

# Bushcare news

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Observatory Park

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Newsletter managed by Hornsby Shire Council  
Natural Resources Branch

For more information visit  
[hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushcare](http://hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushcare)




 things to remember

# 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.



### Contact Details

Hornsby Shire Bushcare Earthwise Cottage  
28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills

**Mail:** PO BOX 37  
Hornsby NSW 1630

**Email:** bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Environmental Scientist – Bushcare  
Leanne Johnston 9847 6362

Coordinator - Bushland Programs  
Gareth Debney 9847 6360

Bushcare Field Officer  
Jean-Philippe Kecman 9847 6364

Nursery and Guided Bushwalk Program Coordinator  
Ross Rapmund 9847 6361

Incident and hazard reporting  
9847 4848 including outside business hours



Flowering basket grass, Herta Watts



# Greetings from Gareth Debney



Gareth Debney

Following the departure of some key bushland staff in 2015, Council created a new Coordinator position to bring the Community Programs (including Bushcare) and the Bush Regeneration (contract management) teams together and integrate their activities – with the end result being the enhancement of already well managed bushland reserves. I was fortunate to be offered this position and am thrilled to be working with such a fantastic team of professionals, not to mention a great many dedicated volunteers!

So a bit about me... I've been working in the bushland management field since finishing a BSc at Macquarie Uni in 1999. For the first 5 ½ years of my career I held a variety of positions in Warringah Council's Conservation and Land Management Team (whilst also completing both Cert II & Cert IV in Bush Regeneration at Ryde TAFE).

I then spent two and a half years at Leichhardt and Canada Bay Councils looking after their Bushcare Programs before moving to North Sydney Council where I remained for the last nine years as the Bushland Management Coordinator.

I grew up in the local area and have lived in Mt Colah since 2007. I am passionate about bushland conservation and am very tied to the beautiful and stunningly biodiverse natural areas that we are fortunate to have here in Hornsby Shire.

I look forward to getting out and visiting our Bushcare, Landcare and contract regeneration sites over the coming months and meeting our wonderful volunteers.



# Staff changes

## Leanne Johnston

This year has had many changes. I kept the Coordinator seat warm from November 2015 until July 2016 and am most pleased to have a new coordinator on board. In addition to returning to my role as Environmental Scientist, I have returned full-time, I hope this will give the team more continuity and make communication easier with everyone.

I would like to thank Meron for all her help for the last 5 years, especially in the absence of a coordinator.

## Anita Wynne



Hi! To many of you, I will be a familiar face as I have been a dedicated volunteer with Council's Bushcare programme for 21 years. I can

honestly say I am addicted to Bushcare! Now, in my new role as a Bushcare Trainer, I very much look forward to meeting many more of the fantastic Hornsby Bushcare Volunteers.

Weeding weekly with the Roselea Volunteers over the years, I have taken part in many Council sponsored Bushcare activities, promoting its programme to the public. I also embraced opportunities to introduce school students to the wonders of their local environment.

Concurrently, I worked as a Bush Regenerator with Bush Habitat Restoration and Abel Ecology. This professional work offered me an appreciation of a wide variety of plant communities and Bushcare techniques, beyond my local Blue Gum High Forest volunteer site.

With 21 years under my belt, it is truly rewarding to witness sites emerge from degraded to flourishing landscapes, supporting an array of native plants, birds and animals previously absent from the area. I look forward to meeting and working with you in the field!



## Deb Rothwell

While trying my hand at canyoning in the mountains a friend turned to me and said "wouldn't you like this to be your office?!"

That was a defining moment in my life. I went straight home to research what careers I could pursue in the bush. I studied Bush Regeneration Certificate 2 and loved it, continued on with Certificate 4, and loved it, and so continued on with the Diploma in Conservation and Land Management. I found I love learning about nature, plants, animals and ecosystems.

I have worked for both large and small bush regeneration companies, observing different techniques, and learning a lot from my work colleagues. In my fourteen years working in Bush regeneration I have worked in many different plant communities, in various stages of resilience health, throughout the Sydney metropolitan area.

I am excited to be embarking on my new career direction with Hornsby Council, and continuing my learning along the way. I look forward to meeting you all.



## Ty Suter

Hi! I have recently joined the Hornsby Council Bushcare team as a Bushcare Trainer. I already work

for Hornsby Council as an Environmental Scientist in the Bushland Programs team, project managing bush regeneration contract sites and bushwalking track construction. I have been with Hornsby Council for about 4 months.

I came across Bushcare and bush regeneration while studying several land management subjects for a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in environmental management. Growing up in regional areas, I knew of Landcare but I had never heard of Bushcare. I started as a volunteer at Hornsby Council in 2009 where I joined two local groups in Berowra. Since that time, I made the career change to bush regeneration and have worked both as a contractor and with various councils. I have also completed both Certificate 3 and 4 in Conservation and Land Management. I also work at Ku-ring-gai Council and Willoughby Council as a casual Bushcare Trainer.

I will be the trainer for the Berowra Oval Bushcare group which I am very happy about because this is one of the first groups that I joined as a volunteer. I am looking forward to continuing the great work this group has done in the past.



# Vale: Charlie Miller

Charlie Miller passed away after a brief illness in February 2016. He was an active member of the Bushcare program for twenty three years.

**H**e was passionate about the bush and together with his wife Jean devoted many hours to caring for the reserve in front of his home in Epping.

They did constant battle with a plume of weeds brought in and nourished by a persistent seep of stormwater from the houses and roads upslope. For many years he agitated Council to 'do something' about this infestation in otherwise healthy bushland. He was most gratified when in 2015 a catchment remediation device was constructed to capture and filter the flows before releasing them slowly into the bush below.

We are proud to have known and worked with him.



*Charlie Miller*

## Vale: Poa the nursery dog

**P**oa has now left us at the Community Nursery & Bushcare after a short battle with renal failure.

She had an illustrious career in local government spanning over 15 years and across two council nurseries. She will be missed by all bar the rats.





# 2016 Bushcare competitions

## Photo Competitions

It's time to get your cameras out!

### Bushcare Photo Competition Terms and Conditions

Open to bushcare and nursery volunteers only

- Submissions need to include the photographer's name, title of the photo and volunteer group. Photos are to be at least 300dpi (resolution) or 1200 pixels width/height, should you have difficulties please contact the office on 9847 6362 or [bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au)
- There are two categories:
- The main event: Hornsby - Our Beautiful Bushland – our celebration of our environment. Photos must be related to our local plants and animals and taken within the Hornsby Shire
- Hornsby Orchids – a popular subject in previous years.
- Closing date for 2016 competition: Friday 2 September 2016.
- Up to three photographs per person from our Orchid evening will automatically be submitted for the competition, however new entries are welcome.
- If a child is clearly identified we need the parent or guardian to fill in a photo release form. Photo release forms are available upon request.

Viewing will be from 12 September until 5 October at Hornsby Library and online.

Voting is open to all attendees of the Hornsby Bushcare Christmas Party on Saturday 26 November 2016. Winners of each category will be awarded by popular vote and announced at the Christmas party. The judge's decision is final.

A selection of the photos will be published in the 2017 Bushcare Calendar.

## Poetry and Prose competition

**Closing date for 2016 competition: Monday 7 November 2016.**

We also want your prose entries describing life as a Bushcarer. Ditties, limericks, jokes, haiku, yarns, whatever your pen is inspired to create. Entries will be printed and displayed for voting purposes.

## Christmas Bushcare Hat conversion

**Closing date: Christmas Party Saturday 26 November 2016.**

To celebrate another year of Bushcare, we want to see your design skills. Everyone attending the Christmas party is welcome to style up their Bushcare hat in a Christmas theme. We look forward to seeing your creations.





# Group leaders forum 2016

**O**ver two days in May 2016 thirty three volunteer group leaders took up our invitation to meet and share their points of view of the Hornby Bushcare program and how it could develop. Comments and suggestions were recorded and later collated to create a picture with actions we could take up.

Bushcare volunteers describe themselves as interested in caring for the native plants and animals that inhabit bushland. They have a sense of commitment to helping restore the bush and a moderate level of fitness that allows them to carry out basic tasks. They are willing to learn, tolerant of others, and enjoy a spot of socialising.

## Bushcare groups

Good Bushcare groups are made up of registered volunteers who enthusiastically work to a similar end. They feel passion and love for the bush. They feel they are custodians of the site, and will protect it from damage, rubbish dropped, etc. They are welcoming to new volunteers and say hello to people who walk past.

Bushcare groups are made up of people who are variously skilled, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. The group is not defined or limited by size, age, gender or meeting frequency. Good communication creates teamwork and ensures effective effort. Their Trainer adds value, encouraging, sustaining, and supporting.

## What is a good bush neighbour?

Good neighbours look after their side of the fence. They make sure their plants do not encroach onto/into bushland.

They observe and learn from what Bushcare volunteers are doing. They are respectful of your efforts though not necessarily going to work on your site.

To create good neighbours patience and tolerance are needed.

## What is working well with Bushcare?

There was good support for the way the Bushcare program was running, and pride in the achievements made in the field. Monthly meetings with professional Trainers, supply of equipment, and support from office staff were all appreciated. All but one comment was in favour of taking a tea break to socialise.

## How can we make it work better?

Suggestions revolved around expanding communication channels and attracting visitors to bushcare sites. Following on from this, if you know of a school group you would like to invite to your site, and there is a safe meeting area for 30 people away from traffic and toilet facilities nearby, please contact the office for help to set it up.

## How can we expand the care?

Suggested ways to promote the program, and sectors of the community to attract, will feed into the future direction of the program.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who generously gave their time and effort to make your Forum the success it was.





# Restoring native wildlife

Karen Benhar, Meluca Crescent Hornsby Heights Bushcare

**D**id you know that in the last 200 years western Sydney has lost 20% of its native animal species? Fauna ecosystem services are vital to bushland health but our native wildlife is struggling.

In April 2016 Karen attended a one day workshop at Richmond TAFE presented by Peter Ridgeway of CLC to learn more about how to care for wildlife on her bushcare site. She came away inspired to write a blog. Here are some extracts.

The first step is to understand the characteristics of the site's habitat. Sydney can be broadly summarized into six habitats – Grassy woodlands, Sandstone Forests, Heathlands, Rainforests, Freshwater wetlands, and Mangrove/Salt Marsh. Each habitat represents its own ecology and range of wildlife.

Wildlife comes in many forms. Invertebrates represent 97 percent of all animal species on earth and according to ecologist E. O. Wilson, "are the little things that run the Earth." Gastropods (stomach foot) such as snails and slugs crawl along the ground feeding on rotting wood and fallen leaves. Insects pollinate flowering plants, worms compost organic matter and aerate soil, and spiders keep insects under control. All of these animals are an important food source for lizards, snakes and birds.

Birds are critical links within the vast food chains and webs that exist in the ecosystem. They spread seeds, consume enormous amounts of insects and pollinate many plant species. Reptiles such as snakes and lizards fill a critical role both as predator and prey species. Herbivorous species can also be important seed dispersers and even as pollinators.

Since most amphibians such as frogs live in both aquatic and terrestrial habitats at some point in their lifecycles, and their skin is highly sensitive to changes in their surroundings, they serve as indicators for the health of both environments. They are huge consumers of insects and in turn are a part of the diet of many birds, lizards and mammals.

Most bats eat night-flying insects and play a significant role in controlling insect populations. About a third of bats are fruit or nectar feeding, and in the process they pollinate numerous plants and disperse seeds.

Digging mammals such as bandicoots and native rats, echidnas, bilbies, and wombats improve soil health by turning and mixing organic matter as well as breaking of very hard soils which would otherwise be impenetrable to plant seedlings. They improve water infiltration which increases soil moisture. Digging mammals spread important mycorrhizal fungi across the landscape. These fungi help plants to increase their absorption of nutrients and deal with our nutrient-poor Australian soils.

Kangaroos and Wallabies lessen the possibility of bushfires by eating dry grass that ignites easily. Their urine and faeces is a natural fertilizer (not excessively high in nitrogen).

## Improving habitat on site

Coarse woody debris such as sticks and logs are critical for terrestrial mammals and reptiles. We visited a private conservation reserve which was originally grazed by cattle. It is being restored and a number of native animals have been reintroduced. An important part of restoring the property was to truck in hardwood logs recently lopped and rescued from the chipper.

Trees have wonderful insulation, keeping the animal warm and dry. They do not leak or fall apart within a short period of time. However a nesting box can be part of a strategy to help a declining species. Other great ideas include:

- Save woody debris from the council chipper or collect habitat logs from local arborists.
- Add old pottery or other organic habitat
- Build a bee hotel
- Manage or build ponds for frogs
- Plant structural habitat

## Key Tips for Regenerators

- Know your local wildlife and monitor over time.
- Start from the ground up – wood debris, logs.
- Only remove as fast as you replace, weeds are key habitat.
- Avoid piles or keep them small, they are a magnet for native snails and frogs which can be a problem if they are burnt. Habitat spread throughout a site does more for wildlife than if it is piled together in one spot.
- Avoid using wood chip and never use pine mulch which restricts native plant, insect, and fungi growth
- Avoid disturbing dreys (Possum nests) and nests as they may be active although temporarily empty. Many wildlife rotate through multiple nests to ensure they are not detected by predators and for hygiene purposes.
- Avoid spray and manage it for wildlife. Don't spray moist areas or moist vegetation (i.e Trad) Remember all surfactants kill.

For more details go to Karen's website: [greengardener.com.au/restoring-native-wildlife/](http://greengardener.com.au/restoring-native-wildlife/)



Know your local wildlife  
and monitor over time.





# Our oldest Bushcare site: Observatory Park

Ron Leslie, Group Leader

**O**bservatory Park is a well known landmark at the junction of Beecroft and Pennant Hills roads. Its deep, nutrient-rich clay soil and high rainfall create perfect conditions for the stately *Eucalyptus saligna* (Sydney Blue Gums) that cover the site.

Between 1804 and 1811 this triangular block of land was on the route used to drive cattle from Parramatta to Lane Cove for transport to Sydney, and Red Hill, as it was known, and was often used as a campsite.

The surrounding bushland was initially cleared in the 1816 – 1830 period. Leading up to 1886 when the railway was completed and the area subdivided for housing a second wave of clearing took place, and a saw mill operated on the site of Mt St Benedict's school nearby. At this time the Crown set five acres (2.2 hectares) aside as public reserve.

Since then the land has been used in many ways. An observatory was established in 1899 to map the southern skies, and operated until 1932 when the work was completed by astronomer James Short, and the building demolished. All that now remains are a few foundations and the name.

In World War Two the area was used as an army transit camp. From 1953 it was managed by Hornsby Council and used for fairs and other charity events. The area around the trees was mown, a toilet block erected (demolished in 2000) and car parking allowed.

## Regeneration starts

In 1988 pioneer bush regenerator John Noble and Beecroft botanist Jenifer Lewis surveyed the site and found forty six native species of plants. Council agreed to set aside a central section for mowing to cease and regeneration to commence.

John undertook the hand removal of weeds in a chessboard pattern and many more species emerged. By 1994 more than 100 different species had been identified. In 1997 the NSW Scientific Committee recognised the park as Sydney Blue Gum High Forest and listed it as an Endangered Ecological Community under the Threatened Species Conservation Act.

In 1998 John, then in his eighties, asked for help. The following year a group of volunteers commenced working on the first Saturday morning of the month, and the regeneration area was nearly doubled in size. Since then more than 120 species of native plants have returned. In June 2016 the regeneration area was further extended to include land near the observatory site. The group hope Iron Bark seedlings will emerge from the mature trees in that upper part of the park. Observatory Park's location at the top of two catchments means it has no drainage issues. It also has an intact soil profile despite its history of use. After years of abuse, thirty four years of mowing and twenty eight years of regeneration, Observatory Park has returned to its original state of Sydney Blue Gum High Forest.

Do stop and have a look at the park sometime when you are passing by and watch for even more trees in the future.





# Floating landcare

in Hornsby

Donna Fitton, Bushland Operations

It has been another good year on the river. Thanks go to the volunteers, contractors and staff who brave the early mornings and unforeseen weather conditions to journey up the river on an oyster punt.

As part of Hornsby Council's partnership and funding from Greater Sydney Local Land Services we managed ten trips to various Council reserves along the Hawkesbury Estuary, particularly Bar Island. The Vinca major (Blue Periwinkle) is going, going, nearly gone thanks to the steadfast determination and hundreds of busy hands crowning away, and natural regeneration is occurring in all vegetation layers.

We sighted two wallabies on the Island and found a pile of shiny echidna scats on the south side. Oddly, a cat was dumped on the Island (later rescued by its owner). An attempt to dump a goat was foiled and the poor thing was given a foster home (but I'm sure I smelt goat curry drifting along the river the following week). The plan for the coming year is to return a few times to Bar Island, and explore further afield to wage war on Ochra at Cobra Point, Crofton Weed at Collingridge Point, and the jewel in the crown, Mother of Millions at Cunio Point.

## Volunteer Lynne Springett adds:

I joined Floating Landcare in early 2013 and have been a regular on the river ever since. It has given me the opportunity to see and visit parts of the beautiful Hawkesbury River only accessible by boat. The friendly and relaxed atmosphere always makes for a great day out with like-minded and interesting people, who are there to do their bit for the local environment. Most of the sites have relatively small weed infestations which means the work we do prevents them spreading into the surrounding pristine bushland on the estuary foreshores. In the more degraded sites the program has made a real difference. Staff from National Parks, Gosford and Hornsby Councils say they now have the impetus to go in and build on the work we have done.

Of course all this would not happen without Rob, our oyster barge chauffeur, and our organiser extraordinaire Bec Mooy, from Greater Sydney Local Land Services, who makes sure the trips happen without mishap. After a "scenic river cruise" and a few weeds bagged, she miraculously produces delicious lunches before tired but very happy volunteers return home, always eager to turn up again next time.

If you are up for a day of weeding, chat and floating on the river contact Donna [dfitton@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:dfitton@hornsby.nsw.gov.au) or 9847 6976. To be on the alert list or for Floating Landcare events in other areas see:

[greatersydney.lls.nsw.gov.au/resource-hub/events/2016/floating-landcare](http://greatersydney.lls.nsw.gov.au/resource-hub/events/2016/floating-landcare)





# Indigenous plants in schools

**O**ften we get queried on how many plants the community nursery supplies to schools. One of the charters of the nursery is to work closely with local schools in the supply of plant material along with advice on native vegetation. Last year alone we supplied 29 local schools with plants and undertook 10 school visits for detailed advice and support.

Across the past 5 years we have supplied local schools with a grand total of 10,853 plants! Many of the schools are situated on heavy clay soils which would have once supported either Turpentine - Ironbark Forest or majestic Blue Gum High Forest. Often small remnants of these forests or indicative trees from these forests are still found within the school grounds. It is these patches within the schools we focus on by supplying the missing understorey to help recreate habitat and provide that educational element on our rich indigenous plant heritage.

The nursery also hosts work experience students. This past year we have had several students from both Karonga School and Cherrybrook Technology High School.

For a great little video on our results with indigenous plants check out this from Pennant Hills Primary School.

[classmoviestv.com/decnsw5?movid=S9068-05-S2973-003](https://classmoviestv.com/decnsw5?movid=S9068-05-S2973-003)





# Bushcare Library talks

**H**ornsby has a long history of providing great seminars to our residents that improve their knowledge of the local environment.

We have been rewarded with external funding for education programs including Gardens for Wildlife and Greenstyle. Since the Greenstyle program concluded we have been working with our local libraries and running great seminars open to all residents of Hornsby. Recent topics have included termites, native bees, gardens for wildlife and bird friendly backyards. Each seminar has plants to give away. The selection is based on the topic of the seminar and supplied by the community nursery. Charges, if any, are returned to the Bushcare team and used to pay for the great presenters or other ways that promote Bushcare and look after our precious natural resources.

## **Bird Friendly Backyard Presentation**

Presenter: Judy Christie – Natural Resource Management Consultant, March 30, 2016

**Location: Hornsby Library**

Birds are one of the easiest ways to connect with nature, they are beautiful and their songs bring such delight.

If you want to encourage birds into your garden, you need to provide food, water, shelter and safe nesting sites. Suitable habitat gardens for birds have a variety of plants with different structures and connectivity to other protected sites. Densely planted shrubs provide protection from cats and dogs, and dominant birds, such as the noisy miner.

When you plant out your garden remember to mix it up a little, plant native trees and shrubs. Complexity is the key, be sure to have as many structural layers as space allows, use vines, infill with low shrubs and groundcovers. Lawn is fine.

Birds love water. If you have a bird bath, have it in dappled light, keep it clean. Birds use baths for drinking and bathing. Make sure there is a safe place to perch; smaller birds will need a safe place to monitor the surrounds before deciding it is safe to use the bird bath. Plant dense shrubs close to the bath to provide safe refuges for birds. You will also need to monitor the bath to ensure your safe havens are actually providing protection for small birds.

You may have noticed that there are urban bird winners and losers.

The winners of urban landscapes are: Australian Magpie, Red Wattle Bird, Rainbow Lorikeet, and the Noisy Miner.

The losers are Eastern Spinebills, White Plumed Honeyeaters, Red-Browed Finches, Golden Whistlers and Superb Fairy Wrens.

Many Australian birds nest in hollows, particularly parrots, kookaburras, powerful owls, pardalotes etc. If you would like to build a nest box, you will need to be specific to the needs of the birds you wish to attract to your garden.

For details see [birdsinyourbackyard.net/](http://birdsinyourbackyard.net/) Nest-box where you can find specific box designs for different species of birds and tips on how to install and maintain the box.

If you are interested to learn more, the birds in backyards website is a great resource: [birdsinyourbackyard.net/](http://birdsinyourbackyard.net/) there is even a bird finder to help you identify your garden visitors.



# Bird monitoring morning with breakfast

**E**ach team will comprise a team leader, an assisting bird expert and team members. The team leader is a bird expert, who can identify birds from their calls and by sight.

The assisting bird expert can identify many common calls and identify birds by sight. Team members are volunteers who would love to know more about their birds in Hornsby but have limited skills in bird identification.

We have identified some great birdos in Hornsby both staff and volunteers. See below for the teams and vacancies.

Most importantly, a picnic breakfast basket is provided to all survey groups. The contents remain secret but will include tea and coffee and a selection of yummy breakfast food. We look forward to having you on our teams.

## When:

Saturday 8 October

Get to site 7.45am start survey 8:00am and complete a series of 3 x 20 minute surveys.

## There are four survey teams at various locations:

**HORNSBY - Rosemead Road**

**Bookings:**

[trybooking.com/179422](http://trybooking.com/179422)

**EPPING - Terrys Creek**

**Bookings:**

[trybooking.com/178868](http://trybooking.com/178868)

**HORNSBY HEIGHTS - Binya Place**

**Bookings:**

[trybooking.com/179425](http://trybooking.com/179425)

**HORNSBY - Clarinda Wetland**

**Bookings**

[trybooking.com/179428](http://trybooking.com/179428)

## Each group will be equipped with:

Bird identification books, binoculars, and data recording sheets (to be returned at the end of the day).

New participating volunteers will receive a complimentary CD recording of common bird calls prior to the day (to keep).

**If you do not have access to the internet please contact 9847 6362 for bookings**



Yellowtail Black Cockatoo  
by Liz Bulley



Eastern Yellow Robin  
by Rae Rosten



Tawny Frogmouth  
by Sue Patterson



Eastern Yellow Robin nest  
by Sue Patterson





Your stories and news items  
are always very welcome.  
Contact our Bushcare Officer  
on 9847 6362 or email  
[bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au)

Eastern Spinebill  
by Matt Feierabend



# Real estate for native critters

Anita Wynne, Bushcare Trainer and volunteer



**O**n 3 May 2016 Bambara Bushcare volunteers hosted a fun-filled, educational outdoor experience for over two hundred year 3 students from Epping West Public and St Gerard's Catholic School, Carlingford - a day to "chill out" after their NAPLAN test! This event, now in its tenth year, took place at the "Habitat Havens" site on the Epping/Carlingford bushcare corridor.

An initial bushwalk through the "Bird Haven" section engaged the students' interest with practical examples of simple actions they can undertake in their own backyards to enhance habitat and assist the return of local (particularly small) native birds and animals. Chancing upon a tower of sticks and logs they realised they could provide accommodation for lizards. Secreted amongst the vegetation, bee hotels excited the students' interest in the number of insects that had laid eggs in the drilled holes of wood, cringing from the realisation that a proliferation of insects would provide a good food source for small birds... and, protruding from the tree trunks, nesting boxes promised shelter for microbats, sugar gliders, birds and possums.

More surprises awaited the students in Little Ray Park where they found puppet parrots, sugar gliders, possums and wrens peeping from the shrubbery. Three tables displayed items that students could touch and talk about with the volunteers. One table contained an array of bird nests, feathers, snake skins, and a "home-made" bower for the Satin Bower Bird, (constructed from *Austrostipa*), complete with blue items that were collected from the local bush. These exemplified the nests that birds made for themselves.

The second table included hollow logs which birds, lizards and possums could utilise and a large chunk of a disused arboreal termite nest which, it was explained to the students, can also be used as a nesting site by Kookaburras. These displays also highlighted the concept that hollows in trees are formed by arboreal termites dining on cellulose, taking at least 100 years to develop a small nesting hole and 200 years or more to create one large enough for a powerful owl!

On the third table, a variety of man-made nesting boxes and knitted possum pouches for injured wildlife again brought attention to empower the children with ideas of

what they could do to help protect our local wildlife. Upon learning that our older trees were disappearing to urbanisation, the classes understood the importance of nesting boxes and were excited to learn that they had the capability as individuals to make a difference locally.

The highlight of the day was a visit from Anthony Stimson from AustWildlife who captured the children's imagination with tales of his neighbour who wanted to burn Anthony's logs of wood on his BBQ. Anthony surprised the students as they discovered the log was actually a home for Bubblegum, a Blue-tongue lizard. Other local fauna that Anthony introduced included Princess, a Black Headed Python snake, Prickles the glamorous Water Dragon, Frankie Tawny Frogmouth and Gumnuts, the ever so sweet ring-tailed possum (looking a little dazed to be awake during the day). Anthony's presentation left all the children enthusiastic about saving their wildlife!

Taking our volunteer role beyond weeding, and engaging with these budding conservationists was both rewarding and inspirational. To see their enthusiasm heartened our future efforts in the bush. Many thanks to Dorothy Doolan for her wonderful organising skills and fountain of ideas, Marilyn Guyot, Mary O'Byrne, Jishan Lin, Pam and Terry Ludlow, Marie Crowne, Ross Muller, Caitlin Wynne, Helen Milliken and Linda from the Carlingford North florist shop who lent us the hollow logs from her window display, used by our puppet rosellas and possums to demonstrate the perfect home! We all thoroughly enjoyed the day and I would recommend your volunteer group take the opportunity to engage with local schools to teach and inspire their environmental awareness!



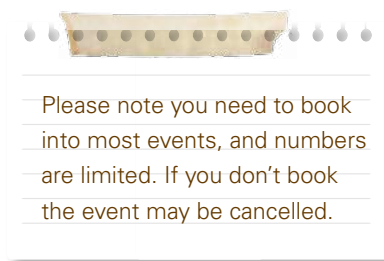
Image above and opposite  
Caitlin Wynne by Dorothy Doolan







# Events



## Farewell to Bushcare groups south of the M2

Celebrate the work of our volunteers south of the M2 and wish them all the best for their new adventure with the City of Parramatta. This will be a great opportunity to meet Gareth Debney our new Bushland Programs Coordinator.

### When?

Friday 16 September

### Where?

Plympton Road Reserve, near 1st Roselea Scout Hall

### Bookings?

Essential as spaces are limited.  
RSVP: [bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au) or phone 9847 6362

## Our Beautiful Bushland Photo Competition 2016 exhibition

This is your opportunity to vote on the 2016 Hornsby – My Beautiful Bushland Photo Competition. There are also opportunities to vote at the Christmas Party.

### When?

Wednesday 12 September to Friday 14 October

### Where?

Hornsby Library, 28-44 George St, Hornsby

## Bushcode workshop

This Bushcare training workshop for new and renewing volunteers, all participants will receive a native plant voucher.

### When?

Monday 19 September or Saturday 5 November  
8.45am-3pm

### Where?

Earthwise Cottage, 28 Britannia St, Pennant Hills

### Bookings?

[trybooking.com/173581](http://trybooking.com/173581) or phone 9847 6362

## Sustainable Garden Day & Native Plant Giveaway

Be inspired to get into the garden. Talks, tours, kid's activities, giveaways and garden displays.

### When?

Saturday 1 October, 11am-3pm

### Where?

Fagan Park Eco Garden

[hornsby.nsw.gov.au/  
communitygardens](http://hornsby.nsw.gov.au/communitygardens)

## Native Plant Propagation

Learn how to propagate native plants by cuttings. Cuttings have the benefit of being at the same stage of maturity as the parent i.e. flowering and fruiting. Cuttings are also useful for plants that have a short seed life.

### When?

Thursday 6 October, 11am-3pm

### Where?

Ku-ring-gai Nursery, Mona Vale Rd, St Ives

### Bookings?

[bushcare@kmc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushcare@kmc.nsw.gov.au) or phone 9424 0893

## Crop n Swap

Grow it, Make it, Brew it, Bake it, Bunch it, Bring it.

No money exchanged. Pre-bundle and label your items. No refrigerated items. Only whole vegetables.

15 minute viewing before swapping.

### When?

6 October, 12 November, 3 December  
10am-11am

### Where?

Pennant Hills Leisure and Learning Centre, 8 Warne Street, Pennant Hills  
Register via email  
[tmein@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tmein@hornsby.nsw.gov.au)

## Bushcare Bird Survey and Breakfast

Come along and learn about bird surveys. If you are enthusiastic about our local birds but can't tell the difference between a Noisy Miner and an Indian Myna then this is the workshop for you. Experienced team leaders will be on hand to conduct

bird surveys in selected Bushcare sites throughout the Hornsby Shire. Our team leaders have excellent skills in identifying birds by sight and calls. If you have these skills we have a vacancy for a team leader. Alternatively you could be an assistant, someone who can identify common species in Hornsby. A delicious breakfast picnic will be supplied to all teams.

### When?

Saturday 8 October,  
7:45am for an 8.00am start

### Where?

Four locations: Hornsby Heights, Hornsby, and Epping.

### Bookings?

Bookings essential, spaces are limited. Please call 9847 6832 or [hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson](http://hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson)

## Orchid Evening

We need your help to run this event. Please send your orchid photos to [bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au) and we will put together a slide-show of the best photos to create a Powerpoint display. We will talk about different species of native orchids and their interesting characteristics. An orchid themed supper will be provided.

### When?

Friday 14 October, 6pm-8pm

### Where?

Earthwise Cottage, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills

### Bookings?

[trybooking.com/178870](http://trybooking.com/178870) or phone 9847 6362

## Catchment Tour

Want to know how Hornsby Shire Council manages the health of our local waterways? Celebrate National Water Week 2016 and join us on a 3 hour bus and walking tour exploring the upper Lane Cove River Catchment and examples of Hornsby Shire's stormwater quality improvement devices. Council has installed over 400 devices to help capture and filter



urban run-off pollution. Tour departs from Pennant Hills. Further details provided following booking confirmation. For Hornsby Shire residents aged 16 and over.

**When?**

Saturday 22nd October , 9am-12pm

**Where?**

Pennant Hills

**Bookings?**

Book online at  
[trybooking.com/207986](https://trybooking.com/207986) or phone  
9847 6362

### Free Native Plant Give Away

For ratepayers from Cherrybrook, Normanhurst, Thornleigh, Wahroonga, Waitara and Westleigh only. Please bring your current Hornsby Shire rates notice and identification.

Limited stock available.

**When?**

Saturday 29 October, 1pm-3pm

**Where?**

Hornsby Community Nursery 28-30  
Britannia St, Pennant Hills

### Bushcare Christmas Party

The bring your table service was such a success last year it allowed the Bushcare Trainers and other staff to spend less time in the kitchen cleaning up and more time to talk to you. Please bring your own table setting, plate, knife and fork and cups. Competitions for the party will include the Bushcare hat upcycle, photo competition (see terms and conditions) and poetry and prose. Get creative!

Bushcare volunteers and contributors will soon be receiving invitations and will need to RSVP as seating numbers are limited. RSVPs need to be received by Monday 14 November. Make sure we know if you have any special dietary requirements, e.g. vegetarian, gluten free etc.

We look forward to seeing you at the Christmas Party.

**When?**

Saturday 26 November, 10am-2pm

**Where?**

Roselea Community Hall, Pennant Hills Rd, Carlingford

**Bookings?**

Bookings: [trybooking.com/178871](https://trybooking.com/178871)  
or phone 9847 6362

## Citizen Science

Are you interested in providing material to assess fox behaviour, habitat and prey preferences? If you are interested in collecting fox scats for research please contact Leanne for more information  
email [bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au) or phone 9847 6362.

## Hornsby Council Community Gardens

### Fagan Park Eco Garden

The Fagan Park Eco Garden is located in Galston, approximately twenty minutes from Hornsby. The Eco Garden was established in 2000 by Hornsby Council by what was then the Northern Sydney Waste Board.

There are over forty different types of fruit trees growing in its approximately 3500 square metres. Also on display are a variety of sustainable gardening elements including composting, espaliered fruits, food forests, wicking beds, balcony gardening, a cob oven, native bees, companion planting and different gardening methods.

Workshops, working bees and kids activities are held throughout the year.

### Hornsby Eco Garden

The under construction Hornsby Eco Garden is a community garden located in the heart of Hornsby off Sherbrook and Northcote Roads. The design for this garden has been developed with permaculture principles in mind and volunteers have worked hard to obtain grants to fund the works onsite. It is hoped to launch the garden in spring this year. New members are keenly welcomed, no experience required!

More information can be found at [hornsby.nsw.gov.au/communitygardens](https://hornsby.nsw.gov.au/communitygardens)





## Water Dragon Rescue

Strath Clarke,  
Bambara volunteer  
Sunday, January 10, 2016

**T**his afternoon I discovered a Water Dragon trapped in the base of a 0.5 metre deep, PVC-lined, hole in my back yard. I don't know how long he'd been there.

I put a timber ladder into the hole, but he didn't move.

Then I remembered a children's story "Alexanders Outing", which is about a family of ducks living in Hyde Park in Sydney. One of the ducks falls down an open manhole. They fill the hole with water from the Archibald Fountain, and the duck rises to the surface and is saved.

I figured that this should also work with Water Dragons. Connor and I filled the hole with water and the floundering lizard rose with the rising water and leapt out as he neared the top.

I think this was his lucky day.



## Work Health and Safety updates

With all the recent wet weather, we are coming into the hatching season for ticks. Please remember to record all tick, leech and bull/jumping ant bites on your Insect Bite Record Sheet. If your data sheets are full please return them to your trainer so we can enter the data into Safehold.

To reduce the chance of getting bitten, wear insect repellent, tuck pants into socks and wear a hat.

For more detailed information see site folder.

### PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEWSLETTER

You can send your stories or letters to the Editor for the next edition by 1 JANUARY 2017

**Mail:** PO Box 37, Hornsby 1630  
or **Email:** [bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au)

**This newsletter has been compiled  
by the Natural Resources Branch and Bushcare volunteers.**

Almost every week there is  
a free guided bush walk through  
a part of the Hornsby Shire.  
Visit [hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushwalks](http://hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushwalks)  
for more information.



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

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