Message from the Mayor

Yarra Ranges has a large and active community of volunteers who are dedicated to preserving our beautiful natural environment. These people are extremely important to the Yarra Ranges community, and we are committed to supporting them and making sure they are safe while they volunteer.

We understand that being part of an environmental volunteer group can also bring a range of benefits to volunteers. For example:

- learning more about the environment.
- developing a sense of community and belonging.
- strengthening community partnerships.
- making like-minded friends, and
- having lots of fun.

To support our volunteers, we have developed a range of useful information to help environmental volunteer groups continue their tireless work in the best and safest way possible. The information is designed to cover a range of important topics including how we can support groups, the roles and responsibilities of group members, and essential information regarding Occupational Health and Safety.

The Yarra Ranges community is lucky enough to have more than 70 environmental volunteer groups throughout the region, and we recognise their importance in helping to sustain our natural environment.

Cr Graham Warren, Chandler Ward, Mayor
Environmental volunteer groups in the Yarra Ranges

What is an environmental volunteer group?
An environmental volunteer group is a group of people who work together to conserve native plants or animals, reserves, parklands, bushlands, roadsides, waterways, and public or private land.

The activities of each group are highly varied — weed control, habitat restoration, flora and fauna surveys, seed collecting, plant propagation, revegetation, etc. Joining a group is a wonderful opportunity to network and connect with your local community.

How can I join a group?
Contact the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer on 1300 368 333 to find out about groups you can join. If there is no relevant group in your area, you might consider starting your own.

For more information, see http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/eServices/Search_the_Community_Directory
Environmental volunteer groups in the Yarra Ranges

Environmental volunteer groups in the region of Yarra Ranges undertake a number of different activities depending on the group’s interest and the site location.

Some activities include:
- revegetation projects
- site maintenance
- habitat restoration
- flora and fauna monitoring
- water monitoring
- special events and festivals for days such as Clean Up Australia Day and World Environment Day
- weeding and weed mapping
- mulching and jute matting
- management planning
- attending training sessions conducted by Yarra Ranges Council.

How would I start up a group?
If there is no relevant group you wish to join, you might consider starting your own. All you need to do is get together with like-minded people and then contact Council:

- Outline why you wish to form a community group and what you hope to accomplish.
- On a map, define the area you wish to work in, e.g., along the creek banks.
- Explore what other community interest there is from existing groups in the area: local residents, schools, scouts, etc.
- Determine the support for your group, who you would like to get involved, how many people have registered interest.
- List the types of activities you would like to undertake and what assistance you would need from Council.
- Think about how many hours and when your group would want to undertake activities.

The Environmental Volunteer Support Officer can help ascertain likely interest in the area by organising mail-outs, and helping with flyers to initiate activities.

Council’s Environment Department and Bushland Management Team currently support more than 70 groups across the region.
Environmental volunteer groups in the Yarra Ranges

Northern Yarra Region
9. Friends of Elizabeth Bridge Reserve
21. Friends of Leadbeater’s Possum Inc
46. Friends of Yarra Flats Billabongs Inc
47. Healesville Environment Watch Inc
67. Yarra Valley Tree Group
76. My Environment

See Map for Region:
Chum Creek Landcare Group
Dixons Creek Landcare Group
Mt Toolebewong District & Landcare Group
Steels Creek Landcare Group
Upper Yarra Landcare Group

Lilydale to Warburton Region
74. Candlebark Nursery
11. Friends of Four Mile Creek
16. Friends of Hoddles Creek (interest in region from Yellingbo across to Kurth Kiln park)
20. Friends of Kurth Kiln
22. Friends of Little Yarra River Parklands
23. Friends of Margaret Lewis Reserve
31. Friends of Mount Evelyn Aqueduct Inc
32. Friends of Old Gippsland Road
33. Friends of Old Pound Reserve
34. Friends of Picnic Hill
41. Friends of the Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail
42. Friends of the Owl Lands
43. Friends of Wanderslore
44. Friends of Wandin Yallock Creek
45. Friends of Water Race & Quinn Reserve Inc
52. Millgrove Environment Restoration Group
75. Mount Evelyn Environment Protection & Progress Association (MEEPPA)
66. Upper Yarra River Reserves Committee of Management

Southern Dandenong Region
78. Belgrave South Community House Reserve
1. Belgrave South Community House Reserve Group (SDLG)
6. Friends of Baluk Willam Flora Reserve
7. Friends of Clematis Creek
12. Friends of Glen Harrow Heights Reserve
13. Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc
14. Friends of Hazelvale Valley
18. Friends of Karwarra Garden
19. Friends of Ken Leversha Reserve
24. Friends of Minak Reserve
25. Friends of Monbulk Creek - Belgrave Lake Group (SDLG)
26. Friends of Monbulk Creek - Colby Drive Reserve
27. Friends of Monbulk Creek - Colin Avenue
28. Friends of Monbulk Creek - German Gully Group (SDLG)
29. Friends of Monbulk Creek - Selby Conservation Reserve (SDLG)
30. Friends of Monbulk Creek Trestle Bridge Group (SDLG)
37. Friends of Selby Park
40. Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater
73. Friends of the Upwey/Tecoma Community Garden
81. Save the Dandenongs League - Kallista
58. Selby Wildlife and Environment Group
59. Southern Dandenongs Community Indigenous Plant Nursery Inc
61. Southern Ranges Environment Alliance (SREA)
Environmental volunteer groups in the Yarra Ranges

Southern Dandenong Region (cont)
See Map for Region:
Cardinia Hills Ragwort & Landcare Group
Johns Hill Landcare Group
Macclesfield Landcare Group
Monbulk Landcare Group
80. Roma Reserve Residents Advisory Committee
Southern Dandenong Landcare Group
The Patch Landcare Group

Central Dandenongs Region
2. Bungalook (Kilsyth) Creek Care
3. Bungalook (Montrose) Creek Care
5. Chandler Hill Parkcare Group
8. Friends of Dandenong Ranges National Park
10. Friends of Ferny Creek
15. Friends of Heathfield Creek Reserve
17. Friends of Kalorama Park
35. Friends of Richards Reserve
36. Friends of Sassafras Creek
38. Friends of Sherbrooke Forest Inc
39. Friends of Singleton Reserve
48. Holly Hill Community Fire Guard
79. Kalowerama Community Fireguard Group
53. Montrose Environmental Group Inc
77. Olinda Action Group Inc.
See Map for Region:
Olinda Creek Landcare Group
Thompsons Rd Area Community Fireguard and Landcare Group

Not on Map
Yarra Valley Equestrian Landcare Group
(landscape scale group)
Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Landcare Network YVDRLN (All landcare networks)
Northern Yarra Landcare Network NYLN (Northern Yarra Region)

For more information on joining a group, please call 1300 368 333 to speak to the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer.
Yarra Ranges Council has two departments that help environmental volunteer groups: the Environment Department and the Bushland Management Team.

The Environment Department is responsible for supporting environmental volunteers to achieve and protect the biodiversity values and ecological integrity of the region. The Bushland Management Team supports environmental volunteer groups with their on-ground works. This team looks after our Council-managed roadsides and reserves — the places where many of our groups work.

Council provides ongoing support for environmental volunteer groups. There is a limited budget which needs to be shared with more than 60 groups, so we need to be able to allocate appropriate funds.

Administrative assistance is available with mail-outs, flyers, distribution of newsletters. Loans of tools and other materials for working bees can be made, tea/coffee kits supplied — and much more. Each group is different and requires various resources.

**Remember:** No matter where you are working, whether it is on Council land, Parks Victoria, the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) or private property, you must get permission from the landholder before the works commence.

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**Environment Department**

The Environment Department aims to enthusiastically:

- support very active and important volunteers.
- raise community awareness of environmental values and encourage the sensitive appreciation and enjoyment of the natural environment.
- foster environmental stewardship and best ecological practice within both Council and the community.
- provide advice to environmental volunteer groups, Council departments, internal and external committees and agencies.
- provide regular updates, communicate important news and promote group successes and events.
- assist with equipment booking (e.g. marquees, tables and brochure stands).
- answer and field questions regarding group management (e.g. insurance and group governance).
- provide training for Occupational Health and Safety, first aid and other required safety training.
- organise newsletter updates, including information about external and internal grants available.
- assist Council’s Bushland Management Team and groups to develop Agreed Works Plans.

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The Environment Department & the Bushlands Management Team are to happy to help, please call the Environmental Volunteers Support Officer on 1300 368 333
Council support for environmental volunteer groups

Bushland Management Team
There are four Bushland Management Officers in the Bushland Management Team. Each manages its own region of the Council. They can:

- develop Agreed Work Plans with groups and contractors.
- provide technical guidance, advice and support to groups.
- provide tools and materials to be used out in the field.
- liaise with contractors to undertake ground works that are unsuitable for volunteers.

Agreed Works Plan
An **Agreed Works Plan** is designed to help you, Council and contractors plan and manage Council managed land together. It enables your group to identify any management goals, and plan any works or events that you want to run. It also enables Council to identify the risk level of the activities you intend to perform, and follow this up with alternative methods, training and Council support where required. It also assists us to identify groups’ needs.

An Agreed Works Plan is developed with the Bushland Management Team, so that projects can be documented and followed. This enables Council to identify any training or extra tools required and what funds might be allocated. Please see the Forms and checklists section for the Agreed Works Plan.

Once this has been organised, you can start planning your activities and work on minimising any associated risks to ensure group safety and success.

Working bees
If the group has good knowledge of the site and knows what kind of work is required, it can start holding working bees very quickly. If not contact the Environmental Volunteers Support Officer on 1300 368 333 and they can help determine when and how working bees could be organised.

The Environmental Volunteers Support Officer can also help you to define the boundaries of land, and offer tips on where to work, the history of the site, what kind of work the site needs and any tools or equipment your group might need.

Other contacts for environmental volunteer groups
Department of Planning and Community Development, Eastern Metropolitan Region - Indigenous Community Engagement Broker - (03) 9296 4614

Department of Sustainability and Environment 136 186

Parks Victoria Information Centre - 13 1963

Risk Management Team - 1300 368 333

Environmental Volunteer Support Officer, Yarra Ranges Council - 1300 368 333

Melbourne Water - 131 722

Department of Primary Industries - 136 186

Council insurance

Council offers insurance coverage to all our environmental volunteer groups who work on Council land. This covers members of groups on both Council-owned and private land while they are doing voluntary work as a member of the volunteer group.

Each policy feature is subject to limits and conditions, and there may be further exclusions relevant to groups. This information can be found in the policy booklet. If you require a copy, please contact the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer on 1300 368 333.

Your group and members have legal and moral responsibilities to ensure the safety of your group. Certain laws govern the responsibilities of committees, and you can be liable for damages if something goes wrong that is not covered by insurance.

The personal safety of every volunteer is a very high priority. When members of the group are volunteering on public land, they need to consider all other people. This includes people who may be indirectly involved, such as walkers, bike riders and other public space users.

The group must help its members to understand that site safety is the responsibility of each individual participant. It needs to provide clear information, instruction and supervision for its members. This includes making sure that:

- the worksite is as safe as possible and that any hazards are reported to the Site Coordinator.
- all tools and equipment are well maintained and in safe working order.
- all members adhere to the safety prompts in this guide.
- each working bee is overseen by a designated Safety Officer from the environmental volunteer group. Before each working bee, the Site Coordinator or Safety Officer must check that the site is safe and all tools are safe to use.
Section 3

Council insurance

Group coverage
It is recommended that you become covered by insurance to ensure your group is safe.

To get your group covered by insurance, all you need to do is send the details below to the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer. They will arrange to have you added to the list, which is held by the Council’s insurer. Once we have confirmed that you are covered, you will be sent a Certificate of Currency for your records.

What you will need to provide to the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer is:
• group name.
• contact name, phone number, postal and email address.
• number of members.
• activities undertaken by your group (working on private or public land).
• when your group was established.

What if an incident occurs?
Immediately attend to the person and call an Ambulance.

Everyone has a responsibility to take all reasonable precautions to prevent personal injury and property damage, but if something does happen that you think will or might result in a claim, please do the following:
• Contact Council, talk to the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer on 1300 368 333, as soon as you can.
• If possible, secure the site trying not to disturb any evidence or place others in harm’s way.
• Take photographs of the site.
• If possible draw a diagram of the site.
• Cooperate at all times with the insurer and provide access to inspect property.
• Do not admit liability or make any offer to pay for any damage or injury.
• Write down the circumstances of the incident while they are still fresh in your memory including things like the time of day and the weather conditions.
• Get the contact details of any witnesses.
Council insurance

Insurance policy summary
When insured as a group all activities are covered once registered as that group. This means that irrespective of where a group works (public or private) land they will be covered under the group’s name.

Personal accident cover
Cover provided by: Chubb Insurance Company of Australia
Policy limit: $1 Million
Name of policy: Group personal injury (voluntary workers)
Who is covered? ‘Friends of’ groups, Township groups & Landcare groups

What is covered?
This policy covers members for losses resulting from an accident that occurs while you are performing voluntary work. The policy provides:
• lump sum payments for accidental death permanent disablement (refer to policy)
• payments to cover loss of income if you are unable to do your regular job due to the injury

What is NOT covered?
As with all insurance policies, there are exclusions and limitations to this policy. The main ones relevant to the groups are:
• people who are over 90 years of age (loss of income only to 65 years of age).
• people who are under 12 years of age
• non Medicare expenses
• any medical condition that has required treatment in the 6 months before the commencement of this policy
• claims as a result of being under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs (including prescription drugs).
Section 3

Council insurance

Public liability
Cover provided by: SRS Underwriting Agency
Policy limit: $10 Million
Policy excess: $1000
Name of policy: Various Friends groups. Public and product liability.
Who is covered? ‘Friends of’ groups, Township groups and Landcare groups

What is covered?
This legal liability insurance policy covers you for loss or damage to another person’s property or injury to another person that has occurred as a result of your actions.

If a claim is made against the group, this policy will:
• cover investigation, negotiation and settlement of any claim or legal action made against the group or a member of the group
• reimburse expenses incurred by you as a result of the claim against you (other than loss of earnings)
• pay all legal costs.
• A separate policy provides legal liability cover for stall holders (contact the Risk Management Team to discuss on 1300 368 333

What is NOT covered?
As with all insurance policies, there are exclusions and limitations to this policy. The main ones relevant to the groups are:
• liability involving a vehicle that is required by law to be registered
• property damage arising from the loading or unloading of any vehicle, or from any vehicle being used as a tool (e.g. injury or damage caused while using a car to assist in removing a tree) pollution (e.g. contamination of land or a water course)
• liability where the person responsible is employed by the organisation
• damage to property or injuries arising from participation in a game, match, race or sporting activity
• damage to property or injuries resulting from children’s rides, animal rides and inflatable recreational equipment.

Insurance is available for stall holders and markets etc, organised by the groups. Please contact the Risk Management Team to discuss on 1300 368 333
Section 3

Council insurance
Good practice for volunteer groups and participation

Governance and committees
Good group governance is essential to make sure volunteers remain safe. Whether your group is incorporated or not, it is important to ensure you have appointed some form of committee that is able to make strategic decisions about the group’s direction and goals, and deal with any issues that arise on behalf of all the members.

Providing vision and leadership
As a committee, you need to be able to provide a vision that sets up your group’s purpose and goals.

This will be the basis for all future activities, and will also be needed when dealing with any disagreements about the group’s direction and activities. In some cases you may need to legally prove that certain actions lie within your stated vision.

Accountability
As a committee, you are accountable for all activities of the group, including finances.

As part of remaining accountable, it’s important that you keep good records, including copies of all your forms, transactions and other information so that if an incident occurs or questions are raised, you are covered and have the documentation to support you and your group.

Legal responsibilities
Several legal obligations affect environmental volunteer groups working on public land (Council land). These responsibilities include:

- lawful and responsible governance
- member safety
- safe storage of dangerous goods and machinery
- a zero tolerance policy to discrimination and sexual harassment.
Section 4

Good practice for volunteer groups and participation

Group structure
Some groups have a very basic structure while others are more complex. A committee is a good way to structure a group. The best way to appoint a committee is to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in which volunteers can be elected for positions. Although a committee is not required it is seen as a good practice. If this sounds overwhelming be assured that all groups begin this way and Council are here to help. For assistance please contact the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer on 1300 368 333.

Positions may include:

The President is ultimately responsible for overseeing and ensuring the smooth operation of the group. The president is usually the person who:
- is the spokesperson and contact person for the group.
- provides leadership.
- oversees the day-to-day running of the group.
- ensures that the group members are aware of OH&S and other safety requirements.

The Chairperson is responsible for managing the smooth running of committee meetings. The President can also act as Chairperson.

The Secretary deals with many things and acts as a support to the President. The Secretary:
- deals with correspondence.
- takes and distributes meeting agendas and minutes.
- books facilities such as meeting rooms if required.
- assists the President in the smooth running of the group.

The Treasurer is responsible for all financial activities and maintains all financial records and bank accounts.

Group incorporation
Incorporation is a form of registration that gives an association or community group certain legal advantages in return for accepting certain legal responsibilities. Incorporation of an association means that the group becomes a legal entity in its own right, separate from the individual members.

Incorporation is something that can be considered once a group has become well established.

Benefits of becoming incorporated are to:
- create a legal entity separate from the individual members and provides a level of legal protection.
- continue to exist regardless of changes in membership.
- enter into enforceable contracts including buying and selling property.
- attract funding more easily.
- apply for status as a charity or formally register as an environmental organisation.

It is recommended that groups operate with some level of protection and it is recommended that your group operates under another organisations incorporation such as the Farm-tree and Landcare Association (FTLA) or local network.

Advantages to this include the same protections, less paperwork and other member benefits.

For information on a local network contact the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer on 1300 368 333
Volunteer groups need to be incorporated if the group:
• wishes to receive funds from a government body or other funds that requires incorporation.
• does activities that involve any real risk of personal injury or any other claim for damages
• wishes to hold property.
• proposes to enter important contracts.
• is prepared to satisfy the continuing reporting and procedural requirements of an Incorporated Association. There is a requirement to lodge an annual return.

It is important to note that usually for a group to be eligible to receive grants, it must be incorporated or be able to make arrangements with another incorporated association to auspice their application.

When a group has incorporated status this protects the personal assets of the committee members in the event an incorporated volunteer group is sued. The incorporated group can only be sued for the value of the incorporated body’s assets (e.g. property, cash in bank, tools, equipment and other assets).

However, having said this if an accident does occur as a result of an authorised volunteer activity, the legal liability would generally be the responsibly of the higher authority, which is usually the land manager i.e. Yarra Ranges Council for groups that are working on Council land.
Good practice for volunteer groups and participation

Safety

Environmental volunteers put in enormous efforts each year to improve our environment, campaign for change and protect our precious natural resources. It is important that all volunteers are safe and protected, and are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Common sense plays a big part in safety, but it isn’t always enough. Volunteers have a responsibility to take care of their own and others’ safety, and are recommended to:

• disclose any pre-existing injury or medical condition, which may be aggravated by participation in any activities, to a responsible committee member.
• wear recommended protective equipment for activities.
• participate in a site assessment and report any hazards or injuries to the Safety Officer.
• listen to and follow directions from the Site Coordinator, Safety Officer, First Aid person or any committee member when on site.
• raise any concerns or issues to a responsible committee member as soon as possible.
• provide training and demonstrating the importance of safety.

Underage volunteers

A responsible adult must always be present to accompany volunteers who are minors (under 12 years old). While we wish to encourage volunteers of all ages to participate in our community and environment, it is important to note that volunteers who are minors (under 12 years old) are not covered by Council insurance. If an incident occurs that is caused by the child, the responsible adult may be expected to cover all damages. A guardian must always be present and responsible for a child.

If a group plans to work closely with children and schools on a regular basis, it is recommended that members get a Working with Children Check. For more information go to: http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren/

Grievances

All volunteers have the right to raise any dissatisfaction, complaint or other grievance with the committee. If adequate action is not taken, volunteers have the right to seek legal advice and action if deemed necessary. Contact Council for advice or for appropriate referral bodies or see Legal responsibilities for further information.

Good practice for volunteer participation

Environmental volunteers are not Council volunteers, but are rather volunteers supported by Council. Council provides the following suggestions on good practice for groups.

It is recommended that participants sign Volunteer Participation Agreements before performing any work (see the section Forms and checklists). The agreement covers the responsibilities of a volunteer, and is guided by legislation put in place to protect volunteers when working with an environmental volunteer group.

Volunteer rights

For information about volunteer rights, please see www.volunteeringaustralia.org.
It is important to ensure that volunteers read each point carefully. For more information request a copy of the related policies, and speak to a committee member or the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer about questions or concerns you may have. For related policies on Occupational Health and Safety and Sexual Harassment and Discrimination, see the section Legal responsibilities.

New volunteers
When new volunteers join your group, it is recommended that you:
• ask the new volunteer to fill out the member signup and volunteer emergency details forms.
• check that they have been taken through the volunteer registration form, and are familiar with all relevant information required.
• demonstrate how to do the job safely and monitor.

Before the working day starts
Before the working day starts, it is recommended that you check that information has been provided to your group regarding:
• site location
• activities planned for the day
• contact details of the Site Coordinator
• appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) required for the activities
• any other requirements (e.g. drink bottle and lunch).

You should also ensure that the weather is suitable for the planned activity and that you have a member of the group designated as the Safety Officer, and a member of the group designated as the First Aid person, attending the event.
Good practice for volunteer groups and participation

At the worksite
At each group event it is recommended that there be a designated volunteer who acts as the Safety Officer and is responsible for addressing, communicating and managing any potential hazards identified by the group. The Safety Officer:

• ensures that all participants have been introduced to key personnel for the day (e.g. Site Coordinator, Safety Officer, First Aid person).
• demonstrate how to do the job safely and monitor.
• explains details of the day’s tasks.
• conducts a tour of the site identifying key areas (e.g. emergency evacuation points, first aid equipment, amenities).
• ensures everyone knows the exact location (melways reference) with the nearest cross street or safety marker if you have one.
• identifies any risks and checks that all volunteers are aware of them.
• manages these risks effectively.
• ensures personal protective equipment is being worn correctly when required. Ensures all volunteers have read and understood the Code of Conduct and signed in on the Volunteer Registration Form.
• checks that volunteers are aware of emergency planning procedures (e.g. how to get out if required).
• ensures that volunteers do not work in isolation
• checks that there is a first aid kit on site, and that it is properly stocked.
• makes sure that toilets and hygiene materials (e.g. soap, access to hand washing area, toilet paper) are stocked, if needed.

The Safety Officer role does not always need to be filled by the same person. Several group members should be aware of the requirements and be competent in filling the Safety Officer role if required.

Communications
Whenever you are onsite, the emergency contact list for all participants should be filled out.
You should ensure you have access to a phone or mobile communications. All group members should know who has a mobile with them and if it is in range. The closest landline should also be identified. All group members should know their location in case of emergency.

At the end of the day
• Report any accidents, incidents or near misses to the Risk Management Team.
• Record your achievements for the day (e.g. number trees planted) and maintain this information as part of your group records. This information may be useful for your group for future projects, monitoring and funding opportunities.

OH&S training for environmental volunteer groups in the Yarra Ranges can be provided to volunteers. Please see the community training calendar for upcoming training or call the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer on 1300 368 333
Legal responsibilities
Several legal obligations affect environmental volunteer groups working on public land (Council land). For volunteers and the committees of environmental volunteer groups, the relevant Victorian Acts are:

- The Associations Incorporation Act 1981.

The Associations Incorporation Act 1981 identifies the responsibilities and requirements of the committee of any incorporated association. Even non-incorporated groups can follow these guides to ensure sound, successful governance. The Act mostly addresses the responsibilities of the managing committee. It requires:

- all members in the committee to take care and be diligent when making decisions, in the best interests of the association and its vision, and not to act for self-interest.
- all members in the group to work within a purpose which guides actions and decisions with good faith and proper purpose.
- avoidance of trading while insolvent.
- the committee to give adequate information to members on their rights and other documentation, and a grievance procedure to address complaints.
- the committee to maintain a register of members for the association.

The Dangerous Goods Act 1985 governs the use and storage of chemicals by groups. Under this Act you are required to ensure:

- that storage areas are safely designed.
- that equipment is properly maintained and operates safely.
- that appropriate personal protective equipment is provided.
- that there are no ignition sources in hazardous areas.
- that safety instructions to visitors are provided.
- that personnel are equipped in the handling of chemicals and dangerous substances.

Note: If your group needs to use chemicals, please contact the Bushland Management Team (1300 368 333) and they will help you select the right chemicals and storage.

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 addresses discrimination and sexual harassment within volunteer groups. Volunteers now have rights and responsibilities under this Act. This Act includes:

- that all group members understand actions which constitute sexual harassment.
- that sexual harassment in any form is not tolerated.
- that all volunteers understand how to report incidents of sexual harassment.
- that all volunteers understand that appropriate legal action will follow any incidents.

Useful websites
Updates to legislation can be found on the following websites:
Volunteering Victoria: www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au
Pilch Connect: www.pilch.org.au
A user-friendly one-stop shop for government regulations is at www.nfpcompliance.vic.gov.au
Responsibilities of an environmental volunteer group

Sexual harassment and the law
Changes to the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 mean that sexual harassment law now applies to volunteers (previously only employees were open to legal action).

All groups now have a legal responsibility to inform their volunteers that sexual harassment is never acceptable, in any form. If you turn a blind eye, and sexual harassment does occur within your group, your organisation and the people in it may be liable.

Every volunteer, staff member and supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that sexual harassment does not occur. Anyone found to have sexually harassed another person will be subject to disciplinary action that may include an apology, counselling, transfer of duties and/or dismissal.

This information has been adopted from Volunteering Victoria’s ‘Volunteers and the Equal Opportunity Act, 2010 Information Pack’. To access this document visit www.volunteeringvictoria.com.au

What is sexual harassment?
Sexual harassment can take various forms. It can involve conduct such as:
• unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing.
• staring or leering.
• suggestive comments or jokes.
• sexually explicit pictures, screen savers or posters.
• unwanted invitations to go out on dates or requests for sex.
• intrusive questions about a person’s private life or body.
• unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against someone.
• insults or taunts of a sexual nature.
• sexually explicit emails or SMS messages.
• accessing sexually explicit internet sites.
• inappropriate advances on social networking sites.
• behaviour which would also be an offence under the criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

Sexual harassment is judged not by what was intended but by how it was received.

What to do if sexual harassment occurs?

Making a complaint
If you are a volunteer or paid staff member who believes they have been harassed, you should:

• make a note of the date, time and location of the incident/s.
• if you are comfortable doing so, tell the alleged harasser that the behaviour is offensive, unwelcome, against the organisation’s policy and should stop.
• if not comfortable confronting the alleged harasser or if unwelcome behaviour continues, report it to a responsible member of the committee (It is a good idea for the committee to nominate a committee member who can deal with any such complaints).
• if this is inappropriate, speak to another senior member of the group or contact the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer (1300 368 333), who will refer you to the appropriate person.
Responsibilities of an environmental volunteer group

The person dealing with the complaint (the Investigating Officer) will follow the procedures set out below. At any time you may discontinue this process.

Complaints process
When a complaint is received, the Investigating Officer will:
• obtain and record a full, step-by-step account of the incident/s.
• ensure the organisation’s process for handling the complaint is understood.
• ascertain your preferred outcome (e.g. an apology, the behaviour to cease, a change in working arrangements).
• agree on the next step: informal resolution or formal investigation.
• keep a confidential record of all details of this discussion and subsequent steps in the process.

You may also choose to take your complaint to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (HRC).

Key resources

The HRC will discuss the proposed outcomes with you to ensure that your needs have, as far as possible, been met by the process.

Formal investigation
The HRC will:
• work to afford natural justice to all involved.
• interview all directly concerned, separately.
• interview witnesses, separately.
• keep records of the interviews and investigation.
• ensure confidentiality and minimise disclosure.
• make a determination as to whether there is sufficient evidence that a reasonable person could conclude, on the balance of probabilities (i.e. it’s more likely than not), that an incident of sexual harassment as defined by the legislation has occurred.
• in such a case, determine appropriate action, which may include a change of duties for the harasser, change to working arrangements or, where the incidents were frequent and/or severe, dismissal.
• where it cannot be determined by the required test that an incident of sexual harassment as defined by the legislation has occurred, may still take action to ensure the proper functioning of the workplace; but these actions should not prejudice any party. They will also continue to closely monitor the situation and provide retraining where required.
• check to ensure the action meets the needs of the complainant and organisation.

Responsibilities of an environmental volunteer group

What is Occupational Health and Safety?
Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) addresses the safety concerns of all aspects of an individual, including their mental, social and physical health.

The purpose of the OH&S guidelines is to allow the group’s committee to identify and address any potential health risks to volunteers and the broader community, and allows any participants to raise any issues or concerns with the knowledge that they will be fully dealt with.

Hazards and risk
When we talk of OH&S, we often talk about hazards and risk, but what are they?

- A **hazard** is a source which has the potential to cause injury or illness to someone, or that may damage equipment, property or the environment.
- A **risk** is a measure of the likelihood that exposure to a hazard will result in illness, injury, property or environmental damage.

For example, when using a hand mower, the hazard is the mower and the risk is considered to be medium.

Measuring risk
We measure risk to be low, medium or high. The level of risk can determine whether or not your group can perform that activity without further training or additional control measures put in place.

- **Low- and medium-risk works** are permitted for volunteer groups on Council land; Safe Working Procedures (SWPs) are available for each activity.
- **High-risk works** cannot be performed by your group without first being included in your Agreed Works Plan. If you think your group needs to perform high-risk works, contact the Bushland Management Team to find an agreed solution.

To find out which works are High, Medium and Low, and for SWP guidelines for each activity see **Safe Work Practices and Procedures**.
Responsibilities of an environmental volunteer group

Safety: whose responsibility is it?
As a volunteer group, it is of utmost importance that you and your members remain safe at all times. **Safety is the responsibility of everyone — each individual has to ensure that the work place is as safe as possible.**

It is the responsibility of the committee to ensure that:

- everyone is aware of the risks associated with any works that volunteers intend to perform by first referring to the SWPs.
- members understand that workplace safety is the responsibility of each individual participant.
- committee members provide clear information, instruction and supervision for your members to ensure safe operations.
- environmental volunteers undertake relevant training where required.
- the worksite is as safe as possible and that any hazards are reported to the relevant group member (Safety Officer).
- all tools and equipment are well maintained and in safe working order.

Personal protective equipment
Personal protective equipment (PPE) is required during working activities. General PPE includes:

- sturdy footwear (steel capped boots).
- gloves.
- long sleeved tops and long pants (to protect from sunlight, bites and scratches).
- hat and sunscreen.
- insect repellent.
- high visibility vest.
- protective eyewear such as sunglasses or safety glasses.

Other tasks may require more specialised equipment, so always check the SWPs for each task prior to the day of activity.

Council can provide groups and volunteers with PPE such as gloves and sunscreen, and can also loan out relevant equipment to groups.


First aid
Council can provide committee members with Level Two First Aid training. At least one member of each volunteer group must be trained to ensure that, in the case of an incident, a certified First Aid person is present.

Council will provide first aid training on an annual basis to environmental volunteers.

The First Aid person is also responsible for maintaining the contents of the group’s first aid kit, by regularly checking the use-by-dates of all products and making sure any damaged or used items are replaced before the next event or activity.

Every group should have an up-to-date first aid kit on the day of each working bee. This must be taken to every working bee and be put in an obvious and accessible location so that all volunteers can gain immediate access. It should contain emergency contact numbers and details of the closest hospital.

Council can provide first aid kits and supplies; contact the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer to arrange this.
Responsibilities of an environmental volunteer group

Injury
It is essential that groups working on Council land report any accident, incident, property damage or near miss that occurs to the Risk Management Team using a Volunteer Incident Report Form. (This is available in Word or as a PDF. See the Forms and checklists. Your group will be asked to keep a copy on file and the Risk Management Team will also keep a copy.

The purpose of the form is to protect the group and the affected person or property, as well as to assist when reconciling any claims later on. Even minor incidents should be reported, as further medical attention may be required later.

Report any near miss or potential incident to your Safety Officer and group to ensure your safety and the safety of others for any future works.

Contact the Environmental Volunteer Support Officer on 1300 368 333
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Safe work practices include taking general safety precautions as well as following recommended Safe Work Procedures (SWPs). SWPs are guides for volunteers. They set out the best and safest practices in a range of activities, with varying levels of risk.

Each SWP describes the task, the risks, any protective equipment, risk management strategies, and where to pay special attention.

For safe volunteering:
- follow the SWPs that are relevant to your activities.
- wear the recommended gear.
- follow the recommended practices.
- notify your group about risks and how they are to be managed.
- stay alert to changes as the work proceeds (task, environment, and group).

Degrees of risk
Activities may be low, medium or high risk.
- Low and medium risk: groups need to follow the procedures.
- High risk: these activities are restricted. They can’t be undertaken unless they are in the Agreed Works Plan.

Extra care
Some situations that are not particularly risky require extra care in some circumstances (e.g. when a volunteer has a hearing impairment). SWPs include these details as well.

Calling an ambulance
Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Safe Work Practices
Safe work practices include taking general safety precautions as well as following recommended Safe Work Procedures (SWPs). General safety includes being rested, with a level of health and fitness suitable for the task, having the experience and skill necessary to do the work, and staying alert to changes as the work proceeds (e.g. changes in the difficulty or danger of the task, changes in the environment, and changes in the group, such as people getting tired and inattentive or short-tempered.)

What are Safe Work Procedures?
SWPs are guides designed to ensure volunteers are using the best and safest practices for the activities they are undertaking.

SWPs include a description of the task, its potential risks, the personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn, desirable risk management strategies, and any areas in which extra care should be taken.

To be safe when volunteering, refer to and follow the relevant SWP for your activities.

Using SWPs to manage risk
Site Coordinators need to identify any hazards that volunteers might need to deal with. Make sure members of your group follow SWP guidelines, including wearing recommended PPE.

In addition, always:
• consider other potential safety issues
• notify all participants of any risks and the management practices in place.

Low-risk activities
Low-risk activities may be performed by groups, so long as the relevant SWPs are followed.

Examples include:
• working in public spaces.
• working on rough terrain.
• working in hot conditions.
• working in cold conditions.
• general activities.
• manual handling.
• using small tools.
• working near water.

Potential hazards for these activities include:
• injuries.
• bites, stings and threats from wildlife.

For training opportunities please see Council’s Community Training Calendar http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Things_To_Do/Learn_in_Yarra_Ranges/Community_Training_Calendar.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Medium-risk activities
Medium-risk activities may be performed by groups, so long as the relevant SWPs are followed. Examples include:

- using power tools and hand mowers.
- working with chemicals and herbicides (using dabber bottles).
- using a brush cutter with cord pre-start.

High-risk activities
These activities must not be performed unless they have been deemed essential by the Bushland Management Team and are included in your group’s Agreed Works Plan. SWPs for these activities are not included here because they need to be dealt with on an individual basis.

Examples of high-risk activities include using:
- chippers.
- chainsaws.
- ride-on mowers.
- brush cutters with blades.
- augers.
- petrol-powered generators.
- machinery.
- working on roadsides near machinery, or on roadsides requiring traffic management.

All SWPs have been adopted from the Conservation Volunteers in Safe Hands.

Ensure everyone has the exact location when calling 000, including the nearest cross street or safety marker if working on a walking track.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Working in public spaces (low risk)
When working in public spaces, volunteers should always be aware of their surroundings. Other people are likely to be around. Let them know works are occurring in that space, and keep their safety in mind.

Potential hazards
- Injury to others using public spaces
- Distraction and subsequent injury
- Property damage by volunteers
- Threats to personal safety
- Theft of belongings
- Potential contact with contaminants such as sharps or toxins
- Abuse from members of the public

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes high visibility safety vests.
- Wear weather and work appropriate clothing, including sturdy shoes, long pants, a hat and sunscreen in hot weather. Warm and waterproof clothing and warm layers (hat, scarf, gloves) in cold weather.

Risk management
Always:
- Assess the designated work area for hazards and risks.
- Use signage when working in a public area to notify general public that works are occurring (e.g. ‘Work in progress’ signs).
- Block off an area using road cones or tape to exclude members of the public from a designated work area.
- When operating machinery (e.g. mower) always ensure a second person is present to watch out for and warn the general public.
- Remain vigilant and aware at all times.
- Keep belongings in a safe place at all times (e.g. in the boot of a locked vehicle).

Extra care
Consider risks to hearing-impaired volunteers.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Working on rough terrain (low risk)
Be careful when working in areas of steep or slippery ground with trip hazards (e.g. steep ground, loose stones, fallen branches, protruding roots, wet slippery surfaces).

Potential hazards
• twisted ankle or knee.
• sprains and strains.
• broken limbs.
• impact injuries (hands, knees, back, head).

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes Sturdy footwear/ appropriate footwear

Risk management
• Identify any danger zones and notify all participants of the associated hazards.
• Clear paths and remove hazards where possible (e.g. fill in holes, move branches,).
• Cordon off or flag immovable hazards.
• Do not carry awkward or heavy objects while navigating rough terrain.
• Do not run, jump or climb for access to work areas.

Extra care
Anyone with pre-existing back, knee, hip or ankle injuries, or physical impairments that are likely to impact on or increase risk of slip, trip or fall should be delegated alternative duties.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Section 5

Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Working in hot conditions (low risk)
Exposure to heat can have serious effects on the health of volunteers. Care needs to be taken to ensure volunteers are not put at risk. Holding events in severely hot weather conditions (e.g. over 35°C) should be avoided.

Potential hazards
• dehydration or heat stroke.
• headaches and cramps.
• heat exhaustion.
• sun burn, and longer-term, skin cancer.
• injuries or damage as a result of fatigue.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes:
• safety glasses.
• light weight clothing (long pants and sleeves).
• broad hat .
• SPF 30+ sunscreen.
• water.

Risk management
• Ensure volunteers have adequate access to water to maintain hydration.
• Work in shaded areas as much as possible.
• Have regular breaks.
• Ensure all participants are adequately protected from the sun/heat by wearing PPE.
• Avoid hottest parts of the day by working in early morning or late afternoon.
• Be extremely cautious when there are weather warnings and high fire danger ratings.
• If the temperature is over 35°C or humidity levels reach 80% consider cancelling the event and rescheduling.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.

Extra care
Never hold an event on a total fire ban day (35°C) or under any other extreme weather conditions.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Working in cold conditions (low risk)
Exposure to cold can have serious effects on the health of volunteers. Care needs to be taken to ensure volunteers are not put at risk. Special caution should be taken in wet, icy conditions.

Potential hazards
• hypothermia.
• loss of dexterity and fine motor control and subsequent injuries due to reduced tool handling ability.
• colds and flu or other sickness.
• dehydration (due to wearing heavy clothing which causes sweating).
• increased risk of slipping.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
• warm weatherproof clothing (waterproof if raining).
• wear layers to allow temperature adjustment.
• warm hat/scarf/gloves.

Risk management
• Warm up before activity.
• Ensure plenty of food and drink are available (include warm options like tea and coffee if possible).
• Work in sheltered areas where possible, and ensure cover is available when taking breaks.
• Avoid working in extreme weather conditions.

Extra care
Never hold an event on a day that is stormy or below 5°C, or under any other extreme weather conditions.

Ensure everyone has the exact location when calling 000, including the nearest cross street or safety marker if working on a walking track.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Section 5

Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Injuries (low risk)
Working in the field can result in a range of mild to more serious injuries that need to be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Potential hazards
- minor injuries: scratches, bruises, small cuts
- serious injuries: sprains, breaks, head injuries, eye injuries, severe cuts.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
- sturdy boots.
- gloves.
- mask.
- eye protection.
- long pants and sleeves.

Risk management
- Ensure that works are only done when a certified First Aid person is present on site.
- Always have a fully stocked first aid kit on site, and ensure all volunteers are aware of its location.
- Always have access to a working phone or alternative mobile communication when in the field in case of an emergency.
- Ensure that all volunteers know the work location to communicate to emergency services if necessary.
- Always keep records of emergency information for volunteers handy.

If an incident occurs
- Remain calm.
- Call for the First Aid person and administer first aid if required.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.

Extra care
Ensure you are aware of any allergies or existing medical conditions of your volunteers before administering first aid.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Bites, stings and threats from wildlife (low risk)
When working out in the field it's important to be aware of insects and other wildlife that may have potential to cause harm to volunteers.

Potential hazards
• insect bites and stings.
• spider or snake bites.
• injury from wildlife in distress.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
• sturdy boots and thick socks.
• gaiters if possible (particularly near snake habitat).
• gloves.
• long pants and sleeves.
• insect repellent.

Risk management
• Identify and avoid risky areas (e.g. ants’ nests, wasp or bee hives).
• Check local advice on snake presence. If present, don’t work at site in high-risk periods (spring to autumn).
• Walk heavily and work/walk along a single line through snake habitat (prevents snake from being trapped).
• Avoid lifting objects which may conceal a snake. If required use an aid (e.g. crowbar).
• If you see a snake, avoid the area and notify all participants as well as the Bushland Management Team (1300 368 333).
• If an injured animal is found on site, don’t handle it. Call Wildlife Rescue in your local area.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.

Extra care
Any participants with known allergies should not be given tasks that have a risk of contact with allergens.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

General activities: litter collection, mulching, weeding, planting (low risk)
All tasks involve some level of risk, but being aware can greatly reduce the chance of incident.

Potential hazards
- manual handling.
- general injuries.
- pathogens from infected soils.
- disease (e.g. needle stick injuries —hepatitis A & B, tetanus).
- bites, stings and threats from wildlife.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
- appropriate clothing and footwear.
- gloves and safety glasses.
- high visibility vest.
- hepatitis A and B and tetanus vaccination (recommended).

Risk management
- Demonstrate proper manual handling techniques (safely lifting objects, working with awareness of others, staying with the group).
- Rotate tasks between personnel to avoid repetitive strain injuries.
- Be aware of all potential risks (e.g. handling soil with glass, falling branches).
- Allow plenty of breaks and encourage regular stretching.
- Ensure hand washing facilities are available (especially if handling rubbish, soil, chemicals, etc.).
- Be aware of sharps and syringes and dispose of safely and correctly (into a ‘sharps’ container provided).

Ensure everyone has the exact location when calling 000, including the nearest cross street or safety marker if working on a walking track.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Manual handling (low risk)
Manual handling describes activities that require the exertion of force by the participant upon an object, whether it be pushing, pulling, lifting, or dragging.

Potential hazards
• injuries due to overexertion, such as strains, muscle ache or other discomfort, especially in back, neck, torso and shoulders.
• hernia.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
• gloves.
• sturdy footwear.
• safety glasses.
• long pants and sleeves.

Risk management
• Warm up and stretch before starting and repeat regularly throughout the day.
• Lifting aids should be used if possible.
• Ensure no one lifts beyond their limits, and do a team lift where possible.
• Sufficient space should be available to achieve the correct lifting techniques.
• Plan the path before making the move.
• Ensure there are no obstructions or other risks when moving the load.
• Demonstrate proper lifting techniques (the load should be as close to the body as possible, the back should not be twisted, avoid carrying with one hand, always bend from knees, lift slowly and smoothly).
• Rotate tasks between participants.
• Grip object securely — use the whole hand, not just fingers.
• Heavy items should not be lifted alone — work in pairs/group (use lifting aids).

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Section 5

Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Using small tools (low risk)
A range of small tools may be used by volunteers out in the field, each with their own associated risks and safety precautions.

Potential hazards
- injuries to self, other volunteers or property due to tool misuse.
- overexertion and strain injuries.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
- gloves.
- sturdy footwear.
- safety glasses.
- long pants and sleeves.

Risk management
- Check that all equipment is in safe, working order.
- Ensure space around the operator is clear.
- Be aware of all other workers/public space users in you vicinity.
- Always ensure the right tool is used for the job.
- Ensure correct, tight grip on object and wear gloves if necessary.
- Only use tools when in a stable, comfortable position.
- Rotate tasks between volunteers.
- After use, tools should be cleaned as required.
- All tools should be stored in a safe, lockable place when not in use.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Section 5

Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Working near water (low risk)
Working alongside or in water bodies can pose serious risks to volunteers and therefore due care should be taken at all times.

Potential hazards
• drowning.
• threatening organisms (snakes, mosquitoes, water-borne disease, etc.).
• exposure to cold.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
• sturdy footwear.
• waders.
• warm, waterproof clothing.
• spare dry clothes, socks.

Risk management
• Identify dangerous areas (assess things like depth, current, murkiness, turbulence, difficulty to escape, underwater snags, etc.)
• Ensure all volunteers are aware of and remain a safe distance from all identified danger areas.
• Ensure that all volunteers work with a partner.
• Avoid working on unstable, slippery or steep banks.
• Flag or fence off any high-risk areas.
• Provide washing facilities.

Ensure everyone has the exact location when calling 000, including the nearest cross street or safety marker if working on a walking track

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.

Extra care
• Non-swimmers should be kept well away from high-risk water bodies. Select tasks for non-swimmers that ensure they are not put at greater risk.
• See http://waterwatch.melbournewater.com/content/safety/safety.asp for more information.
Section 5

Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Tools used in the field (medium risk)
Below are some examples with basic precautions that should be considered when using small tools in the field.

Ensure that all tools are used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

Chisel
- Blades can be extremely sharp. Be careful when using, and always work away from the body.
- Be careful when carrying. Point the blade away from the body.

Cordless drill
- Be aware of what you are drilling into, check for wires, nails etc.
- Wear dust mask if necessary.
- Always wear eye protection (goggles).
- Never point a drill towards another person or yourself.
- Don’t force the drill. Let it do the work.
- If in doubt, ask for assistance.

Hammer
- Ensure fingers don’t get in the way.
- Don’t rush. Take your time.
- Only use a hammer when appropriate (would a mallet be more suited to this task?).
- Your thumb should be extended along hilt of the hammer for accurate direction.

Hand mattock
- Watch out for feet and other body parts.
- Don’t throw when swinging. Ensure your grip is tight and secure.
- Ensure working space is clear of objects and other people.
- Never leave a mattock lying on the ground (if someone stands on it, it can fly up and hit them in the face).
- Secure the object being cut, and cut it at an appropriate height (hip level: torso, mid-range).

Handsaw or bow saw
- Beware of the sharp blade. Ensure fingers, limbs, and clothing are well out of the way.
- Before use, ensure the blade teeth are sharp to avoid excessive strain.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Knife
• Be careful when using a knife and ensure all body parts stay out of the way.
• Transport the knife in a case.
• Keep a safe distance away from others. Never point a knife at another person.
• Always point the blade towards the ground and away from body.

Loppers
• Always carry by the handles, with blades facing the ground.
• Do not overreach while using.
• Be extra careful if climbing while carrying loppers.

Mash hammer
• Ensure working space is clear of objects and people.
• Watch out for fingers.
• Maintain a firm grip when using.

Rake
• Always be aware of those around you and ensure you don’t accidentally hit them with the end of the rake.

Secateurs
• Always carry by the handle, with blades facing the ground.
• Be cautious of blades. Don’t run fingers along the edges.
• Keep fingers clear when cutting materials.
• Ensure safety lock is fastened when not in use.

Shovel
• Always be aware of the blade. Make sure your digging technique does not put others at risk.
• Manual handling risk: use the right size of shovel.

Wheelbarrow
• Don’t overload barrow, and evenly distribute the weight in the barrow.
• Never allow someone to walk alongside the barrow (in case of tipping).
• Wheel the barrow on a safe, clear path.

Hamilton planter
• Manual Handling risk: holding the handgrips, putting weight onto the footstep until the desired depth is reached is the best approach.
• Jumping up onto the footsteps and thrusting your weight down is a good method but beware of balance.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Using power tools and hand mowers (medium risk)
While many power tools are high risk and therefore not to be used on site, some fall into the medium-risk category and can be used, as long as they are used safely and responsibly.

Ensure that all tools are used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

Potential hazards
• electrocution and burns.
• hand, foot, limb injuries.
• overexertion and strain injuries.
• eye injuries (from flying materials).
• ear damage or headaches (from loud, excessive noise).
• dust inhalation.
• manual handling strain.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
• high visibility clothing.
• gloves.
• sturdy footwear.
• safety glasses.
• long pants and sleeves.
• hearing protection.
• face protection (wear a mask if necessary).

Risk management
Warm up and stretch before starting work.
Assess site before starting work.
Place ‘Work in progress’ signage appropriately before beginning work.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Chemicals and herbicides (medium risk)
Several different techniques are used with herbicides. Most are medium risk — but spraying is high risk (see below).

Potential hazards
• poisoning.
• skin or eye irritation or burning.
• respiratory impairment or damage.
• risk of fire explosion.

Personal protective equipment
This generally includes
• long-sleeved shirt and long pants.
• sun hat and sunscreen.
• safety boots.
• safety glasses.
• PVC gloves.

Risk management
• Consider the location and sensitivity of any flora and fauna.
• If the weather is going to be wet, do not carry out any herbicide use.
• Check all relevant equipment to ensure everything is in working order before use.
• Ensure appropriate PPE and other equipment is used and available.
• Ensure use of chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.
• Warning: Pregnant women should be aware around chemicals and herbicides.

Herbicide selection
• Important: only use herbicide authorised by Council (usually Glyphosate).
• Herbicide must only be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and for its registered purpose.

Application method
• Follow the directions on the label.
• Also refer to Dabber bottles — Instructions for Use (see next page).
• Add a drop or two of herbicide dye if you have it available (this enables you see where you have applied the solution and also lets others know that herbicide has been applied.
• Choose a day when the plant is growing actively (warm, not hot, not drought stressed or no rain)

Training and qualifications
• All volunteers using herbicide must have good plant identification skills or work alongside another volunteer that does.
• Appropriately qualified contractors holding an Agricultural Chemical Users Permit (ACUP) or equivalent are to be used for large scale or sensitive herbicide applications. Volunteers that hold an ACUP can use registered herbicides in none sensitive areas.

Operation
• Wear and use PPE.
• Assess work site and weather conditions before starting.
• Check for potential hazards, including people, waterways, crops etc.
• Store bottles in safe and appropriate storage location.
• Ensure that the bottles are appropriately labeled and are kept secure at all times to avoid misuse or children accessing chemicals.

• Only Roundup Bioactive™ may be used when working next to waterways, lakes, rivers, creeks, ponds, dams and near storm water drainage systems.
Section 5

Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Dabber bottles – instructions for use
(medium risk)

Set up
The bottle should have three parts: bottle, sponge stopper, and lid. Make sure you follow proper safety procedures during filling and in use. Use gloves, covering clothing and eye protection. Herbicides are potentially dangerous and the label instructions should be followed.

- Write ‘poison’ on the side of the bottle.
- Fill bottle with an appropriate registered herbicide (such as Glyphosate).
- Add a drop or two of herbicide dye if you have it available (this lets you see where you have applied the solution and also lets others know that herbicide has been applied).
- Push the sponge stopper into the top of the bottle as far as it will go.
- Put on the lid and you are ready to go.
- Store any unused solution safely.

Usage in the field
- Choose a day when the plant is growing actively (warm, not drought stressed and no rain).
- Cut stem of plant near the ground with secateurs or pruning saw, alternatively, scrape the stem (good for canes such as blackberry).
- Dab the stem as quickly as is practical (within 5—10 seconds). The sponge has a small pin in the centre, when depressed this releases the herbicide, which soaks the sponge. For larger tree stumps, concentrate around the outside (sapwood area) just inside the bark, not the heartwood. For climbing ivy, dab both the stem leading down to the roots and that going up the tree.

When to use dabber bottles
Most woody weeds (up to 50cm diameter) can be effectively controlled by this technique. For example:

- Pittosporum
- Cotoneaster
- Hawthorn
- Holly
- Willows
- Japanese Honeysuckle
- Pines (generally don’t need it)
- Boneseed
- Watts
- Ivy
- Blackberry
- Broom
- Cestrum
- Wild Tobacco Tree
- Sycamore Maple
- Privet

Herbicide spray (high risk)
Herbicide spraying is considered a high-risk activity and must only be done with Council permission and appropriate training.

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.
Safe Work Practices and Procedures

Working near roadsides or machinery (high risk)
Potential hazards
• respiratory and eye irritation (from exhaust fumes or dust)
• ear damage or just difficulty communicating (due to excessive noise)
• collision or impact injuries

Personal protective equipment
• high visibility clothing
• safety glasses
• respirators or face masks
• ear protection

Risk management
• Eliminate or minimise the necessity for volunteers to work near roadsides or machinery.
• Use signage and witches hats to indicate volunteers are working in the area.
• Maintain direct and continual supervision and ensure volunteers remain vigilant of their surroundings.
• Decide upon non-verbal signals which can be used to communicate with your team. Make sure everyone understands the signals, and that they are clear and unambiguous.
• Avoid dust or fumes and work upwind where possible.

Ensure everyone has the exact location when calling 000, including the nearest cross street or safety marker if working on a walking track

Always call triple zero (000) or 112 (if out of phone range or credit) if you think an ambulance is needed. If you aren’t sure, call anyway.