

Monday 5 May 2014

VOLUNTEER PARTNERS HELP RESTORE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Restoration of the wildlife corridor along Shrimptons Creek is getting a helping hand from big business volunteers thanks to an innovative Council Bushcare Partnership Program.

The program provides opportunities for employees from local businesses to volunteer and get involved with Bushcare activities during community partnership days.

In the past twelve months employees from Toshiba, CA Technologies, Chep and members of Morling Theological College's *Plunge* program have removed noxious weeds that have been choking out the native bushland along Shrimptons Creek and have prepared the land for a mass-planting activity by Novartis staff.

City of Ryde Community Life Group Manager, Baharak Sahebekhtiari, said the community partnership program is a win for everyone. "It helps promote team-building activities, providing unique and satisfying experiences for employees while protecting the environment and creating community awareness."

Since 2006, staff from Novartis have volunteered over 800 hours to plant more than 6,750 plants in local parks, helping to restore bushland and transforming degraded areas.

Novartis CEO, Jason Smith, said: "Novartis is proud to again partner with Bushcare as part of our 2014 Community Partnership Day. This is a global Novartis initiative where our employees from around the world engage in volunteering projects to support local communities, social institutions and non-profit organisations. Personally I found today's activity a great way to connect with nature, get fit and make a difference to the local community."

By providing a well-structured community partnership program the City of Ryde aims to expand on work already undertaken in bushland areas and form networks with local businesses. The focus is on long term strategic projects like Shrimptons Creek that improve natural habitats and enhance biodiversity.

To learn more about the City of Ryde Bushcare Partnership Program visit www.ryde.nsw.gov.au/bushcare or call 9952 8222 and ask to speak to the Coordinator Bushcare Volunteers.

Photo Opportunity: 30 staff members from Novartis, (incl CEO Jason Smith, and Head of Oncology, Christoff Laurez) will roll up their sleeves to plant over 400 shrubs and plants in Wilga Park (near the corner of Waterloo Road and Cottonwood Crescent, Macquarie Park) Friday 9 May, (mulching from 9am-10am, and planting from 10.30am-1pm).

Media contact: Lee Kirkland City of Ryde Media Officer 9952 8083 kirkland@ryde.nsw.gov.au