



# NOOSA INTEGRATED CATCHMENT ASSOCIATION

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2022



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# LETTER FROM THE NICA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

It is with great pleasure the NICA Management Committee presents the 2022 Annual Report as a summary of the organisation's work in this, our 26th year. 2022 will be remembered as a challenging but productive year for NICA.

Sequential minor to moderate flood events within the catchment in early 2022, the lingering effects of COVID-19 on our activities and a fluid and loosely integrated planning environment all presented challenges to our organisation. Nevertheless, the year will also be remembered for some considerable steps forward in NICA's evolution and stewardship of the catchment.

In April, NICA was pleased to launch a Strategic Review of the organisation, its positioning in the catchment and amongst stakeholders. The initiative is NICA's first review in over 5 years and will help define a path forward for the organisation over the long term. We eagerly await its outcome. In May, the Noosa River Catchment Fund made its first major distribution in support of the Girraween Bushcare Group's restoration work. In June, the Friends of Kinaba proudly launched their new vessel, "Jabiru", into the calm waters of Lake Cootharaba.

The seminal Wetlands report was published in July to inform and guide the community on a long-term program to restore Noosa's urban wetland fringe. July also witnessed the launch of the Line in the Sand initiative to guide recreational fishing behaviours, whilst in October the acclaimed Enter the Flyosphere program debuted, highlighting Noosa's iconic shorebird species.

The Coastal Connect Bushcare collaboration continued its work, building resilience along the eastern beaches, whilst the Urban Wildlife Gardens program progressed from strength-to-strength, adding households and urban habitat to its community conservation initiative.

Finally in November, NICA's Waterwatch team were deservedly and belatedly recognised for their hard work, winning the Water category in the Noosa Biosphere Awards. Though important, these milestones represent but a fraction of the contributions of NICA's volunteers toward the conservation of the catchment during the year.

Whilst NICA's member base declined modestly in 2022, likely due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on volunteer

participation rates, our overall capacity, capabilities, financial performance and position continued to improve. NICA was particularly pleased to secure the ongoing financial support of Noosa Council via the Alliance Program for a further year, whilst we continued to broaden and deepen other funding partnerships.

It would be remiss of the Committee at this point not to recognise the immense contributions of our members and volunteers from across the catchment and further afield, who remain the lifeblood of NICA and set the organisation apart for our peers. We are sincerely and genuinely appreciative of these efforts and the many thousands of hours you contribute toward the organisation and catchment.

We now look forward to 2023 with a good leadership team, motivated volunteers, strong partnerships across the catchment, a robust financial position and the outcome of the Strategic Review to help guide us on our path.

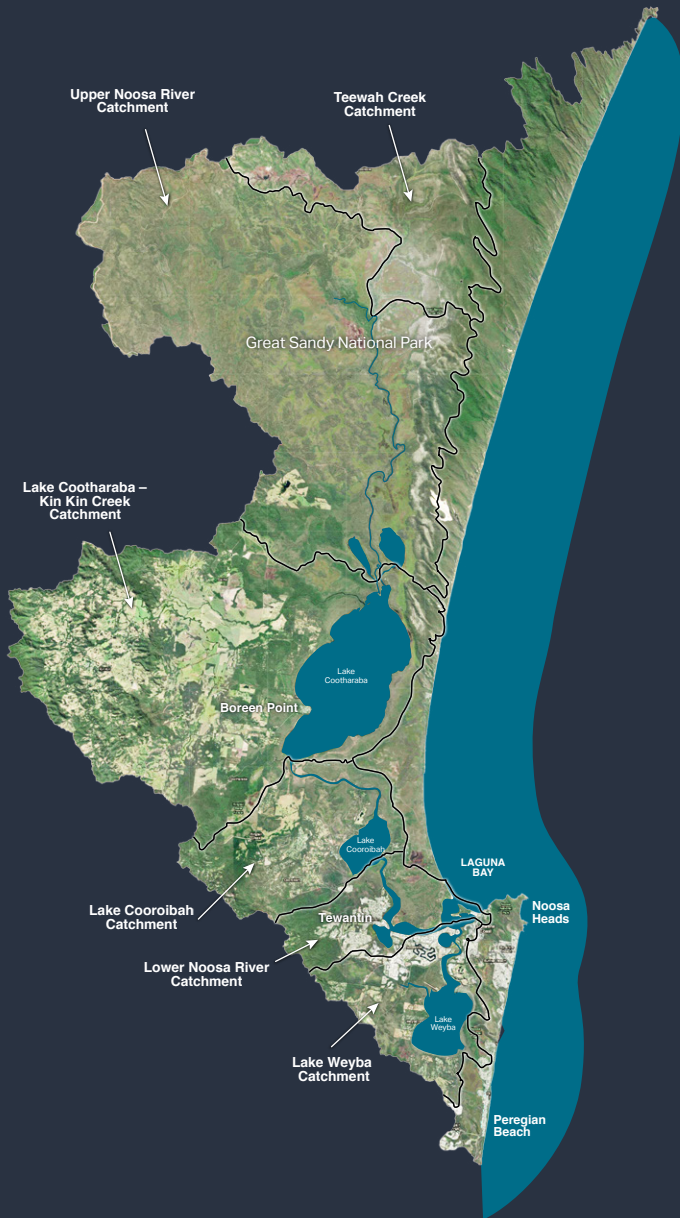
Sincerely,

**THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

## Acknowledgement of country

NICA acknowledges the Kabi Kabi people as the traditional owners of the land and sea of the Noosa River catchment. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and recognise the enduring role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in caring for country across Australia.

# NICA'S PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES



“The conservation and ecologically sustainable use of the Noosa River catchment”

**854km<sup>2</sup>**  
at the intersection of the Macleay-McPherson overlap

**1,505km**  
of coastal lagoons, rivers and creeks

**61**  
regional ecosystems

**1,340**  
plant species

**350**  
terrestrial vertebrate animals

**217**  
bird species

**2**  
nationally significant wetlands

A community of over  
**54,000**  
residents

## NICA'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

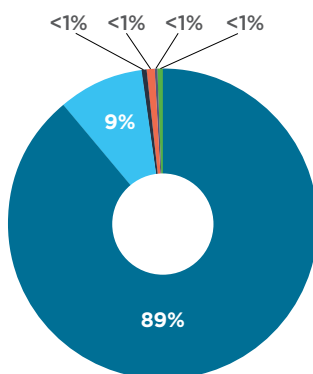
- Strengthen conservation of the Noosa River catchment
- Enhance community knowledge
- Improve awareness and understanding across the community
- Contribute to improved water quality
- Collaborate with, and support, partners within the catchment
- Support science-based intervention to improve long-term sustainability
- Explore and broaden funding sources

For  
**26 years**  
one community organisation  
dedicated to its conservation  
and sustainable use

# NICA FINANCIAL REPORT

Despite the challenges outlined in the Committee letter, FY2022 marked a continuation of the improving financial trends evident for NICA in our FY2021.

NICA's net income, inclusive of grants, rose 14% to \$240,110, driven by increased grant and sponsorship income. Encouragingly, we continued to expand both our program activities and key funding relationships during the year. Excluding grant and sponsorship funds received, income from merchandising activities declined following FY2021's successful book launches and changes to our accounting for inventory. Other income sources including membership, donations and interest income all declined modestly.



NICA Income - by source

Income - by item	2022 FY	2022FY
Grants and sponsorship	\$213,557	89%
Merchandise	\$21,786	9%
Donations	\$1,193	<1%
Membership subscriptions	\$2,109	1%
Interest received	\$752	<1%
Other income	\$713	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$240,110</b>	<b>100%</b>

Total expenditure rose 40% year-on-year to \$227,614, driven by increased program activity including expenditure on contractors and fixed investment in NICA's equipment and capabilities. Profit from Ordinary Activities totalled \$12,495.

Income and expenditure - overview	
Total Income and expenditure	2022 FY
Total income	\$240,110
Total expenditure	\$227,614
Profit from ordinary activities	\$12,495
Operating profit after income tax	\$12,495

NICA's financial performance contributed to a modest improvement in our financial position with the net assets of the Association, inclusive of the Noosa River Catchment Fund, rising 6% to \$224,705. Total assets were broadly unchanged at

\$330,053. NICA's liquidity position remains sound with net cash, inclusive of committed grant funds, totalling \$241,330, and inventory held for sale \$54,129.

As with all aspects of the organisation, we eagerly look forward to the outcome of the Strategic Review to help guide the financial performance and position of NICA with a view to providing long-term, high quality and diversified funding support to our programs, volunteers and the catchment at large.

## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT: NOOSA RIVER CATCHMENT FUND

The Noosa River Catchment Fund ("NRCF"), NICA's tax deductible gift recipient, received over \$1,000 in donations from the community for the FY2022 year. After careful deliberation, the NRCF was pleased to provide funding support toward Girraween Bushcare Group's program to restore the upper Burgess Creek basin at Girraween Reserve. The Reserve is home to numerous threatened species including the Ground Parrot and Glossy Black Cockatoo and had been adversely affected by invasive weeds and wildfires. The NRCF ended FY2022 with cash at bank of \$5,169.

NICA thanks NRCF Chair, Mr Phil Moran and fellow Committee Members Prof. John Martin and Dr Jan Green for their efforts during the year. The NRCF looks forward to further expanding and diversifying its funding and distribution program in FY2023.



Girraween Bushcare group restoring a degraded area of wallum habitat.

**\$1,024**  
donated

**\$5,400**  
distributed

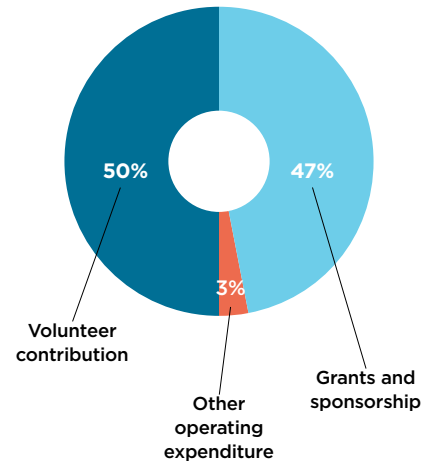
# NICA'S VALUE CONTRIBUTION

NICA's management committee, program coordinators and the members who participate in our programs are all volunteers from the Noosa community. Our programs, including expenditure on equipment and contractors, are funded through a combination of grants from third parties, donations from the community or the sale of merchandise and other income streams from NICA.

The contributions of volunteers towards NICA's programs ("in-kind" contributions), multiply the value of the grant and other funds received or deployed by NICA toward the Noosa catchment. In line with guidance from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, NICA applies an "in-kind" value of \$46 per volunteer hour contributed.

In FY2022, NICA estimates that our volunteers contributed over 5,000 hours toward our programs and the catchment – significantly multiplying every \$1 invested in our programs through grants and other funds.

NICA value contribution



**5,000+**  
volunteer hours contributed

# NICA'S INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Since 1996, NICA's aim has been the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of the Noosa River catchment. NICA's integrated catchment management program is aligned to that purpose and organised across four linked thematic:



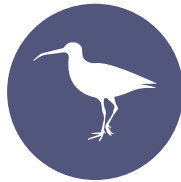
## CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

including our Bushcare, Urban Wildlife Gardens and Get Your Wetlands programs;



## WATERWAYS

including our Riverwatch, Waterwatch programs and aligned programs;



## THREATENED SPECIES

including our high priority biodiversity conservation programs (e.g. migratory shorebirds, aquatic ecosystems, flora species);



## COMMUNITY AND AWARENESS

spanning our botanical publications, Monday with NICA forum and community participation events (Clean Up Australia Day, Wildflower Festival, Tread Lightly).

NICA's activities and programs utilise the support of hundreds of volunteers of all ages from across our community, supported by a panel of expert contractors and external consultants.

NICA targets best-in-class citizen science outcomes and attracts funding to support our programs from grants, donations, merchandise and other income streams.





WATERWAYS



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# RIVERWATCH



Riverwatch crew members, David and John, after a morning run.

In addition to the on-water effort, community outreach through participation, education and awareness remained a key pillar of the program. Several NICA and Riverwatch members also participated in the Noosa River Stakeholder Advisory Committee, chaired by Noosa Council and MSQ, and applied the combined knowledge of the Riverwatch program to help inform stakeholder deliberations.

The Riverwatch team were particularly pleased to be recognised as an Alliance partner of Noosa Council and awarded funding support under the 2022 Community Alliance Program. Sincere thanks to all our dedicated volunteers, particularly coordinators Tony Haslam and Roger Kelly, along with Bruce McConkey for keeping the NICA vessel running smoothly. Finally, thanks to our partners at Laguna Marine, O Boat Hire and Bendigo Bank for their ongoing support for the program.

Despite extended periods of elevated rainfall and some vessel maintenance downtime, the Riverwatch team of over 20 experienced volunteer mariners, led by Roger Kelly and Tony Haslam, had a productive year conducting over 35 outings and contributing over 500 volunteer hours towards the conservation of the waterway. As the “eyes and the ears of the catchment”, the team’s focus on hazard monitoring and marine debris removal paid considerable community dividends, particularly given the impact of sequential floodings early in 2022.

Working closely with on-river partners including Noosa Council, MSQ, DES and QPWS, the Riverwatch team reported or resolved numerous navigation hazards, derelict or misplaced vessels, infrastructure, pollution and fisheries issues, wildlife callouts and structural and superficial rubbish accumulations. In total, the Riverwatch team removed over 1.5 tonnes of marine debris from the waterway in FY2022. All debris was diligently audited to AMDI standards by Riverwatch’s Resource Recovery Auditors, Melanie and Jarrah Small. This work provides a useful baseline for future monitoring and source reduction strategies as part of Noosa’s Zero Litter strategy.

The Riverwatch team were also active in supporting numerous aligned initiatives including the Line in the Sand FLRB renewal program, Get Your Wetlands project, Noosa River Mapping Application and Noosa River Oyster Gardening initiatives.



Marine debris, all audited to AMDI standards.

<p><b>1.5 tonnes</b> of marine debris removed and audited</p>	<p><b>Tens</b> of navigation hazards resolved</p>	<p><b>Vessel + ramp</b> surveys completed</p>	<p><b>500+</b> volunteer hours contributed</p>
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PROJECT SNAPSHOT

# A LINE IN THE SAND

In partnership with OzFish (Noosa), NICA was pleased to launch the Line in the Sand initiative in July. The initiative aims to enhance recreational fishing behaviours by encouraging the removal of discarded fishing tackle from the environment, hence reducing the impact on Noosa's iconic wildlife.

Over 30 new, fully recycled fishing line recovery bins were installed at key points around the Noosa River and have already removed hundreds of metres of fishing line and other hazards from the environment. The initiative was proudly supported by Noosa Council under the 2021 Environment Grants Program.



New fully recycled fishing line bin installed by the river.

**Over 30**  
bin locations

On target to remove  
**3+ km**  
of fishing line annually

**250+**  
volunteer hours  
contributed



# WATERWATCH



Waterwatch coordinator Bruce, and volunteer Wilhelmina, conducting nutrient sampling in support of algae investigations.

NICA's dedicated Waterwatch team, led by Bruce McConkey, had another busy year assessing water quality parameters at over 30 sites across the Noosa River catchment, from Kin Kin Creek in the north to Murdering Creek in the south – some accessible only on foot.

In addition to this work, the team also conducted event testing and nutrient sampling in support of algal investigations on the waterway. The team's efforts, along with those for many years prior, were recognised at the Noosa Biosphere Awards in November, with the team awarded the prize for the Water category against stiff competition from across the catchment.

In addition to the regular schedule of monitoring, significant rainfall experienced over the last two years due to the prevalent La Nina cycle, provided a useful opportunity for the team to make comparisons of our water quality observations across the catchment, particularly regarding turbidity (see box inset).

Looking forward, the Waterwatch team is keenly engaged with our partners at Noosa Council, Noosa District Landcare and MRCCC on developing an integrated and upgraded water monitoring and communications program for the Noosa River. The team has participated in several workshops to date and exchanged many ideas with our partners to progress that initiative. We look forward to further developments in this space and thank Bruce and the volunteer team for their sterling efforts and award during the year.

**3,240**  
water parameters  
tested

**500+**  
volunteer hours  
contributed

Analysing the last two years of data, a comparison of turbidity with total monthly rainfall and nitrogen nutrient concentrations in the lower Noosa River, highlighted the significant contribution of Kin Kin Creek and Lake Cootharaba to sediment, turbidity and general pollution loads throughout the system. Some specific observations could be derived:

1. Turbidity throughout the system is strongly associated with heavy rainfall events;
2. Nutrient spikes also occur at the same times, but additional peaks occur at some locations;
3. There is negligible turbidity in the Upper Noosa River;
4. Turbidity is extreme in Kin Kin Creek after heavy rain, but quite small at all other times;
5. Turbidity in Lake Cootharaba is very high after rain events, and variable but always present at other times;
6. Over 17 year period of our dataset, average turbidity in the lake was 3 times higher than that discharging from Kin Kin Creek; and
7. The turbidity is carried downstream with relatively low but variable readings throughout the lower river, but quite high peaks are recorded immediately after the heaviest rain.

A conclusion could be made that the primary ongoing source of turbidity is sediment (most of which has derived from Kin Kin Creek over time) resuspension within Lake Cootharaba, presumably driven by wind and wave action across a shallow coastal lagoon. As sediment is transported downstream, broadly consistent concentration of solids are maintained over time, diluted only by tidal influx downstream. Turbidity peaks downstream only appear after disturbance by major rain events.

Turbidity readings indicate Kin Kin Creek as the primary source of sediment during/after high rainfall, with turbidity within the creek otherwise low. Sediment transfer from the Upper Noosa River appears negligible even after rainfall. Sediment transferred downstream carries nitrogenous nutrients adsorbed on the particle surfaces. Observations indicate little additional sediment enters the river from tributaries downstream, even from Lake Cooroibah, unless there is heavy localised rain within that sub-basin.

Going forward, minimising erosion and transfer of sediment via Kin Kin Creek would appear the most effective mitigation strategy for the overall river system, excepting sediment already accumulated with the coastal lagoons and system itself. The peak inflows suggest that retention basins along the creek, or other means to slow the peak flow rates, could be a useful measure to allow sediments to settle before they reach the lake.

# WATERWATCH CONTINUED

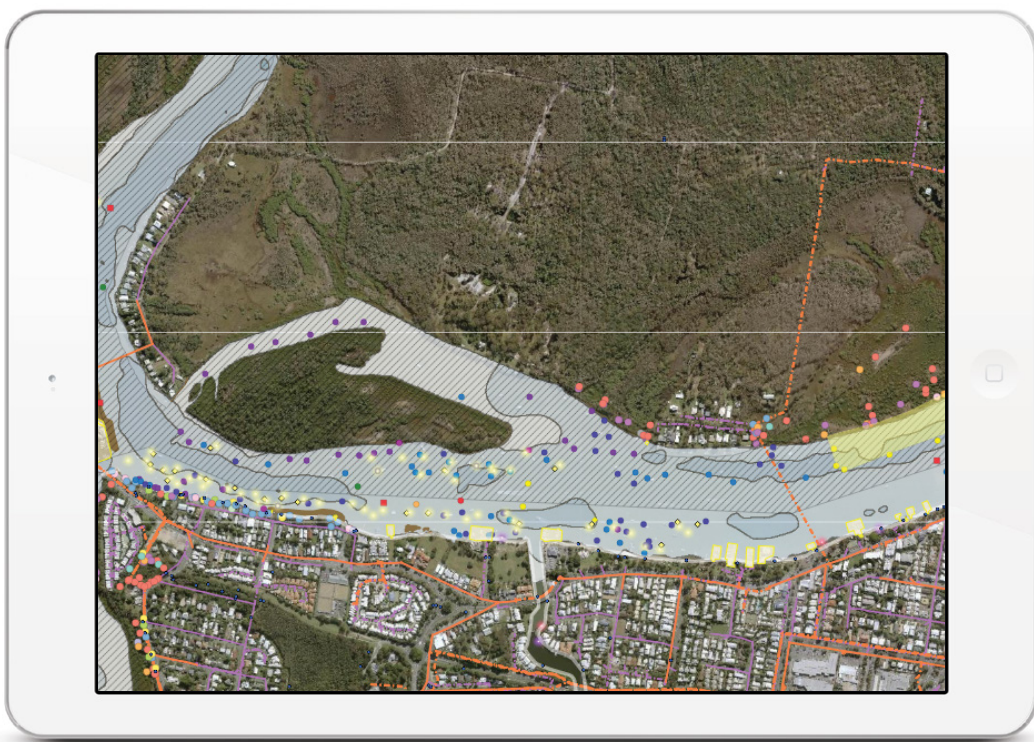
## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

# NOOSA RIVER INTERACTIVE MAPPING APPLICATION

During the year, NICA's Riverwatch team commenced development of an innovative new GIS mapping application incorporating key social, commercial and environmental values of the Noosa River.

Based in ArcGIS by Esri, the product aggregates over 40 data layers and thousands of data points from numerous sources, including NICA, into a portable and highly accurate GIS tool that can be used to inform integrated river and catchment management.

A recent vessel survey, conducted by NICA with the support of the Office of Sandy Bolton MP under the Seeds for Change program, added over 4,500 vessel-specific data points to the application. The Noosa River Mapping initiative has been made possible with the generous support from Noosa Council under the Environment Grants Program. NICA looks forward to working with stakeholders to refine the product and deploy in early in 2023.



Sample output from the Noosa River Mapping Application.

**10,000+**  
data points  
integrated

**150+**  
volunteer hours  
contributed

## NICA CAPABILITIES

# DRONE

NICA's CASA-certified UAV pilot, Klaus Horner, operates our new Mavic Air-2S drone over the river, thanks to support from the office of Sandy Bolton MP. The drone is used to support multiple catchment and waterways programs by capturing and processing high resolution aerial imagery for NICA's project teams.





# CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT





## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## URBAN WILDLIFE GARDENS



NICA's wonderful community engagement program, Urban Wildlife Gardens (UWG), had another successful year, its 3rd since inception, with over 130 households across the shire now involved in creating urban native gardens on their properties.

In addition to expert advice on native garden design and selection, the UWG program provides its members access to regular workshops, with this year's highlights including Pruning Native Plants by John Olds, Landscaping in Public Places by Matt Hansen, Bruce Hallett's Guide to splitting Bee Hives, and Marc Russell's presentation on Bush Tucker. The UWG team has also been active with displays mounted in Cooroy and Noosaville libraries to draw attention to the program.

Many thanks to Michelle Newall who is responsible for property visits, Council representative Ryan

Heeney, and the volunteer team Kay Southam, Keron Hilton, Suzanne Bloomfield, Stephanie Haslam and Tony Haslam who continue to arrange engaging workshops. Looking forward, the UWG team are planning to produce and publish an Urban Wildlife Gardens Handbook for members. UWG is appreciative of Noosa Council's ongoing financial support through the Community Alliance Program and assistance from the Member for Noosa Sandy Bolton for incorporating information materials on UWG in mailouts to new residents of Noosa.

The UWG program represents an engaging citizen science initiative of NICA and valuable contribution toward Noosa Council's Environment Strategy.



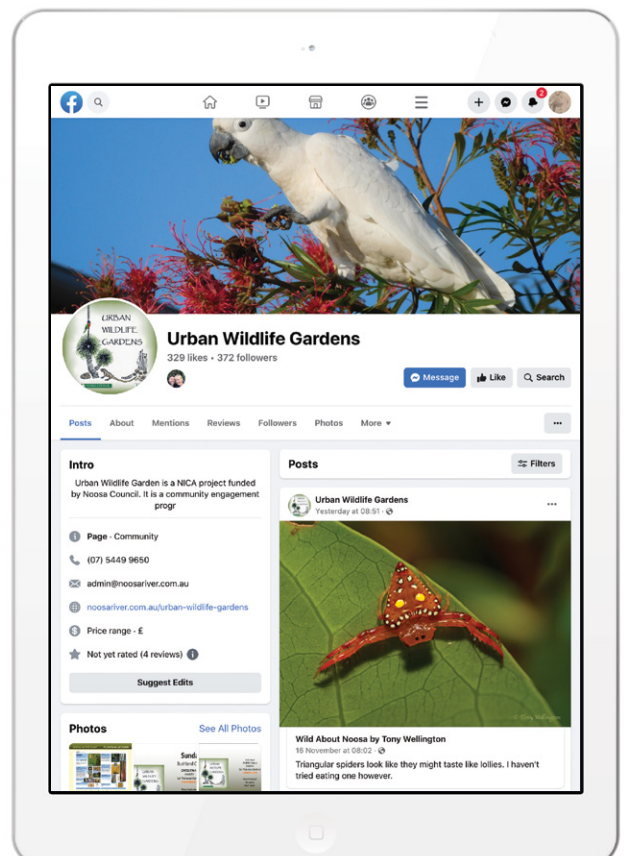
UWG Program Coordinator, Michelle Newall



**130+**  
members

**15+**  
acres of native  
urban habitat

**500+**  
volunteer hours  
contributed





## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## COASTAL CONNECT BUSHCARE



Volunteers at work in the dunes on the eastern beaches.

The Coastal Connect Bushcare collaboration completed its second year of works supported by Noosa Council under the 2021 MEC Grants initiative.

Working to restore seriously degraded habitat, build resilience and enhance biodiversity along frontal dune and swale systems from Sunshine Beach to Peregian Beach, the six community Bushcare groups partnering in the program collectively

conducted 105 working bees and contributed over 2,400 volunteer hours in 2022. Over 730 bags of invasive weeds were removed from target areas plus a further 140 cubic metres left to mulch. To support revegetation, over 1,250 endemic deep-rooted native plants were carefully planted or propagated along the four kilometres of priority sites.

NICA is proud to partner and auspice the collaboration which continues into its third and final year in 2023.



Coastal Connect Coordination Team planning for further works along the Eastern Beaches.



Hand removal of invasive weeds to enhance resilience and biodiversity.

**A model**

community Bushcare collaboration

**4km+**

of coastal habitat under restoration

**730**

bags of invasive weeds removed

**140m<sup>3</sup>**

of invasive weed mulched

**1,250**

native plants planted or propagated



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# GIRRAWEEEN BUSHCARE

The Girraween Bushcare group resumed a regular schedule of works once again this year, targeting areas of the upper Burgess Creek basin in Girraween Reserve that were heavily degraded by 2019's bushfires and more recent weed infestation.

The Girraween Reserve is crucial wallum refugia for several threatened species including the Glossy Black Cockatoo, and Ground Parrot and fauna and flora species.

Targeting a two kilometre strip of native fringing habitat from Oz Care at Cooyar Street all the way around the border of the Reserve to Bicentennial Drive adjacent to the sports grounds, the group has been active removing invasive weeds, stabilising vulnerable banks with biodegradable coir logs and conducting infill plantings of endemic native species. The recent wet weather has also encouraged impressive regrowth of native species in selected areas.

Funding support from both the Qld DES Bushfire Recovery Grants Program and the Noosa River Catchment Fund has enabled contractor support in areas too treacherous and tedious for volunteers. NICA is indebted to the hard work of coordinators Bruce Hallett and Roger Kelly and all the volunteers for this important conservation work.



**Acres**  
of key wallum  
habitat restored

**750+**  
volunteer hours  
contributed

Girraween Reserve in the Upper Burgess Creek Basin.





## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

# ISLANDS RESTORATION PROGRAM

Restoring degraded mangrove and saltmarsh habitat to preserve threatened ecosystems and high priority species, including shorebirds amongst the islands of the lower Noosa River, remained a priority for our on-river volunteer Bushcare teams, led by Jill Campbell and Bruce Hallett.

Multiple excursions to the Sand Island and more recently Sheep Island removed hundreds of kilograms of invasive weed species and marine debris, from over five acres of vulnerable estuarine wetland, all by hand. Encouragingly, native flora species, particularly mangroves, demonstrated excellent resilience with the habitat slowly recovering and, in some areas expanding and providing additional cover and complexity for diverse and healthy estuarine ecosystems. The team looks forward to continuing this important work next year and always welcome new volunteers.



Bushcare volunteers at work on the Sand Island, Noosa River estuary.

Bushcare volunteers after a mornings work on the Sand Island, Noosa River estuary.



Acres of critical wetland habitat  
**restored**

**250+**  
volunteer hours contributed

## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

# GET YOUR WETLANDS



NICA contractor Alex, removing accumulated debris from sensitive Wetland areas on the North Shore



Conceived by NICA ecologists Peter Hunnam and Alex Western, the Get Your Wetlands project culminated in August with the publication of the "Wetland Urban Pressures" report (access via QR code) – a broad-scale assessment of urban land-use pressures on the wetland areas of the Noosa River.

Adding a fresh and insightful perspective on the management issues facing the littoral and riparian areas of the Noosa River catchment, the project and accompanying report highlight the accumulation of pressures on the urban wetland fringe of the lower Noosa River and the need for a coordinated response to restore and conserve these areas across stakeholders.

The report serves as a roadmap for further integrated planning and implementation, led by Noosa Council, NICA and stakeholders.

The work was funded by the Queensland Government under the DES Marine Debris program and will initially progress to a pilot series of clean-ups at priority sites throughout the lower Noosa River.



Sample survey area demonstrating accumulation of pressures on urban Wetland areas.

A highly detailed report

**12**  
field surveys

**400+**  
volunteer hours contributed



# THREATENED SPECIES





## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

# CONNIE

Affectionately called “Connie”, the threatened species program conceived and launched by NICA partner, Noosa Bush Beach and Creek Care (NBBCC) in 2020 to “Strengthen existing and establish additional populations of endangered *Eucalyptus conglomerata*” has proven the value of best-practice community citizen science.

Prior to launch, fewer than 1,000 specimens of the swamp stringybark (*E. conglomerata*), Queensland most endangered eucalypt, were known to exist, predominantly in specific soil conditions from Beerburrum to Kin Kin. With funding assistance from the Queensland DES under a three-year program, the NBBCC team led by Jill Campbell has been remarkably successful in locating mature trees across its range, collecting seed (under strict permit conditions) and trialling (and trialling) and perfecting propagation of this hardy but challenging species.

The team has now reintroduced over 120 juvenile specimens back into suitable habitat within their range, where they are now becoming established. The NBBCC has since received further funding support from DES to continue this remarkable example of best-practice community citizen science. NICA is proud to auspice and provide administrative support to NBBCC for this program.



Swamp stringybark (*E. conglomerata*) as seedlings propagated from seed collected from wild specimens.



Juvenile swamp stringybark (*E. conglomerata*), reintroduced back into suitable habitat within their range.



Swamp stringybark (*E. conglomerata*) ready for plantings.

A threatened flora species on the road to  
**recovery**

**250+**  
volunteer hours  
contributed



## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

# NOOSA RIVER OYSTER GARDENING PROGRAM

Restoring critically endangered rock oyster ecosystems (*Saccostrea glomerata*) in the Noosa River is the objective of the Noosa River Oyster Ecosystem Restoration (NROER) project, led by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in partnership with Noosa Council.

As part of the NROER project, NICA was pleased to finally launch the Noosa River Oyster Gardening Program in October 2022 by select group of residents, schools and community groups. The Oyster Gardening Program, one of the first of its kind in

Australia, involves gardeners hosting and maintaining baskets filled with juvenile rock oyster spat (oyster gardens) on jetties in the lower Noosa River.

Once fully grown, the oysters will be deployed on to the newly built oyster reef sites under the guidance of project coordinator, to help kick-start recovery of the critically endangered rock oyster ecosystems.

NICA is coordinator of the Oyster Gardening Program with funding support provided by The Nature Conservancy, The Thomas Foundation, Noosa Shire Council and the Australian Government's national Reef Builder Program.



A sample of wild oyster recruitment observed in NICA's basket field trial



TNC's Queensland Oceans Coordinator, Megan, with NICA volunteer Ben, carefully seeding oyster gardens with juvenile rock oysters settled on clean, recycled shell before deployment around the river.

40

oyster gardens  
deployed

One

threatened ecosystem  
in recovery

350+

volunteer hours  
contributed



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# SHOREBIRDS AND TERNS

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

# ENTER THE FLYOSPHERE

Raising awareness of Noosa's iconic but threatened species and restoring a key focal point on the river foreshore was the aim of NICA's Enter the Flyosphere initiative launched in October. Combining engaging new interpretive signage, a new telescope and short film (scan QR code to view) produced by Panga Productions, the installation showcases Noosa as a hotspot of shorebird biodiversity. Generating considerable acclaim, the installation and film have been viewed by thousands of residents and visitors alike. The initiative was proudly funded by Noosa Council under the 2021 Environment Grants Program.



New shorebird installation at the Noosa Rivermouth.

The NICA shorebird team, led by Jill Dening and Allen Briggs, were active again this year monitoring and conserving Noosa's iconic but threatened shorebirds and terns. Including regular monthly surveys, the team also launched the acclaimed Enter the Flyosphere initiative, procured new spotting equipment, inducted new team members and developed new partnerships.

Around the estuary, the team noted migratory shorebird numbers continued to ebb with species numbers ranging from 12 to 23, including the now rare sighting of a critically endangered Far Eastern Curlew. Overall numbers rarely exceed 1,150 individuals, inclusive of terns. Resident species and abundance remained broadly stable. Overwintering activity was surprisingly subdued, but breeding activity observed amongst resident Red-Capped Plovers, Pied Oystercatchers and the

Beach-stone Curlews provides optimism for species resilience.

The ongoing restoration and maintenance of shorebird habitat in the lower estuary by the Bushcare team, led by Jill Campbell and Bruce Hallett remains key to species survival and visitation. All shorebird survey data was provided promptly to the Queensland Wader Study Group as part of the National Shorebird Monitoring Program.

The team is looking forward to our new partnerships with Healthy Land & Water and Tourism Noosa via the Tread Lightly program to further raise awareness of Noosa's shorebird species. Thanks again to our marvellous volunteer group including Allen Briggs, Jill Dening, Russ Lamb, Judith Coles, John Bloomfield, Geoff Gettons and Richard Howard. Thanks to Noosa Council for their ongoing commitment to the program.



An innovative new awareness program,  
**1,500+**  
views

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

# SPOTTING SCOPE

Shorebird volunteer Geoff, in action with the team's new Swarovski ATS 80 20 x 60 angled spotting scope, procured thanks to funding support from the Office of Llew O'Brien MP.



**27** shorebird species

**250+** volunteer hours contributed



# COMMUNITY AND AWARENESS





## MONDAYS WITH NICA



Crowd at Monday's with NICA enjoying a discussion on Noosa's Threatened Species by Council representative David O'Gorman.

After the COVID-19 related disruptions to events in 2019-2020, NICA was pleased to finally relaunch a regular series of social and informative gatherings under the "Mondays with NICA" banner.

A shift to the uber-cool "Bounce Noosa" venue in Noosaville and an initial presentation and lively discussion on NICA's Strategic Review, led by Phil Moran, set the scene for a revival of this much-loved event. That event was followed by an engaging presentation on Noosa's Council's Threatened Species Roadmap from Council representative David O'Gorman as members were tested on their prioritisation of key species. NICA looks forward to further events in the new year and broadening our appeal to the community.

### PROJECT SNAPSHOT

## THE LAUNCH OF JABIRU

On a delightful day in August, the Friends of Kinaba ("FOK") QPWS volunteer group proudly launched their new 4.3 metre SmartWAVE vessel, named "Jabiru", into the calm waters of Lake Cootharaba at Boreen Point.

Fully fitted with bright new decals, the vessel will be used to support FOK's conservation and education programs in the upper catchment, including maintenance of the QPWS Kinaba Information Centre and surrounds, integrated water monitoring and community awareness.

NICA was proud to support FOK's application to the Queensland Community Gambling Benefit Fund to acquire the vessel and looks forward to collaborating with FOK on future initiatives.



Launch of Friends of Kinaba's new vessel, "Jabiru".



### A new vessel

and capability delivered to the FOK and the Upper Noosa River



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# SUNSHINE COAST WILDFLOWER FESTIVAL



Almost 100 guests joined the Wildflower Festival walks hosted by NICA this year.

Under cool August skies, NICA was pleased to host the Noosa leg of the Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival in collaboration with Sunshine Coast Environment Council.

Almost 100 local, interstate and international guests enjoyed a series of guided walks across local wildflower landscapes, including Noosa National Park, Girraween Nature Refuge, Arthur Harrold Nature Refuge and Weyba Creek Conservation Park, led by NICA's expert guides. Many thanks to our guides Ryan Heeney, Maddison Brown, David Burrows and Susan Davis and to Gill Studdock in the NICA office for coordinating this event.



Wildflower walk at Arthur Harrold Refuge, Noosa North Shore.

**Four**  
guided wildflower  
walks

Almost  
**100**  
guests

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

# TREAD LIGHTLY



Tread Lightly guests observing shorebirds by the Noosa River.

NICA was pleased to be named as launch partner for Tourism Noosa's innovative new Tread Lightly program.

The program offers a range of ways for visitors to offset the impact of their travel in the Noosa region by participating in or donating toward environmental initiatives. As part of the program, NICA has developed on-river experiences to provide visitors with a close-up perspective of Noosa's unique but threatened biodiversity through our migratory shorebird and oyster programs.



Eurasian Whimbrel,  
one of Noosa's iconic migratory shorebird species.

**Two** unique visitor experiences



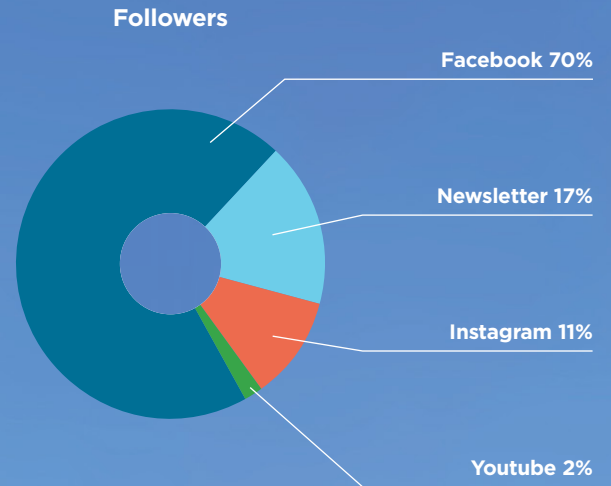


# NICA IN PROFILE

Through increased program activity and the production of engaging content, NICA continued to raise its profile and deliver its message to the Noosa community and further afield. Impressively, NICA's cross-media presence now extends to almost 2,500 independent subscribers across our channels.

Highlights for NICA in the media this year included the Waterwatch team's Noosa Biosphere Awards win, publication of the Get Your Wetlands report, Urban Wildlife Garden workshop profiles, and the launch of the Enter the Flyosphere program - each attracting significant cross-media coverage.

With a new NICA website due to launch in early 2023 and numerous innovative programs under development or coming to fruition, NICA's presence and reach is expected to extend even further next year.



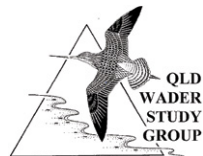
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND THANKS

NICA is grateful to the ongoing support and assistance of our partners and sponsors.

## PROJECT AND FUNDING SPONSORS



## TECHNICAL AND AGENCY PARTNERS



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS





