



NORTH  
QUEENSLAND  
CONSERVATION  
COUNCIL

2019-20  
ANNUAL REPORT







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# ABOUT US

## OUR MISSION

To be a strong voice for the environment, influencing, educating and inspiring our North Queensland community to achieve an ecologically sustainable society.

## OUR VISION

A caring and well-informed society living sustainably in a healthy and well protected environment, where ecological sustainability is everybody's responsibility.

North Queensland Conservation Council (NQCC) is a peak organisation in the statewide environmental movement, based in Townsville. It represents the area roughly bounded by Bowen in the South, Cardwell in the North, the Coral Sea and the Northern Territory border, advocating on regional conservation issues.

NQCC works to support small, often single-issue and hands-on local organisations in statewide forums and liaises with other peak bodies.

NQCC was established in 1974 as a not-for-profit incorporated association with a broad mandate to “protect the land, waters and atmosphere of the region” and has since worked continuously on a range of environmental issues of significance to North Queensland and beyond.



## OUR OBJECTIVES

- To operate as the peak environmental non-government organisation for the North Queensland region.
- To act as a voice for and promote and protect the values of the natural environment in North Queensland.
- To work towards protection and rehabilitation of the environment through advocacy and education.
- To ensure that resource use in the region occurs in an ecologically sustainable manner and respects species, habitats and the integrity of ecosystems.
- To work with governments to ensure that legislation, regulations, policies and plans are designed and implemented to protect the values of the natural environment of North Queensland.
- To follow directions, engage in issues and participate in activities deemed by the Management Committee to be in the interests of the organisation.

## OUR VALUES

- **A healthy natural environment is the foundation of a healthy society.** We believe that societal transformation is required for North Queensland communities to operate within the biophysical limits of the natural environment and that a healthy, thriving North Queensland community is inextricably dependent on a healthy environment.
- **Passionate people are the hope for the future.** We believe people power brings about change for current and future generations.
- **Real change is achieved by empowering local communities.** We are committed to supporting North Queensland citizens, our members, staff, volunteers and supporters to be strong advocates for the environment.
- **Partnerships and collaboration are vital.** We recognise that significant and systemic changes will be achieved by working with others in our local community, the North Queensland region, Queensland and the world.
- **We are independent and ethical.** We represent the natural environment, free from the influence of corporations, political parties and governments and we ensure our activities align with our mission and values.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

It seems a long time since I wrote my President's Report to present at last year's AGM, where NQCC presented an Honorary Life Membership to Dr Charlie Veron, the "godfather of coral" and one of the living treasures of the conservation world.

In the twelve months since, all of us have been affected by COVID-19 in some way or another. During the height of the restrictions, NQCC found creative ways to connect to one another and our community. We held General Meetings, Management Committee meetings, conversations training and (most enjoyably) Green Drinks in a virtual setting. A lot of this creativity was enabled by Crystal, our Community Campaigner, who continues to play a vital role with NQCC.

In March this year, we farewelled our Campaigns Manager of two years, Tarquin Moon, with an online event for members to say goodbye. I will take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible contribution Tarquin made to NQCC and our community in her time with us. In late April, we welcomed Simon Cheers to continue in this role. Originally a Townsville local, Simon comes to us with a wealth of experience working closely with Traditional Owners in conservation and land care in South Australia and the NT and we look forward to seeing him build upon the great work commenced by Tarquin.

We have also made positive changes to the way our Management Committee operates, with the introduction of Sub-Committees. This includes our very active Burdekin Basin Sub-Committee, headed up by John Connell. This Sub-Committee has been exploring the lack of coordination and transparency around the multiple developments proposed in the Burdekin catchment. In the months since the end of the last financial year, NQCC held a seminar entitled "Ensuring a Viable Burdekin Basin", which was

attended by 50 researchers, stakeholders and community representatives.

Also of great importance is our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Sub-Committee who are fostering links with the First Nations community as the first step in developing a RAP for our organisation.

Our Governance Sub-Committee began by producing a Code of Conduct for Management Committee members and our Strategic Plan Sub-Committee has completed their final review of our Strategic Plan, which will help to guide NQCC into the future.

I will conclude by acknowledging the amazing contributions of members of the Management Committee. I especially want to thank Cam Leitch who will stand down at the AGM after two years as Treasurer. During this time Cam has been a rock of the organisation and thankfully Cam is planning to stay on as a Committee Member.

**Peter Hanley**

President, North Queensland Conservation Council





# FROM THE STAFF

NQCC is a wonderful organisation, with a rich history of being a strong voice for the North Queensland environment. Since I have been at NQCC we have formed a number of sub-committees comprised of staff, Management Committee members and volunteers. These committees have been effective at achieving important outcomes for NQCC. I would also like to thank Tarquin Moon for all her efforts as NQCC's Campaign Manager. She worked tirelessly on our National Parks campaign and was the brains behind the innovative 'Climate Conversations' project.

Next year will be an exciting and busy year for NQCC. I'm really looking forward to creating more opportunities for our members and volunteers to get involved in the organisation, while increasing our visibility in the community and promoting our unique environment. Most North Queenslanders enjoy spending time in nature and it's NQCC's role to connect our community's enjoyment of our beaches, waterways and outback to the importance of conserving it for future generations.

**Simon Cheers**

Campaigns Manager

This year has been like no other. One minute we were high on life at Trivia and the next we were watching the climate crisis unfold before us. As the public discourse around climate change and the environment became increasingly polarised, we knew we had to adapt.

Amid the horror of the summer bushfires, we were exploring smarter ways to address the climate change debate. Then, during COVID-19, we quickly adapted, delivering online conversation training sessions and other online events to connect with our community.

Farewelling Tarquin this year wasn't easy, as she's been a mentor to me, as well as an incredible source of experience and insight. While she laid the groundwork for uniting our community in our campaigns around Climate Change and National Parks, Simon has continued to elevate this work, and I am excited and honoured to be working with him.

In this Annual Report you will find no EcoFiesta, Palm Creek Folk Festival or Climate Week actions. But rest assured that our organisation is as committed as ever to our objectives and our community, and with the help of our generous donors and dedicated volunteers, we will continue to grow bigger and better than ever before.

**Crystal Falknau**

Community Campaigner



# MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



**Peter Hanley**  
President



**Alastair Birtles**



**David Kault**



**Cam Leitch**  
Treasurer



**Linda Davis**



**Tash Henderson**



**John Connell**  
Secretary



**Chris Pam**







# CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS

Like many other environmental organisations throughout the world, NQCC has recognised the need for a real paradigm shift around climate change to unite communities to work towards positive outcomes for the future.

Our Climate Conversations Project kicked off in the second half of 2019, with the goal of destigmatising climate change by highlighting the community benefits of a more sustainable, low-carbon future.

Our research showed that: positive interactions lead to the sharing of ideas and breaking down of barriers, allowing meaningful, two-way dialogue with members of our community about the solutions and opportunities available to us here in North Queensland.

As part of their internship under their Social Work studies, Parimal Reddy and Mapendo Rwamuhizi assisted Tarquin in researching various communication methods and began devising our "Conversations Training" for the project.

Following this internship, we were successful in obtaining a grant from CANA (Climate Action Network Australia) to employ Tessa Hodge as our Project Coordinator.

Over the next few months, Tessa conducted conversation training sessions to help participants develop conversational techniques for facilitating effective conversations about climate change and the future. This training reinforced that, through the power of conversation with calmness and clarity, change towards progress can be made. The plan was to recruit and train willing

volunteers and then take to the streets of Townsville, door-knocking with a short survey to capture community support for various carbon-reducing initiatives (e.g. publicly-owned renewable energy production, electric vehicles, public transport etc.).

When Covid-19 restrictions hit our region, the training sessions moved online, providing the perfect platform for those stuck at home and yearning to upskill and remain actively engaged in climate activism. Volunteers who undertook this training were encouraged to practice these conversations with their friends and relatives, using our online survey as a guide.

Throughout this project, we crafted our "Vision for Townsville", which has endured, now that the "conversations training" chapter of this project has come to a close. This vision board has proven to be incredibly useful in continuing these conversations within our community, allowing us to build upon this project into the future.



Tessa Hodge sharing our "Vision for Townsville" at Cotters Market.



# NATIONAL PARKS CAMPAIGN

As State Governments throughout Australia signal support for commercial leases in National Parks, NQCC has taken a stand for the protection of biodiversity above all else.

Throughout the year, we have worked with campaigners across Queensland, met with decision-makers, built connections with allies and engaged communities in our campaign to #SaveOurNationalParks. We know that visitor facilities are best publicly funded and managed, and available for the general public.

Commercial leases and infrastructure within National Parks monopolise access, increase concentrated visitation, threaten biodiversity and provide no guarantees for the future health of the developed site's environment. While ecotourism plays an

important role in highlighting the wonder and value of our unique species and landscapes, tourism operators conducting business within National Parks should adhere to the cardinal principle of biodiversity conservation and operate under the existing permit system.

With threats to several beloved National Parks within our region, including Hinchinbrook Island National Park, NQCC has taken the lead on this issue and will not let our campaign rest until the future of our National Parks is guaranteed.



## WILDERNESS MATTERS BAND NIGHT

In the 1990s, passionate conservationists actively protested the commercial development of Hinchinbrook Island and the Hinchinbrook Channel. 25 years later, the campaign was remembered and celebrated in an historical display in Cardwell.

Inspired by this display, NQCC partnered with Kenn Parker and Cardwell supporters to bring the display and its important message to Townsville. This live band night, hosted at Umbrella Studio, provided an opportunity for locals of all ages and backgrounds to explore the history of the campaign through an impressive collection of newspaper clippings, guests speakers and video footage.

To liven up the event, we were accompanied by four fantastic local bands: Astronaut Launch Party, Trash Meow, The Residance and DJ Tropicalism. We would like to thank all of these performers, as well as Derek Tipper, Kenn Parker, Umbrella Studio and our amazing team of volunteers who assisted on the night!



# ADVOCACY

## ROUND TABLES

In December 2019, Tarquin attended the final Ministerial Environment Round Table Meeting for the year. These meetings are attended by seven regional councils, SEQ groups and several state-based environmental organisations such as The Wilderness Society and Environmental Defenders Office. In meetings with the Environment Minister Leeanne Enoch, NQCC advocated for three issues – National Parks, flying foxes and climate change. Our request was granted for more consistent and regular engagement with the department on changes to National Parks relating to private leases starting with a meeting early in the new year.

We joined CAFNEC in raising concerns about flying fox roost dispersal, drawing attention to Townsville City Council's dispersal occurring during breeding season, causing flying fox young to be abandoned in trees. Currently the Queensland Government's flying fox roost management framework is being reviewed with input from submissions by Queensland conservation organisations.

Finally, we advocated for increased public engagement on zero-carbon transitions to highlight the importance of collective action on climate change as a community. The conservation groups present worked well as a cohesive sector and came away from the meetings with some satisfying outcomes.

## REGIONAL PARLIAMENT

Occasionally, all 93 of our Queensland Members of Parliament head out of Brisbane to hold their Parliamentary sittings in other localities, and in September 2019 it was Townsville's turn! NQCC took full advantage of this opportunity, meeting with Tourism Minister Kate Jones, Deputy Premier/Treasurer Jackie Trad, Environment Minister Leeanne Enoch and Small Business Minister Shannon Fentiman, as well as an impromptu meeting with State Development Minister Cameron Dick.

The issues raised in these meetings included private leases in National Parks, the lack of protection for Mahogany Glider habitat, climate change impacts on flying fox species, reef regulations, a transition to a low-carbon economy and the North Queensland Regional Plan. On the final day of the Regional Parliament, we held a demonstration against the privatisation of Hinchinbrook Island National Park. A massive thanks to our wonderful supporters who attended this demonstration – particularly those who made a special trip to Townsville in support of our National Parks!



Rally outside Townsville's sitting of Queensland Parliament.



## SUBMISSIONS

### The North Queensland Country Club Resort and Equestrian Centre at Toolakea Beach (July 2019)

Throughout July 2019, Tarquin worked closely with Wildlife Queensland's Townsville Branch on a submission about the North Queensland Country Club Resort and Equestrian Centre Proposed by Landmark Projects Pty Ltd. We had the opportunity to suggest any changes or additions to what has to be included in the Environmental Impacts Statement (EIS) that the proponents would have to prepare as part of the development application process.

The project needs to be looked at carefully with such close proximity to the Great Barrier Reef, the presence of sensitive wetlands and drainage areas, potential habitat of threatened species, the complexity of past council decisions on this development and EPBC referrals. Another point worth noting is that the surrounding properties are also owned by the same proponent Landmark Projects Pty Ltd., which is a parent company of Rimbunan Hijau.

### North Queensland Regional Plan (November 2019)

Thank you to all of our supporters who provided us with tremendously valuable input for our submission into the North Queensland Regional Plan.

### Other Submissions

Flying Fox Roost management codes of practice and management guideline (12 Dec 2019)

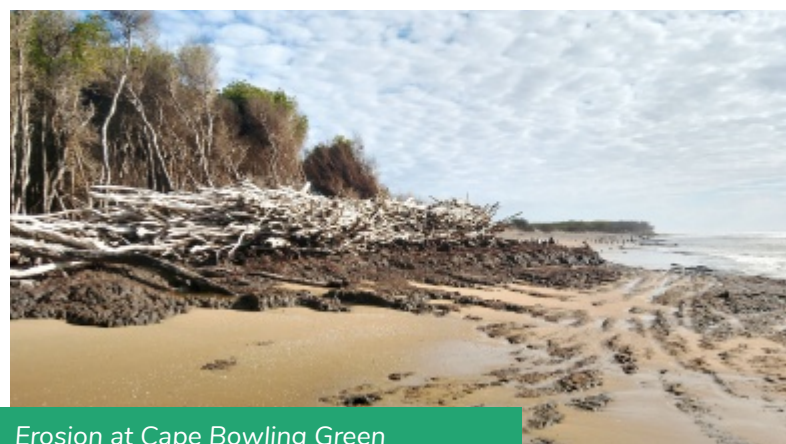
Submission on proposed future management of the Lake Eyre Basin (QLD), 13 February 2020

## HELLS GATE DAM

There have been renewed calls for construction of Hells Gates Dam, and post-Covid-19, this could well be included as a new "nation building project". As such, NQCC has conducted research to examine its feasibility as well as environmental impact and presented this to MP for Herbert, Phillip Thompson. The research examined documents that represent three perspectives: proponents of the dam, water-security interests and environmental impact, and was complemented by field trips to vulnerable sites.

Our research has found that this dam cannot be justified on water security grounds, and with great difficulty in terms of economic return. Importantly, the environmental impacts will be profound. As well as loss of habitat due to land-clearing and inundation, the dam will result in the river flow below the dam to become permanently turbid and will contribute to reducing the river flow by more than thirty percent. This has the potential to affect nutrient supply to the reef and cause erosion to the narrow spit of land that is Cape Bowling Green.

NQCC will continue to follow proposals for Hells Gates Dam construction and alert State and Federal parliaments of the potential environmental impacts and lack of economic feasibility.



Erosion at Cape Bowling Green

# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES



## GREEN DRINKS

Green Drinks is an international initiative, described as 'an organic, self-organising network' of people working in environmental fields. We see Townsville Green Drinks as a monthly networking event for anyone who loves the environment and shares a passion for conservation. NQCC has been facilitating this event on a monthly basis for Townsville locals to encourage networking, community-building and knowledge-sharing. During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, Green Drinks became a monthly Zoom get-together, involving props, photos, stories and laughs.



## COTTERS MARKET STALLS

With our Climate Conversations training equipping participants with the boost they need to take the conversations to the streets, we've held numerous stalls at Cottes Market to practice these conversations and to engage with the Townsville public. It is always wonderful to get to hear from people in the community and it gives us even more determination to champion the cause.



## JCU MARKET DAYS

We attended James Cook University's O-Week Market Days, sharing our campaign to #SaveOurNationalParks with our giant postcard in Semester 2 of 2019 and initiating interesting conversations with students around why climate action was important to them with our bottle cap poll in 2020's first semester. Thanks to our stall volunteers Parimal, Matthew and Tessa who really got people engaged!



# TRIVIA NIGHT 2019

October 2019 saw our annual fundraising Trivia Night come to life once again, where we got up to some good old-fashioned mischief for a great cause!

The night featured questions on a variety of topics, from "Australian Birds" and "National Parks", to "Entertainment of this Decade" and "1969" (because why not?). We also got to enjoy nutritious and delicious vegan food, presented on biodegradable tableware (banana leaves and cabbage cups made an appearance). We'd like to give a huge shout out to our kitchen hands on the night; Parimal, Csilla and Megan, our junior food servers Jack and Matilda and our lovely bar attendant, Mapendo.

As the questions came at the teams hard and fast, the bribes started rolling in, with Linda Davis carrying out the dirty deeds and returning with mysterious brown paper bags. When some teams started scoring 10 out of 10 we knew our answers had been traded away! Thank you to Linda for this mischievous work, and to David McMillan for devising some truly difficult questions and for scoring the answers, along with Peter Hanley.

Highlights of the night included the talent show in our game of Animal Charades, where enthusiastic participants wriggled, crawled and squawked to the delight of their audience!

Throughout the night, lucky door prizes were distributed to the lucky winners, some of whom were delighted with their winnings and others who got a good laugh.

Later that evening, our major "Cash for Conservation" raffle was drawn, with four lucky

winners announced. The raffle raised over \$950, and we are so grateful to everyone who purchased tickets! A special thanks goes to Coffee World, The Source Bulk Foods, Mary Who? Bookshop and Gecko Interiors who donated the truly wonderful prizes.

Our MCs Simon Foale and Leni Peirano kept us on our toes as the teams battled it out for a place on NQCC's famous Trivia Championship plaque, which in the end came down to a two-team tie! Bribery, corruption and early-bird bonus points may have had a role to play, but the scoreboard doesn't lie! Congratulations to the Beggars and Suppository of Wisdom, who shared first place on 68.5 points (leaving the Inundated Islanders just one point behind)!

Thank you to everyone who supported our event and made our annual fundraiser such a special night! Thanks to your generosity we raised over \$2,800 for our organisation!

Next year we hope to continue this silly tradition, so be prepared!



One of the competing Trivia Night teams, the Flamin' Galahs



## 2019 AGM

Our 2019 Annual General Meeting was held in balmy September in the leafy backyard of our office. The highlight of the evening was a special talk from Dr Charlie Veron (known to many as "the Godfather of Coral") after he accepted an Honorary Life Membership with NQCC, in recognition of his dedication and service to the Great Barrier Reef. Charlie doesn't mince his words, and his passionate stance on climate change shone through clearly. As our Campaigns Manager Tarquin Moon said afterwards: "He could have spoken for an hour and we would have happily listened on". Special thanks to interns Mapendo and Parimal for their culinary contributions and to all who attended, for food, drinks, official business and photos on our famous Rainbow Couch!

# FUNDRAISING

## CASH FOR CONSERVATION RAFFLE

A major contribution to our fundraising over 2019-20 was our "Cash for Conservation" fundraising raffle. This featured wonderful prizes from four local businesses – Coffee World, The Source Bulk Foods, Mary Who? Bookshop and Gecko Interiors. We are so grateful for the generosity of these businesses in supporting our raffle, which was drawn at our Trivia Night and raised almost \$1000!

## CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME

Throughout 2019-20, we continued to receive generous donations of bottles and cans to raise funds through Queensland's Container Deposit Scheme. Supporters can donate to us in two ways through this scheme – by dropping them off at our office (in the bins provided out the front) or by quoting our ID number at their closest container recycling facility. Our number is C100 283 66 and we receive ten cents for each eligible container donated!



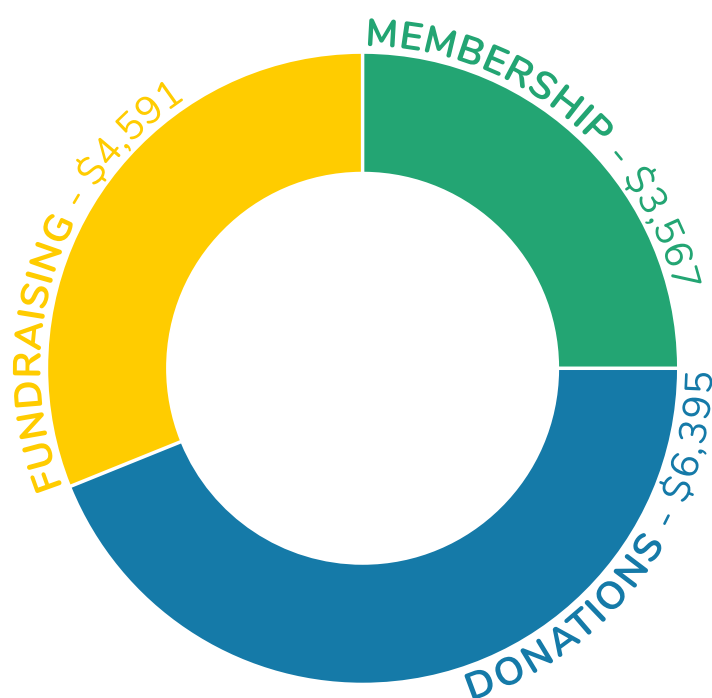
# FINANCES

NQCC is a not-for-profit incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Queensland). The organisation is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). NQCC fulfills its governance obligations through reports and returns as required to the ACNC, Office of Fair Trading and the Register of Environment Organisations through the Australian Tax Office.

The principal activities of NQCC are to protect North Queensland's environment through advocacy and education. The organisation is governed by a Management Committee in line with the requirements of NQCC's constitution (the Rules of Association). The Management Committee is elected by members at the Annual General Meeting. Management Committee members are volunteers who do not receive remuneration for their role.

NQCC maintains a public gift fund - the NQCC Environment Fund - which is a tax-deductible gift recipient registered by the Australian Taxation Office and subject to the regulatory oversight of the Commonwealth Register of Environmental Organisations and the ACNC. Sue Cole, Mary Vance, Cam Leitch and Sue O'Brien oversee the NQCC Environment Fund. All donations received are used to support NQCC's environmental objectives.

As well as donations, NQCC is funded through memberships, fundraising events and funding from the Queensland Government. In 2019-2020, NQCC was granted \$65,000 from the Queensland State Government, from their Non-Government Conservation Funding Program. NQCC gratefully acknowledges the support of this agency.



Further detail can be found in the 2019-20 Financial Report.

# PARTNERSHIPS

- Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook (ASH)
- Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)
- Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS)
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC)
- Boomerang Bags Townsville
- Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee (BBIFMAC)
- Burdekin Water Futures Group
- Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC)
- Capricorn Conservation Council
- Cassowary Keystone Conservation Group
- Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA)
- Climate Media Centre
- CSIRO
- Environmental Defenders Office (EDO)
- Gladstone Conservation Council
- Lock the Gate Alliance
- Mackay Conservation Group
- Magnetic Island Nature Care Association (MINCA)
- National Parks Association Queensland
- Plastic Free Townsville
- Queensland Community Alliance (QCA)
- Queensland Conservation Council (QCC)
- Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC)
- Schools Strike 4 Climate (SS4C)
- Solar Citizens
- Stop Adani
- Tangaroa Blue
- The Australia Institute
- The Morris Foundation
- The Wilderness Society
- Townsville Against Live Export (TALE)
- Townsville City Council
- TropWATER (JCU)
- Volunteering North Queensland (VNQ)
- Wildlife Queensland (Townsville Branch)
- WWF - Brisbane
- Zero Waste Magnetic Island



# VOLUNTEERS & SUPPORTERS

We would like to give a huge THANK YOU to all of our incredible volunteers, members, supporters, partners and allies!

Thank you also to our wonderful interns Parimal Reddy and Mapendo Rwamuhizi and our Climate Conversations Project Coordinator Tessa, who brought the project to life.

## VOLUNTEERS

- Csilla Peto
- David McMillan
- Ian Yesberg
- Leni Peirano
- Malcolm Tattersall
- Matthew Garbutt
- Megan Armstrong
- Rachel Langtree
- Simon Foale
- Taryn Laporte



NQCC interns for 2019, Parimal and Mapendo.

## SUPPORTIVE BUSINESSES

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Artie's Music        | • Mary Who? Bookshop    |
| • Canva                | • Sweetleaf Gardening   |
| • Coffee Works Mareeba | • The Source Bulk Foods |
| • Gecko Interiors      |                         |

*Thanks to David McMillan for document design and photos on pages 1, 2, 4, 9, 18 and 20.*



North  
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NQCC acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live, work and meet.  
We pay respects to elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the important role that  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play in environmental conservation  
throughout Australia.