Bushcare Boosters Module 1

Working Safely and Weed Control Techniques

Facilitators's Notes

Disclaimer

The information in this training module is from a range of sources and considered to be good practice. However there may be differences depending on the location of sites, the scale of the on-ground works and changes in methodology that are developed with ongoing research and monitoring.

Legislation on native species, weeds, occupational health and safety and herbicide use may vary across Australia. It is imperative that trainers and organisations using this training module check their legal obligations under Local, State and Australian Government laws and regulations.

All liability arising directly or indirectly from the use of or any omissions in the information in this manual is expressly disclaimed. Further professional advice should be sought when required.

Acknowledgements

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Contents – Facilitator's Notes

About the Bushcare Boosters resource and workshops **1**

About Module 1 ..... **1**

General Tips for delivering a Bushcare Boosters workshop **2**

Choosing the venue 2

Needs for inside the venue 3

Desirable features of a field visit 4

Promoting the event 4

On the day 5

Event planning template **6**

Facilitator's Notes for delivering Module 1 ..... **7**

Notes to assist the person delivering the workshop

Invitation template **9**

Program template **10**

Workshop evaluation form template **11**

About the Bushcare Boosters training modules

This module is part of the **Bushcare Boosters** workshop program developed by the Sydney Metropolitan Catchment Management Authority as support training material for Bushcare volunteers. Boosters workshops aim to help volunteers value and understand their Bushcare and other on-ground work as part of the big picture of biodiversity restoration across Australia. The program encourages recognition of the interconnectedness of work across all sites, big or small and its contribution to habitat health and landscape change.

The series includes:

Module 1 – Working safely and weed control techniques
Module 2 – Bushcare and the 'Big Picture'
Module 3 – The birds and the bees of bushcare

The modules do not need to be completed in numerical order or in their totality. The series has been designed to support a flexible delivery approach that can be tailored to meet the individual needs of each training group. Each workshop in the Bushcare Boosters program can be delivered as a stand alone training event or combined with other modules and field sessions. The modules provide base information which can be altered, added to and tailored to suit the needs of participating volunteers. There are specific learning outcomes for each module.

About Module 1

This module is the first in the series. It covers weed characteristics, basic weed control techniques, and general safe work practices and methodology.

The content of Module 1 is of an introductory level and is most suitable for volunteers who have some practical experience in the field but who wish to participate in a short refresher course to develop a better understanding of environmental restoration techniques and safe work practices. It is not aimed at volunteers who have obtained accredited training in environmental restoration. This module is best delivered in the field, using practical demonstrations.

TIP:
Module 1 is best delivered outside as a practical field session.

General tips for delivering a Bushcare Boosters workshop

1. Choosing the venue

Close to your target group	Remember, volunteers are interested mostly in local Bushcare, and their local sites. Keep it local.
Within close proximity to a key local natural site	A key component of making this day an effective awareness exercise is spending some time on a working site where the issues raised can be examined and practical solutions explored. Ideally this will be in walking distance from the training venue. Preferred sites should be within a brief walk (less than 5 minutes). The closer the better. Another option is to have a mini bus to take participants into the field, but the preferred option is always to be able to walk straight from the venue into a suitable practical demonstration site. This allows the trainer to take advantage of good weather and enjoy the outdoors. After all, Bushcare is about getting out there.
Comfortable in terms of heating, seating and sound	Simple venues are fine, but tables, chairs, heating and lighting must be adequate as a relatively comfortable setting will help to promote a relaxed atmosphere. Watch out for too much external noise – e.g. roads or sporting activities.
Parking should be available within several hundred metres of the venue	The more complicated the access arrangements, the more likely there are to be late starters, or lost participants. Venues should be easy to find, and close to parking or other transport. Where possible, sandwich boards or other signage should be used to indicate where the session is being held and put out at least 1 hour before the advertised commencement time.
Public transport access	Access points should be identified in promotional material distributed to participants prior to the event. Participants should be provided with a map prior to the session indicating: • the venue • parking options • public transport options • amenities options • emergency contact numbers.

2. Needs for inside the venue

Seating to comfortably fit your proposed participant numbers	The ideal number of participants for this workshop is 12 – 14. There are several reasons for this. The timing of activities is structured for this size of group. More than this number and the time taken for discussion activities will lead to the workshop running longer than planned. This may not be a problem, as long as the model timetable is amended to cater for the larger groups. Groups smaller than 10 may struggle to get the interactivity that helps to make this activity a success. The room should not be overly large (i.e. school hall), or the atmosphere is not conducive to good communication. On the other hand, an overly crowded venue will be uncomfortable and stifle discussion. NOTE: The presence of one or two agency/council support staff should be strongly encouraged and they should participate in all the activities.
Tables and chairs desirable	Tables should never be set up in a classroom lecture format. This is the quickest route to a disengaged and sleepy audience. Where possible, participants should sit around tables in groups of 4 to 5 and be encouraged to have as much interaction as possible around each discussion activity.
White board desirable	When "feeding back" after each discussion activity, a useful exercise is to write up key points on a white board as they are raised. This reinforces the value the facilitator places on the feedback, and provides a framework for later review activities.
Power available	For any displays. Check whether a screen is available, or at least a plain white wall to project on to.

3. Desirable features of a field visit site

A field walk and talk is a key component of making the day a success. Your field visit site should have the following characteristics:

- Be typical of the sites that the participants deal with on a regular basis
- Some remnant bushland
- Some patches of weed
- Access
- Be varied enough to illustrate the major themes of the day

The purpose of the field visit is to reinforce the principles of the day's discussions.

4. Promoting the event

An invitation flyer template is provided as part of these facilitator's notes.

Key information to make sure is included in the flyer:

- Who the session is for
- Where it is located – include map and address
- Day
- Date
- Start and finish times
- Catering
- An RSVP deadline
- Contact person for more information
- Contact email and phone number
- Public transport options

5. On the day

Ensure participants have a contact number for late-comers or people who can't find the venue.	Make sure that a contact number is provided upon confirmation of the place, and that the organiser also has a contact number for each participant. Make sure that whatever contact number is provided is contactable on the morning of the event – for example do not give a number that can only be reached from 9 – 5 if the event starts at 8am.
Place notices, if possible, to advise people of directions to the venue.	Notices in car parks, and at entrances to the venue are helpful to direct people to where you would like them to be. Ask someone who has not been to the venue before to come along and seek their advice on where signs would be best located.
Have some sticky labels for people to write their first names on and stick on their shirts.	Pre-printed name labels are very helpful and show a commitment to the participants that is appreciated. When time does not allow this, sticky label sheets can be used with hand written first names. Always have extras. A fall back is some paper that can be folded over and left in front of the participant on the table. NOTE: Although common sense, having names personalises the session and encourages better and more open communication
Have several permanent markers to write names	Permanent markers can be used to write names on the sticky labels.
Packet of pens	People always forget pens. Have a bag handy, it is appreciated by participants.
Whiteboard marker pens	There is no point having a white board without whiteboard markers. Don't forget the whiteboard cleaner also.
Laminated aerial photos	Laminated aerial photographs of the area that is being looked at are very helpful when looking at significant environmental sites. Topographic sheets are available with colour aerial photos very cheaply and if laminated can be very long lasting.
Copies of Council policies and other documents including local reference books, field guides etc	e.g. Plans of Management, Policies, Development Control Plans, Field Guides, Local plant lists.

Event planning template

Before you start	Requirement	Who	Date completed
Identify your target audience	• Find out names, roles, and groups that participants are from. Level of experience of participants is also useful.		
Check the venue	Preferred location is: • Within close proximity to a key local natural site with lots of weeds that's easily accessible • Comfortable in terms of heating and sound • Parking should be available within 100 metres where possible • Public transport access points should be identified in promotional material distributed to participants prior to the event.		
	• Comfortably seats proposed participant numbers		
	• Tables and chairs essential		
	• White board desirable		
	• Power available		
Promoting the event	• Distribute the flyer (template attached)		
	• Note an RSVP deadline and contact person		
	• Provide a confirmation of place booking		
Materials preparation	• Prepare maps and aerial photos, tools, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), powerpoint presentation if desired, sign on sheet, evaluation forms, programs (template attached), copies of participants workbooks for each attendee, additional signage to direct participants to location, labels, pens, markers, camera.		
On the day	• Take maps and aerial photos, tools, PPE, powerpoint presentation if desired, sign on sheet, evaluation forms, programs, copies of participants workbooks for each attendee, additional signage to direct participants to location, labels, pens, markers, camera.		
	• Ensure participants have a contact number for late comers or people who can't find the venue		
	• Place notices if possible to advise people of directions to the venue		
	• Have some sticky labels for people to write their first name on and stick on shirts.		
	• Make sure permanent markers do not get used on the whiteboard.		
	• Keys to venue.		
Other items			

Facilitator's Notes for delivering Module 1

Please note that the information contained in the Bushcare Booster Participant's Workbook for Module 1 is general information only. It does not aim to provide comprehensive details regarding OH & S and other legislative requirements related to Bushcare work. It is the responsibility of trainers and supervisors to be familiar with their own organisational requirements and responsibilities, and be up-to-date with current legislation and any legislative changes affecting volunteers. This specific information should be included in training delivery, additional to the general information provided in this module.

These notes provide a guide and prompts for the person delivering the Module 1 workshop.

Approximate running time: **2.5 hours with a 30 minute break.**

Workshop Activity	Tips for the facilitator
Welcome	• Welcome the participants • Provide a brief introduction to the session, the reasons for its scheduling and any other local details that are relevant. • Do (or ask someone else to) an "Acknowledgement of Country" • Give an overview of general housekeeping such as emergency procedures, toilet facilities and the timetable for the day. • Reinforce that the session is for their needs, is meant to be fun and interactive, and is flexible enough to address relevant issues and problems that they have an interest in or are seeking more information about.
Introductions **Activity 1:** Getting to know the group, why did we get involved and who are we?	• This activity aims to get participants talking about the things that interest them, motivate them and the reasons why they got involved. • Give people time to talk and introduce themselves. Don't hurry them through this session. Allow the participants to share a bit about themselves, their story and their wisdom.
All about weeds **Activities 2 & 3:** Weed origins and characteristics	• Content includes where weeds come from, why they grow so well and their characteristics. • Activities are pair or group discussion activities to encourage participants to share their knowledge and experiences.

Working safely	• Content includes rights and responsibilities of volunteers and land managers. Emergency procedures and reporting incidents. • Where possible, trainers should include actual documents used by the organisation for site risk assessments, site inductions and other OH & S requirements specific to the group. • The generic Site Risk Assessment template in the workbook can also be used as a field exercise.
Controlling Weeds **Practical demonstrations of weed control techniques**	• Introduce this exercise as a 'brushing up on skills' activity but be aware even experienced bushcarers may have developed bad habits. • Make this a "hands-on" practical session at a site with a diverse range of weeds. • Run through each of the techniques once verbally. • Do a demonstration, and then allow the participants to have a turn of each method. • If there is a large group of participants, have another support person there to assist with demonstrating and supervising the participants. • If enough support staff are present, consider "rotation stations" where each technique is already set up (with the right tools) and done.
Wrap up & feedback	• Provide participants with information on follow-up references and handy resources. • Thank the participants for their time attending today and their contributions. • Give positive feedback for their efforts. • Have them complete evaluation forms about today's session (which helps you to learn what works well and how to improve things for next time). • Reinforce the need to maintain communication with their council/supervisor.

Invitation Template

Dear Bushcarer,

Bushcare Boosters –
Working safely and weed control techniques

You are invited to a free *(insert duration)* interactive Bushcare Boosters training workshop that will cover:

- weed characteristics
- basic weed control techniques
- safe work practices and methodology

The content is of an introductory level and is most suitable for volunteers who have some practical experience in the field and who wish to participate in a short refresher course to develop a better understanding of environmental restoration techniques and safe work practices. It is not aimed at volunteers who have obtained accredited training in environmental restoration, though all are welcome to attend.

Date:

Time:

Location:

What should you bring:

(Insert map showing location, parking and any public transport options)

Places are limited. Bookings are essential, please RSVP to *(insert contact)* by *(insert date)*

T: *(insert phone number)* E: *(insert email address)*

Program template

(Insert organisation logo)

Working safely and weed control techniques

(Insert date)
(Insert venue)

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

	Welcome & Introductions
(Insert times)	**All about weeds** • Where weeds come from • Why they grow so well • Weed characteristics
(Insert times)	**Working safely: Occupational Health and Safety** • Rights and responsibilities of volunteers and land managers. • Emergency procedures and reporting incidents • Site Risk Assessment exercise
(Insert times)	**Brushing up on skills** • Weed control techniques - practical session
(Insert times)	**Wrap up**

Workshop evaluation form template

Feedback about today's workshop -

WORKING SAFELY & WEED CONTROL TECHNIQUES

This workshop has been designed to help you in your Bushcare work. We appreciate your feedback and suggestions, so we can make future workshops as useful as possible.

About you: *(please tick)*

I am:
- ☐ new to bushcare
- ☐ a beginner with some experience
- ☐ an experienced bushcarer

I have:
- ☐ no background in the natural environment
- ☐ some knowledge of the natural environment
- ☐ lots of knowledge of the natural environment

Please tick the most suitable box below about today's workshop:

Training feedback	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Comments
I learnt something new about Bushcare and weed removal.				
After today, I feel more capable and motivated to continue work at my site.				
I have better understanding of hazards and how to work safely at my Bushcare site.				
The workshop helped me to brush up on or learn new skills.				
I thought the training was thorough and well presented.				
The workbook was useful for me and easy to follow.				

Any further feedback or comments?

Is there other training or workshops that you would like to do?