

Bushland Newsletter

SUMMER 23/24



On the go with Emily

With the recent 30-year anniversary of the Randwick Bushcare program, I have reflected on the positive impact of this community and how it embodies “think global, act local”, because it demonstrates the positive impact that can be made when ordinary people work together to make a difference.

Bushcare brings people together from all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds, demonstrating commonality, and a shared value worth spending time to work towards. This work has protected and enhanced one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world, something all residents of Randwick City can be proud of.

“A sense of community” – yeah! That’s what bushcare has been creating for the past 30 years! We might not always agree, in fact maybe that’s the very point. In a world of increasing division, working together as part of a diverse community is significant itself.

We often think it’s the biggest moments in life that most shape us. But surprisingly, it’s also those fleeting interactions...a chat with someone from your community or witnessing beauty in nature as you wait for the bus. Moments so small, they can easily pass you by.

Drawing on my own experience, I realise the power of these small interactions. Because as a young person, it was moments such as these that demonstrated the difference that can be made by passionate, yet otherwise seemingly ordinary people.

The Randwick Bushcare community showed me that:

- 1) Where we live is enriched by the other creatures that also call it home, if we want them to remain, it is our responsibility.
- 2) Caring for our environment is an investment worthy of contributing our most valuable asset – time!

Ideas that looking back, altered the course of my life and ideas that I, as the Bushcare Officer, now hope to pass on.

Often it is easy to fall into the trap of focusing on the losses. Being frustrated by the slow gains, or sent mad pulling out another tuft of grass from the same patch, where you pulled it out last month, and the month before that...

Real, sustainable, change, inevitably and unavoidably takes time. Quick won is quick undone. A tree doesn’t grow overnight, just as your core values aren’t shaped in one day. These things simply take a lifetime. And big things, take more than one generation.

Yet there are fruits born of the efforts made by people in this community,

including some who are sadly no longer with us. Their legacy lives on in the patches of habitat that support diverse wildlife where there was none before. In the green spaces secured and improved for the enjoyment of future generations.

These wins were achieved all in the very real context of global rates diminishing green space, of unprecedented rates of extinction of birds, fish, plants and fungi faster than ever before. Clearly, much more needs to be done and in the face of unprecedented challenges – of fire, drought, floods, pandemics and the climate crisis, it is entirely unfair to leave this work for volunteers working in isolation.

To bare more fruit, we must support collaborations with the best minds – the wisest of our Elders, the most innovative scientists, and let’s face it, ongoing financial investment into caring for our places.

Yet right here, in Randwick, real and positive impact has been made. Here, where conversations happen over a cuppa, or experiences present themselves facilitated by those who have come before. These moments create the opportunity to consider “what is really important...? what is valuable enough to protect, to enhance and watch grow?”

Emily Strautins Randwick City Council Bushland Officer



Bushcarers enjoying the music at the recent Christmas luncheon in the shade of gums planted by the first RCC Bushland staff

30 years of care! Bushcare celebrates a big birthday.



The historical evolution of Bushcare...

The Australian environment is special. It is diverse, tough yet fragile at the same time, and unique in many ways. Our history and the Australian character have a bush folklore evolved from the challenges of living in the land of 'ragged mountain ranges' and 'drought and flooding rains'.

*I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror –
The wide brown land for me!
Dorothea Mackellar (1904)*

In urban areas such as Sydney, many people still have a strong connection to the natural environment and want to conserve it. As a Bushcare volunteer, you are part of a national movement that started in the suburbs of Sydney.

- In the 1960s concerned community people such as the Bradley sisters in Mosman started working to restore their 'local patch' of bush.
- The 1970s saw battles over urban bushland pockets such as Kelly's Bush on Sydney's harbour foreshore, which raised international attention.
- Across the 1980s many councils in Sydney saw the need to support

this type of community action and established Bushcare programs.

- In 1986 the Australian Association of Bush Regenerators NSW was established in Sydney to help encourage sound ecological practices of bushland management, and to promote the study and practice of Bush Regeneration.
- In the 1990s the Decade of Landcare highlighted the problems of the bush right across the nation.

- In 1990 the book "Taken for Granted" by Benson and Howell graphically demonstrated the impact of the incremental loss of Sydney's Bushland - and this book is still worth a read today.
- In 1993 Randwick Council Bushcare was officially launched, in response to grass roots groups who were already working to protect and enhance the bush within council owned patches of bush in Gordons Bay.
- Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub was listed as an Endangered Ecological Community under the Threatened

Species Conservation Act in 1997. This meant it was one of the first communities recognised, in part due to work undertaken here in Randwick. At the time of listing the Critically Endangered category did not exist.

- Over time Bushcare (and landcare) groups have been initiated, evolved, disbanded or moved reflecting changing land use and the people involved. There have been huge wins, but also some losses. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that Randwick would look very different today without the ongoing care of these dedicated people.

Congratulations on taking a positive step!

Your actions help to protect and restore our natural environment. Welcome to this non-exclusive, but very special club of people.

Text adapted from: Bushcare and the big picture (Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority 2012)

From the Nursery

A sneak peek behind the garden gate

The home gardens of staff at Randwick City – Emily the Bushcare Officer's garden

A small garden can present many challenges. Each corner may provide a different microclimate, often quite extreme. I have patches in my garden that are extremely dark, but as the seasons change may experience only the hottest, driest afternoon sunshine. Fully appreciating these changing conditions is knowledge that takes a lot of time. Observing over multiple seasons, and of course the changeover broader climatic events such as the El Nino/ La Nina cycle.



This extremely shady corner is now one of the best looking spots.

The benefit of this however, is learning which plants work best in this array of intense situations, honing my ability to understand the limits to each species viability. It's a fine tuning, which hopefully one day will lead to

greater success when I come to plan a larger garden, which is inherently more expensive. But with the knowledge I am gaining on the small scale, I can hopefully have fewer losses.

Of course, I do experience losses. I am currently experimenting with a vertical veggie patch, which has its challenges. Other areas of my patch I have built up to amazing for a season, but then as the season changes things die back. It is a constant process of balancing the plants I love, within the conditions that I have.

My biggest tip is letting the plant guide you rather than you trying to force a plant to grow in an unsuitable position. For this reason, I am constantly re-arranging my indoor plants and observing them closely to see what suits best. I often take them outside (to a shaded position) to allow them to soak up more direct sunlight and be watered by the rain (rather than purely

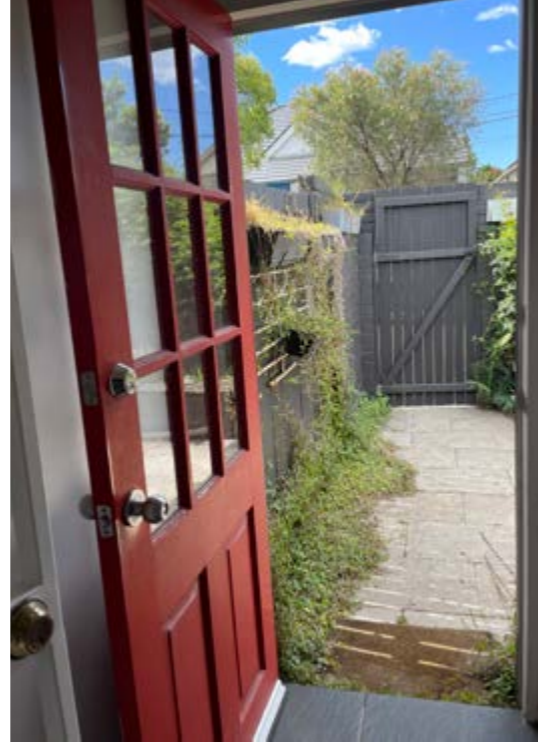


tap water which has a mildly different mineral composition and pH).

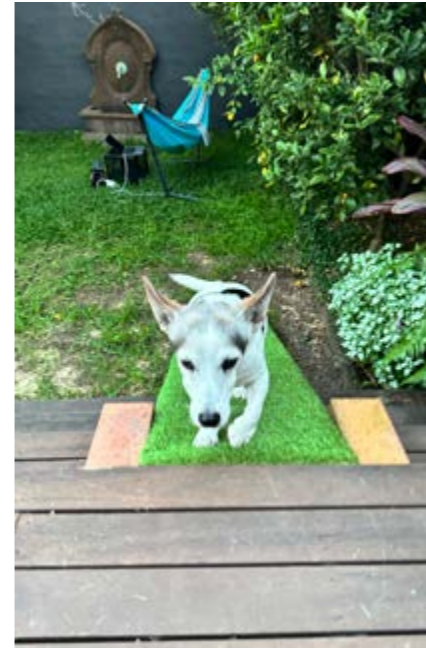
Gardens are dynamic and ever-changing. That is the true enjoyment of a gardener, to evolve and adapt and notice the new, or even the return of things you thought were gone. I know many people who desire a "maintenance-free" garden, something that can be set and forget, which makes sense in a world where we find ourselves increasingly time-poor.

Yet, for me, it is the maintenance that keeps both me and my garden happy. Taking time out to notice little things, to nourish and to care is a practice that benefits your internal nature as well as the external environment. It is exactly when you feel everything is too much, that it's time to slow down and take a seat, maybe give your garden a drink.

Water is essential to all life. Instead of offering food, providing a variety of places to drink is the best way to support wildlife including pollinators. Placing this tray below our down pipe also helps to diffuse water during heavy downpours.



Lawn maintenance is not my thing, however those I live with enjoy the versatility of this open, soft space.



My partner is a mossie magnet, so I introduced this carnivorous plant into our bathroom. Not only are the bugs reduced, but it's thriving in this high humidity environment.

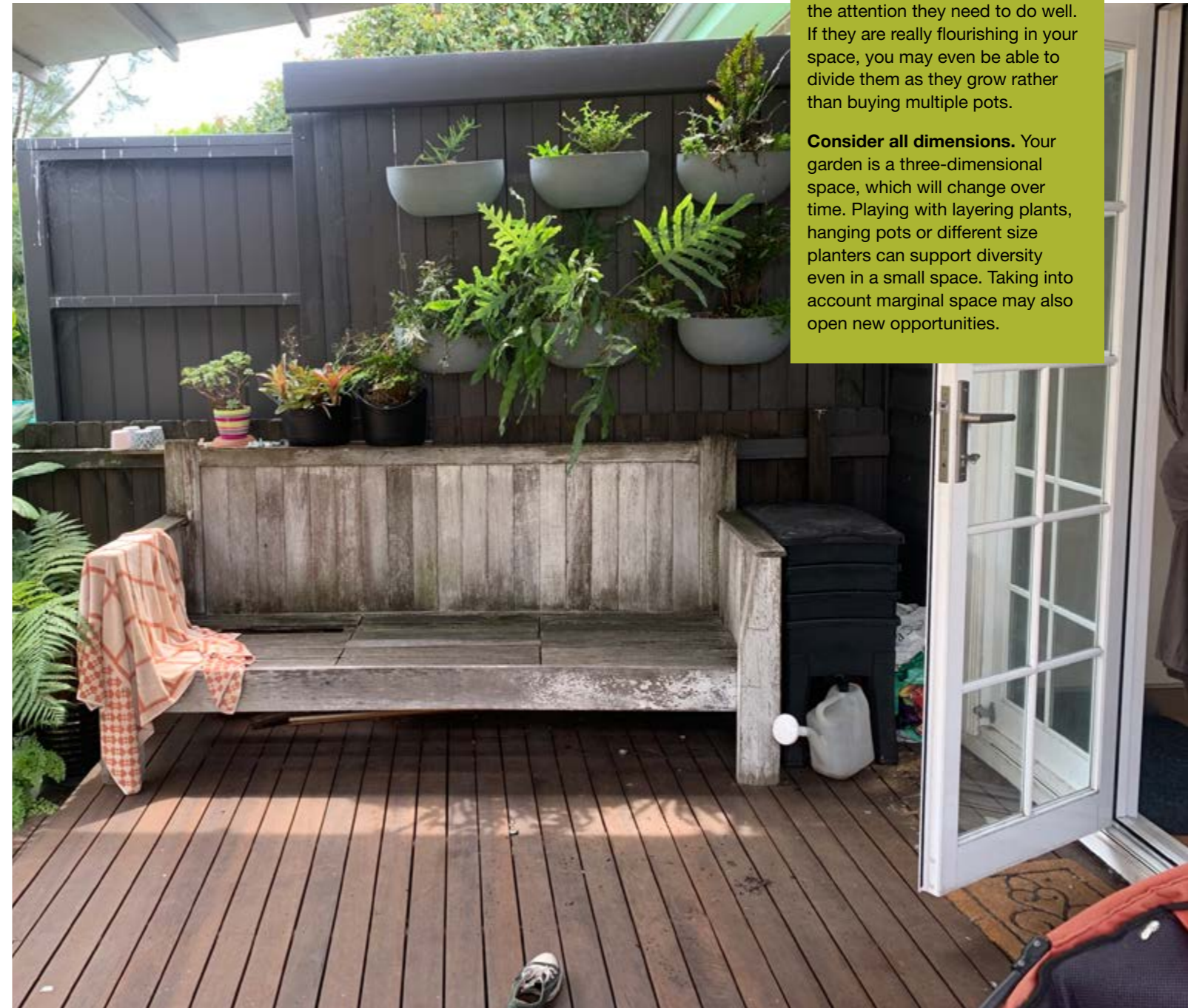
Emily's top tips

Go slow and observe carefully. You can save a lot of money by taking your time. Watch how conditions change over the seasons.

If in doubt, DON'T pull it out. The great catch phrase that works in bushcare works at home! Enjoy what's there! With a suburban garden, it's rare to start with a blank canvas. Take time to build habitat before removing. You may even find you grow to love the plants as they are.

Buy small. When buying plants, don't go all out all at once. Instead buy small plants in small numbers and trial them to see if they are suitable. Planting out only a small section or small number of plants at a time ensures you can provide the attention they need to do well. If they are really flourishing in your space, you may even be able to divide them as they grow rather than buying multiple pots.

Consider all dimensions. Your garden is a three-dimensional space, which will change over time. Playing with layering plants, hanging pots or different size planters can support diversity even in a small space. Taking into account marginal space may also open new opportunities.



From Sustainability

What goes around, comes around

Nestled across the eastern suburbs of Sydney, our natural bushland is a precious resource that deserves our utmost care and attention.

To achieve this, we must explore innovative approaches to conservation and sustainability. Enter the concept of the circular economy, a promising path toward a more sustainable future. In this article, we'll delve into what a circular economy is and how it can be relevant to caring for our beloved bush in Eastern Sydney. We'll also introduce you to *The Saturday Circle*, a fantastic initiative taking place at the Randwick Sustainability Hub, which embodies the circular economy spirit.

Understanding the Circular Economy

At its core, the circular economy is about reducing waste and maximising the use of resources. It's a holistic approach that challenges the traditional linear economy, where products are made, used, and discarded. Instead, the circular economy encourages practices like reusing, repairing, and recycling to ensure resources stay in circulation for as long as possible.

Why the Circular Economy Matters for Our Bush

1. **Reducing Waste:** Eastern Sydney is home to precious bushlands and stunning coastal areas. Unfortunately, they can also bear the brunt of urban waste and pollution. By embracing the circular economy, we can significantly reduce the waste we generate, ultimately leading to cleaner and healthier natural habitats.
2. **Conservation of Resources:** Our bush thrives when its natural resources are preserved. The circular economy minimises the extraction of new resources by promoting the repurposing and reuse of existing materials. This, in turn, helps protect the natural ecosystems we cherish.
3. **Community Engagement:** Circular economy practices often involve local communities. Engaging residents in sustainable activities fosters a sense of responsibility for our bush and encourages active participation in its conservation.



The Saturday Circle: A Circular Economy Extravaganza

The Saturday Circle is an exciting initiative happening on the second Saturday of every month from 10am to 12pm at the Randwick Sustainability Hub, 27 Munda St, Randwick. It's a vibrant gathering that embodies the principles of the circular economy while offering a plethora of exciting how-to activities:

- **Clothes Swaps:** Embrace sustainable fashion by swapping your clothes with others. It's a fantastic way to extend the life of your garments and reduce textile waste.
- **Toy Swaps:** Give new life to old toys through sharing and exchanging. It's a fun and eco-friendly way to keep toys in use and out of the landfill.
- **Textiles Mending Group:** Learn how to repair and mend textiles. This not only saves money but also extends the life of your favourite clothing items.
- **Nature Photography Workshops:** Explore the beauty of our bush through the lens. These workshops connect people with nature while promoting eco-friendly activities.

In the near future, *The Saturday Circle* will include even more exciting activities that align with circular economy principles:

- **PermaBee Community Garden Volunteering:** Get your hands dirty and contribute to the growth of a sustainable urban garden. Gardening fosters a connection with the environment and promotes biodiversity.



- **Bike Maintenance:** Learn how to maintain and repair your bicycle, a sustainable mode of transportation that reduces carbon emissions.
- **Library of Things:** Borrow tools, equipment, and other items you might only need occasionally. This reduces the need for individuals to buy and own infrequently used items.

Eastern Sydney's natural beauty is a treasure we must cherish and protect. The circular economy offers a sustainable approach to caring for our bush by reducing waste, conserving resources, and engaging our community. *The Saturday Circle* at the Randwick Sustainability Hub is a shining example of how these principles can come to life. By participating in these events and embracing the circular economy mindset, we can contribute to a more sustainable future for our beloved bushland, ensuring its beauty endures for generations to come. So, mark your calendars and join us at the Hub to be a part of this exciting journey towards a more sustainable Eastern Sydney.

For more information and bookings visit: <https://events.humanitix.com/tours/randwick-sustainability-hub> or scan the QR code



Got a snap to share? We'd love to share your recent photos of native plants, animals or you - getting out into nature. Please send your photos to bushcare@randwick.nsw.gov.au.

Contenders for the biggest Turkey Rhubarb tuber. Think you've dug out a bigger one? We need photographic evidence!



Working bee calendar

BUSHCARE

GROUP	LOCATION	DAY	TIME	DEC	JAN	FEB
Clovelly Bay	Opposite 18 Eastbourne Ave, Clovelly	4th Friday	9am-12pm	22	No Council Bushcare in JAN	23
Dunningham Reserve	Adjacent 5-7 Major Street, Coogee	4th Thursday	9am-11am	Summer break		22
Fred Hollows Reserve	Bligh Place entrance, Randwick	2nd Wednesday	9am-12pm	13		14
Gordons Bay	Access via UNSW Cliffbrook Campus Grounds, 45 Beach St, Coogee	1st Sunday	9am-12pm	3		4
Grant Reserve	Coogee Surf Life Saving Club carpark (south of the beach)	3rd Wednesday	9am-11am	20		21
Ladies Pool (Ladies Only)	At the entrance to the Ladies Pool, McIver's Rock Baths, Coogee	3rd Thursday	9am-12pm	21		15
Malabar Foreshore	Opposite 9 Bay Parade, Malabar (near Malabar Ocean Pool)	1st Saturday	9am-1pm	2		3
Malabar Wetland	End of Manwaring Avenue, Maroubra	3rd Wednesday	1pm-4pm	20		21
Maroubra Dunes	The South Maroubra SLSC car park	1st Thursday	9am-12pm	7		1
Prince Henry	Alternate between the corner of Jennifer and Harvey St or opposite 2 Millard Dr, Little Bay	2nd Saturday	9am-1pm	9		10
Randwick Environment Park	Access via corner of Dooligah Avenue and Burragulung Street, Randwick. Works take place within fenced area on the far side of the oval.	1st Wednesday and 2nd Sunday	9am-12pm	6 & 10		7 & 11
Wylies Baths	At the picnic tables above Wylie's Baths, Neptune Street, Coogee	3rd Tuesday	9am-12pm	19		20
Alison Road	Corner of Alison Road and Beach Street, Coogee	4th Thursday	1pm-3pm	Summer break		22
Old Tramline	The reserve between Dudley St and Carrington Rd, Randwick	2nd Thursday	9am-12pm	14		8

NON-COUNCIL RUN GROUPS

Friends of Malabar Headland*	Contact Therese Weiss on 0403 532 655 or via malabarheadland@gmail.com for details.	2nd, 3rd and 4th Thursday	9am-1pm	14, 21 & 28	11, 18 & 25	8, 15, 22 & 29
Little Bay Landcare*	Access between 119 and 121 Bilga Crescent, Malabar. Contact Kerry Gordon on 0411 245 985.	1st Saturday	8am-12pm	2	6	3
Kamay Botany Bay National Park*	Contact National Park Rangers for details.	Every Tuesday & 4th Saturday	Tues: 9am-12pm Sat: 8am-11am	5, 12, 19 & 23	2, 9, 16, 23 & 27	6, 13, 20 & 27

For more information contact the Bushcare Officer via: bushcare@randwick.nsw.gov.au

*Denotes non-council run groups. Please contact organisers directly.