

Regenerating bushland one plant at a time

Kirsty Heenan October 25, 2019



Bushcare volunteers Arnold Riek, Kathryn Gilbert, Anthony Edwards and David Manning.

Taking care of the bush is more popular than ever, with five different volunteer groups working to regenerate bushland and parks in Rosewood, North Ipswich, Brookwater and Gales.

As part of the new Ipswich City Council Bushcare and Parkcare program, each group will receive tailored support, including on-the-ground training, insurance cover, plants, tools and mulch.

It will also help connect new groups based in Brookwater's Opossum Creek and Fred Ferguson Park in Gales, to more established groups with decades of experience.

Cassie Paton, Gales Community House Coordinator, is working to transform Fred Ferguson Park alongside Parkcare group leader Katie Gilbert. Ms Paton said the group at Gales Community House had lots of ideas on what they hoped to achieve.

"We want to make Fred Ferguson Park a more community and family friendly space – to pretty it up and bring in more resources like water taps. We also want to introduce more activities and services so it'll be a more exciting park for everyone to visit," Ms Paton said.

As part of a newly formed group, Ms Paton said she's excited about networking with other Bushcare and Parkcare groups and learning from their experience.

"It will be great to connect with other groups so we can learn from them, and find out more about native plants and maintenance," she said.

One of those sources of knowledge is Arnold Rieck.

The passionate horticulturist was a founding member of the group that's worked to regenerate Mason's Gully in Rosewood for the past 19 years.

"When we started, there was nothing in Mason's Gully other than one tree, which was an exotic," Mr Rieck said.

"Over the years, we've planted hundreds of native trees, and lots of the school children I taught helped with some of the first plantings we did."

The Mason's Gully Bushcare group celebrates 20 years next year, and is looking for more volunteers to help ahead of the milestone.

"I would encourage folk to get involved in projects like this and to enjoy our local plants," Mr Rieck said.

"We'll be having a big party to mark two decades since we began, and I'm hoping lots of our volunteers who have worked on Mason's Gully will be there for it."

The Bushcare program includes five groups:

- **Garden of Eden Group, North Ipswich** – volunteers have been working for three years to restore the riverbank at the North end of Cribb Park
- **Peace Park Arboretum, Rosewood** – Run by Native Plants Queensland, the group has been running for 15 years and plans to set up a seedling nursery this year.
- **Mason's Gully, Rosewood** – Run by West Moreton Landcare, this group has been active for 19 years to regenerate Mason's Gully and is looking for more volunteers.
- **Opossum Creek in Brookwater** – Run by Springfield Lakes Nature Care, this new group is also seeking members. They will be working close to where Bundamba botanist Lloyd Bird finished working with his Bushcare group 20 years ago.
- **Fred Ferguson Park, Gailes** – Run by Gailes Community House, this new Bushcare group is looking for more volunteers to help transform the large park for the community.

If you're interested in joining any of these groups, visit Ipswich City Council's [Volunteer Portal](#) to register your interest and find out when the next working bee is being held.