

Bushland Newsletter

SPRING 23



On the go with Emily

I recently had the privilege of traveling internationally and while some time away offered a much-appreciated break it also brought with it refreshing perspective. The northern hemisphere celebrates the warmer months with near feverish enthusiasm, knowing the sunshine and flowers won't last. In contrast, we here in Australia can easily become complacent blessed with greenery, flowers and blue skies year-round. It's almost too easy to overlook the passage of time which elsewhere is so clearly punctuated by stark seasons. How lucky are we to work in bushland while looking out to beautiful blue seas. But with privilege comes responsibility, to take the time to appreciate and protect these environments. Read on in this edition to discover some different ways to think about and enact this care.

Emily Strautins
Randwick City Council
Bushland Officer

NEWS UPDATE

Save the date: Bushcare Christmas Lunch 2023

Bushcare Christmas party will be held on the 25th of November. Whether you volunteered a little or a lot this year, if you contributed to the Bushcare program we'd love to see you there! This annual event is a chance to relax and celebrate all your efforts to support Randwick's Bushland.



Post-burn Recovery

Pine Heath (*Astroloma pinifolium*) and Tree-Broom Heath (*Monotoca elliptica*), just two of many species regenerating beautifully after a successful burn at Randwick Environment Park. Prior to the burn here, these species had almost disappeared from the location. Now these plants are making a comeback alongside a huge range of other Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub diagnostic species. These results can also be seen from the edge of the Harvey Street burn,

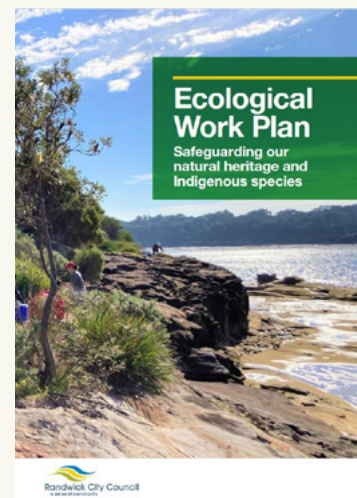


which although a more recent burn, is flourishing with a diversity of banksias, wattles and pea-flowers.

Recently Launched: Ecological Work Plan!

Unless you're in the bush working alongside our bushland teams, sometimes it's hard to see or understand what our teams do. The recently launched 'Ecological Work Plan' aims to address this and more. This substantial volume contains a brief overview of each and every element which influences the ecology of Randwick City. From soil to wildlife, plants and people (even some of the dry stuff like legislative frameworks), this document aims to provide a one stop shop to anyone wanting to learn about the life of our City and how Council aims to preserve it for countless generations to come. If you're out for a solid read, check it out now on the Bushland pages of the Randwick Council website.

<https://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/bushland/protecting-bushland/bush-regeneration>



Caring for Ocean, Caring for Burri Burri (whale)

Seeing whales from the coastline of Randwick is an annual privilege, but what we do on land can have flow on impacts to these amazing creatures. By making very small behaviour changes, you can do your bit to promote health oceans.

During June-July, the greatest number of Humpback Whales pass our shores as they migrate north to warmer waters of the Great Barrier Reef to breed. Yet, with more than 50% of the worlds marine mammals occurring in Australian waters, those with their eyes trained to the sea can encounter glimpses of other whales including Southern Rights, Blue, Dwarf Minke or even Killer Whales, not to mention a variety of dolphins throughout the year.

Cultural significance and taking responsibility

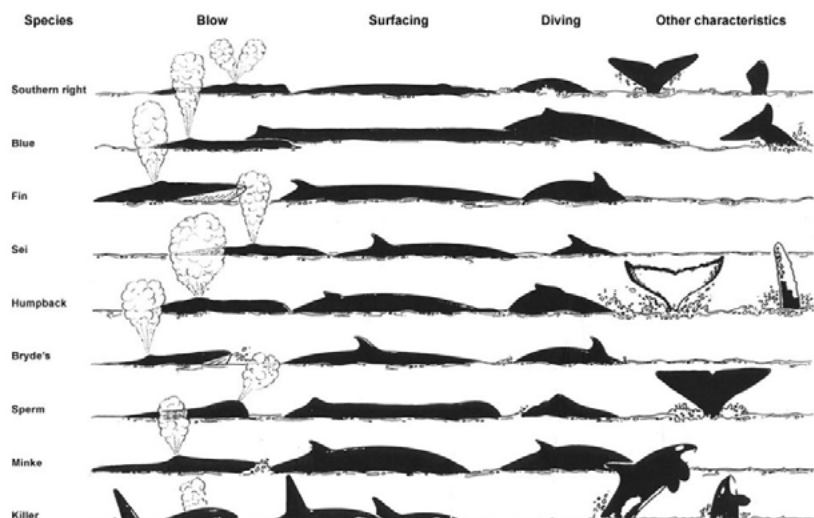
It is a huge privilege to observe these incredible animals play in the waters just offshore from where we live, work and play. However even as a coastal community it can be easy to forget just how interconnected our terrestrial and marine worlds are. Watching the movements of whales young and old, serves as a powerful reminder of what is at stake, reminding us that what we do to our lands, affects our seas.

Appreciating this unbreakable linkage between land and water, is inherent in Aboriginal culture, and for local Saltwater people the whale is a particularly important totemic species. Robert Cooley, of the Gamay Rangers says “The humpback whale, or Burri Burri as he is known to us, is really significant, we see them as our overriding ancestral being”. Observing

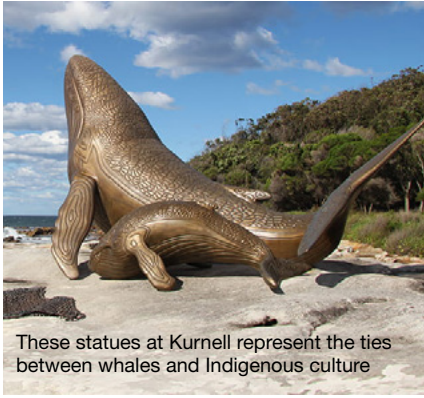
Bushcarers working at many of our coastal sites have been fortunate enough to observe whales as they weed throughout winter.

these creatures connects Saltwater People with ancient Dreamtime stories and renews the appreciation of the ocean as a source of sustenance, cultural identity and wellbeing. But with appreciation for these elements comes a deep obligation to care for and protect the sea and all its inhabitants, a lesson which today we need to enact perhaps more than ever.

Everyone can contribute to the support and protection of whale habitat through small actions, in day-to-day life on land.



Whale identification chart (Source: DCCEW.gov.au)



These statues at Kurnell represent the ties between whales and Indigenous culture

Individual steps towards global impact

The climate crisis is undoubtedly the greatest threats to marine ecosystems, including whales. Rising sea temperatures, ocean acidification, and changes in seasonal food availability can disrupt the delicate balance of marine ecosystems, affecting the entire food chain. Take steps to reduce your carbon footprint by conserving energy, reducing the amount of meat you eat, using public transportation or carpooling, and supporting renewable



When you see litter think: if not me, it's in the sea, if we all do a bit the problem will be gone.

energy initiatives. Small changes in daily habits can collectively make a difference, whilst also sending a strong message to government to promote more systematic changes.

What flows on lands, enters the sea

Perhaps the most direct way that our lives on land can affect the ocean is via runoff from urban, industry and agricultural areas. As citizens of the coast, it is important to think about products which you may use which may become contaminants such as plastic, household chemicals and fertilizers, even your dog's poo can introduce particularly harmful bacteria and nitrates if it's not binned. You have the power to address this by spreading awareness

through respectful conversation with friends, family and neighbours. As for plastic, that's easy! Whenever you see litter think: 'if not me, then it's in the sea' - pick it up and put it in a bin.

Choose sustainably sourced seafood

A really simple way to support the health of marine ecosystems is to consider what you eat. Overfishing can disrupt the balance of marine ecosystems and impact the availability of food for whales and other marine species. Look for certifications like Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or choose seafood options recommended as sustainable by reputable organisations. Salmon farming has been found to be particularly environmentally damaging, so consider branching out. Or when catching or collecting your own seafood, remember to only take what you will eat, be careful to clean up loose line, hooks or sinkers and to respect 'no-take' marine protection zones.

Connecting ecosystems

Did you realise that bushland is also integral promoting healthy seas? Our terrestrial plants play a major role in filtering stormwater, holding soils and creating healthy diverse ecosystems. Plants and their relationship with soils provide integral water filtration and erosion control, reducing contaminants (including our precious soils!) being washed out to sea during stormy weather. The greater the variety of plants, the greater the benefit. From lawn to giant trees to aquatic plants, each play a role in the way the water moves over land and into the sea. In fact, once you start to observe closely the boundary between land and sea begins to blur.



One of the roles of the Gamay Rangers is to free whales that become tangled in rope or drift nets.

Bushland supports migratory birds which prey on fish, intertidal invertebrates live their lives half in and half out of the sea and many coastal plants depend on sand and salt.

The more diverse an ecosystem the more stable. Humans, both as animals and as caretakers are inextricably involved in these networks of energy, water and nutrients following through diverse ecosystems.

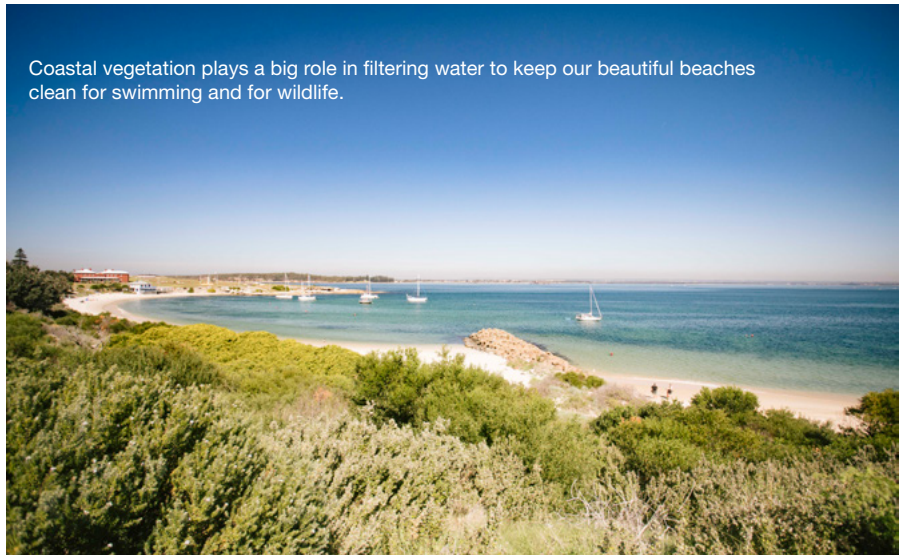
Conclusion

Part of the mystique of whales is their otherworldliness, yet they aren't as disconnected from the human world as it may seem. By recognising the Aboriginal connections to Sea Country and making small adjustments in our own lives, we strengthen our cultural understandings and collective commitment to preserving these precious marine ecosystems for generations to come.

Want to do more? You can learn about and support the work of the Gamay Rangers at: laperouse.org.au/gamay-rangers



Coastal vegetation plays a big role in filtering water to keep our beautiful beaches clean for swimming and for wildlife.



Spring into Summer

Summer is a challenging season for gardens, with extreme heat and holiday absences taking a toll. It doesn't take long for things to turn bad and it can happen without us even noticing. Spring is a great time to build some resilience into the garden, giving it more of a buffer against the heat, and lightening our mental and physical load.

Mulch

Mulch is vital to minimising water loss from the soil and reducing soil temperature. It will give plants a bit more protection on extreme heat days and allows you to get the most out of your water. Mulching with a good-quality large-grade hardwood chip (at least 15-30mm) is the best way to reduce evaporation and inhibit weed growth while retaining airflow in the soil. Mulches that are too fine can sometimes compact and actually repel water.



Prune, tidy and fertilise

Spring is a great time to prune any dead or broken branches, dead head spent flowers and remove and compost excess leaf litter from around the garden. Most plants will have a growth spurt during the warmer months, so a pre-emptive tidy will ensure they have plenty of airflow. It's also good to do the hard tasks before the more extreme heat of summer. Spring is also a great time to fertilise plants, ensuring they can make the most of the warmer weather. Use a slow-release fertiliser and follow the directions on the pack for re-application.

Weed

Weeds can take off and take over in warmer weather, competing with other plants for water and space. Get on top of weeds early while they are small and set a schedule to do a little bit regularly, which should make the task less onerous.

Figure out a watering plan

Consistent deep watering is essential over summer, though it's often a busy time of year which makes this difficult. Planting native, drought-tolerant plants is a good way to start, by reducing the demand for water from the outset. However, even the hardiest natives will need a regular top-up in summer.

Spring is a good time to consider installing an irrigation system. A simple system is relatively easy to install and can be designed to reduce water waste as well. If you already have a system installed, make sure it is in good condition so you have peace of mind on those hot days.



Plant

Finally, take advantage of spring's mild conditions and put some plants in the ground. Planting in summer is tricky as the plants don't have time to settle in before being exposed to extreme conditions, resulting in shock and stress. Planting in spring gives them a chance to develop a root system so they can tap into deeper water to see them through summer.

Did you know the nursery reuses used plastic plant pots? If you are left with some after a spring clean, you can drop off used black plastic tubes and pots in sizes 140mm, 200mm and 300mm. Pots in other sizes and colours can be taken to Flower Power, which has a large-scale pot recycling program.

Paws for Thought

With their furry, paw-like flowers, these plants make a striking addition to the garden. Colours range from reds to orange, to pink to green, and they are available in a range of sizes, from the smaller, 60-70cm Bush Gem varieties to the hardy so-called landscaping varieties, whose flowers grow to a spectacular 1.8-2m. Many cultivars flower throughout the warmer months.

Varieties regularly for sale at the nursery include the Bush Gem cultivars Bush Tenacity, with a golden yellow flower, and Bush Pearl, which has a hot pink flower. The larger cultivars available include Yellow Gem, Big Red and Landscape Tangerine.

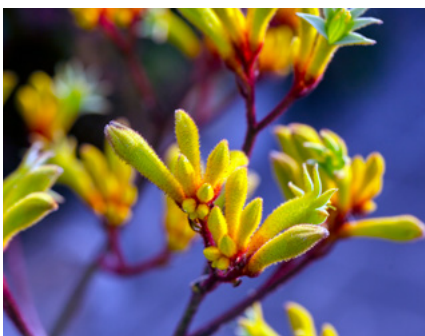
The smaller varieties look great as a border plant or growing among flowering shrubs and native grasses in a habitat or cottage-style garden, while the larger varieties make a dramatic statement either individually or mass planted. Whether small or large, they will also grow well in pots, as long as the pot is well-drained.

The nectar in the long, tubular flowers is an important high-energy food source for many birds, mammals and insects.

Kangaroo paws prefer a full sun position and well-drained soils. During the flowering season, they will need more water, but remember to reduce watering in winter. To maintain good airflow, don't plant your paws too close together. Feed with a controlled release fertiliser during the warmer months and remove the flower stems as they start to fade to encourage more flowers.

If your paws start to look untidy, cutting them right back to the base in late summer or early autumn will promote vigorous regrowth in spring.

Kangaroo paws can be divided if they get too big for their allocated space. Division promotes health and vigorous growth, with the bonus of creating another plant.



The Flowering Gum is probably the best-known of the Corymbias.



The Other Gums

Question: When is a eucalypt not a eucalypt? Answer: When it's an Angophora or Corymbia.

There are more than 850 eucalypts in Australia. While the genus *Eucalyptus* dominates, with about 750 individual species, the *Angophoras* (fewer than 15 individual species) and *Corymbias* (about 90 species) include some of our most iconic and attractive trees.

The *Angophoras*, which grow mainly in eastern Australia, are known as apples. They were given this common name by the early European settlers, who thought the leaves and flowers looked like those of the apple tree.

The best way to tell the difference between *Angophoras* and other eucalypts is to look at where the mature leaves grow on the stem: *Angophora* leaves sit opposite each other on the stem while *Eucalyptus* and *Corymbia* leaves appear to alternate. The seed capsule, or gumnut, is also different - the *Angophora* seed capsule is ribbed and lacks an operculum, or bud cap, over the developing flowers.

The *Angophoras* include the beautiful Smooth-barked Apple (*Angophora costata*), also known as the Sydney Red Gum, and the small but perfectly formed Dwarf Apple (*Angophora hispida*), which can reach 8m but is usually much smaller, making it ideal for a Sydney-sized backyard. They are hardy, growing well in free-draining soils and most aspects.

Closely related to the *Angophoras* are the *Corymbias*, known as bloodwoods. Only split off from

Eucalyptus in the 1990s, this genus is mainly from northern Australia. *Corymbias* have distinctive, often large, urn-shaped gumnuts. They include the spectacular Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and Lemon-scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*).

Possibly best-known to gardeners is the Western Australian Flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*), which is usually sold as a grafted plant in the eastern states to improve its hardiness. The other benefit of grafting is that it limits the height of the mature tree. *Corymbia ficifolia* cultivars include Summer Red, Summer Beauty (pink) and Dwarf Orange.

Debate still rages about the reclassification of *Corymbia*, with some botanists arguing they should not have been split off from the *Eucalyptus* genus and others saying that not just the *Corymbias*, but another six subgroups, should be classified as subgenera. Another group says that *Angophora*, long accepted as a separate genus, should also be a subgenera.

References: *Australian Native Plants: Propagation, cultivation and use in landscaping*, Fourth Edition, John Wrigley and Murray Fagg, Reed New Holland, Frenchs Forest, NSW, 1996; *Eucalypts: A Celebration*, John Wrigley and Murray Fagg, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2010.



The Dwarf Apple is great for a Sydney-sized backyard.

Creating Native Havens



Designing backyard gardens to attract and protect Australian wildlife in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney

In the bustling Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, a haven for native creatures can be created right in your own backyard. By designing your garden to cater to the needs of smaller Australian natives including frogs, lizards, bees, and birds, you can contribute to the preservation of these important creatures. In this article, we'll explore some tips and ideas on how to create a wildlife-friendly garden that not only attracts and protects our cherished smaller native creatures but also provides an urban oasis for those living in apartments.



One of the key elements in designing a backyard garden to attract and protect Australian native creatures is to incorporate native plants. Native plants are well adapted to the local environment and provide food, shelter, and nesting sites for a variety of wildlife. Choose a diverse range of plants including local grasses, shrubs, and flowering plants, ensuring they bloom at different times of the year to provide a consistent food source.

Frogs, lizards, and birds all need a water source, so including a small pond, birdbath, or water feature in your garden is essential. Add rocks or logs to provide perching and basking spots for lizards and frogs. For small birds, they like to feel protected, so place the birdbath near a shrub and not out in the open. Ensure the water is clean and fresh and refill it regularly to attract a variety of creatures.

Offering a range of shelters and nesting opportunities will entice native wildlife to your garden. Install hollow logs for birds, and create rock piles, log piles, and leaf litter areas for lizards and frogs to seek refuge. These structures will mimic natural habitats and provide safe spaces for wildlife to rest, breed, and raise their young.

Bees are vital to our ecosystem, and by including a variety of native flowering plants in your garden, you can attract and support these important pollinators. Choose plants with different flower shapes, colors, and sizes to cater to various bee species. Be sure to avoid pesticides, as they can harm not only bees but also other wildlife in your garden.

Living in an apartment doesn't mean you can't contribute to creating a wildlife-friendly space. Utilise balcony and rooftop gardens by incorporating potted native plants, a small birdbath or water feature, and hanging baskets

filled with native flowers to attract birds and bees. Even a small space can make a big difference for local wildlife.

If you're interested in learning more about designing a garden for native habitat, the Randwick Sustainability Hub offers a 10-week course every winter. This course provides invaluable knowledge and guidance for creating a wildlife-friendly garden. Additionally, you can join the PermaBee community garden volunteering on Fridays from 9am to 12.30pm, where you can learn from experienced gardeners and contribute to creating a sustainable urban ecosystem.

Once you're ready to get started in your place, our Native Havens program can help provide site specific advice and up to \$100 worth of plants for your home, \$300 for your school project.

randwick.nsw.gov.au/permaabee

<https://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/bushland/biodiversity-in-randwick/native-havens-program>



From Bush Regeneration to Native Gardens: A Lifelong Devotion

Ask Linda Johnson what she loves about the Australian landscape, and her eyes light up with admiration. “Anyone who has travelled or come from overseas will recognise we live in an incredibly unique and diverse land. We’re incredibly fortunate,” says Linda. Her deep appreciation for the natural wonders of Australia is at the core of her life’s work.

For Linda, knowing about the Australian landscape, its flora, and fauna is just the beginning. She wishes people would take stronger action to protect it amidst competing interests. “Our individual and societal decisions and actions matter,”

emphasizes Linda. “Even the plants we grow in our gardens make a difference. As Paul Kelly said, ‘From little things big things grow...’”

Linda’s journey towards her green-hearted pursuits was influenced by her grandparents’ passion for preserving native flora and ecosystems. “I’m a bit of a self-confessed ‘plant nerd,’” chuckles Linda. “I love that, in this field, you are always, always learning. I feel exceptionally lucky I get to explore the secret world and language in nature.”

In the 90s, Linda started her path in bush regeneration, laying the groundwork for her lifelong commitment to nature. Intrigued by Permaculture, she pursued her Permaculture Design Certificate

about 15 years ago. A decade later, her passion led her back to her roots (pun intended) as she studied Horticulture through Ryde TAFE, reigniting her love for native plants.



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.

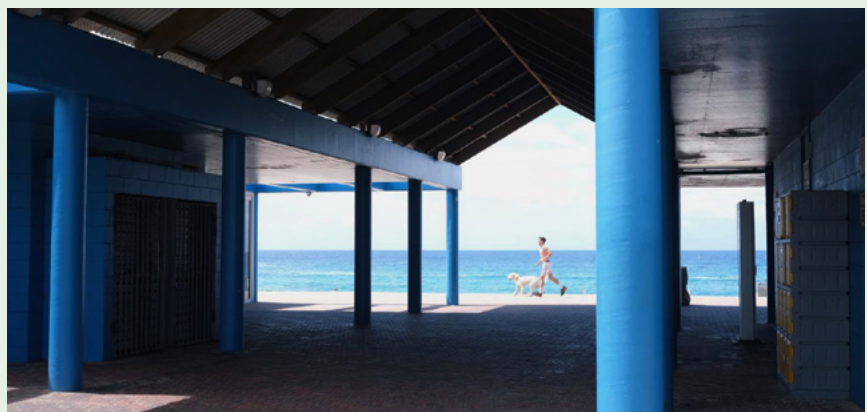
Images top right to bottom:

More of bushcarer Shaomei’s photography series, featuring Clovelly Bay and Maroubra Beach.

“Our friends... the Henry’s Trading Post galahs” – From John, Bushcarer at Prince Henry.

Image below:

This is how *Bidens pilosa* gets its common name: Farmers Friend! The clingy friendship forged with Carolyn, is indicative of just how many seeding plants our team removed from our site at Prince Henry last winter.



Working bee calendar

BUSHCARE

GROUP	LOCATION	DAY	TIME	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Clovelly Bay	Opposite 18 Eastbourne Ave, Clovelly	4th Friday	9am-12pm	22	27	24
Dunningham Reserve	Adjacent 5-7 Major Street, Coogee	4th Thursday	9am-11am	28	26	23
Fred Hollows Reserve	Bligh Place entrance, Randwick	2nd Wednesday	9am-12pm	13	11	8
Gordons Bay	Access via UNSW Cliffbrook Campus Grounds, 45 Beach St, Coogee	1st Sunday	9am-12pm	3	1	5
Grant Reserve	Coogee Surf Life Saving Club carpark (south of the beach)	3rd Wednesday	9am-11am	20	18	15
Ladies Pool (Ladies Only)	At the entrance to the Ladies Pool, McIver's Rock Baths, Coogee	3rd Thursday	9am-12pm	21	19	16
Malabar Foreshore	Opposite 9 Bay Parade, Malabar (near Malabar Ocean Pool)	1st Saturday	9am-1pm	2	7	4
Malabar Wetland	End of Manwaring Avenue, Maroubra	3rd Wednesday	1pm-4pm	20	18	15
Maroubra Dunes	The South Maroubra SLSC car park	1st Thursday	9am-12pm	7	5	2
Prince Henry	Alternate between the corner of Jennifer and Harvey St or opposite 2 Millard Dr, Little Bay	2nd Saturday	9am-1pm	9	14	11
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	4 & 9	1 & 12
Wylies Baths	At the picnic tables above Wylie's Baths, Neptune Street, Coogee	3rd Tuesday	9am-12pm	19	17	21
Alison Road	Corner of Alison Road and Beach Street, Coogee	4th Thursday	1pm-3pm	28	26	23
Old Tramline	The reserve between Dudley St and Carrington Rd, Randwick	2nd Thursday	9am-12pm	14	12	9

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	9, 16, 23 & 30
Little Bay Landcare*	Access between 119 and 121 Bilga Crescent, Malabar. Contact Kerry Gordon on 0411 245 985.	1st Saturday	8am-12pm	2	7	4
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	3, 10, 17 & 31	7, 14, 21 & 25

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

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