

Natural Area Volunteers Group

Meeting Date: Monday, 18 August, 2025

Location: Jervis Bay Room, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra

Minutes Attachments

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| NA25.1 | The Importance of Volunteers in Managing Natural Areas | |
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The importance of volunteers in managing Natural Areas



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Natural Areas

- About 268 reserves
- 3400 hectares in total
- Average = 12 ha



Natural Area reserves



Natural Areas - governance

- Local Government Act (1993)

36E Core objectives for management of community land categorised as a natural area

The core objectives for management of community land categorised as a natural area are—

- (a) to conserve biodiversity and maintain ecosystem function in respect of the land, or the feature or habitat in respect of which the land is categorised as a natural area, and
- (b) to maintain the land, or that feature or habitat, in its natural state and setting, and
- (c) to provide for the restoration and regeneration of the land, and
- (d) to provide for community use of and access to the land in such a manner as will minimise and mitigate any disturbance caused by human intrusion, and
- (e) to assist in and facilitate the implementation of any provisions restricting the use and management of the land that are set out in a recovery plan or threat abatement plan prepared under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* or the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*.

- Plans of Management
- SCC Policies – e.g., Foreshore, Vegetation Vandalism Prevention

Natural Areas benefits - habitat



Natural Area benefits

- Recreation for locals
- A drawcard for tourists
- Improves physical and mental health
- Biodiversity
- Cultural heritage
- Other 'ecosystem services' – air quality, water quality improvement, carbon capture, erosion control



Natural Areas - management



- 'Program Logic'

Asset

Threats

Assumptions

Actions

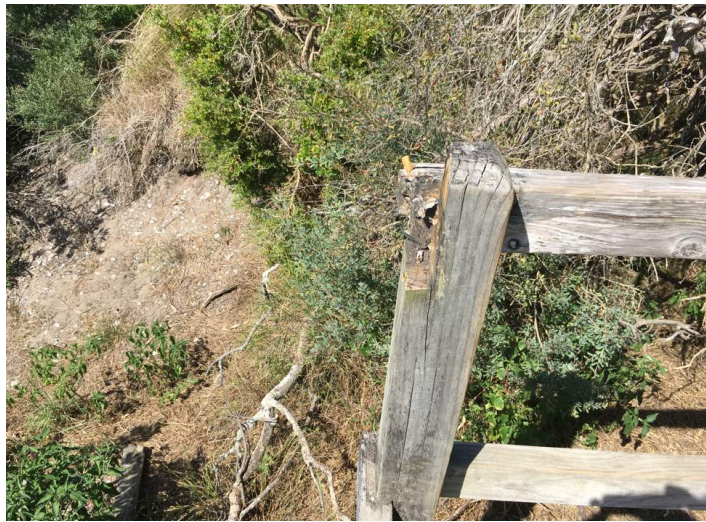
- Often, the best value is to 'protect the best'
- Also, where community care is high



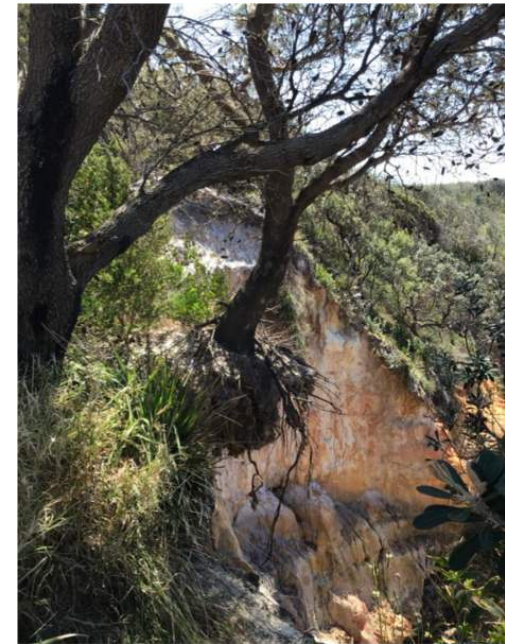
Natural Areas – addressing threats



Natural Areas – addressing threats



Natural Areas – threats



Natural Areas – addressing threats



Natural Areas – addressing threats



Natural Areas – Improving condition



Before works



after

Bushcare



- Around 60 volunteer groups
- Bushcare, Dunecare, Friends of.... etc
- Compared with Parkcare
- About 500 active Bush-carers



Bushcare – weed control



Bushcare – more weed control



Bushcare – and more weed control



Bushcare – erosion control



Bushcare – habitat creation/revegetation



Bushcare



- Community nursery
- Community events



Bushcare - information

- New weed incursions
- Damaged infrastructure
- Pest animals
- iNaturalist – Budawang Coast Atlas of Life



Budawang Coast Atlas of Life

Overview: 59,002 OBSERVATIONS, 5,169 SPECIES, 2,471 IDENTIFIERS, 1,662 OBSERVERS

Recent Observations:

- Eastern Whipbird (*Pachycaulus obscurus*) - 1 3 months ago
- Antler and Spindle Fungi (Family: Clavariaceae) - 12 days ago
- Common Meadow K... (Tribe: Cottocephales) - 21 hours ago
- Sooty Oystercatcher (*Haematopus fuliginosus*) - 15 days ago



Bushcare – financial contribution



- 178,600 hours by group volunteers since 2009
- = labour to the value \$7.1 million
- = on average about \$450,000 per annum
- An underestimate
 - Only includes working bee hours



Council – Natural Area management



Bushcare cost - annually:

- Bushcare Coordinator and two casuals \$240,000
- Aboriginal Bush Regenerators \$60,000

- \$300,000 per annum



Ron and Ed – Aboriginal Bush Regenerators



