



earthwatch  
AUSTRALIA

# IMPACT REPORT 2025





**We respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people** as Australia's First Peoples and the local Traditional Owners as the original custodians of the lands, water and sky on which we rely, operate and learn. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge the continued cultural, social and spiritual connections that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with the lands, waters and skies and recognise and value that Traditional Custodians have cared for and protected these lands, waters and skies for thousands of generations. We recognise and value the essential and continuing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

*Image (above): Chris Jack Photography*

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Image: Rainbow Bee-eater. Photography: Helen Cross

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# CEO Message



**Every day I am reminded of the state of the environment, by the headlines and social media and science.**

Yet, every day I am inspired by the actions people take daily to protect our natural world, and proud of Earthwatch staff, volunteers and community members who go out into their local wetlands to monitor their health, who take ClimateWatch observations on their commute and those educators who are taking their students out into the field to collect data for local citizen science projects.

The amount of work our participants undertook to protect our natural world in 2025 is equivalent to a single person working full-time for 62.5 years. This is the power of the Earthwatch approach to protecting the natural world. People with the right knowledge and tools make a difference, every single day.

As one of our Wetlands community champions Rob Williams said last year...

“  
I drove past that habitat for years thinking, someone should do something about that. . . then one day, I realised. . . I can do something about that. ”

Thank you Rob, and to all our Earthwatch supporters. Together we make a difference for nature.



# Chair Message



**I'm proud to reflect on the progress and achievements of Earthwatch Australia in 2025. The year demonstrated the strength and relevance of Earthwatch Australia's model: rigorous science grounded in community and connection to place.**

Our community-led climate solutions for wetlands were ranked in the top 14% of global nominations by independent judges of the 2025 Earthshot Prize, an endorsement of both the quality and scalability of our work.

In Vanuatu, we reached an important milestone: Traditional Knowledge biodiversity indicators, documented through ClimateWatch, are now informing climate and seasonal forecasts produced by the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department. This integration of Traditional Knowledge and contemporary science represents the kind of systems change Earthwatch enables.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our CEO, staff, partners and supporters for their dedication and integrity.

In a complex and rapidly changing world, Earthwatch continues to demonstrate that experiential learning and community-led action can shape better environmental decisions. Locally, nationally and globally.

# Who we are

Earthwatch works in partnership across academia, First Nations, government, corporate, NGO and civil society sectors to deliver meaningful environmental impact.

At the heart of our approach is citizen science, a powerful and proven tool that enables people from all walks of life to contribute to scientific research, inform decision-making, and drive long term behaviour change.

Our work champions impactful research, on-ground action, and education across key environmental areas, including Education, Climate & Biodiversity, Coastal Wetlands & Reefs, Scientific Expeditions, and national scale citizen science programs. Citizen science plays a critical role in addressing complex environmental challenges.

It increases the capacity to undertake robust scientific research that informs policy and management strategies; builds scientific and environmental literacy so individuals, communities and organisations can make more informed decisions; and empowers people and businesses to take positive, practical action for the environment.

Through a combination of experiential learning and hands-on community engagement, Earthwatch programs deliver transformational experiences that foster lasting connections to nature. This approach not only generates high-quality data and insights, but also creates sustained, positive behaviour change that supports healthier ecosystems and communities.

By empowering people to save the natural world, we are working towards a society that lives in balance with nature.



## Our Mission

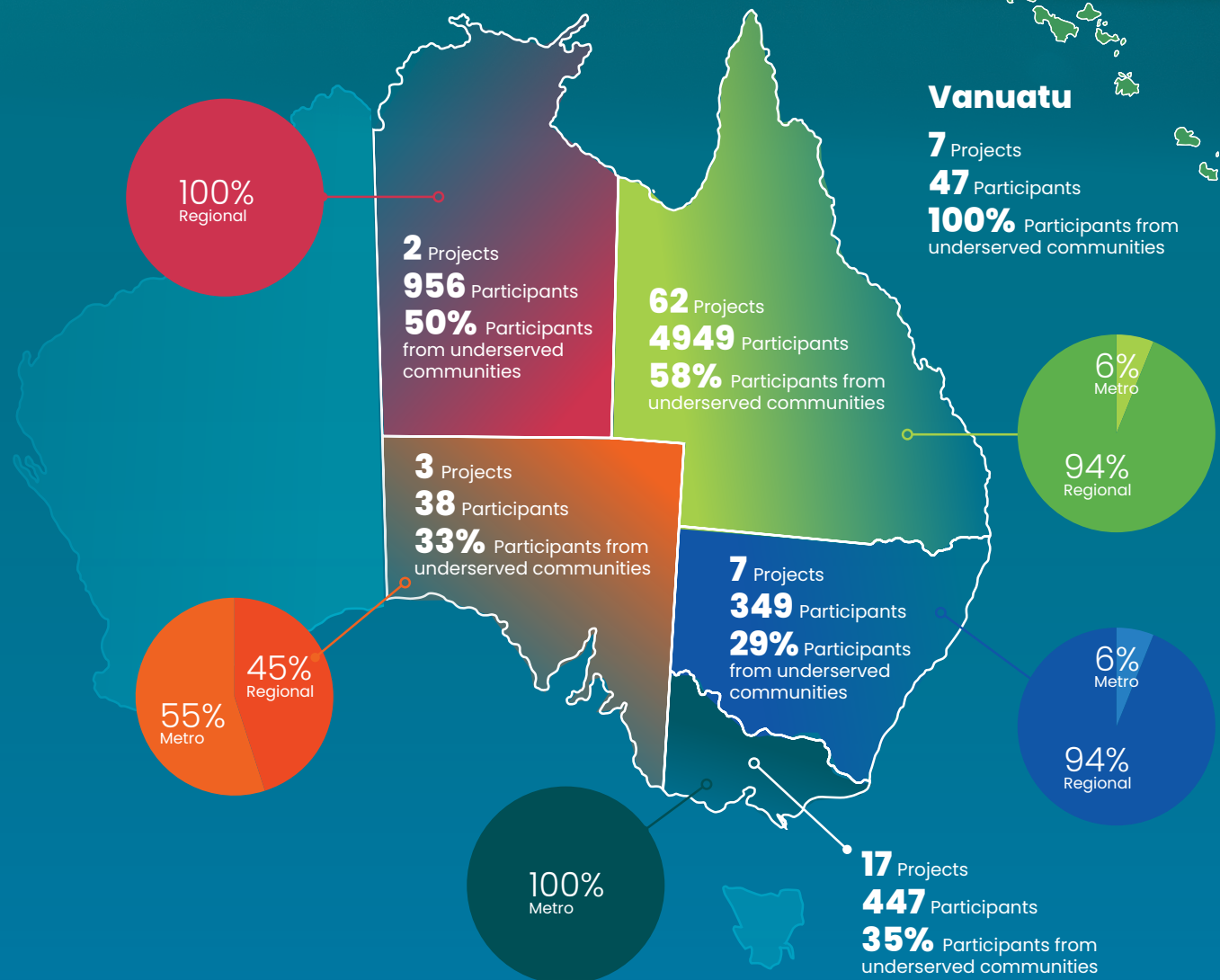
To empower people to save the natural world.

## Our Vision

Working together to create a society that lives in balance with nature.



# A snapshot of our 2025 citizen science projects across Australia and Vanuatu.



# Our Impact

## Increasing scientific knowledge



119,841

hours of people power through citizen science and learning



91

scientific expeditions, training sessions and community workshops delivered



80%

of programs empower participants with skills that directly conserve, restore and enhance ecosystems

## Saving our unique species



2,054

rolling total of new species identified to science across 51 Bush Blitz expeditions (2010-2025)



334

tropical saltmarshes surveyed across



41

sites

## Developing environmental leaders



144

Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers engaged in MangroveWatch



20

Traditional Owner groups

6,786

children, young adults, workers, business owners, care givers and retirees participating in Earthwatch programs





## Engaging underserved communities



70%

of projects delivered in marginalised, regional and remote areas



48%

of projects engaging First Nations learning

## Changing practices for positive environmental outcomes



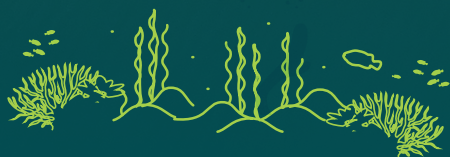
623

environmental action projects implemented as a direct result of participation in Earthwatch programs



66,970

hectares of wetlands and saltmarsh actively stewarded by local communities protecting wetlands for the future



430kg

of sea-weed removed from the Great Barrier Reef to restore degraded coral reefs



800

trees and shrubs planted in Tiny Forests from critically endangered and threatened ecological communities

# Stories of Impact



## MangroveWatch: Empowering Communities to Protect Australia's Coastal Ecosystems

In 2025, MangroveWatch strengthened its position as a leading community-driven coastal wetland program, connecting science, stewardship and strategic partnerships to protect some of Australia's most climate-critical coastal ecosystems: mangroves and saltmarsh.

As climate pressures intensify and coastal communities face increasing disaster impacts, the need for informed, locally embedded environmental stewardship and action has never been greater. Earthwatch partners with MangroveWatch to bring together citizen science, Traditional Owner knowledge and ecological expertise, ensuring that monitoring translates into measurable outcomes.

This year, 627 volunteers, Traditional Owners, Indigenous Rangers, school students, community groups, natural resource managers and scientists worked together across Queensland and the Northern Territory. Monitoring spanned 20 estuaries, 52 saltmarsh sites and 33 mangrove forest plots, representing community stewardship of more than 66,900 hectares of coastal wetlands.

Supported by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and delivered in partnership with regional organisations including the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre, the program expanded through new [Local Action Plans \(LAPs\)](#). This practical framework moves beyond data collection and transforms monitoring insights into coordinated, locally led solutions.

Workshops in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Bundaberg brought together Traditional Owners, community leaders, youth participants and environmental practitioners to identify priority risks and co-design response actions. These partnerships are strengthening pathways between community-generated evidence and government decision-making across local, state and federal levels.

Importantly, the program is empowering the next generation in coastal stewardship and ensuring youth voices actively inform wetland management and conservation. 162 young people participated in coastal wetland monitoring, education and management planning activities this year, including the Townsville Local Action Plan and the Yunbenun Wetland Warrior program delivered in partnership with Canoe Projects. Youth engagement is not an add-on, it is central to building long-term ecosystem resilience and future leadership capacity.

In 2025, six community-led Local Action Plan initiatives moved into implementation, delivering nature-positive actions including habitat restoration, erosion management, community education and upskilling and culturally informed ecosystem management. Regular coordination between LAP leaders, Earthwatch scientists and regional project officers ensured accountability, scientific rigour and alignment with regional priorities.



## Did You Know?

MangroveWatch data feeds directly into:

- 🕒 **Wet Tropics Waterways Report Card**
- 🕒 **Healthy Waters Partnership for the Dry Tropics**
- 🕒 **Healthy Rivers to Reef Report Card**

Community-generated data is actively informing regional environmental management and investment decisions.



The Earthwatch-MangroveWatch partnership continues to demonstrate that community-led monitoring is more than participation. It is an infrastructure for community-led climate resilience. Mangroves and saltmarsh buffer coastlines, support fisheries, store significant blue carbon and sustain cultural values. By equipping communities with credible data, structured action pathways and strong partnerships, the program is safeguarding the ecosystems that protect and sustain us all.



## Global Recognition

**The Earthwatch MangroveWatch program was ranked in the top 14% globally for community-led, evidence-based climate solutions by the 2025 Earthshot Prize judges.**

Earthwatch's resident mangrove ecologist, Jock Mackenzie, was invited by the Abu Dhabi government to train participants at the IUCN Species Survival Commission Mangrove Specialist Group developing a new **Mangrove Ecosystem Monitoring Toolkit for the Arabian Gulf region**. Jock is now an advisor to the IUCN Commission Group for Wetlands Ecosystems, where he also champions community engagement in global mangrove species conservation.

## Strengthening Australia's Coastal Wetland Biodiversity Knowledge

In 2025, the program contributed:

- 1,952** coastal wetland observations
- 736** recorded species
- 107** new species locality records
- 38** new Local Government Area records
- 3** new bioregion records
- 6** species range extensions

An additional **5,474** coastal wetland observations were independently verified by our team.

Other key highlights:

- 128** Indigenous participants
- 78** Indigenous youth
- 20** Indigenous Ranger Groups
- 21** schools + youth organisations engaged
- 48** community and government partners
- 13** action outcomes (including LAP)
- 3** Published Products
- 18** Workshops and Presentations

# Stories of Impact



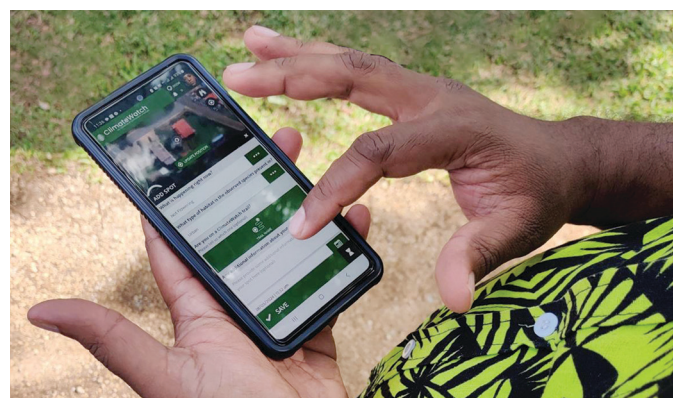
## ClimateWatch Vanuatu: Strengthening National Climate Capacity in 2025

In 2025, ClimateWatch Vanuatu accelerated measurable capacity development across communities, schools, and government partners, positioning the program as a high-impact investment in resilience and locally led adaptation.

Through the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazard Department's (VMGD) leadership, 11 ClimateWatch trails were finalised across all provinces, each supported by trained Community Climate Champions and Senior Meteorological Officers to ensure sustained data collection and validation at the community level.

The program also delivered a significant education outcome: ClimateWatch curriculum resources were piloted in two Tanna schools, integrating Traditional Knowledge with phenology monitoring. Students collected weekly species data, collaborated with Elders and presented research projects. This approach has since been endorsed by the Ministry of Education for national adoption, embedding climate literacy across Vanuatu's school system.

Data capacity continues to scale, with over 800 ClimateWatch data points collected feeding directly into national climate and cyclone forecasting tools used by VMGD. Parallel investment in data validation systems and integration with VanKIRAP's Traditional Knowledge database further strengthens long-term sustainability.



These achievements demonstrate strong return on donor investment, expanding local leadership, improving national forecasting capability, and establishing enduring systems that underpin Vanuatu's climate resilience beyond the project lifecycle.

**We are looking to scale with other  
Pacific Island Nations**





**Student Challenge  
Environmental Leaders**



**mizuiku  
Nature and Water School**

In 2025, our Student Challenge program proved as popular as ever with 130 applicants and 38 exceptional senior high-school students awarded Earthwatch Student Challenge Fellowships. Supported by a \$235,000 program investment, these emerging leaders participated in expeditions at Calperum Station in the Mallee and the Mackay Coastal Wetlands, immersing themselves in real-world science, building skills, confidence, and passion to pursue future careers in environmental leadership.

## Did you know?



**Student Challenge is one of Earthwatch Australia's longest running programs.**

Over its lifetime (2007), and thanks to the long-term support of The George Alexander Foundation and our other donors, we have placed over 470 students on life-changing and career-defining scientific expeditions.



2025 saw the delivery of the pilot program, Mizuiku Nature and Water School. This program is proudly sponsored by Suntory Oceania with a \$100,000 grant for its creation and delivery last year. This program teaches children the importance of nature and water; by deepening their understanding of the natural water cycle and how it relates to their daily lives, learning how to use and conserve water responsibly, the relationship between water and biodiversity, as well as providing an opportunity to teach others, take action in their communities and be future changemakers. Connections were made and networks built between local school, Traditional Custodians and experts in the water sector.

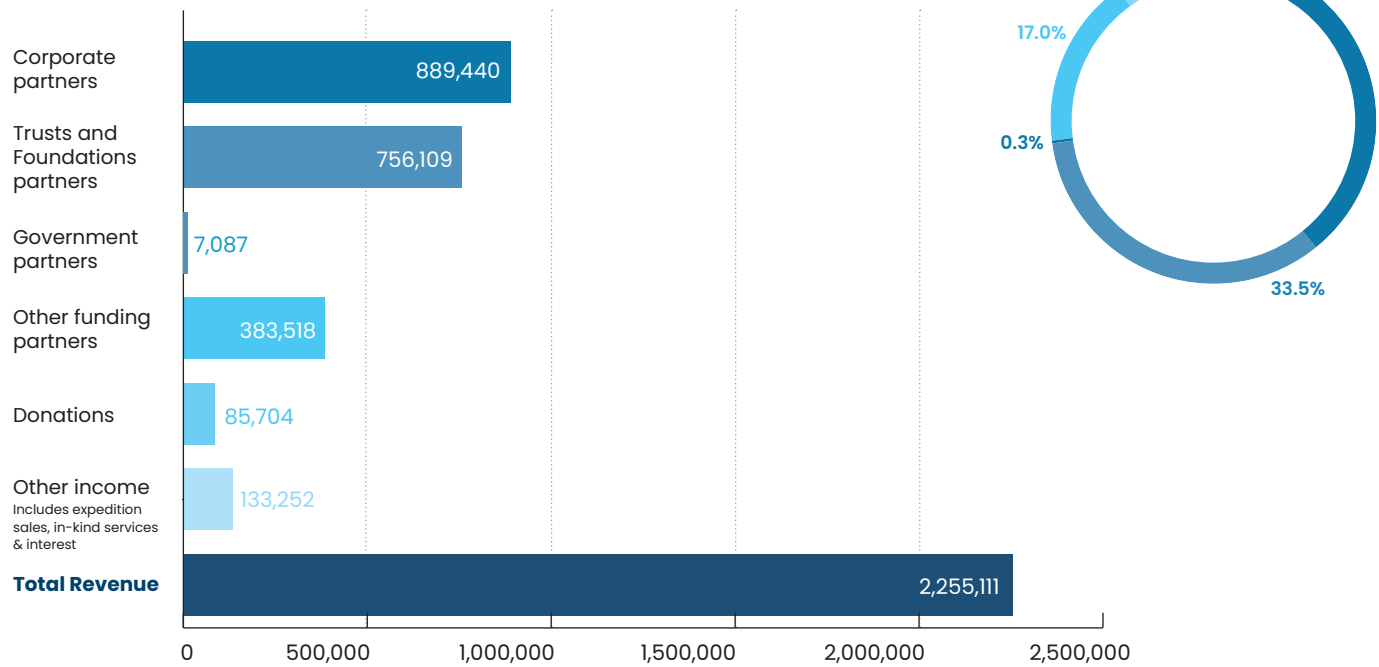
**3,957 students** were engaged in the program, **20 water education workshops** were created and presented and **11 Elders partnered with Earthwatch Australia** to enhance student learning and connection to Country. We are proud to be offering this program again in 2026.



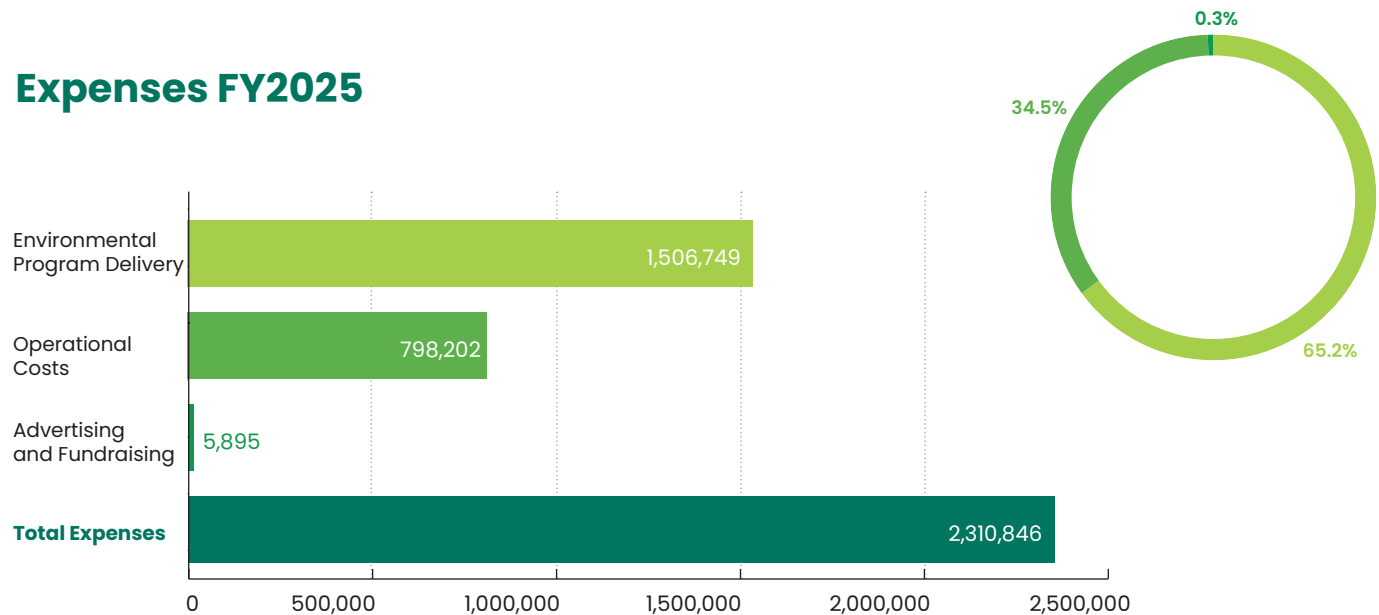
Images (top + below): Chris Jack Photography

# Our Financials

## Revenue FY2025



## Expenses FY2025





# With thanks

## Funders

BHP  
Brother  
BUPA  
CAFNEC (Cairns and Far North Environment Centre)  
CLCAC (Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation)  
George Alexander Foundation  
Gidarjil Development Corporation  
Global EBA Fund  
Goondoi Arts Aboriginal Corporation  
Great Barrier Reef Foundation  
IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)  
Mitsubishi Corporation  
OceanWatch  
Port of Townsville  
Positive Change for Marine Life  
Solving Plastic Waste CRC  
Suntory Mizuiku  
Swarovski Foundation  
Telstra Foundation  
Vincent Family Fairfax Foundation

## Delivery Partners

ALT (Australian Landscape Trust)  
Austland Services  
CAFNEC (Cairns and Far North Environment Centre)  
CANOE Projects  
Department of Education  
Gidarjil Development Corporation Ltd  
HCDI (Human Capacity Development International - Vanuatu)  
Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation  
James Cook University  
Ku-ring-gai Council  
Mangrovewatch  
Melbourne University  
MICDA (Magnetic Island Community Development Association)  
Pioneer Catchment & Landcare Group Inc  
Port of Townsville  
Spotteron  
SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme)  
The Litter Lab  
Townsville City Council  
VMGD (Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department)  
Yuwi Aboriginal Corporation

## Pro-bono partners

K&L Gates  
Google Grants

## Service Partners

ACSA (Australian Citizen Science Association)  
AMW Audit  
Benevity  
Earthwatch Europe  
Earthwatch USA  
Good2Give  
Good Company  
Goodtel  
Grassrootz  
Kaizen Synergy  
Network Insurance House (Steadfast)  
SeedPlus Bookkeeping Services  
Social Traders

We extend our sincere thanks to our donors, as well as to all our citizen scientists, volunteers and interns who shared their time, energy and expertise with Earthwatch throughout 2025. Your commitment helps power our citizen science initiatives and environmental education programs, creating lasting impact for ecosystems and communities across Australia and beyond.

With your help, we're  
empowering people  
to save the natural world  
through citizen science,  
experiential learning and  
practical environmental  
stewardship.



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