

Revised Bushcare Policy 2013 Update

As you may be aware the *Bushcare Policy, February 2011* underwent a major review process from August of 2012 to May 2013. This included feedback from and consultation with the Bushcare Convenors and other representatives of the Bushcare groups. In May 2013 the *Revised Bushcare Policy 2013* was approved by the General Manager of the Hobart City Council. The new revised policy is clearer, more concise and more representative of how the program operates.

The policy and related procedures are an important part of the Bushcare Program and provide a framework that helps to ensure that everyone gets home safely. This is a summary of some new and existing policies and procedures we would like to make you aware of:

Workplace Health & Safety

- On 1 January 2013 new legislation took effect in Tasmania regarding Workplace Health and Safety. One of the key implications for certain organisations (including the Council) is that what applies to paid staff, in regards to Workplace Health and Safety, equally applies to volunteers. This is reflected throughout the *Revised Bushcare Policy 2013*.

Group Personal Accident Insurance

- Group Personal Accident Insurance for all volunteers is made available by the Council within the limits of the *Revised Bushcare Policy 2013*. The current age limit in respect to volunteers has been raised to **85 years of age**.

Working Alone

- Provision has been made in the revised policy for Bushcare Volunteers to work alone as part of the Bushcare Program. However, individuals wishing to do this need to seek prior approval from the Bushcare Coordinator and will need to meet various requirements to ensure that their safety is adequately addressed. If you work alone undertaking any bush regeneration or other activity associated with the Bushcare Program in any outdoor environment please contact the Bushcare Coordinator as soon as convenient on the details at the bottom of this document. This does not include instances where a volunteer takes a walk and happens to pull out a few weeds as they go but, rather, instances where a volunteer's intention is to go out and perform Bushcare activities specifically.

Bushcare Inductions & Safety Briefs

- **Safety Briefs** - Prior to any Bushcare Program activity the Bushcare Supervisor or Volunteer Bushcare Supervisor will perform a safety brief covering hazards and controls relevant to the tasks to be performed. We would like to encourage you to raise any concerns or new hazards at any time.
- **On-Site Induction for new volunteers** – all new Bushcare Volunteers will receive an on-site induction prior to undertaking any Bushcare activity. This will cover information about how the program functions, the Council and the activities that will be undertaken during monthly working bees.
- **Annual Bushcare Induction Day** – all new volunteers commencing within the program from 1 July 2013 will be asked to attend the first Annual Bushcare Induction Day to be held at a date TBA in 2014 that will be held on an annual basis thereafter. The event will not only cover key WH&S and policy information but will provide useful information relating to bush regeneration principles and ecology. This will equip new volunteers with knowledge and skills pertinent to their important role in assisting in the protection and restoration of Hobart's bushland. Existing volunteers will also be welcome to attend.
- **Job Safety and Environment Analysis (JSEA)** – is a risk assessment taking into consideration both WH&S and the environment and has been developed for each Bushcare group. Every year the JSEA is reviewed and updated so as to manage any new and emerging hazards and to ensure that Bushcare Volunteers and Supervisors are familiar with its contents. During the summer break the JSEA is updated and, from 1 February 2014, the new document will be communicated to all attending Bushcare Volunteers by the Bushcare Supervisor during the first scheduled Bushcare activity for the year. Volunteers must sign the JSEA to indicate that they are familiar with its contents. Any volunteers who aren't present at this working bee must read and sign the JSEA at the next working bee they attend.

Extreme Weather Conditions and Cancellation of Bushcare Activities

- Bushcare Program activities will be cancelled on total fire ban days, during strong winds, heavy rainfall and storms. There is some discretion by the supervisor to shift Bushcare activities into an open area away from trees during strong winds. The Bushcare Supervisor has the discretion to cancel a Bushcare activity during that activity at any time if they feel the weather conditions are unsafe. If you are unsure of whether a Bushcare activity will go ahead it may be worth contacting your Bushcare convenor approximately 1 hour before the scheduled start time to check.

Cliffs and Steep Slopes

- A *Site Assessment Guide for Working near Cliffs and Steep Slopes* has been developed that provides guidance for individual sites to avoid making generalised rules for working in these areas. A copy is carried in the Bushcare folder by the Bushcare Supervisor. Please feel free to take a look.

Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Requirements

- **Mandatory Clothing Requirements** – Bushcare volunteers must wear fully enclosed, sturdy shoes to Bushcare Program activities at all times to the satisfaction of their Bushcare Supervisor. While working with vegetation that has thorns, in dense vegetation where the supervisor deems there is an increased risk of snake or spider bite or when using herbicides Bushcare Volunteers must wear a long-sleeved shirt and trousers.
- **Recommended Clothing Suggestions** – Bushcare volunteers are recommended to wear a hat and sunscreen during Bushcare activities. The Council will provide SPF 30+ sunscreen for all Bushcare Volunteers during daylight hours. Bushcare Volunteers are recommended to wear a long-sleeved shirt and trousers at all times for general protection. Zip-off trousers are an appropriate option for people who prefer to wear shorts.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Bushcare volunteers are required to use PPE provided appropriate to the task being undertaken.

Please be aware that if you are not wearing appropriate clothing or PPE you may not be able to engage in certain Bushcare activities.

Minors Attending Bushcare Activities

- Minors under the age of 16 years must be accompanied by their parent or an adult guardian, they must be closely supervised by that parent or adult guardian during the activity and they will remain the responsibility of that parent or adult guardian for the duration of the activity.
- Minors under the age of 16 years are not permitted to use herbicides.
- Minors who attend Bushcare activities with their parent or adult guardian but who are not engaged in Bushcare tasks will not be covered by the insurance provisions outlined in the *Revised Bushcare Program Policy 2013*.

For further information pertaining to minors at Bushcare please read S 4.1 on pg 23 of the *Revised Bushcare Policy 2013*.

Bushcare Folders and First Aid Kits

- Important information for use during Bushcare activities is stored in the Bushcare group folders carried by the supervisor during the activity. The folders contain emergency contacts (both for registered Bushcare Volunteers and Council staff contacts); evacuation plans; copies of relevant Material Safety Data Sheets for herbicides used during Bushcare activities; and a copy of the most recent JSEA. In the unlikely event that something happened to the supervisor it is worth volunteers being aware of the folder and its location (carried in the Bushcare backpack during activities or in the vehicle).
- A large first aid kit is always carried by the Bushcare Supervisor in their vehicle. An additional, smaller first aid kit is carried by the Bushcare supervisor in their backpack.

Notification of Changes to Your Personal Information

- Please notify us if your contact details have changed.
- Please let a Bushcare staff member know if you have any medical conditions that may impact on your ability to undertake any particular Bushcare tasks.
- Please consider changing your Bandicoot Times preference from hard-copy to electronic if convenient.

For further information, to request a copy of the *Revised Bushcare Policy 2013* or to discuss working alone in bushland areas undertaking bush regeneration or any activities related to the Bushcare Program please contact the Bushcare Coordinator on bushcare@hobartcity.com.au, 6234 2884 or GPO Box 503, Hobart 7001.