TANGAROA BLUE® FOUNDATION

2025 - 2026

ANNUAL REPORT



AUSTRALIAN MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE®



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Cover Photo: Cocos Keeling Islands Clean-up Voyage. Credit: Niamh Swingler
Photo Above: Coral Sea. Credit: Peter Varga

Tangaroa Blue® Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Lands and Sea Country on which we live and work.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and acknowledge their ongoing relationship to this land and sea, and the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

Through respectful relationships, we will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve shared goals.



Photo: Coral Sea. Credit: Peter Varga

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

As Chair of Tangaroa Blue Foundation, I am pleased to introduce our 2025 - 2026 Annual Report and reflect on a year defined by practical action, evidence-led innovation, and deep collaboration. Our purpose remains clear, which is to prevent and remove marine debris by connecting community effort with robust data, developing and maintaining strong partnerships and implementing source reduction solutions that stop pollution before it reaches our ocean.

This year, Tangaroa Blue Foundation continued to evolve in response to emerging challenges. Project ReCon is a powerful example of that approach. By repurposing satellite trackers from commercial tuna fisheries, the program helps locate abandoned fishing gear, ghost nets and other high-risk floating debris. Its adaptation to support the NSW Government's efforts to track and assist whales entangled in discarded gear demonstrates our capacity to apply practical solutions in new ways. Through partnerships with marinas, commercial operators and private vessels, we are building a more responsive network for locating, tagging and removing debris from the marine environment.

Our data systems remain central to this work. The Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database turns clean-up effort into evidence for action, helping communities, industry and decision-makers understand what is being found, where it is coming from and how it can be prevented. Every item recorded strengthens the case for better systems, changed behaviours and targeted source-based interventions.

Strong governance and adaptive systems underpin that impact. Under CEO Heidi Tait's leadership, Tangaroa Blue Foundation has strengthened policies, systems and operational readiness, including expanding the Health and Safety Management System to address psychosocial risks, protecting isolated field workers during severe weather and responding quickly to emerging biosecurity risks such as bird flu. These measures reflect our commitment to the wellbeing of staff, partners and volunteers, supported by no major incidents or lost time despite approximately 8,500 hours of active fieldwork.



ReefClean also reached an important milestone. The program continued to deliver tangible outcomes across the Great Barrier Reef region through targeted clean-ups, monitoring, community engagement, microplastic sampling and source-reduction initiatives. As ReefClean 2.0 closes in 2027 and the ReefClean 3.0 grant application opens, I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, delivery partners, schools, volunteers and communities who have helped make the program a sustained success.

Looking ahead, marine debris pollution will continue to require collaboration across government, industry, community and research. Tangaroa Blue Foundation's role is to translate evidence into action through removing harmful debris, identifying sources and pathways, and supporting practical changes that prevent the problem from recurring.

On behalf of the Board, I thank Heidi Tait and the Tangaroa Blue Foundation team for their leadership, professionalism, and persistence. I also thank my fellow Board members, funding and program partners, and every volunteer, ranger group, school, business, and community member who contributed time, knowledge, and energy. Together, we are not only cleaning up coastlines, we are building the partnerships and solutions needed to stop marine debris at its source and protect our oceans for future generations.

I am proud of what Tangaroa Blue Foundation achieved in 2025 - 2026 and look forward to the next phase of our work with confidence, gratitude, and renewed determination.

Shoanne Labowitch

Shoanne Labowitch
Chair of the Board
Tangaroa Blue Foundation



Photo: Wedge Island Protection Association during the 2025 WA Beach Clean-up

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

As we reflect on the 2025 - 2026 financial year, I am continually inspired by what happens when diverse groups of people align around a single, uncompromising goal: stopping marine debris at its source.

When Tangaroa Blue Foundation began in 2004, our mission was grounded in a simple realisation - cleaning up our beaches, while vital, would never be enough to end the marine debris crisis on its own. If we wanted real, enduring change, we had to combine grassroots action with rigorous data collection.

Over two decades later, our work continues to evolve to ensure that as the latest demands for environmental data arise, we are ready to meet them - informing policy at the highest levels of government and driving community-led Source Reduction Plans across Australia.

At the core of this movement is the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) framework. We designed AMDI on a simple premise: marine debris is a complex, systemic issue and no single group can solve it alone.

Industry, government, scientific institutions, Traditional Custodians and local communities all have a stake in addressing marine debris, with each bringing a distinct contribution to the solution. The AMDI provides a shared platform for collaboration, connecting individual efforts into a coordinated national response.

None of our impact this year would be possible without the extraordinary dedication of our volunteers, partners and staff. Over the past twelve months, our team has worked alongside thousands of passionate volunteers who brave all weather conditions to clear tonnes of debris from our environment.

Together with Indigenous Rangers, whose ongoing stewardship and deep knowledge of Country remain vital to protecting remote and culturally sensitive environments, we have scaled up both our physical reach and our restoration efforts.



This year, our scope of work spans the full spectrum of environmental intervention. From high-impact community clean-ups and engaging school education activities to rigorous scientific monitoring and co-authoring peer-reviewed research papers, our operations demonstrate the power of data-driven conservation. Every single item logged into the AMDI Database adds a piece to a national puzzle, equipping decision-makers with the evidence needed to hold supply chains accountable, reform waste management policies and implement localised preventative action.

We are immensely proud of the work we do alongside all our stakeholders. The conservation sector cannot solve these complex environmental challenges in isolation. To create lasting impact, we must forge authentic relationships across all sectors - including non-traditional partners in commercial industry and manufacturing - because that is precisely where structural changes need to occur.

Trust and relationship-building serve as the foundation of our work. When we foster trust, pivotal changes become possible and non-traditional collaborations achieve unimaginable outcomes. As we look ahead, we remain deeply grateful to our network of volunteers, funding supporters and donors, corporate partners, research allies, Indigenous Ranger groups and dedicated staff.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to protecting all our aquatic environments—from rivers, wetlands and catchments to coasts and oceans—ensuring both freshwater and saltwater ecosystems are safeguarded for generations to come.

Heidi Tait

Heidi Tait
Chief Executive Officer
Tangaroa Blue Foundation



Photo: Larapuna Country, Bay of Fires, Tasmania

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to lead, inspire, and ignite action by all, to empower the removal and prevention of litter from entering the marine environment, for a healthier and cleaner ocean.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a healthy and clean ocean for current and future generations. Tangaroa – the God of the Ocean – made laws to protect the marine environment, which inspired the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI).

OUR MISSION

Tangaroa Blue Foundation works to prevent and remove marine debris in Australia and across regions. We use the Australian Marine Debris Initiative framework to inspire behaviour change and innovation, and empower communities, industry, and government to make data-driven decisions that improve ocean health.



Photo: Cocos Keeling Islands Clean-up Voyage, Home Island

IMPACT GOALS

As Tangaroa Blue Foundation's impact continues to grow across Australia, we're focused on ensuring our efforts create meaningful change. From using the Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database to drive data-driven global action to ensuring our charity remains stable and resilient, run by a dedicated team of subject experts, scientists, and community builders, we're constantly reflecting on how to keep moving toward our goal of preventing and removing marine debris in and around Australia.

Tangaroa Blue Foundation's 2024 - 2030 Strategic Plan sets five impact goals that guide how we use data, partnerships, community action, and innovation to prevent and remove marine debris.

1 DATA-DRIVEN GLOBAL ACTION

We will support the implementation of a regional standardised framework that guides data-driven global actions to reduce international marine debris by 2040. This includes strengthening adoption of the Australian Marine Debris Initiative framework and methodology across Oceania and South-Eastern Asia, building regional partnerships and improving the tools used to collect, interpret and share marine debris data.

2 EVIDENCE-BASED INVESTMENT

We aim to strengthen evidence-based strategic investment by communities, industry and governments so funding for marine debris removal and prevention delivers the greatest possible impact by 2030. Priorities include expanding long-term monitoring under the Australian Marine Debris Initiative, developing national assessment and reporting tools, contributing to research, and ensuring evidence informs policy, investment, and management.

3 INSPIRING COMMUNITY

We aim to inspire environmental stewardship through collaboration and citizen science, building a robust community able to tackle the marine debris issue by 2030. Growing the Australian Marine Debris Initiative network, supporting Source Reduction Plans, increasing participation, and strengthening respectful engagement and knowledge sharing with Traditional Custodians are central to this goal.

4 REGULATED RECYCLING PATHWAYS

By 2040, we want an evidence-led and regulated approach to recycling marine debris. This means improving understanding of material lifecycles, increasing responsible recovery and recycling pathways, supporting industry best practice, developing circular solutions for recovered materials and equipment, and using evidence to inform regulation and guard against greenwashing.

5 A STABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION

By 2027, we aim to be a stable and resilient organisation that is independent with diverse funding and appropriately resourced to allow for agility to address marine debris issues now and into the future.

AMDI IMPACT 2004 - 2026

The Australian Marine Debris Initiative® connects citizen science clean-ups with data collection to identify marine debris hotspots, inform policy, support peer-reviewed research and guide source reduction initiatives at local, national and international levels.



31.2 M
ITEMS REMOVED



46,683
CLEAN-UPS



2,238
TONNES



312,191
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



2.6 M
VOLUNTEER HOURS



5,480
CLEAN-UP SITES



3,381
PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



50,138 km
COASTLINE CLEANED (MILESTONE)



35
CO-AUTHORED SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

Photos: From various Tangaroa Blue Foundation events during 2025 and 2026

AMDI HIGHLIGHTS

Across 2025 - 2026, Tangaroa Blue Foundation's work connected community clean-ups, long-term monitoring, education, industry engagement, and source reduction across Australia. From remote coastlines and island communities to urban waterways and industrial sites, people contributed time, local knowledge and data to understand marine debris and prevent it at its source.

The following highlights capture the breadth of this work, from practical litter prevention and creative uses for recovered materials to international collaboration. Together, they show how local action can inspire new solutions and contribute to wider efforts to address plastic pollution.



1 Port Douglas tackles cigarette litter

Through Ditch the Flick, Tangaroa Blue Foundation mapped cigarette butt hotspots and worked with Douglas Shire Council and Crystalbrook Superyacht Marina to make existing bins more visible. Repurposed mint tins offered smokers a portable way to store cigarette butts until they could dispose of them responsibly.



2 Marine debris reimagined through art

Artists Jo Victoria and Tangaroa Blue Foundation Ambassador Bernadette Davis combine porcelain, recovered marine debris rope, and Rig Recycle braided fishing line to create Luminescent Sea Lighting. Their work raises awareness of marine pollution, with 10% of sales donated to Tangaroa Blue Foundation.



3 A voice at the Global Plastics Treaty talks

Tangaroa Blue Foundation's Global Plastics Treaty Ambassador, Dr Randika Jayasinghe, attended the August 2025 negotiations in Geneva, bringing perspectives from research and communities affected by plastic pollution to the international discussions.



4 Sharing experiences across the Pacific

In February 2026, CEO Heidi Tait joined a workshop in Papeete, Tahiti, on reducing drifting fish aggregating device loss and abandonment. She shared Tangaroa Blue Foundation's experience in buoy recovery and reuse, FAD Watch, and using AMDI data to support collaborative responses.

AMDI NETWORK CHAMPIONS

AMDI partners contribute in many ways, from dedicated local clean-ups to regional collaboration and research that supports pollution prevention. The following profiles show how individuals and organisations turn practical action into valuable data, community awareness, and solutions to marine debris.



1 Larrakia Land & Sea Rangers - NT

Larrakia Land and Sea Rangers led the 16th Annual Darwin Harbour Clean-Up in September 2025, uniting schools, businesses and community groups to remove 1,178 kg of waste from Darwin's coastline and waterways. Tangaroa Blue Foundation compiled debris data for the AMDI Database, helping turn community action into evidence for marine debris prevention.



2 Rockingham Beach Cleans - WA

Rockingham Beach Cleans combines community clean-ups with data collection and public awareness. During 2025 - 2026, the group recorded 149 clean-ups in the AMDI Database, removing 538 kg of marine debris comprising 40,142 items. Participants contributed 388.75 hours, gathering valuable citizen science data to support marine debris prevention.



3 Port Phillip EcoCentre - VIC

Port Phillip EcoCentre partners with Tangaroa Blue Foundation on Let's Strain the Drains, hosting stormwater litter audits. EcoCentre volunteers and Tangaroa Blue Foundation staff sort, count, and record debris captured in stormwater traps. Their work identifies litter entering local waterways and provides evidence to guide pollution prevention.



4 Ekipa Tasi Mos Atauro - Timor-Leste

Ekipa Tasi Mos Atauro celebrated its 10th anniversary in May 2026. Partnering with Tangaroa Blue Foundation, the team monitors a 300-metre stretch at Beloi on Atauro Island and records findings in the AMDI Database. Between May 2016 and May 2026, the team removed 2,878.69 kg of marine debris comprising 158,129 items.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND — INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORIES

The 2023 – 2025 Christmas Island Marine Debris Initiative concluded in September 2025, with 35 monitoring surveys informing its final public report. Monitoring recorded approximately 189,500 debris items, and the dataset contributed to research published in Marine Pollution Bulletin. The study highlighted the island's exposure to debris arriving from overseas, with only 1.8% of items originating on Christmas Island or the Australian mainland.





CHALLENGERS BEACH - WA

Tangaroa Blue Foundation and the Callum and Jake Robinson Foundation partnered to complete four rounds of marine debris monitoring at Challengers Beach during 2025 - 2026. Together, they removed 69.39 kg of marine debris and recorded 2,047 litter items in the AMDI Database.



EAST ARNHEM LAND - NT

Dhimurru Rangers maintain the AMDI National Monitoring Program's only Northern Territory sites, surveying Gadalathami Town Beach, Nhulunbuy, and remote Wanuwuy, Cape Arnhem, quarterly. These locations provide a comparison between a populated beach and a remote coastline. During 2025 - 2026, the Rangers removed 315.69 kg of marine debris and recorded 8,715 litter items across the two sites.



BOLINGBROKE BEACH - SA

The Eyre Peninsula Landscape Board completed four rounds of marine debris monitoring at Bolingbroke Beach during 2025 – 2026. The team removed 128.58 kg of marine debris and recorded 2,644 litter items in the AMDI Database.

AUSTRALIAN MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE®

National Monitoring

With 3,381 contributing organisations and 31 million items, the AMDI Database is the largest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

ABBOT & DUDGEON POINT - QLD

With support from North Queensland Bulk Ports and Tangaroa Blue Foundation, Juru Enterprises Limited Field Officers monitor Abbot Point, while Yuwi Land and Sea Rangers monitor Dudgeon Point at Hay Point. Both teams completed their second consecutive year of quarterly monitoring in 2025 - 2026. Together, they removed 293.92 kg of marine debris and recorded 4,913 litter items, contributing 243 participant hours to clean-up and data collection.



TAREE - NSW

During 2025 - 2026, Barray Alliance (formerly TIDE) Rangers monitored an estuary site at Khappinghat Creek Back Beach and a coastal site at Wallabi Beach South quarterly alongside a Tangaroa Blue Foundation staff member, allowing comparisons between two different ecosystems. Across monitoring and associated clean-ups, they removed 33.82 kg of marine debris and recorded 1,362 litter items.



WOOLLEYS BEACH - VIC

During 2025 - 2026, Friends of Woolleys Beach completed four monitoring rounds and two additional clean-ups at Woolleys Beach, on Bunurong Country in Western Port Bay. Across these activities, the group removed 6.87 kg of marine debris and recorded 99 litter items, contributing 10 hours to caring for their local coastline.



87

MARINE DEBRIS MONITORING SITES ACROSS AUSTRALIA

5,480

DATA LOCATIONS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

We extend our sincere thanks to the Ian Potter Foundation and the Big Blue Ocean Foundation for their vital support in building the AMDI National Monitoring Network.



CLEAN-UP HIGHLIGHTS



SCOTT RIVER EAST: REMOVING A GHOST GEAR HAZARD

Around 2018, a large tangle of ghost fishing rope washed ashore at Scott River East and became locally known as “Rope Corner”. Winter storms gradually buried the rope beneath the sand, making removal increasingly difficult and leaving a persistent entanglement hazard and source of degrading microplastics.

During the 2025 WA Beach Clean-up, another large rope ball washed ashore nearby. Long-time Tangaroa Blue Foundation volunteer Boyd coordinated its removal with local landholders Jasper and Colleen, who provided property access and a farm tractor before the debris could be buried or swept back to sea. A week later, Boyd and Project Coordinator Shannon returned to the original rope ball. Over four days, they dug, cut, and hauled the deeply buried mass from the beach, with the final extraction requiring a tractor and two 4WDs. The recovered rope is now awaiting redistribution to community groups and local artists for creative reuse. The removal brought years of local concern to a close through persistence, teamwork, and practical support.



IOT VOYAGE: CHRISTMAS ISLAND & COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS

In May 2026, Tangaroa Blue Foundation and volunteers travelled to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island to remove marine debris, collect AMDI data and support local Source Reduction Plans. Supported by Australian Marine Parks and Parks Australia through the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) Marine Park Grants, the voyage combined conservation work with community engagement. On Cocos (Keeling) Islands, the team joined community members, shire representatives and Marine Parks staff for clean-ups across four islands and hosted an Ocean Film Festival screening.

On Christmas Island, volunteers worked with Parks staff to clear debris from Dolly Beach, helping reclaim nesting habitat for sea turtles. Quarterly monitoring also took place at Dolly Beach, Greta Beach, Flying Fish Cove and Merrial Beach. Alongside the demanding clean-up work, volunteers experienced the islands’ natural beauty and unique cultures, sharing an appreciation of the remote environments and communities their efforts helped support.



THE KING'S BATON RELAY IN TOWNSVILLE, QUEENSLAND

In March 2026, Tangaroa Blue Foundation partnered with Commonwealth Games Australia for a beach clean-up at Rowes Bay in Townsville as part of the official King's Baton Relay and the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Plastics Campaign. Local community members, students and Commonwealth Games athletes, including medallists Serena Bonnell and James Bacueti, joined the event alongside Australian Team mascot Borobi. Participants sorted and recorded recovered debris in the AMDI Database, linking local action on the Great Barrier Reef coast with a global campaign aiming to prevent one million pieces of plastic from entering waterways.



PENNEFATHER: CLEARING THE WAY FOR NESTING TURTLES

Tangaroa Blue Foundation joined Nanum Wungthim Land and Sea Rangers, volunteers, and Western Cape College students for a major clean-up at Pennefather Beach in September 2025. Together with four monitoring rounds across 2025 - 2026, the project removed 3,137 kg of marine debris from this important turtle nesting coastline. Supported by a Queensland Government Community Sustainability Action Grant, the project provided practical training for 31 participants during the initial activities. Returning Rangers strengthened their skills throughout the year, taking the lead in setting up monitoring sites and collecting data.





SCHOOLS

During 2025 - 2026, Tangaroa Blue Foundation engaged primary and high school students through education and hands-on activities, from remote Torres Strait communities to urban south-east Queensland and Western Australia.

In WA, Tangaroa Blue Foundation supported the Department of Communities Cadets WA River Rangers River Rescue Day at Taylor Reserve and McCallum Park. Around 300 cadets, leaders and volunteers from eight schools participated, with students collecting 4,437 litter items in one hour. Each student then selected an item to place in a sculpture representing Akuna, a resident Swan River dolphin.

Students also joined community clean-ups and the Great Barrier Reef Clean-up, used curriculum-aligned classroom resources and participated in staff-led workshops. These experiences connected practical action with learning about marine debris, the Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database, and pollution prevention - giving young people a direct role in caring for their coastlines and waterways.



Photos: River Rangers River Rescue Day, WA

WESTERN AUSTRALIA BEACH CLEAN-UP

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY ACTION ACROSS SEVEN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REGIONS



1,579
VOLUNTEERS



92
CLEAN-UP EVENTS



70
LOCATIONS



5.3
TONNES
DEBRIS REMOVED



3,028
VOLUNTEER HOURS



112.8
km
COASTLINE & WATERWAYS

Photos: From various 2025 WA Beach Clean-up events

PLASTIC ACCOUNTED FOR 82% OF RECORDED ITEMS. HARD PLASTIC REMNANTS WERE THE MOST COMMON ITEM, REPRESENTING 46% OF THE TOTAL.



PROUDLY DELIVERED BY:

WESTERN AUSTRALIA BEACH CLEAN-UP

In 2025, the 21st annual WA Beach Clean-up brought together 1,579 volunteers across 92 clean-ups, removing 5.3 tonnes of marine debris from beaches and waterways.

What began as a local Cape-to-Cape initiative in 2005 now connects communities across Western Australia, with participants covering almost 113 kilometres during this year's event.

The effort extended well below the shoreline. At Steep Point, nine divers, three Malgana Rangers and three vessel crew recovered 350 kg of debris from depths of 18 – 20 metres, including 70 kg of lead sinkers, fishing line and even camping chairs. At Wedge Island, community members combined coastal care with creativity, transforming washed-up debris into rope mats, baskets and artwork, with pieces donated to local fundraisers. These efforts reflect the different ways communities care for their coastline, from demanding underwater recoveries to giving discarded materials a second life.

The program was supported by Tallwood Custom Built Homes, Keep Australia Beautiful WA, Containers for Change (WARRRL), Southern Ports, Fremantle Ports and GHD, alongside Traditional Custodians, Indigenous Rangers, community groups, schools, businesses and local governments. University of Western Australia Student Guild Micro-Volunteering participants also helped prepare volunteer clean-up kits.



Photo: The WA Beach Clean-up's Sip and Sort at the Margaret River Brewhouse, WA

REEFCLEAN

ReefClean: Working Together for the Reef

ReefClean brings communities, Traditional Custodians and partners together to remove marine debris and prevent it from reaching the Great Barrier Reef. Funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust and delivered by Tangaroa Blue Foundation with its partners, the program supported 30 community clean-ups, 152 monitoring activities and 21 education and awareness activities during 2025 - 2026.

Working across remote coastlines, island communities and urban catchments requires flexibility. **Teams brought activities forward to make the most of favourable weather and vessel availability, while responding to community priorities and demand.** The monitoring network included five additional sites, bringing coverage to 38 locations. Across the year, reported ReefClean activities - including the Great Barrier Reef Clean-up - removed approximately 17 tonnes of marine debris, with 291,962 items recorded and more than 7,000 volunteer hours contributed to clean-ups.

The year also opened new possibilities for recovered materials and equipment. ReefClean activities collected 127 commercial fishing smart buoys for reuse assessment or recycling, while Rig Recycle diverted more than 208 kg of recreational fishing gear and packaging from landfill.



Photo: Bustard Bay Clean-up with the 1770 Larc! Tours

ReefClean is funded by the Australian Government's Reef Trust

Australian Government | REEF TRUST | TANGAROA BLUE | AUSTRALIAN MARINE DEBRIS INITIATIVE

GREAT BARRIER REEF CLEAN-UP

Great Barrier Reef Clean-up: Acting Before the Wet Season

In October 2025, communities across the Great Barrier Reef region joined forces to remove litter before summer rains could carry it from catchments to the Reef. Delivered through ReefClean in collaboration with Clean Up Australia, the Great Barrier Reef Clean-up brought together 75 partners, with 153 registered clean-ups across 101 locations.

The campaign launched at Pallarenda Beach in Townsville with representatives from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Townsville City Council and the Dry Tropics Healthy Waters Partnership. Throughout the month, schools, community groups, businesses and environmental organisations took part in activities stretching from Lizard Island to Bargara on the southern Great Barrier Reef.

The month-long effort recorded 2,646 volunteer opportunities and removed 2,706 kg of debris, representing approximately 20.7 cubic metres of material. Volunteers contributed 73 submissions to the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) Database. Plastic accounted for 83% of recorded items, with hard plastic remnants the most common item, representing 54% of the total.

For the first time, a television commercial helped extend the campaign's reach. Alongside a reported social media reach of 307,000 and an estimated news reach of 10 million, these communications brought the community effort to a wider audience and encouraged action to protect the Reef.



2,706 kg
REMOVED



153
REGISTERED CLEAN-UPS



20.7 m^3
DEBRIS REMOVED



101
LOCATIONS



75
PARTNERS



2,646
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Photos: From the 2025 Great Barrier Reef Clean-up

WEIRDEST ITEMS FOUND

Weird and Wonderful Finds

A lone leg, a weather instrument, and a very bad hair day? Our 2025 - 2026 clean-ups delivered some unexpected discoveries. Alongside the familiar plastic bottles and fishing gear were objects that had everyone asking: “What on earth is that?”

One step out of place

A mannequin leg found on Horsburgh Island in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. No sign of the rest of its owner!

Weather report: washed ashore

A radiosonde used to collect weather data, released by Gilmour Space at Abbot Point in QLD - a reminder that some beach finds begin their journeys in the sky.

A lightweight mystery

Found on a beach in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park in WA’s south-west, this oversized polystyrene cube wrapped in rope appears to be a handmade fishing float. It may have travelled from Indonesia on the Leeuwin Current, although its origins remain unconfirmed.

A lid having a bad hair day

With rope threaded through it and frayed into a fluffy fringe, this unidentified lid-like object has us puzzled. A lid to what, exactly? We’re still working on that one.



SOURCE REDUCTION

What is a Source Reduction Plan?

A Source Reduction Plan uses marine debris data to identify a recurring item, investigate where it comes from, and develop practical ways to stop it from entering the environment. It brings together the people who can influence the source, whether through changes to products, infrastructure, services, or behaviour.

Collect clean-up data
Record what is found, where it is found and when it is collected.

Analyse the evidence
Use the AMDI Database to identify recurring items, patterns and likely sources.

Design and trial a response
Work with relevant communities, businesses, or government agencies to address a specific source or behaviour.

Monitor and improve
Continue collecting data to assess whether the response is working and refine or expand it where appropriate.
The following pages show this approach in practice, from capturing stormwater litter to replacing disposable freight packaging and recovering fishing materials.









LET'S STRAIN THE DRAINS

"City of Greater Dandenong has participated in the Let's Strain the Drains program for many years and continues to support the initiative because of the valuable data it provides.
The audit results help inform Council's education and behaviour change programs, while also enabling us to track the impact of initiatives such as the Container Deposit Scheme and the ban on selected single-use plastics. In addition, the data supports Council's maintenance planning and helps guide future investment in stormwater and litter prevention infrastructure.
We value our ongoing partnership with Tangaroa Blue Foundation and the role the program plays in delivering meaningful environmental outcomes for our community." - *Mohammad Khan, Service Unit Leader, Works & Flee,t and Corinna Dieters, Community Waste Education Officer*

Stormwater systems connect urban streets directly to Port Phillip Bay. Phase 5 of Let's Strain the Drains continued intercepting and monitoring litter before it reached local waterways, turning captured debris into evidence for prevention.

Delivered jointly by Tangaroa Blue Foundation and the Port Phillip EcoCentre, and funded by the Cities of Greater Dandenong and Glen Eira, the program monitored 44 specialised stormwater drain traps across both local government areas. Volunteers audited traps every eight weeks, sorting, counting and categorising the captured debris before recording it in the Australian Marine Debris Initiative Database.

The resulting datasets and annual trend analysis are provided to participating councils, giving them local evidence to assess initiatives such as container deposit schemes and single-use plastic bans, refine education and behaviour-change programs, plan maintenance and guide future investment in litter-prevention infrastructure.

The program shows how community participation, consistent monitoring and local government action can tackle marine debris upstream, closer to its source.





ESKY LIBRARY

The Esky Library: Building on a Successful Start

Following its successful launch in 2024 - 2025, Tangaroa Blue Foundation's Esky Library continued putting reuse into practice during 2025 - 2026. Reusable eskies carried fresh food from Perth to Christmas Island, replacing disposable expanded polystyrene (EPS) boxes in a region without EPS recycling facilities.

The initiative grew to 120 TomKat KoolPak eskies in circulation, with tracking showing strong retention and return rates. Demand exceeded available capacity, with more than 70% of regular air-freight users requesting participation. Experience also highlighted the value of introducing different esky sizes to better suit household orders and freight requirements.

With support from the Indian Ocean Territories Regional Development Organisation, Tangaroa Blue Foundation is now scoping expansion to more households and local businesses on Christmas Island and across to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. This next phase would build on the established service and growing community demand. Recognition as a finalist in the 2026 WasteSorted Awards' Closing the Loop category further highlighted the initiative's potential.



Photos: Esky Library in action on Christmas Island. Credit: Megan Powell

RIG RECYCLE

During 2025 - 2026, Rig Recycle reached a significant circular economy milestone: recovered monofilament fishing line was reprocessed and manufactured into sunglass frames. This created a practical end market for material collected through the program, giving discarded fishing line another use while keeping it out of landfill and marine environments.

The program's collection network now extends through participating tackle stores on Australia's east coast, south-west Western Australia and Christmas Island. Since inception in 2022, Rig Recycle has recovered 4.7 million metres of fishing line and more than 35,000 plastic line spools.

Collection units inside participating tackle shops give recreational anglers a straightforward way to dispose of old line and unwanted spools. Returned material is sorted, weighed, and recorded in the AMDI Database before progressing through suitable recycling pathways.

From anglers, for anglers, Rig Recycle gives fishing communities a practical way to participate in the blue economy through their local tackle store. Old gear returns to the hands of other anglers as new products, from sunglasses to rod racks, supporting the future of fishing and healthier oceans. The program continues to develop new designs and manufacturing capabilities - explore the growing range in Tangaroa Blue Foundation's Sea Store.



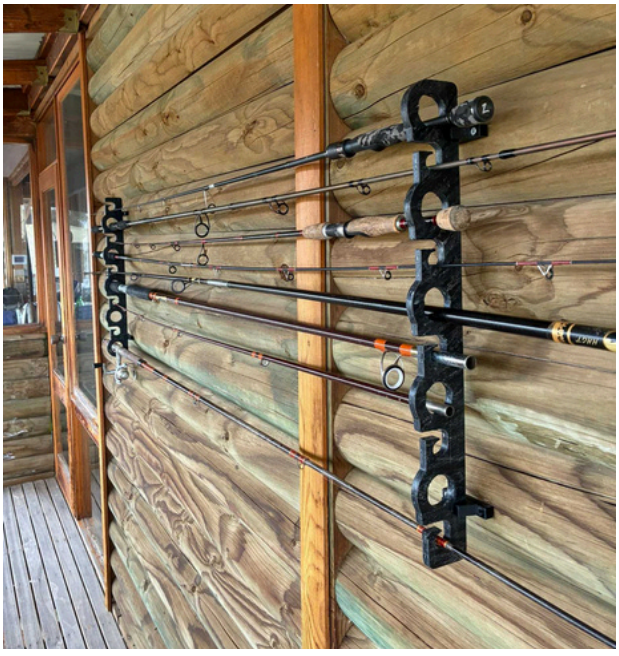


Photo: Rig Recycle Station on Magnetic Island, QLD and the Rod Rack Holders



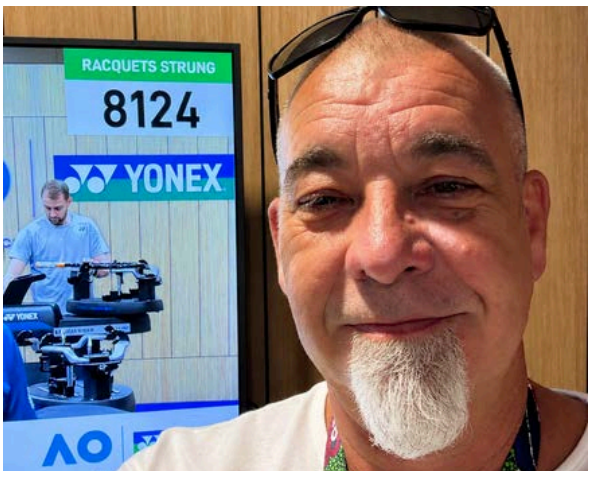
From Fishing Line to Tennis Strings

A discovery in a Rig Recycle collection sparked an unexpected opportunity: a participating tackle store also restrung tennis racquets, and discarded strings had entered its collection. Drawing on experience recycling fishing line, Tangaroa Blue Foundation's business development team explored whether tennis strings could follow a similar pathway. Now in its third year at the Australian Open, the collaboration connected tennis with ocean conservation through the #saveaturtle message.



In 2026, all 32 international stringers embraced the project. This year's trial successfully separated natural gut strings from synthetic materials, creating cleaner recycling streams to recover greater value. With recycling partner BlockTex, Tangaroa Blue Foundation is progressing the use of recovered polyester as PET feedstock for manufacturing applications such as injection moulding. Recycling old strings into new strings remains a longer-term ambition.

A total of 8,125 racquets were restrung during the tournament, representing an estimated 101,550 metres of string used, based on an average of 12.5 metres per racquet. Recovered string was also made into bag tags, which each stringer received before the tournament ended as a thank you for participating. These gifts brought the recycling process to life, showing what their discarded strings could become. Tangaroa Blue Foundation continues to explore collaboration with the Australian Open for 2027.



Photos: Top: AO Bag Tag and below: the Australian Open Stringers' Room



REEFCYCLE

ReefCycle advanced new uses for marine debris collected through ReefClean during the year. Tangaroa Blue Foundation worked with its commercialisation arm, Circular Blue, to turn suitable recovered plastics into plastic sheeting and new products.

A highlight was the creation of Drift Disc bag tags by Tangaroa Blue Foundation x Circular Blue for Australian athletes travelling to the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in July 2026. Made from plastic marine debris collected on remote Cape York beaches, the tags connected community clean-up efforts with the Commonwealth Games' Clean Oceans Plastics Campaign and its goal of preventing one million pieces of plastic from entering the environment. The Drift Disc was also showcased at the King's Baton Relay reception at Admiralty House in Sydney, where Tangaroa Blue Foundation presented the product to Commonwealth Games Australia President Ben Houston.

During the year, Tangaroa Blue Foundation also worked with Satlink to identify recycling pathways for recovered GPS buoys that could no longer be reused. This included incorporating suitable plastics from these buoys into plastic sheeting, extending material recovery options beyond the existing buoy reuse programs.

Together, these developments demonstrate how ReefCycle connects marine debris collection, processing, and product development to keep suitable materials in circulation and create practical uses for recovered plastics.





Photos: Brett Tait (Tangaroa Blue Foundation), Hamish Marshall (X8FAB) & Adam Cheyne (Sports Environment Alliance) with Drift Discs for the Australian Commonwealth Games Athletes



FAD WATCH

Project ReCon and FAD Watch are extending the life and usefulness of satellite buoy technology used by commercial tuna fisheries. During 2025 - 2026, Project ReCon collected 160 trackers, supporting reuse pathways for equipment that might otherwise become marine debris.

FAD Watch builds on that work by using real-time satellite data to help locate drifting Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) and their attached GPS buoys. A network of commercial vessels and operators can be contacted when tracked gear drifts near a planned route. Where operationally possible, vessels may divert to recover the abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear before it reaches sensitive coastlines or reefs. Recovered buoys can then enter Project ReCon or other circular reuse pathways.

The approach is increasingly collaborative and international. In February 2026, Tangaroa Blue Foundation CEO Heidi Tait attended the Pacific Community's international workshop on mitigating drifting FAD loss and abandonment in Papeete, Tahiti. 110 participants from 25 countries and territories attended, including fisheries managers, scientists, government representatives and industry leaders.

Tangaroa Blue Foundation presented its work with major buoy manufacturers Satlink, Marine Instruments and Zunibal, alongside the emerging FAD Watch model.

Across the year, vessels and recovery partners — including commercial operators, charter operators and rangers — intercepted tracked buoys and attached FADs moving through waters including the Coral Sea, Great Barrier Reef region and Tasman Sea.

Together, the programs show how shared data, industry participation and local recovery capacity can shift marine-debris response from finding stranded gear to intercepting it earlier and returning useful technology to circulation.

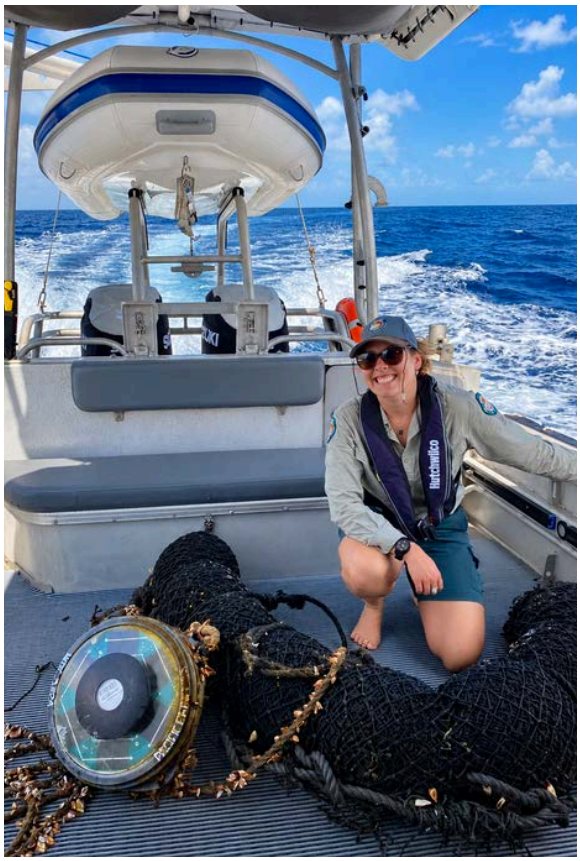


Photo: QPWS Marine Park Rangers pick up a FAD

Satellite buoys have long helped fishers operate more efficiently. Today, through partnerships such as FAD Watch with Tangaroa Blue Foundation, the same technology is helping recover drifting FADs before they reach sensitive coastlines. This collaboration demonstrates that the buoy is not part of the problem - it is an essential part of the solution.

The success of FAD Watch comes from collaboration. Buoy manufacturers, fishing companies, NGOs, regional organisations and local recovery teams each contribute an essential piece of the solution. We believe this model has tremendous potential to expand across the Pacific and beyond, improving FAD recovery while supporting healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable fisheries.

Jorge Perez-Bouzada, Director of Sustainable Fishing at Marine Instruments





Satlink is proud to work alongside Tangaroa Blue Foundation in developing impactful and scalable initiatives for improving the sustainability of industrial fishing. By engaging directly with industry, scientists, and regulators, we build trust and find real-world solutions to the challenges each stakeholder faces. Satlink and Tangaroa Blue Foundation's initial collaboration through Project ReCon has continued to grow and evolve, and this year we've been able to lay the groundwork for more ambitious projects like FAD Watch, a program designed to proactively locate and remove fishing gear before it strands on reefs and coastlines.

Kathryn Gavira O'Neill, Head of Science and Sustainability at Satlink

At Zunibal, we believe that maritime technology earns its place when it serves both operational efficiency and environmental responsibility. Through our SEARCLE program, our partnership with the Tangaroa Blue Foundation puts this into practice. By working together to validate the reuse of our smart buoys for environmental monitoring, we are giving our hardware a valuable second life in service of marine ecosystem protection.

In this same spirit, our role as a technological facilitator in SPC's drifting FAD monitoring initiative is straightforward. Through our platform, we provide real-time satellite data that helps protect sensitive marine habitats from uncontrolled FAD drift. Seeing that data feed directly into Tangaroa Blue Foundation's on-the-ground mitigation work is what meaningful collaboration actually looks like: the fishing sector and conservation networks sharing the same information, with the ocean as the winner.

Patricia Ordóñez Cebrián, Director of Science and Sustainability at Zunibal



Photos top to bottom: FAD Watch recoveries by Cossack Pearl, 4Seas and Tangaroa Blue Foundation



OPERATION CLEAN SWEEP

The 2025 - 2026 financial year marked 10 years of Operation Clean Sweep in Australia. Over that decade, the program has built a national network of more than 150 pledged businesses committed to preventing plastic feedstock — including pellets, flakes and powder — from escaping into the environment.

With a third year of funding from the NSW EPA, Tangaroa Blue Foundation worked alongside EPA officers and local council compliance teams on targeted inspections at facilities with repeated plastic feedstock leakage. This work resulted in formal clean-up notices and Operation Pellet Patrol, the NSW EPA's first joint regulatory blitz with local councils focused on plastic feedstock pollution.

Operation Clean Sweep also expanded into South Australia with support from The Knights Family Jabula Foundation. Baseline data was gathered across more than 50 industrial sites, creating the state's first Operation Clean Sweep report for presentation to the South Australian EPA and local councils. In parallel, Tangaroa Blue Foundation partnered with FORE Good to develop two government policy briefings on plastic feedstock pollution for the Federal and South Australian Governments.

Industry engagement remained an important part of the program. Annual Nurdle Hunts in Sydney and Melbourne brought together more than 100 plastics-industry representatives and NSW and Victorian EPA officers to examine field evidence, discuss leakage pathways and identify practical ways to prevent feedstock loss across the supply chain.



Photo: 2025 Nurdle Hunt in Sydney

PUBLISHED PAPERS

During 2025 - 2026, Tangaroa Blue Foundation staff contributed to seven scientific papers with Australian and international research partners. The work spans citizen science, debris deposition, single-use packaging, fishing-related pollution, plastics recycling, and policy and jurisdictional challenges associated with land-based marine pollution.

PUBLISHED

1. Davies L, Tait H and Lavers JL (2026). Impact of single-use waste reduction initiatives using citizen science data: Western Australia as a case study. Marine Pollution Bulletin 222, 118750. DOI: 10.1016/j.marpolbul.2025.118750.

2. Lavers JL, Cook H, Woodward C, Tait HL and Rivers-Auty J (2026). Wind speed and direction influence beach plastic accumulation patterns on remote Christmas Island. Marine Pollution Bulletin 222, 118883. DOI: 10.1016/j.marpolbul.2025.118883.

3. Lavers JL, Hood L, van Zinnicq Bergmann N, Nye-Butler G, Charlesworth B, Kandziora J and Tait H (2026). Less is more: Quantifying non-functional slack filling and its role in reducing global packaging waste. Cambridge Prisms: Plastics. 2026;4:e22. DOI:10.1017/plc.2026.10062. (published October 2026)

IN PRESS, REVIEW OR DEVELOPMENT

1. Greenshields J, Washer E, Tait HL and Lavers JL. Single-use packaging as the primary source of plastic pollution on a remote Australian island. Cambridge Prisms: Plastics. In press.

2. Connan M, Ryan PG, Hofmeyr G, Tait HL, Favaretto B, Sanders Y and Lavers JL. Long-term fate of plastics in the marine environment: Information from old artefacts. Marine Pollution Bulletin. In preparation.

3. Panneerselvan L, Kulanthaisamy MR, Manivannan AC, Ravindran A, Kandaiah R, Tait HL, Lavers JL, Tait BD, Greenshields J and Palanisami T. Soft plastic fishing lures as an emerging marine pollutant: Composition, environmental fate, ecological impacts, and knowledge gaps. In preparation.

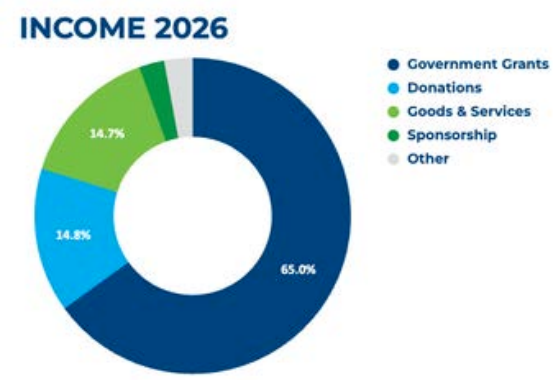
4. Kamara G, Kalidin B, Mallela J, Pittock J, Graham A, Tarer M, Tait HL, Lavers JL, van Niekerk L, Lamberth S and Pattiaratchi C. Management of rivers discharging into ocean realms – Land-based pollutants and responsible jurisdictions in the Indian Ocean catchment. Marine Policy. In review.

FINANCES

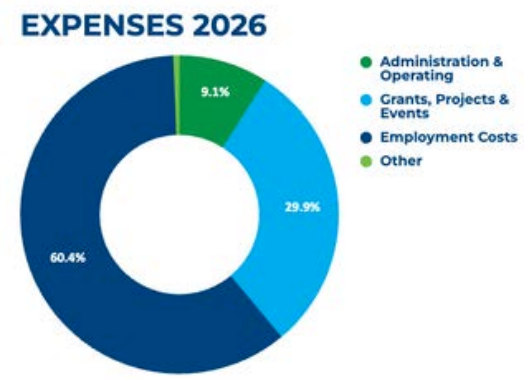
INCOME & EXPENSES

Financial position and stewardship:

- **Planned reinvestment and income timing:** The deficits reported over the past two financial years reflect the timing of grant and other income relative to related project expenditure, alongside reinvestment of accumulated surpluses in the AMDI platform and organisational capacity.
- **Year-end financial position:** At 30 June 2026, Tangaroa Blue Foundation held $1,004,825 in cash and term deposits. Total current assets of $1,082,507 exceeded current liabilities of $366,120, resulting in positive net current assets of $716,387.
- **Financial oversight:** The Board has reviewed the 2027 budget and confirmed its expectation that the organisation can meet its financial commitments as they fall due.
- **Future financial planning:** The annual financial result is expected to stabilise as expenditure normalises following this period of reinvestment and the completion of prior-year funded projects. Further investment will be considered as initiatives to grow fee-for-service income generate additional revenue.



Government Grants	$1,299,929	65.0%
Donations	$295,892	14.8%
Goods & Services	$293,407	14.7%
Sponsorship	$51,486	2.6%
Other	$58,073	2.9%
Total	**$1,998,787**	



Administration & Operating	$237,940	9.1%
Grants, Projects & Events	$783,737	29.9%
Employment Costs	$1,586,255	60.4%
Other	$16,419	0.6%
Total	**$2,624,351**	

View our audited Financial Statements through the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission

We gratefully acknowledge the individuals, businesses, philanthropic organisations and funding partners whose financial support made our work possible.


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