

## Natural Area Volunteers Group

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 18 August, 2025

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

## Minutes Attachments

### Index

NA25.1	The Importance of Volunteers in Managing Natural Areas	
	Attachment 1 Presentation - The importance of Natural Area Volunteers - 18 August 2025 .....	3





# 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



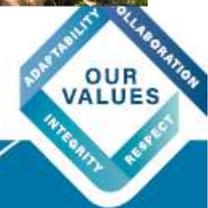
# Natural Areas – addressing threats



# 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**

About

Started in 2016, this long term project aspires to empower anyone with an interest in nature to become a citizen scientist. We aim to record all species in our uniquely beautiful region and for the data to be used by citizen scientists, researchers and decision makers to better protect and conserve our natural world.

Members 156

Read More >

Project Journal

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

Recent Observations View All

- Eastern Whipbird *Pachycephala pectoralis* 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* 1 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



## Bushcare provides.....



- Diversity
- Connection
  - of people
  - with nature
  - Connects community to Council
  - connectivity of habitat
- Resources
- Resilience



# Questions?

