



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 10 February 2011

Bushcare volunteers urgently needed

The National Trust needs your help to save native bushland at some of our Sydney properties, including two near you at Cheltenham and Beecroft.

Ahmisa at Cheltenham and the **Ludovic Blackwood Memorial Sanctuary** at Beecroft are both in need of volunteers to join their Bushcare program and help reverse the long-term decline of Australia's native vegetation.

Brian Scarsbrick, director of Natural Heritage, said that volunteers play a vital role in controlling weeds, especially those that degrade urban bushland.

"Caring for native bushland is vital for our natural environment to be protected for the benefit of future generations," Mr Scarsbrick continued.

"The best way to protect the local environment is for the local community to get involved.

"All Bushcare groups are led by a trained supervisor who will guide volunteers through local plant identification, native fauna identification and basic site strategies for controlling weeds.

"The main tasks of Bushcare volunteers are to weed out aggressive plants, such as Asparagus fern, Lantana and Privets, as well as updating the flora species list."

Ahmisa, which adjoins the Lane Cove National Park, Bushcare groups have been meeting **monthly** since 2008. The property comprises of two cottages and a meditation hut, set in 1.3 hectares of typical Sydney sandstone bushland, dominated by Eucalyptus and Angophoras. Over the last six years, post-fire germination has resulted in a dense growth of shrub species, with local weeds threatening to invade regenerating areas.

A Bushcare group has been meeting **fortnightly** at the **Ludovic Blackwood Memorial Sanctuary** since 2004. It is a sheltered site with a small gully that contains an important remnant of the protected Blue Gum High Forest, as well as Sydney Red Gums, Blackbutt eucalyptus and a large variety of native understorey plants. The health of the bushland is threatened by a number of weedy vines and other weeds. Many native animals, including possums, native bees, rosellas, echidna's and powerful owls have been seen foraging in the area.

Morning tea is provided at all Bushcare sessions.

For more information or to join a Bushcare group, please contact the National Trust on **(02) 9258 0176**.

Editor's note: Images can be provided on request.

Media enquiries: Anastasia Stomo (02) 9258 0131.