

Bushcare news

Protecting Our Forests

Blue Gum High Forest

Long-nosed Bandicoot

A closer look

Annual bird survey 2022

Identify and count

Aussie Backyard Bird Count

Make every bird count

Field days with TAFE

Chilworth Bushcare Group milestone celebration

+ Staff reports | Bushcare volunteer profiles | Bushcare training | Office matters | Diary dates and events



A few housekeeping notes

Requesting Council help for non Bushcare matters

If you find a tree has fallen over a walking track, or someone has dumped rubbish in the bush, or something has happened that you think Council has some responsibility for, the fastest way to get assistance is to call the main phone number **9847 6666**, explain briefly what the issue is, and ask to place a Customer Service Request.

Bushland Programs Team

Coordinator- Bushland Programs Team
Jeannette Stannard

Environmental Scientist – Bushland Reserve Management (North East)
Donna Fitton

Environmental Scientist- Bushland Reserve Management (South)
Ty Suter

Environmental Scientist- Bushland Reserve Management (North West)
Petra Holland

Environmental Scientist – Bushcare
Leanne Johnston

Bushcare Field Officer
Jean-Philippe Kecman

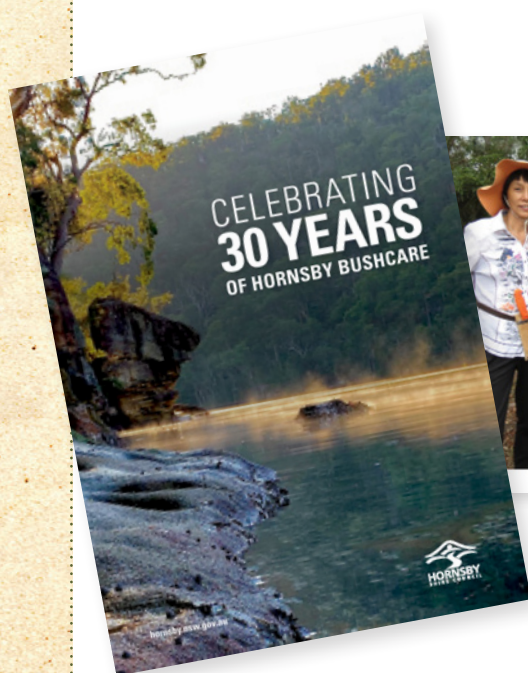
Nursery and Guided Bushwalk Program Coordinator
Ross Rapmund

SAFEHOLD
Incident and hazard reporting
9847 4848 including outside business hours



We are quite excited to publish our first bumper edition of the Bushcare newsletter after a few difficult years. We completed our 30 years of Bushcare publication earlier in the year and hope you all received your copy. If not, please contact 9847 6362 or **bushcare@hornsby.com.au** to arrange for a copy to be delivered.

Like so many of you, we welcome the return of face-to-face events and workshops and are eagerly anticipating a fantastic Christmas celebration in late November.



Protecting Our Forests



Did you know Blue Gum High Forest grows in 14 suburbs within Hornsby Shire, in and amongst the places where over 99,000 people live?

If you live in or near these suburbs, then Blue Gum High Forest is your neighbour: Arcadia, Beecroft, Castle Hill, Cherrybrook, Dural, Galston, Glenhaven, Hornsby, Normanhurst, Pennant Hills, Thornleigh, Wahroonga, Westleigh, West Pennant Hills. You will not find Blue Gum High Forest anywhere else in the world except Sydney's north shore and its northern and north-western suburbs.

Blue Gum High Forest has specific soil and rainfall requirements which, when added together, limit where it can grow. Trees in a Blue Gum High Forest need rich, deep soils to support their straight and tall growth. Such soils form from weathered shale rock or have volcanic origins. The second essential ingredient is a rainfall total above 1100mm (on average) per year. Where Hornsby Shire's suburbs have this soil and rainfall combination, and where it hasn't been cleared, you will find Blue Gum High Forest.

What can you do to help protect Blue Gum High Forest?

You can join one of our Bushcare groups working amongst Blue Gum Forest or you could simply spend some time in a Blue Gum High Forest:

- Take a gentle stroll along the sealed path in Normanhurst's Kenley Park
- Admire the forest as you ramble along the management trail and bushwalking track of Hornsby Valley's Ginger Meggs Loop Walk
- Grab a coffee or pack a picnic and head to Beecroft's Fearnley Park, West Pennant Hills' New Farm Road

Reserve or The Lakes of Cherrybrook where you will also find play spaces for the kids

- Get out of the car and amble up the centre track in Observatory Park, Pennant Hills
- Wander down and back up the bushwalking track through the spectacular Blue Gum Diatreme Forest in Dog Pound Creek Bushland Reserve, Westleigh
- Extend your immersive experience of the forest by bushwalking the Blue Gum Walk in Hornsby Valley
- Enjoy the respite of being in nature
- Share your experiences with your friends and family

For more information visit: <https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/environment/flora-and-fauna/bushland-management/threatened-forests-and-fauna/blue-gum-high-forest>



Kaz and David at a Protecting Our Forest community planting

We launched the Protecting Our Forests campaign on 18 September with a community nature event at Ginger Meggs Park. The forest we highlighted was Blue Gum High Forest (BGHF), a critically endangered ecological community with less than 5% of its original extent remaining. Activities included community planting, free guided bushwalks, a native plant giveaway of BGHF species, kids' nature craft, and a truly engaging Nomadic Nature Safari.

The weather was perfect! John Martyn, the bushwalking guide, shared his expert knowledge on how soil influences the flora and fauna found in the reserve. We planted 230 Blue Gum High Forest species, with special thanks to our volunteers Kaz, David M and Mary for their involvement. It

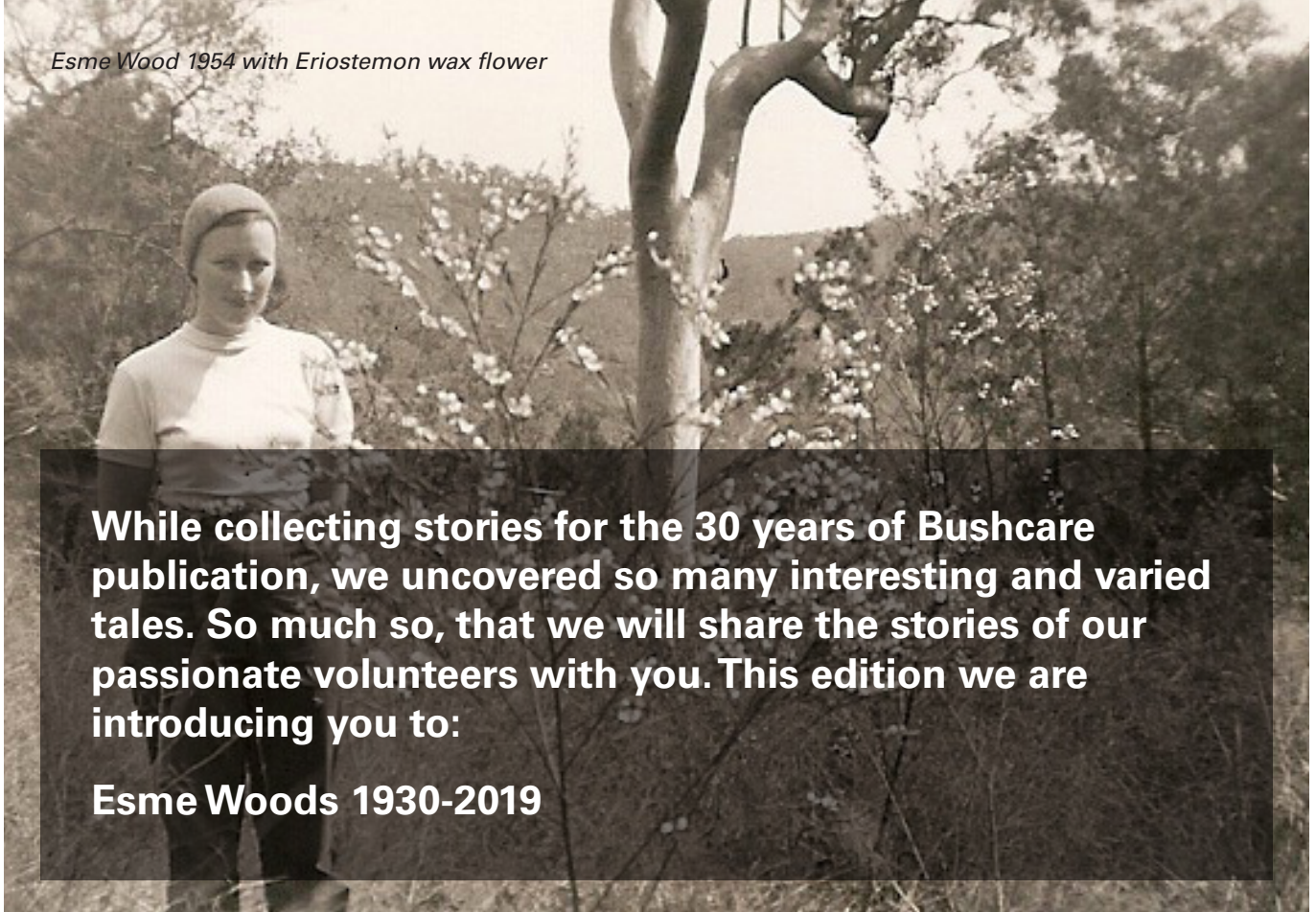
was inspiring to see young children take a special interest in choosing their favourite plants to put into the park. Best of all, we gave away 250 plants which grow in Blue Gum High Forest to around 100 local households.

If you missed out, the good news is that we be will co-hosting a similar event at Jane Starkey Park, Thornleigh on Saturday 19 November. There, the focus will be on another of our critically endangered ecological communities, Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest. The event will be a collaboration with staff from Lane Cove National Park. Details of the event will be uploaded onto Council's What's On pages soon.

See [Hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events](https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events)



Protecting Our Forest community nature event



While collecting stories for the 30 years of Bushcare publication, we uncovered so many interesting and varied tales. So much so, that we will share the stories of our passionate volunteers with you. This edition we are introducing you to:

Esme Woods 1930-2019

Esme Wood has left a long-lasting legacy through her advocacy work for the promotion and protection of local bushland and more particularly, the magnificent remnants of the critically endangered Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest around her Galston home.

Even though Esme was born in Roseville and lived for a short while at Collaroy, she spent the rest of her life in the Hornsby Shire. Esme lived with her mother, her sister (artist Yvonne du Moulin) and two brothers at 'Eltham', on Beecroft Road, opposite Beecroft Post Office. The family house is still standing at the corner of Beecroft Road and Hannah Street and is now heritage listed. Esme's father was a WWI veteran who spent time adventuring on a yacht or in his light plane, perhaps to escape the terrible memories of the trenches at Passchendaele.

Esme was educated at Arden (Beecroft) and Meriden (Strathfield). Arts were always a big passion of hers. Upon leaving school, Esme enrolled at the Julian Ashton's Art School and East Sydney Technical College. She then worked at the Mitchell Library and later on, as a recognised theatre set designer for 18 years. She was involved in more than 30 plays. Her artistic interests continued throughout her life. She took up an art and sculpture course at Hornsby TAFE in the 1980s.

Esme dedicated a lot of her energy towards protection of the local environment and local bushland. Her first interest in the bush was inspired by her father, who took her for exploratory bush walks in the valley at Beecroft. He also took her camping at Bilpin.

In 1949, Esme met her future husband, Bill. The pair did a lot of overnight bushwalking, mainly in the hills behind Brooklyn. One of Bill's friends complained that Esme was often stopping to look at wildflowers! After marrying Bill (who worked in the planning section at Hornsby Council) in 1951, the young couple moved to Shepherds Lane in West Pennant Hills (now Shepherds Drive, in Cherrybrook).

In 1970, they moved to a 5-acre property of cleared land and bushland remnant on Fishburns Road, in Galston. Esme's daughter, Meri Oakwood, remembers that her Mum was fascinated by the bush flowers and would take her "down the back" to draw small sketches, particularly of the spider flowers (*Grevilleas*).



Esme's memorial ceremony

Esme quickly got active within the local community's life. She volunteered at the Dural and District Historical Society and was a prominent member of the Hornsby Conservation Society. Esme's love and appreciation of the remnant bushland on her property prompted her to enter a Voluntary Conservation Agreement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2004, to protect it in perpetuity. Esme was particularly proud of a majestic Turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) towering over her property. She was convinced it preceded European settlement. The tree had a scar and Esme organised to have it inspected but unfortunately, it couldn't be ascertained whether the tree was a sacred one or not. It remained definitely sacred in Esme's view!

In the early 1990s, Esme joined Hornsby Council's budding Bushcare program. Without fail, she quickly became a driving force of the program. Along with another inspirational local Bushcare volunteer (Barbara Cush), Esme inspired a strong group of volunteers who all became friends. Amongst others, the group included Pat Pike, Barry Lees, Lucia Sini, Helen Wilson, Keith Brownscombe, Lia Reith and Daphne Gordon. Husband Bill and daughter Meri Oakwood also joined in. Esme was a volunteer with four Bushcare groups: Carrs Bush, Tim Brownscombe Reserve, Berowra Waters Ferry and Rosemead Road in Hornsby.

Esme was a neighbour and friend of Keith and Margaret Brownscombe. They dedicated the reserve in the memory of their son Tim, who died of Murray Valley encephalitis aged in his thirties. When Esme and Meri were shown the area to be dedicated by Keith, Esme thought that it was a good location for a Bushcare group. She wrote to Council and her proposal was accepted. This was the beginning of "Tim's" or "Tim's Bush", as she called it. She also assisted with designing and writing a flyer on Bushcare, which she then letter-box dropped around Galston to try to increase local membership.

Our colleague Robyn Cox remembered the time when the Tim Brownscombe Bushcare site was impacted by Myrtle Rust. As a result, the site was closed for a year and a half in 2010-2011 as a preservation and preventative measure. The biosecurity risk of Myrtle Rust was eventually contained but killed almost all of the Scrub Turpentine (*Rhodamnia rubescens*) population at the site. In her quiet, friendly yet definite way, Esme instigated through Council the reinstatement of Bushcare in the reserve. Along with Lucia, Esme was back on the job clad from head to toe in a biosecurity suit and her signature gum boots.

In her spare time, Esme took hundreds of photos of native plants which she arranged in photo albums for plant identification. She also collected, pressed and identified (sometimes sending to the NSW Herbarium for ID) hundreds of

native plant species. These photo albums are cherished by Esme's family.

Even after her 'retirement' from Bushcare in 2015, Esme kept in touch with old friends who visited regularly. Lucia would regularly drop in on Tuesdays for a cup of tea and scones, and they would discuss current affairs and local news.

Esme's life and achievements were celebrated during a well-attended gathering of family and friends at the Carrs Bush Bushcare site on a sunny summer Friday morning in December 2019. Lots of stories and memories were shared. Barry Lees planted an *Angophora costata* alongside members of the various Bushcare groups Esme was affiliated with.

I had never worked with nor met Esme when I started the Bushcare Oral History project back in early 2017. Knowing about Esme's reputation and achievements with Bushcare, I was apprehensive to approach her. Would she be willing to share her memories and experiences during her Bushcare years with me and the rest of the Bushcare family? To my relief, Esme did agree to have me around to her house for a series of informal chats in September-October 2017. Esme talked about her love of her property, the importance of the surrounding bush and her Bushcare friends. She also shared interesting facts about what the local area was like when she moved in with Bill.

Esme's vivacious mind, energy and interests in life were an inspiration. Her legacy as a Bushcare volunteer and as an advocate for bushland will continue to be valued, remembered and shared amongst current and future generations of bush regenerators. **Thank you Esme.**

Jean-Philippe Kecman
Bushcare Field Officer



Myrtle Rust



Turpentine tree

Vale Penny King



Penny with Lindsay, Cam and our two youngest volunteers

Penny King, a much-loved nursery volunteer passed away under tragic circumstances in July. In her short four years as a volunteer, she created a culinary buzz with her sandwiches. Her offerings to the communal table were relished by all, filled with unusual flavour combinations, they were a treat for our tastebuds. But Penny gave us much more than sustenance. Always kind and very generous with her time, she was pleased to work with anyone around the potting shed as she diligently potted seedlings.

One of our long-term nursery volunteers, Nicole, penned a few words:

Penny's warm personality and beautiful smile would light up the potting table, where she would happily undertake any task that needed to be done, no matter how unglamorous. When someone was in need of help, Penny would be the first to offer assistance, whether it be with completing a nursery task, engaging with younger members of the volunteering community, or preparing morning tea (in pre-COVID times). We are very saddened by the tragic accident that claimed Penny and her husband's life and we will deeply miss her presence and positivity each week at Wednesday volunteering.

Long-nosed Bandicoot

(Perameles nasuta)

Hornsby Shire is one of the few urban councils where two of the three NSW bandicoot species are found within its LGA, namely the long-nosed bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*) and the extremely rare southern brown bandicoot (*Isoodon obesulus*). Sometimes confused with rodents, bandicoots are small marsupials about the size of a small rabbit but with a long tail and small somewhat pointed ears.

The long-nosed bandicoot is the most common species of bandicoot and were once common in the gardens of Sydney's northern suburbs. For many years the suburban populations have been in decline with fewer sightings of the iconic small, round conical holes they leave behind after a night's foraging. These holes are dug with their front feet and are big enough for the animal's long, sensitive snout to reach in and detect insects and other tiny morsels. Invertebrates make up most of the diet year-round, with spiders, caterpillars, leaves and seeds more common food items in summer, and cicada larvae, blades of grass and underground items, such as roots and fungi, eaten more in winter. Bandicoots are often attracted to

forage on well-manicured lawns and gardens where insect numbers are higher than in bushland, and in addition, these areas can sustain higher numbers of bandicoots. This behaviour may frustrate the home gardener, but bandicoots are often helping to control grubs and other garden pests. In fact, your garden could well become a sanctuary for them from time to time, and you can adapt to live in harmony with them by accommodating them in purpose-designed areas. Select an area away from the places that are used by your family and pets and establish a separate haven in the garden that provides food and shelter for native animals.

Bandicoots are territorial and remain solitary for most of the year. They sleep during the day in burrows or well concealed nests made from grasses or other plant material, or even shelter under houses or other buildings. Threats include habitat loss and fragmentation as a result of urban development. This also increases the likelihood of bandicoots becoming roadkill. Predation is another threat as domestic cats, dogs and introduced foxes all have the potential to significantly impact local populations.



Long-nosed Bandicoot

Bandicoot cone-shaped diggings

Annual Bird Survey – 2022



Laughing Kookaburra

AFTER two lost years due to COVID-19, Hornsby Bushcare was excited to resume its Annual Bird Survey! This year, the invitation to participate was extended to members of the public as well as Bushcare and nursery volunteers. Those participating in the event on Saturday 10 September were treated to clear skies, a captivating variety of birds, some awesome birdie surprises and, the always scrumptious breakfast at the end of the survey.

Two sites within Hornsby Shire were selected for the 2022 Bird Survey. Deb Rothwell hosted the group at Byles Creek, Cheltenham; home to the beautiful plant community known as Peppermint Angophora Forest. As the name suggests, the dominant tree species were Sydney Peppermint Gum (*Eucalyptus piperita*) and Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*). Underneath the canopy trees was a host of shrubs and small trees such as Old Man Banksia (*Banksia serrata*), NSW Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*) and the Graceful Bush Pea (*Pultenaea flexilis*) to name but a few. The ground layer was studded with a host of ferns, climbers and native grasses. I hosted the second Bird Survey at Rosemead Park, Hornsby. Here, in the critically endangered Blue Gum High Forest, the deep, fertile soils permit a tall tree canopy (around 30m high) dominated by flowering Sydney Blue Gums (*Eucalyptus saligna*) and

Blackbutts (*Eucalyptus pilularis*). Underneath grew a myriad of smaller trees and shrubs, and low to the ground was diverse, dense vegetation of native grasses, herbaceous plants, ferns and vines. At each level, from the forest floor to the tips of the canopy, the complex structure in these plant communities provides protection, habitat and food for our native and migratory birds who have adapted unique ways to inhabit the forest.

Our pleasant task for the morning was to identify and count the number of birds we could see or hear within two, 20-minute sessions. We chose different locations for each survey session. At Byles Creek, a total of 25 bird species were encountered and recorded, either by call or by sighting. The Rosemead Park group counted a total of 22 bird species. With analogous numbers tallied at each site, it appears there is a similar diversity of birds across both sites, suggesting their ecosystem is of a similar quality. Another interesting point was noted from the survey; there were NO introduced bird species seen or heard at either site! In fact, since the bird surveys at these two sites began in 2016, introduced birds have never been recorded! This suggests the complex structure in these forest locations is not conducive habitat for introduced species, and is strong inspiration to make our backyard gardens more complex in their design. The simple analyses above highlights how annual surveys provide a longitudinal assessment of bird

populations and any apparent changes, such as a decline species abundance or the incursion of introduced birds, may prompt further investigation.

During our surveys, both groups were treated to some very special moments. At Rosemead Park, suspended from a low branch and swaying in the breeze was the nest of a Brown Gerygone (pronounced 'jer-ig-on-nee') (*Gerygone mouki*). Their delicate looking nest is bulb shaped with a side tunnel for safe use as a "secret" entrance. The nest is characteristically made from bark fibres, lichens, mosses and spiders' webs. We were lucky enough to see the Gerygone entering its nest, and Bushcare volunteer Carol Devey managed to photograph the small bird with its tail feathers hanging from the tunnel entrance before the bird disappeared inside! Nearby, a pair of nesting Brown Cuckoo-Doves (*Macropygia phasianella*) were spotted, (typically) right next to the track atop a tree fern. These doves find tree ferns a perfect spot to place a few twigs laid crosswise to fashion their nest. You need a sharp eye to spot the Brown Cuckoo-Dove's slender brown image which blends seamlessly with their surrounds.



Eastern Spinebill

At Byles Creek, a magic moment occurred when a 60-66cm tall Powerful Owl (*Nixon strenua*) and two adorable Powerful Owl chicks were sighted sitting on Eucalypt branches ten metres above the ground! In contrast, a tiny, delicate Spotted Pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*) only 8-10cm long was seen near its nest; a small hole in the mud bank.

Encountered by both survey groups was a cacophony of screeching Sulphur Crested Cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*) and 20 whaling Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*) flying overhead! They were alerting the surrounding bush inhabitants to the threat of a raptor, a Brown Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus*) following closely behind!

Everyone on the day, whether a beginner or a seasoned "birdo," benefited from the knowledge imparted by our wonderful bird experts Judy Harrington and Cathy Goswell,

committee members of Birdlife Australia, Southern NSW. Their passion for our birds and wealth of information made this a thrilling and unforgettable experience for all who attended. If your interest has been piqued and you would like to delve further into the world of ornithology, you can discover more about our beautiful birds and the conservation programs Birdlife Australia is involved in at <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>. In addition, if you would like to download an excellent, free bird identification app for easy use at any moment on your mobile, take these simple steps. Type **Birdlife Australia** into your app store then OPEN the "Aussie Bird Count" app. I like checking out the birds by colour, but searches can be made using size or shape too.

Through the website or the app, you will find instructions on how to contribute to the October Aussie Bird Count Survey. Perfect for beginners or seasoned "birdos," these 20-minute surveys can be done whilst bushwalking, hanging out in a park, or while relaxing in your backyard with a cuppa! It's free, it is very easy to use, your observations benefit our birdlife, and, it's LOADS of fun! Happy Birding!

Anita Wynne
Bushcare Site Supervisor



Brown Gerygone



Brown Cuckoo-Dove

V = Visual C = Call Only heard			
Species	Site 1 – Rosemead Rd, Hornsby. Tall forest (BGHF) (10/09/2022)	Site 2 – Byles creek (10/09/2022)	Notes
Brown Goshawk		V	
Brown Cuckoo-Dove	C V		Site 1- nesting in top of tree fern
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	V		Site 1 - flying over
Galah		V C	
Little Corella	V		Site 1- swinging on a branch
Sulphur Crested Cockatoo	V	V C	Site 2 - eating grass
Rainbow Lorikeet	V		
Australian King Parrot	C	V	
Crimson Rosella	V	V	
Eastern Rosella	V		
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	C	C	
Shining Bronze-cuckoo		C	
Powerful Owl		V	Site 2 - two young white fledglings sitting on branch and adult along the track
Laughing Kookaburra	V	V	
Superb Lyrebird	C		Site 1- walking though the forest
White-throated Treecreeper	C	V C	
Variegated Fairy-wren	V	V C	Site 1- male and female amongst vines
Spotted Pardalote	C	V C	Site 2- maybe near its nest burrow
Brown Gerygone	C V	C	
Brown Thornbill	C	V	
Little Wattlebird	C		
Lewins Honeyeater	C	C	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater		C	
Eastern Spinebill	V	C V	
Rose Robin		C	New bird for the annual bird survey
Eastern Yellow Robin	C	V C	
Eastern Whipbird	C V	C	
Golden Whistler	C	C V	
Grey Fantail	C V	V	
Olive-backed Oriole	C		
Grey Butcherbird		C	
Australian Magpie		C V	
Pied Currawong	V	C V	
Australian Raven	C		
TOTALS	26	25	

Keeping Cats Safe at Home

RSPCA NSW's *Keeping Cats Safe at Home* is a ground-breaking project that aims to encourage those who have cats in their lives to keep them safe from harm – at home. This NSW Environmental Trust-funded grant project is looking for ways to improve how we keep our pet cats and wildlife safe in our community.

The idea that all cats need to roam outdoors has changed; many owners now provide a safe and suitable environment for their cat at home all day, every day. Keeping your cat happy at home means providing for all their needs, including many that may previously have been met by being outdoors.

Meeting these needs in other ways requires forward thinking and a little imagination and commitment. But you needn't go it alone. This project aims to provide you with the knowhow for you and your cat to live at home together in harmony. By keeping your cat safe at home, you will:

- reduce the risk of your pet getting sick, being hurt or dying in an accident
- enjoy more quality time together
- reduce the risk they will stray and be lost or impounded by the council
- minimise the risk they will harm or kill other animals
- prevent them from interacting with undesexed roaming cats
- avoid problems with your neighbours
- give them a better chance to enjoy a longer, healthier life

Most pet owners are responsible but may not be aware of what it takes to keep both cats and wildlife safe. The *Keeping Cats Safe at Home* project will develop and implement strategies to help cat owners adopt responsible cat ownership practices, including desexing, identification, registration, and containment to protect cats and wildlife. Many owners believe their animals don't hunt because they never come across evidence of killed animals. Studies, using scat analysis and video tracking collars, show that on average pet cats bring home only 15% of their prey. This indicates roaming pet cats kill 390 million animals per year in Australia.

Did you know that indoor cats live for 12 years on average while the life expectancy of outdoor cats is less than 5 years? Encounters with traffic, diseases, dogs, other cats, wild animals, poisons, parasites and other hazards can and do reduce the lifespan of outdoor cats. At a minimum, pet



cats should be kept inside at night. This ensures pet cats are safe and comfortable and not hunting nocturnal wildlife.

If you have an existing cat who roams, then try to gradually introduce them to being contained (e.g., initially keep them inside at night, then gradually increase the time they are contained during the day). It is essential to provide lots of distractions, such as new hiding and resting areas in the house, a variety of toys, and extended play sessions every day.

Keeping your cat at home helps protect them from an increased risk of disease, injury or death from:

- being hit or run over by a car
- being attacked by a dog
- fighting with other neighbourhood cats
- acquiring a serious infection, such as FIV
- eating toxic plants or poisons
- being stolen or abused
- picking up ticks or fleas
- being bitten by a venomous snake

For more information visit

<https://safeandhappycats.com.au/>

Rainforests in Hornsby Shire

Characterised by tall trees, high rainfall and buzzing with biodiversity, much of the world's rainforests are in tropical or subtropical regions of the world.

Did you know you can take a rainforest walk right here in Hornsby Shire?

We have two regionally significant rainforest types in the Shire. They are Coachwood Rainforest and Grey Myrtle Rainforest. Our rainforests are usually found along creeks in sheltered gullies and are densely forested with low-growing trees.

In this newsletter, we are focussing on Coachwood Rainforest. Here are three Hornsby Shire locations to immerse yourself in the beauty and peacefulness of this rainforest:

1. Cherrybrook in Lambe Place Bushland – Coachwood Rainforest grotto at Nyrippin Creek on the Callicoma Loop Walk before the track enters Berowra Valley National Park (if walking from the Francis Greenway Drive direction).

2. Westleigh in Berowra Valley National Park – Coachwood Rainforest along Berowra Creek on the Great North Walk (GNW). Enter the national park via a walking track where Elouera Road bends. Walk 400m until you reach a wire fence at Elouera Lookout. Turn left onto the GNW, following it south as it descends into the Coachwood Rainforest along Berowra Creek, following the creek for a few hundred metres until the track crosses the creek (NB creek may be impassable in heavy rain). Enjoy the cool ambience of the rainforest on either side of the creek before retracing your steps.

3. Mount Kuring-gai in Berowra Valley National Park – Coachwood Rainforest in Lyrebird Gully. This is the hardest and longest of the three options, even if walking down and back from Glenview Road.

Aussie Backyard Bird Count – make every bird count

BirdLife Australia's *Aussie Backyard Bird Count* is a great way to connect with the birds in your area whether it happens to be in your backyard, a local park, a patch of forest, down by the beach, or the main street of town. By recording the birds you've seen within a 20-minute period, you will help BirdLife Australia develop an understanding of local birds, whilst getting to know the birdlife on your doorstep.

You can count as many times as you like between Monday 17 and Sunday 23 October 2022, but remember each count is completed over a 20-minute period. The 20-minute observation time limit provides a standard for all BirdLife Australia's surveys. Having everyone counting for the same interval ensures the data we receive will be more scientifically robust, allowing us to use it in our conservation efforts. If you can identify birds by their calls, please include these in your count, but if you aren't sure of a bird without seeing it, please exclude it rather than making a guess. The Aussie Bird Count app has a handy field-guide to help you identify birds. The data collected assists BirdLife Australia to understand more about the birds that live where you live.

Once you have completed your count, you can submit it in two different ways:

- Through the online web form (this form won't be made live until the 14 October)
- or
- Through the Aussie Bird Count app.

The app is available free for iPhones and Android smartphones. If you have the Aussie Bird Count app from previous years don't delete it. It should update

automatically with the newest version. In between event dates, the app operates as a field guide/bird finder.

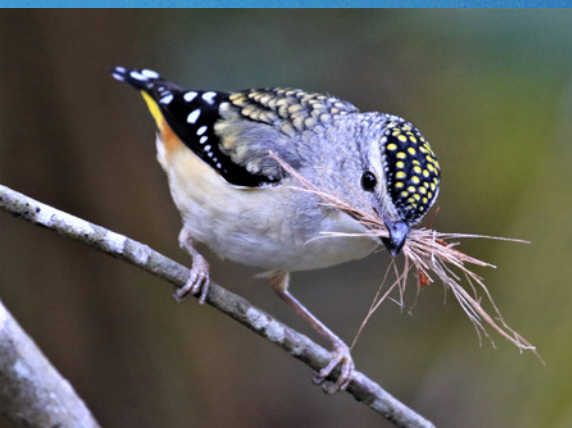
By participating in the Aussie Backyard Bird Count, you will be helping BirdLife Australia find out about the common species that live where people live. The snapshot of Australian birds at the same time each year helps analyse and predict trends in our bird communities from year to year. This is important because these more common species provide the best indication of the health of our environment.

BirdLife Australia is the nation's largest bird conservation organisation and has run the Aussie Backyard Bird Count since 2014.



Little Wattlebird

Community nursery naming ceremony



Spotted Pardalote



White-faced Grey Heron



Honeyeater



Sacred Kingfisher

Almost eight months after the popular Warada Ngurang Community Nursery was given its new name recognising Traditional Owners the Darug and GuriNgai Peoples, the name was formally reaffirmed in a National Reconciliation Week tree planting ceremony in June.

GuriNgai Custodian Uncle Neil Evers opened the event with a Welcome to Country. He then joined Mayor Philip Ruddock in planting a Waratah.

“It’s pleasing to see us go back in time by naming things in the way our ancestors would have. Waratah meaning strength. Just look at how proud and bold and beautiful it is. A fitting name for the nursery,” Uncle Neil Evers said.

Following correspondence from community member and nursery volunteer Ted Angelo, and as recommended by members of the Hornsby Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Consultative Committee (HATSICC), Hornsby Shire Council renamed the Britannia Street, Pennant Hills community nursery in August 2021.

A combination of Darug and GuriNgai language words, the new name which means ‘Place of Waratah’ was endorsed by a HATSICC sub-committee comprised of Traditional Owners.

Hornsby Shire Mayor Philip Ruddock talked about the significance of the renaming ceremony and paid tribute to Ted Angelo who passed away earlier this year.

Warada Ngurang Community Nursery is managed by Council’s Natural Resources Branch, assisted by many dedicated local volunteers. It produces around 45,000 plants each year, many of which are given away to residents at our Free Native Plant Giveaways.

Adopted in April 2022, Hornsby Shire Council’s Dual Naming and/or Renaming Policy outlines how Council will assess naming and dual naming proposals for Council facilities, with names to be drawn from the Darug and GuriNgai languages of the Shire’s Traditional Owners. Read more at hornsby.nsw.gov.au



Planting waratahs at Warada Ngurang Community Nursery



Hornsby Shire Council hosts the Volunteer Coordinators Network

Every quarter, Bushcare officers from the Greater Sydney Basin get together to give an update about their respective Bushcare programs. These regular gatherings are facilitated by Local Land Services (LLS) and have existed as the Volunteer Coordinators Network (VCN) for over 25 years.

It is always interesting to hear about the ways other Councils run their Bushcare programs. As you can imagine, weed species, threatened species and bushland condition are extremely disparate whether you volunteer in Woollahra, Bankstown, Liverpool or the Blue Mountains!

Catching up with old and new friends and hearing about successful projects, sharing issues and recommendations is always a timely reminder of the importance to support the invaluable efforts our volunteers contribute by working tirelessly and passionately to protect and improve our bushland reserves.

After a false start due to COVID-19, the Hornsby Bushcare team organised the first VCN for 2022. More than 20 Bushcare officers made their way to Galston Community Hall on 11 May. Sitting down and preparing for the morning presentation made me realise how fortunate we are, in the Bushland Shire, to have access to so many different natural areas, which makes our responsibility to look after them even greater. But it is of great comfort and privilege to be

able to rely on the expertise and the willingness of so many volunteers to assist us with so many different projects.

On the day, Bushcare legend Barry Lees shared his wealth of Bushcare and native plant knowledge with the participants. Barry is the Carrs Bush group leader but is also a member of the Australian Plant Society (North Shore) and convenor of the Hornsby Herbarium. And as if this was not enough, Barry is also a prominent member of the very active Still Creek Catchment Landcare Group.

Barry continued to provide more insight during the afternoon field trip to nearby Carrs Bush and answered many questions from our inquisitive guests. Despite the grey skies and the occasional light drizzle, everyone enjoyed a relaxing meander through the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest remnant. The recently built raised boardwalk, the new interpretive signs and the real-size sculptures of native fauna were particularly appreciated by our visitors. Thank you to our colleague Petra Holland (Bushland reserve manager and Bushcare volunteer) for managing this project and for leading the afternoon tour.

I would encourage you to visit Carrs Bush (and its Bushcare site) if you haven't done so yet. It's worth the trip but avoid weekends if you want to enjoy and take in the serenity of the place!

Jean-Philippe Kecman
Bushcare Field Officer

Day out with Asquith Boys' Environmental Group



Asquith Boys at Lyrebird Gully

In recent years, Bushcare has developed an educational partnership with students from Asquith Boys' High School Environmental Group. The group is made up of year 7 to 11 students who take part in weeding and other educational activities with a strong environmental focus.

The last gathering took place in late June along the Mount Kuring-Gai end of the Lyrebird Gully track, in Berowra Valley National Park. Weeding techniques and local weed species no longer hold any secrets for our budding bushland ambassadors! At least a dozen bags containing the dreaded Mother of Millions were filled within two hours. Countless woody weeds were also treated accordingly. It is satisfying to see that the pocket of bushland where the boys have been working for some time now is recovering extremely well.

In the afternoon, the group ventured further along the walking track and set up wildlife cameras in more secluded areas under the guidance of Brad. Fingers crossed we will be able to share nice wildlife shots in the near future.

Knowledge, support and mentoring is provided by Brad Crossman, teacher at Gibberagong Environmental Education Centre and Andrew Duffy, Berowra Valley National Park Ranger (NPWS). Jim French, Asquith Boys' Science Teacher, is also instrumental in keeping the group engaged and active.

Berowra Bushcare volunteers Rae Rosten, Mick Marr (former Asquith Boys' student) and Ken Fox regularly take part in the activities with the group. Karen Benhar, from the Friends of Berowra Valley National Park, also attended and shared her bush regeneration experience with the group.

The mentors' willingness to share their vast experience and their local knowledge of the local bushland with the next generation of environmental advocates will undoubtedly stay with the students for years to come. It is always a treat to see the students' knowledge and appreciation of our natural environment grow year after year.

Field days with TAFE



Carrs Bush was again the perfect setting to assist TAFE students with one of their major assignments. Over the years, the Bushcare team has developed a close relationship with teachers from the Applied Environmental Management Division at Ryde campus. TAFE students have been involved in many revegetation projects in our bushland reserves and at our Bushcare sites.

Many of us in the industry completed a Certificate 3 or a Diploma in Conservation and Land Management through

Ryde TAFE. We still have many fond memories of consolidating our theoretical and practical skills of the conservation and ecosystem management industry. Some of you will remember Agata Mitchell, who was a Bushcare Trainer at several sites in Hornsby, Beecroft and Arcadia in the late 1990s. Agata is now Head Teacher of the Environmental Management Division.

On 27 May and 2 June, 27 Certificate 3 students travelled to Carrs Bush Bushcare site. The first day focused on the theory part of the assessment. Reference ecosystems, catchments, soil profiles, past use of sites, weed and native species identification, and current management through Bushcare and contractors were some of topics of discussion covered during the day.

The second day took a more hands-on approach. The students planted 170 tube stock from Warada Ngurang Community Nursery on the edge of the critically endangered Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest vegetation community patch adjoining Arcadia Road. The rest of the day was spent fixing 100m of damaged sediment fence.

This is most definitely a privileged relationship we are willing to maintain and help continue to grow. We already have a list of jobs around Bushcare sites that I am sure future TAFE students will help us with!

Jean-Philippe Kecman
Bushcare Field Officer



TAFE students at Fagan Park

National Tree Day 2022

Sunday 31 July was National Tree Day and Hornsby Council hosted a planting day at Appletree (Park) Bushcare site, Kanangra Crescent, Cherrybrook on what turned out to be a beautiful sunny day.

Appletree Bushcare site consists of a core of Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest with a strip of vegetation adjoining the bushland running up the alleyway near the shops (that a Brush Turkey has taken a fancy to), and another strip that runs along the back of housing. The Bushcare group has worked on this site since January 2008.

Appletree Park had a major renovation in 2022. The playground was upgraded and most of the exotic pine trees were removed and replaced with deciduous trees to shade the playground in summer and provide a sunny winter oasis for playground users. Unfortunately, the strip behind the housing suffered tremendously from the removal of the exotic pine trees. This particular strip was a mix of remnant vegetation and plantings that were cared for by the volunteers for many years, to the point where the vegetation had increased in resilience and the weed seed bank was massively reduced. The area was extended

by creating a no-mow area, which saw an explosion of native grasses burst up and seed.

This National Tree Day planting site was chosen to assist the volunteers to recover the impacted strip, and hopefully make it even better through increased species diversity and thick shrub plantings, to provide habitat for fauna and encourage small birds to the area.

It turned out to be a fabulous day with over 70 people attending. There were members of the Scouts digging in and many volunteers from other Bushcare sites attended to lend their hands. The local Greens Councillor Tania Salitra also came out to get her hands dirty, plant some plants and pull some weeds.

It will be great to watch this site develop and prosper from the care that local residents provided it on the day.

To all those who attended, on behalf of the Appletree Bushcare Group, I thank you and shamelessly remind you that we meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month between 9am and 12pm if you are interested. The more the merrier!

Deb Rothwell
Bushcare Site Supervisor



Barry Lees



Barry giving a talk for ANPS

Cryptostylis leptochila



NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards



Barry Lees grew up in Pennant Hills when it was largely undeveloped, and it inspired in him a deep love and appreciation for the bush growing in sandstone country. Later when he had a young family of his own he chose to settle on a block of land a little further north, on the new fringes of suburbia, where the bush was familiar.

As he set about clearing his block he realised he needed help picking out the natives from the weeds. He joined a local bushcare group and before too long he had become the leader. Their site, Carrs Bush, is in Fagan Park Galston and contains a now healthy remnant of the Endangered Ecological Community of Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest.

Barry's passion to learn about all things to do with the local plants, and generosity in sharing his learning kept on growing. Shortly after volunteering with Council, Barry joined the Australian Native Plant Society (ANPS) and became an extremely active member. As well as holding many executive roles, he enthusiastically attended group outings and working bees, where his engineering expertise and practical skills always led to positive outcomes.



Barry joined the Hornsby Herbarium volunteers documenting the plants of the local area when it went on line.

His work includes searching for new species in bushland from Wisemans Ferry to Bobbin Head, Pennant Hills and Hornsby. He works closely with the technical staff at Council, providing in-depth knowledge of local plants and an impressive attention to detail that ensures the records are accurate and images of high quality.

In 2008 Barry became a founding member of the Still Creek Landcare Group. Though now retired as coordinator, he still engages with the rural community at environmental

information events to convey the benefits of native vegetation on private land. He is actively involved in bush regeneration, planting native plants and providing advice to landholders on many aspects of growing native plants and managing their bushland. He works with the Council's Community Nursery to distribute local tree species throughout the rural areas to improve habitat corridors.

For around ten years, Barry was part of the catchment water testing community group, where he was responsible for a sample area at the headwaters of Still Creek. Barry took monthly samples, tested, evaluated and reported via data entry into the Streamwatch program. This provided useful information on rural creek health within the Berowra Creek Catchment.

Where does it end? Not content to be land bound, Barry has also assisted with the Floating Landcare groups on the Hawkesbury River. In this program volunteers travel by boat to deal with problem weeds growing in hard to access locations.

Barry is ever so slowly stepping back from his many commitments. The bush on his block, now cleared of weeds, is in excellent condition. He has registered the property as a Land for Wildlife area with the Department of Planning and Environment, a voluntary scheme for landowners who wish to manage areas for biodiversity and wildlife habitat. His very favourite place is down by the pristine creek with its mosses and ferns, surrounded by the sounds of the bush. Long may he enjoy his haven.



Barry at Landcare stall persuading community members to plant natives

New Bushcare group

Netherby Street Bushland Reserve in Hornsby

Considerate bushland neighbours can make a big difference and can influence the health and condition of our bushland reserves. Even more so when the patch next door is a remnant Blue Gum High Forest, listed as a critically endangered ecological community.

Local residents backing onto Netherby Street Bushland Reserve in Hornsby have taken an interest in the active restoration of this isolated patch of urban bushland.

The collaboration between Council and residents started when Council's Bushland Programs Team suggested the reintroduction of suitable native species on a thin strip of land at the interface of the private property and Council's reserve. The opportunity to plant natives in an otherwise barren and neglected parcel of land has been extremely well received by residents. This resulted in two working bees and about 360 plants planted, all grown at Council's Warada Ngurang Community Nursery.

The inaugural Bushcare session was held on Monday 12 September 2022, under the supervision of Bushcare Site

Supervisor Jonatan Zethner. The group is a good balance of experienced volunteers and others eager to learn more about the intricacies of bush regeneration practices. But everyone shares the same enthusiasm!

The group started by treating herbaceous weeds that had established at the eastern corner of the reserve. There is no doubt that Ehrharta, Tradescantia and other familiar foes will not stand a chance against the efforts of our motivated volunteers. We are also counting on the relentless activity of the local resident Brush Turkey to keep some of the weeds at bay!

Thank you to all who participated in the planting working bees and who have since joined the Bushcare program. A special thanks to Vanessa McKenzie (Manager- McQuoin Park Retirement Village) and her team for their support. We are looking forward to a long and fruitful relationship and we would like to address a warm welcome to the Bushcare program to all our newest Bushcare volunteers from the Netherby Bushcare Group!"

Jean-Philippe Kecman
Bushland Field Officer



Chilworth Bushcare Group milestone celebration



The opportunity to celebrate the group’s 30 years of activity was disrupted by last year’s lockdowns. To make up for the missed opportunities, a celebratory morning tea was held at the Chilworth Bushcare site in early August.

It was also the occasion to inaugurate the new sitting area, recently installed as a big thank you to the group. The bench and table were built out of Blackbutt and Ironbark barrels from timber salvaged following the 2020 storms. The sitting area has become very popular, not only with the Bushcare group but also with local residents on their daily walk through the reserve.

Long-term volunteers Sheila Woods, Marylin Guyot, Esme Blackmore and Ross Walker all contributed a few words, reminiscing about the very first meeting of the group and how much has been achieved since. Thanks to the group’s continuous efforts, Chilworth Bushland Reserve has been returned to its original “green island” condition for local residents.

Thank you to all our past and present Chilworth Bushcarers for your relentless work making bushland reserves around Beecroft and Cheltenham less weedy and much more inviting for the broader community’s enjoyment and appreciation.

Events

Please note you need to book into most events, and numbers are limited. If you don't book the event may be cancelled.

Bushcode Workshops

This workshop is compulsory training for Hornsby Shire Bushcare volunteers. It covers the work health and safety training aspects of the program. It is a great opportunity to visit Warada Ngurang Community Nursery and learn how the volunteer program works within Hornsby Council.

Please note: volunteers are no longer required to refresh every five years.

Where:

Warada Ngurang Community Nursery, Pennant Hills

When:

9am to 1pm on Saturday 22 October

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/BXBAA>
(limited places available)

or

9am to 1pm on Saturday 19 November

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/BXBAG>
(limited places available)

Pollinator Survey

Australian Pollinator Week acknowledges our important and unique insect pollinators during our southern spring. We will celebrate Australian Pollinator Week a little early this year with our first pollinator survey along the Mambara Track. We will start the morning with an introduction to some of our more common pollinators before we venture outdoors to conduct our own survey.

Where:

Warada Ngurang Community Nursery, Pennant Hills

When:

9am to 11am on Saturday 5 November

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/CCESK>
(limited places available)

Protecting Our Forests community nature event

Join us at this community awareness event to learn about and restore Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest, a critically endangered ecological community. The event will be a collaboration with Lane Cove National Park staff.

Details of the event will be uploaded onto Council's What's On pages soon. [Hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events](https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events)

Where:

Jane Starkey Park, Thornleigh

When:

10am to 1pm on Saturday 19 November

See [Hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events](https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/lifestyle/events) for details

No bookings required

Save the date

Bushcare and Nursery Volunteer Christmas Party – Saturday 26 November

Invitations to arrive soon.

Hills – Hornsby Koala Search 2022!

Have you seen or heard any local Koalas this year?

Over the last 10 years, Koalas have been heard or observed at a number of locations around the Bushland Shire.

The *Hills-Hornsby Rural Koala Project* team is working with our community and local organisations to conduct their annual Koala search over Spring and Summer.

If you would like to help, please keep an eye out and if you are lucky enough to see or hear a Koala, try to take a photo or a voice recording and contact the project team on 0424 844 740. You can also make contact via their Facebook page.

Koalas tend to be more vocal during the mating season, usually from around August to February. You can listen to examples of male and female calls on the *Hills – Hornsby Rural Koala Project* Facebook page – simply scan the QR code below. Alternatively, type 'koala calls' into YouTube for more examples.





Turner Road trail upgrade

Next time you are in Berowra Heights, be sure to take a walk along Turner Road Fire Trail and enjoy your stop at the newly renovated ridge top campsite and rest area. It is a great place to stop, take a break at the

picnic table and hear the wind in the trees. It is also a great place to set up camp if you are on the Great North Walk. The wildflowers and views are stunning, and it's hard to believe such a wilderness is so close to civilisation.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEWSLETTER

You can send your stories or letters to the Editor for the next edition by 1 JANUARY 2023

Mail: PO Box 37, Hornsby 1630
or **Email:** bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

This newsletter has been compiled by Hornsby Shire Council.



THE BUSHLAND SHIRE

If not claimed within 7 days please return to PO Box 37 Hornsby NSW 1630