NORTH COAST REGIONAL LANDCARE NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 – 2025

OUR MISSION

People and the environment thriving together across the Nations of the North Coast.

OUR VISION

A cohesive and leading voice which builds connections to care for land, and cultivates inclusive, resilient communities for generations to come.

Contents

Our Operation 1
Acknowledgment of Country.....1
Reporting Period.....1
Message from the Chair 1
Committee and Staff.....4
Financial Summary.....4
Partnerships & Programs 5
NSW Landcare Enabling Program 5
Projects 6
Executive.....8
Regional Community of Practice.....8
Network Map 9

Our Operation

North Coast Regional Landcare Network is an independent not for profit organisation supporting 11 member Landcare networks across the region. We connect NSW North Coast's community Landcare groups to address local and regional Sustainable Agriculture, Natural Resource and Environmental Management issues. Networks, their groups and volunteers use community action to achieve primarily on-ground environmental and community capacity building outcomes.

Established in 2009, North Coast Regional Landcare Network provides a regional voice through leadership, governance, communication and financial management. North Coast Regional Landcare Network undertakes regional scale projects, developing network and community skills, creating partnerships and delivering business activities to support and resource our member networks.

Acknowledgement of Country

North Coast Regional Landcare Network is proud to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians and original Landcarers of the land on which we live and work. We pay our respect to Elders' past, present, and emerging.

Reporting Period

This report covers the operation of North Coast Regional Landcare Network (NCRLN) for the 2024-2025 financial year.

Message from the Chair

The 2024-25 financial year has been another year of activity and growth with an emphasis on looking forward.

We are in a strong financial position as evidenced by the included financial statement. Our finances continue to be well managed by our Treasurer, Executive Support Officer and accountants Thomas, Noble & Russell. Our focus should be to consolidate our financial position to meet the goal of increasing the self-sufficiency of Landcare groups and networks through leveraging investment to activate a diverse range of funding sources.

NCRLN continues to be well represented at the state and national levels of Landcare. We have representatives on the Board of Landcare NSW, the Landcare NSW State Advisory Council and the National Landcare Network. These representations provide us with the opportunity to participate in future planning that may impact Landcare on the North Coast and is a platform for us to ensure our voice is heard. All member groups across the network have access to discussions that occur at these levels through feedback at General meetings and via the distribution of State Advisory Council decisions to all network chairs and coordinators.

During this financial year we have recruited three new employees – a Regional Landcare Coordinator and two Project Officers. We now have a staff of seven which includes the Regional Projects Operations Manager.

In June we reviewed the Strategic Plan with the assistance of Kim Boswell from The Forever Agenda. The document produced is a bold commitment to leading with purpose in the service of Landcare on the

North Coast, our members, our volunteers and the diverse ecosystems that surround us. It is now up to all of us to use the document to drive us toward a sustainable future.

In recognition of North Coast Regional Landcare Network's ongoing commitment in employing an Aboriginal Landcare Officer, and the efforts of Michael Kennedy in growing the reach of Landcare into Aboriginal Communities of the North Coast, we were invited by Local Land Services to participate, one of only two regions in the Regional Aboriginal Partnerships Project. We partnered with the Burbangana Group to assist with the facilitation of this project. Through the efforts of the team which included our Regional Projects Operations Manager, Aboriginal Landcare Officer, Project Officer and Jacqui Pearce from Burbangana we have an invaluable toolkit to guide us in our future engagements with Aboriginal Communities.

The Caring for Catchments Project continues to achieve highly significant on-ground outcomes for the four northern catchments and remains a flagship project for NCRLN. The project is the first of its kind, attracting some of the largest grant funding for these sorts of works in Australia. North Coast Regional Landcare Network is excited to be delivering this project with funding from the Australian Government through the Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program 2022-23 administered by NSW Reconstruction Authority.

In line with our emphasis on looking forward we have produced the NCRLN Prospectus. This document will be vital in seeking investment from organisations on the North Coast to ensure the long-term viability of our organisation.

Through the Landcare Enabling Program 2023-27, funded by the NSW Government we continue to support the employment of Local Landcare Coordinators in the 11 networks.

Whilst all the above portrays a healthy perspective for Landcare on the North Coast we do face some challenges. We are now more than halfway through the current LEP 2023-27. It is now time to begin the process of preparing for the next cycle of funding which is linked to the next state election. Questions around what happens if the next state government doesn't provide funding or reduces it must be addressed. At the North Coast level how do we best implement any future allocation?

Another challenge is one of financial self-sufficiency and autonomy. Given some of the issues we have dealt with in the current LEP and the increased administrative workload it would be ideal if we could achieve this. We have the organisational structure and the professionalism of our operations to achieve this if we make it a priority.

One other challenge that most of us face at either the North Coast level or network level is succession. Many of the volunteer members of the committees have been long time champions for Landcare on the North Coast and have been representatives at the local, state and national level. How do we replace the corporate knowledge that we will lose as these volunteers start to call time on their service?

In conclusion I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the thousands of volunteers who support Landcare across the North Coast. Through their efforts we are having significant impact on the management of natural resources, whether they are part of the many committees that oversee the governance of the networks and groups or give up their time to support on-ground works.

Rob Drury

Chair

The Committee

Chair - Rob Drury - representing Border Ranges Richmond Valley Landcare Network

Vice Chair – Jim Kinkead – representing Tregeagle Landcare

Secretary - Larry Langman - representing Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare Network

Treasurer – Ros Woodward – representing Yamba Landcare

Committee Member – Lyn Thomson - representing Bagot Park Landcare and Landcare NSW

Our Employees

Bridget Kent – Regional Projects/Operations Manager (Caring for Catchments [CfC], NCRLN) – full time

Linda Durham – Regional Landcare Coordinator (LEP)– full time

Michael Kennedy – Aboriginal Landcare Officer (Far North Coast Aboriginal Partnership, NCRLN) – full time

Fiona Berry – Project Officer (CFC) - part time

Kate Medcalf – Project Support Officer (RLAP) – part time

Chris Servadio – Project Software Specialist (CfC) – part time

Rebecah Watsford- Executive Support Officer (CfC) – part time

Financial Summary

Project Income	$4,254,740
General Income	$39,271
Membership Income	$1,100
Interest	$44,228
TOTAL	**$4,339,339**

Project Expenses	$3,279,652
NCRLN General Expense	$3,400
TOTAL	**$3,283,052**
NET EARNINGS (Includes carry over of unexpended project funds)	**$3,373,675**

Contractors

Thomas Noble & Russell - Accountant & Bookkeeper

Roberts and Morrow – Auditors

Somerville Laundry Lomax – Solicitors

Techknow IT – It & Technology Specialists

Partnerships and Programs

NSW Landcare Enabling Program 2023/27

The NSW LEP 2023 – 2027 is a partnership between NSW Local Land Services and Landcare NSW Inc. supported by the NSW Government.

The program facilitates the employment of Regional and Local Landcare Coordinators and Regional Administration Support Officers in the 11 NSW Local Land Services regions. These roles will grow and strengthen the capacity of Landcare NSW groups to care for the local natural environment and agricultural systems by: increasing the capacity of Landcarers to produce effective outcomes by developing their knowledge, skills and experience; improving the efficiency of Landcare groups and networks by increasing the volume of Landcare activity relative to resource inputs; and increasing the self-sufficiency of Landcare groups and networks through leveraging investment to activate a diverse range of funding sources.

NCRLN has a contract with North Coast Local Land Services (NCLLS) to employ a Regional Landcare Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator is a part of a state-wide network, playing a key role in expanding and multiplying the benefits delivered at the local district and network scale.

Under this program NCRLN has contracts with the 11 local Landcare Networks to employ part time Local Landcare Coordinators to play a role in empowering local Landcare volunteers by contributing to the systems, partnerships and structures that underpin their capacity to achieve outcomes.

Aboriginal Engagement Program

NCRLN's Aboriginal engagement program continued with the Aboriginal Landcare Officer (ALO) working with communities and local networks on a range of initiatives aimed at delivering collaborative, placed based and Aboriginal led environmental projects.

Local Land Services

NCRLN continues to develop the regional partnership with North Coast Local Land Services (NCLLS) by:

- Conducting quarterly Regional and Sub Regional 'Catch Up's' to identify collaborative opportunities
- Partnering in the North Coast Region Seedbank
- Including NCLLS as a stakeholder in significant projects.

Projects

NSW Landcare Enabling Program 2023/27

- NCRLN has undertaken implementation of Phase 1 value $4,041,955 – Funding for Local and Regional Coordinators
- The LEP reporting process for the 2023-2024 year was complex, NCRLN reviewed and established a process with 11 Local Networks to ensure a smooth reporting period for the 2024-2025 year.
- Representatives from NCRLN have participated in a range of initiatives under the program including the Landcare NSW State Community of Practice (CoP) event in Sydney in August 2024 and online CoP's for Leveraging Self Sufficiency, Mapping and GIS, and Digital Landcare.

Regional Landcare Aboriginal Partnerships - 2024/2025

- NCRLN was funded to deliver the Regional Landcare Aboriginal Partnerships (RLAP) project because of their strong track-record engaging with local Aboriginal Communities, Landcare state programs and successfully employing Aboriginal identified roles.
- The aims of the project include providing feedback to Landcare NSW Aboriginal Partnerships Framework and building local and regional cultural awareness and identifying opportunities for collaboration.
- Led by the ALO, activities include surveys, a series of place-based Walking Together Workshops with Aboriginal stakeholders, an art prize to acquire a work for use in a Cultural Toolkit as a guide for Local Networks and groups.
- An Aboriginal organisation, the Burbangana Group were contracted to support the project delivery, feedback to the framework and develop the Toolkit.

NSW Koala Strategy – Far North Coast Aboriginal Partnership – 2022/2026

- Funded by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (now DCCEEW)
- The project objective is to deliver on-ground actions informed by Aboriginal community expertise to protect local koala populations and their habitat on the NSW Far North Coast over four years.
- Recognising the importance of local and cultural knowledge, the strategy will leverage and build strong partnerships with local councils, community groups, local Aboriginal groups, and conservation organisations.
- These partnerships will help deliver Aboriginal led coordinated, strategic on-ground conservation actions and prioritise investment.
- An Aboriginal led steering committee to guide the project workplan and priorities

Lawrence Koala Project – 2024/2025

- The first Aboriginal led project under the Far North Coast Aboriginal Partnership developed in collaboration with the Yeagl Traditional Owners
- Aims to strengthen the capacity of the Yeagl Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation and other Aboriginal organisations to deliver cultural land management services, embedding Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) within broader (non-Aboriginal) land management practices.

- Through education, bolster the resilience of the Lawrence koala population by mitigating threats from natural disasters (e.g., bushfires and storms).
- Raising awareness among community stakeholders and landowners - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - of the benefits of Cultural Burning for koala habitat management.
- Share and pass on cultural knowledge to local youth (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) to ensure the survival and continuation of local Aboriginal culture.
- Build skills, pathways, and opportunities for local youth (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) to practise cultural land management and inspire pursuit of future careers in the sector.
- Due for completion November 2025

Private Land Conservation Matters– 2023/2024

- A Landcare NSW program funded by the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) to develop networks of landholders with BCT agreements to connect, share stories/ideas and learn from each other's conservation work.
- Facilitated by Local Landcare Coordinators, the project aims to connect BCT agreement holders to BCT staff - accessing support, education, and resources through a series of workshops and field days throughout the region.
- Completed in December 2024

Caring for Catchments 2023/2027

- NCRLN is delivery partner for the Caring for Catchments project funded by the Australian Government through the Emergency Response Fund and administered by the NSW Reconstruction Authority Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program 2022-23
- The project aims to improve catchment health, build flood resilience, and enhance biodiversity through riparian revegetation and reforestation with the objective to restore and protect waterways by planting up to 240 hectares of native vegetation along eight kilometres of cleared river and streambanks over the next three years.
- Caring for Catchments project is a significant investment in the Northern Rivers valued at $5,450,000 aiming to build capacity in the Northern Rivers region to implement nature-based measures at scale to assist flood mitigation, build resilience to flooding, improve catchment health and contribute to economic and ecological sustainability.
- The project has 35 on ground projects due for completion in August 2026 and delivery is underway across other key components: GIS and data-mapping framework, workshop series, and the CfC Environmental Markets Education Program.
- Project management software remains critical for tracking grantee progress and producing detailed reports. A substantial evidence base is being harvested, including drone footage, photo points, and associated datasets.

North Coast Region Seedbank Partnership 2024/2025

- Supported by funding from North Coast Local Land Services, NCRLN worked in partnership with the Friends of the Coffs Harbour Regional Botanic Garden and Local Land Services to develop a native seed bank for the North Coast region
- The project has improved the capacity of key volunteer community and industry stakeholders to collect, store, exchange, and supply native plant seed according to the Florabank guidelines. This will result in an increase in the supply of native plant stock to satisfy emerging biodiversity, revegetation, and carbon sequestration programs across the North Coast region
- Landcare's role builds on existing expertise and capacity and provides the geographic spread for seed collection activities. Sub regional seed collection hubs were established at Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare, Macleay Landcare, Clarence Landcare, Tweed Landcare, and Border Ranges Richmond Valley Landcare
- The successful pilot was completed in June 2024 leading to a continued commitment by the Seedbank partners to support good practice seed collection, develop a governance structure and broaden membership, specifically to include First Nations organisations.
- In July 2025 Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Seedbank Partners

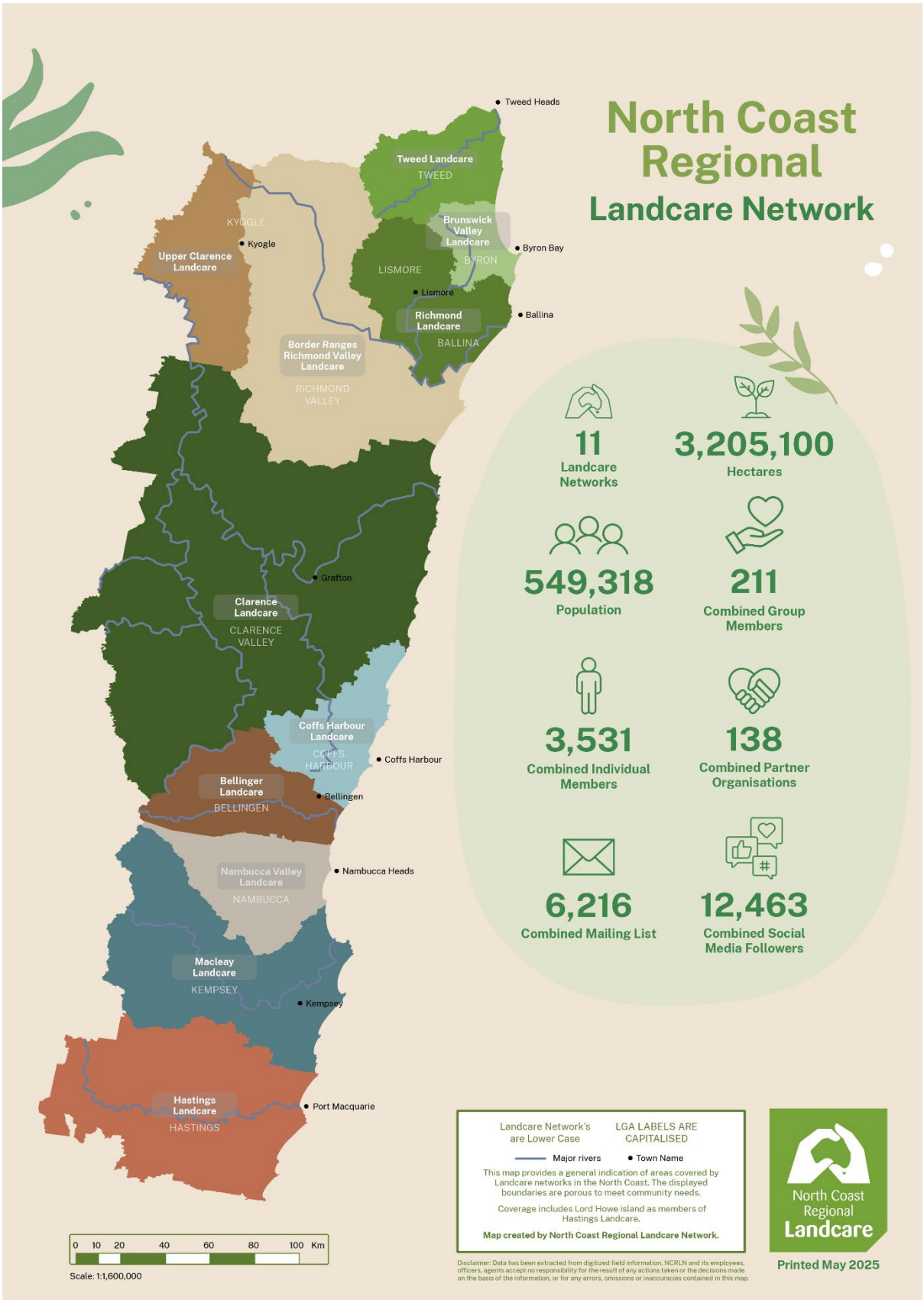
Executive

- Representation on Landcare NSW Board
- Representation on Landcare NSW State Advisory Council
- Representation on NCLLS Weed & Pest Advisory Committee
- Representation on NCLLS Regional Weed and Pest Committee
- Representation of Landcare NSW Program host meetings
- Represent local Landcare networks within the North Coast Landcare Region
- Liaised with NCLLS on developing partnerships
- Attended Primex in partnership with local networks
- Lead and advocated for the region
- Advocate for network requirements for new NSW Landcare Enabling Program
- Point of contact for collaborative regional Landcare projects
- Ensured strong financial management and governance
- Supported management of successful grant projects

Regional Community of Practice

- Regional Community practice events:
  - Grafton – July 2024- Regional and Local Governance check workshop
  - Coffs Harbour - November 2024 – Regional CoP – Collaboration in Action

Network Map


North Coast Regional Landcare Network
Tweed Heads
Tweed Landcare
TWEED
KYOGLE
Kyogle
Upper Clarence Landcare
Brunswick Valley Landcare
Byron Bay
BYRON
LISMORE
Lismore
Richmond Landcare
Ballina
BALLINA
Border Ranges Richmond Valley Landcare
RICHMOND VALLEY
Grafton
Clarence Landcare
CLARENCE VALLEY
Coffs Harbour Landcare
COFFS HARBOUR
Coffs Harbour
Bellinger Landcare
BELLINGEN
Bellingen
Nambucca Valley Landcare
NAMBUCCA
Nambucca Heads
Macleay Landcare
KEMPSEY
Kempsey
Hastings Landcare
HASTINGS
Port Macquarie
11 Landcare Networks
3,205,100 Hectares
549,318 Population
211 Combined Group Members
3,531 Combined Individual Members
138 Combined Partner Organisations
6,216 Combined Mailing List
12,463 Combined Social Media Followers
0 10 20 40 60 80 100 Km
Scale: 1:1,600,000
Landcare Network's are Lower Case
LGA LABELS ARE CAPITALISED
Major rivers
Town Name
This map provides a general indication of areas covered by Landcare networks in the North Coast. The displayed boundaries are porous to meet community needs.
Coverage includes Lord Howe island as members of Hastings Landcare.
Map created by North Coast Regional Landcare Network.
Disclaimer: Data has been extracted from digitized field information. NCRLN and its employees, officers, agents accept no responsibility for the result of any actions taken or the decisions made on the basis of the information, or for any errors, omissions or inaccuracies contained in this map.
North Coast Regional Landcare
Printed May 2025