

Blue Mountains City Council

Bushcare Annual Report



2008 - 2009



Introduction

Welcome to the Bushcare Annual Report for 2008-2009 Financial Year.

At the end of June there were 65 active Bushcare and Landcare Groups working in the Blue Mountains spread across the whole LGA. Volunteer participation has also increased this year by 8 % over the previous year, with over 10,000 volunteer hours contributed.

The Bushcare team wishes to acknowledge the efforts of all volunteers and Groups and looks forward to seeing the on ground results of all this work unfold over the coming year. We are proud of the high standard of bushregeneration work we have been able to achieve together and look forward to further refinements of our approach.

Our Weeds Website www.weedsbluemountains.org.au continues to be popular with over 4000 hits each week.

This report records our achievements in each of the key areas of the 2005-08 Service Level Agreement.

Lyndal Sullivan

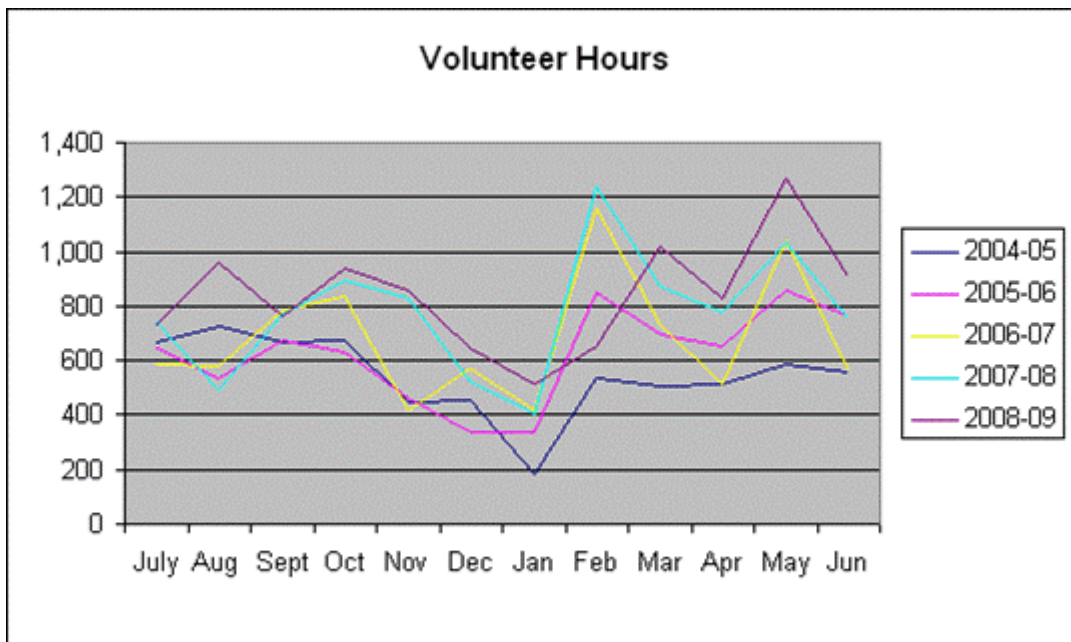
Bushcare Team Leader



Total Volunteer Participation

During the 2008/2009 year 10,074 volunteer hours were recorded across 68 Bushcare and Landcare groups and special events. This represents an 8 % increase in hours from last year with an average annual increase of 11.3 % over the last 4 years.

The graph below shows the volunteer hours over the last 5 years, contributed during monthly Bushcare or Landcare workdays as well as special events.



These figures do not include an additional 614 hours of support from TAFE classes on Bushcare Sites (additional detail below)

A list of all groups at end June 2009 is included as an attachment to this report. Current lists of all groups are available on the website http://weedsbluemountains.org.au/locate_bushcare_group.asp

MAINTAIN A DATA BASE OF VOLUNTEERS & OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES MAINTAIN RECORDS OF WORK UNDERTAKEN & TRAINING

Records of volunteer attendances and work undertaken is kept for each site. These are compiled at the end of each month across all sites.

The volunteer database is regularly updated, incorporating records of on-site training. The current database system was developed early in 2008 with all entries transferred by August 2008.

Bushcare Groups

SITE SUPERVISION OF BUSHCARE VOLUNTEERS

At the end of June 2009, there were 49 active bushcare groups working each month on public land which were supported by on-the-ground supervision and training each work day. This is an increase of 2 from the previous year.

Three new groups commenced during the year with an initial Open Day, promoted by letterboxing the neighbourhood and display posters:

Upper Kedumba, Katoomba
Marmion Creek, Leura
Pitt Park, Wentworth Falls

One group has gone into recess, hopefully to re-emerge in the future - Reading Reserve, Glenbrook

2138 person days/events were recorded with 6126.5 volunteer hours and 1421 site hours by Bushcare officers at regular workdays. During the year 5 special events were held on Bushcare days which gave an additional dimension to the normal group's activities. These were remote bushcare days and threatened species days.

| | Volunteer person days | Volunteer hours | BMCC Bushcare support hours* |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Normal Bushcare months | 2138 | 6126.5 | 1421 |
| Special events held for Bushcare Groups | 48 | 194 | 34 |
| Total Bushcare | 2186 | 6320.5 | 1455 |

*not including additional funding

The management of green waste has been a focus of all Groups during the year. Efforts are made to leave all non -reproductive material on site, and only to remove that which cannot effectively be composted or dried. There has been a reduction in the green waste taken to landfill over the year.

In addition to bush regeneration activities, some groups have undertaken track work and erosion control works during the year.

Trackcare activities have been held under the guidance of the Walking Tracks Team by the Else Mitchell and Sublime Point Bushcare groups.

The Bushregeneration, Noxious Weeds and Fire Mitigation teams all contribute to the support of the works undertaken by Bushcare groups. 848 hours of bushregeneration works have been undertaken during the year across 25 sites. An additional 85 hours of tree felling and weed spraying works were also done on Bushcare sites.

The Sublime Point Bushcare Group's site in Leura was burned in March 2009 from a hazard reduction burn which escaped from the planned area. Assistance has been given by the Noxious Weeds team in spraying groundlayer weeds to protect the recently burned area from weed invasion.

Landcare Groups

SITE SUPERVISION OF LANDCARE VOLUNTEERS

18 Landcare Groups operated during the year working on private land supported by on-the-ground supervision. At the end of June 2009, there were 15 active Landcare groups being supported by the Bushcare program.

Changes to 3 groups were:

- The Pulpit Hill Road Landcare group in Katoomba - has reformed as a 3 monthly group and is being funded under a Swamp project grant
- The Fairy Dell Landcare Group at Mt Victoria - is in the process of re forming to becoming a broader based group looking after public reserves as well as private creeks; the viability of this new group will be re-assessed over the last half of 2009
- The Freeland Avenue Landcare Group has gone into recess

Two new Groups commenced during the year:

- Vipassana Meditation Centre, Blackheath and
- RSPCA, Katoomba.

11 of the 18 Landcare groups also work on public land. All groups have been provided with monthly on site support for most of the year . Every endeavour is made to continue this level of support until the demands of new Landcare or Bushcare Groups commencing will require a reduction for the most experienced groups.

Other activities supporting private landholders have included workshops and Bushcare days where residents have attended specifically to learn more about how to manage their own land.

Bushcare Special Events

DEVELOP AND MANAGE PROGRAM RELATED EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Three evening talks/forums were held across the mountains and proved to be popular, not only for existing volunteers but also other residents.

- Phytophthora workshop - Katoomba - 32 attended
In September, Dr Edward Liew of the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens, ran a series of workshops for Council on the management of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* for staff, bushcare volunteers and other agencies. 32 bushcare volunteers attended the sessions and contributed to a lively discussion.
- Koala presentation - Blaxland - 35 attended
A presentation on Koala Research was made by Robert Close, Adjunct Associate Professor of UWS. 35 people attended, most of whom were residents not associated with Bushcare.
- Provenance Forum - Lawson - 75 attended

A forum on Provenance held on April 2 attracted 75 people from a range of sectors of the community. The main message was that Climate Change considerations do not change the importance of provenance as a key consideration to protect biodiversity in the Blue Mountains.

Three field events were held with volunteer presenters:

Spotlighting at Knapsack
Bird Walk
Historic Walk

Bushcare also worked with other sections of BMCC to make the following training opportunities available to volunteers:

Stream processes workshop/ field day (November)
Large Aquatic Life Presentation (October) Hazelbrook
Microstrobos information and weeding days (see events section 3.28)



Knapsack Historic Walk

DEVELOP EVENT BASED VOLUNTEERING

Remote Bushcare

Remote Bushcare activities continued to grow with 9 events over the year involving 58 volunteer days and 378.5 hours with 73 hours of Bushcare officer time. Activities were in the following locations:

- Grose River uppercatchment, Mt Victoria
- Braeside, Blackheath
- Popes Glen, Blackheath
- Katoomba Creek, North Katoomba
- Sassafras Creek Springwood (Beefarm Road Bushcare Group)
- Blue Gum Swamp, Winmalee (Summerhayes Park Bushcare group)

Two of these events were planned with the relevant Bushcare Group to enable them to work in more remote parts of their sites (downstream of their normal work areas). These provided an opportunity for group members to gain a better understanding of their sub catchments. Both of these events were full days and also attracted other bushcare volunteers.

Three events were held in conjunction with NPWS as part of the Great Grose Weed Walk program. The Jamison Weed Busters program was a new initiative during the year developed by NPWS with assistance from Council. Both of these programs promote existing bushcare groups in the relevant catchments and provide opportunities for joint agency activities.

Swampcare events

Bushcare supported the Threatened Species program, in the running of 10 Swampcare events by providing the technical support in Bushregeneration training and equipment. On 2 occasions, Bushcare ran the whole event.

This was total of 55 volunteer participant days (205 hrs), with the Bushcare program providing 37 site hours of support.

These activities were held in:

- North Wentworth Falls swamp near Kittyhawk Avenue,
- Clydebank Swamp North Leura,
- Yosemite Creek swamp area (off 5th Avenue)
- Hester Creek (in conjunction with ther Hester creek Landcare group)
- Wentworth Creek (between Leura and Wentworth Falls)
- Leura School
- Browns Swamp , Clarence

***Microstrobis fitzgeraldii* events**

Eight information and weeding days were planned and 7 held in conjunction with the Threatened Species Program to safeguard the *Microstrobis fitzgeraldii* - at Katoomba Falls, Bonnie Doon Katoomba, Leura Cascades. and Jamison, Wentworth Falls. Educational materials were provided and short presentations given on this threatened species. Each of these events were planned and run by Bushcare Officers working additional funded hours to the SLA, with some contribution from the regular Bushcare program. On 2 occasions these events were held on a regular Bushcare day, adding an extra educational component for the Group and also being open to the local community. The program contributed 2 half days of Bushcare Officer time as well as administrative support provided for bookings and information (for 8 events). [equivalent 2 event support]



Michael Hensen BMCC - Microstrobos workshop

FACILITATE CATCHMENT WIDE APPROACHES TO BUSHCARE SITES

A Leura Cascades Catchment event held in October successfully brought together the 4 groups working in the catchment to work above the Cascades. The morning enabled groups to meet each other, discover that their efforts were not isolated and gain a better understanding of the catchment and some of its threatened species.

Continued to provide support for the catchment coordination of Katoomba/Govetts and Yosemite Creeks. 2 Coordination meetings held which brought together Bushcare groups, landcare, NPWS and various sections of Council involved in the subcatchment.

TAFE Students

FACILITATE SITE IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH OTHER VOLUNTEER AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Wentworth Falls TAFE bush regeneration students and teachers contributed 614 hours over the year on 12 sites. Bushcare Officers are involved in site planning with TAFE teachers for these activities. Bushregeneration work was undertaken by students on the following sites:

- Knapsack Park Lapstone
- Summerhayes Park Winmalee
- Gloria Park, Hazelbrook
- Peter Carol Field, Leura
- Bureau Park, Katoomba
- Yosemite Creek, Corner Seventh Ave and South Street Nth Katoomba
- Frogs Hollow, Blackheath
- Falconbridge Primary School
- Central Park Wentworth Falls
- Fairy Dell Mt Victoria
- North Lawson Swamp
- Brookdale Reserve Glenbrook



TAFE group plantings Central Park Wentworth Falls

Promotional Events

SLA BC 3.13 RECOGNITION OF EXISTING VOLUNTEERS

A volunteer “Thank You” BBQ was held on May 30th 2009 with approx 140 volunteers attending. Awards were given in recognition of the milestones reached by groups, and awards to individuals. Two groups were acknowledged for their 20 years of effort - Centenary Reserve at Blackheath and the Friends of Blue Mountains Creek Valley at Katoomba.

SLA BC 3.15 PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES AT EXTERNAL EVENTS

Workload indicator: set up and resource displays at 4 events a year

Performance: 5 external events

- Springwood Foundation Day - Bushcare provided materials for a Green Team stall
- Love Lawson Festival - Bushcare provided materials and equipment for a stall which was staffed by volunteers in November. Information specific to mid mountains groups was supplied.
- Weedbusters Week- a stall was organised and staffed in Springwood
- A World Environment Day stall was held at Blackheath Community Markets - Bushcare participated and provided local materials
- National Tree Day - Bushcare coordinated the supply of trees and shrubs to 14 schools, 2 community groups and 4 Bushcare / Landcare groups. This extended between the designated day in July till late November.



Weedbusters in Springwood

Four bushcare groups held tree planting events under the NTD banner as a promotional exercise - South Lawson, Marmion Creek, Cox's Reserve and Explorers Reserve Lapstone.

The **nursery educational program** has continued with 10 nurseries visited, approximately 3 times each, involving discussions with 33 owners/workers, with a total of 30 face to face hours between these individuals and a BMCC officer. The aim of the visits is to checking stock for weed species, to encourage nursery owners to replace these with more environmentally friendly plant species and also to encourage them to display and distribute copies of the weeds booklet.

Volunteer Communications with Council

SUPPORT BUSHCARE NETWORK

Support is provided for the meetings by arranging the venue, refreshments, minutes and agendas. This year an additional special meeting was held to brainstorm marketing ideas for promoting Bushcare.

Publications & Communications

RODUCE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Four "Gecko" newsletters were produced; in Winter (Issue #36), Spring (Issue #37), Summer (Issue #38) and Autumn (Issue # 39). Circulation is approx 600 hard copies and 380 by email notification. An additional 160 copies are distributed at Council officers, through libraries or promotional events.

The newsletters have included articles on events, phytophthora protocols, new weeds, a report on the Provenance Forum, Birds research, Dragonflies and Damselflies, new weeds, Bushland management works in the Lower mountains, Safe and Sustainable Gardening, Koala, Grey headed Flying Foxes, history of bush regeneration, Aboriginal Landscapes, and two special "How to" inserts have been produced about Making and Applying Montbretia Wipers.

Electronic bulletins

A short email bulletin is sent to over 380 people each month to update volunteers on events between Geckos.

Email bulletins are also sent to targeted audiences using the preferences indicated by volunteers on the database- eg notices of remote bushcare events, information on trackcare, information about Bushcare Network meetings and issues and specific group notices

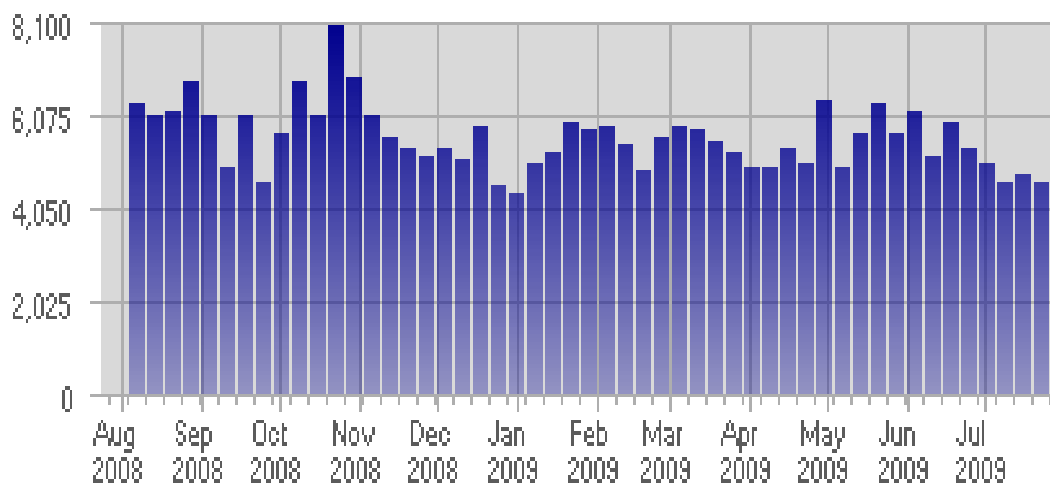
MAINTAIN, UPDATE, DEVELOP THE BUSHLAND WEEDS WEBSITE

The website continues to service sessions from over 4000 users every week, with 14 weeks exceeding 6000 hits. The website (www.weedsbluemountains.org.au) is now in its fifth year of operation and widely accepted as the benchmark for weed education on the Internet.

It is updated on a regular basis with news items and group details.

Developments on the website during the year include:

- Current Issues section introduced
- Bushcare Network section introduced
- Weed of the Month on the Home Page automated
- Sound recordings have been added (both playable and downloadable) to the report on Bob Mackinson's talk on Provenance.
- Additional Bushcare 'mini sites' included within website, bringing the total number of mini sites to 16 with the addition of Glenbrook Lagoon.



Website hits per week from August 08 - July 09

DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The *Weeds of the Blue Mountains* booklet has been distributed across the mountains throughout the year. It has been distributed at promotional events, as well as through ... regular

distribution locations such as nurseries, neighbourhood centres, libraries, railway stations and council offices.

RESPOND TO CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUESTS

An average of 10 requests for information from the community are received each month, excluding phone calls and emails received which directly relate to Bushcare and landcare groups or events being organised. In addition to this there are less than 10 requests received over the year as formal 'Customer Service Requests'

Most of these informal requests come through the council call centre, then by email either directly or through the website.

Managing Contracts

ASSIST IN MANAGING CONTRACTS

Assistance has been provided to Community and Corporate Branch in the application for grants and/or the management of subsequent contracts on the following 11 sites:

Central Park, Wentworth Falls
Cox's Reserve, Lapstone
Cross Street Reserve, Warrimoo
Katoomba Creek, Nth Katoomba
Leura Cascades, Leura
Linksvie Avenue Springwood
Marmion Swamp, Nth Leura
North Lawson
Tortoise Creek, Faulconbridge
Mount Wilson -Zig Zag and Waterfall Reserves
Wilson Glen Woodford

The following contracts have been managed by Bushcare/Landcare groups:

McCraes Paddock, South Katoomba
Brahma Kumaris Landcare Group, Leura

Managing Chemicals

MANAGING CHEMICALS

AQF4 training undertaken by 1 BCO and organised for rest of team during 09-10.

Future Directions

The Blue Mountains City Council Bushcare Program continues to show strong growth from within the community at both regular and special events. For the last three years there has been at least one group in every township of the Blue Mountains, except for Linden.

The standard of bush regeneration work on Bushcare sites continues to be important, with continual emphasis on ongoing training in techniques as well as site strategies.

Areas for development over the next 12 months are:

- Development of more cross-agency partnerships- particularly with NPWS in the expansion of the Jamison Weed Buster program.
- Development of training opportunities - to increase the skill levels of existing volunteers to assist them in being more actively involved in site strategy decisions, and to increase their sense of stewardship for their sites.

- Review and updating of the Bushcare Policy and Procedures Manual
- Review and updating of Volunteer training materials



Katoomba Falls

The End

Blue Mountains City Council Bushcare/Landcare Directory 08-09

| Township | Reserve | Day of Month | Time |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Lapstone | ❖ Explorers Reserve, Grover St | 1 st Sat | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Knapsack Creek | 2 nd Sat | 1:30 - 4:30 |
| | ❖ Coxs Reserve/Gregory Terrace | 1 st Sat | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| Glenbrook | ❖ Alexander Crescent Landcare | 1 st Sat | 1:00 - 4:00 |
| | ❖ Glenbrook Lagoon | 3 rd Sun | 2:00 - 4:00 |
| | ❖ Bellata Court | 1 st Sat | 1:30 - 4:30 |
| | ❖ Darks Common | 3 rd Sat | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Zora's Creek Landcare | 4 th Thurs | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Three Gullies | every Thurs | 8.30 - 12.30 |
| Blaxland | ❖ Pippa's Pass | 1 st Sat | 1:00 - 4:00 |
| Mount Riverview | ❖ Roger Cres and Panorama Ave | 4 th Sat | 1:30 - 4:30 |
| Warrimoo | ❖ Cross St | 4 th Sat | 2:00 - 6:00 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| | ❖ Long Angle Gully Landcare | 1 st Sat | 1:00 - 4:00 |
| Sun Valley | ❖ Sun Valley Reserve | 1 st Wed | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| Valley Heights | ❖ Benoit Park | 4 th Sat | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| Springwood | ❖ Birdwood Gully | 3 rd Sat | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Deanei Forest | 4 th Sat | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Else Mitchell Park | 3 rd Sat | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Fairy Dell | 3 rd Sun | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Beefarm Rd | 4 th Sat | 2:00 - 4:00 |
| Winmalee | ❖ Summerhayes Park | 1 st Sat | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Linksvie Landcare | 3 rd Sat | 1.00 - 4.00 |
| Faulconbridge | ❖ Jackson Park | 3 rd Sun | 1:00 - 4:00 |
| | ❖ Tortoise Creek Landcare | 3 rd Sat | 9.30 - 12.30 |
| Woodford | ❖ Wilsons Glen | 3 rd Sat | 2:00 - 5:00 |
| | ❖ Woodford Glen Landcare | 1 st Sat | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| Hazelbrook | ❖ Horseshoe Falls & Gloria Park | 3 rd Sun | 2:00 - 4:30 |
| | ❖ Coates Park | 1 st Sat | 1:30 - 4:30 |
| | ❖ Burgess Falls | 4 th Sun | 2:00 - 4:00 |
| Lawson | ❖ South Lawson | 3 rd Sun | 10:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ North Lawson | 4 th Sat | 1:30 - 4:30 |
| | ❖ Kihilla Landcare | 1 st Fri | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| Bullaburra | ❖ Red Gum Park | 4 th Sun | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| Wentworth Falls | ❖ Wentworth Falls Lake | 3 rd Sat (2 nd Tue) | 1:00 - 4:00 (3-5) |
| | ❖ Jamison Creek | 3 rd Sat | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Central Park | 4 th Thurs | 9:00 - 11:00 |
| | ❖ Water Nymphs Dell | 3 rd Sat | 2:00 - 5:00 |
| | ❖ Valley Of The Waters (NPWS)* | 2 nd Sat | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Pitt Park | 4 th Sat | 2.00 - 5.00 |

Blue Mountains Bushcare/Landcare Directory cont

| Township | Reserve | Day of Month | Time |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Leura | ❖ Brahma Kumaris Landcare | 1 st Fri | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Sublime Point | 2 nd Mon | 9:00 -12:00 |
| | ❖ Lindeman Road | 1 st Sat | 9:00 -12:00 |
| | ❖ Leura Cascades | 2 nd Fri | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Everglades Landcare | 3 rd Wed | 9:00 - 12.00 |
| | ❖ Marmion Swamp | 3 rd Sun | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Rawson Parade Landcare | 4 th Sat | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Lone Pine | 1 st Sat | 9:00 - 12.00 |
| | ❖ Govett St | 4 th Sat | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Hester Creek | 3 rd Fri | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| Katoomba | ❖ Katoomba Falls Creek Valley | 2 nd Sat | 9.00 - 1.00 |
| | ❖ Minne-Ha-Ha Falls | 4 th Sun | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Katoomba Creek | 3 rd Sun | 9:30 - 1:00 |
| | ❖ Kedumba Creek | 4 th Fri | 9:30-12:30 |
| | ❖ Upper Kedumba Creek | 4 th Sun | 1.30-4.30 |
| | ❖ Vale St | 4 th Sat | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Cumberland Walkway | 2 nd Wed | 9:00 - 12:00 |
| | ❖ Frelander Ave Landcare | NCA | |
| | ❖ RSPCA Landcare | 4 th Wed 2 nd Sat | 9.00 - 12.00 |
| | ❖ North Katoomba Landcare* | 3 rd Mon | 9.00 - 12.00 |
| Medlow Bath | ❖ Medlow Bath Park | 1 st Sat | 2:00 - 4:00 |
| Blackheath | ❖ Centenary Reserve | 2 nd Fri | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Popes Glen | 4 th Sat | 9:00 - 1:00 |
| | ❖ Sutton Park | 1 st Thurs | 9.00 - 12.00 |
| | ❖ Blackheath Glen | 4 th Sat | 2:00 - 4:00 |
| | ❖ Frogs Hollow | 3 rd Sat | 9:30 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Vipassana | 3 rd Mon | 9:00 - 12:30 |
| | ❖ Braeside (NPWS)* | 4 th Sun | 9:30 - 1:00 |
| Mount Victoria | ❖ Mt Victoria Bushcare/Landcare | NCA | |
| Mount Irvine | ❖ Mt Irvine Landcare* | 3 rd Fri | 9:00 - 12.00 |
| Mount Wilson | ❖ Mount Wilson Bushcare | 2 nd Fri | 9:00 - 12.00 |

All groups are supported by Bushcare except those marked *
 NCA means - not currently active