

Bushcare news

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& critters

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Forests

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at Warada Ngurang
Community Nursery

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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

Bushland Programs Coordinator
Jeannette Stannard

Bushland Programs Officer
Donna Fitton

Bushland Programs Officer
Ty Suter

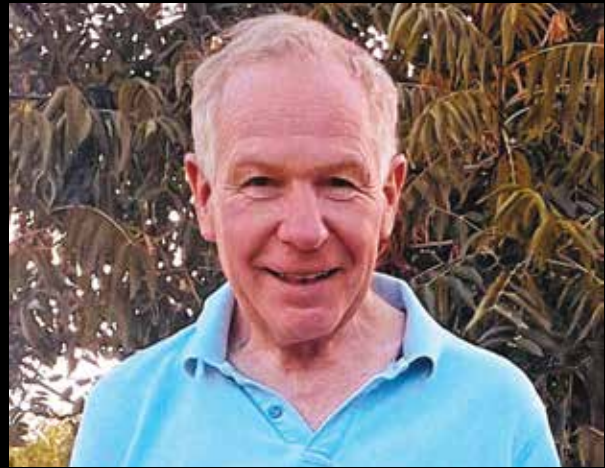
Bushland Programs Officer
Petra Holland

Biodiversity Education Officer
Leanne Johnston

Bushcare Officer
Jean-Philippe Kecman

SAFEHOLD

Incident and hazard reporting
9847 4848 including outside business hours



Vale Mark Sutherland-Harris

Galston's Carrs Bush Bushcare Group, has lost a respected and well-liked member. Mark Sutherland-Harris passed away on 29 December 2023. Family and friends gathered at a well-attended Thanksgiving service at Saint Jude's Anglican Church, Dural, on Friday 5 January 2024.

Mark came to Australia from the UK in 1968 and married Jan the following year. The couple raised a family on a 5-acre block with remnant bushland in Glenhaven. Tending after 'Red Creek' was a labour of love as Mark patiently and methodically removed privets and other common weeds across the property.

Mark enjoyed a fulfilling career with the Reserve Bank of Australia, one of the highlights being his involvement in setting up PNG's new currency system following its independence in 1975. Upon retirement, Mark pursued several interests of his; historical and family research, gardening, playing tennis, wine appreciation and knowledge, travelling and Bushcare.

Mark was a family and community man. He joined Carrs Bush Bushcare Group in 2014 and contributed over 300 hours of volunteer work.

Being a Bushcare volunteer was not the only service Mark gave to the local community. Mark's association with Saint Jude's Church in Dural spanned over 50 years. He was a valued member of the congregation where he took on many roles including treasurer, warden leading the morning services, and custodian of the cemetery.

Mark also had a long association with Galston Garden Club, where he was the club's President for several years.

Mark will be remembered as an intelligent, quiet but confident and friendly person with a love of the bush. Hornsby Council's Bushcare Team would like to remember Mark's decade as a Bushcare volunteer, defined by a commitment to improve the condition of this important Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest remnant.

New Bushcare Trainer

My name is Julie, and I've recently joined Hornsby Council as a Bushcare Trainer.

I've worked in environmental restoration for the past four years, as a bush regenerator and as a volunteer bush carer. Previously, I worked in aged care after spending much of my career in communications roles in government, corporate and association sectors.

I have a Cert III Conservation and Land Management which I completed during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Initially, becoming a Bushcare volunteer provided an opportunity to try something different and improve work/life balance while learning more about our Australian bush environment. Embracing this learning has led to a career change which has been a healthy and happy shift from an office environment to working outdoors where you never stop learning about the natural environment.

I'm looking forward to working with our passionate volunteers to continue learning and restoring natural areas in Hornsby Shire.



Farewell Jonatan Zethner

Jonatan and family are embarking on a new and thrilling adventure. Jonatan's wife, Dr Tonya Lemoh, was offered a position as Head of the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts at Edith Cowan University. The family will be moving to Perth mid-June.

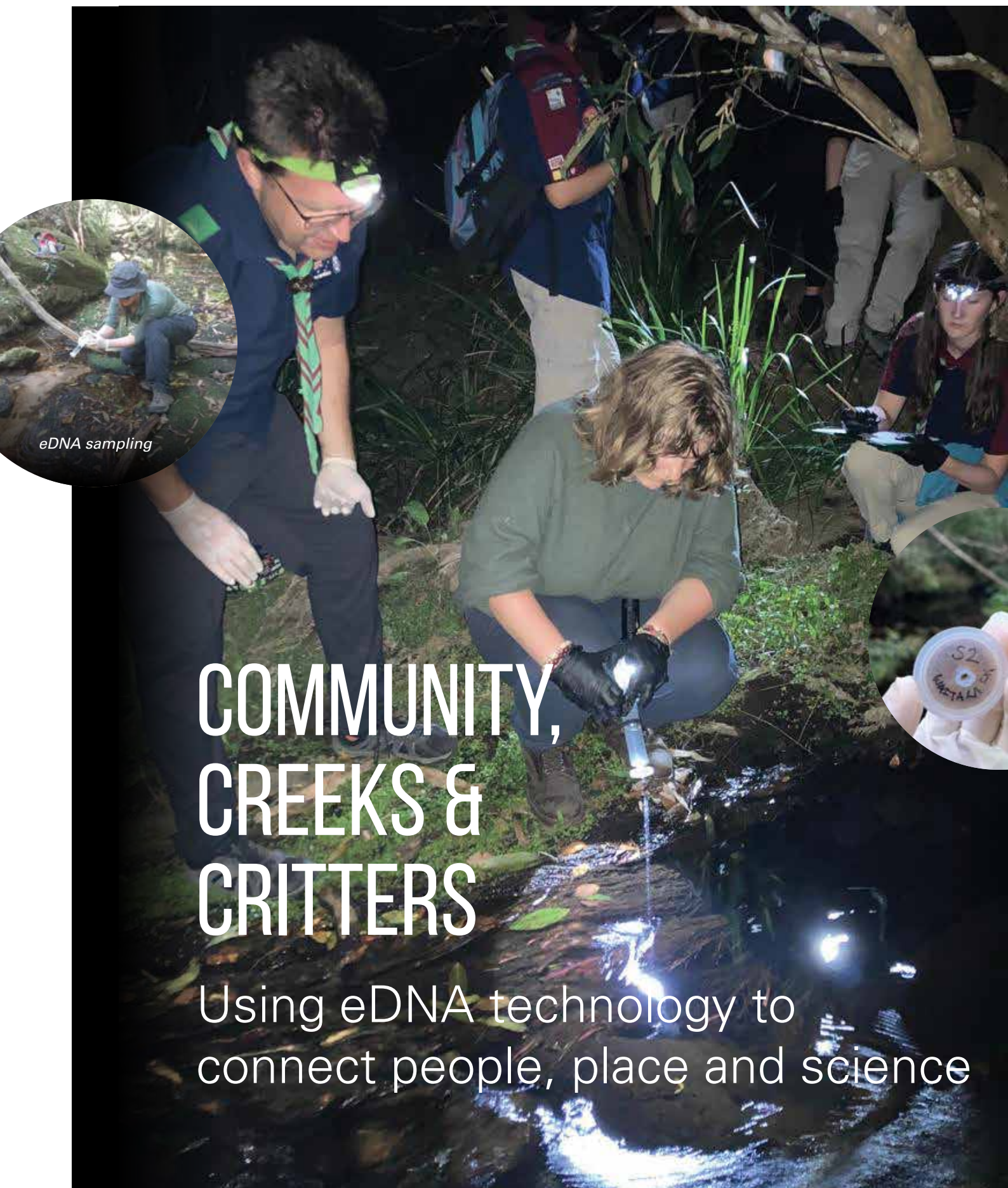
We are thrilled that such a talented musician will be able to teach, research and share her musical talent and knowledge with budding and confirmed musicians alike.

Jonatan started as a Bushcare Trainer with Hornsby Council in 2021, working with 10 Bushcare groups of various sizes around the Shire. Jonatan was generous with his time, filling in when other Trainers were away or sick and helping the team during community events and workshops.

Jonatan is already looking forward to pursuing his interests and career in land and ecological management and learning about a whole new suite of native plants and weeds. It will probably feel like starting all over again but will definitely be an exciting challenge!

Thank you, Jonatan, for all your efforts and your sunny disposition. We hope you enjoyed your time with Hornsby Bushcare and all the best with this new chapter of your life.





COMMUNITY, CREEKS & CRITTERS

Using eDNA technology to
connect people, place and science

eDNA sampling with Hornsby Heights Scouts, Berowra Creek, Hornsby Heights

You might recall a story in last year's Bushcare News about a Sydney Water Community Grants project. The project, titled "Using Hornsby Platypus eDNA as a Healthy Waterways Catalyst," aimed to learn more about local platypus distribution and promote the value of healthy waterways.

The project was a community partnership between Still Creek Catchment Landcare Group, Streamwatch, Friends of Berowra Valley and Hornsby Shire Council and was inspired by the August 2022 'discovery' of a platypus in Colah Creek. Platypus were previously thought to no longer inhabit any Hornsby Shire waterway.

Twenty-three eDNA water sampling site locations within the Still Creek, Glenorie Creek, and Colah Creek catchments were targeted, with the disappointing result of no fragments of platypus DNA being detected.

Unfortunately, the timing of our sampling coincided with platypus nesting season which could have influenced the amount of DNA in the creekline. Our platypus expert reassured us that a negative result does not necessarily mean they are not there, it just means that they were not around that sample location at that time.

Although the anticipated outcome of platypus detection was not achieved, this inaugural eDNA project served as a catalyst for securing a larger grant from the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet as part of their NSW Social Cohesion Grants – Unsung Heroes – Innovation in Volunteering program. Thanks to this grant funding and the continued backing from our community partnership, the *Community, Creeks & Critters - Using eDNA Technology to Connect People, Place & Science* project was conceived.

While the pilot project focused specifically on detecting platypus DNA in several rural Hornsby Shire creeklines, the *Creeks & Critters* project utilises broader focus environmental DNA (eDNA) metabarcoding techniques that can detect a wider range of species beyond just platypus. It also expanded eDNA water sampling efforts to a wider selection of Hornsby Shire creeks.

The project called on residents to connect with their local creek and get involved as citizen scientists by taking on some basic scientific training before donning field gear and obtaining eDNA sampling kits and bushwalking into a cross-section of the Shire's creek lines — from easily accessed urban and rural settings to remote off-trail sites.

To capture seasonal variation, eDNA sampling was scheduled for October 2023 (Spring) and April 2024 (Autumn). The Spring sampling saw 94 citizen scientists collect 82 samples from 41 creekline sites. From these samples, eDNA analysis at the Melbourne EnviroDNA laboratory detected a total of 97 'vertebrate taxa'



— meaning 97 different groupings of distinct, backboned critters living in and around our local waterways including 6 frog, 25 fish, 6 reptile, 36 bird and 24 mammal species.

Learn more about the project and check out our innovative Data Dashboard that includes an interactive map of the sampling site locations and information about the critters detected.

<https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/communitycreekscritters>

At the time of writing, our Creeks & Critters project team were busy gearing up for the Autumn eDNA sampling program.



What is eDNA?

eDNA stands for 'environmental' DNA. eDNA is cutting edge technology for wildlife detection and monitoring and is quickly gaining popularity as an innovative, non-invasive sampling technique. It is also slowly becoming more cost effective. All animals shed DNA into the environment — for example, through mucus, faeces, urine, gametes and skin cells — and scientists are now able to scan a sample of water, air, or soil to trace these tiny remnants. For example, a water sample can capture evidence of a platypus being in a creekline within the past 24-48 hours.



How do eDNA methods work?

There are two methods for identifying sources of eDNA: If you're looking for a specific species in your sample, that's referred to as DNA barcoding — you're using a specific gene test to target a SINGLE species. This was the method utilised in the platypus eDNA monitoring project.

If you want to identify ALL the species in the sample, that's called DNA metabarcoding. However, species detection is typically limited to those species included within the laboratory's eDNA reference database. This is the method being utilised in the Creeks & Critters project.

Bushcare iNaturalist project

Hornsby Bushcare's iNaturalist journey began in 2023 with the Bushcare Bioblitz in iNaturalist. A web-based citizen science database, iNaturalist allows you to record observations by uploading photos or auditory recordings of any living thing and shares your records with the community for identification. A bioblitz sets a limit in time and space to record as many species as possible within a defined location. In our case, the location was all Bushcare sites. Other benefits of joining a bioblitz include connecting with other nature lovers and keeping a record of all your Bushcare discoveries.

During the 2023 Hornsby Bushcare Bioblitz we had 77 participants who recorded 2,865 observations of 702 different species at 60 Bushcare sites within the Shire. Since then, we have continued our Bushcare projects to allow anyone to add to the species lists. At the time of writing this newsletter, we now have 182 participants who have recorded 4,291 observations of 1,000 species within our Bushcare sites! This strongly suggests that the iNaturalist bug has spread, meaning that even more can be learnt about life at our Bushcare sites.

As seen below, plants are the subject of choice when people are recording observations within Hornsby Shire. Insects and fungi are popular subjects as well.

Most popular observations by category for 2023 Hornsby Bushcare Bioblitz

Category	Number of species observed	Most popular species – common name	Most popular species – scientific name
Plants	600	Sweet pittosporum	<i>Pittosporum undulatum</i>
Insects	168	Australian jumper ant	<i>Myrmecia tarsala</i>
Fungi	94	Southern cinnabar polypore	<i>Trametes coccinea</i>
Arachnids (spiders, mites and ticks)	44	Red-tipped crab spider	<i>Sidymella rubrosignata</i>
Birds	38	Australian brush-turkey	<i>Alectura lathamii</i>
Mammals	9	Echidna or short-beaked echidna	<i>Tachyglossus aculeatus</i>
Reptiles	8	Australian water dragon	<i>Intellagama lesueurii</i>
Amphibians	7	Leaf green tree frog and Striped marsh frog	<i>Ranoidea phyllochroa</i> <i>Limnodynastes peronii</i>

There is a clear preference for species that are charismatic and easy to photograph. If your observations have not been identified to research grade, we have some tips to get your observations confirmed.

Need advice to get your observations to research grade?

Please record wild observations only. Landscaping, gardens and bushland restoration plantings are not wild and should be identified as 'captive' should you record them on your Bushcare site. Captive observations are not natural phenomena and will not be used for research

purposes. Council will have records of all plants supplied to your Bushcare group from the community nursery.

Do not upload blurred photos. A good tip is to carry a small ruler to help your phone focus on the feature you want to capture.

Take more than one photo per observation and try to capture key features such as a flower, leaf venation, underside of the leaf, the whole plant and any other distinguishing features. Be sure to combine your photos of the one species into one observation. If you are recording an observation of an insect, be sure to take photos from as many angles as possible.

Where possible, name your observation, noting that 'plant' or 'dicot'/'monocot' is a good starting point. If you are not convinced the suggested identification is correct, consider looking at the taxonomic family to broaden the likelihood of some fellow citizen scientist identifying your observations. There are people out there who use these tags to find their specialty.

Why can't I see my observation in the reserve?

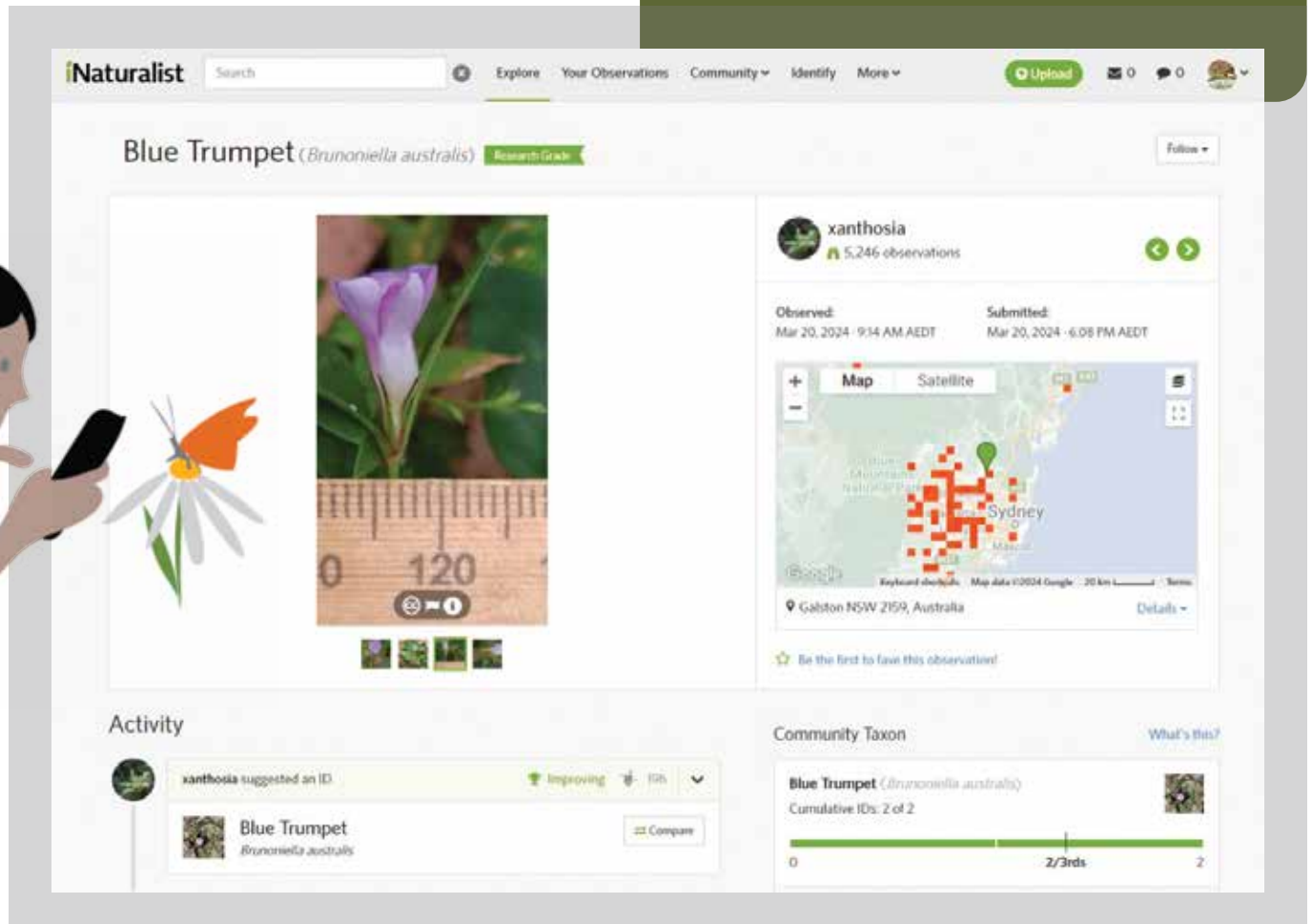
Check to see if your photo geolocation, or geotagging, is on. If not, refer to your device manual to enable photo

geotagging. Another common problem is the device recording your observation outside the project area. Geotagging is influenced by topography, with flat sites more likely to record an accurate location and steep sites likely to give you an inaccurate geotag. If this happens to you, log onto the iNaturalist website and move your observation pin within the project site.

For more information on geotagging, see [Geotagging Photos · iNaturalist](#)

inaturalist.org/posts/1918-geotagging-photos

inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started



iNaturalist observation page



Brunoniella australis
close up



Close up of *Brunoniella australis* flower



Brunoniella australis
leaf arrangement



20

VOLUNTEER YEAR IN REVIEW

23



2023 Nursery volunteer and golden trowel winner

Community nursery

The Community Nursery Volunteers program is continuing to thrive under Kelly's leadership, with 47 volunteers in the program who last year contributed a total of 3061 hours.

The volunteers produced 34,000 plants of which over 33,000 were distributed throughout the Council area for bush regeneration projects, water catchment devices, citizenship, community planting days, community native plant giveaways, schools and other community groups.

Hornsby Bushcare

Hornsby Bushcare continued its steady path of nurturing and restoring bushland. We have 65 Bushcare sites, with 24 new volunteers joining the program and 294 active Bushcare volunteers who worked over 7000 hours last year. We started two new groups: Wisemans Ferry Bushcare Group, who work near the community centre on Singleton Rd ; and Jane Starkey Bushcare Group, administered under the Lane Cove National Park Bushcare Program and working in both the national park and Jane Starkey Park at Dawson Ave, Thornleigh.

Golden Trowel Award

Heather Loch

The 2023 Golden Trowel was awarded to Heather Loch for her iNaturalist contributions to the Bushcare Bioblitz. Heather added many observations to our Hornsby Bushcare projects, and was instrumental in making the pilot project such a great success. Since joining both the community nursery and Bushcare programs, Heather has been eager to learn more about nature and the environment.

Recognition Awards

Nursery volunteer of the year

The 2023 Nursery Volunteer of the Year was Keith Bassett.

Keith's ability to effortlessly bring the Wednesday group of volunteers together with his humour and ever-friendly attitude was such a positive addition to the team. He approached all tasks with enthusiasm and precision, while showing support and consideration to all people involved at the community nursery.

Bushcare Years of Service Awards

Over 30 years

Currawong Bushcare Group: Berowra Heights

Currawong Reserve is in Berowra Heights, just before the winding section of Berowra Waters Road to the ferry crossing.

The Bushcare group started in 1993, when the volunteers tackled the weeds along the main drainage line and successfully restored this area of the site. A major



achievement was the transformation of a former roadside car park at the top of the site into a lovely native fern and microlaena glade.

Currawong is lucky enough to have some threatened species onsite including *Darwinia biflora*, *Tetratheca glandulosa* and *Lasiopetalum joyceae* and is frequently visited by glossy black-cockatoos.

The current regulars on the site are Rae, Joanne, Soumali, Natalie and Angus. Commendations are also due to many others over the past 30 years, whose contributions have helped make this site what it is today.

Dangar Island Bushcare Group: Dangar Island

This scenic site of remnant Blackbutt Rough-barked Apple Forest is perched above the surrounding residents. It is a green island within the island. This much-loved remnant has been consistently managed to improve the condition of the site and reduce the amount of weed incursions from neighbouring properties. Despite these challenges, the group has worked tirelessly on often steep slopes to control vines and other garden escapees. Terry, David and Cybele fearlessly scramble the escarpments in search of vines while the work horses of Maria, Margaret, Jan and Ana patiently sort the trad.

New Farm Road Bushcare Group: West Pennant Hills

Three ladies, Jackie, Louise and Jan started the New Farm Road Bushcare group back in 1993. The site consisted of two hectares of Blue Gum High Forest along a narrow creek corridor with an understorey of weeds.



The group has been meeting every Monday morning for 30 years with the current regulars being Tony, Doug, Bob, Heather, Ross, Lal, Jason and Julian. New Farm volunteers

have been lucky enough to be guided over the years by many inspirational trainers, such as Sheila Woods and Pat Pike.

Today, about half of the bushland has been fully restored, providing scenic surrounds for local residents who walk through the reserve, and serenity for those who simply enjoy being in nature. Thanks to the inspiring efforts of the Bushcare group, walkers can wander through healthy bushland and be delighted by the many indigenous plants and birds, and by the eastern long-necked turtles and Australian water dragons that call the reserve home.

Wareemba Avenue Bushcare Group: Thornleigh

Ann and Russell have worked tirelessly along Larool Creek over 30 years. Their consistent and methodical approach has resulted in a dramatic improvement of the site. Many



local residents use the site's walking track daily and appreciate the work of this dynamic duo. Frogs, ducks and water dragons have returned to this once highly degraded creek. We often catch glimpses of visitors using the group's purpose-built picnic tables.

Over 20 years

Carrs Bush Bushcare Group: Galston

Carrs Bush is a spectacular remnant of Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest nestled within Fagan Park in Galston.

The site has captured the hearts of many locals, none more so than the dedicated volunteers, Barry, Jody, Mark, Chris, Angela and Philip who crawl around on their hands and knees twice a month paying homage to the native bushland by battling the dreaded ehrharta.

Barry is the most senior member of the Bushcare group and a founding member of the local Still Creek Landcare Group. Barry happily shares his wealth of knowledge and passionately campaigns for what he believes in. He

regularly gets to the site half an hour early to check the site over before work begins.

Jody is one of Bushcare's multi-site volunteers who has a genuine love of the local bushland and has the added benefit of being highly entertaining.

Sadly, Mark recently passed away after a medical episode. See vale.

Cherrybrook Technology High School Bushcare Group: Cherrybrook

Cherrybrook Technology High School is fortunate enough to have a small remnant of Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest within its grounds. Teaching staff approached Bushcare in 2001 to seek advice and assistance with the removal of major weeds like madeira vine and lantana.

Since then, generations of students have been involved in learning about the significance of their bushland under the



watchful eye of volunteers Sandra (2022 Golden Trowel recipient) and Marie (our talented natural world photographer).

More recently, the Bushcare group was thrilled to work together with a dedicated group of hands-on students by showing them weeding techniques and teaching them about their natural environment. What a terrific way to engage with the next generation!

Denison Street Bushcare Group: Hornsby

When you walk around the Denison Street Bushcare site today, it is hard to imagine what a desolate and weedy parcel of land it was more than 25 years ago. With a lot of patience and hard work, Vicki and Grant transformed the immediate surroundings of a concrete-channeled urban creek from a bare patch in the middle of Hornsby into a lush, native urban oasis.



What Vicki and Grant have achieved in the middle of suburbia is no mean feat! It took many years to suppress the weeds, hundreds of plants from Council's Warada Ngurang Community Nursery and countless hours of hard yakka to achieve their vision. But the results are spectacular and inspirational.

Hull Road Bushcare Group: Beecroft

Hull Road is a small riparian Bushcare site forming the headwaters of Devlins Creek. The Bushcare site contains mature Sydney blue gums and turpentine.

Despite the presence of weeds and a history of encroachment, Ross and other local residents saw the potential in restoring this small patch of Blue Gum High Forest. As a result, the Bushcare group was established back in 2000.

Ross is a member of a number of Bushcare groups around Beecroft and Cheltenham. He is a passionate advocate for local bushland. Ross is an essential member of the group, and he is well-known for wielding his garden fork with lethal efficiency and precision to get rid of weeds!



Anita is another key member of the group. Anita has a love for the Arts, writing and gardening. She keeps the group enthused and entertained with her extensive general knowledge.

Last but not least is Alister, an active Bushcare

volunteer in both Hornsby and Parramatta local government areas. He brings his seemingly endless energy to the site, which must be based on his love of running and his passion for politics amongst other things.

Hunt Reserve Bushcare Group: Mount Colah

This reserve had a long history of dumping (rubbish, vegetation refuse, and car bodies). Nearby residents expressed concerns about fire risks and so a hazard reduction burn took place in 2001. Hunt Reserve Bushcare



Group was established by local residents Angela and Peter in 2002 following the burn. The group has been focusing on protecting the reserve's core areas by persistent hand weeding along the site's perimeter. Regular volunteers are Julie, Helen, Janine and Rosemary.

Quarry Road Bushcare Group: Dural

Quarry Road Bushcare Group was founded in 2001. Margaret and Col, who recently retired from Bushcare, were both original founding members of the group.

Soon after, Danny and Verena joined the group, followed by John in 2006 and then Sally a few years later. Chris joined the group in 2022.



At the beginning, the site was totally covered in lantana and blackberry and seemed, to some, a poor choice. But the group trusted legendary Bushcare Trainer Pat Pike's wide experience, knowledge and ability to envisage the site's potential.

The Bushcare group has a nice friendly vibe. There is a genuine friendship between the volunteers who are always willing to help each other out and to organise get-togethers.

They are welcoming to new members and have managed to cross the generational divide including high school student Chris into their friendship group.

Hopeville Park Bushcare Group: Hornsby Heights

In August 2000, a group of local residents decided to clean the remnant patch of bushland from the weeds that had established and proliferated over many decades. Despite some difficulties along the way (vandalism, regular rubbish dumping and storms), the group's persistence and hard work paid off. The reserve is now mostly self-sufficient, the native vegetation is suppressing weed incursions and rubbish dumping and vandalism acts are sporadic.



In recent times, the group has been diligently concentrating on maintaining regenerated areas, replanting, and reducing stands of dead vegetation.

Harvey Field is the only active volunteer from the original group. Kylie has worked on the site for almost 10 years and Kaz joined soon after. Recently the group welcomed Jo into the team.

Epping Oval Bushcare Group: North Epping

Epping Oval Bushcare site still retains a small remnant of Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest beside the oval. Large camphor laurels dominate the canopy. In most situations, this would be a problem, however the trees act as a buffer



to the winds that sweep across the oval and provide shelter and food to the often-sighted white-headed pigeons. This site contains all of the usual nasty weeds, but we have a great team of volunteers who attack them with great enthusiasm.

A drainage line that runs through this site and the roadside edge are a constant source of litter and occasional dumping, which keeps Simon busy. Diane and Caroline get on with weeding while Alan attempts to take photos to upload onto iNaturalist.

Meluca Crescent Bushcare Group: Hornsby Heights

This site is situated below properties on Meluca Crescent, Hornsby Heights and is partially managed as an Asset Protection Zone which is dutifully maintained by Keith, the sole volunteer. Keith was a founding member of the group and joined Bushcare to keep weeds and rubbish out of the bushland reserve. He has noticed a lot more wildlife travelling through the site including echidnas, wallabies and even a turtle in the local waterhole.

Parrish Place Bushcare Group: Mount Colah

Parrish Place Bushcare Group started with neighbour Carol who wanted to improve the condition of the bushland



surrounding the walking track linking the end of Parrish Place and the end of North Street. Carol was an active member of the Rural Fire Service at the time and arranged to use the Bushcare site for fire-related training activities. As such, there have been many pile burns on the site, many of which have resulted in excellent native regeneration in areas of high resilience, although some sections have resulted in poor regeneration.

In 2011, Council improved the functional and aesthetic value of the waterfall area, where the creek was diverted to fall into a new retention basin and slow the movement of water. This allowed for greater capture of excess nutrients, weed propagules and litter before releasing the water back into the main creek line, down the next waterfall, and then further downstream.

Guling and Ian have taken up the baton of caring for Parrish Place since Carol's departure.

Reddy Park Bushcare Group: Hornsby

Reddy Park is a well-used green space frequented by many locals. It contains a precious remnant of Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest.

The Bushcare group was established in 2000 and since then, efforts have concentrated in addressing the conflicting values between recreation and conservation.

The compacted soils means the establishment of any mid-story is a slow process. A community planting took place in 2023 beside the scout hall, with the plants coming along nicely.

Recent efforts have concentrated on the removal of garden escapees from neighbouring properties. Ros and Marie patiently tackle the never-ending supply of palm seedlings and trad. The enthusiastic Zaragoza family has recently joined the group.

Short Street Bushcare Group: Thornleigh

Short Street Bushcare Group is jointly managed by Hornsby Shire Council and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The site has always been busy with a healthy number of volunteers, both old hands and newcomers. Currently, we have a great mix of passionate and motivated volunteers transforming the site.

Local resident, Don joined the group in 2002 and became the 'face' of the Short Street group. Don does a great job at liaising between Hornsby Bushcare and NPWS and his fellow volunteers.

Long-standing volunteer Steve Procter joined the group in 2009. Steve's hard work and dedication to the group and to the site is second to none.



Another quiet achiever in this group is Sarah. Sarah has been volunteering since 2009 and has hardly missed a session in all this time. Her passion and dedication to Short Street Bushcare has been immense, quietly working away and getting the work done, and also assisting Don offsite with admin work for NPWS.

Tim Brownscombe Reserve Bushcare Group: Galston

Tim Brownscombe is a sweet little isolated reserve nestled in the semi-rural area of Galston. It is one of the sites that bears the stamp of Esme Wood, a long serving pioneer of bushland conservation in the area.

In 2011, the site was temporarily closed due to myrtle rust. When the site finally reopened after treatment, Lucia tirelessly battled the trad infestation.

Lucia's devotion was not only to the site but also to Esme. When Esme was no longer able to attend Bushcare, Lucia would deliver the papers and share a cuppa with Esme after every Bushcare session.

Other volunteers that have assisted are Angela who dabbles in many volunteering roles regenerating her own property, and Jody, our highly entertaining multi-site volunteer who continues to fight the good fight against trad.



Jeannette at the 2023 Bushcare Christmas party

The 2023 Bushcare Photo Competition winners



*Winner – Tawny
Frogmouth in a pot
plant - Richard
Shields - 2023*



The eyes have it by David Hooper



Love me knot by David Hooper

2024 Bushcare Photo Competition

The annual Bushcare Photo Competition is open to Hornsby Bushcare and Warada Ngurang Community Nursery volunteers and Environment Branch staff. Submissions close Wednesday 9 October 2024.

There are two categories in the 2024 competition, with a maximum of three entries per person per category:

- **Hornsby - Our beautiful Bushland Shire** – the celebration of our environment. Photos must be taken between 1 October 2023 and 9 October 2024 within Hornsby Shire and be related to wild plants and animals.

- **The wonder of weather** – From dramatic skies to crystal clear days, it's time to take notice of the abiotic features that surround our Bushland Shire.

Submissions are to include the photographer's name, title of the photo and volunteer group name. Photos are to be at least 300dpi (resolution) or 1200 pixels width/height. Email: bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

- By entering the competition, you agree for Council to use your photo to promote the local natural environment, including for social media posts.
- Winners will be awarded by popular vote and announced at the volunteer Christmas party. The judge's decision is final.
- A selection of the photos will be published in the 2025 Bushcare calendar.
- All entries will be used to promote Hornsby Bushcare and Environment Branch, including social media.
- Should a child be clearly identifiable within a photo, consent of the parent or guardian via a photo release form is required. Photo release forms are available upon request.

Please direct any questions to Leanne Johnston on 9847 6362 or ljohnston@hornsby.nsw.gov.au



Sundews

Drosera, commonly called sundews, are a unique and interesting genus of small carnivorous plants. They have modified leaves with sticky hairs to attract then trap tiny insects. Usually found in moist but nutrient-poor areas, they extract the nutrients they need by digesting insects. Many *Drosera* species have a neat rosette of leaves hugging the ground; other species have leaves arranged almost like flowers or sticky arms.

We have started growing *Drosera* at the nursery as a fun plant to educate kids about how amazing, strange and interesting plants can be.

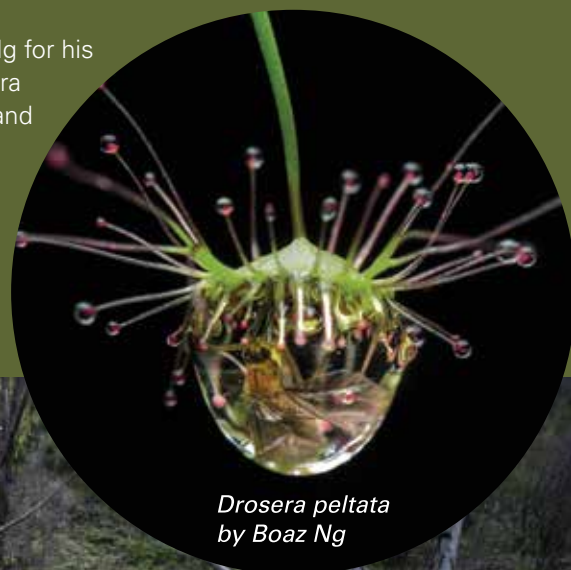
Many *Drosera* species can be grown by cuttings or seed and also by division.

Drosera can be grown in pots by keen gardeners and those who want to try something different. There are carnivorous plant groups to join and shows each year around Sydney.

If you want to learn more about these diverse and amazing little plants, please check out the very passionate Sydney enthusiast and expert, Boaz Ng's Fierce Flora Website at: fiercefloora.com

Credit to Boaz Ng for his photos of *Drosera peltata* with fly and *Drosera binata*.

Kelly Bollinger
Community
Nursery
Coordinator



Drosera peltata
by Boaz Ng



Drosera binata

Spotlight on Hopeville Park

The year 2023 was a celebratory year for the Hopeville Park bushcare site in Hornsby Heights. It marked the group's 23rd year of activity.

Hopeville Park is one of Hornsby Heights' recreational landmarks. The park has had many lives and uses over the years, but it is most notably remembered for being the site of a campsite for unemployed workers during the Great Depression years of the 1930s.

It is remarkable that the native forest of silvertop ash and red bloodwood managed to remain and renew over the years. Even though Hopeville Park is a small reserve in size, the challenges faced by the volunteers since 2000 have been momentous. Volunteers have had to deal with damaging storms (2002 and 2018), arson, dumping, vandalism to vegetation and plantings and the dismantling of various structures.

The group never gave up and showed extreme resilience and perseverance. Challenges, that would have demoralised most, were used as an opportunity to improve the condition of the reserve. The group revegetated the groundcover and shrub layers, installed signage, prepared the site for small control burns, had input into the BMX track master plan and negotiated that the derelict fence originally built to protect the native remnant vegetation be repaired and upgraded.

Harvey Field, Bushcare volunteer

The history of the Hopeville Park Bushcare Group is closely associated with Bushcare volunteer Harvey Field. Harvey was one of the main instigators behind the establishment of the Bushcare group in August 2000 alongside Clem and Jenny, and Michael and Moira.

Harvey, alongside a couple of other residents, decided to start looking after the native section of the park that had been subject to degradation and dumping for many years.

Harvey was born in Forbes. Growing up, Harvey worked with his wool classer father in many country occupations such as building, fencing, bag sewing and all jobs in shearing sheds. Harvey enjoyed the bush, living on the Lachlan River in yellow-box country, where early life bush activities included pig farming and learning about birds and vegetation.

Harvey joined the State Public Service in 1958 in the Lands Department. He worked for three years in Forbes, assisting returned servicemen getting into farming, followed by a two-year stint in Coonamble as assistant to the clerk of petty sessions. Harvey moved to Sydney in 1963 and later joined the Land Titles Office, until retirement in 2000.

Harvey and his wife Maria bought the family block of land in Hornsby Heights in April 1965. Harvey remembers the area being covered in many trees. Even though new residents were required to preserve remnant trees during the

construction of their houses, many trees were lost due to ground sullage, changes in natural water courses and little protection from building sites. The loss of mature trees also had an impact on birds. Harvey recalls that birdlife was more abundant back then.

Many local residents were reticent to have a section of Hopeville Park dedicated as a Bushcare site. The site was treated as a kids' playground where anything and everything went on. It was also used as a rubbish dump for the neighborhood. For many years, on every 24th of May parents, would take everything that could be burnt into the park for a big bonfire, with kids joining in on the fun by bringing along numerous firecrackers!

After some of the original residents left the area, Harvey witnessed a change in attitude towards the site for the better. Harvey continues to look after the Hopeville Park bush by attending Bushcare and keeping an eye on the site whilst on his regular walks.



Hopeville Park - Apr 2001 - Harvey Field and Michael Cusack

Harvey is very fond of all native plants, but grass trees and banksias are amongst his favourites. He still enjoys new projects with the Bushcare group around the site. Watching the site change for the best, chasing weedy grass species, most notoriously the tenacious pigeon grass, and learning about the characteristics of the large variety of native species on the site keeps Harvey and the group going!

Jean-Philippe Kecman
Bushcare Officer

Rare species for Hornsby Shire *Zornia dyctiocarpa*

(caterpillar
bean)

Caterpillar bean-flower

records of this species. One record of *Zornia dyctiocarpa* was made in Dural in 2017. The other location where observations of *Zornia dyctiocarpa* were made was on land that is now Jane Starkey Park in Thornleigh. The Thornleigh records were made by Robin Buchanan about 50 years ago in the mid-1970s.

So, what we have found at Kenley Park is certainly something very special!



*Caterpillar bean-stem
and leaves*

What does it look like?

The caterpillar bean is a small, non-woody yellow and red-flowered plant from the pea family. It grows horizontally along the ground, with the ends of its stems turning upward and growing to a height of up to 30cm. It prefers open areas with little competition from taller grasses.

What's next?

- A temporary fence with signage was erected around the Kenley Park individuals to protect them from mowing and trampling.
- Seeds are being collected and will be stored and prepared for (fingers crossed) germination at Warada Ngurang Community Nursery with the help of our wonderful team of volunteers.
- Having a population of healthy ex-situ plants growing at the nursery would allow for their placement at sites (within suitable bushland reserves) that offer much better protection.

Finding healthy specimens of *Zornia dyctiocarpa* at Kenley Park is certainly something very special. No doubt, the Kenley Park Bushcare Group will get to know these caterpillar beans better and will look after this latest addition to the native species list for Hornsby Shire's bushland reserves.

Jean-Philippe Kecman
Bushcare Officer

Fortunately, not every newly recorded plant is bad news!

The Kenley Park Bushcare Group in Normanhurst made an interesting discovery during their January meeting. Again, iNaturalist played an important role in the recording of a cryptic plant growing along the edge of the car park on Kenley Road. Members of the group came across at least 30 *Zornia dyctiocarpa* (caterpillar bean) individuals whilst using iNaturalist to update the site's species list.

The caterpillar bean is extremely uncommon in Hornsby Shire. *Zornia dyctiocarpa* only grows on clay-based soils and is a typical species of Western Sydney's Cumberland Plain Woodland vegetation community, a Critically Endangered Ecological Community (CEEC).

While not considered a threatened species under NSW or federal legislation, *Zornia dyctiocarpa* is extremely rare in bushland to the east of an imaginary line drawn roughly north-south through Parramatta. In Hornsby Shire, there are only two locations with official



Caterpillar bean-Kenley Park

Recent volunteer retirements

After a combined 30 years of Bushcare, volunteers Judy Jeffery and Marie Glover have made the decision to hang up their Bushcare tool belts.

Marie Glover - Reddy Park Bushcare Group, Hornsby

Marie had a long association with the Reddy Park Bushcare Group in Hornsby. A long-term resident of the area, Marie used to walk through Reddy Park after moving into the area with her husband. The tall standing turpentine made an impression on her; not so much the vast expanse of mowed buffalo grass underneath the turpentines. Marie would worry that the whole reserve would turn into a grass paddock should many of the turpentines and ironbarks die.

To Marie's delight, Council started to gradually recognise the importance of this Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest (STIF) remnant, which resulted in the adoption of a more sympathetic way to manage the native vegetation. Areas of mowed grass were considerably reduced, and more focus was put towards a bush regeneration approach.

A small bush regeneration contract was secured for Reddy Park, about the same time as the Reddy Park Bushcare Group was established in 2000. Marie joined in 2003, and it was the beginning of 20 years of Bushcare.

Marie transposed skills and knowledge gained at Bushcare to her own garden. She realised that a few plants thought to be weeds were in fact native ground covers and grasses. By allowing plants to go a bit 'wild' in her garden, she noticed that more and more native species were given the opportunity to pop up and reveal themselves.

Marie enjoyed her time as a Bushcare volunteer and is thrilled to have witnessed the gradual return of native vegetation at Reddy Park. Ending her involvement with Bushcare is a bittersweet feeling for Marie, but she will continue to enjoy her regular walks through Reddy Park, pulling out the odd weed along the way!

Judy Jeffery – Binya Close Bushcare Group, Hornsby Heights

Judy, of Binya Close Bushcare Group (Hornsby Heights) and Floating Landcare fame, celebrated her 90th birthday in November 2023. This milestone felt like a good time to step down from Bushcare responsibilities. Retirement from Bushcare only means one thing for Judy; being able to spend more time in her own garden!

Judy grew up in Elwood, a Melbourne bayside suburb near St Kilda. The family then moved to the Dandenong area when her Mum's health deteriorated. Judy became a full-time carer for her Mum and couldn't get her School Leaving Certificate. To supplement the family income, she

worked at the HJ Heinz factory whilst taking on family responsibilities.

In 1957, Judy moved to Sydney and got a job at the National Cash Register. Soon after, she met her future husband, Grahame at the Pittwater Youth Hostel. Marriage soon followed in 1958. Judy and Grahame raised a family in Greenwich and remained in the family home for 40 years. Grahame, with the help of Judy, ran their own business, specialising in selling irrigation systems to nurseries. The family business is still in operation to this day, managed by Judy's son.

Judy and Grahame moved to Hornsby Heights in 2002. Volunteering with the Pink Ladies Force at Hornsby Hospital was not enough for Judy. When she heard that Bushcare volunteers were needed in her suburb, she joined the Binya Close Bushcare Group in 2012. Judy's love of Bushcare and the local bushland inspired her to complete a Certificate 3 in Land and Conservation Management at Ryde TAFE.



Judy hardly missed any Bushcare sessions for 13 years. She contributed greatly to the transformation of this rugged yet beautiful Bushcare site. Judy was also a regular participant in Floating Landcare expeditions organised by NPWS and Hornsby Council. She also attended the initial Bushcare sessions at Rofe Park when the group was created.

Judy will always have fond memories of working with other like-minded volunteers. Memories that not even an overabundance of leeches and a large amount of lantana will tarnish! She retires from Bushcare in the comforting knowledge that an increasing number of local residents are taking a keen interest in preserving their natural heritage.

Thank you, Marie and Judy, for your involvement with Hornsby Bushcare and for giving countless hours of your time towards preserving our precious natural areas by making bushland less weedy and more enjoyable for the community.

Jean-Philippe Kecman

Bushcare Officer



New environment workshop for 2024 – Basket weaving with natural fibres

The Bushcare Team are working on some new workshops to provide alternate ways of igniting a passion for nature amongst the Shire's residents. Our first workshop was basket weaving with native fibres with Kirrily Jordan, a local multidisciplinary artist specialising in basketry, textiles and social practice.

We started off the day with a brief talk about suitable native fibres and how to select the best materials for basket weaving. We touched on ways to personalise the fibres through natural processing and dying to improve the colour and texture of the weaving materials. Then, we moved onto tools and started our basket using lomandra leaves. Soon the group were practising the ancient

two-strand twining stitch to weave their baskets. Weavers could choose from a variety of fibres, each with their own unique qualities. Popular weaving materials were the inner sheath of the Bangalow palm pod, and cordyline, Gynea lily, fan palm and pandanas leaves.

As with all Kirrily's workshops the focus was on exploration and self-expression, not perfection! Under her guidance the cottage became a relaxing, welcoming space to the time-honoured traditions of basket weaving. We ended up with a room full of miniature baskets, each with its own unique shape, texture and colour.

If you are interested in attending one of Kirrily's weaving workshops, visit her website for more information, Kirrily Jordan.

Public Disclosure update

The Public Interest Disclosures Act (PID Act) was amended in October 2023. This piece of legislation is sometimes described as 'whistle-blower' legislation. Its main purpose is to put in place legal protections for staff in the public sector who want to report serious wrongdoing such as fraud, corruption and maladministration.

Hornsby Shire Council takes reports of serious wrongdoing seriously. The integrity of our Council relies upon our staff, volunteers, contractors and subcontractors speaking up when they become aware of wrongdoing. Council is committed to

building a 'speak up' culture where public officials are encouraged to report any conduct that they reasonably believe involves wrongdoing.

If you require further information about this policy, how public interest disclosures will be handled and the PID Act you can:

- contact the PID Advice Team within the NSW Ombudsman by phone: (02) 9286 1000 or email: pidadvice@ombo.nsw.gov.au
- Alternatively, you can make a complaint directly to Council. This can be done by:

- contacting the Council by phone on 9847-6666 and requesting to speak to the General Manager, any Director, or the Risk and Audit Manager about reporting serious wrongdoing
- Sending an email to Council at hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au or a letter, marked to the attention of the General Manager, and which states that you are reporting serious wrongdoing

This policy is available on Council's website.

Project update- Protecting Our Forests

Council's *Protecting Our Forests* campaign (part of Council's NSW Environmental Trust grant) continues to engage and involve the community in many and varied ways, raising awareness about our precious Blue Gum High Forest (BGHF) and Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest (STIF) vegetation:

September 2023

BGHF – community planting on the edge of Berowra Valley National Park near Lee Rd Pennant Hills, in collaboration with the local National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) team.



October 2023

STIF – Pop-up display outside Woolworths, Glenorie in partnership with Still Creek Landcare group



November 2023

STIF – Pop-up display outside the Bendigo Bank, Galston in partnership with Still Creek Landcare group



December 2023

BGHF – Script for the creation of a short video finalised

February 2024

STIF – One-week display at the Discovery Space in Hornsby Library



Contractor bush regeneration

The contractor bush regeneration component of the NSW Environmental Trust grant has entered its 3rd year, with contractors continuing ecological restoration work at:

Blue Gum High Forest

Ginger Meggs Park in Hornsby Valley, Fuller Ave and Osborne Rd road reserves in Hornsby and Normanhurst respectively, Park Ave and Sutherland Rd Bushland in Beecroft, Lakes of Cherrybrook Bushland in Cherrybrook.

Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest

Lane Cove National Park in Thornleigh, Greenway Park East and West Bushland in Cherrybrook (see progress over page).

Boosting Bushcare

New Bushcare groups established under the NSW Environmental Trust grant have made sound progress at:

Blue Gum High Forest

Kenley Park in Normanhurst, Ginger Meggs Park in Hornsby Valley, Netherby St Bushland in Wahroonga.

Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest

Jane Starkey Park & Lane Cove National Park (LCNP) in Thornleigh.



Existing Bushcare groups working in BGHF and STIF are delighted that their membership has been given a boost on the back of *Protecting Our Forests* activities and engagement, including New Farm Rd Reserve Bushcare in West Pennant Hills (BGHF) and Reddy Park Bushcare (STIF) in Hornsby.

While there is invariably always room for new volunteers at all Bushcare sites, we would really love a few more volunteers in the new Jane Starkey Park & LCNP Bushcare Group in Thornleigh. This group meets on the 3rd Sunday morning of the month from 9am to 12pm, working under the supervision of Council trainer Jenny Heller to restore an important STIF remnant that straddles Council and NPWS land. See inaturalist.org/projects/hornsby-bushcare-jane-starkey-park for an amazing array of plants, animals and fungi at this fascinating site, including Bushcare volunteers' observations during the Hornsby Bushcare Bioblitz. To join this group, you will need to register through NPWS Bushcare at nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/volunteer-activities/lane-cove-national-park-bushcare.



Protecting Our Forests Galston pop up

The last *Protecting Our Forests* event for 2023 was held in November when Rachel, Petra and I from Environment Branch, along with Barry Lees and Jutta Hamilton from Still Creek Landcare group, popped up outside the Bendigo Bank at Galston.

The purpose of our presence was to raise awareness of the exceedingly rare and threatened Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest (STIF) ecological community, much of which grows on private property in the rural parts of Hornsby Shire. With good visibility from passing vehicles and shoppers, people engaged on a number of levels, from simply noticing the banners right through to in-depth conversations.

Visitors included rural landholders who delighted Barry with stories about how nature on their properties has been invigorated since they sought his wise advice in years gone by.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Still Creek Landcare group on this campaign in 2024, the final year of the NSW Environmental Trust grant that has part funded *Protecting Our Forests*.

Jeannette Stannard

Bushland Programs Coordinator



Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest - Greenway Park West Bushland, Cherrybrook

Before and after photos of bush regeneration contractor work in the Environmental Trust grant-funded area of Greenway Park West Bushland, Cherrybrook.



December 2021 Quadrat 2 - before work started - *Ehrharta erecta* covered 25% of the ground layer. Privet covered 90% of the mid-storey. Ten (10) native species were recorded in the quadrat.



November 2022 Quadrat 2 - *Ehrharta erecta* covered 30% of the ground layer (high rainfall and increased light to the ground from woody weed removal led to a flush of *Ehrharta erecta* germination). Privet covered 20% of the mid-storey. Fifteen (15) native species were recorded in the quadrat. New native plant species appearing in Quadrat 2 were *Clerodendrum tomentosum*, *Cayratia clematidea*, *Clematis aristata*, *Desmodium varians* and *Hydrocotyle peduncularis*.



December 2023 Quadrat 2 – *Ehrharta erecta* covered 20% of the ground layer. Privet covered 4% of the mid-storey. Sixteen (16) native species were recorded in the quadrat. The new native plant species *Pittosporum revolutum* appeared in Quadrat 2.

Predators at the Nursery

Thankfully we have a good balance of predator and prey at the nursery. Our most common problem insects are aphids who ruin new growth on plants, grasshoppers and katydids who nibble on newer leaves.

We do use white oil and pest oil at times of infestation, especially with aphids, but need to be careful not to accidentally spray any beneficial predator such as spiders, praying mantis, assassin bugs, robber flies and ladybug larvae.



Thornbill



Fairywren



Thornbill



Fairywren

Gum Trees of Hornsby Shire workshop

Have you ever spent time looking at a gum tree and its distinctive features and wondered what its name could be? Many of us feel like identifying gum trees can turn into a real challenge. From semi-arid areas to alpine conditions, from tall and straight to gnarly and stout, gum trees are present across most corners of the Australian continent.

Despite being instantly recognisable icons of the natural Australian world, identifying local and favourite gum trees can feel like a daunting task. But it does not have to be. Help is available to get you started!

The Gum Trees of Hornsby Shire workshop continues to be a popular event in the Bushcare calendar and the recent one, in early February 2024, was no exception. This time, we began in the classroom where we looked at different types of barks, fruit, leaf shapes and other distinguishing features.

Skills were then tested in the field. Through observation and collection of fruit, leaves and flowers (thank you rowdy cockies for your help!), we managed to identify nine different species of gum trees (out of 36 recorded in the Shire) growing naturally in the Shire. It was also a good opportunity to talk about the relationships between the large-scale landscape, soil types and vegetation communities.

Make sure you join us next time round.

Jean-Philippe Kecman
Bushcare Officer

We get many good small bird helpers such as thornbills and fairywrens, fantails and eastern spinebills which hop through the foliage searching for insects.

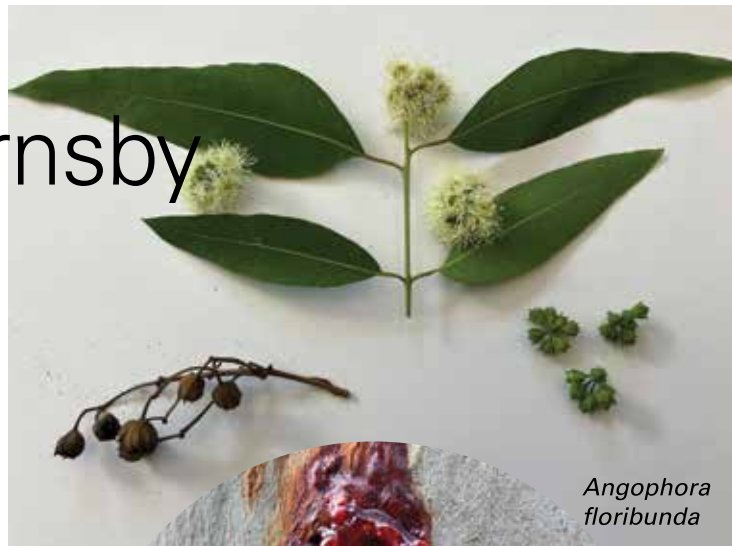
We also get beautiful frogs such as Peron's and leaf green tree frogs and eastern water skinks who feed on insects at the nursery.



Huntsman



Praying mantis



Angophora floribunda



Sydney Red Gum oozing kino (Angophora costata)



Blackbutt (Eucalyptus pilularis)



Sydney Blue Gum (Eucalyptus saligna)



Blackbutt (Eucalyptus pilularis)



Narrow-leaved Scribbly Gum (Eucalyptus racemosa)



Native Plant Giveaway

We held our first 2024 Native Plant Giveaway in March this year. Kelly selected 70 different species for this giveaway, with the most popular plants being grevilleas and the ever-popular chorizema, a habitat plant. We had 600 residents take home over 2,260 native plants to place in their gardens.

The nursery volunteers were on hand to assist people with plant selection and garden advice. Staff from other sections of Council were available to talk to residents

about waste and recycling, sustainability, fire preparedness and biosecurity. The popular *Protecting our Forests* display made an appearance, this time with its Blue Gum High Forest plants. Woo Hoo, the homemade powerful owl, continues to be a hit with young and old as she keeps a watchful eye over her eggs.

The next plant giveaway is in August. Please follow Council on Facebook or look out for Council's eNews for details. We will continue with the booking system, to reduce long queues and ensure we have plenty of plants for residents.



Peron's Tree Frogs at Warada Ngurang Community Nursery

In November last year, I set up a 25L raised water bowl to create habitat for tree frogs at the nursery.

I had heard Peron's tree frogs (*Litoria peronii*) echoing croaks from some of the pipes around the nursery. They are sometimes found in our wheely bins looking for insects. I was hoping they may find the raised bowl, strategically placed to outmanoeuvre the ever-present striped marsh frogs (*Limnodynastes peronii*), our most successful urban frog.

In only a couple of weeks, the eggs were laid on the sides of the bowl and on leaves of the local waterlily growing within.

I had heard or seen eastern dwarf tree frogs (*Litoria fallax*), leaf green tree frogs (*Ranoidea phyllochroa*) and Peron's tree frogs at the nursery, so I was excited to see the golden noses, a key identifier for Peron's tree frog tadpoles, soon after hatching from the frogspawn.

The Peron's tree frog tadpoles grew quickly, eating all the vegetation in their pond. I removed what was left of the native water plants (grown as a trial for general nursery production) and fed baby spinach leaves, pumpkin leaves, lettuce, and sliced zucchini to the ravenous hatchlings. Soon, I had to set up extra bowls as there were so many growing tadpoles. There were huge numbers because they were safe from predators in the bowls and I could not let it be survival of the fittest, so I diligently provided tasty daily banquets.

It wasn't long before I was buying lots of green leaves or collecting suitable plants to feed the hundreds of little tadpoles each day, and cleaning their water each week.

A couple of months passed and by February many had formed back legs and were soon to be leaving their water bowl homes to brave the big wide world. Hopefully, many will stay at the nursery helping with insect pest control and creating a new generation.

It has been fascinating for volunteers and staff to watch them grow.

Kelly Bollinger

Community Nursery Coordinator



Peron's tree frog - distinctive inner thigh markings



Leaf green tree frogs



Peron's tree frog - tiny tadpoles



Peron's tree frog - tiny tadpoles

It's Myrtle Rust March!

Myrrtle rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) is a fungal plant pathogen which affects plants of the Myrtaceae family, including eucalyptus, melaleuca, leptospermum, callistemon and many others. It was first introduced to Australia in 2010, with a nursery in the Central Coast being ground zero. Of particular note was the dramatic impact of myrtle rust on the once common scrub turpentine (*Rhodamnia rubescens*), which has been recorded in several parts of our Shire.

Hornsby Shire had three recorded locations of *Rhodamnia rubescens*; Dog Pound Creek, another at Tim Brownscombe Reserve in Galston, and a third at Devlins Creek. Several management methods were trialed including exclusion fencing and fungicides, but myrtle rust could not be avoided and all three patches succumbed to infection. The patch at Devlins Creek had the added threat of an impending M2 expansion, so it was prioritised for cutting collection, with one individual persevering at the nursery 14 years on!

I became personally involved with the fight against myrtle rust in 2023, when a month-long stint of volunteer bush regeneration at Lord Howe Island turned into a multi-agency emergency response to a myrtle rust incursion in the settlement area. The fate of five endemic species found nowhere else in the world depended on the successful eradication of myrtle rust from the island. My role in monitoring and data collection included inspecting every myrtaceous plant within a several hundred-metre radius of infected sites, and all tracks and trails on the island. Fortunately, no further myrtle rust has been detected on the island since April 2023.

While myrtle rust is now widespread throughout much of the east coast of NSW, higher-quality data is needed to keep track of exactly where active spores are. To address this data gap, myrtle rust PhD researcher Alyssa Martino launched the Gum Tree Guardians project on iNaturalist. By harnessing the power of citizen science, she hopes to improve monitoring and reporting of myrtle rust throughout the country. This will help to determine exactly which Myrtaceae plants are highly susceptible, and where preservation measures should be focused.

Have you seen myrtle rust in our Shire? Next time you do, be sure to snap a photo, and upload it to the Gum Tree Guardians project on iNaturalist! Gum Tree Guardians · iNaturalist

Myles Holloway

Bushfire Mitigation Officer



Myrtle rust on scrub turpentine



Myrtle rust

Myrtle rust conference 2023

Myrtle rust monitoring on Lord Howe Island

Events

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

We are working on some new and exciting events for the remainder of 2024. Keep your eyes peeled for spoon carving woody weeds and nature therapy.

Creating spoons from woody weeds

When: 9am-12pm, Saturday 15 June,

Where: Warada Ngurang Community Nursery, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills

Bookings: hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson

Cost: \$10

Carve your own spoon with master greenwood carver and bush regenerator Brad Van Luyt. Brad will introduce you to the wonderful world of spoon carving with woody weeds, such as privet or box elder, sourced from local bushland. No woodwork or carving experience is needed, and all tools and materials are provided. All that is required is an open mind to the possibilities of working with wood to create a spoon and increasing your skills and techniques whilst connecting with other wood lovers. All materials and tools supplied.

Protecting Our Forests community planting

When: Sunday 30 June, 10am-12pm

Where: Greenway Park, Cherrybrook

Bookings: No booking is required and all are welcome

This is your chance to participate with members of the wider community, lending a helping hand and learning more about your local environment in this patch of critically endangered Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest.

For more information scan the QR code or visit hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson



National Tree Day

When: 10am-12pm, Sunday 28 July

Where: Carrs Bush, Fagan Park

Parking: Access via Carrs Road, Galston. Parking fees apply.

All tools and equipment are supplied. Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

Bushcode Workshop

When: 9am-1pm, Saturday 10 August

9am-1pm, Saturday 21 September

9am-1pm, Saturday 2 November

Where: Warada Ngurang Community Nursery, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills 2120

Event cost: Free, bookings essential.

Bookings: hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson

All Bushcare volunteers must complete this workshop within six months of joining the program. This is your

opportunity to learn about how Council supports Bushcare group activities within the Shire.

Morning tea is provided.

Enquiries email: bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

iNaturalist Workshop

When: 9am-11am, Saturday 7 September

Where: Warada Ngurang Community Nursery, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills.

Bookings: open late July, go to hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson

Be prepared for the 2024 iNaturalist Bioblitz at the end of September. This is your opportunity to find out how to use the iNaturalist app. This is a great workshop for those new to using the iNaturalist app or if you have difficulty getting your observation to research grade. We will start the morning with a lecture followed by a walk on the Mambara Track. Please bring your phone with the app already downloaded.

Aussie Bird Count

When: 8am-11am, Saturday 19 October

Where: Hornsby and Cheltenham.

Bookings: open September, go to hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson

This year we are holding our annual Bushcare bird survey during the Aussie bird count, a Birdlife Australia citizen science project to find out what birds frequent our cities. We record the species present and the number of individuals in a twenty-minute interval. But why wait for us to take you out? When you can do your own bird survey anytime during the Aussie bird count. For more information see aussiebirdcount.org.au

Pollinator Workshop

When: 1:30- 3.00. Saturday 26 October

Where: Warada Ngurang Community Nursery, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills.

Bookings: open September, go to hornsby.nsw.gov.au/whatson

Australian pollinator week acknowledges our important and unique insect pollinators during our southern spring (November). This workshop will highlight the differences between our common pollinators to enable you identify distinct groups of pollinators. You will learn skills to do your own pollinator count in November during Australian Pollinator Week. November is an exciting time to get into your garden or local reserve and look at pollinators.

Bushcare and Nursery Volunteers Christmas Party

Save the date: Saturday 7 December 2024

Invitations to be sent out in October. We are looking forward to celebrating another great year of volunteering for a better environment.

Save the date!

New environmental weed for Hornsby Shire

Salpichroa organifolia

In news that none of us looking after the bush want to hear, an unwanted guest has made its way into our bushland.

Salpichroa organifolia, commonly known as pampas lily of the valley, was found by bush regeneration contractors at Upper Pyes Creek Bushland Castle Hill in late 2023. It is the first mention of this plant growing anywhere in Hornsby Shire.

Salpichroa organifolia, is unfortunately not a newcomer in the Sydney Basin. Our colleagues from Randwick and Waverley councils have been battling with the species for the past two decades. It is also well established in areas of the Northern Beaches.

Pampas lily of the valley has all the characteristics of a super weed:

- Originating from the temperate regions of South America and a member of the Solanaceae family, it has an extensive root system and dense scrambling stems, similar to turkey rhubarb.
- It reproduces both by seeds (dispersed mostly by birds but also by mice, rats and ants) and vegetatively from creeping stems and suckering roots.

- To top it all off, it can cope with long periods of dry weather and seems to have developed a certain resistance to glyphosate.
- How a handful of individuals have made their way to a corner of a Blue Gum High Forest bushland reserve remains a mystery. As far as we know, this is the only recorded infestation in the Shire. Without being too pessimistic, it is likely other individuals are keeping a low profile in our bushland or gardens.

So next time you are at your Bushcare site, bushwalking or working on your iNaturalist skills, make sure you keep an eye out for this new nasty and report it to your Trainer or Council's Bushcare Team.

Council has recently updated its information about weeds.

To find out more visit
Weeds | Hornsby Shire Council (nsw.gov.au)

Jean-Philippe Kecman
Bushcare Officer

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEWSLETTER

You can send your stories or letters to the Editor for the next edition by 1 JANUARY 2025

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

**This newsletter has been compiled by
Hornsby Shire Council.**