

volunteer

Friends Group Manual



Working together to
strengthen our community

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1. Introduction

The Shire of Nillumbik is widely recognised for its unique flora and fauna and ecologically significant natural areas. Approximately 677 species of indigenous flora have been recorded in the Shire, many of which are considered rare or endangered.

There are currently over seventeen active Friends Groups throughout the Shire of Nillumbik and Council recognises the importance of these groups in helping to sustain our natural environment.

Alongside undertaking work to protect Nillumbik's flora and fauna, the wide ranging benefits of volunteering with friends groups include; strengthening community and local sense of place, developing avenues for self expression, opportunities to work in a team situation and to be involved in Council decision making processes and generally having fun!

This Volunteer Manual is designed to provide Friends Groups with information regarding how Council can support the group, the roles and responsibilities of the group and group convener whilst working on Council Land, essential information regarding Occupational Health and Safety and some basic information regarding volunteering for Nillumbik Shire Council.



1.1 What is a Friends Group?

Friends Groups consist of volunteers with an interest in a particular park, reserve, or species of native flora or fauna. A Friends Group is a support group - not the management authority.

Friends Groups, while being autonomous and independent, operate in partnership with the relevant land manager. The partnership is a cooperative, mutually supportive relationship, which encourages volunteer participation and recognises the legal responsibilities of the management authority.

Friends groups, and groups with similar objectives, work in a great variety of natural situations - coastal sites, bush, grasslands, watercourses or wetlands. They operate in conjunction with the relevant management authority, such as local government, Parks Victoria, or other organisations such as the Trust for Nature.

Many groups organise monthly committee meetings and/or work activities and organise a yearly calendar of events. Others wish to be more informal, and undertake a small number of activities per year. Individual groups operate in different ways; this is determined by the group. Whatever way a group operates, it provides a great forum for local residents to meet and share a common interest.

1.2 Friends Groups in the Shire of Nillumbik

Council's Environmental Works Unit currently supports approximately 17 Friends Groups.

These groups are spread throughout the Shire, and members predominantly undertake agreed works on a specific Council-managed reserve, to help protect and enhance the natural environment.

Friends Groups in the Shire of Nillumbik can undertake a number of different activities depending on the groups' interest and the Reserve the group chooses to work in.

Some activities include:

- revegetation projects
- site maintenance
- flora and fauna monitoring
- Waterwatch monitoring
- plant propagation
- special events such as Clean-up Australia Day and Spring Planting Festival
- weeding and weed mapping
- rabbit or predator-proof fencing
- mulching and jute matting
- reserve management planning
- attending training sessions conducted by Nillumbik Shire Council or Greening Australia.

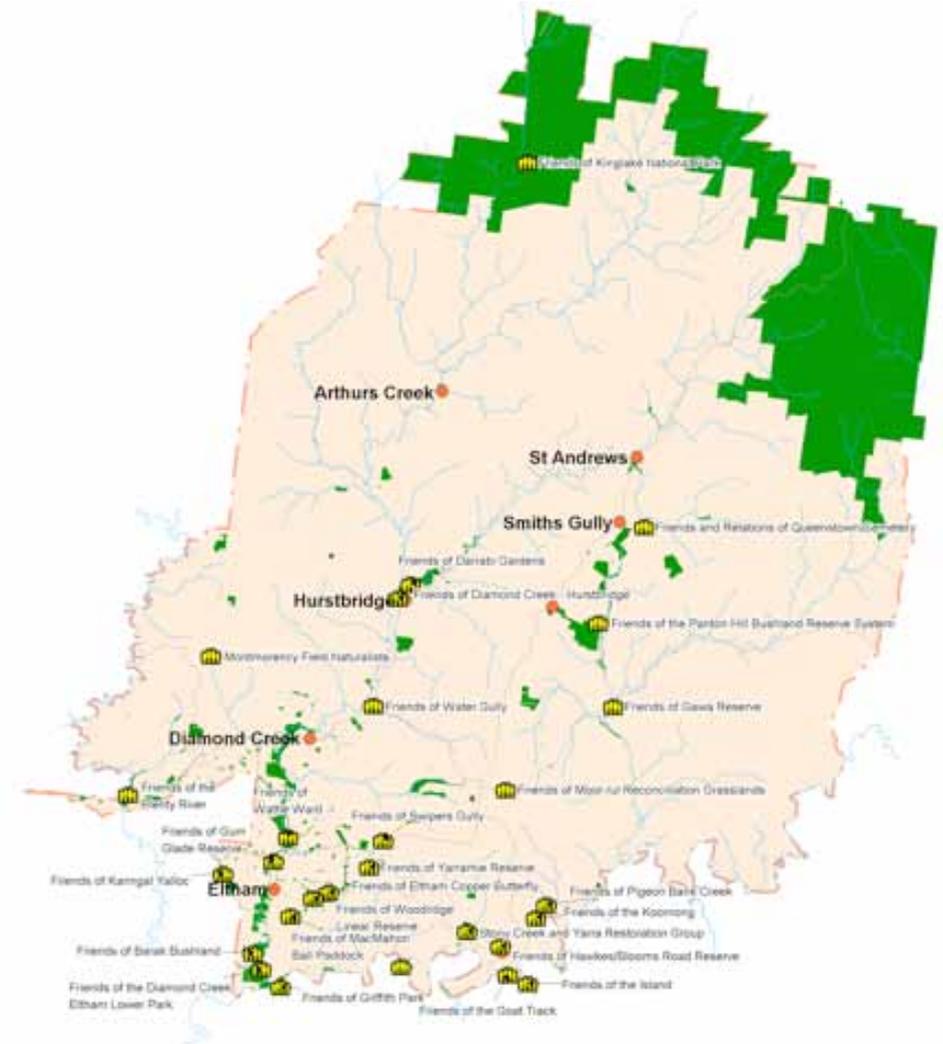


Figure 1: Friends groups in the Shire of Nillumbik

1.3 Environmental Works Unit

Nillumbik Shire Council's Environmental Works Unit aims to:

- enhance and protect the biodiversity values and ecological integrity of the Shire of Nillumbik
- encourage and facilitate environmental stewardship and best ecological practice within both Council and the community
- respect and acknowledge Indigenous cultural values and heritage
- facilitate the sensitive use, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural environment by people.

The Environmental Works Unit is responsible for:

- actively managing approximately 200 hectares of environmentally significant reserves and 235 kilometres of environmentally significant roadsides
- providing support to community environmental groups working on Council owned or managed land
- providing support to internal and external committees
- providing advice on environmental issues to the community, other Council departments and utilities.

Council's Environmental Works Unit (EWU) supports all Friends Groups working within the Shire of Nillumbik.

The EWU provides support and assistance to Friends Groups in a variety of ways, including:

- technical guidance and support
- liaison with contractors to undertake onground works unsuitable for volunteers
- tool use, safety equipment and OH&S training
- provision of revegetation materials
- plant propagation
- first aid training
- provision of barbecues, morning and afternoon tea
- environmental calendar and newsletter
- applying for external agency grants and funding
- training
- organising mail outs for group publications
- organising special events and community information sessions.

2. Forming a Friends Group

To set up a group, all you need is a contact person and a number of like-minded people in your area.

To appropriately encourage and support the Nillumbik community in an equitable manner, it is important that the aims and proposed works area are clearly defined.

To address this requirement Council should be provided with a written request for assistance, which covers the following points.

- Outline why you wish to form a community group and what you hope to accomplish.
- Define the area you wish to work in on a map, e.g. along the creek banks, within the remnant vegetation, etc.
- Explore what other community interest there is from existing groups in this area, local residents, schools, scouts, etc.
- Determine the support for your group, who you would like to get involved, how many people have registered firm 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.

Environmental Works officers can help ascertain likely interest by organising mail-outs to local residents and initiate activities.

A typical first activity may include a site walk and talk, as well as a morning tea or barbeque lunch.

At such a meeting, all aspects of Friends Groups can be discussed, including ascertaining levels of interest. If warranted, additional activities can then be organised by officers.

Friends of Watery Gully

The Friends of Watery Gully formed in 1992 and since then the group has transformed the areas along Watery Gully, such as Peppers Paddock in the centre of Wattle Glen, from a weed infested paddock to an attractive public area enjoyed by local residents and visitors alike.

2.2 Group Structure

It is up to the group how formally they would like to run. Most groups have simply a convener that is the main point of contact for group members and Council. Other groups have a committee with a secretary, treasurer, newsletter editor, etc who meet regularly to discuss issues.

Most groups have a small annual joining fee (\$5-\$10), which helps cover the cost of monthly newsletters, publications and other costs.

2.3 Convener Information

After the initial set up, it is anticipated that groups are somewhat self sufficient. The main role of the Group Convener is to be the primary contact person for the group and Council.

The Group Convener is responsible for organising activities, with assistance from the Environmental Works Officer. They are also responsible for ensuring that group members work according to the occupational health and safety procedures that are provided in this document.

2.4 Hints on forming a Friends Group

Forming a Friends Group can require a significant investment of time and energy.

Sue Dyet from the Friends of Diamond Creek (Eltham Lower Park) provides some helpful hints and tips on how to form and run a group:

1. Be willing to commit yourself for at least five years with monthly action on an activity day, planning, writing newsletters, talking with land managers – *many of these roles can be given later to other committed people once you have found them!*
2. Have an idea of what you want to aim for (*don't say achieve – it might not work out that way*), talk with the land manager and other groups.

ideally volunteer with a nearby group to understand the issues of the area (*rabbits/weeds/vandalism*), how many people turn up to what sort of working bees (we had 90 on our original database – 10 is now a good turnout for weeding and 20-30 for planting with media assistance), talk with other group organisers for therapy sessions.

3. Plan a strategy to involve the local residents – 'ownership' is a really helpful concept – think of finishing an activity with coffee & biscuits or even a barbecue – letterbox drop the locals for special events.
4. Determine a strict start and finish time for activities – volunteers want to know that they will finish at 'x' time so they can plan the rest of their free time at weekends. You will need to be there 15 mins beforehand for the early birds who would be discouraged if you weren't.

Have enough tools and equipment and always Plan B for extra action if five Scouts suddenly turn up wanting to do environmental activity for badges.

5. Start your first activity close to Melbourne Water grant cycle so you can apply for a start up grant and an activity grant – nothing entuses people more than the thought of getting money from the government.

The Land Manager (Council) also likes it because such grants help them to apply for funding as well – and Councillors like it as well. *And you feel patted on the back too!*



6. Start off with a small, readily achievable project – if you find yourself with 20 people turning up each month - great - then you make the project bigger.

7. Plan a cycle of activities and link in with others.

When we started we ran Bat and Bird identification sessions, night time possum spotting sessions, propagation sessions – all types of activities which the Council has now taken over.

8. Get involved with Edendale – know what they can provide in the way of plants – you might find yourself with interested people who are unable to bend down and weed or plant but who can stand and help propagate plants in the nursery for your and other groups to use.

9. Remember that volunteer numbers will fluctuate/drop – it's not your fault – it happens – not everyone is as 'committed' as you!

You are there to try to make a difference – even one patch of weeds cleared and one young tree surviving for the future is success.

10. Remember you chose to do this because you basically want to make a difference to your world – *forget the rest who don't!*



2.5 Group Incorporation

Incorporation is the official registration of a group name. Incorporation is a voluntary process whereby a not-for-profit club or community group can apply to become its own 'legal person,' i.e. the association becomes a distinct legal entity that continues regardless of changes to its membership.

2.5.1 Benefits of incorporation

- Ability to make and enter contracts
- Ability to own property
- Liability rests with the Incorporated Association not with members of the Committee
- Ability to receive grants from private and public organisations.

2.5.2 Advantages of remaining unincorporated

- Ease of dissolution (generally)
- Privacy of affairs
- Difficult to sue
- No legal reporting requirements.

2.5.3 Do volunteer groups need to be incorporated?

Yes, if:

- The association wishes to receive funds from a government body or other fund, which requires incorporation
- The activities of an association involve any real risk of personal injury or any other claim for damages
- The group wishes to hold property
- The group proposes to enter important contracts
- The group 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 for a group to be eligible to receive grants under most grants programs, it must be incorporated or be able to make arrangements with another incorporated association to auspice their application.

However for groups who wish to remain unincorporated, Nillumbik Shire Council can act as a sponsoring organisation in order to administer the grant.

Incorporated status also protects the personal assets of the committee members and individual volunteers in the event an incorporated volunteer group is sued.

The incorporated body could only be sued for the value of the incorporated body's assets, e.g. property, cash in bank, tools, equipment, and other assets.

However, if an incident occurred as a result of an authorised volunteer activity, the legal liability would generally be borne by the 'higher' authority, usually the land manager, i.e. Nillumbik Shire Council for groups working on Council owned land.

2.5.4 How to become incorporated

Incorporation is best achieved by following the procedures set out in the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981*. The application process takes about five weeks after lodgement of the form.

Contact Consumer Affairs Victoria for further information or assistance with becoming incorporated on 1300 558 181 or visit their website www.consumer.vic.gov.au.

2.6 ABN and GST

2.6.1 Do groups need an ABN?

The Australian Business Number (ABN) is a single identifier used by organisations for dealings with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

The main reason for volunteer groups to have an ABN would be to access grants and funding. Without this, tax legislation requires the grant agency to withhold 48.5% of the grant, and send it to the Australian Tax Office.

Nillumbik Shire Council has structured its Friends Group Support Program so that Council manages the funding on the group's behalf and handles all the GST and tax credits.

This means that if you only volunteer with Nillumbik Shire Council and do not plan to seek other funding, there is no need to have an ABN.

2.6.2 How to get an ABN?

Groups can register electronically at www.business.gov.au or obtain an application pack from any major bank, post office, newsagent or by phoning the Business Tax Reform Info Line on 13 24 78. There is no cost involved in registering for an ABN or the GST.

2.6.3 Goods and Services Tax (GST)

On 1 July 2000, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was introduced through which suppliers change up to 10% GST.

2.6.4 Will our group need to register for the GST?

Not for profit organisations with an annual turnover of \$100,000 or more, must by law, register for the GST. The threshold for all other entities is \$50,000.

If turnover is less than \$100,000, and you wish to receive other grants it is still recommended that you be registered for the GST.

Registration allows your group to claim Input Tax Credits on GST you have paid on various goods and services. You should be aware that if you are not registered for the GST, your grant spending power may be around 10% less than if you are registered.



2.6.5 How to register for the GST?

Organisations can register for GST, in the same application to register for an Australian Business Number (ABN). You can register for the GST at any time. You need to apply 21 days prior to when you wish to be registered. Contact your land manager to discuss the GST before you start the registration process.

For information on the Australian Business Number or registration for the GST, contact the Business Tax Reform Information Line on 13 2478 or www.business.gov.au.

2.7 Insurance

If a Friends Group only undertakes activities on Council owned and managed land, there is no requirement for them to obtain their own public liability insurance for such activities.

If an incident occurred as a result of an authorised Friends Group activity the legal liability would generally be borne by Council.

However, if a Friends Group also volunteers on land managed by another authority, on privately owned land or occupies their own premises, it is recommended that the group seek advice about obtaining Public Liability Insurance, as Council may only be held responsible for public liability for authorised Friends Group volunteer activities on Council land, not for activities on other land or for other land management agencies.

Friends of Diamond Creek (Eltham Lower Park)

Friends of the Diamond Creek (Eltham Lower Park) started in 1990 in a blaze of community green enthusiasm being the first friends group in the area. The group are still going 20 years later with original members being somewhat older, greyer and wiser but still enthusiastic.

When the group started they ran revegetation activities along the Diamond Creek through Eltham Lower Park together with wider community activities of Possum Prowls, Birdwatching Walks and Bat Nights.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of the Friends Group Convener is to liaise and work with Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers in coordinating and supervising Friends Group activities and ensuring the group complies with Nillumbik Shire Council policies.

3.1 Friends Group Convener

The Group Convener is responsible for working in conjunction with Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers in developing revegetation and restoration activities in Councils reserves and coordinating and supervising the group during activities.

Conveners are responsible for ensuring Friends Group Members have read and signed off the Friends Group Member Role Description and sign the Attendance Sheet at each working bee to ensure they are covered by Councils Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance. They are also to ensure Members work in a safe and responsible manner whilst in Council Reserves.

It is also the responsibility of the convener to ensure all members have read Council's volunteer handbook.

Activities may include site planning for revegetation projects, flora and fauna monitoring, Waterwatch monitoring, plant propagation and site maintenance activities such as weed control and mulching.

Friends Groups can also be involved in special events such as Clean-Up Australia Day, National Tree Day, Spring Planting Festival and other environmental activities/festivals conducted within the Shire of Nillumbik.

Friends Group Conveners can be involved in administration activities such as the production of environmental/ group newsletters, record keeping and grants/funds applications.

A more detailed Position Description (Appendix A) for this role has been developed.

3.2 Friends Group Members

The role of the Friends Group Member is to work as part of an environmental team in undertaking revegetation and/or regeneration activities to help enhance and conserve the local environment.

The Friends Group Member is responsible for working within a team in undertaking revegetation and restoration activities in Council reserves and must follow the guidelines set by the group convener.

Friends Group Members must read and sign the Volunteer Role Description for Friends Group Members (Appendix B) before participating in any activities and must sign the Attendance Sheet at each working bee to ensure coverage by Council's Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance in the case of an accident. Friends Group Members must work in a safe and responsible manner.

Activities may include revegetation projects, flora and fauna monitoring, Waterwatch monitoring, plant propagation and site maintenance activities such as weed control and mulching.

Friends Group Members can also be involved in special events such as Clean-Up Australia Day, National Tree Day, Spring Planting Festival and other environmental activities/festivals conducted within the Nillumbik Shire.

Friends Group Members can be involved in administration activities such as the production of environmental/group newsletters, record keeping and grants/funds applications.

A more detailed Position Description (Appendix B) for this role has been developed.



4. Council Support

Council's Environmental Works Unit supports all Friends Groups working within the Shire of Nillumbik. The types of activities and assistance offered to Friends Groups are outlined below.

4.1 Public Liability Insurance

Group members whilst in their capacity as a volunteer as part of a Council-endorsed Friends Group activity, and where an accurate List of Attendees has been kept (Appendix D), are deemed to be acting on behalf of Council and as such are indemnified under Council's Public Liability Insurance Cover. It is the responsibility of the group to keep a diary of activities and a register of participants at events.

Volunteers participating in authorised activities are protected for:

- injury to other third party people as a result of their activities; and
- damage to third party property as a result of their activities.

Council does not cover volunteers for any valuables, money, clothing or other personal property, lost or stolen whilst volunteering.

4.2 Personal Accident Insurance

Volunteers are not deemed to be employees for the purposes of work cover. Medicare provides cover for medical expenses.

If you are injured during the course of your volunteering you will be required to complete an incident report (Appendix G) and a register of injury form (Appendix H).

Council has Personal Accident Insurance to provide limited income protection, disablement and death benefits to volunteers while performing voluntary work.

The volunteer must be registered and the activity must be authorised by Council.

Any expenses recoverable from any other source such as Medicare, private health insurance, etc are not claimable.

4.3 Motor Vehicles

Council does not have insurance to cover damage to, or caused by, volunteers private vehicles.

All drivers and passengers or registered vehicles are covered by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) for medical expenses for bodily injury arising from a motor vehicle accident.

Any speeding offences, traffic parking infringements and toll fees incurred while performing volunteer duties will not be paid by Council.

4.4 Technical Support

Although it is anticipated that groups will be somewhat self sufficient, the EWU support groups with project guidance and activity planning, mail-outs, engaging contractors for herbicide works, delivering and maintaining tools and attendance at working bees where possible.

Council can also supply groups with:

- a copy of this manual
- a cadastre map of the reserve
- an aerial map of the reserve
- other information relevant to the reserve including flora lists.

4.5 Planning and Programming Works

Council's Environmental Works Officers can assist Friends Groups in planning and programming activities throughout the year. This generally involves regular meetings with Friends Groups Conveners to determine what activities need to be undertaken.

4.6 Contractor Support

In many reserves where there are active Friends Groups, Council will engage contractors on behalf of the group to undertake activities which may be beyond the group's ability. These works may include on-going weed control, pest animal management or fuel reduction programs.

4.7 Tool Use

*Council **does not** permit people to use personal tools and equipment whilst working on Council land.*

Council has a number of tools available for use by Friends Groups which can be delivered to the site or to a nominated address. A list of current tools available is below. Council will assess and purchase equipment deemed appropriate if requested.

Available tools include:

- Buckets
- Hamilton tree planters
- Handsaws
- Hand weeders
- Lockable trailer
- Loppers
- Mallets/hammers
- Mattocks
- Mulching/pitch forks
- Rake hoes
- Secateurs
- Shovels
- Steel and plastic rakes
- Wheelbarrows

Groups are able to request certain hand tools for activities, and others items, such as gas burners and cut and paint herbicide applicators, are available if an Environmental Works Officer is present at the activity and trains members in its use.

Training is made available in the use of Council brushcutters and only people who have completed this training are permitted to use brushcutters on Council property. The use of chainsaws on group sites can only be undertaken by Council Officers or Council-employed contractors.

4.8 Revegetation materials

Council supports groups in carrying out revegetation projects through the provision of plants, mulch, weed matting and rabbit guards and stakes.

Council encourages groups who wish to revegetate to do so in autumn when climatic conditions are good and groups interested in planting need to discuss the project with an Environmental Works Officer and complete a 'project proposal form' (Appendix C) prior to the planting season.

4.9 First aid training and safety equipment

Council is committed to the safety of people working in Council Reserves. Important Occupational Health and Safety Information regarding tool use and working on Council Reserves is included later in this document.

A First Aid Kit and associated safety equipment is provided to groups with any Council tools.

Training in Emergency First Aid is made available to groups through the EWU and groups are required to have at least one regular member trained in First Aid.

4.10 Barbecues, morning tea and afternoon tea

The EWU has a portable barbecue which is available for use by groups at special activities and Christmas functions. EWU officers can bring morning/afternoon tea when attending group activities.

4.11 Environmental calendar and newsletter

A calendar of environmental events, i.e. group activities and environmental seminars is developed and posted on the Environment page of the Nillumbik website, www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au (follow links to Community Groups).

Fringe Focus is a quarterly newsletter which aims to keep the local community up-to-date with environmental issues and events in the Shire of Nillumbik. If your group has an article or event they wish to be included in either *Fringe Focus* or on the Environmental Events Calendar, please contact the Environmental Works Officer.

A copy of the calendar and newsletter are emailed to the Group Convener to distribute amongst their group. If you would prefer a hard copy, please contact the Environmental Works Officer.

4.12 Grant Applications

Community Group grants are often available from organisations such as Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria and the Natural Heritage Trust. Information regarding these grants is usually available on the organisation's website (see useful contacts page at the rear of this folder). EWU officers are available for assistance with completing application forms. Council consent must be given for any grant projects which are to be implemented on Council land.

For groups which are not incorporated, Council can act as a sponsoring organisation for the grant funding. As a sponsoring organisation Council would be required to sign the project agreement and manage the funding on the groups behalf.

4.13 Training

Nillumbik Shire Council considers training to be important for members of Friends and Landcare Groups. Training can help members gain an understanding of many issues concerned with land management and revegetation of degraded sites.

Training can be undertaken in an informal manner by Environmental Works Officers attending group

activities. Training in areas such as plant identification, revegetation techniques, weed control and tool use is often undertaken in this way.

In addition to informal training, Council offers group members access to more formal training through Council organised training sessions. Previous sessions have included 'Strategic Weed Management' and 'Grass Identification.' Training may also be available for interested groups through Council's Environmental Events Program.

As required, Council can arranged accredited training in the use of specific tools, such as brushcutters. Only people who have attended such training will be permitted to use these tools on Council Land at group activities.

Environmental Works also makes available environmental management books/reference material for group members to borrow. To access any of the reference material, please speak with the Environmental Works Officer.

4.14 Plant propagation

Groups can be involved in propagating their own plants for revegetation projects at Council's Edendale Community Environment Centre

Indigenous Nursery. A project proposal and seed request sheet form must be completed before propagation takes place. Nursery staff are available to assist with propagation.

4.15 Publicity and Promotion

Some groups like to keep their members up to date with what is happening in their park/reserve and local area through a regular newsletter, others may like to inform the neighbourhood of upcoming activities and events to encourage new members. The EWU can assist groups with photocopying and mail-outs to reduce costs to groups.

The EWU can also assist groups to promote their activities by providing signage.

4.16 Organising annual get-togethers for all groups

Council organises annual get-togethers for groups to meet and discuss their achievements with like minded people around the Shire. As volunteers for Council, members are also invited and encouraged to attend any volunteer events being held by Council or Volunteer agencies. Groups will be notified of these events by mail.

5. Working Safely

The health, safety and welfare of Nillumbik volunteers are of paramount importance. Volunteers are valuable asset to Council and as such their right to a safe workplace is essential.

Nillumbik Shire Council will ensure, so far as is practical, that volunteers are not exposed to foreseeable risks to their health or safety whilst volunteering with Council.

Nillumbik Shire Council is committed to fulfilling both its moral and legal Occupational Health and Safety responsibilities to provide a safe and healthy work environment for employees, volunteers, contractors, customers and visitors.

You must follow all established practices, procedure/guidelines and safe work instructions of Nillumbik Shire Council, which apply to the tasks you have volunteered to perform.

Council will provide the highest level of protection against risks to your health and safety that is reasonably practicable and will continually monitor conditions at any workplace that are under Council's management and control.

Friends of Karingal Yalloc

Friends of Karingal Yalloc began in 2002, with the support of Nillumbik Shire Council and Melbourne Water, aiming to work on what was then called the Eltham West Drain. The group undertakes activities on three main sites: Meruka Park, Nerreman Gateway, and Ramptons Park.

Last year the group managed to gain Nillumbik's support to change the name of the creek to Karingal Yalloc, which is Wurundjeri for 'Happy Camp Creek' – somewhat more salubrious!

Members of Friends of groups also have an obligation whilst volunteering for Council to protect their health and safety by working in a safe manner.

Volunteer safety responsibility

- Take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others.
- To use safety devices and protective equipment correctly.
- Not to perform any procedure or task unless they have received appropriate training and instruction.
- To report any accident or injury immediately. An Incident Report Form is to be filled in by the volunteer and referred to the Program supervisor.
- To ensure that they are not, by the consumption of alcohol or drugs, in such a state to endanger their own safety or that of others.

5.1 Job Safety Analysis

To ensure that Friends Group activities are undertaken in a safe manner, the Environmental Works Unit has developed a template Job Safety Analysis (Appendix E).

The template JSA addresses activities that Friends Group Members and Council staff regularly undertakes during events, the hazard each activity may pose and controls to mitigate each hazard.

It is compulsory that Group Conveners will read, understand and ensure the all Safety Rules associated with on-ground activities are adhered to by all members attending an activity.

It is also compulsory that Conveners will read, understand and help Environmental Works Officers implement the Occupational Health and Safety conditions set out in the Volunteer Role Descriptions (Appendices A & B).



5.2 Training

To enable each Friends Group to know how to work safely, Council provides regular training opportunities. This is either by assisting with the cost of attending a training course or by running a training course for volunteers such as brushcutter training.

5.3 Extreme Weather Protocol

Modelling undertaken by the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology indicates that climate change will result in a warmer and drier climate in Victoria, with more days over 35 degrees, less annual rainfall (but more intense rainfall events), more days with very high and extreme fire danger, and more extreme weather events.

The Environmental Works Unit have produced a Working in Extreme Weather Protocol (Appendix F) to minimise the risk to Environmental Works Unit staff and Friends Group volunteers from the effects of unusual and extreme weather conditions that may be encountered when working in Nillumbik.

5.4 Incident Reporting

In the case of an incident on-site during a Friends Group activity, it is the role of the Group Convener to complete an Incident Report Form (Appendix G).

The Incident Report Form must be returned to the Environmental Works Unit on the next working day.

If an injury is sustained during a Friends Group activity a Register of Injury Form (Appendix H) must also be completed.



6. Privacy and Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to the trust and assurance that the content of any specific and/or information will remain entrusted between Nillumbik Shire Council and the people and communities it deals with.

Confidentiality of information must be respected for:

- the protection of the client and their right to privacy
- the protection of the service and its reputation
- the protection of and reputation of the staff and volunteers.

Volunteers should not disclose to any third party any confidential information in their possession or knowledge relating to the Nillumbik Shire Council's affairs, business dealings or transactions.

'Confidential Information' includes, but is not limited to the following types of information.

- Any information relating to Council's technology or intellectual property.
- Details of Council's facilities, equipment and methods of operation.

- Details of Council's employees, customers, suppliers or other third parties working with Council.
- Any information on Council's commercial agreements.
- Any financial information.
- Any other information not generally available to the public, or which you reasonably consider is confidential.

As required by Federal and State legislation, Nillumbik is committed to protecting your right to privacy. It is the responsibility of your supervisor to ensure that privacy and confidentiality is maintained at all times. Any information collected for statistical purposes will only be used in a non-identifiable manner.

If you have any queries in relation to privacy or confidentiality issues please discuss with your supervisor or contact Council's Governance Unit on 9433 3269.

7. Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct was developed in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

The Code of Conduct is an extremely important document and broadly:

- Identifies our values and behaviours (the way employees are to act);
- Promotes and provides a framework for volunteers to work in the best interests of the Nillumbik Community; and
- Ensure volunteers are accountable for their actions

The scope of the Employee Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers of Nillumbik Shire Council. The policy states “All employees, volunteers, Council representatives and contractors will, at all times, adhere to the Code of Conduct and the terms and conditions within the Code of Conduct”.

As a volunteer, you have an obligation to fulfil your voluntary duties in accordance with the expected standards in the Council’s Code of Conduct.

These standards cover areas but are not limited to:

- Nillumbik values and behaviours
- Alcohol, drugs and smoking
- Dress and appearance
- Ethical behaviour/Professional ethics
- Performance of duties
- Lawful directions
- Confidentiality
- Information privacy
- Information and records
- Intellectual property
- Use of Council resources and other assets
- Service Excellence Charter
- Conflict of Interest
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality
- Media protocol
- Internet and e-mail usage
- Access to social media and social networking sites
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Equal Opportunity and prevention of bullying and violence
- Charter of Human Rights and responsibilities.

8. Useful Contacts

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS UNIT

Nicole Drever	9433 3202	nicole.drever@nillumbik.vic.gov.au
Tim Krasevac	9433 3121	tim.krasevac@nillumbik.vic.gov.au
Brad Tadday	9433 3203	brad.tadday@nillumbik.vic.gov.au
Corinne Mays	9433 3192	corinne.mays@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

TAXATION AND INCORPORATION INFORMATION

Consumer Affairs Victoria	1300 558 181	www.consumer.vic.gov.au
Business Tax Reform Information	13 24 78	www.business.gov.au

VOLUNTEERING RESOURCES

Victorian Environmental Friends Network	http://home.vicnet.net.au/%7Efriends/
Our Community	www.ourcommunity.com.au
Volunteering Victoria	www.volunteeringvictoria.com.au
Volunteering Australia	www.volunteeringaustralia.org

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

Melbourne Water	131 722	www.melbournewater.com.au
Port Phillip & Westernport CMA	8781 7900	www.ppwoma.vic.gov.au
Wurundjeri Tribe Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Council	9416 2905	info@wurundjeri.com.au
Birds Australia		www.birdsaustralia.com.au

9. Friends Groups in the Shire of Nillumbik

Friends and Relations of Queenstown Cemetery

Elizabeth Wykes
9718 1245
lizwykes@bigpond.com

Friends of Barak Bushlands

Carolyn Mellor
9431 4512
mellor@bigpond.net.au

Friends of Challenger Street Reserve Wetlands

9305 3344, 0409 104 710
Christopher.Collins@vrfish.com.au

Friends of Darrabi Garden

Susie Walker
9719 7170

Friends of the Diamond Creek – Hurstbridge

Anne Fitzpatrick
9718 1339
aefitzpatrick@bigpond.com

Friends of Diosma Road

Tim Krasevac
9433 3121
Tim.Krasevac@nillumbik.vic.gov.au

Friends of Eltham Copper Butterfly

Sally and Wayne Kinrade
9439 1482
waynekinrade@hma.com.au

Friends of Eltham Lower Park

Sue Dyet
9439 1175

Friends of Heard Avenue Reserve

Julia Davis
9439 2378

Friends of Karingal Yalloc

Ian Burns
9435 8603
ibgburns@optusnet.com.au

Friends of Macmahon Ball Paddock

Reg Elder
cpr.rge@bigpond.net.au

Friends of Mine Road

Peter Yates
pmyates@internode.on.net

Friends of Moor-rul Reconciliation Grassland

Jann Darvill
9439 7342
jann.darvill@bigpond.com

Friends of Panton Hill Bushland Reserve

Sue Penrose
9719 7468
susyp@pas.com.au

Friends of Swipers Gully Creek

Bronnie Hattam
bronniahattam@hotmail.com

Friends of Watery Gully

Anika Van Hulsen
9438 1071
Anika.Van.Hulsen@spin.net.au

Friends of Woodridge Linear Reserve

Karin Diamond
kdiamond@unimelb.edu.au

Friends of Yarramie

Therese Scales
9437 2429
Tcales@bigpond.net.au



Appendix A – Convener Volunteer Role Description

1. Role Objectives and Context

The role of the Friends Group Convener is to liaise and work with Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers in coordinating and supervising Friends Group activities and ensuring the group complies with Nillumbik Shire Council policies.

signed off the Friends Group Member Role Description and sign the Attendance Sheet at each working bee to ensure they are covered by Councils Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance. They are also to ensure Members work in a safe and responsible manner while in Council Reserves.

Activities may include site planning for revegetation projects, flora and fauna monitoring, Waterwatch monitoring, propagation and site maintenance activities such as weed control and mulching.

Friends Groups can also be involved in special events such as Clean-Up Australia Day, National Tree Day, Spring Planting Festival and other environmental activities/festivals conducted within the Shire of Nillumbik.

Friends Group Conveners can be involved in administration activities such as the production of environmental/group newsletters, record keeping and grants/funds applications.

2. Key Responsibilities

It is essential for the convener to read Council's volunteer handbook and to have read and signed the volunteer agreement form.

The Friends Group Convener is responsible for working in conjunction with Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers in developing revegetation and restoration activities in Councils reserves and coordinating and supervising the group during activities.

Friends Group Conveners are responsible for ensuring Friends Group Members have read and

3. Organisational Relationships

Supervisor: Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers

Reporting relationships: not applicable

4. Accountability and Extend of Authority

The Friends Group Convener must liaise with Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers before the group undertakes any activities on Council land.

5. Judgement and Decision Making

All judgment and decision making will be made by Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers in conjunction with Friends Group Conveners. Conveners are encouraged to discuss issues and ideas with group members.

6. Specialist Skills and Knowledge

No specialist skills or training is required for this position. Guidance and training from peer group members and Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers can be provided with the use of specific tools in performing certain tasks.

Opportunities for specialist training exist and are encouraged through Council training programs including compulsory Occupational Health and Safety Training.

7. Interpersonal Skills

There are no specific inter-personal skills required, however it is encouraged that the Convener have good communication skills.

8. Qualifications and Experience

Friends Group Conveners do not need any qualifications or experience to undertake the role.

9. Location of Activities

Friends Group Conveners undertake work in Nillumbik Shire Council Reserves.

10. Occupational Health and Safety

Friends Group Conveners must read and abide by the Occupational Health and Safety Procedures as outlined in this document.

Friends Group Conveners are responsible for making Occupational Health and Safety Information available to Friends Group Members and ensuring members abide by the conditions of the policy.

Friends Group Conveners must ensure Friends Group Members sign the Attendance Sheet at each working bee. Failure to do so may result in loss of cover by Council's Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance in the case of an accident.

General Site Conditions for working on Council Reserves are stated below:

- Environmental group volunteers should always work in teams and never work alone.
- No environmental group volunteers are to undertake works on creek/river banks or on other steep slopes.
- No environmental group volunteers are to undertake works within creeks/ rivers unless undertaking Waterwatch activities.
- Where environmental group volunteers are undertaking Waterwatch activities, they must access the creek/river in the safest possible way and follow all safety procedures outlined in the Waterwatch Information Kit.
- Environmental group volunteers are not to use ladders on Council managed reserves for any reason.
- No monitoring of nest boxes is to be undertaken that requires environmental group volunteers to climb trees or use ladders.

- Environmental group volunteers are not to undertake any tree removal or tree pruning works.
- Environmental group volunteers are not to use privately owned machinery, such as chainsaws or brushcutters, or herbicide to work on Council managed land.
- No works are to be undertaken by environmental group volunteers within five metres of any road, without supervision from a Council Environmental Works Officer (appropriate personal protective equipment and signage must be used whilst undertaking the above activities).
- No work on Council managed reserves is to be undertaken by environmental group volunteers whilst they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- All children attending environmental group activities are to be supervised by an adult at all times.
- Strong, sturdy, closed-toe footwear must be worn at all times. Thongs, sandals and all open-toed shoes are prohibited whilst undertaking work on Council land.
- Needles and sharps must not be picked up by volunteers. Please notify Council if there are any syringes found on site.
- Work must not be undertaken if it is beyond the capabilities of the individual. Please observe correct manual handling techniques and contact the site supervisor if any problems are experienced, or extra help is required to lift a heavy object.



11. Selection Criteria

Not applicable.

Friends Group Members have access to tools and training aids held by Council and are covered by Council's Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance whilst working on Council Reserves.

12. Benefits to Volunteer

The Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Unit encourage and subsidise Friends Group Conveners to attend environmental training presented by external sources such as Greening Australia Victoria.

Friends Group Members also receive an invitation to attend a Volunteer Celebration during National Volunteer Week and are encouraged to partake in Volunteer Week activities.

I, the undersigned, have read and understand the Volunteer Role Description for Friends Group Conveners and agree to the responsibilities and conditions set out within.

Signed

Convenor of

Date / /

Appendix B – Group Member Role Description

1. Role Objectives and Context

The role of the Friends Group Member is to work as part of an environmental team in undertaking revegetation and/or regeneration activities to help enhance and conserve the local environment.

Activities may include revegetation projects, flora and fauna monitoring, Waterwatch monitoring, propagation and site maintenance activities such as weed control and mulching.

Friends Group Members can also be involved in special events such as Clean-Up Australia Day, National Tree Day, Spring Planting Festival and other environmental activities/festivals conducted within the Nillumbik Shire.

2. Key Responsibilities

The Friends Group Member is responsible for working within a team in undertaking revegetation and restoration activities in Council reserves and must follow the guidelines set by the group convenor.

Friends Group Members can be involved in administration activities such as the production of environmental/group newsletters, record keeping and grants/funds applications.

Friends Group Members must read and sign the Volunteer Role Description for Friends Group Members before participating in any activities and must sign the Attendance Sheet at each working bee to ensure coverage by Council's Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance in the case of an accident. Friends Group Members must work in a safe and responsible manner.

If group members wish to receive a copy of Council's Volunteer Handbook they can contact the convenor of the group or Council's Environmental Works Unit on 9433 3121.

3. Organisational Relationships

Supervisor: Friends Group
Convener
Nillumbik Shire Council
Environmental Works Officers

Reporting relationships: not applicable

4. Accountability and Extent of Authority

The Friends Group Member must follow the guidelines and instructions set by the responsible convener and Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers.

5. Judgement and Decision Making

All judgment and decision making will be made by Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers in conjunction with group conveners. Friends Group Members are encouraged to share ideas and discuss issues with the group convener.

6. Specialist Skills and Knowledge

No specialist skills or training is required for this position. Guidance and training from peer group members and Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Officers can be provided with the use of specific tools in performing certain tasks.

Opportunities for specialist training exist and are encouraged through Council subsidies for Greening Australia training.

7. Inter-personal Skills

There are no specific inter-personal skills required.

8. Qualifications and Experience

Friends Group Members do not need any qualifications or experience to undertake the role.

9. Location of Activities

Friends Group Members work in Nillumbik Shire Council Reserves.

10. Occupational Health and Safety

Friends Group Members must read and abide by the Occupational Health and Safety Procedures as outlined in this document.

General Site Conditions for working on Council Reserves are stated below:

- Environmental group volunteers should always work in teams and never work alone.
- No environmental group volunteers are to undertake works on creek/ river banks or on other steep slopes.
- No environmental group volunteers are to undertake works within creeks/ rivers unless undertaking Water Watch activities.
- Where environmental group volunteers are undertaking Water Watch activities, they must access the creek/river in the safest possible way and follow all safety procedures outlined in the Water Watch Information Kit.
- Environmental group volunteers are not to use ladders on Council managed reserves for any reason.
- No monitoring of nest boxes is to be undertaken that requires environmental group volunteers to climb trees or use ladders.
- Environmental group volunteers are not to undertake any tree removal or tree/shrub pruning works above head height.
- Environmental group volunteers are not to use privately owned machinery, such as chainsaws or brushcutters, or herbicide to work on Council managed land.
- No works are to be undertaken by environmental group volunteers within five metres of any road, without supervision from a Council Environmental Works Officer. (Appropriate personal protective equipment and signage must be used whilst undertaking the above activities).
- No work on Council managed reserves is to be undertaken by environmental group volunteers whilst they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- All children attending environmental group activities are to be supervised by an adult at all times.

- Strong, sturdy, closed-toe footwear must be worn at all times. Thongs, sandals and all open-toed shoes are prohibited whilst undertaking work on Council land.
- Needles and sharps must not be picked up by volunteers. Please report any syringes found to Council.
- Work must not be undertaken if it is beyond the capabilities of the individual. Please observe correct manual handling techniques and contact the site supervisor if any problems are experienced, or extra help is required to lift a heavy object.

11. Selection Criteria

Not applicable.

12. Benefits to Volunteer

The Nillumbik Shire Council Environmental Works Unit encourages and subsidises Friends Group Members to attend environmental training presented by external sources such as Greening Australia Victoria.

Friends Group Members have access to tools and training aids held at Council and are covered by Council's Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance whilst working on Council Reserves.

Friends Group members also receive an invitation to attend a Volunteer Celebration during National Volunteer Week and are encouraged to partake in Volunteer Week activities.

I, the undersigned, have read and understand the Volunteer Role Description for Friends Group Conveners and agree to the responsibilities and conditions set out within.

Signed

Convener of

Date / /



N I L L U M B I K
THE GREEN WEDGE SHIRE

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