

Bushland

Newsletter

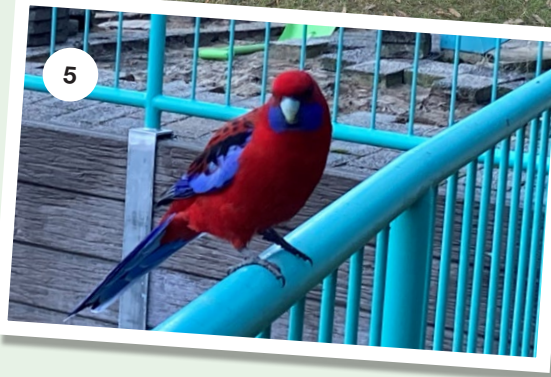
SPRING 25

GOT A SNAP TO SHARE?

Share your love for Randwick's bushland and biodiversity!

Send your photos and stories to
bushcare@randwick.nsw.gov.au

1. "One of the small pleasures of bushcare is, while creeping around the underbrush, occasionally coming across some oddity that is new to me, in this case 3 perfect miniature radar domes" said Baths Bushcarer.
2. Eastern Rosellas return to the Prince Henry Nursing and Medical Museum to breed again this year, Eric Ooms urban bird advocate and Prince Henry bushcarer.
- 3/4. Build it and they will come and it sure didn't take long before Aaron's street verge became habitat. Check out Council's Native Havens program to learn more.
5. Crimson rosellas (Platycercus elegans) spotted in Thredbo by Anne-Maree Mitford.



In this edition:

- Defenders of the nest: how to stay safe this swooping season
- Growing resilience: preparing for the heat with trees
- What harm can pet poo do?
- Taking inspiration from Leete Park
- Tackling Vine Weeds





Defenders of the nest

Improving safety for all this swooping season

By Emily Fern Strautins, Bushcare Officer

There is nothing quite like returning from a long trip to hear the lyrical song of the Australian Magpie. These birds are an iconic part of the Australian land- and soundscape and are one of our native species which truly thrive in the habitat of suburban Sydney.

As the warm weather rolls around, breeding birds can become defensive of their babies in nests. Magpies, masked lapwings, butcherbirds and noisy miners are all famous for dive-bombing and, though this can be intimidating, all are protected from harm under Australian law.

Since the birds aren't going anywhere, how can we humans better understand our feathered neighbours and promote safer streets, parks and gardens?

Understanding your feathered neighbour

Open parks and gardens with lawn and some tall trees are the perfect habitats for magpies, butcherbirds, noisy miners and masked lapwings. As these

habitats expand, so do the numbers of these species and the rate of swooping activity.

By reducing the size of a lawn in favour of lower dense ground layers and shrubs, we can support a greater diversity of habitats for the smaller birds that are disappearing rapidly from Sydney's suburbs, and reduce the dominance of the larger, swooping species.

These birds have strong ties to a home territory and come to know the people who share their neighbourhood. They have been known to exhibit different behavior towards specific people, depending on their observations and life experiences. Magpies specifically will maintain a territory for up to 20 years. The best way to avoid becoming a target is to befriend your neighbourhood magpies and show them respect year-round.



Why do they swoop?

Swooping is purely protective. These birds are devoted parents, and during nesting season (August to November), they become highly vigilant. Magpies and butcherbirds tend to target what they perceive as threats to their chicks. Masked lapwings, which nest on the ground, may swoop more frequently and noisily—but they rarely make contact. Understanding that their intention isn't aggression, but defence can help shift how we respond.

Most birds do not swoop. Only individual birds who have learned to fear people, dogs or cyclists become problematic. Therefore, when swooping begins attempts to move or scare the bird will serve to exacerbate the issue.

Swoop-Safe Tips

During nesting season, the best way to avoid being dive-bombed is simple – give them space to feel safe.

- **Know the hotspots:** Councils often post warning signs in known swooping areas. The website <https://www.magpiealert.com/> can alert you to known hotspots to plan alternate routes during nesting season. Avoid lingering near nest sites.
- **Reduce disturbance = reduced reactivity:** Never antagonise or feed birds. Give them extra space around breeding season.
- **Protective gear helps:** Cyclists should dismount, use zip ties or paint eyes on helmets. Pedestrians can carry an umbrella or wear sunglasses on the back of the head as many birds swoop from behind.
- **Stick together:** Walking in pairs is better as birds are less likely to swoop groups of people.
- **If you are swooped:** Rapid or erratic movement is likely to intimidate birds. Move away promptly but calmly, while watching the bird.



Australian magpie fledgling.



Masked lapwing and chicks.



Defender of the nest, the Grey Butcherbird.



Plant with Us

Growing resilience Preparing for the heat with trees

By Julian Lee, Coordinator Sustainability

As the hot season looms, communities across Sydney are preparing for longer, more intense heatwaves. In urban areas like Randwick, the effects of climate change are amplified by the urban heat island effect, where hard surfaces absorb and radiate heat, making cities significantly warmer than surrounding bushland. One of the most effective ways to combat this is through tree planting and canopy expansion.

Trees provide natural cooling, reducing ambient temperatures by up to 10°C in shaded areas. They also improve air quality, support biodiversity, and enhance the liveability of our neighbourhoods. Recognising these benefits, Randwick Council has proposed a canopy target of 22% by 2040 in its draft Urban Forest Policy, a goal that will help create a cooler, greener, and more resilient city.



Achieving this target requires a whole-of-community approach. Randwick's **Bushcare program** plays a vital role in protecting and restoring natural areas. Volunteers work alongside Council's Bushcare Officers to regenerate bushland, remove invasive species, and expand habitat for native fauna. These efforts not only preserve biodiversity but also contribute to canopy growth and ecological resilience.

For residents keen to get involved, the **Plant With Us** program offers hands-on opportunities to help green the city. Through regular community planting events, locals can dig in, learn about native species, and contribute directly to increasing vegetation cover.

Another way to participate is through the **Request a Street Tree** initiative, where residents can request a free street tree to be planted outside their home. Council assesses the site for suitability and handles the planting, while residents commit to caring for the tree as it establishes. It's a simple but impactful way to contribute to the canopy target and beautify your street.

Randwick Council is currently seeking public feedback on its **Draft Urban Forest Policy**, which outlines a

strategic framework for managing and protecting trees across public and private land. The policy sets out clear guidelines for planting, maintenance, and tree protection, and reinforces the importance of urban greening in climate adaptation. Residents are encouraged to **have their say** before the consultation closes on August 13.

Choosing the right trees is essential. Native species are generally well-suited to the local climate and provide critical habitat for wildlife. These trees are also more resilient to drought and require less maintenance once established.

As we prepare for another hot season, planting trees is a simple yet powerful way to build resilience. It's a community effort that supports biodiversity, improves wellbeing, and helps meet our canopy goals. Whether through Bushcare, Plant With Us, Request a Street Tree, or by commenting on the Urban Forest Policy, there are many ways to get involved.

Useful Links:

- **Bushcare Program:** randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/bushland/bushcare/bushcare-volunteers
- **Plant With Us:** randwick.nsw.gov.au/environment-and-sustainability/bushland/bushcare/bushcare-volunteers
- **Request a Street Tree:** randwick.nsw.gov.au/about-us/forms-and-publications/forms/community-forms/request-a-tree-form
- **Have Your Say - Urban Forest Policy:** yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au/trees





images: Kezia Littlemore and Brad Smith

From the nursery

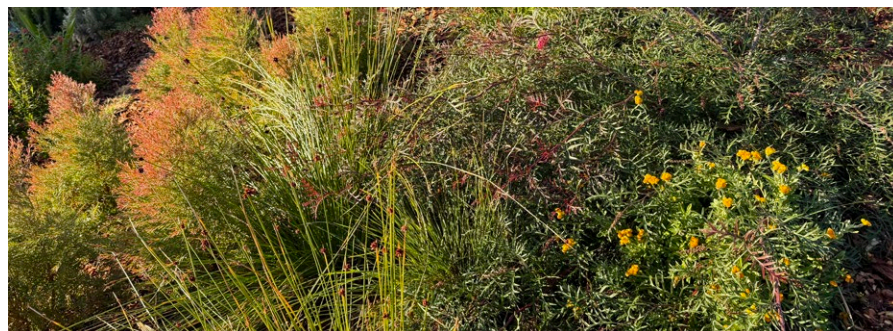
Taking inspiration from Leete Park

By Kezia Littlemore, Nursery Team Leader

After visiting Leete Park recently I was knocked out at how it has thrived. It is currently in flower and looking stunning! With acacias covered with native bees, tussock grasses blowing in the breeze and grevilleas adding splashes of colour throughout the bed. If you look more closely you will see flannel flowers, yellow buttons and the purple pea flower sprays of *Hardenbergia violacea*, interspersed between larger shrubs.

The Randwick Council Community Nursery was asked in June 2024 to select plants for Leete Park, a triangular park bounded by Dudley, Higgs and Thomas Streets in Randwick. The park has a steep sloping hill on the Dudley Street side. It is one of the highest points in Randwick.

The slope, previously just grassed with turf, was chosen as a site to have a native garden with large numbers of flowering plants. The garden was



planted out with a range of plant types, using grasses to create a matrix into which the flowering native shrubs and ground covers have been incorporated.

Leete Park is a challenging site for a garden, having several constraints including erosion potential, being windy and coastal as well as inaccessible for watering, and not having irrigation installed. These constraints narrowed the plant choices and made it an interesting project to work on.

I selected plants for hardiness, erosion control and flowers. The initial planting

included grasses, rushes and vines to help stabilise the slope and form the base of the matrix style planting, and eco-logs were also used to terrace the site. Fast-growing small trees such as acacias, grevillea shrubs and spreading ground covers were included for their flowers. Other plants were selected for their foliage adding contrast and colour in non-flowering seasons. The red tips of the *Melaleuca* 'Claret Tops' and striking leaves of the *Gynerium* Lilies can be spotted every so often in the hillside planting.

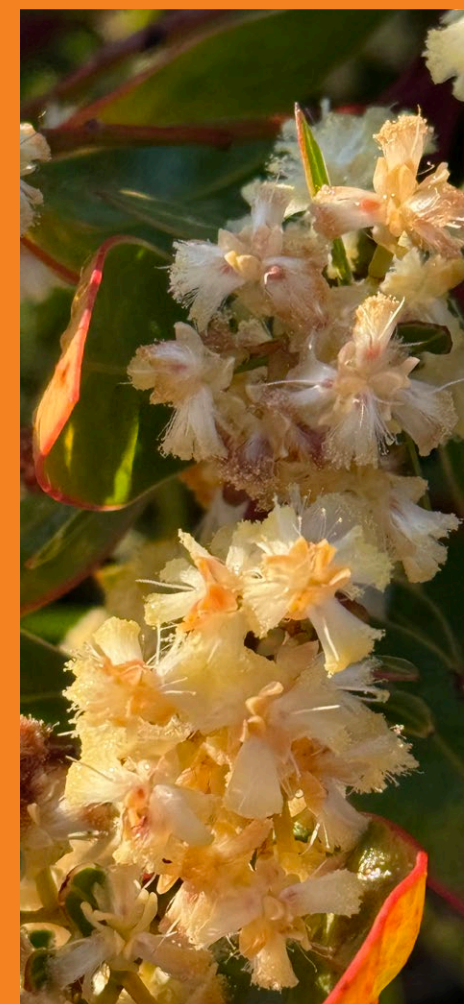
Leete was planted out in mid-2024. Most of the initial planting has worked and the Open Space North team maintaining the site has supplemented the original planting with other native plants from the nursery to increase the variety and density in the bed. It's inspiring to discuss potential plants with the team and to receive progress updates. It's great to see what has worked so well there and how the garden has grown out of a barren hillside. The successful plants have helped inform the nursery, streetscape and open spaces teams about their future garden additions and designs.

Of course, the successful plants are ones the nursery will look at having more of and recommending to the public for gardens with similar conditions.

What has been the most important aspect of this project is the ongoing collaboration between the nursery and the open spaces team at council when it comes to the ongoing maintenance and planting of the site, finding out what is working from the gardeners and selecting plants together to add to the diversity and visual appeal of the garden.

The aim of the garden is to reflect the natural landscape where different native plant types thrive together, suppress weeds and beautify the area. After only a year the garden has already received praise from passersby, residents and visitors and hopefully it will inspire other gardeners and councils to plant more of our fabulous natives in exciting mixes where grasses, vines and underrated smaller flowering shrubs are included. It's the mix of native plants and the combined work of the council teams that have made this new garden something special.

For those who haven't seen Leete Park, I recommend a visit!



What harm can pet poo do?

Why picking it up matters

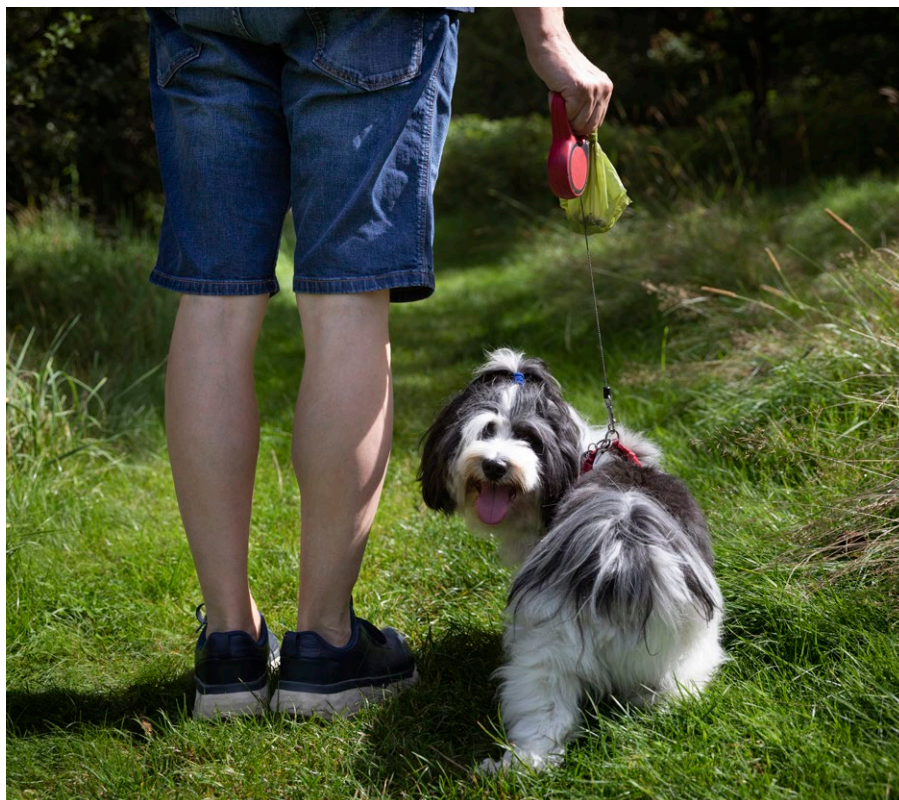
By Emily Fern Strautins, Bushcare Officer

Picture this: you're strolling along a gorgeous Australian beach, the waves crashing, the sun shining—until you step into an unexpected, squishy surprise. Gross, right? But beyond the ick factor, pet poo left in coastal areas is causing serious environmental harm.

You love nature. You recycle, reduce waste, and make eco-friendly choices. But if you're leaving pet poo behind on coastal trails or beaches, you're harming the very environment you're enjoying.

It's not "fertilizer"

Unlike the droppings of birds or native animals, pet waste doesn't break down harmlessly. It's full of bacteria, parasites, and excess nutrients that disrupt fragile ecosystems. When rain washes it into waterways, it fuels toxic algae blooms, which degrade water quality, fuels algal blooms and harms marine life.



Wildlife pays the price

Australia's native animals are uniquely adapted to their environment, but pet waste introduces foreign bacteria and parasites that can be devastating. From bushland to backyards, green spaces to the sea elements found within pet poo, such as toxoplasmosis from cats, can be fatal to native wildlife. Species like possums, seabirds and dolphins can be particularly sensitive even to indirect contact, such as exposure to contaminated soil or water can cause significant health issues and even death.

Public health matters

And let's be honest—no one enjoys dodging landmines on a morning walk!

Leftover pet waste on footpaths, nature strips, or park trails doesn't just disappear. Pet waste harbours bacteria like E. coli, which lingers in sand and water posing health risks to people enjoying our parks and beaches especially kids who love digging in the dunes!

Urban pollution starts with you

If you're passionate about sustainability, extend that mindset to pet ownership. A simple habit—bagging and binning pet waste—prevents pollution, protects biodiversity, and keeps our beaches beautiful.

A small act makes a big difference. So, next time your furry mate does their business, be a responsible pet owner—because nature (and your neighbours) will thank you!



The scoop on the poop bag



- Sure, a plastic bag is good for scooping the poop but don't purchase new bags—this simply creates a new source of plastic with an average bag taking 400 years to decompose!
- Bags marketed as “biodegradable” often mean they break down into tiny fragments of plastic quickly in the environment. Check the label to determine what they are really made of.
- “Certified home compostable” is best, as these products must be made of a natural product which will readily return to soil.

No matter which option you choose remember to bag it & bin it or risk an 'on the spot fine' of \$275.





Vine weeds

The highest priority in bush regeneration

By Emily Fern Strautins

When tackling bush regeneration, vine weeds should be the top priority. These fast-growing, invasive species quickly smother native vegetation, outcompeting plants for light, water, and nutrients. Left unchecked, they can strangle entire ecosystems, leading to biodiversity loss and habitat destruction. Their aggressive growth patterns and multiple methods of propagation make them some of the toughest weeds to control. Below are four key culprits threatening natural bushland.

1. Blue Morning Glory (*Ipomoea Indica*) and Coastal Morning Glory (*Ipomea Cairica*)

Identifiable features: This twining vine boasts heart-shaped leaves and stunning, funnel-shaped blue to purple flowers that fade to pink as they age.

Growth patterns: A rampant climber that can form dense mats, blocking sunlight and suffocating native plants.

Propagation: Spreads through stem fragments and roots at nodes, making it highly resilient to disturbance.



Morning glory quickly smothers fences and other vegetation



Vine Weeds (turkey rhubarb seeds)

2. Turkey Rhubarb (*Rumex sagittatus*)

Identifiable features: Recognisable by its arrow-shaped leaves and distinctive papery, winged seed capsules that turn brown as they mature.

Growth patterns: A vigorous climber with underground tubers, allowing it to persist even after cutting.

Propagation: Reproduces via tubers and wind-dispersed seeds, making eradication challenging.

3. Madeira Vine (*Anredera cordifolia*)

Identifiable Features: Fleshy, heart-shaped leaves and clusters of small, fragrant white flowers. It produces aerial tubers, giving it a distinctive beaded look.



Vine Weeds (Madeira vine)

Growth Patterns: Forms thick, hanging curtains that smother native vegetation, breaking branches and collapsing trees under its weight.

Propagation: Spreads aggressively via aerial tubers, which easily detach and establish new plants.

4. Cape Ivy (*Delairea odorata*)

Identifiable Features: A climbing vine with lobed, ivy-like leaves and clusters of small, yellow daisy-like flowers with a strong scent.

Growth Patterns: Rapidly climbs over vegetation, forming dense thickets that suppress native plant regeneration.

Propagation: Spreads via wind-dispersed seeds and rooting stems, quickly colonising disturbed areas.

5. Moth vine (*Araujia sericifera*)

Identifiable features: Milky white sap, which is both poisonous and corrosive – avoid getting it on your skin and protect your eyes.

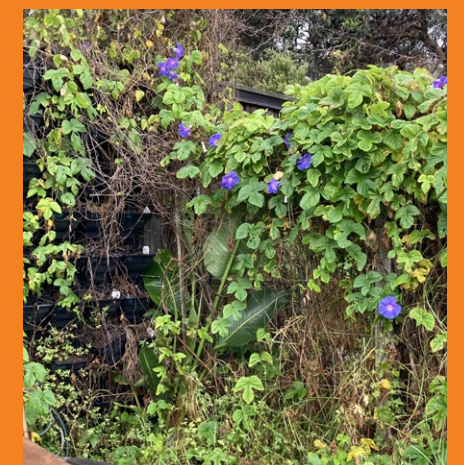
Growth patterns: Will grow long slender stems to reach up into the canopy before spreading its leaves and producing its large choko-like (but inedible) fruit. Leaves are slender grey-green on top and paler on the underside.

Propagation: Spreads via a plethora of fine, feathery wind-dispersed seeds.

Why Control is Essential

Vine weeds are among the most destructive invasive plants because they not only compete with native species but also alter the structure of ecosystems. Their ability to spread through multiple means—seeds, tubers, stem fragments—makes them incredibly difficult to eradicate. Prioritizing their removal in bush regeneration efforts helps restore natural balance, allowing native flora and fauna to thrive.

By acting quickly and persistently, we can prevent these aggressive vines from overwhelming our precious bushland.



Vine Weeds

Bushcare calendar

GROUP	LOCATION	DAY	TIME	SEPT	OCT	NOV
Alison Road	Corner of Alison Rd and Beach St, Coogee	4th Thursday	1pm-3pm	25	23	27
Clovelly Bay	Opposite 18 Eastbourne Ave, Clovelly	4th Friday	9am-12pm	26	24	28
Dunningham Reserve	Adjacent 5-7 Major St, Coogee	4th Thursday	9am-11am	25	23	27
Fred Hollows Reserve	Bligh Place entrance, Randwick	2nd Wednesday	9am-12pm	10	8	12
Gordons Bay	Access via UNSW Cliffbrook Campus Grounds: 45 Beach St, Coogee	1st Sunday	9am-12pm	7	5	2
Grant Reserve	Coogee Surf Life Saving Club car park (south of the beach)	3rd Wednesday	9am-11am	17	15	19
Ladies Pool (Women only)	At the entrance to the Ladies Pool, McIver's Rock Baths, Coogee	3rd Thursday	9am-12pm	18	16	20
Malabar Foreshore	Opposite 9 Bay Pde, Malabar (near Malabar Ocean Pool)	1st Saturday	9am-1pm	6	4	1
Malabar Wetland	End of Manwaring Ave, Maroubra	3rd Wednesday	1pm-4pm	17	15	19
Maroubra Dunes	The South Maroubra SLSC car park	1st Thursday	9am-12pm	4	2	6
Old Tramline	The reserve between Dudley St and Carrington Rd, Randwick	2nd Thursday	9am-12pm	11	9	13
Prince Henry	Alternate between the corner of Jennifer & Harvey St, 5R Brodie Ave or opposite 2 Millard Dr, Little Bay	2nd Saturday	9am-1pm	13	11	8
Randwick Environment Park	Access via corner of Dooligah Ave and Burragulung St, Randwick. Works take place within fenced area on the far side of the oval.	1st Wednesday and 2nd Sunday	9am-12pm	3 & 14	1 & 12	5 & 9
Wylie's Baths	At the picnic tables above Wylie's Baths, Neptune St, Coogee	3rd Tuesday	9am-12pm	16	21	18

NON-COUNCIL RUN GROUPS

Friends of Malabar Headland*	Contact Therese Weiss on 0403 532 655 or via malabarheadland@gmail.com for details.	2nd, 3rd and 4th Thursday	9am-12pm	11, 18 & 25	9, 16 & 23	13, 20 & 27
Little Bay Landcare*	Access between 119 and 121 Bilga Crescent, Malabar. Contact Kerry Gordon on 0411 245 985.	1st Saturday	8am-12pm	6	4	1
Kamay Botany Bay National Park*	Contact local National Park Rangers for details.	4th Saturday	Saturday: 8am-11am	27	25	22

For more information contact the Bushcare Officer via: bushcare@randwick.nsw.gov.au

*For non-council run groups please contact organisers directly.