested  
into  
invasive  
species  
management  
officers

**\$120k**  
invested  
into  
community  
engagement  
and support



## An involved community

A major engagement and marketing program to inspire and empower the community to value the environment and play their part in a liveable, sustainable and resilient future.

### Kids in Action

Council's Kids in Action Program has gone from strength to strength with more than 300 students and teachers from 26 schools taking part in the 2019 program. This year's theme, Connecting to Country: Celebrating nature's icons, acknowledges 2019 as being the United Nation's Year of Indigenous Languages.

The Environmental Project Day was held on Brannocks Ecological Reserve, an Environment Levy acquired reserve on the boundary of Kabi Kabi and Jinibara Country in Landsborough.

Students took part in a variety of hands-on workshops delivered by First Nations representatives and visited a culturally significant site in our region.

The program not only assists students to develop their understanding of native flora, fauna and connections to ecosystems, but also fosters an ethic of care and connection to place inspired by the natural resource management practices developed over tens of thousands of years by First Nations People.







### Little Aussie Battlers program

Council recently became the first Queensland local government to partner in the the Little Aussie Battler program which provides resources and advocates for the protection of Australia's four flying-fox species. Sunshine Coast provides habitat for three of these species, the grey-headed flying-fox, the little red flying-fox and the black flying-fox.

### Flying fox education

For the fifth year council held a range of community events including the Australian Bat Night held at Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve. This event was attended by more than 150 community members.

Council remains committed to educating the community to improve the awareness of the important role flying foxes play in maintaining Australian native forest ecosystems.

**\$20k**  
invested  
in flying fox  
education



More than  
**700**  
community  
members  
engaged  
through a range  
of events

**1st**  
Queensland  
council  
to become a  
partner in  
"Little Aussie  
Battlers" program



## Building our knowledge

Enabling evidence based decisions for a healthy environment and liveable Sunshine Coast.

Eastern sedge frog (*Litoria fallax*)



### Monitoring our waterways

Through council's ongoing partnership with Healthy Land and Water comprehensive water quality monitoring and modelling has continued throughout the region's waterways. The monitoring of Pumicestone Passage, Mooloolah River, Maroochy River and Upper Stanley River catchments determines condition grades and sets long-term targets to improve our catchments.

Council's partnership with Healthy Land and Water also supports the Healthy Waterplay Program.

This initiative assesses water quality to ensure our waterways are clean and safe for recreational use. Assessment of microbial water quality enables the community to make informed decisions about waterway recreation.

**\$130k**  
invested

**4**  
Sunshine  
Coast  
catchments  
monitored

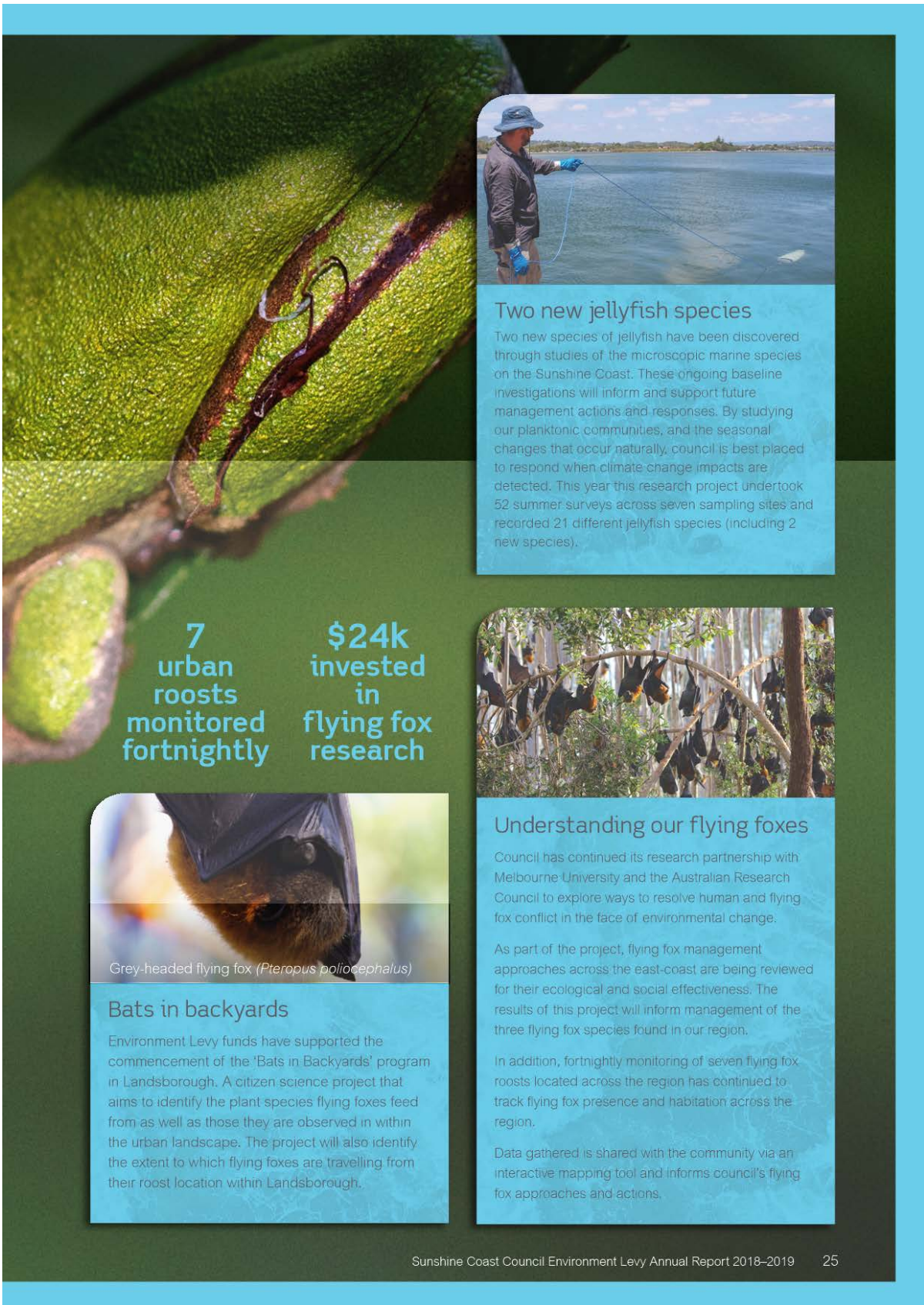



Black-breasted button quail (*Turnix melanogaster*)

### Protecting our biodiversity

In establishing our environment reserves flora and fauna surveys are undertaken across all new reserve sites to assist in understanding biodiversity and inform management. Hundreds of plant and animal species have been detected across our newest Environment Levy acquired reserves including a range of **threatened species** such as the black-breasted button quail (*Turnix melanogaster*) which is listed as vulnerable under the state's *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.








### Two new jellyfish species

Two new species of jellyfish have been discovered through studies of the microscopic marine species on the Sunshine Coast. These ongoing baseline investigations will inform and support future management actions and responses. By studying our planktonic communities, and the seasonal changes that occur naturally, council is best placed to respond when climate change impacts are detected. This year this research project undertook 52 summer surveys across seven sampling sites and recorded 21 different jellyfish species (including 2 new species).

**7** urban roosts monitored fortnightly  
**\$24k** invested in flying fox research




### Understanding our flying foxes

Council has continued its research partnership with Melbourne University and the Australian Research Council to explore ways to resolve human and flying fox conflict in the face of environmental change.

As part of the project, flying fox management approaches across the east-coast are being reviewed for their ecological and social effectiveness. The results of this project will inform management of the three flying fox species found in our region.

In addition, fortnightly monitoring of seven flying fox roosts located across the region has continued to track flying fox presence and habitation across the region.

Data gathered is shared with the community via an interactive mapping tool and informs council's flying fox approaches and actions.



Grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*)

### Bats in backyards

Environment Levy funds have supported the commencement of the 'Bats in Backyards' program in Landsborough. A citizen science project that aims to identify the plant species flying foxes feed from as well as those they are observed in within the urban landscape. The project will also identify the extent to which flying foxes are travelling from their roost location within Landsborough.

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