

bush neighbours

*your guide to understanding,
enjoying and protecting
our wonderful natural
bushland areas*



Knox City Council



New challenges for our bush


Once part of a vast natural landscape that stretched right across the continent, many of our bushland reserves are now islands in a sea of houses.

Without careful management, plants and animals will continue to disappear and the wonderful natural qualities of our bush will be lost as:


- Weeds out-compete native plants.
- Vandalism, such as dumping and mowing, destroys native plants and spreads weeds.
- Wildlife faces new dangers; eg. foxes, roads and a lack of healthy vegetative cover.
- Passive recreation and overuse by people erodes or compacts soil and tramples plants.

Repairing and protecting

Knox City Council employs specialist staff to manage our bushland reserves. We spend most of our time:

- Controlling weeds and encouraging natural regeneration of bushland.
 - Expanding bushland by replacing adjacent areas with local native species.
 - Supporting volunteers and friends groups.
 - Providing visitor facilities and materials, such as track signage and brochures.
 - Managing bushfire risk.
 - Monitoring feral animals, such as foxes, so the reserves are safer for native animals.
 - Managing projects and planning for the future.
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Do you live next to a bushland reserve?



As a bush neighbour, you are in a special position to know and enjoy our wonderful natural areas, and to help them through the changes they face as part of an urban landscape. It also means you hold the key to their protection.

Council's bushland reserves

Indigenous vegetation is extremely fragmented in urban areas. Some municipalities have very little remnant vegetation and most sites are also isolated from one another by residential, industrial and former agricultural uses.

Habitat corridors linking patches of remnant and planted vegetation need to be an integral part of vegetation management and planning if individual sites are to remain viable in the long term.

Corridors of vegetation along streams, roads, railways lines, etc provide valuable habitat, especially in urban and rural areas where remnant vegetation is extremely fragmented. They allow movement of animals and plants via patches of habitat that would otherwise be isolated.

Knox City Council manages more than 70 bushland reserves which enhance the landscape character of the municipality. These incorporate a variety of landscapes such as Swampy Woodland, Valley Heathy Forest, Grassy Forest, Wetlands and Creek-side Riparian Zones. Our reserves provide food and shelter for a wide variety of animal life, including many bird species, bats, frogs, reptiles and insects.

Our bush is more than a garden – it is a complex living environment of plants, animals and landscapes. It has been evolving for thousands of years to be perfectly suited to the condition in your area. That makes each bushland area unique. Enjoy getting to know its rich diversity, and you may help guide it through the changes that development brings.

How to be a good bush neighbour



Keep your backyard in your backyard

Please don't expand your lawn or garden into the bush or 'improve' the bush by planting.

Do not dump rubbish

It may 'be out of sight, out of mind', but dumping garden waste and lawn clippings over the back fence will damage our bushland.

It spreads weeds, creates fire hazards, smothers native plants and can even change the soil nutrient levels to favour weed growth. Garden waste can make great compost around the garden or can be placed in the green waste bins to be collected every fortnight.

In you notice anybody dumping waste on public land, please immediately call Council's Local Laws on 9298 8000.

Volunteer

Why not get fit and have fun meeting people while helping to look after your local environment? There are three active friends groups within Knox, whose activities range from planting and weeding to rubbish removal and water testing:

- Friends of Blind Creek Billabong.
- Friends of Koolunga Native Reserve.
- Friends of Dandenong Creek.

Bushland remnants are difficult to manage and the best results are achieved through partnerships with Council and neighbours working together.

Research suggests that volunteering leads to better health and volunteers are likely to receive physical and mental health benefits from their volunteer activities.

Tread gently in the bush

Many of our most beautiful and sensitive native plants and insects can easily be damaged or destroyed by careless trampling. Please try to stay on formed tracks, this prevents erosion and minimises the spread of weeds.

Leave the bush in the bush

Rocks and fallen braches provide homes for native animals, while flowers and seeds ensure that plants will reproduce. Removing these without permission can harm the animals and plants that live in the reserve.

People food is 'JUNK' food!

The feeding of wildlife by humans can lead to many detrimental effects on the animals and the people feeding them.

- Unhealthy wildlife – often the food being fed to wildlife is unnatural and inappropriate, resulting in nutrient deficiencies, weight problems and gum/beak diseases to birds.
- Aggressive behaviour – wildlife can grow to rely heavily on food provided by humans and become quite threatening and aggressive in their demand for it. Animals that become used to being fed might also lose their fear of people. This puts them at risk around people who don't appreciate wildlife.
- Spread diseases to humans – the increased contact between wildlife and humans can lead to the spread of diseases to people which would not have otherwise occurred.

Please – Only our natural foods!

You can provide food for wildlife by increasing the amount of habitat available to them. An animal's habitat will provide natural sources of food, such as nectar, foliage, or insects. You can create this habitat by planting native plants in your garden.

Pets belong at home

Pets can be a great source of joy and an important part of a household. However, nobody likes to see their cat or dog with a dead native bird, possum or lizard. One of the most important things you can do to look after our native fauna is to be a responsible pet owner.

Keep your cat inside (especially at night) and make sure that your dog is secure on your property.

Get to know your local plants and animals

Find out about the amazing diversity of plants and animals in your local bushland. Observant bush neighbours are often the first to notice ecological changes such as a decline in small bird numbers, or increasing numbers of pest species.

The 'Knox Wildlife Atlas' provides Council with information on native fauna, to assist in habitat management of our bushland reserves. It will also help to identify and monitor any significant, rare or endangered native animals that reside or move through Knox. ALL interested community members are encouraged to submit their sightings of native animals into the database. This data will assist in making decisions that may support the wildlife in our municipality.

To contribute, please contact:

Knox City Council, 511 Burwood Hwy, Wantirna South 3152

To register, go to www.knox.vic.gov.au and search for Gardens for Wildlife.

For further information, call (03) 9298 8000.

The bush is a natural place that cannot be modified to make it completely safe for humans. Some inhabitants, such as spiders and ants, can bite or sting, so they should be treated with respect and left alone.

There are many fascinating creatures that play an important role in our local ecosystem, so please don't harm them. Remember all the plants, logs, rocks and other things found in our bushland reserves are homes for these native animals.



Grow bush friendly plants (support Gardens for Wildlife)

Some common garden plants can spread into the bush and become weeds. As a good bush neighbour, please take special care to make sure that these plants are kept under control or replace them with less invasive plants.

Gardens for Wildlife is a support program run by Knox City Council. It encourages residents to remove invasive and weedy plants and replace them using local native plants. This helps to extend the habitat areas for native fauna, whilst lowering water usage and maintenance because indigenous plants are adapted to local rainfall, soil and drainage conditions.





For further information

Knox City Council
511 Burwood Hwy, Wantirna South 3152
t 9298 8000
w www.knox.vic.gov.au

Knox Environment Society
Community Nursery
1010 Burwood Highway, Ferntree Gully

Other useful contacts

Report all bushfires: 000

Wildlife Victoria's 24-hour emergency telephone service:
t 13 000 WILDLIFE (sick or orphaned native animals)

