



Bushcare Volunteer Manual

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statement

Randwick City Council acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Australians of this land, and the Bidjigal and Gadigal people who traditionally occupied the land we now call Randwick City.

We recognise and celebrate the spiritual and cultural connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have with the land which long pre-dates European settlement and continues today.

Randwick City Council
30 Frances Street
Randwick NSW 2031
Phone 1300 722 542

council@randwick.nsw.gov.au
www.randwick.nsw.gov.au

Follow us here





Contents

Welcome to Bushcare	5
1. Bushcare program overview	6
1.1 What is Bushcare?	6
1.2 What to expect?	6
1.3 Why should you get involved?	6
1.4 How to join the Bushcare program	6
1.5 Bushcare site map	7
2. Terms of agreement	8
2.1 Volunteers' rights	8
2.2 Volunteers' responsibilities	8
2.3 Council's rights	9
2.4 Council's responsibilities	9
3. Workplace health and safety	10
3.1 Council policy	10
3.2 Insurance	10
4. Working safely	11
5. Bush regeneration principles	12
6. Weed control techniques	13
6.1 Manual control methods	13
6.1.1 Hand pull	13
6.1.2 Crowning	13
6.1.3 Digging out	13
7. Further reading	15





Welcome to Bushcare

Welcome to Randwick City Council Bushcare!

By joining the program you are becoming part of a wider community of like-minded individuals who dedicate their time to help conserve, restore and enhance the beautiful natural environment of our coastal location. Volunteers are the heartbeat of the program. They provide their time, passion and care for one another and the environment and in doing so, inspire us and others to make a positive difference.

The program started informally in the early 1990s through a group of local residents intent on improving their environment. Since then it has grown from strength to strength, bringing together a diverse range of people from the community. Lifelong friendships have been formed and a sense of achievement and excitement at the progress that has been made.

Thanks to the energy, ideas and commitment of volunteers, Randwick City Council Bushcare continues to grow and improve year-on-year and this would not be possible without your support.

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Randwick City Council. Your personal contribution is invaluable to our cause and we hope that your life will be further enriched by the experiences, connections and knowledge you gain from volunteering with us.

Warm regards,

Randwick City Council Bushland Team

1. Bushcare program overview



The Bushcare Volunteer Manual outlines the rights and responsibilities of both the volunteer and the Council, and provides a general overview of the program. This manual can be used to learn the practical aspects involved in bushcare to complement on-site learning.

1.1 What is Bushcare?

Bushcare is a community-based program involving volunteers working alongside Council staff to protect and restore our bushland and natural areas using bush regeneration principles. Within Randwick we have numerous dedicated groups working at set times throughout the year, usually between two and four hours per month. Council provides a qualified Bushcare Officer to supervise groups as well as; free training, tools, regular events and communication to support our volunteers.

1.2 What to expect?

A typical Bushcare session could involve:

- Native and exotic plant identification
- Hand weeding
- Woody weed removal
- Planting indigenous species
- Installation of erosion controls
- Wildlife observations

1.3 Why should you get involved?

By participating in Bushcare you are playing an active role in the management of your local environment. The weed control and planting activities you undertake are vital in helping to preserve and enhance existing bushland and natural areas.

Bushcare will provide you with the following benefits and opportunities:

- Meet like-minded individuals
- Learn about and have a connection with the natural environment
- Wildlife viewing
- Outdoor enjoyment
- Sense of accomplishment and contribution to the community
- Social morning tea

1.4 How to join the Bushcare program

Further information can be found on the Council website at: www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/bushland/bushcare

There is no need to pre-register, simply turn up to the designated meeting spot as specified on the Council website and our Bushcare Officer will gladly welcome you into the program.

Alternatively you can contact Council's Bushcare Officer via phone **9093 6708** or email: bushcare@randwick.nsw.gov.au

1.5 Bushcare site map

Find your nearest bushcare site on the map below:



2. Terms of agreement

All members of the public are welcome to be part of Randwick City Council's Bushcare program, however, Council reserves the right to accept only those who are capable of carrying out the required tasks in an appropriate manner, as outlined in the volunteers' rights and responsibilities below.

2.1 Volunteers' rights

Randwick City Council's Bushcare Volunteers have a right to:

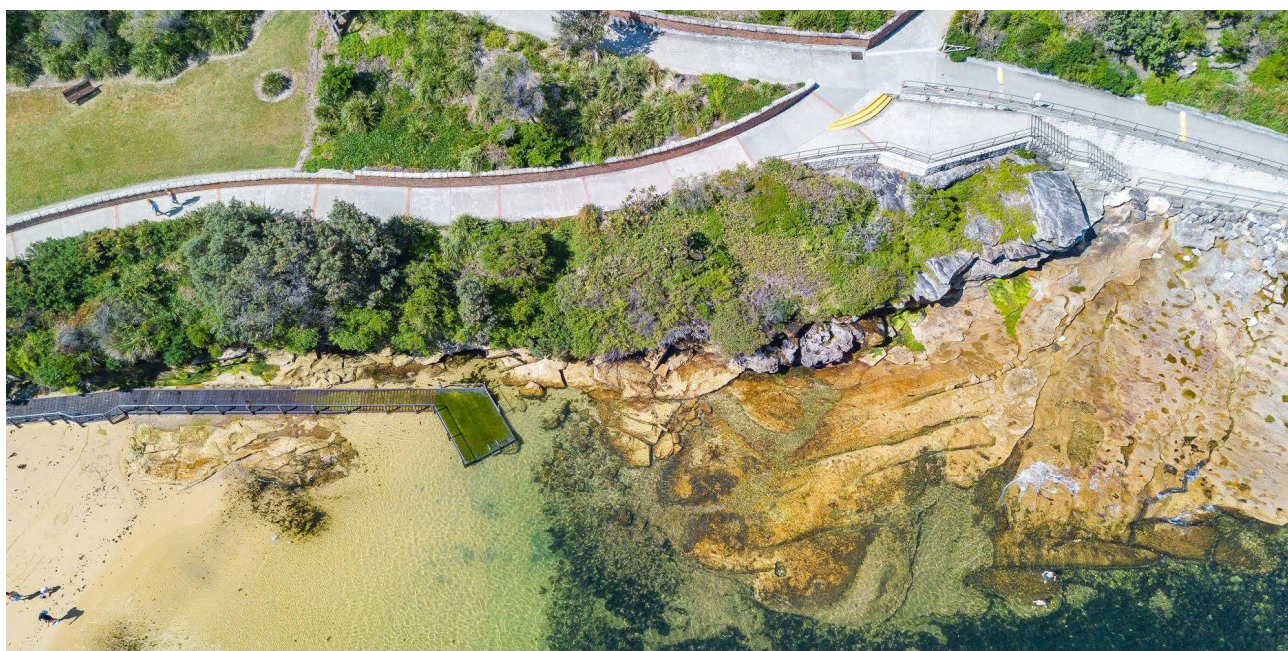
- A position which is worthwhile, varied, challenging and satisfying;
- Be treated as co-workers;
- Access to related information that will assist them in performing their task;
- Clear instructions from their site supervisor;
- Receive appropriate induction and ongoing training for the job;
- Sound and regular supervision, support and direction;
- Express themselves and make suggestions in planning and decision making;

- Be adequately insured;
- Have their contributions recognised and valued;
- A safe and conducive work environment.

2.2 Volunteers' responsibilities

Randwick City Council's Bushcare Volunteers have a number of responsibilities when they join the program. These include the following:

- To respect and abide by the policies and practices of Randwick City Council. This includes Equal Opportunity and Anti-discrimination legislation as well as Workplace Health and Safety legislation;
- To undertake the Bushcare Workplace Health and Safety induction prior to commencing work;
- To respect the rights of other volunteers and staff with whom they work;
- To work in a safe and healthy manner and not jeopardise the health and safety of others;
- To report any accident or incident immediately to the site supervisor;
- To abide by the instructions of their supervisor at all times;
- Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who is prepared to work with and assist their child at all times.





2.3 Council's rights

Randwick City Council has a right to:

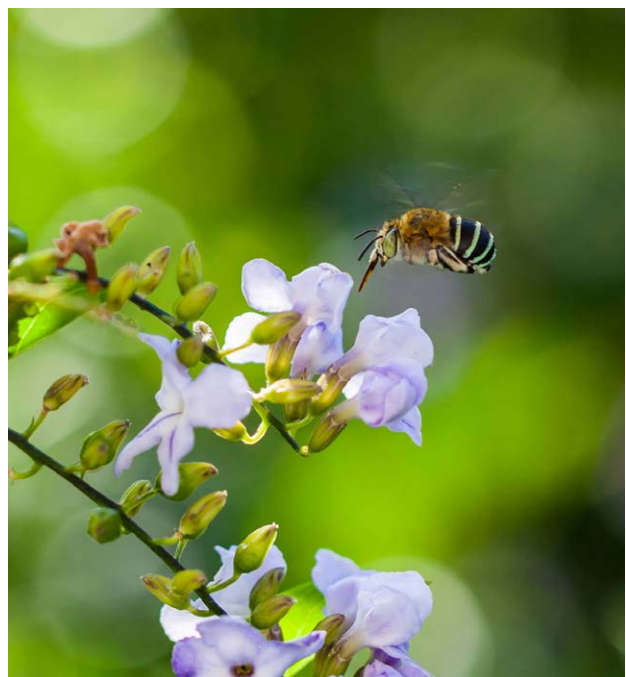
- Accept only those who are capable of carrying out the required volunteer tasks in an appropriate manner, and in accordance with Council's policies and management objectives.
- Release a volunteer if they are deemed to be unsuitable for the program's activities or their behaviour is deemed to be:
 - Unsafe to themselves and/or others.
 - Considerably inconsistent with Randwick City Council policies.
 - In contravention of a direction from the Bushcare Officer.
 - Counter-productive to the success of the bushcare program.

2.4 Council's responsibilities

Randwick City Council acknowledges that a volunteer has exercised free choice in joining the program and that the relationship between a volunteer and Council is a reciprocal one. Council's responsibilities to its Bushcare Volunteers are as follows:

- Being aware of a volunteer's preferences and abilities;
- Making reasonable adjustments to the work environment to allow equal access to volunteer opportunities;
- Ensuring that all volunteers are engaged in accordance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation;

- Providing volunteers with a level of responsibility and involvement that meets their expectations;
- Informing volunteers about the organisation;
- Providing ongoing training, skills development and experience opportunities;
- Providing a supervisor to support volunteers;
- Providing program induction and adequate volunteer policies and procedures;
- Providing volunteer accident insurance and first aid equipment;
- Providing a safe and conducive work environment;
- Complying with the requirements of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017;
- Providing all tools, equipment and materials;
- Recognising the contribution and worth of their volunteers;
- Treating all volunteers equally and fairly;
- Ensuring that volunteers only perform work they have agreed to;
- Documenting the work performed by volunteers and recording their hours worked;
- Consulting with volunteers on issues that arise in their conservation and restoration work;
- Providing feedback on their work;
- Maintaining volunteers' personal details in a confidential manner.



3. Workplace health and safety

3.1 Council Policy

Randwick City Council is committed to its responsibility to operate in a manner that protects human health and safety.

We meet and will continue to meet this responsibility by the following actions:

- As a minimum level of performance, we will comply with applicable Acts and Regulations aimed at protecting human health and safety.
- We will conduct regular audits to verify compliance with regulatory requirements and Council policy. We will implement workplace health, safety and risk (WHSR) management systems to identify and manage health and safety, risks, obligations and opportunities.
- We will work to prevent accidents, injuries and unsafe work conditions and/or practices, encourage the reuse and recycling of materials, and encourage a reduction of the use of hazardous substances in our operations. We will share WHSR best practices across the Council.
- We will monitor emerging issues and keep abreast of regulatory and legislative changes, technological innovations, advancements and stakeholder interest. We will strive to develop effective and sustainable solutions to WHSR challenges arising from our activities.
- Council is committed to communicating relevant and meaningful information about our WHSR performance to our internal and external stakeholders.



- It is the responsibility of the Risk and Safety section to establish policy, oversee compliance, and review the Council's WHSR performance with Council and division management on a periodic basis, including compliance with this policy.
- Each division is responsible for implementing this policy. Workers and organisations with which Council partners to deliver services are responsible for integrating sound WHSR practices into their everyday activities and acting in a manner that is protective of human health and safety.

3.2 Insurance

All Randwick City Council Bushcare volunteers are protected by the same public liability policy as Council staff. The policy provides protection against claims for compensation by third parties for death or personal injury, or loss or damage to property, arising from any negligent act, error or omission allegedly committed.



4. Working safely



While working outdoors in the bush, we need to take precautions and be aware of potential hazards so as to prevent accidents and injury to ourselves and others.

For this reason it is important that all volunteers bring the following:

- Sturdy non-slip enclosed shoes
- Long sleeves and trousers
- Hat and sunglasses
- Drinking water

Many of our bushcare sites are along the coast where the vegetation is quite low and therefore doesn't provide much shade. You should drink plenty of water, particularly on hot days, and if you are feeling hot take a break and sit in the shade.

On the workday you will be using hand tools to remove weeds. Your supervisor will show you the correct way to use each tool and the posture to adopt when weeding so as to prevent back injury. If you are unsure how to use a tool, please ask your supervisor.

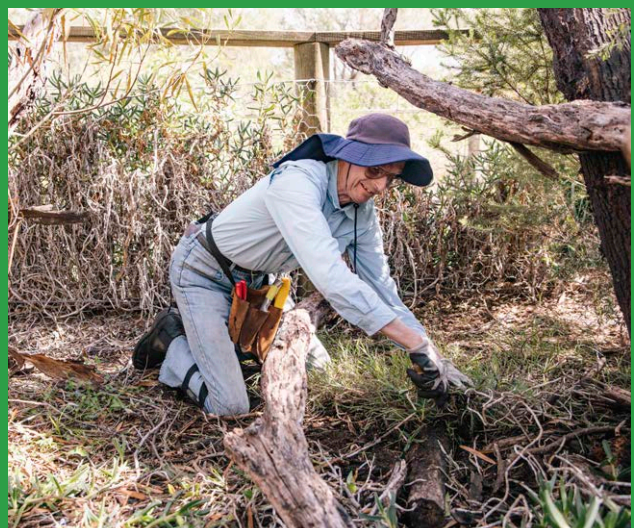
To prevent cuts, scratches and tripping while working on a site:

- Watch out for broken glass hidden among the vegetation;
- Remain aware of your surroundings and make sure that you have secure footing. Look out for rocks and logs before you take a step;
- Wear sturdy footwear that covers the whole of your foot;
- Wear trousers, a long-sleeved shirt and gloves.

To prevent eye injury from twigs, shrubs or grasses wear sunglasses. Council provides safety glasses for use, if required.

Sometimes while undertaking bush regeneration, insects are encountered. They are a natural part of a healthy ecosystem, providing food for birds and helping to break down old plant material. If you come across a harmful insect please move away and inform your supervisor. Do not touch or handle the insect. If you are bitten or stung please let your supervisor know.

We all need to look out for each other. So when we put down our tools and weed bags, we need to put them in a place where no one will trip over them. They should not be left on pathways. If you see anything that could harm someone, such as broken glass, let those around you know and tell your supervisor.



5. Bush regeneration principles

Bush regeneration is the rehabilitation of bush from a weed-infested or otherwise degraded plant community to a healthy community composed of plants indigenous to that area. When conducting bush regeneration activities we follow three basic principles:

1. Work outwards from good bush towards areas encroached upon by weeds;
2. Make minimal disturbance to the environment;
3. Do not overclear (let native plant regeneration dictate the rate of weed removal),

By following these three principles it allows us to:

- Prevent deterioration of good areas.
- Improve the next best areas.
- Hold the advantage gained.

We should always be cautious before deciding to conduct work in areas heavily infested with weeds as their requirement for follow-up weed control is high. This places a strain on resources and slows overall site progress.



6. Weed control techniques

There are many definitions of a weed, including “any useless, troublesome or noxious plant” or “a plant growing out of place”. There are also many different types of weeds and depending on the way each weed grows, we implement different control measures. These include manual removal as well as chemical control techniques. While at Bushcare, volunteers are not required to conduct chemical weed control.

6.1 Manual control methods

The techniques of hand pulling, crowning and digging out are commonly used in weed control.

6.1.1 Hand Pull

The plant should be small enough to ensure the entire root is removed and will not re-sprout from any remaining root system.



1. Remove and bag any seed heads prior to disturbing the plant
2. Remove any mulch/debris around base of main stem
3. Grasp the plant firmly from the base of the stem
4. Gently pull the plant out with constant pressure
5. Shake off any excess dirt attached to the roots

6.1.2 Crowning

Crowning involves using a sharp implement (knife) to cut out the growing point of species that grow from a crown (central growth point). Such species include most tussock grasses and asparagus ferns. Tools required include gloves and a knife (gyprock knives are excellent for this purpose). For safety purposes ensure the knife is used for cutting rather than levering. Larger specimens may require a peter lever or spade.

1. Grasp the plant at ground level
2. Insert the knife at around a 45 degree angle and make a cut around the crown



3. Remove the plant whilst cutting through the lateral roots
4. Replace disturbed soil

6.1.3 Digging out

Certain plants have below ground organs (rhizomes/tubers/bulbs) that will regrow unless the whole organ is removed. There are sometimes chemical control options for these plants but many people choose to remove them manually. This is generally safer and if done correctly will provide a higher chance of successful eradication. Tools required include gloves, hand trowel or a knife. Common weeds targeted using the following method include turkey rhubarb, madeira vine and onion weed.

1. Trace the main stem to the roots at the grounds surface.
2. Start digging to trace the underground organs using the appropriate tool. Cast iron hand trowels are sufficient for smaller rhizomes, while mattocks or peter levers may be required for larger ones.
3. Dig along the root system. Try to dig gently as some tuberous roots are weak and are very easily broken.
4. Remove any secondary rhizomes/tubers while loosening the soil. Carefully remove the entire root/tuber system and bag it. Be sure to remove all roots and any tubers lying around at ground level.
5. Replace disturbed soil.





7. Further reading

Below is a list of relevant websites that provide a wealth of extra information related to bush regeneration and weed control within New South Wales (NSW):

- NSW Weedwise - weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au
- PlantNET - plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au
- The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators - www.aabr.org.au
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services - www.greatersydney.lls.nsw.gov.au/_old/home
- Landcare NSW - www.landcarensw.org.au

- NSW NPWS volunteering - www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/conservation-programs/bush-regeneration-volunteering-program

- Sydney Weeds Network - www.sydneyweeds.org.au

- The Weeds Network - www.weedsnetwork.org/traction

For more information regarding bushland within Randwick City Council head to: www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/bushland

Alternatively you can contact Council's Bushcare Officer via the details: Phone (02) 9093 6708 or email: bushcare@randwick.nsw.gov.au





Randwick City Council
30 Frances Street
Randwick NSW 2031
Phone 1300 722 542

council@randwick.nsw.gov.au
www.randwick.nsw.gov.au

Follow us here

