

Bushcode



For more information visit
hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushcare



Welcome

Welcome to Hornsby Shire Council's Bushcare Program.

This "Bushcode" document outlines all aspects of the program including:

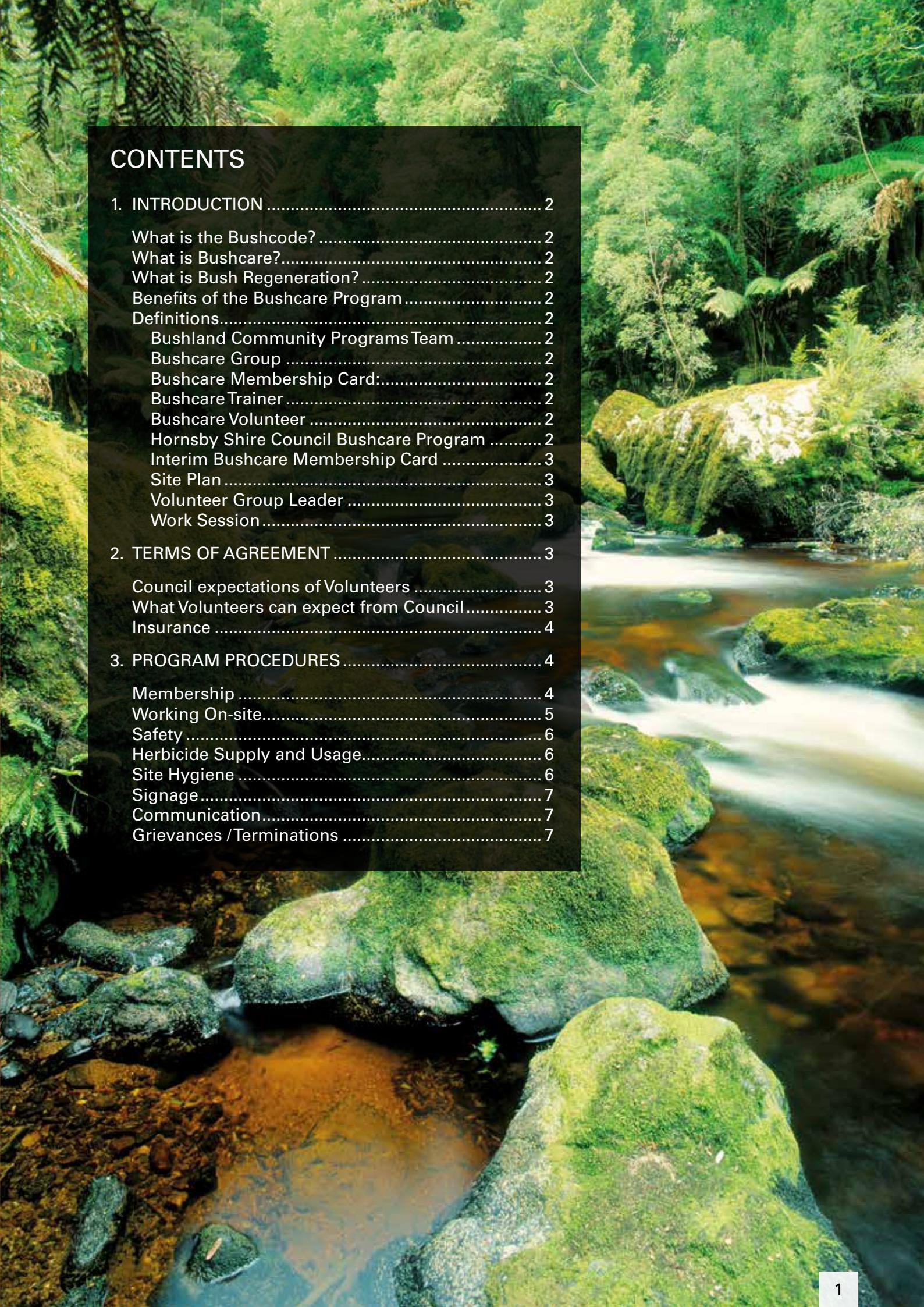
- Aims of the program
- Benefits of belonging to the program
- Working on a safe site
- Working as part of a team
- How the program runs (covering Terms of Agreement and Procedures)
- Glossary of terms

We encourage you to read this Bushcode document to gain a thorough understanding of our Bushcare program. If you have any queries please contact our team on 9847 6362 or bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

We look forward to seeing you at your Bushcare site.

enjoy!





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1. INTRODUCTION

What is the Bushcode?

The Bushcode is a document outlining the terms of agreement and procedures that guide the operation of the Hornsby Shire Council Bushcare Program.

What is Bushcare?

Bushcare is a program where community volunteers work with Council to undertake bush regeneration activities, to conserve and rehabilitate publicly owned bushland reserves.

Bush regeneration programs are long term commitments. Volunteers require a variety of skills and understanding of ecological concepts. These are attained through a combination of training, research, observation and practical application.

What is Bush Regeneration?

Bush regeneration is “the practice of restoring bushland by focusing on reinstating and reinforcing the system’s ongoing natural regeneration processes” (Australian Association of Bush Regenerators). Each volunteer group aims to rehabilitate the bush from a weed infested or otherwise degraded plant community to a healthy community composed of locally occurring flora and fauna.

Bush regeneration is not just weed removal; it is an integrated approach that encourages the bush to ‘bounce back’ through natural processes. It must consider environmental aspects such as, fauna habitat, drainage, weed sources, nutrient levels, disturbance, and the resilience of the native bushland to re-establish itself. Sometimes areas are so degraded that natural regeneration is minimal and revegetation may be the most successful restoration option.

Benefits of the Bushcare Program

The Bushcare Program benefits the general community through reversal of bushland degradation, conservation of biodiversity and the development of community spirit and awareness, whilst the individual can enjoy:

- A great outdoor working environment
- Healthy, active and fun activities
- Social interaction (meeting other volunteers and neighbours)
- Training opportunities
- Learning more about natural ecosystems and environmental processes
- A sense of personal achievement through community involvement

Definitions

Bushland Community Programs Team:

A team within the Natural Resources Branch of Hornsby Shire Council that is responsible for the management of the Bushcare Program.

Bushcare Group:

A group of Bushcare volunteers undertaking bush regeneration and / or associated works on land owned or managed by Council.

Bushcare Membership Card:

An identification card that certifies that the holder has completed the Bushcare Program Membership and Bushcode Training. They are therefore authorised to carry out work as part of an approved Bushcare project under the guidance and instruction of a Council officer.

Bushcare Trainer:

Appropriately qualified and experienced person who is employed by Hornsby Shire Council to supervise and train Bushcare Volunteers while they are working on a Bushcare Site. Generally Bushcare Trainers provide training to groups on a monthly basis.

Bushcare Volunteer:

A person who freely contributes their services without coercion or financial reward as a member of the Hornsby Shire Bushcare Program.

Hornsby Shire Council Bushcare Program:

A program administered by Hornsby Shire Council facilitating the involvement of community volunteers in the bush regeneration of natural areas under its care, control and management or joint management with other agencies.

Interim Bushcare Membership Card:

An identification card that certifies that the holder is in the process of completing the Bushcare Program Membership and Bushcode training. The volunteer is not considered a fully registered member while they hold an interim membership card.

Site Plan:

Each site has a guiding document called a site plan which is created by the Bushcare Trainer in consultation with the group's volunteers. The site plan includes the following information:

- Site history
- Aims and 1, 5, and 10 year objectives for the site.
- Site fauna, flora and weeds lists
- Map depicting work zones and photo reference points.
- Actions for issues identified in each work zone with priorities for undertaking those actions.
- Site risk analysis, matrix and emergency contact numbers.

On becoming a member of the Bushcare Program, a volunteer agrees to follow the specifications of the site plan.

Volunteer Group Leader:

A Bushcare volunteer who acts as main contact person and co-ordinator for each Bushcare group. This is a non-disciplinary role as leader of the volunteer group.

Work Session:

Usually a Bushcare group will carry out work on their site at the same time each month under the supervision of a Bushcare Trainer. A Bushcare group may work more regularly, under agreement with the Bushcare Trainer and Community Programs Team, and receive training from a Bushcare Trainer or qualified staff member on a monthly basis. This participation needs to be formally recorded on the sign-on sheets provided and pre-arranged with Council.

2. TERMS OF AGREEMENT

Council expectations of Volunteers:

1. Complete the membership by undertaking a Bushcode workshop and on site skills training.
2. Attend refresher Bushcode workshop every five years to maintain current volunteer membership.
3. Be committed to their site.
4. Co-operate with other volunteers and staff.
5. Conform to relevant legislation and follow the Bushcode and site plan.
6. Give notice prior to leaving the program and return any tools or equipment.
7. Undertake work on site in a safe and responsible manner.
8. Comply with Hornsby Shire Council's Alcohol and Other Drugs Determination and Procedures.
9. Comply with Hornsby Shire Council's Code of Conduct.

What Volunteers can expect from Council:

1. Direction and supervision from Council staff.
2. Training from qualified staff.
3. Appropriate tools, resources and personal protective equipment for their work.
4. Insurance cover while they are performing volunteer duties.
5. Support, encouragement and appreciation for their efforts.
6. Work that best suits their skills and ability.
7. Feedback regarding their performance as a bush regenerator.
8. Information on matters that may affect their Bushcare site.
9. Assistance with recruitment of new volunteers and community education.
10. No expectation or requirement to remain a volunteer.
11. A site plan.
12. Staff compliance with Hornsby Shire Council's Code of Conduct.
13. Access to First Aid equipment while working under the Bushcare program.

Insurance:

All volunteers registered with Hornsby Shire Council are extended insurance protection in two key areas, Public Liability / Professional Indemnity and Personal Accident. It is important for volunteers to be familiar with these policies and to regularly report incidents to their Council supervisors to ensure the coverage is provided. The policies are summarised below:

Public Liability / Professional Indemnity Insurance

Volunteers of Hornsby Shire Council have the same level of public liability/professional indemnity protection as staff and councillors. Currently the policy provides \$400 million Public Liability cover and \$300 million Professional Indemnity cover. 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.

Indemnity under the terms of this policy may not be provided in cases where a volunteer is found to be acting outside their scope of duties and responsibilities, such as committing an illegal act.

Personal Accident Insurance

As volunteers are not employees of Hornsby Shire Council, they are not able to be protected under normal Workers Compensation arrangements. Instead, Council maintains a Personal Accident Policy which provides up to \$20,000 cover for injury/sickness resulting in surgery, and up to \$5000 for injury resulting in fractured bones. The policy also pays up to \$3000 per week (for 156 weeks), in cases of total disablement or \$2,250 per week (for 156 weeks) in cases of partial disablement.

As this is the maximum cover provided, it is important for volunteers to evaluate this cover against their own personal circumstances to consider if it is adequate. Council is not in a position to meet personal costs which are over and above these insured limits. Compensation is also not payable to persons under the age of 10 or over the age of 90.

3. PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Membership

All members of the public are welcome to be part of Hornsby Shire Council's Bushcare Program

There will be no discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, disability, religion or sexuality against those who wish to join the program. Some activities may however be unsuitable for people with physical or intellectual impairment. Hornsby Shire Council reserves the 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 instructions.

Volunteers do not receive any financial remuneration. Their reward is personal satisfaction, the protection and enhancement of the environment, free onsite training, workshops and seminars and the gratitude of Council and the wider community.

All new volunteers are required to fill in an application form, and undertake an onsite induction prior to commencing any Bushcare activity. They also need to attend a Bushcode workshop that run throughout the year. This introductory training is provided by Council. The on-site sessions need to be with a qualified Bushcare Trainer in an established Bushcare group. It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that Council is notified of any new volunteer in their group and provide an application form for completion.

Compulsory training is required to ensure that volunteers are competent to carry out the relevant volunteer work, by demonstrating safe use of equipment, safe work practices and an understanding of Work Health and Safety requirements.

All volunteers must complete and sign a Bushcare Membership Form indicating they agree to the terms and conditions of the program and giving their name, contact details and an emergency contact.

Details of all Bushcare memberships will be kept on a central database register. This register (and all details within it) is confidential and will not be disclosed without prior consent.

Volunteers have full membership when they hold a valid membership card. Mailing list members are those who are interested in the Program but are currently unable to actively participate. Mailing list members will receive the Bushcare newsletter and other information regarding the program.

Volunteers are encouraged to join existing Bushcare groups in their local area. All groups should nominate a regular work day and time. Most groups work once a month on a regular day (eg. 3rd Saturday of the month).

All new groups will be allocated a Bushcare Trainer to supervise all works on site and undertake training of new volunteers. New groups will only form if they have a minimum of three potential group members (from different households) or as the Coordinator – Bushland Community Programs agrees (based on training resources available or site regeneration potential). Volunteers must work under the guidance of a Bushcare Trainer until relevant concepts and skills have been mastered, after which time an agreement may be made with the Bushcare Trainer or Community Programs team staff for the volunteer to work with the group in the absence of a trainer.

Volunteers are required to renew their Bushcode training every five years.

New volunteers undertaking Bushcode training will be issued with an Interim Bushcare Membership card when they join the program.

On completion of the Bushcode workshop and demonstration of competency on site with their Bushcare Trainer, each volunteer will receive a Bushcare Membership card and be considered a fully registered member.

Membership allows volunteers to perform approved Bushcare activities on land owned or managed by Hornsby Shire Council (or other land by agreement with the land manager and Hornsby Shire Council) in accordance with a relevant site plan.

The Membership card does not authorise volunteers to work on private property or carry out unauthorised activities on Council land.

Working On-site

All Bushcare works carried out in Council managed bushland must comply with relevant legislation and regulations. All Bushcare works must also comply with any site plan, Council strategy and Plans of Management.

At the start of each work session, volunteers complete a site hazard assessment and sign the sign-on sheet supplied by Council. They also note the times they are on site and herbicide use details. The sign-on sheets are to be submitted to the Bushcare Trainer Bushland Community Programs or team at Council at least annually.

Volunteers are required to follow the directions of relevant Council staff or Bushcare Trainer, as well as the objectives and strategies of an approved site plan.

To ensure the safety of all volunteers, the following working conditions must be adhered to:

- Volunteers must not work alone
- Volunteers must not work in a reserve that has been affected by recent wildfire
- Volunteers must not work in a reserve that has been affected by storm damage
- Volunteers must not work on declared Total Fire Ban days
- Volunteers must not work on days with extreme wind, heat or rain conditions
- Volunteers must not work on site outside daylight hours
- Volunteers must not work on site without permission or arrangement through a Council Staff member
- Volunteers are not permitted to use any power tools or machinery while working on a Bushcare site
- Volunteers are not permitted to undertake any herbicide spraying on a Bushcare site.
- Volunteers are not permitted to undertake stormwater or drainage works on a Bushcare site. Should volunteers suspect stormwater or drainage works are required, the Bushland Community Programs Team should be contacted in the first instance

Clearing for bushfire hazard reduction purposes or any track work is not part of the Bushcare program activities.

Safety

Volunteers are to be attired in their own closed shoes with sufficient tread to work in bushland. They must also wear personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by Council and wear clothing with appropriate sun and weather protection. All volunteers need to be aware of the nearest medical facility to their Bushcare site and any injuries should be seen by a doctor.

A Site Safety Manual outlining safe work methods on a Bushcare site will be given to all volunteers during Bushcode training.

All injuries to a volunteer must be reported to Hornsby Shire Council's Safehold reporting line on 9847 4848 within 48 hours of injury. For additional assistance with reporting injuries, volunteers should contact the Coordinator, Bushland Community Programs on 9847 6360.

Hazards should be notified to the Bushcare Team or Safehold reporting line. An assessment of the hazard and the potential risk will then be carried out and addressed by a member of the Bushland Community Programs Team.

It is the responsibility of all volunteers to avoid any risk when working on site. Volunteers should ensure work is conducted away from hazards identified in the risk assessment undertaken at the beginning of each work session.

Herbicide Supply and Usage

In accordance with accepted bush regeneration techniques, herbicide will be available for use on Bushcare sites to control selected weed species. Council will supply all herbicide, application equipment, and safety equipment. All volunteers have the right to refrain from herbicide use.

The following procedures will be in place for the use of herbicide on a Bushcare site:

- Only glyphosate based herbicides will be supplied to and used by volunteers.
- All legislative requirements (including the instructions on the product label) and Council directions must be followed at all times.

- All herbicide is to be contained in the standard labelled manufacturer's bottle or applicator bottles provided by Council and stored as per the label.
- All empty herbicide containers should be retained for collection and exchange via the Bushcare Trainer.
- A Safety Data Sheet will be supplied with containers of herbicide. This must be made readily available on site when herbicide is used.
- Volunteers must complete the Bushcode training before undertaking any unsupervised herbicide application. This will ensure that each volunteer understands the safe use of the product and is aware of the appropriate protective clothing that must be worn.
- Council has a herbicide register to monitor the use of herbicide (group specific records). Individual use should be recorded on the volunteer sign-on sheets provided.
- Volunteers are not permitted to spray herbicide on a Bushcare site. Spraying on sites will be carried out by Bushcare Trainers or other Council staff and contractors. Requests to have areas sprayed on Bushcare sites should be made through the Bushcare Trainers or the Bushland Community Programs Team.
- All requests for herbicide should be placed through your Bushcare Trainer.

Site Hygiene

Phytophthora cinnamomi is a soil borne pathogen and major threat to some very common native plant groups. It has been identified throughout the Sydney Region including some sites in the Hornsby Shire. Each Bushcare Trainer is provided with a Phytophthora hygiene kit, to reduce the introduction or spread of disease. If the Bushcare site is known to contain Phytophthora or the group meet regularly outside the Bushcare Trainer session times, the group leader should also have a kit.

Volunteers and trainers are required to exercise consistent and thorough site hygiene at the beginning and end of each session on site, by cleaning shoes, tools and other equipment following the procedures outlined in the Phytophthora hygiene kit.

Myrtle Rust (*Uredo rangelii*) infects foliage of susceptible plants by producing spore-filled lesions on young actively growing leaves and shoots, as well as fruits and sepals. Myrtle rust is spread by very small spores carried by wind, bees and/or birds. The disease can also be spread through the movement of infected plant material or people carrying spores on infected clothing, shoes, equipment and other personal effects.

To protect against spreading the disease: always launder clothing, including hats and gloves, and disinfect boots. No vegetative material suspected of containing Myrtle Rust should be removed from the site.

If a group suspects there is Myrtle Rust or Phytophthora on a Bushcare site they should immediately contact the Bushland Community Programs Team for formal identification and treatment.

Signage

All Bushcare sites are entitled to a Bushcare Project Site sign to raise awareness of the Bushcare group's work on site and assist with recruitment. Requests for signage should be made to the Coordinator – Bushland Community Programs. Only Council endorsed signage is to be erected on public land and this is to be undertaken by a Council officer.

Communication

- All enquiries, complaints, suggestions and concerns should be directed initially to the group's Bushcare Trainer, or if necessary, to a member of the Bushland Community Programs Team.
- Volunteers are encouraged to ask questions and give suggestions.
- Council will facilitate networking amongst volunteers in the form of workshops, site tours and open days.
- Council will produce a Bushcare Newsletter to promote the program and spread information. Volunteers are encouraged to contribute to its content. This newsletter is also available on Council's website.

Grievances /Terminations

The Hornsby Shire Council Bushcare Program brings together people from all walks of life, with varying skills and experiences. Unfortunately, sometimes people's aims and objectives do not match, and disagreements or grievances can occur. If any volunteer or Bushcare group has a grievance regarding another volunteer, Bushcare Trainer, or Council staff member, they should address their concerns, in writing, to the Co-ordinator – Bushland Community Programs. If the grievance can not be resolved at this level, or the grievance is regarding the overall management of the Bushcare Program, the volunteer or group should contact the Manager, Natural Resources Branch.

Grievances should be sent to the appropriate staff member at:

**Hornsby Shire Council
PO Box 37
HORNSBY NSW 1630**

or

hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Hornsby Shire Council reserves the right to terminate the membership of a volunteer or group if they fail to work according to the Bushcode. All tools, membership cards and rights to work on Council (or other land tenures as the case may be) land will be revoked.

Hornsby Shire Council reserves the right to terminate a Bushcare group should the site be left absent for a significant length of time or should the land be no longer managed by Council.

NOTES

