

PORT MACQUARIE LANDCARE GROUP INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE & NEW MEMBERS

Dear Prospective or New Member

Whether you have decided to join Port Macquarie Landcare Group or are just thinking about it, I hope this pamphlet gives you a good understanding of who we are and what we do.

On joining, you decide what project or projects you'd like to work on and which days you are available. If you are a novice Landcarer working in the field, project coordinators and fellow volunteers will introduce you to the general concepts of bush regeneration and help you to distinguish between beneficial local native flora and environmental weeds. While this can seem a daunting task at first, you will slowly learn to tell one from the other.

Our work in Landcare is good fun and very rewarding. We see, week by week, visual improvements in the local environment as a result of our work. We also know that we are helping to improve and protect habitat for hundreds of species of native plants and animals and preserving something important for future generations.

If you're still just thinking about joining, why not try us out – join a working bee and see how much pleasure you can get helping the environment with like minded people.

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Answers to some FAQs

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1. What is Landcare Australia?

Port Macquarie Landcare Group (PMLG) is part of a national organisation called Landcare Australia Limited. This was formed by the Commonwealth Government in 1989 as a private non-profit company to manage the national public awareness and sponsorship campaign for the Decade of Landcare. You can read all about Landcare Australia at:

<http://www.landcareonline.com.au/>

2. What is Port Macquarie Landcare Group?

Port Macquarie Landcare Group (Incorporated) is a rapidly growing organisation of volunteers dedicated to improving public bushland and related environments around Port Macquarie.

We aim to contribute to ecosystem restoration of urban bushland, waterways, and coastal and marine environments, increase community awareness and foster liaisons with like-minded organisations. This is a particularly important role because our region with its warm summers, very mild winters and excellent rainfall hosts a vast range of vulnerable native plants as well as birds and animals. To find out more about who we are and what we aim to achieve go to: <http://www.landcareportmac.com.au/> >General >About Us

3. What does volunteering for Port Macquarie Landcare Group involve?

Field work

Our field volunteers work on projects in bushland, rainforest and coastal dune reserves in and around Port Macquarie. To find out about the projects go to: <http://www.landcareportmac.com.au/> >Projects

Each project has a coordinator and a schedule for working bees. To find out the days and times of working bees at each project and who to contact go to: <http://www.landcareportmac.com.au/> >General >Volunteering

We cater for different levels of availability and fitness - you can join working bees at more than one location, work as often as you like and work at your own pace. There is a BYO refreshment break half way through each working bee.

Working bees involve weeding, planting, mulching, pruning, minor tree removal, herbicide spraying, and other weed control strategies such as cut-scrape-and-paint and trampling. You will be taught all you need to know about what's a weed and what's a native as well as weed management and other techniques. *No prior knowledge is required.*

For field work you need to wear full length clothing, a hat, covered footwear and gloves. PMLG provides the hat and gloves and a Landcare shirt. Conditions are sometimes muddy – if necessary PMLG will supply gumboots.

Hand tools such as small picks, secateurs and pruning saws are all provided. As well, a chainsaw and/or a pole saw are sometimes used but only by volunteers who have received training in their use.

The Nursery The nursery operates on Mondays from 9.00am to 12noon. Jobs include: collecting, cleaning or preparing seeds for sowing; potting seedlings; care of the plants as they grow; weeding; preparing orders; serving customers; and general upkeep of the nursery. Clothing is the same as for projects sites with Landcare shirts, hats and gloves provided.

Other opportunities Executive, other committee and other roles include President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Publicity Officer, Funding Officer.

Other ways to contribute include writing grant applications, website management, and helping with the PMLG stall at events such as Green Day Out and the annual volunteers expo.

4. What resources are available to help me 'learn the ropes'?

An overall comprehensive weed manual (*The Master Weed Wackers Manual*) and smaller project weed manuals that focus on the major weeds at each site (*The Starter Weed Wackers Manual*) help our volunteers in the ongoing process of learning to distinguish between native plants and weeds. There is also useful information such as a list and description of local native plants and propagation tips on our website at: <http://www.landcareportmac.com.au/> > *General > Downloads*

In addition, there are books available for loan from the PMLG working bee van.

5. Who funds Port Macquarie Landcare Group's projects?

Although Landcare is a volunteer organisation, we need to apply for funding from government and corporate sources to cover specific project costs. These include:

- new and existing project works
- personal protective equipment for volunteers;
- hand tools;
- mechanical tools, including maintenance;
- a vehicle to transport equipment;
- training courses; and
- attendance at conferences etc.

In addition, our Nursery at the end of Blackbutt Road generates a significant amount of income through the sale of seedlings to public and private purchasers. The nursery, which is staffed by volunteers (see below), also supplies the plants to revegetate our project sites.

6. What partnerships does Port Macquarie Landcare Group have?

Our strong, positive working relationship with Port Macquarie Hastings Council helps to ensure there is a strategic and coordinated approach to management of our sites. Council is responsible for implementing various natural resource restoration and management activities. Principal areas of focus for Council include:

- Weed management in high conservation value ecosystems in both public and private ownership
- Significant weeds inspection and control programs on private and public land
- Riparian vegetation management

Council's Natural Resources Management Unit works closely with PMLG as well as with private landowners and other government agencies to plan, fund and implement these programs. To find out more go to: <http://www.hastings.nsw.gov.au/www/html/2919-biodiversity-management-and-environmental-rehabilitation-.asp>

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service provide Landcare with the space at their depot in Blackbutt Road to conduct the community nursery. They have also contributed many person hours to the erection of the nursery facilities. In turn, PMLG Landcare assists NPWS with plants and has been involved with the renovation of gardens and making new gardens at Roto House and assisting with the current upgrade of facilities there.

Others involved in natural resource restoration and management include Conservation Volunteers Australia and bush regeneration contractors.

7. What does it cost to join and how many members are there?

Annual membership is: individual \$15, family \$20. There is a general meeting every second month to which all members are invited. We currently have around 100 members.

8. How does Port Macquarie Landcare Group celebrate its achievements?

PMLG prides itself on its acknowledgement and celebration of the work of its volunteers, partners and supporters, and its achievements. These include verbal feedback, articles in the local press, occasional presentations about PMLG's achievements and a Christmas Party. As well, members are supported from time to time to attend conferences and other forums.

9. Workplace Health and Safety

PMLG is committed to workplace health and safety. OH&S legislation requires that the same requirements that apply to paid workers apply to volunteers. All Landcare members are entitled to receive:

- a site induction;
- adequate training for the jobs that they do;
- instruction on safe use of mechanical equipment and access to safe operating procedures;
- instruction on safe use of chemical herbicides;
- personal protective clothing including a long sleeved shirt and broad brimmed hat;
- opportunities to attend training in first aid, chemical handling, use of power tools etc; and
- a worksite free of discrimination.

Each project team has at least one trained first aid officer as well as an officer trained in the safe application of chemicals.

In addition, PMLG has public liability and personal accident insurance that covers you once you have signed the sign on sheet to participate in any Landcare work.