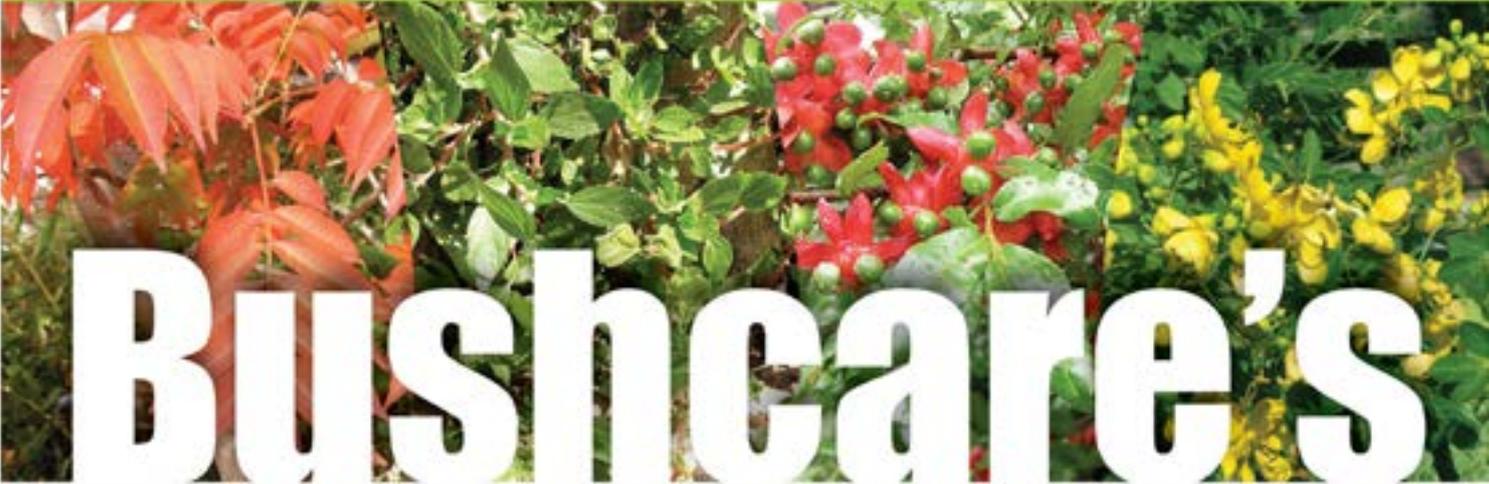


Join us for



Bushcare's

Major Day Out



Site Organisers' Starter Kit 2015

 BushcaresMDO

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Landcare
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www.bushcaresmajordayout.org
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Phone: 0417 285 871



Bushcare's
Major Day Out

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Thank you

Thank you for taking an interest in Bushcare's Major Day Out. If you are reading this information you are already a BMDO site organiser or you are thinking of participating.

Without enthusiastic site organisers BMDO obviously could not occur, and it is the dedication and support of people like you, which has enabled BMDO to grow from 10 sites in one state in 2010 to 237 sites in seven states and territories in 2014.

We would like to thank you very much for your past participation and we hope that this Starter Kit will help you with your 2015 event.

If you have any questions we would be delighted to assist.

Please email us at info@bushcaresmajordayout.org.

Don Wilson
 Founder and President
 Bushcare's Major Day Out

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What is Bushcare's Major Day Out?

Bushcare's Major Day Out (BMDO) is an annual event, held throughout Australia, in or around Landcare week in September each year. It has been running successfully for five years, and in 2014 BMDO involved 237 sites, in every state and territory except the Northern Territory.

There are hundreds of local volunteer Bushcare, Landcare, Coastcare and Creekcure groups around Australia, meeting weekly or monthly to maintain local areas of bushland. Their main activities are controlling environmental weeds, clearing rubbish which has no habitat value, planting native species and reporting wildlife sightings and issues. Groups are usually supported by Council or land management representatives.

BMDO aims to increase the awareness of this important work and to attract more volunteers to join these groups.

Mission

A national day of community participation in the care of our bushland.

Vision

Build the awareness and reach of BMDO over the next three years, so that it becomes as well-known as Clean Up Australia Day and a truly national event.

Objectives

- Celebrate the work done by bushcarers
- Raise community awareness of the threats facing our bush and its biodiversity across Australia
- Increase the numbers of bushcare volunteers
- Through awareness raising and education, inform people how they can make a difference, by avoiding growing invasive species in their gardens and becoming involved in bushcare.

Background and Support

BMDO was the brainchild of Willoughby, NSW resident, Don Wilson, back in 2010. He and his wife Marianne, and friend Matt Keighery, all bushcarers, felt that bushcare deserved more publicity and more support around Australia. They gathered a few like-minded people including experienced bushcarers to form a committee of volunteers, and took to the phones to persuade land managers and councils to nominate sites for the Major Day Out.

Landcare Australia and Willoughby City Council have been supporters since this time, donating both resources and funds. BMDO is a Registered Australian Charity.

Other sponsors include: NRMA Insurance, Chatswood RSL, NRM Jobs, Kennards Hire and Forestry Tools



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Why should you be involved?

Land Managers – extra resources

Bushcare's Major Day Out is a useful reminder for land managers, local residents, councillors and politicians that our bushland is important to Australians, and that it will not continue to be healthy unless professional bush regenerators and volunteers assist in its revitalisation.

Government resources alone cannot undertake the restoration required after so many years of disturbance of the natural environment. For example, in the City of Willoughby NSW, bushcarers donated nearly 5800 hours of bush regeneration in 2013. Also the more residents get involved, the more educated the community becomes about how to care for our precious bushland.

Key dates

In 2015 Bushcare's Major Day Out will be held on **Sunday September 13th in Landcare Week**, at city and country locations across Australia.

However, the day for Bushcare's Major Day Out is flexible, so individual groups may choose slightly different dates, so long as the event falls within a few weeks of the main date. When you register your site on the BMDO website you just choose the date that suits you.

Local Residents – wellbeing

People really appreciate the opportunity to get closer to nature, enjoy biodiversity and take part in useful community activities. Bushcare is a powerful tool for building strong community connections.

By volunteering for bushcare people feel that they are making a real difference, which is good for both mental and physical health and wellbeing. It's also a good excuse to get out there and have some fun.

January to July - Register your site on the BMDO website. The earlier you register the more volunteers you are likely to attract. Go to www.bushcaresmajordayout.org.au.

June to August - Promote your site to local residents through flyers, banners, posters, local media announcements and social media.

August - Plan the details of your event

13 September or your preferred date - Hold your event

September to October - Let the BMDO organising committee know how your event went, so that we can gain more publicity for next year and promote your achievements on the day.

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Tips on Planning Your Event

1. Choose your site

You will need permission to work on the site you have selected. If this is not a site which you are directly responsible for, contact your local council for guidance and see if they can assist.

Ensure that your site:

- Has an action plan for your site
- Has ongoing follow up maintenance after your BMDO event from a Bushcare or Landcare group, contractors or employees
- Has high visibility, so banners, posters and activity prior to the event and on the day, will be noticed by passers by
- Already has natives present, so you can reinforce the idea of working from the good bush to the bad
- Has weeds that are easy to control by either hand removal or cut, scrape and paint with herbicide (glyphosate) eg Asparagus Fern or Fishbone Fern. Avoid using poison if possible due to WHS concerns and not making too big an impact on the site
- Has had a risk assessment done to reduce the likelihood of an incident; needs to be as safe as possible, without hidden steep drops, with some shade, without tick infestations, and without water hazards if children will be attending
- Has the ability to cope with large numbers of people some of whom may be untrained
- Has easy access to toilet facilities, BBQ & car parking, so you don't have to carry food/drink/tools too far
- Can be accessed by the landholder to remove any bags of weeds or rubbish, or that it is a site with alternative vegetation disposal options

2. Decide on your type of event

To attract more participants you may like to consider adding extra elements alongside traditional bushcare. These could include:

- Bushcare with families or grandchildren. We need to attract and involve future generations
- Face painting and/or art competitions for the children, billy teas, boomerang throwing demonstrations
- Creative arts workshop with an Artist providing tips for inspiring creative works
- Picnics / morning teas / BBQs
- Adventure activities such as bushwalks, boat trip to the site, kayaking
- Information on local flora and fauna
- Native plant sales or free give-aways
- Bushcare for singles or people new to the neighbourhood, to meet new friends
- Focus on habitat construction or protection of an iconic or threatened species
- Involve local cultural groups

Or you may wish to undertake just your usual regeneration, cleaning up and planting.

3. Catering

- Ask your local Rotary, or similar community group if they would be interested in providing a BBQ. You will have to pay for the cost of sausages, bread, etc
- Ask those attending to bring a cake, pie or beverage donation for a morning tea spread
- Try to provide drinks and cups (or BYO cup). Cold water is probably the minimum and tea/coffee with hot water and mugs is always very welcome

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4. Registering your site

It is essential to [register your site](#) on the BMDO website as early as possible. This will allow the BMDO organising committee to provide as much help and publicity for your event as possible, through traditional and social media, and, most importantly, will allow potential volunteers to find a site near them.

5. Setting up on the day

Here is a [handy checklist](#) to help organise your day. You will need helpers on the day to organise the site, welcome participants and supervise the activities.

- Welcome table – greet people and ask them to complete the [sign in sheet](#) and risk assessment
- Name tags – sticky labels for people to write their names help make the event friendlier
- Tools – supply tools from your organisation (if available) ask participants to be responsible for them after the event
- Other items – consider providing a large dispenser for sun and insect protection, hand cleaner and a First Aid kit
- Experienced bushcarers/professionals eg. council bush regenerators to work alongside new volunteers
- Organise weed bags or composte site

6. Things to cover

- Welcome to Country- ensure you acknowledge the traditional owner of the land you are working on. eg when you introduce the site say something like “on behalf of the traditional elders past and present I would like to welcome you to country” (insert name of community)
- Welcome - ensure that new volunteers are welcomed, thanked and introduced to more experienced bushcarers, throughout the event. If you want people to come back and join your existing bushcare groups they need to feel valued, and that they've met some new friends

Consider having an optional column on your sign in sheet for contact details, so you can ensure they are in the loop about future events.

- Insurance – Local council insurance usually covers most sites if these are on council land, so you may wish to check with your local council.
- Health and Safety on your site- Choose your site with safety in mind and ensure volunteers are briefed on relevant risks. You may want them to sign that they have received this briefing - [Safety Sheet](#). A [Risk Assessment](#) sheet has been prepared and the basics are:

Sun and heat protection - sunscreen, hat, long sleeves, long trousers, drinking water, shade. Warm clothes if required in cooler areas. To be provided by the participants

Insect and snake protection – repellents (preferably tick-specific), hat, gloves, long sleeves, long trousers tucked into socks, closed shoes. Taking care when walking or reaching into areas without good visibility. To be provided by the participants

Avoidance of falls - site selection, sensible shoes, notification of hazards.

Weather – avoid working in high winds (falling branches), heavy rain (slip hazards) and electrical storms (lightning strikes). You may need to postpone your event in the event of extreme weather conditions

Working with tools- wear PPE including gloves and sturdy boots. Volunteers should receive informal induction on the correct use of tools. Outline potential crush injury hazards with particular tools such as secateurs. Volunteers to provide adequate space from each other

Slip trip/fall hazard - Be familiar with terrain and potential hazards prior to commencing work. Avoid hazardous area such as steep slopes and unstable areas. Remove potential hazards where safe to do so. Ensure boots are firmly laced, and avoid carrying awkward heavy objects on uneven ground

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7. Other considerations

- Number of people – it is always difficult to know just how successful you will be in attracting volunteers to your event. Base your calculation on previous experience and the level of promotion you have undertaken. Err on the side of over catering eg, provide extra water just in case you have underestimated. Consider asking people to register their intention to attend in advance with you, when you register your site on the BMDO website. This way you will have some idea of the numbers attending. Knowing the number of people is essential if you are organising transport, providing accommodation or complicated catering, or the site has a maximum attendance level.

Remember you can put a limit on the numbers you take.

- Photos - take lots of photos especially of the whole group assembled for morning tea break/ gathered around the promotional banner/ in front of the pile of weeds you collect on the day etc. You can use these for follow up media articles and to promote your event next year. It's also a good idea to establish photo monitoring points before works commence to show the impact made after your session and in the years to come.

Under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 - Section 10 it is required that permission to use or collect personal information (photographs, video footage and names) by the individual or guardian. See attached Photography and Filming Permission Form (link)

- Information - have further information about your ongoing Bushcare program available on the day.

Tips on attracting more volunteers

Promotion of your Bushcare's Major Day Out event is key to its success, and should be undertaken at least one month prior to your event to guarantee great attendance on the day. The BMDO committee will be undertaking promotion at a national level, which is designed to raise awareness about bushcare in general and BMDO in particular, and to encourage people to visit the BMDO website in search of local sites.

This state and national promotion will include:

- Inclusion in Landcare Australia and other newsletters and publications, which are sent out to existing environmental volunteers and interested parties. These reach about 25,000 people around Australia.
- Promotion via Local Land Services (NSW) and interstate equivalents

- BMDO and Landcare will assist with promotion via our social media channels including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We are aiming to reach over 10,000 people.

- The Big Media Event a couple of weeks before the main BMDO event date, to attract state and national media coverage, by involving our patron Costa Georgiadis, politicians and other experts at a wildlife event in Willoughby, Sydney

- Media releases to local and national newspapers and magazines to promote specific stories around BMDO

- Email to councils around Australia to encourage support

- Radio interviews on the ABC by Don Wilson – Founder of BMDO (planned as per previous years)

- If you have any other great ideas, please contact us.

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Site promotions

Local residents and other potential volunteers will not know about your event unless you actively promote it. Photos and logos are available on the BMDO website to jazz up your own promotions.

Here are some ideas and some templates to assist with the promotion of your event.

1. Register your event on the BMDO website

By registering your site and event on the BMDO website people looking to participate will be able to find you. Register early. In August 2013, nearly 2000 people visited the website, many of whom were looking for local sites to join.

2. Use social media

If you have group or personal Facebook pages or Twitter accounts, you can use these to tell your network of friends and acquaintances about your BMDO event by using the hashtag #BushcaresMDO.

If you would like the BMDO team to tweet something on your behalf please let us know. You can use the hashtag #BushcaresMDO when promoting from your own account to be in the conversation.

“Like” the BMDO Facebook page to promote the event and location finder part of the BMDO website to your circle. Retweet the BMDO tweets to add content to your own tweets.

3. Email lists and newsletters

- Amend your email signature on your personal emails to include a few details of your event and a website address.

- Send emails out to friends and family who might be interested in participating and supporting your event.
- Include details of your event in printed or emailed newsletters from your organisation, community group or social circle.

4. Local newspapers and magazines

- A short announcement about your forthcoming event in a local newspaper or local magazine can do wonders. Try to speak to the editor or relevant journalist well in advance to find out what they need and their deadlines. Keep the announcement short, entertaining and provide the necessary details, and preferably an interesting photo (children and animals are star attractions).
- Better yet write a media release with a longer story about your site, its beauty and attractions, your event and any fascinating facts about the people, animals or activities. [Sample media](#) releases are provided here: Also see [Appendix one](#) for more tips about media releases. Our Media expert on the BMDO committee is happy to assist you.

5. Flyers and posters

Old fashioned advertising can also attract new volunteers.

- Flyer - adapt the [A4 Word document](#) flyer from BMDO with the details of your event and pop this into letterboxes. (add link)
- Posters – this [A3 poster](#) can be adapted easily to promote your own event, and can be displayed in local libraries, shops, surgeries, community noticeboards etc. (add link)

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6. Banners on site (possibly the most effective promotion)

People close to your site are the richest source of volunteers. Here is a link to a [large banner](#), which can be printed out by professional printers and displayed in a high visibility position at your site. (add link) You can contact us for design assistance. Vistaprint is a low-cost online site with banners at about \$100 each.

7. Videos

You may wish to include one of these [BMDO videos](#) on your community website or in presentations to explain BMDO further.

8. Community and school groups

- People who volunteer for one community activity may be interested and willing to volunteer for others. See if you can get a local community group to promote your BMDO event on their websites and in their meeting rooms.
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is run by many schools and these students are often looking for a community activity to gain credits for the various levels. Some students then volunteer at regular bushcare groups to meet the community hours required for the awards.
- Scouts and guides may also be interested to earn some of their badges.

9. Local celebrities

Local Councillors, Mayors, MPs, local actors, singers and other community celebrities can be a drawcard for your event. Not only in the publicity surrounding their attendance but also by them promoting your event to their followers. Invite them along and tell the local media if they are going to attend.

10. Extra activities

By making your event particularly interesting to families, singles, wildlife enthusiasts, photographers, children etc, you can attract more volunteers. Consider offering more than weeding and planting on this special day. See Tips on Planning Your Event section 2 about deciding on your type of event. Of course, lots of people like weeding and planting and this might be enough for many sites.

11. Corporate days

Some corporate and other organisations are keen to offer "Volunteer Days" to their employees to build a sense of teamwork and social responsibility. If you have contacts in these companies you could approach them for their staff to participate in your event. You may need to choose a working day during the week close to 13 September instead of the Sunday for this to work.

They might also be interested in sponsoring your event and or donating to assist your group with resources required for the day.

For more information about Landcare Australia's corporate volunteering program visit <http://www.landcareonline.com.au/corporate-volunteering>

12. Web Sites

GoVolunteer and SEEKVolunteer websites are both great online places to promote your event. Go to the find volunteers tab and request an invite to register your event and join GoVolunteer. You will need to provide details of personal accident and public liability insurance which should be available from your local council or may be part of your own organisation.

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How to register your event

The BMDO website makes it easy to register bushcare and Landcare sites. There is a simple form to fill in with:

- site details (which will automatically generate a map)
- contact details
- date and time
- website link
- short description of the venue and attractions
- what people should wear and bring with them
- opportunity to post a logo and a photo of the site (which really helps to attract volunteers if it shows friendly people having fun, beautiful scenery, or an interesting or cute animal)

If you have a technical issue, please call Linda on 0447 150 255.

Once you register you will be listed as a location on the front of the website and in our locations page. You will also be flagged on our website front page and you will have a web page of your event. So, it is important you spend a few minutes to ensure the details are correct. Try and make your information enticing!

After the event

It would be appreciated if you could send photos and other information to the BMDO team after your event. These achievements can be shared in our newsletters and on our social media channels.

Send to info@bushcaresmajordayout.org

This Starter Kit was developed from the suggestions and issues experienced by various organisers in previous years, so your feedback is invaluable.

Your feedback also allows BMDO to gain more publicity and support year after year.

We would love to see:

- Photos/video
- What activities you undertook
- How many volunteers came to your event and the total hours contributed
- Number of bags of weeds/rubbish, plants planted, native fauna sighted etc.
- Media coverage
- Changes in knowledge or support for bushcare
- Ideas for the future of BMDO

Thank you again for joining this national event and donating your time and effort (we know it's not easy) to making bushcare an important part of Australian community action.

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Appendix One

Writing Media Releases

Contact BMDO's media expert for assistance: sandra.edmonds@bushcaresmajordayout.org.

Keep it short, snappy and simple. Make it easy for a journalist, and their readers to understand what is happening and why it is interesting. Avoid jargon and be enthusiastic but don't exaggerate.

Be careful with your spelling and grammar. Small mistakes can mean the difference between a journalist running your story or throwing it away. They want to cover an event that will be run properly and mistakes in the text make it look sloppy.

Photos increase the chance of a story being published. Email your photos separately immediately after sending your media release – don't compress or zip the photos. If the file size is too large you can send one at a time via the free site hightail.com but you will have to register first (it's free), or include them in your media release.

Use quotes from interesting spokespeople. The BMDO team can provide these if required, but local people are the best, from local businesses, environmental organisations, schools, communities or government. Ask them why they think your event is going to be great for your community because it's an easy way to show your newsworthiness.

Have your media release written before contacting a journalist and follow up with a phone call the next day after they've had a chance to read it. It's best to brief yourself beforehand so you can answer any questions they might have and if they have deleted or lost the press release.

Your local media are employed to cover interesting news, not to provide free advertising. Don't expect they will automatically cover your story. It's okay to follow up to see if your story is being published but always be polite and don't hound them!

Target your media release carefully. It's best to send the story to the relevant journalist or find out who would have received the release and follow up with them directly if possible. Call their office to find out if you don't know who does what. One sentence to introduce yourself is useful.

Remember your event could be of real interest to the local media so don't be shy! Think about what is interesting or newsworthy, or quirky about your story and mention it clearly.

Include in your communications that Bushcare's Major Day Out is sponsored by Landcare Australia and Willoughby City Council who are providing funding to help make the event a success.

The person you speak to may not know much about Bushcare. You will need to be able explain what it is and what Bushcare's Major Day Out is all about. You can forward them background information from www.bushcaresmajordayout.org.

Keep in touch with your media contacts. Even if they don't run your story before the event they may be interested in a follow up about how successful it was and what you achieved.

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