

Bushcare news

Bushcare photo and prose competition

Dust off those lenses.

The Story of our Bioretention Basin at Parrish Place, Mount Colah

A complete transformation.

Promising new bio-controls for Crofton Weed and Mistflower

CSIRO's latest research.

Have you seen a SQuID near your Bushcare site?

Council's Catchments Remediation Program.



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

Newsletter managed by Hornsby Shire Council
Natural Resources Branch

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



Volunteers working alone identified as high risk

In February an email went out to our Bushcare volunteers addressing a high risk issue regarding volunteers who work alone at their Bushcare sites.

NSW Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) legislation and Hornsby Shire Council's duty of care obligations have identified Bushcare volunteers working alone as meriting a High Risk rating.

Whilst we appreciate your dedication, to ensure the safety of all volunteers we have to reinforce the message that **volunteers cannot work** alone on bushcare sites. This is regardless

of any informal arrangements you have previously made with your trainer or a staff member.

To clarify, working alone is determined as **working without any other bushcare volunteers or staff member present** and is referred to in the Bushcode under On-Site Working Procedures (page 9 in the 2009 edition):

"To ensure the safety of volunteers, the following working conditions are required:

- *Volunteers should not work alone"*

Should this issue relate to you, please contact us and give your feedback. You can email bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au or write a letter to the Coordinator, Bushcare Community Programs (Danielle Sutton).

You can also phone Danielle on 9847 6360, or one of the Environmental Scientists Bushcare (Leanne or Meron) on 9847 6362. Please feel free to discuss the issue with your Trainer when they next visit your site.

Your cooperation on this matter is greatly appreciated and apologies for the inconvenience caused.

Promoting Bushcare through Video

In October 2012 Council's Media Officer, Nick Cook, produced a short video to promote the Bushcare program to the broader community.

The video highlights some personal stories of our volunteers talking about why they are involved in Bushcare, and the benefits achieved: personally, for the environment and for the local community.

A two minute version of this video was screened as a promo at council's "Movies under the Stars" events in February this year. It was seen at two venues (the third venue at Epping was unfortunately rained out) by an estimated total audience of 900.

The original video, titled *Do you love the bush?* runs for 4 minutes 16 seconds. It can be viewed on councils website and YouTube http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXUbil_FeYo

So far we have had over 160 hits.

Please have a look, share it with your friends, and mention it to prospective volunteers.



Contact Details

Hornsby Shire Bushcare
Earthwise Cottage
28 Britannia St, Pennant Hills

General Bushcare enquiries
E: bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au
F: 02 9484 3588
Mail: PO BOX 37
Hornsby NSW 1630

Environmental Scientist –
Bushcare
Leanne Johnston and
Meron Wilson 9847 6362

Coordinator Community
Programs
Danielle Sutton 9847 6360

Nursery and guided bushwalk
information
Ross Rapmund 9847 6361

Incident and hazard reporting
9847 4848 (outside business hours)

Our door is open

A reminder that the door to Earthwise Cottage at 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills (next to the Community Nursery) is open to Bushcare visitors.

Drop by to browse through our reference library, get help identifying a plant, replenish your first aid kits or replace Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items such as gloves (these can also be delivered to your trainer or site). Or you might want to raise an issue or comment on your bushcare site or the program.

You are welcome to call in between 8:30 am and 3:30pm Monday to Friday. To avoid disappointment, be sure to phone ahead because our work often takes us away from the office (contact details inside the cover page).

Look forward to seeing you.

Brad's back yard (move over Burke!)

Brad Forrest, from the Hillmont Avenue Bushcare group, writes:



"Here are some photos from our back yard in Pennant Hills on the 48 C day. I know back yards are not bush, but it might be helpful to show the value of bird baths on a very hot day.

"The bird bath was busy all afternoon, mainly with Rainbow Lorikeets and Noisy Miners but also a few Musk Lorikeets and a Scrub Turkey chick (*Alectura latham*) that was rescued from a cat and is now with WIRES. We also found a deceased but very odd looking insect that apparently couldn't take the heat"

More on Brad's visitors:

The **Rainbow Lorikeet** (*Tricoglossus haemotodus*) is unmistakable with its bright red beak and colourful plumage. It occurs in coastal regions across northern and eastern Australia, foraging for nectar and pollen, but also eating fruits, seeds and some insects.

Rainbow Lorikeet eggs are laid on chewed, decayed wood, usually in a hollow limb of a eucalypt tree. Both sexes prepare the nest cavity and feed the young, but only the female incubates the eggs.

The **Noisy Miner** (*Manorina melanocephala*) is identified by its mostly grey body, black crown and cheeks, and yellow bill, legs and the naked skin behind the eye. It ranges along the east coast from northern Queensland to South Australia and Tasmania, feeding on nectar, fruits and insects and very occasionally on small reptiles and amphibians.

Noisy Miners breed in colonies and several broods may be reared during a single season. The female constructs the nest and incubates the eggs alone, but both sexes will care for and feed the young birds. Additional 'helpers' – always

male - also feed the young.

The **Musk Lorikeet** (*Glossopsitta concinna*) has obvious yellow patches on the side of the breast in flight and a prominent red band on the face. It is widespread through the south-eastern Australian mainland. It feeds mainly on pollen and nectar from eucalypts using its specialised brush-tipped tongue, but also eats seeds, fruits and insects and their larvae. The Musk Lorikeet is gregarious, often mixing with other parrots when feeding.



Musk Lorikeets breed in hollow branches and holes in living eucalypts, often near watercourses. The entrance holes are usually very small, so they have to squeeze in. Eggs are laid on a base of chewed or decayed wood. The female incubates the eggs and both parents roost in the hollow at night.

Brad's odd looking visitor was a Phasmid or Stick Insect. There are around 150 species in Australia. They are mainly nocturnal creatures, and spend most of the day motionless under plants. Many stick insects feign death to thwart predators, and some will shed the occasional limb to escape an enemy's grasp. Their name is derived from a Greek word meaning "apparition".

Stick insects live for up to 3 years in the wild. Females can produce fertile eggs without mating (parthenogenesis). Brad's photo is of a female *Podocanthus typhoon* or Giant Pink-winged Phasmid. It is the largest member of its genus.

More information on the visitors can be found online at: www.birdsinbackyards.net and australianmuseum.net.au

The story of our bioretention basin at Parrish Place, Mount Colah

By
Ian Methven
and Carol
McCormick

Carol says “It was love at first site: a home with a waterfall at the end of the garden. I called to join Bushcare before we moved in, in 2000. Over the years I dreamed of something more than the silt and weeds that people walked through on this amazing site with two waterfalls, one at the end of North Street, then the second dropping down to Parrish Place..

“I read of the water catchment program and funding, and started lobbying Hornsby Council. The first site inspection was in September 2007. Three and a half years later we received notification that my dream was to become a reality. Council was going to install a bioretention basin. I was delighted.

“The planning team were absolutely fabulous in addressing any concerns we had in regards to the design of this amazing new pond they were building.”

Ian takes up the story. “First two chaps with diggers cleared all the old soil and weeds, exposing the underlying sandstone. Once the site was clear they built a sandstone wall enclosure, moving in very large rocks to create a strong base and sealing the inside with sprayed concrete. Piping was laid in a pattern that ensured full drainage of the basin. Layers of gravel, sand and earth became the basin’s bedding for the plants. At the North Street end a gravel bed was laid to absorb the pounding of the stream water and stop the earth being washed away.

“The upper waterfall was cleared and a stream bed cut into the rock to divert non-flood water into the filter basin.

The water collected in the basin is now filtered before merging with the existing water course. Excess storm rainwater takes the old course so that in storms both are running smoothly down our waterfall.

“The basin was planted out in ideal weather and the plants established themselves faster than expected. Later water flows scoured away some individuals but the main planting has held.

“Landscaping beds were set up in the sandstone wall and surrounds and mulched to look very smart. Post and rail fencing at the upper and lower edges of the new waterfall area has ensured pedestrian entry only.

“Previously the area looked forgotten and uninviting even though a Bushcare team had worked the area for many years. Now thanks to this bioretention basin project, it looks marvellous and its creation has beautified the area for the future.”

Carol adds “Our team of bush carers now come from other areas of Hornsby to work on our site. I am very grateful for their support and dedication in joining with me to return this area to a nature’s paradise.

“To me what Hornsby Council has achieved here with the water catchment program reminds me that dreams do come true, far better than I could have dreamed of. I just needed to dream.”

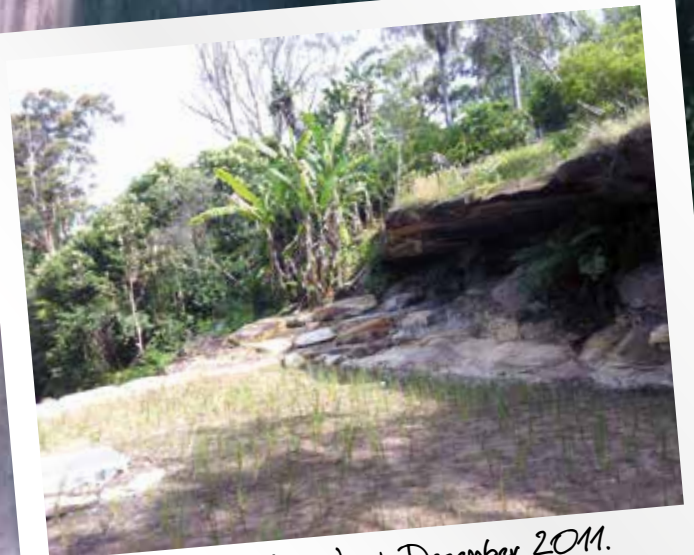


Scraping back to bedrock September 2011.



Laying the plant beds November 2011/

The planning team were absolutely fabulous in addressing any concerns we had in regards to the design of this amazing new pond they were building.



Reed bed planted out December 2011.

Your stories and news items
are always very welcome.
Visit us on the web
hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushcare



Promising new bio-controls for Crofton Weed and Mistflower

Crofton Weed (*Ageratina adenophora*) and its close relative, Mistflower (*A. riparia*) are native to Mexico. They escaped from ornamental cultivation in Australia around 1900, and became widespread along the Queensland coast, moving south. They have been in the Sydney region for more than 30 years and are spreading rapidly.

Crofton Weed infests steep, well-drained land where annual rainfall is more than 1500 mm and where there are few or no frosts. Mistflower establishes in damp areas, stream banks and clearings in rainforest and pasture.

Mature Crofton weed plants can produce between 10,000 and 100,000 seeds per year. Seeds are very light (25,000 seeds/g) and are windborne over long distances, quickly invading previously non-infested areas.

The seeds require light to stimulate germination so that invasion commonly takes place on bare, disturbed sites. However once established, seedlings tolerate shade and grow rapidly. In this way, small infestations of Crofton weed rapidly increase in size unless controlled.

A rust fungus from Mexico, *Baeodromus eupatorii*, is currently being tested at the CSIRO quarantine facility in Canberra, and researchers hope it will soon be available. It has the potential to severely damage Crofton Weed in Australia.

CSIRO Research Scientist Dr Louise Morin explained that "before permission can be obtained to release the fungus in the Australian environment, it is essential to demonstrate that it does not pose a threat to non-target plants. Results so far are very promising. Initial testing on 37 species closely related to Crofton Weed in the family Asteraceae demonstrated that the fungus is highly specific towards Crofton Weed. So far the rust has infected only one other species, Mistflower"

Unfortunately, funding by Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation fell short and more is needed to

complete host testing to ensure a robust case exists before applying to release the rust in Australia.

Meanwhile in October 2010, the white-smut fungus *Entyloma ageratinae*, a biological control agent for Mistflower, was found near Lamington National Park, Queensland.

The fungus has been used in Hawaii, South Africa and New Zealand with good results. It is not known how it arrived here. Field surveys in 2011 revealed it was widespread in southeast Queensland and on the NSW north coast, and present around Coffs Harbour.

According to Dr Morin "In overseas studies, the fungus had been shown to be highly specific towards Mistflower. CSIRO's additional tests on closely-related plant species, including two Australian native *Adenostemma* species, further support claims that it does not pose a risk to other plants"

In May 2011, the fungus was deliberately released at a series of Mistflower sites on the NSW Central and South Coasts, and within a few months its damaging effects could be clearly seen. It also spread naturally to other areas.

Dr Morin says "Long-distance dispersal of spores was probably assisted by a wet winter combined with periods of high wind. Mistflower regrowth from roots and stems observed in spring 2011 was readily infected and by winter 2012 the disease was once again causing major defoliation"

CSIRO with the assistance of collaborators in NSW and Queensland have set up monitoring transects to assess the impact of the white-smut fungus on Mistflower, and the recovery of associated plant communities.

The Mistflower project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust and collaborators in NSW and Queensland

Photos by
Louise Morin



Mist flower with *Entyloma apearatinae* fungus

A request from CSIRO: Keep an eye out for the white-smut fungus on Mistflower and let us know if it occurs in your area

The white-smut fungus produces angular-reddish brown lesions with yellow margins on the upper surface of Mistflower leaves. Spores produced on the underside of lesions give them a woolly white appearance.

The first clue that the fungus is present is a die-off of the leaves and stems of Mistflower, usually starting at the bottom of the plant and moving upwards. On closer inspection the upper surface of leaves have brown spots and some leaves may be brown at the tips. The key trait is white patches on the underside of the leaves.

For more information or to report sightings contact
Dr Louise Morin, CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences

GPO Box 1700, Canberra, ACT 2601 / 02 6246 4355 /
Louise.Morin@csiro.au



Mist flower leaf underside with
Entyloma apearatinae fungus



Crofton Weed with *Baecodromus eupatorii* fungus

Past newsletters can
be viewed in colour
on Council's website
hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushcare

Have you seen a SQulD near your Bushcare site?

Since 1995, over 400 Stormwater Quality Improvement Devices (SQulDs) have been installed and maintained throughout Hornsby Shire as part of Council's Catchments Remediation Program.

Hornsby SQulDs come in many shapes and sizes and are designed to trap/treat polluted stormwater run-off before it reaches local waterways.

Some devices are stored underground and are not visible, such as Continuous Deflective Separation (CDS) units, stormwater pit inserts and litter basket traps. Other treatment devices are very visible and form part of the local urban landscape.

Sometimes more than one device is utilised in a combined treatment train for the most effective environmental outcome.

SQulDs are selected and customised for particular drainage and catchment scenarios in order to target specific stormwater pollution issues.

Creek bank stabilisation works are also incorporated into many device installations using locally sourced sandstone boulders, jute mesh/matting or riparian zone revegetation.

These works help to stabilise drainage lines around the devices and improve habitat immediately up and downstream.



Examples of stormwater quality improvement devices you may have come across near your Bushcare site, include:

- Pollution traps (channel nets, trash racks, Nettek devices, litter baskets, pit inserts & underground sumps)
- Sediment basins
- Bioretention stormwater filtration systems (bioretention basins, rain gardens & tree pits)
- Artificial wetland ponds

For more information check out hornsby.nsw.gov.au/crr

Cr Gallagher visits the nursery

Michael King, one of the Wednesday Nursery volunteers, arranged for Councillor Mick Gallagher to visit the Community Nursery on 20 February, to meet with the volunteers and see what they do. He wanted some of the new councillors to know how important the Hornsby Shire Community Nursery was to all the volunteers and the natural environment.

Sandy Ramsland was voted spokesperson for the volunteers, and he did a fantastic job. He prepared notes on the nursery focussing on the achievements and the high operational standards. Ours is one of very few council run community nurseries to be accredited under the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme, Australia (NIASA).

This means the nursery operates to internationally regarded best practices in terms of pest and disease, water and crop management practices. NIASA provides our nursery with a blueprint for professional management with the end result being consistently healthy plants.

Sandy provided Councillor Gallagher with information about the production processes and outputs, and the value of the Hornsby Shire Community Nursery to Natural Resource Management within Council, and as a model for other councils to follow.

Sandy's briefing notes will be made available to all nursery volunteers.

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Channel nets



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Color: No. 256663211 Daylight 85B

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Creepline remediation

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Sediment basin and trash rack



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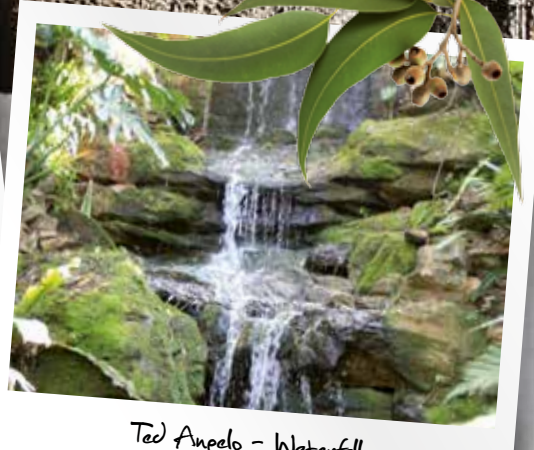
17



Noel Rosten - Sad Dragonfly



David Swain - Skink



Ted Angelo - Waterfall



Ronald Watts - Blue-faced Honeyeater



David Swain - Water dragon



Ted Angelo - Flannel Flower

Bushcare Photo and Prose Competitions

The closing date for the Bushcare Photographic Competition is Monday 30 September, 2013. Now is the time to start clicking!

One theme is 'Hornsby - Our Beautiful Bushland'. If you need some inspiration look out for local plants or animals, or just go to one of your favourite look outs.

Our other theme is 'Bushcare Sites: Before and After'. Dig into your files and pull out those photos of the sites that inspired you to get involved in Bushcare, and if you haven't already, take another photo of the same place as it looks now!

Size matters

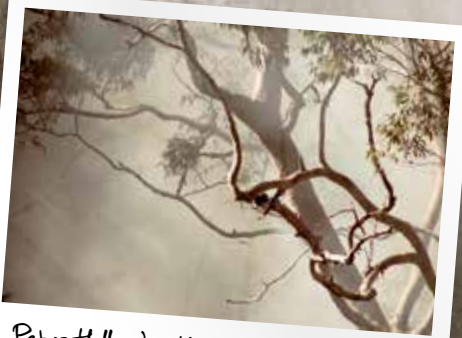
Hard copies should be either A4 or 10" x 8 (25cm x 20cm).

Digital photos need to be at least 300dpi (resolution) or 1200 pixels width/height.

Poetry and Prose Competition

There were some fabulous entries in our inaugural Bushcare Poetry and Prose competition in 2012. They were of a very high standard and inspiring. We look forward to more entries in 2013. Ditties, limericks, jokes, haiku, yarns (no more than 250 words please!), whatever your pen is inspired to create.

Winning entries from the 2012 competitions are in a roving display at local libraries throughout the Shire. See diary dates for details.



Petra Holland - Hazard Reduction Burn



Ann Brown - Wareemba Echidna visiting site



Ronald Watts - Caterpillar Feast

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

Diary dates

Pools to Ponds site visit

Seminar with Kuring-gai Councils Peter Clarke to learn about converting your unused backyard pool into a wildlife heaven.

When: Sunday 24 March

Time: 10am – 11.30am

Where: Council Chambers, 296 Pacific Highway, Hornsby

Bookings: no need to book, just turn up for more information contact 9847 6360

Botanical Photography workshop

Presenter: John Martyn

This fun workshop will have you learning how to use simple techniques to give your photos that wow factor. You will need to bring along your own camera. Be sure to charge the batteries and wear suitable clothing for a short bushwalk. **Numbers strictly limited!**

When: Wednesday 10 April

Time: 9am – 1pm

Where: Location to be advised upon booking

Booking essential: 9424 0179

Bee Hotel workshop

Build your own native bee hotel to attract more non-aggressive native bees into your garden. Materials provided.

When: Saturday 13 April

Time: 2pm – 4pm

Where: Earthwise Cottage, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills

Booking essential: 9847 6360 or dsutton@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Bushcare Photographic and Bushcare Poetry Exhibition – Winners 2012

Come and see the winners of the 2012 Bushcare photo competition at Hornsby Library

When: 12 April – 20 May

Where: Hornsby Library, 28-44 George St (entrance in Hunter Lane), Hornsby

Bushcare Refresher

Workshop for existing volunteers who need to renew their membership. Catch up on the latest changes and get tips on how to improve outcomes for your site. Supper provided.

When: Wednesday 17 April

Time: 5.30pm – 8pm

Where: Earthwise Cottage, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills

Booking: 9847 6832 or bushland@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Plant Giveaway Day

Bring along your rates notice and receive free local plants. Targeted at northern suburbs of Hornsby. See website for eligibility.

When: Saturday 4 May

Time: 1pm – 3pm

Location: Earthwise Cottage, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills

Information: 9847 6832 or hornsby.nsw.gov.au/nursery

Bushcare Site Tour

Visit the group that was awarded the 2012 Golden Trowel for bushcare excellence. The group has been working for over 20 years. They work most weeks and have achieved fantastic results. Come and see how the reserve has responded to their methods. You may pick up some tips for your site.

When: Saturday 11 May

Time: 9.30am – 12.30pm

Where: details provided upon booking

Booking: 9847 6832 or bushland@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Bushcare Boosters – Birds and Bees workshop

What sorts of habitat does your site provide and what is using them? Learn how to attract native fauna to your site and how to keep it there.

When: Saturday 18 May

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

Where: Earthwise Cottage, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills

Booking essential: 9847 6832 or bushland@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Bushcode workshop

Introductory workshop for new and returning Bushcare volunteers. Lunch provided. Participants receive complimentary protective clothing and a native plant voucher.

When: Monday 20 May

Time: 8.45am – 3pm

Where: Earthwise Cottage, 28 Britannia Street, Pennant Hills

Booking essential: 9847 6832 or bushland@hornsby.nsw.gov.au



Cedar Street Bushcare group goes into retirement

For ten years Brian and Valerie Witcombe and neighbours Don and Janice McLennan joined forces to do battle with the weeds that threatened to overtake the bush on the steep slope between their back fences and the creek below.

They thought they were winning until 2011, when long spells of wet weather kept them indoors and gave the weeds a chance to reassert themselves. When they returned to the site they were dismayed by the sea of Trad (*Tradescantia fluminensis*) that met them. It was too much for their knees and reluctantly they decided to retire.

We thank them for their years of dedicated effort. Their site has been declared “inactive,” and will be reopened if there is any local interest in starting a bushcare group.

2013 Bushcare Volunteer Survey results are in!

A great result and thanks to all who contributed their thoughts about the Bushcare program. We had feedback from 122 of you – over 17% of registered volunteers – which is a great response.

The survey was sent out early this year to all Bushcare Volunteers to get feedback on your motivations for being in the Bushcare program, your experiences as a volunteer, and to capture your ideas about how the program could be improved. All the information you have provided is invaluable in helping us understand what we are doing well and also what we can do better.

Bush regeneration is a long term commitment, as many of you will know, and we need to look to the future and see how we can help support you to do what you love and

are committed to – regenerating our bushland.

There are many reasons that motivate us all to get out there and restore bushland but the most important aspects nominated for being a Bushcare volunteer were equally about 'giving back to the environment' and 'restoring habitat'. Although the motivations were many and varied there was a general feeling that the reason we do the work we do is more than about 'pulling out weeds'.

Having a trainer on site (for those of you who have trainers) was important to most of you for the 'guidance and support' offered followed by assistance with 'on-site plant identification'. This shows us how important the Bushcare Trainer is, not just for on-site instruction and training, but that you all appreciate

All the information you have provided is invaluable in helping us understand what we are doing well and also what we can do better.

the camaraderie and relationship built with the trainer and the support that provides.

You all had many great ideas about how the Bushcare program could be improved and how to promote the program and attract new volunteers. So many, they are difficult to summarise here. There was a general feeling that we need more volunteers and also that we need to promote the program more.

The next step is to put it all into a Bushcare strategy. We will soon be in touch with those of you who put up your hand to contribute to this work.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEWSLETTER

You can send your stories or letters to the Editor in for the next edition by 1 JUNE 2013

Fax: 9847 6362 **Mail:** PO Box 37, Hornsby 1630
or **Email:** bushcare@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

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

Almost every week there is a free guided walk through a part of the Hornsby Shire bushland. Brochures at libraries and Council offices.



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



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