

# BANDICOOTtimes

Spring 2021 | No 82



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A PROGRAM OF



City of **HOBART**

# Bushcare Roundup



**Talia Sawers**  
Program Officer Bushcare

Winter is traditionally a busy season for Bushcare and the past few months have been no exception.

We were blown away by the amazing effort of our local community at the National Tree Day planting event on the Hobart Rivulet. There were smiles all round as close to 100 volunteers turned up and donned their gloves to help plant 1300 native plants in the riparian zone. Thank you to everyone involved!

To keep the momentum going we've established a new Bushcare group for the Hobart Rivulet. Please contact the Bushcare team if you're interested in joining.

A big thank you also to the 60 grade 10 students of Mount Carmel College who volunteered their time to help restore Lambert Gully on Schools Tree Day.

We're excited to think about all the newly created habitat gardens being planted across Hobart with plants received from our annual native plant giveaways. So far the Lambert Gully, Waterworks Valley, Mount Nelson and Friends of McAulay Reserve Bushcare groups have given away hundreds of plants to local residents, as well as those on offer at the National Tree Day event. Keep an eye out for details of our remaining giveaways if you missed out.

We're also very grateful recipients of a Tasmanian Government Landcare Action Grant, which will

## VALUE OF OUR WORK

In 2020-21 Bushcare volunteers carried out

**\$156,474**

worth of work weeding, planting and collecting rubbish.

## ACTIVITIES GALORE

We played it COVID safe and still managed to hold

**145**

activities throughout the year, including plant give-aways!

## FRESH FACES

People love joining Bushcare. In the past year

**287**

new volunteers joined our wonderful program!

## BUSY BEES

Bushcare working bees are the powerhouse of our work, with

**123**

working bees held across Hobart's bushland reserves.



## What we achieved in just one year!

A huge thank you to all of our wonderful Bushcare volunteers who, despite a global pandemic, kept Hobart's bushlands healthy, safe sanctuaries for the city's amazing wildlife.



help provide habitat for eastern barred bandicoots in Ridgeway Reserve. We'll be revealing more about this exciting project soon.

The fun doesn't stop there! Coming up in spring more of our Bushcare groups will be treated to a special morning tea, and we have some great activities scheduled, including a waterbug discovery, an orchid walk and a bird walk. So come along and get to know your local patch of

bush and the creatures that call it home.

We'll also be reaching out to our volunteers to discuss next year's works plans and getting together with our Bushcare convenors to celebrate their group's Bushcare achievements so far this year and work together to tackle any challenges. Our program wouldn't be possible without the help of our dedicated Bushcare convenors. A heartfelt thank you from us all!



**Cover photo:** National Tree Day planting on the Hobart Rivulet.  
Photo: Alastair Bett

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Tall in stature, quiet in nature, Gurpreet Singh carries a bucket and drill at the end of another Bushcare activity, his good friend 'Guri Two' by his side.

# Vale Gurpreet Singh, Guri #1

**Bec Johnson**  
Team Leader Bushcare

Hobart's Bushcare community is in shock and mourning at the passing of a wonderful young man, Gurpreet Singh.

Many Bushcare volunteers will remember this tall, quiet, hard working volunteer, often the one washing tools after our activities. He was a man of few words but always ready to help with a smile and boundless energy. He volunteered with no less than eight groups, sometimes twice in one day, and regularly lent his arm to South Hobart and Fern Tree Bushcare activities.

Guri had lived in several other capitals in Australia, but he loved Tasmania. He had been delighted to recently find out his application for residency had been approved.

Gurpreet delighted everyone when one day he brought along a friend to Bushcare, also called

Gurpreet, with the same surname, also from Punjab in northern India, and just as hard working and helpful. Of course their names became Guri One and Guri Two. Later on we were so glad to know Guri One had this close support.

Guri's passing has been a shock to us all. One day he was at the doctor's suffering stomach pains, the next day he was undergoing emergency surgery for advanced cancer. While receiving chemotherapy Guri contracted meningitis and died within a few days. It was very sudden.

He died with friends by his side and the soft sounds of Sikh prayers echoing throughout

the intensive care unit. Guri's body was returned to India for cremation. He will be mourned by his parents and a younger sister back home, as well as many friends here.

We are grateful to have known Guri and for the cultural diversity brought to us by Bushcare. Meeting Guri One and Guri Two and other international volunteers helps make the world feel like a smaller place.

If you'd like to send a message to Guri Two you can do so through Bec Johnson at Bushcare. Thanks to those who donated to the gofundme page and sent kind messages.

“ He was a man of few words but always ready to help with a smile and boundless energy.

# Trickle turns into flood of love for Hobart Rivulet

This year's Bushcare National Tree Day event started early on a Sunday morning with a trickle of people making their way to the Hobart Rivulet. By 11am there was a flood of locals showing their love for this waterway.

Despite COVID restrictions people turned out in force to reclaim this beautiful waterway from overgrown, smothering willow trees and secure its future as a platypus sanctuary.

More than a thousand native grasses, shrubs and trees were planted along the rivulet to replace a number of highly invasive willow trees removed by the City of Hobart earlier this year.

In Tasmania willow trees can take over entire waterways, lining creek beds with dense, impenetrable root systems that make it impossible for platypus to create burrows and find food.

On the Hobart Rivulet giant thickets of willow trees are smothering sections of the catchment, choking out native plant species and dropping millions of leaves into the waterway every year that rot down to create dead pools devoid of oxygen.

The City removed a number of large willow trees from the banks of the Hobart Rivulet as part of plans to remove this weed from our waterways.

Local resident Linda is lucky enough to have both a home and a workplace right on the banks of the Hobart Rivulet. She has the most pleasant commute of anyone we know!

"It's lovely to know so many people have helped put native plants on the banks of the creek.

*continued page 6*



**LEFT:** Ruairi and Rupert were a dynamic duo down on the rivulet embankment, putting plenty of young plants into the ground.

**PHOTOS:**  
Alastair Bett



**ABOVE:** Crystal made sure her daughter Mia was all rugged up and ready for action.

**RIGHT:** There were quite a few mother-daughter teams on the Hobart Rivulet, including Jodie and her daughter Mahalia, both taking great care with their plantings.

Bandicoot Times





Ho, Skye and their daughters Summer and Lomani made a great family team.

They have done a good job," she said.

"When I first bought my house it looked over a terrible old junk yard filled with scrap metal leaking oil, and now it's such a lovely park where people meet. I'm so pleased the willows are gone now and I can see the creek, the cliffs and the rock climbers from my kitchen window."

Linda's favourite thing to do in Linear Park is bike riding with her grandchildren up and down the track.

"You know there's a platypus nearby when you come along the track and see a little cluster of people all quietly watching. It's lovely to see their quiet enjoyment."

Bringing the community together on National Tree Day to help reclaim the rivulet from willow trees will ultimately lead to a healthier, more robust catchment and secure the waterway as an important platypus sanctuary. It also clears the area of old,



Lewis can't wait to see the planting site in a couple of years.

dangerous trees that are known to drop entire branches without warning, and that can easily propagate downstream from just one fallen, green twig.

The day was a real community celebration of the beautiful waterways we have in Hobart and included special Bush Adventures activities for families and a native

plant give-away. The removal of willow trees and revegetation of this section of the Hobart Rivulet was made possible through the Weeds Action Fund, a Tasmanian Government initiative delivered by NRM North.

Willows are a declared weed in Tasmania and a Weed of National Significance.



Generations at work. Bushcare Legend Astrid Wright was as tireless as ever, ensuring the supply of plants and materials kept coming.

# THE PLATYPUS WHISPERER

**F**or Pete Walsh, nature isn't just something to be enjoyed – it's something to be cared for. The Hobart Rivulet's own 'platypus whisperer' has been inspiring action at home and abroad with his remarkable footage of these usually secretive animals.

Pete's connection to the rivulet's platypus began during Hobart's COVID-19 lockdowns last year, when he noticed the critters were out and about in highly urbanised parts of the rivulet.

"With all of us locked down, they were out having fun, and over time they've become used to me," he says.

"Provided I behaved in certain ways, they seemed to be okay with me being around. The most beautiful thing about sitting with the platypus is that time just disappears and the whole day vanishes into this little moment while they're just quietly doing their thing, silently surviving."

Pete's quiet co-existence with the platypus allowed him to capture incredible photos of the rivulet's resident monotremes going about their business, but it also gave him an insight into their vulnerabilities. When he saw a platypus entangled in rubbish, everything changed.

Stirred into action he started up the Hobart Rivulet Platypus Facebook page to highlight the precariousness of this creature's existence in an urban landscape.



Pip Jones  
Team Leader Bushcare

His platypus portraits were soon shared far and wide across social media.

"I think people love seeing that, a view into the world of this mysterious animal they probably haven't seen before in that way," he says.

Pete's inspiring photos have quickly galvanised community support for the Hobart Rivulet platypus, and he now has a dedicated group of volunteers mobilised to protect and conserve the rivulet's mysterious monotreme. From litter pickups to water quality monitoring, the group is finding new ways to take action. Their latest project is a spectacular mural commission, which will be painted in downtown SoHo by artist Jimmy Dvate later this year.

To protect the Hobart Rivulet platypus, the work has only just begun.

"Taking photos and enjoying things doesn't really help them. We should be actively caring, rather than just consuming nature," Pete says.

"It's difficult to go from getting someone to click a 'like' button to getting them to actually do something and to change how they live."

For us in the community, even small changes can help conserve the Hobart Rivulet platypus.

"People can help by picking up rubbish anywhere they see it, regardless of whether it's near a waterway or not, and by being more mindful of their dogs when they're walking along the rivulet or any waterway," says Pete.

"When you look at the stormwater diagrams of the city, a huge area gets funnelled into the rivulet. We need to appreciate that the rivulet was a waterway before it was a drain and there are lots of creatures trying to live in it. The trap of living in a city is that you think nature is a thing you go and visit. You lose track of the nature that's all around – but it's not really a separate thing."

To learn more about the Hobart Rivulet Platypus group and see Pete Walsh's incredible photography, visit [hobartrivuletplatypus.org](http://hobartrivuletplatypus.org).

Photo: A resident of the Hobart Rivulet lovingly photographed by Pete Walsh.



# Little diggers: A poem



**Andrew Hingston**  
Bushcare Legend

While walking through the bush,  
you and I have often found  
Lots of little holes, that have been  
dug into the ground  
Each one has a pit, next to a  
mound of loosened soil  
Evidence of little diggers, and their  
constant toil  
Some holes are rather messy, while  
some are neat and round  
But we've not heard the diggers,  
who hardly make a sound



Secret little mammal diggers,  
dressed in coats of fur  
Many people give them names,  
but still they often err  
Most people know echidnas, but  
often they confuse  
Bandicoots with bettongs, and  
both those with potoroos  
But when you've seen a few,  
they're not hard to tell apart  
Diggers can be identified as they  
dash and dart

Bandicoots have short tails, and  
run along on all fours  
Digging narrow conical holes with  
their sharp fore-claws  
Pointed snouts for probing into  
these narrow holes  
Earthworms, insects, and fungal  
sporocarps are their goals  
Southern browns have uniform  
brown bodies and small ears  
Eastern barred have big ears, and  
pale stripes across their rears

Long-nosed potoroo with hunched  
back and a great big nose  
Sniffing out fungal sporocarps,  
everywhere it goes  
They walk along on all fours, or  
hop on their hind feet  
Digging bigger holes to look for  
truffles they can eat  
Along with invertebrates and roots  
that they dig out  
Dark brown fur, white-tipped tail,  
and a great big bulbous snout

Fine-boned eastern bettong,  
bounding like a kangaroo  
Eats truffles, mushrooms, insects,  
seeds, and wattle sap too  
Its fur is light tan-brown, and its  
fore-limbs are so small  
It stands up straight, but reaches  
no more than one foot tall  
With a long, prehensile, white-  
tipped tail it has been blessed  
For carrying dry grass and bark to  
build a small nest

All these marsupials leave the soil  
in a neat mound  
But echidnas toss excavated soil all  
around  
Leaving tell-tale poke marks in their  
diggings from their snouts  
Their diggings are distinctive, there  
really are no doubts  
Licking up eggs and larvae of ants,  
termites and bees  
While cockchafer pasture grubs are  
swallowed down with ease

All of these little diggings play an  
important role  
As water infiltrates the soil in each  
little hole  
Organic matter gets trapped in  
these holes in the ground  
And decomposes more quickly  
underneath the mound  
Creating patches of soil that are  
fertile and moist  
Thus, the praises of these little  
diggers will be voiced



Love Hobart's wildlife? Why not take the pledge and become a Bandicoot Buddy!  
By doing so you and your family will be helping to protect and provide food and  
shelter for Hobart's endangered eastern barred bandicoots and other wildlife!  
Sign up at [hobartcity.com.au/bandicoots](http://hobartcity.com.au/bandicoots)

# Mt Carmel College girls show love for Lambert Gully

To celebrate National Schools Tree Day this year Bushcare teamed up with nearly 60 Mt Carmel College students for a whirlwind activity in Lambert Park.

In the space of just one hour each student experienced an impassioned Acknowledgement of Country, a Bush Adventures walk and talk, and helped weed a patch of blue periwinkle. They also helped plant native tussock grasses and checked up on creekside plants put in by the school two years ago.

It was a great opportunity to share the Bushcare ethos of caring for the bush and wildlife with the year 10 girls. They were all highly engaged and one of the students was thrilled to find a shrub put in by her sister two years earlier,



Year 10 student Charlotte Doyle ready to plant a native tussock grass.

identified by the name written on a wooden stake.

We would have liked more time with the girls but hopefully this experience will help them feel more comfortable in the outdoors, more familiar with the bush and its wildlife habitat, and might even inspire a few to think about a future career in environmental management.

Thanks to our indefatigable Greg Kidd for his endless help, and to

Landcare Tasmania for loaning us their volunteers Ben Mildren and Don Thompson for the day as well as supplying the native plants, funded by Fifteen Trees. Also thanks to team leaders Michelle Joy, Bec Johnson and Rob Armstrong!

With help from Landcare Tasmania, we hope to engage the school in future years with an ongoing custodial link to Lambert Gully, which is just a short walk from the college.

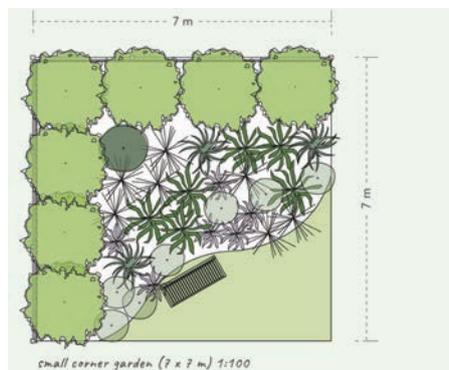
# Urban homes for backyard bandicoots

Calling all backyard gardeners, your backyard bandicoots need you!

Native gardens provide valuable feeding grounds for Hobart's eastern barred bandicoots, and you can help in your own backyard by creating suitable habitat for them to forage, raise young and find shelter from cats and dogs.

Creating refuge in your backyard for our endangered bandicoots has never been easier thanks to a range of habitat-friendly garden designs found in NRM North's new booklet *Urban Refuges: Design Your Garden for Eastern Barred Bandicoots*.

The professional garden designs



enable backyard gardeners, professional landscapers, and developers to provide suitable habitats for bandicoots, regardless of property size or taste in garden style.

Once living throughout eastern Australia, wild eastern barred

bandicoot populations now only exist in Tasmania. Landscape Designer Karen Johnson has drafted a series of unique designs utilising local native plants to encourage urban strongholds for the endangered marsupial.

The booklet includes detailed information about eastern barred bandicoots as well as species conservation advice and native gardening tips. The booklet is available in hard copy or can be downloaded from the NRM North website.

This project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



# ISN'T IT TIME YOU JOINED BUSHCARE?



## SPRING PROGRAM OUT NOW!

Put a spring in your step and join one of our Bushcare spring activities! Download the latest activities program from [hobartcity.com.au/bushcare](http://hobartcity.com.au/bushcare).



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