



Report on grant received by ReForest Now

Donation received from **Commonwealth Bank Sustainability and ESG Staff training program**

\$6,023.25 AUD donated 12th April 2021.



Figure 1 Kallen Marecic, partnerships manager at the base of a Blue Quandong rainforest tree.

Report produced by Maximo Bottaro and Kallen Marecic on behalf of ReForest Now

To whom it may concern, at Commonwealth Bank,

Thank you for helping us with a task that is critically important for the future of subtropical rainforest in northern NSW. Your grant was the third lot of funding we have received that has ever allowed us to work within remnants of the original Big Scrub rainforest. This is a critically endangered ecosystem.

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/communities/pubs/101-listing-advice.pdf>

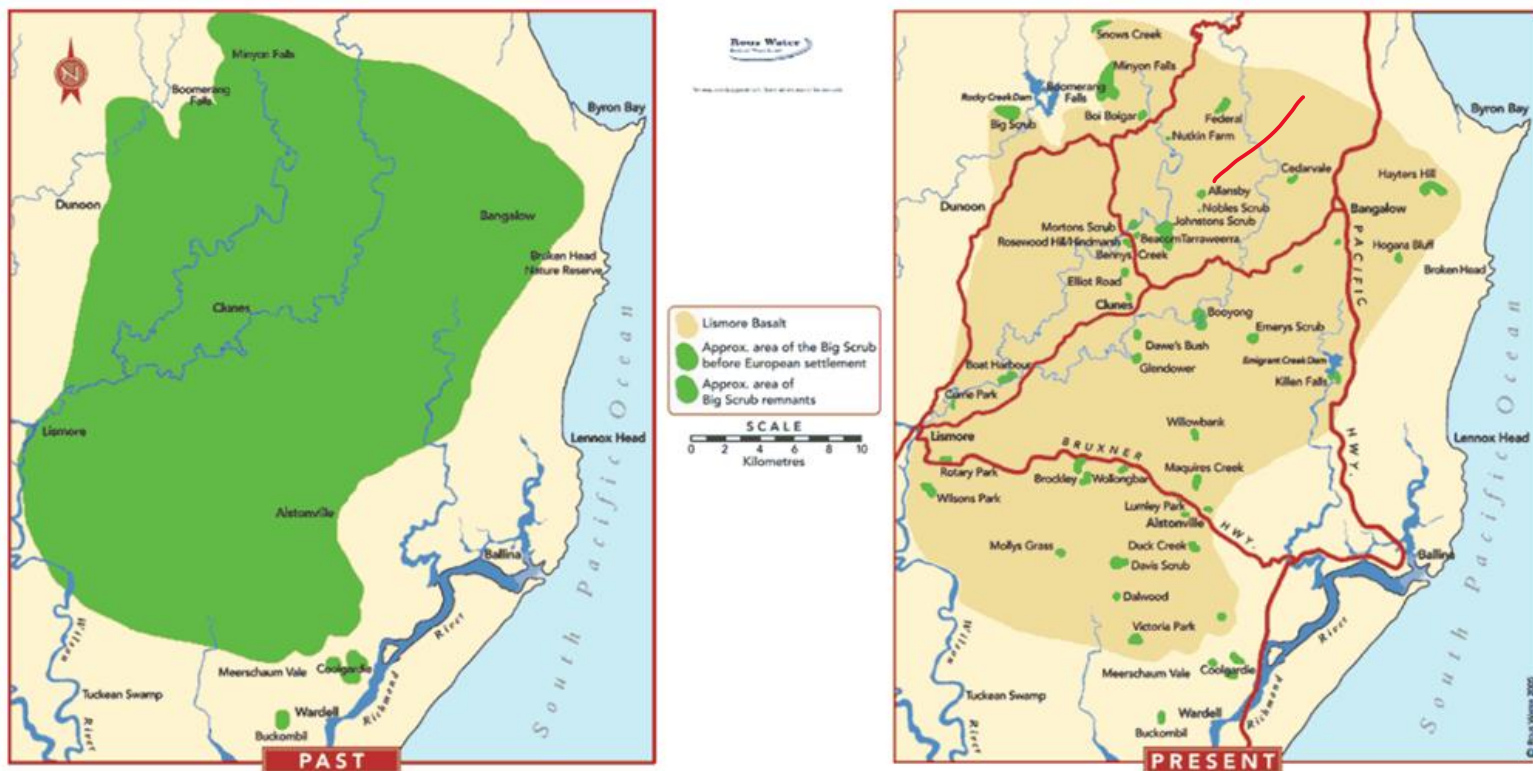


Figure 2 The Original Big Scrub area around Byron Bay. Please follow the red line to the green circle labelled 'Allansby' to see where your support went.

Your patch of restored forest is part of an area called "**Allansby 2**". It is marked as a small green dot that represents 7.9 hectares of remnant forest. The red line in the right-hand image points to the location in Eureka, NNSW – west of the Byron Bay lighthouse. We are working to repair and expand this area from 7.9 to 12 hectares. Additional to that are 40 000 trees planted to expand additional adjacent areas on the site.

This is one of 33 fragments of the original forest that was never destroyed when the area was 99.6% cleared for logging, banana farming, cattle grazing and illegal squatting from 1850-1880.

Below is a map of the area worked. With discussion.



WHITE SOLID AREA – This area, adjacent to **Allansby 2**, represents one planting of 4,850 rainforest trees on April 30, 2021. We planted here to restore cleared land and assist the remnants in expanding. We have plans to reforest more of this property in 2021, having already planted approx.. 40 000 trees over it's entire range (*not all visible here*).

GREEN OUTLINED AREA – The left half of this is **Allansby 2** (*Your worked area is within that*). Note that across a small bridge in the middle, it joins **Allansby 1** on the right. **Allansby 2** is in far worse condition than **1**. **2** has received no additional help in restoring it and helping it expand, that we are aware of. **Allansby 1** was worked in the early 2000's and is likely the true ancient rainforest remnant with far more complex ecology and larger trees. It is likely the case that **1** created **Allansby 2** by seeding it, as **2** was potentially an area let go by an earlier farmer some decades ago.

PURPLE OUTLINED OPAQUE AREA – Previously regenerated area completed for the **Joanne Parkinson Foundation** within **Allansby 2**. 0.96 hectares of primary rainforest regeneration area worked in June/July 2021.

PINK OUTLINED OPAQUE AREA – The regeneration area completed for the **Ashby Utting Foundation**. 0.81 hectares of primary rainforest regeneration within **Allansby 2**. On the eastern side we have reclaimed additional area where native saplings were suppressed under a blanket of weeds (primarily lantana).

UPPER RED OUTLINED AREA/S – These are the regeneration areas completed for **Commonwealth Bank** under this grant. Environmental weeds were removed to allow regenerating rainforest through. 0.65 hectares of primary regeneration completed.

Outcomes Achieved

The regenerated works completed cover **0.14** hectares (*top small red area*) and **0.51** hectares (*larger red area*), **0.65** of a hectare or **6,500** square meters of rainforest for CommBank total. What was done is called "Primary works" – this is best described as the first complete run through where all discernible weeds are eliminated. Examples of tasks completed accompany photos below.



(Right) What we arrived to is a rainforest remnant completely smothered in vines and lantana. These needed to be removed immediately as native trees were dying. Once the habitat is restored properly, this will not continue to happen.

(Left): Working from the North Eastern edge, we found a way into the heavy vine and weed suppressed rainforest and began removing and poisoning lantana, privet and camphor. We first had to cut these away to save the larger rainforest trees from death by strangulation and to allow the total size of the remnant to increase.

A variety of manual techniques were used in the early phase to avoid harming rare and threatened species and/or native wildlife.



(Above): Several large rainforest trees in your regeneration zone were saved from vine strangulation. This happens when native/or exotic vines germinate in the forest too early, when canopy is not yet developed enough to support vines and entire trees are killed before they can reach maturity. Luckily, this problem is easily solved provided it is found in time. In this case, we have been able to save most of the rainforest trees.



(Left): Nina from RN working carefully in understorey to remove competing weeds so that rainforest trees like this Red Bean, on the left can reach maturity and take their place in the canopy.



(Above): With vine overgrowth controlled and weed species treated, these baby rainforest natives (*tagged pink*) will now be able to rapidly reach into the canopy. Although small, they likely are several years old, awaiting their change to receive some of that sunlight that is now reaching through to them.



(Left): Chris from RN working under the canopy, here showing the nest of rainforest insects upon a leaf of a sapling.

The rainforest is home to the largest diversity of terrestrial life seen on the planet. We are very careful and limited in our application of chemicals in regeneration practices for this reason.

Budgets and Expenditure

The total expenditure on this project was \$6,913.50 AUD

Commonwealth bank Grant - \$6023.50 AUD budget

Labour	dates	hours worked	Spent
12 contractors @ 33ph (rainforest regeneration)	29-07-21	7	\$ 2,772.00
15 contractors @ 33ph (rainforest regeneration)	03-08-21	7	\$ 3,217.50
14 contractors @ 33ph (rainforest regeneration)	31-08-21	2	\$ 924.00
Total Expenditure			\$ 6,913.50
CommBank contribution			\$ 6,023.50
ReForest Now Inkind contribution			\$ 890.00
Administration charged by ReForest Now			\$ -

The complete primary works for 0.65 of a hectare have been achieved. To make your funding reach the whole way, we have contributed in-kind to bring you this outcome.

Final Word

Thank you for your generous second donation to ReForest Now and thank you for coming along on this journey with us.

We hope you will donate again to help us further in this mission – there are 9 more hectares in or connected to the Allansby remnants that need help and are vine smothered. While some of these ancient trees would already be dead under the vines, we believe we still have time to get to the others and cut them free.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maximo Bottaro', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Maximo Bottaro - CEO

