



Tuesday 2 May 2017

## HABITAT GARDEN TAKES ROOT WITH NATIVES

A pocket green patch known as Donnelly Park, identified as ideal for a native habitat garden by a group of Putney residents, has now sprung to life thanks to a bit of hard yakka and Council know-how.

Local resident Penny Willis put her idea of a native garden to her local Councillor, Jane Stott, the chair of the Bushland and Environment Advisory Committee who agreed that the park would benefit from the enhancement. Council staff were asked for assistance and Mrs Willis organised a letterbox drop for volunteers to lend a helping hand.

To get the ball rolling, Council improved access to the reserve and delivered 5m<sup>3</sup> of mulch to the site. On the designated day, Bushcare staff armed with shovels, mattocks and eight fledgling flowering gums (*Corymbia ficifolia*) met up with the eager gardeners.

Despite the rain, after an hour the 24m<sup>2</sup> area had been dug, mulched and planted, transforming an underutilised area into a budding native garden.

City of Ryde Mayor, Clr Bill Pickering, said: "The reality is that Council cannot do everything with the funds we have, so working with community groups makes a lot of sense.

"This garden is a great initiative and shows the benefit of Council working 'hand in glove' with the community to improve the environment. It's a win-win for everyone."

Deputy Mayor, Clr Jane Stott, said she was delighted with the outcome. "Community plantings bring people together, add beauty and help the environment.

"Gardening can also serve as an outdoor classroom, giving children the opportunity to learn about the natural world and the value of helping create something with their own hands."

It is hoped that the native habitat gardens will encourage more usage of Donnelly Park for passive recreation and inspire locals to use native plants in their own gardens.

Ryde Council hopes to recruit more volunteers for the next community planting day when the focus will be on planting out the area near the corner of Morrison Road and Mitchell Street and the garden bed area along the Mitchell Street edge.

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Photo: Wednesday 3 May 2017, 3.30pm. Donnelly Park, Cnr Morrison Road and Mitchell Street, Putney.

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