

BANDICOOTtimes

Winter 2018 | No 69



AFTER THE FLOOD

Bushcare Roundup



Sjaan Field
Program Officer Bushcare

This year Bushcare turns 25! We will celebrate this special milestone together at the annual Bushcare BBQ on Sunday 4 November. Mark it on your calendar if you haven't already.

I'm pleased to announce that I have been appointed to the ongoing position of Program Officer Bushcare (formerly Bushcare Coordinator). I am proud and privileged to be working with such passionate and dedicated staff and volunteers.

Recently we welcomed two new Bushcare volunteers into the fold, Milinda and Achini. Their excitement at being part of Bushcare is palpable and they got a real taste of what we do at a Friends of Knocklofty working bee. Both said Bushcare helps them feel more connected with the community and they are both becoming gorse aficionados!

A new casual supervisor has joined the team. Steve McEntee will work with Michelle and Nicole to learn

the ropes and will fill in when Nicole and Michelle are not available. We thank Bec Johnson and Gabrielle Balon, our other casual supervisors, for working with our Bushcare groups over the past few months.

The first Trackcare event for 2018 was a great success, thanks to everyone who joined the North-South Track working bee. Unfortunately Trackcare working bees in March and April were cancelled for safety reasons, but we have big plans for the Slides Track in winter.

Recently I delivered a Bushcare presentation to City of Hobart Aldermen to promote the value of Bushcare to the City and our community. They were impressed with the strength of Bushcare and commend all Bushcarers for their ongoing support and involvement.

If you have any feedback about how Bushcare can continue to make a difference in our bushlands and support volunteers I'd love to hear from you.

Bushcare birthday bash – help celebrate 25 years

This year we celebrate 25 years of Bushcare!

Since 1993, the passion and dedication of volunteers has been the driving force behind Bushcare, with 19 groups carrying out more than 3500 working bees.

The City of Hobart is extremely proud of its Bushcare program, and of the people that are helping rejuvenate and protect Hobart's bushland nature reserves.

Thank you to all past and present Bushcare volunteers. Whether you have volunteered for two hours or 2000 hours, we thank you for helping us make a real difference in our bushlands.

Please join us at the annual Bushcare BBQ on Sunday 4 November, 12–3 pm and help celebrate Bushcare's 25th birthday!



Typical of our Bushcarers Roz and Ken from Cornelian Bay Bushcare are deeply committed to protecting their local environment.

Cover: Vicki Martin was one of more than 240 people who helped clean up Hobart Rivulet after the massive storm that hit Hobart in May.



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Hobart's big wet pours cold water on Knocklofty cool burn

Bec Johnson
Fire and Biodiversity Unit

Preparing for a hazard reduction burn in Hobart's bushland reserves doesn't happen overnight. It follows months of careful planning and often hundreds of hours of work preparing the site, clearing the base of larger trees to protect them from the heat.

The result is a 'cool fire' that reduces dangerous fuel loads while protecting big old habitat trees.

The City of Hobart had planned to carry out its largest-ever hazard reduction burn in Knocklofty Reserve long before we were hit by the massive May rain deluge.

Knocklofty is rich in habitat values, including an impressive stand of mature white gums, white peppermints, blue gums and stringybarks. Our fire and biodiversity team had spent hours raking around these trees, clearing leaf litter and other flammable materials to protect them and their habitat hollows during the burn.

We had also taken special care to protect a patch of the reserve that is home to an extremely rare land snail, the ammonite snail (*Discocharopa vigens*), weeding the area and creating a special fire exclusion zone that would protect it during the burn. This snail is federally listed as Critically Endangered, and found nowhere else in the world.

Weeds, fire and time

Weeds love any form of disturbance, and many spread through fire, so we put considerable resources into removing environmental weeds before and after a burn.

Burns can trigger entire weed seed banks to germinate, giving us the chance to eradicate local seed stock through timely post-burning treatment.

The timing of our burns is designed around achieving the best ecological outcomes. By the time autumn comes around, native plants have released their seeds, and juvenile birds, mammals and reptiles are more likely to survive.

During a bushland burn we display notices at all nearby track junctions, so please always follow 'Track Closed' signs if they appear in your neck of the woods. If an area is closed, it is unsafe for the public, but will be re-opened as soon as hazards are removed.

As with all of our burns, we aim to balance two goals - keeping the City safe from the risk of wildfire, while protecting the ecological values of our wonderful bushland reserves.

The amount of time and energy we put into preparing for the Knocklofty cool burn was enormous, but four days before we were set to go Hobart was washed out in a record rain event. The window of opportunity closed for the time being, but our fire and biodiversity team remain hopeful conditions will let them carry out the burn before the end of the year.

Bushcare Profile

Sandra Poth, Co-Convenor

Waterworks Valley Landcare Group

How did you first get involved in Bushcare?

I was introduced to the wonderful Waterworks Valley Landcare Group volunteers by our neighbours when my partner and I moved to Waterworks Road about four years ago. Their enthusiasm and dedication to making a difference and preserving the beauty of this valley fascinated me and still does. It's very rewarding to be involved in Bushcare and to help sustain the local natural environment.

What are the best aspects of being involved in Bushcare?

Being part of the local Bushcare group is great fun. The best aspect is the people involved. Working in a team with like-minded people is a wonderful way of supporting the community and making a difference. You get instant results and a fantastic sense of achievement. You can see the positive change it has on your local area.

The support of our Bushcare supervisor Nicole Gill is exceptional and we get to learn about Tasmania's native plants and unloved weeds. Not to forget the tea and biscuits at the end of a session.

What else do you enjoy doing outside of Bushcare?

I love the outdoors and exploring the natural beauty of this island through bushwalking. I keep myself busy with lots of projects on our property, especially in the garden, much to the delight of my partner, whose job is to turn my ideas into reality. I also enjoy catching up with friends, gym classes, photography, reading and much more.



Carol Bristow, Co-Convenor

Waterworks Valley Landcare Group

How did you first get involved in Bushcare?

I joined the Waterworks Valley Landcare Group shortly after moving to Waterworks Road about 23 years ago. I like being in the bush, and wanted to contribute to our special natural area, so joining the group seemed like a good way of connecting with other locals. There is a strong sense of camaraderie among the volunteers and everyone has a great sense of humour. They work hard so it's easy to stay involved.

What are the best aspects of being involved in Bushcare?

It's a very positive experience. You are helping to maintain your local natural environment and get to see the results of your hard work immediately. It's so satisfying walking past an area you helped clear of weeds or a patch of native plants and trees you helped plant months or even years ago. Of course, the morning tea we have at the end of the activity is always enjoyable.

What else do you enjoy doing outside of Bushcare?

Since I retired I have the luxury of spare time and like to contribute to a few other community activities such as working in the community garden and helping newly-arrived migrants improve their English language skills. I also enjoy working in our own garden, bushwalking and cross-country running.



Bushland birds like the golden whistler are extremely sensitive to the presence of dogs. Photo: ©Eric Woehler, BirdLife Tasmania

It's a dog's life for our wildlife when pooches step out of line

Dr Eric Woehler and Bob Holderness-Roddam
BirdLife Tasmania

Hobart residents have an amazing array of wildlife on their doorstep. Few other capital cities in Australia can boast the diversity and abundance of native wildlife — birds and mammals — that share our daily lives.

Many people would not be aware of just how close to the city centre our wildlife comes. Small mammals such as bandicoots and bettongs enjoy the peri-urban fringe, venturing into gardens from their woodland territories. Little penguins nest within 2km of the city centre, and white-bellied sea-eagles and wedge-tailed eagles are often seen soaring above the suburbs close to the city's foothills.

Australians love their pets — 62% of households are home to one or more. Dogs are the most popular, with one or more dogs living in 40% of Australian households. There are over 100,000 dogs in Tasmania, that's one dog for every five people.

The many open spaces around Hobart are often shared with native wildlife, particularly those close to woodland areas in the foothills of kunanyi/Mount Wellington. Popular for many forms of recreational activities, the presence of dogs in some areas will have adverse effects on our native wildlife.

Disturbance from dogs has been shown to reduce food intake in wildlife and can reduce reproductive efforts and success. Dogs have also been implicated in the transmission of disease to native

wildlife, including marine mammals through faecal contamination of urban waterways. A recent study in Tasmania showed that dogs were second only to motor vehicles as the cause for wildlife being brought in for veterinary care.

Birds on beaches are particularly sensitive to disturbance from dogs. Several species such as hooded plovers (not to be confused with masked lapwings or 'spur-winged plovers') and pied oystercatchers lay their eggs in a nest on the ground where it can be easily stepped on or where the eggs and chicks are vulnerable to predation by dogs.

There is a long and sad history of little penguins being killed by dogs in Tasmania. In some cases, 20 to 50 or more penguins have been killed in a single attack by one or two dogs.

The City of Hobart and other councils have worked with BirdLife Tasmania and government agencies to identify sensitive habitats for native wildlife. Some areas are prohibited for dogs, others are off-leash exercise areas. Some have restricted access during wildlife breeding seasons, other areas have no restrictions.

It is important to respect and adhere to these restrictions, they have been established to protect native wildlife and their feeding and breeding habitats.

Maintaining control of pet dogs at home and while outside is critical if we want to protect the diversity of native wildlife in and around Hobart.

After the flood – a community rallies

On the night of Thursday 10 May rain started to fall on Hobart and kunanyi/Mount Wellington, then a long line of storm clouds marched across the darkening sky, bringing with them a succession of lightning strikes and a deluge of water.

In just 24 hours 235.2 mm of rain fell on Tasmania's capital city and the mountain, gouging 80 tonnes of gravel from Pinnacle Road, creating flash-flooding and land slips, and causing many of our rivulets to break their banks.

The next day the City of Hobart was forced to close the mountain for public safety. Sports grounds lying under a bed of mud were shut, playgrounds were off-limits and bushland reserves sectioned off as emergency operations began and we started to assess the damage.

The deluge flushed a huge amount of rubbish into rivulets, with all sorts of strange objects turning up, including a skull-and-cross bones onesie at the Hobart Rivulet. The most harmful were tiny bits of polystyrene that would eventually drain into the River Derwent if not cleaned up.

All Bushcare operations were suspended while more than 120 km of tracks and trails were surveyed for damage. Our priority was keeping people safe, and assessing the damage so that we could begin the rebuilding process.

The City of Hobart's parks and bushlands teams put in a huge effort in the first week after the flood, re-opening most of our parks and bushland reserves to the public. It took another week for the road to the summit of kunanyi/Mount Wellington to get the green light. Extensive engineering surveys were needed to ensure the road was safe.

The community also rallied, with more than 240 people gathering on the banks of the Hobart Rivulet for a massive Bushcare clean-up that collected more than half a tonne of rubbish. At a second community clean-up day the Cornelian Bay Bushcare group together with 30 volunteers collected over 50 kg of rubbish, recycling and reuse items at Cornelian Bay.

Over the coming weeks and months we'll need Bushcare volunteers more than ever. We will work with you to support your group's normal operations and will also welcome any assistance you'd like to offer with the ongoing recovery efforts.



Thirza White took her family down to help with the Hobart Rivulet clean-up day



Joseph Erashan was keen to lend a hand at Cornelian Bay

It will take years to repair all of the damage inflicted by the storm, but we're off to a good start, and committed to getting Hobart's walking and mountain bike trails back on track.



Muddy banks didn't deter Pier van der Merwe from pitching in on the Hobart Rivulet



Lord Mayor Alderman Ron Christie, Robyn Mounster, Jim Anderson and Mark Corrigan

Bushcarers share volunteer limelight

Bushcare volunteers Mark Corrigan, Jim Anderson and Robyn Mounster did us proud at the City of Hobart Volunteer Recognition Awards in May, accepting a certificate of appreciation on behalf of Bushcare from Lord Mayor Alderman Ron Christie.

Held every year, the awards recognise the valuable contribution volunteers make to the community, and Bushcare is no exception – in one year alone our volunteers contributed more than 3000 hours of their time.

This was a great opportunity for the City to thank all of our volunteers for their valuable contributions and was part of National Volunteer Week, which recognises the six million Australians who volunteer their time.

Thank you Mark (Friends of McAulay Reserve), Jim and Robyn (Friends of Knocklofty) for making this such a great occasion.

WALKING BOOK CLUB

Our Bushcare Walking Book Club session in May was a special event, featuring readings and a brief 'in conversation' with local author, academic and sometime cricketer Pete Hay.

After a gentle stroll around the Waterworks reservoirs, Pete read from *Physick*, his latest critically acclaimed poetry collection. Pete's poems connect strongly with the Tasmanian environment, and his reading at Gentle Annie Falls was a memorable experience.

If you love walking in the bush, and talking about books and the environment, consider coming along to one of our future sessions!

Upcoming books for the rest of the year include:

FIRST SUNDAY AFTERNOON, 2–4.30 pm

- 3 June** *The Genius of Birds*
by Jennifer Ackerman
Meet: Junction of Chimney Pot Hill and Ridgeway roads, Ridgeway
- 1 July** *Climate Changed* by Philippe Squarzoni
Meet: Upper Cascade Gardens car park, South Hobart
- 5 August** *Weeds* by Richard Mabey
Meet: Cartwright Reserve,
at the base of Truganini Track,
off Sandy Bay Road, Taroona

Are you an ethical shutterbug?

When you're immersed in nature, including Hobart's beautiful bushland reserves, it's hard to resist the shutterbug urge. But can the use of a simple camera or smartphone cause damage to our natural areas?

Earlier this year professional photographer Jason Futrill warned that a stampede of Instagrammers desperate to replicate photos they had seen online of Tasmania's beautiful natural environment was causing considerable environmental harm.

Jason said our own Secret Falls in Wellington Park had become a victim of Instagram trophy hunters.

Clearly much more needs to be done to educate people about the need to tread softly when out in the bush taking photos, and a fantastic new guide launched by NRM South is an excellent starting point.

Ethical Nature Photography in Tasmania is filled with great tips on how to snap that perfect pic while respecting our wildlife and natural spaces.

Birds under stress

Signs that birds are under stress include:

- Frantic running or flying.
- Constant vocalisations to a partner or chicks.
- Overhead or nearby swooping.
- Mock injury displays (eg limp wings) and playing dead.

Tread carefully

It's easy to forget just how fragile many of our natural areas are:

- Cushion plant mosaics and other alpine habitats make for great photos, but they are extremely vulnerable to dieback and death from trampling.
- Be careful when snapping orchids - other threatened and delicate plant species are likely to be found in the same area, including seedlings and non-flowering orchids.
- Long focal length lenses and digital zooms are a great way of photographing small subjects such as orchids, and allow you to avoid high-traffic areas, which leads to erosion.
- Stay on formed tracks and areas of hardened ground or bare rocks.
- Walk softly and avoid delicate soils and plants.

The guide is easy to read and filled with beautiful photos. Download it for free from the NRM South website - nrmsouth.org.au/ethical-photo-guide-tassie/



BREEDING SEASON (1ST OF AUGUST TO 31ST OF MARCH)

CONSTANT VOCALISATIONS CAN INDICATE DISTRESS AND DISTURBANCE



15 MINS AWAY FROM THE NEST CAN RESULT IN LETHAL TEMPERATURE FLUCTUATIONS FOR EGGS AND CHICKS

Swift action rescues kunanyi forests from mystery weed

If anyone else among Hobart's close-knit Fern Tree community had come across this unusual plant growing on the side of a popular mountain track, they would have paid it scant notice. But not Bec Johnson, she can spot a weed at a hundred paces.

That's why in September 2012 this specimen stopped Bec in her tracks. An attractive plant, with glossy-green leaves, it just didn't fit her sense of the mountain's ecology.

What followed was something of a detective story. Bec took the plant home but couldn't identify it. She was sure it wasn't a local, but what was it? Next stop was a visit to the City of Hobart's plant expert, John Sawbridge, now retired. He too was stumped but knew that if anyone in Hobart could figure out what the plant was it would be the Tasmanian Herbarium's Matthew Baker.

That's the moment Bec discovered she had found a new invasive weed species growing in the foothills of kunanyi/Mount Wellington, one that had the potential to take over large areas of natural bush and smother native plant species. *Daphne laureola* is grown by some horticulturalists on the mainland, but as far as we know has never self-seeded anywhere else in Australia.

What followed was a six year community effort to rid kunanyi's foothills of this potential environmental



Hobart Lord Mayor Ron Christie helped launch the new Fern Tree Weed Booklet with Vicki Campbell, Bec Johnson, Michelle Storer and Alderman Bill Harvey

weed before it could take hold, an effort that peaked when the final known wild specimen was plucked from the mountain.

On Thursday 24 May the City of Hobart celebrated this incredible achievement by bringing together the many volunteers and land owners involved with this project and to launch the new Fern Tree Weed Booklet, which has a new addition, *Daphne laureola*.

Over the coming years we look forward to working with the community and keeping the mountain *Daphne laureola* free through ongoing monitoring and follow up efforts.

Weed Watch

Autumn and winter are the seasons in which you might spot a conspicuous feathery seed head towering over surrounding vegetation. Pampas grass (*Cortaderia spp.*) is a tussock-forming grass that grows to more than two metres high. An aggressive coloniser of disturbed or burnt patches, it can invade a range of native bushland, from coastal scrub to closed wet forest. Each flower head can produce up to 100 000 wind-borne seeds, which can spread across a 25 km radius!



In Tasmania, pampas grass was historically planted for windbreaks in agricultural settings, and as a common ornamental feature of urban gardens. As a declared weed under the *Tasmanian Weed Management Act 1999* the importation, sale and distribution

of pampas is now prohibited, and landholders are legally required to control any pampas growing on their properties.

Sightings of pampas in Hobart can be reported to the Bushcare team at bushcare@hobartcity.com.au. If you find pampas elsewhere in Tasmania, or need advice on how to control pampas on your own property, get in touch with Biosecurity Tasmania by phoning (03) 6165 3777, or email Biosecurity.Tasmania@dpipwe.tas.gov.au.



Letter from a Bushcarer

Dear Bushcarers,

Some long-standing Bushcarers may remember me from my years working as a Bushcare Group Supervisor and member of the Vegetation Management Team (formerly the Bush Crew).

My partner Andrew and I departed Tassie in October 2013 in a huge jump to the remote north-west of the Northern Territory. I got a job as an Indigenous Ranger Coordinator with the Gurindji people (famous for the Wave Hill walk-off and birthplace of Indigenous land rights) undertaking land management and cultural preservation.

Although hugely challenging, the job was equally as rewarding and I believe indigenous ranger programs are making a massive difference to the lives of remote people by giving them meaningful employment in managing their ancestral lands and continuing cultural traditions.

Half way through 2015 I started working as a ranger with the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory at Finke Gorge National Park, which is west of Alice Springs. I had a ball on mid-winter trips travelling down the sandy bed of the Finke River with indigenous rangers controlling invasive athel pine, being chopped into remote,

spinifex-clad ridges for prescribed burning and maintaining boundary fencing to limit incursions of feral horses, cattle and camels.

I now work at Elsey National Park near Mataranka. Although a small park, its jewel-like springs are extremely popular with visitors during the dry season. A big part of my work here is managing visitor infrastructure such as walking tracks, picnic areas and campgrounds.

To keep visitors safe from saltwater crocodiles we also dedicate considerable time to surveying the waterways for these animals by spotlighting from a boat at night, as well as routinely monitoring and baiting croc traps. Adventures are also had helping staff in other parks in the region – working alongside traditional owners and experts to record and document rock art in Limmen National Park in the Gulf Country was one particularly awesome experience.

Although this all sounds glamorous, there are still plenty of weeds to spray, feral animals to control and dunnies to clean, but I think most rangers would agree that the job is truly one of the most diverse around.

Yours from the territory

Elise Cox

Bush Adventures connects nature and play

Rob Armstrong
Program Officer Bushland Recreation

This autumn has seen another great Bush Adventures program connecting people of all ages with Hobart's bushland reserves. Hundreds of families took part in Nature Play Day, and more than 50 educators, parents and carers also attended the Nature Play Community Forum in April.

Nature Play is a national initiative that inspires children to get outside, be part of nature and enjoy the many benefits that come from being better connected to the natural world. Both events took place at the Sustainability Learning Centre at Mt Nelson and saw hundreds of families enjoying a wide range of fun and educational activities.

Kids built mountains, became underground threads



of interconnected fungi, searched the local bushland for treasures and created their own works of art. It was an absolute joy to see the smiles, hear the laughter and be part of this great day.

Bush Adventures would like to thank the teams from City of Hobart Community Development, the Sustainability Learning Centre, Lady Gowrie Tasmania, Nature; Be in It, The Little Red Art Shed, Child Health Association Tasmania, C3 Church Hobart and Playgroup Tasmania. We would also like to thank all those who attended and made it such a special day.

We hope you've had a great outdoor autumn and as always we encourage everyone to experience your city's bushland reserves all year round. Join a Bush Adventure or create your own with friends and family. The winter Bush Adventures program is available from hobartcity.com.au/bushadventures.

Green thumbs wanted for Still Gardening

Gardening is an important way for older people to keep fit and remain strong enough to stay at home. For many it's also their passion and pleasure. But as we age, some gardening jobs get harder.

That's where the City of Hobart's Still Gardening Program kicks in, matching "Garden Mate" volunteers with an older person for 1–2 hours every week or two in their garden.

Garden Mates work side by side with an older person, helping them with the harder tasks in the garden. It's a great way of bringing different generations together, and for sharing knowledge between green thumbs.

The program is now looking for volunteers who can make an ongoing, regular commitment



as a Garden Mate. The program operates in Hobart and Glenorchy, so having your own wheels is a big advantage.

Volunteers are offered basic gardening tools and training, gardening workshops, an optional monthly lunchtime catch-up with other volunteers, travel reimbursement and relevant insurance.

To find out more please call 6236 9349 or email stillgardening@hobartcity.com.au

Hobart joins parkrun fun

If you go down to the Domain today you're in for a big surprise. It's not teddy bears you'll see but hundreds of people embracing the healthy parks, healthy people ethos of getting active outdoors.

Parkrun is a global not-for-profit organisation that provides free, weekly opportunities for people to run, jog, walk or stroll 5 km every Saturday morning. Whether you're in London, or Los Angeles, Helsinki or Hobart, you'll find a parkrun every Saturday at 9 am.

Hobart's own event started in January at the Queens Domain and has already seen thousands of feet padding their way around the Max's Infinity Joggers Loop at the Queens Domain. If you'd like to get involved please visit the website www.parkrun.com.au/hobart to register.

NATIONAL TREE DAY

SUNDAY 29 JULY 2018 | FARM GATE MARKET

SUNDAY 29 JULY 2018
8.30 AM – 1 PM

AT FARM GATE MARKET Bathurst Street,
(between Murray and Elizabeth streets), Hobart

To celebrate National Tree Day, the Bushcare team will host a native plant giveaway and speak with locals and visitors about the importance of planting trees for our environment and health.

For more information: hobartcity.com.au/events



A PROGRAM OF



City of **HOBART**