

Care Group Procedures Manual

A guide for volunteers working in Tweed Shire

2014

This manual has been developed through the Tweed - Byron Bush Futures Project, funded through the NSW Environmental Trust, Urban Sustainability Program.

The Project seeks to achieve, through on ground works and extension, the sustainable management of a number of State and regionally significant urban and peri-urban bushland areas within Tweed and Byron Shires.

The Bush Futures project aims to:

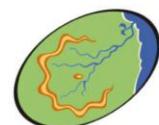
- deliver extensive on-ground works to address threats to urban and peri-urban bushland;
- raise awareness of the ways that residents living adjacent to native bushland can manage their land in a sustainable way and reduce adverse impacts on the bushland; and
- reinforce the role Council has in managing natural areas, particularly those that are directly under its control such as bushland reserves.

This manual has been prepared with assistance of the following resources:

- Conservation Volunteers Australia. *In Safe Hands A Safety Management Tool Kit for Community Groups in Practical Conservation*. Conservation Volunteers Australia
- Blue Mountains City Council. 2002. *Bushcare Procedures Manual*. Blue Mountains City Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council <http://www.lakemac.com.au/>
- Landcare Australia. *New Group Starter Kit, Your guide to starting a new landcare group*. Landcare Australia. <http://www.landcareonline.com.au/>



BUSH FUTURES



This project has been assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust Urban Sustainability Grants Program

Tweed Landcare Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS 1

DEFINITIONS..... 3

INTRODUCTION 4

 Background..... 4

 Purpose of this manual 4

 Aims and Objectives 5

STARTING A NEW CARE GROUP 6

 Procedure for setting up new groups 6

 Where Care Groups Can Work 7

 Permission and Insurance..... 7

 How to Start a New Care Group /Project 8

EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS AND COUNCIL 9

 What is expected of Council..... 9

 What is expected of volunteers 9

 Grievance procedure 10

 Training..... 10

SITE ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING 11

 Preparation of a Site Plan 11

 Monitoring and Evaluation..... 11

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT 12

EXTERNAL FUNDING 12

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS 13

 Responsible Behaviour & Code of Conduct..... 13

 WHS Requirements 13

 Manual Handling 13

 Material Safety Data sheets 14

 Hazard, Accident and Incident Reporting..... 14

 Emergency Procedures..... 14

 Risk Management 14

 Site Safety Rules 15

 First Aid Kits..... 16

 Accident – Incident Reporting 16

 Safety Guide for Volunteers 16

 Risk Assessment 18

DOCUMENTATION..... 19

DEFINITIONS

Activity Report: The Activity Report is filled in on a six monthly basis as a summary of the Daily Record Sheet and Worksite Risk Assessment. A copy is forwarded to Tweed Shire Council each six months.

Annual Work Plan: An Annual Work Plan of proposed Care group activities will be submitted to Council in January each year.

Care groups: groups of volunteers (Landcare, Dunecare, Bushcare, Coastcare and others) undertaking approved environmental restoration activities on land owned or managed by Council.

Council: Tweed Shire Council

Council land: Land that is either owned by, or under the care, control and management of Tweed Shire Council.

Community Support Officer: North Coast Local Land Services provides funding to support local communities in delivering natural resource management activities and projects. Tweed Council supports the employment of a Community Support Officer whose role includes providing assistance to Care groups and others undertaking environmental restoration works.

Daily Record Sheet including Chemical Record: The Daily Record Sheet is used to record location of work, chemical usage, work activities undertaken, incidents and any other information the group considers relevant to the project such as observations about the site.

Equipment Register: The Equipment Register is used to record all equipment issued to the group by Tweed Shire Council.

Group coordinator: Volunteer who acts as contact person and coordinator for each group.

Incident Injury Hazard Near Miss Report: When a work injury/illness requires professional medical attention, causes a volunteer to be incapable of working on the next day, causes property loss or damage, or where a near miss occurs which causes any of the above, an Incident Injury Hazard Near Miss Report must be completed.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Clothing and equipment that protects volunteers from hazards including harmful UV radiation, insect and snakebite, chemical contamination and tool use injuries. Includes long sleeved shirts, long pants, safety boots, broad brimmed hats, sunscreen, insect repellent, eye protection, gloves and other PPE equipment where appropriate.

Register of Injuries: Each group should have a Register of Injuries or Accident – Injury Book. Details of injuries, including minor, should be recorded in the Register.

Risk Assessment: The Risk Assessment assesses the level of hazards at a work site and details controls to limit hazards. This is completed initially when works commence and again if conditions change on a site. New volunteers are to be briefed on the Risk Assessment and complete the Volunteer Induction Sign Off.

Site Plan: Site assessment and restoration program for a work site which is developed by Council in consultation with the relevant volunteer group. Sets out what restoration works are required and how they should be undertaken.

Volunteer Induction Sign Off: After volunteers have been briefed on the Risk Assessment they complete the Volunteer Induction Sign Off. This acknowledges their awareness of hazards and risks as identified through the Risk Assessment and records agreement to follow the risk controls identified.

Work Site Risk Assessment: The Work Site Risk Assessment is completed on site prior to work activities commencing each day. Each volunteer reads and signs the form. This provides a record of volunteers present and provides information regarding potential hazards on site and controls in place to minimise risk.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Volunteers in Tweed Shire have formed Dunecare and Landcare groups committed to restoring and conserving natural areas. These groups play a significant role in rehabilitating degraded ecosystems. Implementation of bush regeneration works involving control of exotic species to facilitate replacement with native plants is a key function of Care groups. Groups meet regularly for working bees, training days and the sharing of information.

Tweed Shire Council recognises the effort put in by community volunteer groups, including Landcare and Dunecare, in the Shire.

The benefits of Landcare and Dunecare work are:

- **Environmental:** conservation and restoration of native vegetation and fauna habitat.
- **Social:** strengthening local communities through social interaction, working together and sharing information, enhanced personal satisfaction of individual volunteers.
- **Educational:** increased community awareness about the environment and increased capacity to implement practical restoration activities. This creates a stewardship approach to public bushland, involving a partnership between Council and the community.
- **Economic:** financial savings gained by Council using a volunteer work force and increased funding accessed through external grants. Activities contribute to the natural values and scenic qualities of Tweed Shire from which the local economy benefits.

Purpose of this manual

The Care Group Procedures Manual has been developed to guide volunteer groups engaged in environmental restoration activities on Tweed Shire Council land to work together effectively and safely.

It details procedures to be followed by Care groups working in partnership with Council. It aims to facilitate effective and safe implementation of restoration works. The guide includes copies of forms to be used by Care groups in the course of their activities.

The manual provides guidance on safe work practices and strategies to minimise risks. Protecting the safety of volunteers is a high priority for both Council and Care groups.

Aims and Objectives

Involvement of community volunteers on Council land aims to promote best practice ecological management of natural areas within Tweed Shire by developing a sense of community responsibility for natural environments and supporting community actions to restore these areas.

The involvement of Care groups on Council land has the following objectives:

- Support Care groups to be active on a regular basis and produce positive environmental outcomes.
- Raise community awareness about the environment and how people can help enhance natural areas.
- Increase the community capacity to achieve positive environmental outcomes.
- Foster a sense of community responsibility for the natural environment.
- To work cooperatively to seek external funding for restoration projects.
- Facilitate social interaction and sharing of information within the community.
- Contribute to personal satisfaction for individual volunteers.

STARTING A NEW CARE GROUP

Procedure for setting up new groups

This manual is not a guide to starting a new Care Group; it provides some introductory information about the process. The Community Support Officer can assist with guiding the formation of a new Dunecare or Landcare group. A New Group Starter Kit is available from <http://www.landcareonline.com.au/> or the Community Support Officer. This guide details the informal and formal steps to setting up a Care group. As part of this process the local community is informed of the formation of a new group and a public meeting is held to recruit new volunteers and discuss any issues. Groups must have relevant insurance coverage prior to commencing site works.

- If a group plans to work on land managed by Tweed Shire Council prospective volunteers contact the NRM Unit of Council and discuss the possibility of forming a new Care group. A copy of this manual is made available to prospective volunteers.
- Care groups are already working along most of the coastal areas and in the hinterland of Tweed Shire. Council can provide contact details of existing groups which new volunteers may seek to join.
- If the work area proposed is a new area, Council checks that the land is owned/ managed by Council.
- Site inspection takes place with volunteers to discuss the nature of problems on site and possible management strategies.
- The group's application is assessed in consultation with the Community Support Officer.
- Once a new group is approved a site plan is required to be developed prior to commencement of on-ground restoration works.
- Volunteers are advised of all relevant training opportunities.
- An adequate first aid kit is required at all work sites.
- All volunteers are to be inducted prior to commencement of works. Two levels of induction are undertaken. The first involves information on general requirements such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), tools and what to do in the case of an accident. It includes going through the Risk Assessment and Volunteer Induction Sign Off. The second level of induction is the daily Worksite Risk Assessment. The checklist is completed and signed by all volunteers.
- Relevant volunteers must hold legislative required competencies where identified e.g. ChemCert.
- Communications and emergency procedures must be established and communicated.

Where care groups can work

Approval must be gained from Council before Care groups can undertake restoration work. Suitable sites are where:

- There is environmental value in undertaking restoration works in the area.
- Bush regeneration is achievable by volunteers.
- A restoration plan has been developed detailing strategies for on-ground works.
- There is a high level of commitment by the local community and the site is likely to be maintained by the volunteer group for a minimum of five years.

Permission and insurance

Landcare Groups in Tweed Shire require landholder permission and insurance coverage:

- Landcare activities may only be undertaken with the permission of the land owner. In the case of land which is owned and/or managed by Tweed Shire Council that permission is given by the Council, on receipt of an application from a potential Landcare group.
- Insurance is the responsibility of the landowner. Council covers approved Landcare activities through its Volunteer Insurance Policy (covers >10 yr old and <90 yr old). This policy covers volunteers for accident or injury and for public liability. All groups working on Council land must have the written permission of Council and fulfill all WH&S and reporting requirements.
- For groups working on other land, the permission and insurance of that landowner and/or manager must be secured in writing before work commences.

The following chart has been adapted from Lake Macquarie City Council
<http://www.lakemac.com.au/>

How to start a new care group / project

Do you want to fix up your patch of paradise?

Firstly find out who owns the land. Contact the Community Support Officer for assistance.



Who can help?

Gather other interested people in your community who live near your project site and hold a public meeting with the Community Support Officer.

Letterbox drops to other houses in your area is a good start, others may share your interest.

Photocopying is available at the Community Support Office.



What kind of group?

Friendly or Formal the group decides.

Do we need incorporation? No.



How do we become a registered group?

Complete the New Landcare Group application form

Assistance with the form is available from the Community Support Officer.



How do we identify our new project?

Your first project should be achievable and high profile to be seen by others who may share your interest. Set targets that will easily be completed and are possible with the time and resources available to your group.



How do we know what to do?

A site assessment and restoration plan (Site Plan) will be created once your group has formed to guide your activities.



How do we create a Site Plan?

Gather as much information about your site as you can. Local knowledge and historical information will create a great site assessment. The Community Support Officer will assist you as well with the vegetation, values and threats.



What do we need to do before we start work?

The group will need to undertake relevant training organised through the NRM Unit of Council.



When can we start work?

When the agreed Site Plan is adopted and Council has given permission.



How do we get resources for our project?

Contact the Community Support Officer.

EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS AND COUNCIL

What is expected of Council

As resources permit, Council will support all Care groups that comply with criteria set out in this manual. Council can assist groups with:

- Sourcing technical advice.
- Ensuring compliance with safe work practices through provision of the Procedures Manual and relevant training.
- Ensuring that works are implemented in line with the restoration plan for the site.
- Informing groups of training opportunities and Council activities relevant to groups.
- Consulting with groups whenever possible about any works proposed for the site or adjoining areas. This could include fire management, weed control, track construction or drainage works.
- Coordination of activities on a larger scale within Tweed Shire and the region. This aims to ensure the activities are compatible with local and regional priorities or organisations such as the North Coast Local Land Services and Office of Environment and Heritage.
- On-going site monitoring and evaluation consistent with best practice in Tweed Shire.
- Providing opportunities for volunteer input into Council's management of natural areas.
- Ensuring that designated work sites are appropriate for volunteers' abilities and interests.
- Assistance with applications for external grants funding provided through the Community Support Officer.
- Arranging for waste removal, chain sawing and chipping where required. When weeds are controlled most of the material should be cut up and remain on site. Avoid making piles of weed material, instead cut up and spread on site. Weed seeds and propagules (such as Madeira vine tubers, Glory Lily seed capsules, and Coral Berry seed) should be bagged and removed to landfill. This limits weed re-infestation.
- Assisting with notification of herbicide use (in accordance with the requirements of the Pesticides Regulation 1995 requiring public authorities to notify the community in accordance with a notification plan). Herbicide signs (which must be displayed when herbicide is being used) are free and available from the Tweed Shire Council Depot.
- Assistance where possible when Care groups wish to use the media to publicise their activities. Any material that includes statements attributed to Council staff or interpretations of Council policy must be approved by Council before being offered for publication.

What is expected of volunteers

- Implementing on-ground restoration work in line with the Site Plan.
- Maintaining records required by Council as detailed in this manual.
- Adherence to relevant legislation, policies and procedures.
- Commitment to carry out their duties in a safe and responsible way.

- Cooperation with Council staff and other volunteers as appropriate.
- Notification to Council of any activities proposed to be undertaken via the Annual Work Plan.
- Following the directions of Council staff.
- Risk assessment is undertaken.
- Undertake relevant training offered in areas such as first aid, occupational health and safety and ChemCert.
- Immediate reporting of any injuries.

Authority to work on Council land as a volunteer is conditional on the volunteer complying with Council's procedures. If Council determines that a volunteer has acted contrary to these procedures, their authority to work on Council land will be withdrawn.

Grievance procedure

If volunteers or volunteer groups have any grievance associated with the operation of the Care program there should be an attempt to resolve the grievance with the Community Support Officer in the first instance including clearly outlining the problem in writing. If the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved the volunteer / group should contact Council in writing.

Training

A group member who leads or supervises volunteers on site should have qualifications in:

- Senior or Workplace Level 2 First Aid Certificate
- An approved course in Occupational Health and Safety
- ChemCert, where bush regeneration work involves the use of herbicide.

Groups will be notified of relevant training opportunities including first aid and occupational health and safety, appropriate use of chemicals, bush regeneration, plant identification workshops and Council activities. Contact the Community Support Officer if you have specific training enquiries. The Site Plan provides a guide to implementing restoration works.

SITE ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Preparation of a Site Plan

Work on Care sites is to be carried out in accordance with the restoration plan for the site. The plan will identify short and long term goals for the rehabilitation of a site and strategies to achieve them. Plans generally contain:

- Aims and objectives.
- A map of the area including its major features.
- A description of the topography and land use within and adjacent to the site.
- Details of flora and fauna present, particularly any rare and endangered species or vegetation communities and how they should be managed.
- Information of threats and impacts at sites including weed infestation, recreational usage, drainage issues, grazing, fire and others. Details of how to manage relevant issues.
- A works program detailing restoration work to be undertaken and what is required to complete actions. This will include recommended weed control strategies and techniques.
- How the success of outcomes will be measured; a monitoring and evaluation component.

Within the context of the plan it is important for the Care group to determine what it wants to achieve on the site (aim), what they plan to do (objectives), how they plan to do it (methods), and how the results will be measured (evaluation and documentation). An important element of the site strategy is to ensure that restoration works are not undertaken beyond the group's ability to maintain them.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is important to record, monitor and evaluate the progress of any rehabilitation project. This is necessary to demonstrate the outcomes achieved and the relative success or otherwise of different methods used.

Successive photographs taken from the same fixed points provide a visual record of weed infestation and vegetation condition. Baseline photographs should be taken prior to commencing on ground works. Photo locations should be marked and successive photos taken at intervals of 6 to 12 months as well as after major events such as planting or fire, from the same location to enable direct comparison. Daily work record sheets provide information that can be evaluated to guide effective future bush regeneration strategies.

Council may provide additional information and training about monitoring and evaluating the progress of works on certain sites.

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Tools and equipment will be available to Care groups and individual volunteers where necessary, on permanent or temporary loan.

All tools provided remain the property of Council. Care groups are responsible for ensuring that equipment is returned to Council in the event of the group disbanding.

Volunteers are not to use power tools on site other than cordless electric drills. Exceptions may be possible for qualified trades people or Workcover accredited operators in the case of landscaping or construction projects. Copies of the relevant licenses and permits will need to be retained by Councils Care Group Co-ordinator.

Care groups will be responsible for daily maintenance of tools and equipment that have been issued, such as cleaning, oiling and sharpening and recording any loss of, or damage to equipment. Council will be responsible for repair of tools and equipment and replacing equipment that is lost or damaged beyond repair, as necessary.

Tools and equipment are required to be maintained in a condition that is safe for use. The safe use, handling, storage and transportation of equipment and substances (such as herbicide) are important.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

Opportunities for external funding for projects will arise through various sources. Providing projects are consistent with management priorities identified by Council and where practical, Council and Care groups may take advantage of external funding opportunities to further develop Care program activities. This may involve forming a partnership to carry out a particular project or Council acting as a financial trustee for the project where work on Council reserves is involved. Care groups cannot apply for external grants or manage projects independently. If a partnership is formed, an agreement will be drawn up before the funding application is lodged which states where responsibilities lie for various aspects of the project.

Council will select projects for funding submissions in consultation with Care groups according to:

- Suitability of project to the funding program, according to the stated priorities for each program;
- Ability of Council and the group to fulfill associated commitments;
- Ability of the volunteers to fulfill a project management/coordination role;
- Potential ecological, educational or other benefits of the project; and
- Consistency of the project with local and regional priorities.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Tweed Shire Council is committed to providing a safe working environment for all workers.

Responsible behaviour and Code of Conduct

- No volunteer should be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol whilst on any Tweed Shire Council worksite.
- Volunteers must behave in a responsible and reliable manner.
- If medication is required, volunteers should ensure to have this with them at all times.

Work Health and Safety (WHS) requirements

- All volunteers must have undergone WHS inductions prior to commencing, which involves going through the Risk Assessment and completing the Volunteer Induction Sign Off.
- No volunteer is to undertake any task or activity that they have not been trained in or are not competent to perform. This includes use of tools and equipment.
- Report all hazards, incidents and injuries immediately to the coordinator on site.
- Use the required personal protective equipment (including sun protection) as determined by procedure, Safety Data Sheet (SDS) or direction.
- Through act or omission not place themselves, colleagues or public in danger or risk of danger.
- Not interfere with safety/ emergency equipment.
- Follow all safety requests from authorised Tweed Shire Council representatives.

Manual handling

Manual handling results in around 1/3 of all occupational injuries within the Australian workforce. Please take care in any activity involving manual handling and be aware of the dangers. Manual handling is simply the actions of: lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying, lowering, moving, holding, or restraining. The correct lifting technique is to lift:

- with the leg muscles, not the back – bend your knees;
- with the use of both hands;
- without twisting movements;
- without side bending of the upper body;
- with the load held close to the body;
- with plenty of space for movement;
- between mid-thigh to shoulder height;
- with a compact, easy to grasp load; and
- using the appropriate lifting aids if required

Before any lift occurs ensure the travel path you will take is clear from obstructions and slip/trip/fall hazards. Ensure the load is within your capable lifting limit – this will differ between individuals, dependent on size, strength and fitness.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

Safety Data Sheets are provided for chemicals and products used by care group volunteers. The data sheet provides the following information relating to the chemical used:

- Identification of chemical product and company
- Composition/information on ingredients
- Hazards identification
- PPE requirements
- First aid measures
- Handling and storage

Please ensure you have read the Safety Data Sheet prior to the use of any chemicals products such as herbicide.

Hazard, accident and incident reporting

All hazards, accidents and incidents are to be reported immediately to the coordinator.

- A **Hazard** is anything that has the potential to cause harm.
- An **Accident** is an event, which results in human injury, environmental harm or property damage.
- An **Incident** is a hazardous situation with or without harm.

Emergency procedures

Emergency procedures must be established as part of the Worksite Risk Assessment and all workgroup members must be aware of the following:

- Location of first aid kit
- Emergency assembly area (where to meet in emergency)
- Emergency procedure (who has phone, who will ring)

Risk management

The basic rules of risk management are:

1. Can I hurt myself?
2. Can I hurt anyone else?
3. Can I damage machinery or equipment?

If the answer to any of the above questions is “yes” then controls must be put in place to bring the level of risk to an acceptable level before progressing any further. If satisfactory controls cannot be put in place that brings the risk to an acceptable level then under no circumstance is work allowed to continue.

At no time are members allowed to undertake tasks or activities that they have not been trained or inducted to perform.

Site safety rules

Inductions

- All volunteers must be inducted to the site prior to commencement and following any significant changes in conditions. This involves briefing on the Risk Assessment and completing the Volunteer Induction Sign Off.

Worksite Risk Assessment

- The site supervisor must conduct a daily Worksite Risk Assessment with the group prior to work commencing each day.

Reporting of Hazards, Incidents, Injuries

- Report all hazards, incidents, injuries immediately to the coordinator.

Alcohol and Drugs

- Alcohol or illicit drugs are prohibited from being on site. No persons affected by alcohol or drugs are allowed on site.

Powered Equipment

- No powered equipment is permitted on site with the exception of cordless drills and brush cutters.

Working at Heights

- No work at heights is permitted.

Hazardous Substances

- Only personnel that hold a current ChemCert certificate are permitted to use hazardous substances and chemicals.
- All hazardous substances must be approved before being bought onto the site.
- A current SDS must be readily available and understood by persons using a hazardous substance.
- All relevant PPE as required in the SDS must be worn.
- Any SDS must be readily accessible by users.
- All containers of hazardous substances including decanted containers must be labelled and carry the minimum set of risk and safety phrases.

Manual Handling

- Observe correct manual handling techniques.
- Use mechanical devices to lift heavy or awkward items.
- Team lifting should only be used where mechanical lifting is absolutely not practical.

First aid kits

A first aid kit is required at all work sites during work sessions. The *First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice* lists the recommended contents of a first aid kit, which should be based on the risk assessment and site requirements.

Groups should ensure the adequacy of first aid kits and check contents and restock regularly. Emergency contact numbers should be included in kits. All volunteers should know the location of the first aid kit. Volunteers with first aid qualifications should be identified.

Accident – incident reporting

Register of Injuries: Each group should have an Accident – Injury Book. If at any time a volunteer sustains an injury, including those that appear minor, it should be treated and then recorded in the Register.

Incident Injury Hazard Near Miss Report: When a work injury/illness requires professional medical attention, causes a volunteer to be incapable of working on the next day, causes property loss or damage, or where a near miss occurs which causes any of the above, an accident/incident report must be completed.

Safety guide for volunteers

Group responsibility: Each group has a responsibility to provide a safe working environment for its volunteers.

Volunteer responsibility: Volunteers must cooperate with the group's efforts to maintain a safe working environment.

Protective clothing: Volunteers must wear sturdy footwear on work sites and clothing which provides adequate protection against the sun and insect and other bites and scratches.

Pre-existing medical conditions: It is essential that volunteers declare, confidentially, any pre-existing medical conditions which may affect their participation in projects.

Risk assessment: All potential hazards relating to the project must be identified, risks involved assessed and controls developed to eliminate, or minimise the risk.

Tool use: Care must always be taken to maintain a safe working distance between volunteers. That distance should not be less than 3 metres when using swinging type tools such as mattocks.

Chemicals: Chemicals may only be used by volunteers when they are supervised by an appropriately qualified person (ChemCert qualification or equivalent) and only when there is full compliance with the safety direction detailed in the Safety Data Sheet (SDS). Use appropriate PPE.

Sun protection: Northern New South Wales has a high incidence of skin cancer resulting from over-exposure to the sun's ultra-violet rays. Loose fitting long trousers, long sleeved shirts, a broad brimmed hat and sunscreen (high protection factor) are recommended when outside for extended periods.

Insects: Insect borne diseases, while not common, can be contracted in our area. Long sleeves, long trousers and insect repellent can provide protection.

Dehydration, fatigue, heat exhaustion: Always make sure you are carrying or have access to water whenever engaged in physical activity. Regular drink breaks and rest periods are important.

Snakes: Venomous snakes are found throughout the Tweed area. If snakes are encountered they should not be disturbed. Move away quietly. Wearing sturdy footwear and socks is recommended.

Slip, trip and falls: Ensure volunteers are familiar with site terrain and potential hazards prior to commencing work. Mark obvious hazards such as boulders, holes, tree roots and low branches with brightly coloured tape where practical. Ensure pathways are clear and obstacle free.

Scratches and stings from trees, bushes and vines: Familiarise the group with plants that have thorns, prickles, stings or sharp leaves. Mark hazardous plants at work sites. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment at all times.

Head and eye injury, cuts and bruises: Use personal protective clothing including eye protection. Check for overhanging head high branches and tag where practical.

Back strain: Ensure correct posture, restrict weight to be lifted and share loads where possible. Rotate tasks.

Wind and storm injury from falling branches/trees: Assess site before working. Leave if severe storm warning or conditions worsen. Use personal protective clothing.

Road safety: Volunteers should avoid working on or near roads wherever possible. Where volunteers need to work on a road reserve or any other place where vehicle traffic is present and may represent a hazard, they must wear a safety vest at all times. In some circumstances it may be necessary to use traffic warning signs or employ traffic control measures. This is a responsibility of Council.

Hazardous rubbish: Volunteers should not remove any potentially dangerous rubbish, eg asbestos, syringes or chemical drums. Council staff should be notified if such items are found. If needles are found, cover to reduce hazard and mark. Collection is required using tongs and disposal into sharps container. If needle stick injury occurs encourage the wound to bleed and seek medical treatment.

Risk assessment

A Risk Assessment is to be undertaken at each new work site or when conditions change at an existing site. The risk assessment considers how likely a risk is to occur and how severely someone could be hurt.

Once hazards are identified strategies to eliminate, minimise or protect against the risk are considered. Additional personal protective equipment may be considered, for example, mosquito nets where insect numbers are high, gaiters in snake habitat or knee pads when kneeling for extended periods.

Hazards must be pointed out to all volunteers and all risk control measures explained and documented on the Risk Assessment. All volunteers are required to read the Risk Assessment and take particular note of hazards on the site. All volunteers complete the Volunteer Induction Sign Off. New volunteers commencing at a later stage are to be briefed on the Risk Assessment and complete the Volunteer Induction Sign Off.

Volunteers should not be working in an area which has a high risk assessment score. If risks cannot be satisfactorily managed and there is doubt that the work can proceed safely, it should not go ahead. At no time should achievement of work outcomes be allowed to compromise safety.

The Worksite Risk Assessment form is completed on site prior to work activities commencing each day. This form is a brief summary of the hazards at the work site and measures taken to minimise or protect against risks. Each volunteer reads and signs the form.

The steps of a simple risk assessment process include:

Consider the site: Is it steep rocky rough slippery, dusty or exposed to wind? Is it thickly vegetated? Are there overhanging dead branches? Are there likely to be snakes, ticks bees, wasps or bull ants? How far are you from emergency assistance if required?

Consider the tasks: Are people carrying heavy or awkward objects? Will they be swinging tools? Is the work site near dangerous water, rocks, cliffs, or machinery?

Consider the people: Are they experienced in the work to be done? Are there children requiring close supervision? Are there elderly, less agile people? Does anyone have any medical conditions or injuries that may be aggravated by performing required tasks?

How can a person be injured? Consider trips, falls, eye injuries, bites, stings, sunburn, dehydration, strains from lifting heavy objects or misuse or repetitive use of tools.

Identify risk control strategies: What will people do to minimise potential harm? Involve everyone in the process, talk about and document agreed strategies on the Risk Assessment form and make sure everyone understands what is expected of them.

Supervise and monitor: Make sure everyone is complying with rules. Be prepared to change strategies if they do not seem to be working.

Emergency response plan: Make sure you have emergency contact numbers and ensure everyone knows what to do in case of emergency.

Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Clothing and equipment that protects volunteers from hazards including harmful UV radiation, insect and snake bite, chemical contamination and tool use injuries. Includes long sleeved shirts, long pants, safety boots, broad brimmed hats, sunscreen, insect repellent, eye protection and water bottle.

DOCUMENTATION

This guide includes copies of forms Care groups are required to use. All forms are to be kept by the group Secretary or a designated group member.

Council will maintain a register of general information about Care groups for public use and a confidential register of volunteer details (personal information such as contact details will not be released without written consent from the individual volunteers concerned).

Volunteer Membership and Training Form

All members fill in a Volunteer Membership and Training Form when they join a group. This records name and contact details. It lists skills, interests and experience and training qualifications in ChemCert, WHS and First Aid. Any restrictions on volunteer activities are also detailed including health conditions. A copy of this form is provided to Tweed Shire Council. The form should be updated if there are changes, such as gaining additional qualifications or new address and contact details.

Equipment Register

The Equipment Register records all equipment issued to the group by Tweed Shire Council.

Daily Record Sheet including Chemical Record

The Daily Record Sheet is filled out each work day to record location of work, chemical usage, works activities undertaken, incidents and any other information the group considers relevant to the project such as observations about the site.

Activity Report

The Activity Report is filled in on a six monthly basis as a summary of the Work Site Risk Assessment Sign Off and Daily Record Sheet. A copy is forwarded to Tweed Shire Council each six months.

Incident Injury Hazard Near Miss Report

When a work injury/illness requires professional medical attention, causes a volunteer to be incapable of working on the next day, causes property loss or damage, or where a near miss occurs which causes any of the above, an Incident Injury Hazard Near Miss Report must be completed.

Risk Assessment

The Risk Assessment assesses the level of hazards at a work site and details controls to limit hazards. This is completed initially when works commence and again if conditions change on a site. New volunteers are to be briefed on the Risk Assessment and Injury Register and complete the volunteer induction sign off. Further details are provided on the form.

For individual / one off events e.g. National Tree Day, Coastcare/Landcare Week plantings, bushland walks, specific operation and hazard risk registers have been developed and these can be sourced from Councils NRM Unit and/or WHS section.

Volunteer Induction Sign Off

All volunteers complete the Volunteer Induction Sign Off after being briefed on the Risk Assessment.

Work Site Risk Assessment

The Work Site Risk Assessment is completed on site prior to work activities commencing each day. Each volunteer reads and signs the form. This provides a record of volunteers present and that they are informed regarding hazards and controls in place to minimise hazards.

Annual Work Plan

An Annual Work Plan of proposed Care group activities will be submitted to Council in January each year.



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