



# N4C Bushcare Group Leaders Manual

[www.norman-creek-catchment.org.au](http://www.norman-creek-catchment.org.au)

NORMAN CREEK CATCHMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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# Acknowledgement of Country

The Norman Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee (N4C) acknowledges the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land where we conduct our bushcare activities.

We honour their enduring connection to Country and pay our deepest respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

N4C strives to uphold the principles of caring for Country, recognising the invaluable stewardship Aboriginal peoples have provided over countless generations. We are committed to respecting and protecting the Aboriginal cultural heritage that exists within our bushcare sites.

## About N4C

The Norman Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee (N4C) is a not for profit organisation established in 1996. Staffed by volunteers, the group's aim is to protect and maintain the ecosystem of Brisbane's Norman Creek Catchment.

We're a community-based not-for-profit group, totally independent of government or industry

The goal of N4C is to improve and maintain local waterways by protecting and rejuvenating the local ecosystem through the following activities:

- Restore habitat in bushland and waterways
- Coordinate the activities and involvement of governments, residents and groups in our catchment
- Involve, educate and empower the local community in our catchment

Website [www.norman-creek-catchment.org.au](http://www.norman-creek-catchment.org.au)

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/n4c.norman.creek/>

## N4C's Bushcare Groups

Bushcare Groups undertake restoration on land owned or managed by Council, or State Government. Groups require permission from the landowner to undertake bushcare, and must abide by any conditions stipulated by the owner. There are three types of Bushcare groups within N4C:

- **Habitat Brisbane Sites** – These groups are formally supported by Brisbane City Council and have their own 5-year Plans developed by group leaders in conjunction with their Habitat Brisbane Officers.
- **State Land Sites** – These groups are supported by Norman Creek Catchment but do not have any State employed officers providing additional support. N4C works with Bushcare Group Leaders to manage the site.
- **Creek Catchment Bushcare Sites** – These sites are supported by Norman Creek Catchment and receive support from Council's Creek Catchment program. Our Creek Catchment officer assists with preparing 5-year plans and may be able to

assist with some types of support such as providing mulch. N4C supports Bushcare Group Leaders to manage the site.

N4C bushcare is guided by the policies of the landowner, the N4C Constitution, the N4C Work Health and Safety Policy and the annual N4C Habitat Restoration Action Plan [ask us for the latest copy].

## N4C Bushcare Support Officer:

N4C has a volunteer [Bushcare Support Officer](#) who may be available to assist Creek Catchment Group Leaders or those on State Land. They can offer advice on bushcare and equipment, basic training and guidance on herbicide use. Remember, they are also a volunteer.

## Insurance

N4C holds General Liability Insurance of up to 30 million dollars through the generous support of Queensland Water and Land Carers (QWaLC).

# How the N4C Supports Bushcare Group Leaders

N4C provides ongoing support for its Bushcare Leaders by:

- Holding general meetings every 2 months where to bushcare activities and site issues can be discussed.
- Conducting an annual Habitat Restoration Action Plan process to help prioritise activities.
- Supplying tools, equipment and materials for non-Habitat Brisbane bushcare sites.
- Running a native plant nursery and compost hub to provide plants and compost for bushcare sites, when available.
- Offering advice from fellow Group Leaders.
- Facilitating networking and collaboration between Bushcare Group Leaders and learning from guest speakers at regular General Meetings.
- Meeting regularly with our Creek Catchment Officer to discuss issues and what support is available from Council.
- Appointing a Bushcare Support Officer to provide support to non-Habitat Brisbane N4C Bushcare sites.
- Promotion of the bushcare site through the N4C website and social media
- Assistance with events and activities to encourage community engagement.
- Administrative and governance assistance around safety protocols, and government requirements.
- Information on grant opportunities and assistance in applying for and managing grants.
- Advocacy for bushcare sites in the Norman Creek Catchment.
- Information about workshops and training sessions on bushcare techniques, weed management, and plant identification.

## Bushcare Group Leaders should:

- Firstly, have fun! Hopefully you gain new friends, community connections and a lot of satisfaction from the amazing work you do.
- Read the regular N4C email updates
- Use a sign-in sheet [ask N4C for a template] to record details of volunteers who attend your bushcare activities and the hours they have contributed. Give those forms or a scan of them to the Baron St office each year in July.
- Induct new volunteers using the [N4C induction checklist](#).
- Hold bushcare activities at your sites, minimum 2 per year.
- Provide volunteers with the skills and knowledge to support work at the site.
- Where possible, apply for grants to conduct additional or complex works for the bushcare site if needed.
- Consider mentoring one or two members of the Bushcare group to serve as a second-in-command (2IC). This will provide support during sessions with large volunteer turnouts and ensure continuity when the Bushcare leader is unavailable.
- **Habitat Brisbane Groups:**
  - Follow the advice of your HB Officer
  - Read the regular Habitat Brisbane update emails
  - Work with your HB Officer to develop a 5-year plan for your site
- **Creek Catchment and non-BCC Groups:**
  - Develop an SMP (Site Management Plan) for your site with the support of N4C and the Creek Catchment Officer, including:
    - identify the rehabilitation strategy you will pursue, goals for the site and plan of action.
    - Provide input into the risk assessment for your site and follow the mitigations identified.

## Creek Catchment Bushcare Groups

You will be provided with a map of your site. This will outline the areas where you are permitted to conduct bushcare activities and any conditions on those.

## Equipment and materials

For Bushcare Groups, excluding Habitat Brisbane Groups, N4C will supply the necessary tools and equipment for use by volunteers, either on loan or brought to site by the Bushcare Leader. Thank you for making space at your home for these. Please keep these in a safe place and let us know if any are broken or need replacing. Leather gloves are provided for bushcare; **these are not single use items.**

All tools supplied by the N4C remain the property of N4C. Tools must be returned to N4C if the bushcare group is disbanded or becomes inactive.

N4C will be able to provide moderate amounts of materials such as stakes and tree guards, herbicide and other consumables. For large projects you may need to apply for a grant.

Mulch can be provided for free, by contacting our Creek Catchment Officer about 4 weeks in advance.

## Safety on site / Risk assessments

Each group is required to have a risk assessment in place governing the hazards of the site and the activities to be conducted there.

A Workplace Health and Safety Induction is an essential component to inducting new volunteers to a bushcare site. [N4Cs induction checklist](#) provides a basic overview of the bushcare site and tasks being undertaken, along with potential risks and strategies for working at your bushcare site. These risks should be explained to new volunteers along with any mitigation strategies used at your site.

We also recommend you attach the full risk assessment to the sign-in sheet and draw attention to it during sign in.

### First Aid Kits

Every Bushcare Leader should ensure they obtain a First Aid kit and a snake bite kit for their site from N4C. So that it remains up to date, request replacement materials or kits as required.

### Incident reporting

If an incident occurs, appropriate first aid should be rendered and medical help sought, if necessary, immediately.

All incidents and near misses need to be recorded and a copy of the incident report provided to or prepared with the N4C Management Committee to submit to our insurer. You can [view the form online](#), but **PLEASE ensure you complete it with one of the management committee as they are an AUTHORISED PERSON**, and for our record keeping.

### Managing waste/hazardous waste

Volunteers should not attempt to remove any potentially dangerous rubbish, e.g. suspected asbestos, or chemical drums or other hazardous wastes.

If you notice these at your site please report them to

- Council on 07 3403 8888

For non hazardous dumping/materials or non life threatening situations, you can report illegal dumping via:

- [Report it: Illegal dumping](#) if your site is on council land

- [Report Littering and Illegal Dumping](#) if your site is on state land

You should not remove syringes unless you have undertaken the training and have the appropriate equipment. A sharps disposal container can be obtained from N4C. Seek advice from N4C on the training required.

## Managing volunteers

### Recording volunteer participation

Recording volunteer hours is a crucial practice as it provides valuable data on the contributions of volunteers and helps demonstrate the impact of their work. N4C needs this data as part of its annual reporting to Council. However, it is also valuable when applying for grants or approaching government officials to secure funding.

To effectively track hours, Creek Catchment and non-BCC Bushcare Leaders should use the N4C sign-in sheets at the start of any bushcare activities. Volunteers need to write their name, hours worked, contact details and the name of an emergency contact person and their phone number.

#### **Children**

A parent or guardian must co-sign the volunteer registration form of volunteers under 18 years of age. While our insurer does not have a minimum age requirement, volunteers must be able to follow instructions.

#### **Blue cards**

Bushcare Leaders are unlikely to require a blue card to conduct bushcare activities as the activities are not targeted to children. If you do have a child at your site ensure the parents are present and supervising the child at all times.

If you are working with school or youth groups regularly, then you will likely need a blue card. Approach those schools/groups that you regularly work with to discuss how they can support you to obtain one in your volunteer capacity. N4C can support you to obtain one also.

You can refer to the [Queensland Government Bluecard website](#) for further information about requirements and exemptions. If you are a [restricted person](#) you are unable to conduct any bushcare activities that may involve children.

#### **Managing volunteer contact details**

Under Privacy laws it is important that you don't share the names or contact details of volunteers in your group without their permission. For example, to keep contact details private when emailing your group use the BCC function instead of CC.

#### **Photographing volunteers and distribution on social media, websites or via emails**

Always obtain consent if showing faces (we recommend including it in your site induction/sign up form) and posting images or videos on social media.

Respect privacy by avoiding sharing personal or sensitive information such as full names (ie in a tag), unless it is with consent.

## All bushcare groups:

### Site Rehabilitation Strategies

Habitat Brisbane sites will work with their Habitat Brisbane Officer on a strategy for the site. Other sites will need to develop a strategy with N4C and the Creek Catchment Officer.

Regardless of what type of site you have, your rehabilitation strategy should depend on the ecological resilience (ecological values) of your site. For example, if there is a healthy native seedbank on the site, you will not need to do planting. However, if the seedbank is exhausted, planting may be advised.

It is also important to consider the resources available at your site, such as access to water. Where you do not have easily accessible fresh water it is not advisable to do large plantings as they will be unable to be maintained.

### Requesting Plants and compost

You can request plants for your site from the N4C nursery. Please give the nursery some notice if you would like to pick up a large number. If you want particular species, you might help us find seed of those and give us a good lead time for propagation. Not all species are available year-round and the stock changes all the time.

At any point feel free to take compost for your site from the three compost storage bays at our Baron St Address.

### Plant and weed identification

- [iNaturalist](#) helps you identify the plants and animals around you. Get connected with a community of over 750,000 scientists and naturalists who can help you learn more about nature! What's more, by recording and sharing your observations, you'll create research quality data for scientists working to better understand and protect nature.
- [Qld Plant Identification](#) – Facebook Group which can help identifying plants from good photos.
- BCC weeds identification tool <https://weeds.brisbane.qld.gov.au/>
- Access the *Weedlings and Seedlings* book at N4C Headquarters.
- The Weed spotters handbook <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/plants/herbarium/weeds/weed-resources>
- Use Weed Australia's weed scan tool <https://weeds.org.au/identify/>

# Weed control

You will need to identify the main weeds at the site and develop a strategy for controlling them. This should draw partly on the principles of the [Bradley method](#); ie, work from good areas to bad; remove seeds and propagules where possible; create space for native plants to thrive.

One weed control method is to use herbicide. No volunteer will be obliged to use herbicide if they don't want to. Anyone using herbicide will need to do some form of training first:

- Cut and paint with glyphosate
- Spraying with glyphosate
- Using other herbicides (Advanced Spray training, BCC training).

Herbicides must be stored and transported correctly and this will be part of your training. Reach out to N4C to arrange some training.

Disposal of weeds is a related issue. Generally it is desirable to reduce the amount of weed material that is transported off site. That may mean using weeds as mulch if they are not seeding and are not succulent species. Discuss this with the bushcare support officer and the Creek Catchment Officer.

# Selecting suitable plants

Find out the [Qld Govt Regional Ecosystem number](#) or numbers for your site. Obtain a technical description of those ecosystems, ie a plant list. You can seek advice from other members of N4C or speak with the Bushcare Coordinator for advice.

An alternative strategy is to consult an ecologist about what species will work best at the site.

# Grants

If Bushcare Leaders identify works needed on Bushcare sites that are beyond the capacity of the volunteer group to implement they may wish to apply for grant programs to support this.

## External Grants

N4C is able to provide support in applying for grants with text describing the organisation and its purpose, and readership support.

N4C auspices grants for its bushcare groups. This means that it puts its name to the grant and provides budget oversight and assistance with acquittal, monitoring of progress, and insurance coverage for projects that it supports.

N4C requires that any group submitting a grant under the N4C name, for N4C management, to first complete [a grant notification form](#). The purpose of this form is to outline the project, and key contacts responsible for the grant that they are requesting N4C support.

The [Brisbane City Council presentation on grant writing](#) has tips to improve the quality of your grant application.

You will often require quotes to assist you with your grant application. Below are some companies that can help.

### **Native Plant Nurseries**

- Barbs trees <https://www.truelocal.com.au/business/barbs-trees/mount-nathan>
- Paten Park Native Nursery <https://ppnn.org.au/>
- Wallum Nursery <https://www.wallumnurseries.com/>
- Logans Nursery <https://logansnursery.com.au/>

### ***Bush Regenerators***

You can search on google and/or reach out to N4C for some recommendations.

## Fire Ants

Fire ants are a dangerous pest and it is important to know how to deal with them.

If you find fire ants on your bushcare site, there is an obligation to report these under biosecurity laws which you can do by phoning the National Fire Ant Eradication Program on 132 ANT ( 13 22 68), or via their [online portal](#). Ensure you take photos of the suspected nests to upload with your report. If you would like to obtain the 'shaker baits' to tackle fire ants at your bushcare site, please complete the [30 minute online training](#) to help you:

- Identify fire ants and their nests
- Reduce the likelihood of spreading fire ants
- Treat fire ants using a range of approaches
- Report fire ant treatment using the fire ant portal

## Promotion

### Website

All N4C bushcare sites will be provided with a page on the N4C website that should include

- Information on the site and its strategy
- Details on regular bushcare activities and information on how volunteers can get involved.
- Photos of the site

## Social Media

If a Bushcare Leader is considering setting up and managing their own social media page they should consider:

- Informing N4C of the page and tagging N4C when posting or creating events.
- Consistently update content with photos, event announcements, sharing N4C posts, and updates on bushcare site progress.
- Monitor posts, comments, and interactions to ensure the environment stays respectful. Delete or moderate inappropriate content or spam. (be aware that page owners are legally responsible for defamatory material).
- Obtain consent for images of people you post.
- Advocate for the site among the community, and with local government representatives.

## Bushcare signage

You can request a "Bushcare in Progress" sign from N4C to display at your site during bushcare activities. This sign can also include contact details to help attract and engage new volunteers.

## N4C Bushcare Shirts

King Gee work shirts with the N4C logo available for purchase through Totally Work Wear. These are sun safe and suitable for work on bushcare sites. Contact N4C for the details on the shirt and how to order your shirt if you'd like one.