

Bushcare/Parkcare Procedures

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1. Purpose

The Bushcare/Parkcare Procedures outline the operational delivery of the Bushcare and Parkcare programs in accordance with the Bushcare/Parkcare Policy.

2. Statement

Council coordinates the Bushcare and Parkcare programs to enable community volunteers to help maintain and improve designated Park and Natural Areas, primarily on Council-managed land.

The aims and objectives of the Bushcare and Parkcare programs are listed in the Bushcare/Parkcare Policy.

3. Definitions

The following terms are utilised in this procedure and are defined below:

Bushcare

The involvement of volunteers in the management of Natural Areas as defined below. The term 'Bushcare' in these procedures includes volunteer groups such as Bushcare, Dunecare, school groups, rubbish clean-up groups and the like.

Bushcare Coordinator

An appropriately qualified Council staff member who is employed to coordinate the Shoalhaven Bushcare Program.

Bushcare Field Officer

An appropriately qualified staff member or contractor who is employed to provide on-site guidance and training to Bushcare groups.

Bushcare Group: A formal group of volunteers undertaking Bushcare as per the above definition.

Bushcare Group Action Plan: A plan developed jointly between the Council and the Bushcare group which clearly outlines, amongst other information, the Group's aims, objectives, and activities for the Bushcare site(s).

Bushcare/Parkcare Project: A project that is delivered, at least in part, by a Bushcare or Parkcare Group or combination of groups.

Council: Shoalhaven City Council.

Council Land: Land that is either owned by Council; or Crown Land for which Council is the Trust Manager or has care, control, and management responsibility.

Group Coordinator: A volunteer who acts as the primary contact for a Bushcare/Parkcare Group.

Hybrid Groups: Volunteer groups that work over areas of dual categorisation including both Natural Area and Park.

Natural Area: Public land classified as Community Land categorised as a Natural Area in accordance with section 36 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW), managed to the objectives given in section 36E of the Act; or other land areas mapped under Council's Asset Custodian Model to be managed in alignment with Natural Area objectives.

Park Area: Public land classified as Community Land categorised as a Park in accordance with section 36 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW), managed to the objectives given in section 36G of the Act; or other land areas mapped under Council's Asset Custodian Model to be managed in alignment with Park objectives.

Parkcare: The involvement of volunteers in management of Park areas, as defined above.

The term Parkcare does not include volunteer involvement or management of land located in or around roads, such as that done by 'Adopt a Road' groups, except for the areas of unused roads where these are managed as parkland and are included in an approved Parkcare group action plan. The term Parkcare does not include maintaining any sports equipment/areas in a Park.

Parkcare Coordinator: An appropriately qualified council staff member who is employed to coordinate the Shoalhaven Parkcare Program.

Parkcare Group: A formal group of volunteers undertaking Parkcare as per the above definition.

Parkcare Group Action Plan: A plan developed jointly between the Council and the Parkcare Group which clearly outlines the Group's aims and objectives for the Parkcare site.

Recording Sheet Book: A book that is issued to volunteer Bushcare/Parkcare Group for the purpose of recording the Group's volunteer hours worked, the people who participated and the type of activities that were undertaken.

Site Risk Assessment: An assessment of the Work, Health and Safety hazards and risks associated with each Bushcare/Parkcare Group's site and the control measures to be implemented to reduce the risk associated with the identified hazards.

Working Bee: An occasion where more than one member of a Bushcare/Parkcare Group carries out volunteer work on-site.

4. Provisions

This procedure applies to all Council staff, and Bushcare/Parkcare volunteers.

5. Implementation

5.1. Priorities for support

Council will endeavour to support all Bushcare/Parkcare projects that comply with the Bushcare/Parkcare Policy and Procedures. Council must ensure that the Groups receive support on an equitable basis and that projects are as successful as possible given finite available resources. Council's capacity to support Bushcare/Parkcare Group is linked to funding levels and available resources.

If resources are insufficient to support all groups, the following criteria will be considered to enable prioritisation of works:

- Land should be public land, owned or managed by Council as defined above.
- The conservation/ecological values of the land and its broader environmental values to the landscape/region, such as connectivity within an existing or proposed flora/fauna corridor.
- The likely or known presence of threats to the identified ecological values, and the ability of volunteers to address these.
- The potential environmental, social, economic or cultural benefits of the project(s).
- Potential of the project(s) to meet set aims and achieve sustainable results. This may depend on the number of volunteers wishing to be part of the Group, and the amount of time they are able to commit.
- Consistency of the project with local and regional environmental and social management priorities; and
- The existence of a community Bushcare/Parkcare within the same reserve/catchment, beach, or local area, to avoid duplication of resources.

5.2. Setting up a new Bushcare or Parkcare Group

The following table outlines the stages and the relevant activities associated with establishing a Bushcare or Parkcare Group.

Stage	Activities
1. Residents inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resident/community approach Council to establish a group. • Check made that land is owned/managed by Council. • Approval sought from Council's asset custodian(s). • Assessment of whether there is another Bushcare/Parkcare Group already working in the area and where possible, inclusion within an existing group. • Where both Park and Natural Area exist, a Hybrid Group will be formed requiring liaison between Bushcare and Parkcare programs within Council. The program with most relevance will take on the coordination.

Stage	Activities
2. Group establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of whether Council has the resources to support an additional group. • Council staff and potential volunteers meet to discuss the aims and objectives of the Bushcare/Parkcare Group and of the works to be carried out. • Registrations by volunteers and completion of Council’s volunteer induction process. • Group nominates a coordinator, and optionally, a deputy coordinator. • Volunteers’ details are entered into Council’s Bushcare or Parkcare Groups database. • Through the database, the name and contact number for the Bushcare/Parkcare Volunteer Group of existing Groups becomes available on Council’s website. A Bushcare Field Officer (BFO) is assigned to support new Bushcare Groups. • Additional funds are sought where necessary.
3. Commence work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BFO or Council staff and Group develop a Site Safety Plan that includes Hazards Identification, Risk Assessment and Control Measures for work sites. The Site Safety Plan is checked on a regular basis and updated when required. • Volunteers undertake a Work, Health and Safety (WHS) induction for the sites. • The Group can commence work undertaking weed control and rubbish removal, with agreement of the Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator, prior to the development and approval of a Bushcare or Parkcare group action plan. • Groups are provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), tools, and Site Recording Sheets. • Policy and Procedures are made available to the Group Coordinator.
4. Bushcare/Parkcare Group Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council staff and volunteers prepare Bushcare/Parkcare group action plan collaboratively. • Bushcare/Parkcare Plan undergoes consultation phase in accordance with section 5.6 of these procedures. • Bushcare/Parkcare group action plan adopted by the relevant Director(s). • Group can implement actions as included in the plan.

5.3. Volunteers

5.3.1. Eligibility

The Bushcare/Parkcare Program is open to all residents, ratepayers, and visitors to the Shoalhaven, provided they operate in accordance with Bushcare/Parkcare Policy and these Procedures and can undertake the required duties in a safe and responsible manner. Council’s Volunteer Induction Handbook (Health, Safety and Behaviour) must be always adhered to.

Position Descriptions for Bushcare Volunteer and Bushcare Group Volunteer Coordinator are provided in Appendix 1. These include information on the range of tasks and activities Bushcare/Parkcare programs and the physical requirements of these. It is recognised that volunteers can perform differing roles and tasks, depending on a wide range of factors such time availability and physical capabilities.

Volunteers participating in the Shoalhaven Bushcare/Parkcare programs must be over 10 years of age. School groups are eligible.

5.3.2. Working with children

In cases where volunteers will have more than incidental contact with children aged up to 16 years, individuals will be required to complete a Working with Children Check under part 2, section 6 of the *Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW)* (<https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/working-children-check/who-needs-check>).

5.3.3. Volunteer pre-existing conditions

Pre-existing conditions that may pose a risk are to be disclosed to Council upon registering and these will be passed on to the volunteer Coordinator of the relevant Group. Volunteers are only to take on tasks that do not pose unacceptable risks based on pre-existing conditions.

5.3.4. Volunteers with carers

Volunteers that have a disability and are supervised by a Carer are welcome to participate, undertaking appropriate tasks. The Carer and where possible, the carer's client, must register and undertake the corporate induction process. Site safety inductions must be completed by both.

5.3.5. Temporary volunteers

Visitors, part-time residents, or event-based participants may volunteer by filling out their details, the date and signing on a Bushcare/Parkcare Site Recording Sheet before they work and provided they:

- Satisfy the age requirements for insurance.
- Are wearing the appropriate clothing.
- Are inducted on-site about the hazards and control measures that must be employed.

5.3.6. De-registering volunteers

The membership of groups is to be checked occasionally, including when a new member joins. Volunteers are de-registered based on the advice of the Group Coordinator when there has been no participation or communication, in general, for six months or more.

5.3.7. Dismissal of volunteers

In instances of misconduct or breaches to the volunteer responsibilities, Council's Chief Executive Officer has the right to dismiss a volunteer. This includes:

- Theft of property or funds.
- Intoxication through alcohol or other substances while volunteering.
- Verbal or physical harassment of any other volunteers, members of the community or Council employees.
- Disclosure of confidential information regarding the Council and/or clients.
- Breaching any other volunteer responsibilities or working contrary to approved works/plans.
- Malicious damage to Council or community property.
- Not working in a safe manner.

Volunteers will be informed of their right of appeal against any dismissal, managed through Council's standard governance processes.

5.4. Supervision and coordination of groups

5.4.1. Group Coordinator

A member of each Bushcare/Parkcare Group will be appointed by the Group to be the Group Coordinator. The Group Coordinator must volunteer to undertake the role and have the support of the majority of the Group members. The role can be shared if the Group wishes, provided it is clear who the primary contact person is at any one time. A Deputy Group Coordinator may be appointed by groups, which may especially be useful when the Group Coordinator is absent.

The role of the Bushcare/Parkcare Group Coordinator is to:

- Act as the Group's primary contact point for Council, other organisations, and the public.
- Provide a contact phone or email address that can be made public.
- Assist Council staff in ensuring that volunteers are involved in the identification and awareness of safety hazards and risks associated with each Bushcare/Parkcare site, risk management procedures and good work practices.
- Ensure that the Bushcare/Parkcare Activity Sheets are completed and submitted to Council in a timely manner.
- Ensure all the group's activities comply with the relevant Action Plan, with the exception of approved weed control and rubbish removal works that can be undertaken in other public areas following WHS risk assessment and liaison with the Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator.
- Nominate training needs for the Group.
- Disseminate relevant information to Group members.

Further information is provided in the Bushcare/Parkcare Group Coordinator Role Description (Appendix 1).

Council encourages Bushcare/Parkcare Groups to rotate the Group Coordinator position every two years. A Bushcare/Parkcare Group Coordinator may resign the position at any time. The new Coordinator must inform the relevant Bushcare Field Officer, or Council's Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator when the Group Coordinator (or deputy) changes.

5.4.2. Records

Council will provide each Bushcare/Parkcare Group with a Recording Sheet book for use at each working session. The logbooks record the following information:

- Site name.
- Bushcare/Parkcare Group.
- Risk assessment and first aid kit check.
- Date of work session.
- Names and signature of people attending the work sessions.
- Hours worked by each person.
- Type of activity carried out.
- Herbicide spray record (when needed).

A copy of the log sheets must be forwarded to the Council's Bushcare/Parkcare Coordinator at the end of each quarter. This information is recorded into a database and Group activity updates will be posted in the Shoalhaven Bushcare/Parkcare newsletter annually and reported to various Council and State government agencies, when required.

Council will maintain:

- A register of each Bushcare/Parkcare Group Coordinator's contact details, Groups' meeting dates, times, and frequency that will be publicly accessible via Council's website.
- A confidential register of Bushcare/Parkcare volunteer's details will be held on an internal database.
- A register of Groups' activities i.e., the number of hours contributed by each Group will be held on an internal database.

Council will obtain personal information from volunteers including names, addresses, and telephone numbers, child protection screening (where applicable) and other contact details for administering the Bushcare/Parkcare Program. Personal information obtained by Council is governed by the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW). This legislation provides direction for the collection, protection, storage, disposal, access, and use of personal information by Council.

5.4.3. Networking and partnerships

Council's Bushcare Coordinator will, at the beginning of each financial year, develop an engagement plan to foster networking and interaction between volunteer coordinators, volunteers and with other organisations (refer to Appendix 2 for an example template). The types of events and gatherings where networking can occur may include:

- National events such as National Tree Day
- Local events such as Bushcare/Parkcare Christmas picnics and planting days
- Training courses, seminars and field days

Council staff will attempt to actively develop relationships with external organisations such as schools, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, Landcare, Correctional Services, Local Land Services and encourage interaction with Bushcare/Parkcare volunteers. These connections will assist with knowledge-sharing and cooperation across land tenures, as well as for the intrinsic benefit in forming connections across our communities.

The engagement plan will identify key potential partners, how engagement will be sought, staff and volunteers involved, and their responsibilities.

5.5. Training

Training is an integral part of an effective Bushcare/Parkcare Program and its delivery will be reviewed annually to consider the needs of volunteers and the type of work they are carrying out. A variety of training and knowledge-sharing opportunities and materials may be offered and could include formal courses. Courses, workshops, and other educational opportunities will focus on local issues whilst offering the participants opportunities to develop a diverse range of relevant skills and knowledge.

5.5.1. Work, Health and Safety volunteer induction training

Bushcare/Parkcare volunteers are required to complete Council's Volunteer Health, Safety and Behaviour Induction. This can be completed on-line ([New Request - Volunteering](#)) or in hard copy. This must be completed prior to undertaking any work on a Bushcare/Parkcare site. The Volunteer Health, Safety and Behaviour Induction addresses:

- Work, Health and Safety issues and working in a safe and effective manner in bushland and/or park areas.

- Rights and responsibilities under relevant Acts and policies.

Each participant must have access to and read Shoalhaven City Council's Volunteer Induction Handbook – Health, Safety and Behaviour. A signed acknowledgment of the handbook's contents (last two pages) is to be returned to Council or completed on-line as part of the Volunteer Induction.

5.5.2. Informal training

Council will also provide on-site training in bush regeneration, for those Bushcare/Parkcare Groups who access the services of the Bushcare Field Officer. This will be done in an informal capacity with non-accredited training being provided.

Council, in cooperation with the Shoalhaven Landcare Association and other interested agencies, occasionally run programs of training workshops, field days and conferences that are commensurate with local community issues and needs.

5.5.3. Formal training

Council will also provide for formal accredited training for volunteers where needed. Courses may include First Aid, Chemical Users Certificate and Chainsaw Operations. The Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator will consider all requests for training based on:

- The requirements of actions in the relevant Bushcare or Parkcare group action plan.
- The overall skills-needs of each group with consideration of the working environment.
- Corrective actions pertaining safety incidents and identified hazards.
- Available funds and resources.

In general, up to two Group members from each Group will be trained by Council for such training courses. Such training will enable competencies to be shared with other Group members.

The Bushcare/Park Group Coordinator is to nominate members for training and should consider equity across the group, as well as identifying the most relevant group members for training.

5.6. Group action plans

5.6.1. Plan contents

Work proposed by a Bushcare/Parkcare group must be carried out in accordance with a group action plan. The plan will outline the objectives of the group and the actions by which they will be achieved. The Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator has the responsibility for compiling and preparing each group's action plan in consultation with other staff and the volunteer group. Each group action plan will include:

- Reserve information.
- Aims and objectives of the Group.
- A map showing the Groups site/s and indicating what activities are to be undertaken and where.
- A table showing details of the actions to be undertaken by the Group, their priority, the methods used and the timing. These should include monitoring and evaluation actions.
- Council support items.
- Identification of projects for future funding opportunities.

- Reference to relevant local and regional plans.
- Workplace Health and Safety Information.

In addition, Bushcare group action plans and, only where relevant, Parkcare group action plans, will include:

- A list of environmental weeds on the site.
- A list of common native plant species or description of the plant community types occurring on the site.
- A recommended planting list (where planting is an action).

Each action plan should not conflict with any other plans or strategies prepared for the site or surrounding areas, such as individual or generic reserve plans of management, the coastal zone management plans and programs, or applicable policies. If any potential conflict arises, these higher-level plans, programs or policies have precedence.

In general, Bushcare/Parkcare group action plans are for Council-managed land only. However, adjacent land areas that are owned by other entities may be included if there is permission from that landowner or delegated manager. Council policies and procedures apply.

The Bushcare/Parkcare group action plans have a review period of six years.

5.6.2. Community consultation

Bushcare/Parkcare group action plans are considered to be 'Local Area and Low Impact' under the Shoalhaven Council Community Engagement Policy. Therefore, calls for submissions from key stakeholders will typically be the required process. Other forms of engagement, such as public meetings and social media may be used more rarely.

Other methods of consultation that can be utilised by Bushcare/Parkcare Groups are publications, factsheets, newsletter articles, website/s, media, and direct communication such as through site tours or on-site meetings.

The following table lists the criteria to determine the level of consultation required for a Bushcare/Parkcare group action plan:

Minor Consultation	Major Consultation
There is either no planting of shrubs or trees proposed, or the planting proposed will not substantially alter existing views from properties or reserve lookouts, for example. This may be due to remote location, existing vegetation or buildings within the view, or as low-growing plants only are to be planted.	There is planting of shrubs and trees that may significantly alter existing views from adjacent properties or reserve lookouts
There are only minor changes to the reserve's usage because of the plan's actions	There are major changes to the reserve's usage because of the plan's actions
There is no significant installation of infrastructure	There is installation of infrastructure

Based on this assessment, the following individuals/organisations will be consulted:

Minor Consultation	Major Consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Staff• Any relevant State Government Agency staff• Local Aboriginal Land Council (excluding Parkcare)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council Staff• Any relevant State Government Agency staff• Local Aboriginal Land Council• Councillors• Community Consultative Body (CCB)• All residents and ratepayers within 200 m of the reserve boundary of the Bushcare/Parkcare site

Once all consultation is considered and modifications to the Bushcare/Parkcare group action plans are completed, all action plans will be approved by the relevant Director(s) within Council.

5.7. Monitoring and evaluation

Council will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the success of the Bushcare and Parkcare programs and will assess these programs for their success in engaging with community. Monitoring and evaluation will also review outcomes of the programs to enable appropriate assurance processes to achieve continual improvement.

Council will support and encourage longer-term assessment of bushland condition, for example, through quantitative vegetation assessment. Volunteers, Council staff and contractors may all contribute to this and external funds will be sought as opportunities arise. Involvement in citizen science applications, such as the iNaturalist 'Budawang Coast Atlas of Life' will be encouraged and supported.

5.8. Funding

5.8.1. Allocations of Council funding

Council will allocate Bushcare/Parkcare Groups with small amounts of funding to manage ongoing expenses such as removal of weed waste, training, materials, equipment, and education activities. A total of \$400 p.a. will be nominally allocated to each Group. Additional funds may be allocated, under special circumstances. Priority for such funding will be allocated according to:

- How many in-kind person hours a Bushcare/Parkcare Group works on their site as per the Bushcare/Parkcare Activity Sheets (i.e., how active is the Group).
- Projects that meet regional and local priorities.
- The ability of the Group to undertake the project.
- The presence of important biodiversity, such as Threatened Ecological Communities.
- Significant threats that can be controlled.
- Budgetary constraints.

5.8.2. Administration of funds and grants

When work is being carried out on Council-managed land, Council has the legal responsibility to comply with relevant legislation and policies (e.g., procurement, WHS and insurances).

Council also has the responsibility to set management and funding priorities across its jurisdiction. This involves taking an overview of needs and considering local and regional priorities. Projects identified for inclusion in external grant funding applications will be consistent with such priorities. This helps ensure that the effort required for preparing applications and managing projects is used as effectively as possible.

Approval is to be sought from the Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator prior to applying for grant funding. Such projects can be undertaken as a partnership between Council and the group. In such partnerships, Council will act as the financial trustee for the projects.

5.8.3. *Selecting projects for external funding*

Projects on Bushcare/Parkcare sites that are suitable for external grant funding can be identified by volunteers and Council staff during the development or review of the Bushcare/Parkcare group action plans.

Grant applications should be developed jointly by Council and the Bushcare/Parkcare group.

Grant applications need to be signed by Council's Department Manager or Director on the basis of financial delegations. At least 10 working days need to be allowed for the approval process.

Projects will be selected for funding submissions by Council in consultation with Bushcare/Parkcare Groups according to:

- Suitability of the project to funding program's stated priorities and objectives.
- Ability of the Council and the group/s to fulfil associated project commitments.
- Potential social, ecological, educational, and other benefits of the project.
- The consistency and ability of the project to meet Council's objectives and other regional and local objectives and guidelines.

5.8.4. *Contractors and consultants*

Any internally or externally funded projects that involve works undertaken by contractors or consultants on Council owned or managed land will be the responsibility of Council. This includes the following:

- Preparing tenders and briefs.
- Preparing scope of works.
- Site meetings (in consultation with the Bushcare/Parkcare group).
- Contractors progress reporting.

Upon completion of the project, the submission of the final report will be the responsibility of Council and the Bushcare/Parkcare Group who applied for the grant in cooperation with the Council. Typically, Council staff will prepare the report with input from the group.

5.8.5. *Donations to groups*

Council is unable to arrange for donations to Bushcare/Parkcare groups to be tax deductible, as it is not a deductible gift recipient.

5.8.6. *Small purchases by Group Coordinators*

Small purchases may be made by Bushcare/Parkcare Group Coordinators provided that prior approval is given by the Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator. These will be reimbursed upon

receipt of an email/correspondence that includes a receipt for the purchase(s) and bank account details. Refunds will be direct deposited to the nominated bank account.

5.9. Accidents and insurance

5.9.1. Reporting injuries, incidents, and near-misses

Any accident involving injury or damage that occurs whilst under the care and control of Council must be reported to the Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator and via the OneCouncil system via a QR code provided to volunteers. If the incident happens out of normal business hours it can be reported to Council's WHS 'Hotline' on 4429 3542, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Injuries, incidents, and near-misses must be reported and investigated, led by the Bushcare/Parkcare coordinator. Volunteers must cooperate with the investigation process

5.9.2. Personal Accident Insurance

Council has taken out personal accident insurance cover for volunteers whilst performing activities authorised by Council. Personal Injury coverage under this insurance policy provides some cover whilst the person is undertaking the approved activities for Council and / or travelling directly to and from such activity. Benefits potentially payable by this policy are reduced by any amounts recoverable from a statutory transport accident scheme (e.g., CTP), workers compensation scheme or the person's private insurance cover. The insurance policy will only cover volunteers aged between **10** and **90** years. Medical expenses covered under this policy are restricted by the *Health Insurance Act 2007*. Medical expenses covered by the Medicare scheme are excluded from this cover.

Volunteers are required to act in a responsible manner and in accordance with procedures. Willfully or deliberately causing injury is not covered by Council's insurance. Any accident that occurs whilst under the care and control of Council should be reported to the relevant Coordinator as soon as possible. A report must be completed and forward to Council's Insurance Claims Officer by the Coordinator where possible within 24 hours. Council has obtained the Personal Accident cover in good faith and cannot be held responsible for any restrictions imposed or determinations of the insurer or legislation.

5.9.3. Public Liability Insurance

Volunteers are protected against public liability claims under Council's public liability insurance cover provided they are undertaking approved activities within their authority and any injury or damage is not the result of willful or deliberate acts. If damage is caused, or an incident arises, the Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator must be notified immediately. An Incident Report is to be completed and returned to the Coordinator, where possible within 24 hours. The Coordinator will notify Council's Insurance Claims Officer.

5.10. Tools and equipment

5.10.1. Requests for materials/equipment

Bushcare/Parkcare groups wanting to request materials or equipment need to do so in writing on the section provided at bottom of the Bushcare/Parkcare Site Recording Sheet or to the relevant Bushcare Field Officer, or Coordinator. A 14-day period must be allowed for Council to respond to the request. Exceptions include the supply of essential safety equipment.

Council will be responsible for the provision of the necessary tools and equipment Bushcare/Parkcare groups. Procedures are:

- Tools and equipment will be made available to registered Bushcare/Parkcare groups on loan.
- Volunteers are responsible for maintaining tools and equipment and returning them to Council in the event of the group ending or reduction in group numbers.
- Hand-held power tools may be used on Bushcare/Parkcare sites provided that their use is covered by the WHS Hazard ID and Risk Assessment and relevant Safe Work Instructions provided by Council staff are followed.

5.10.2. Provision of tools and equipment

All essential equipment will be provided by Council depending on the activities nominated in the Bushcare/Parkcare group action plan and may include:

- 'Bushcare' long-sleeve shirts
- first aid kit
- basic gardening tools
- equipment for maintaining tools
- gloves
- safety glasses
- ear protection
- appropriate mask for activity
- eye protection
- sunscreen (30+ SPF)
- insect repellent
- herbicide
- weed bags

Replacement products will be provided as required.

Other equipment and tools such as bush regeneration pouches, saws, loppers, mattocks, shovels, spray knapsacks, augers, water trailer and plant propagating materials will be loaned out to Bushcare/Parkcare Groups as required and based on training requirements being met.

5.10.3. Maintenance and replacement of equipment

Bushcare/Parkcare Groups will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all tools and equipment are maintained in good working order.
- Recording any loss or damage to equipment in the activity logbook.

Council will be responsible for:

- Repair of tools and equipment.
- Replacing equipment that has been damaged or worn over time.

Council is not responsible for the repair and replacement of tools and equipment that it has not provided unless these have been hired or loaned with approval by the relevant Coordinator.

5.11. Work practices

5.11.1. Tree guards

Tree guards to be used on Council-managed land are to be selected based on the following considerations:

- Effectiveness – Guards and stakes must meet the site-specific requirements. For example, taller mesh guards may be required to protect plants from animals such as kangaroos, compared with smaller guards that are effective protection against rabbits.
- Environmental protection – where there is a moderate to high risk that guards may be lost to the environment, biodegradable types will be used. High-risk areas include foreshores and along waterways. Plastic guards are not to be used.
- Ease of installation – this particularly applies to where volunteer groups such as schools, may require guards that are easy to install.
- Cost – after the above considerations are made, the most cost-effective guards are to be used.

5.11.2. Rubbish removal

Bushcare/Parkcare Groups are encouraged to mulch their weed waste on site wherever possible by removing only seed heads or other reproductive matter. Techniques such as solarisation (including using black plastic to break down the weed matter) and pile burning can be appropriate in some circumstances (see below).

Each Bushcare/Parkcare Group will be issued with a Council Waste Tipping Account card on request, which will allow the group to have free waste tipping fees up to a set value.

Volunteers are not to attempt to remove any potentially dangerous material. For example: asbestos, syringes, or chemical waste. Council staff must be notified immediately if such items are found and can be reported via the Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) prevention program.

If the amount of waste requiring disposal exceeds the ability of the Bushcare/Parkcare group to physically remove it, Council will inspect and determine the best course of action.

5.11.3. Pile burning of woody weeds

There are occasions where it is appropriate to pile burn woody weed material on site.

- Burning of weed waste can only occur after consultation with the Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator.
- If on-site burning is required, then arrangements will have to be made before work commences (refer [NSW Rural Fire Service Standards for Pile Burning](#)).

5.12. Publicity and promotion

5.12.1. Sharing knowledge

The sharing of knowledge is a key aspect of Bushcare and Parkcare. Council will promote the sharing of knowledge in a range of ways.

Council will produce a newsletter and maintain Bushcare/Parkcare web pages that will advertise the Bushcare/Parkcare programs including groups' events, as well as the dates and times of activities. Bushcare/Parkcare Groups will be strongly encouraged to submit updates and articles to the Bushcare/Parkcare newsletters.

Council will also assist in the printing and photocopying of brochures, such as for letterbox drops to inform the local community about the group, or to publicise special events. Local newsletters will also be used to publicise Bushcare/Parkcare activities. The level of assistance available for newsletters and brochures will depend on resources available.

Bushcare and Parkcare Coordinator's will share other relevant information directly with group coordinators who have the role of disseminating this information to their group.

5.12.2. Use of the media

Volunteers are not permitted to make any comments to the media on behalf of Council. Any queries for a statement to the media must be referred to the Bushcare or Parkcare Coordinator.

5.12.3. Volunteer group websites

Individual groups may utilise independent websites or social media. The volunteers that are responsible for those pages must respect Council's Social Media Policy and not make comments on behalf of Council (Section 5.12.2). All content must conform to the Bushcare/Parkcare Policy and Volunteer Induction Handbook.

5.12.4. Field days

Field days are an effective way of informing and promoting Bushcare/Parkcare activities in the local community. Where possible, and dependant on resources, Council will assist with the cost of activities, such as publicity (brochures, advertisement in the local press), venue hire and light refreshments. Field Days will be subject to approval from the Bushcare/Parkcare Coordinator.

5.12.5. Displays

To assist volunteers that wish to hold displays to promote caring for natural areas and parks, Council will assist where possible with the loan of displays and with the production of new display materials, for example, photography, enlargements, and laminating.

5 Review

These Procedures will be reviewed within 12 months of the date of the next Bushcare/Parkcare Policy Review, or earlier, if needed.

5.8 APPENDIX 1 BUSHCARE POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Position Title

Bushcare Volunteer Group Coordinator

Job Description

Help recruit and coordinate a team of Bushcare volunteers to assist in the regeneration, restoration and maintenance of remnant bushland, using best practice bush regeneration techniques, on public land within the Shoalhaven Local Government Area (LGA), and increase public awareness and appreciation of natural values through education initiatives and training.

Types of Volunteers

1. Bushcare Volunteer – A volunteer can join an existing Bushcare Group. Once registered and inducted a Bushcare volunteer can work with multiple Bushcare Groups.
2. Bushcare Volunteer Coordinator – A volunteer who is the primary contact for a Bushcare Group and coordinates the Group at a local level.

Important Volunteer Coordinator Attributes

1. Essential Skills and Attributes:
 - a. Enthusiasm and interest in bushland preservation and restoration.
 - b. A willingness to coordinate a group of Bushcare volunteers and follow a Bushcare/Parkcare group action plan.
 - c. A desire and willingness to expand skills and knowledge by participating and undertaking training in ecological restoration.
 - d. Willingness to work as part of a team.
 - e. Willingness to work towards the aims and objectives of the Shoalhaven Council Bushcare program.
 - f. Group coordination and communication skills
 - g. Physical ability to work outdoors on uneven terrain in a bushland setting.
2. Desirable Skills and Attributes:
 - a. Current First Aid Certificate.
 - b. Bush regeneration skills, qualifications, or work experience.

Estimated Hours of Work

As many hours as desired by an individual volunteer up to 16 hours per week (a volunteer should not work more than 16 hours per week).

Duties and Responsibilities of all Bushcare Volunteers

1. Volunteers must comply with all Shoalhaven City Council policies and procedures, the Council's code of conduct, state and federal legislation including the *Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations 2011*.
2. Whilst working, volunteers have a responsibility to ensure a safe working environment for themselves, other volunteers, paid employees, and visitors. This includes following guidance and instructions on Bushcare site safety, using personal protective equipment (PPE) when required; particularly wearing sturdy covered footwear, a long-sleeved shirt and long pants when working on a Bushcare site. A hat and sun protection has to be worn if the weather conditions require it.
3. Volunteers must sign and date the "Bushcare Site Recording Sheet" every time they attend a Bushcare activity and report any injury, near miss, hazard, or damage to or loss of equipment during a Bushcare activity.
4. Volunteers must also ensure they participate and complete any training relevant to their role, including Council Volunteer Induction.

Tasks of the Coordinator Role

1. Assist in the development of a Bushcare/Parkcare group action plan that sets out the Group's responsibilities and tasks.
2. Work with Council staff and the group's volunteers to guide the work of Bushcare volunteers to ensure that the aims of the Bushcare/Parkcare group action plan are achieved.
3. Provide advice and support to Bushcare volunteers in basic bush regeneration and ensure that all volunteers are working safely.
4. Coordinate Bushcare Group working bees in regard to meeting times, work program and tool maintenance.
5. Ensure the Bushcare Site Recording Sheet is filled out by all volunteers and sent through to Council.
6. Act as the public contact person for the Bushcare Group and primary contact with Council.
7. All other tasks of a Bushcare Volunteer.

Benefits of being a Bushcare Volunteer Position

As a Shoalhaven Bushcare Volunteer you will:

1. Gain personal satisfaction of restoring your local natural areas.
2. Learn new skills and knowledge.

Bushcare/Parkcare Procedures

3. Meet new friends and new people.
4. Improve your mental and physical health (research has proven that volunteering in outdoor activities improves an individual's mental and physical health)
5. Have valued input into the current and future management of bushland reserves under the care and control of Shoalhaven City Council.
6. You will be covered by Council public liability and personal accident insurance when working on a reserve.
7. You will be eligible to become member of the Natural Areas Volunteer Group to assist in the management of the Shoalhaven City Council's Bushcare Program

To apply to be a volunteer of the Shoalhaven City Council Bushcare contact the Shoalhaven Bushcare Coordinator

P – (02) 4429 3592

E – Bushcare@shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au

or via the web at <http://www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Bushcare>
