

Bush restoration

In 1998, the lifting of the road reservation and declaration of the Wolli Creek Valley as a Regional Park, provided sufficient security to encourage real investment in restoring the long neglected bushland. Work carried out by the National Trust during the 1980s, with support from Canterbury Council, showed how effective bush regeneration could be.

Bush restoration, a long process requiring skill, commitment and cooperation between community and government, is now transforming the valley.

What is bush restoration?

The work of restoring bushland has two components:

Bush regeneration

Where a degraded area has remains of or is close to native bushland (having a level of resilience), bush regeneration techniques are applied. This involves removing weeds, reducing other threats and nurturing the native seed bank stored in the soil to tip the balance in favour of native species. It is an intensive and patient process that produces results over time.

Revegetation

In areas that are severely degraded or where regeneration is unsuccessful, revegetation (planting) may be used. Seed collected from local native species (known as local provenance) is used to propagate the plant stock. This retains genetic diversity and ensures that they are suited to local conditions. Revegetation programs in the Wolli Creek Valley use local provenance stock from seed collected in the valley and propagated by the Marrickville Community Nursery.

“No one cared about the bush, no one worried about the weeds or anything, you know. It just happened to be there and nobody said anything about this and that bush in those days.”

Vic Meyer, resident of Bayview Avenue during the 1950s

THE BRADLEY METHOD

In the early 1960s sisters Eileen and Joan Bradley carefully hand-weeded small areas of the degraded Mosman bushland where they walked. They worked from the good condition bushland towards the more weedy areas, being careful to replace the bush litter which - they believed - contained the seedbank for new growth. This approach over time produced a shift from weedy vegetation to an increase in native species. By 1975 The NSW branch of the National Trust adopted the Bradley method, employing Joan to supervise their work and to develop their training program. The Bradley principles have been modified in practice as knowledge accumulates but their method remains the basis of thousands of regeneration programs today.



Revegetation works undertaken by WCPS volunteers at Turrella before in 2008 (top) and after in 2011 (below)
Photo P. Stevens

WCPS bushcare volunteers taking part in bush regeneration works at Undercliffe
Photo P. Stevens

Grey Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*)
Illustration G. Gatenby courtesy NSW NPWS

