

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAM

Oxley Creek Catchment Association (OCCA) established its Corporate Volunteering Program in 2007 to take advantage of the increasing number of businesses and organisations who were implementing sustainability programs and providing their staff with the time and opportunities to volunteer with community organisations.

Corporate volunteering provides a way for OCCA to promote a catchment care message to a broader community. Getting people out to see the problems first hand - and then actually doing something to solve them - is the best way of educating people about the environment and encouraging them to change their behaviours. It is also an important source of volunteer input to current rehabilitation projects and the nursery, and a source of income for OCCA.

Supported by OCCA staff and volunteers who carried out site preparation, provided plants and equipment, facilitated the events, and provided specialist knowledge of flora and fauna, OCCA provides organisations with experiences such as:

- Seed collection
- Plant propagation and nursery work
- Removal of weed species
- Tree planting
- Litter collection
- Water quality testing
- Macroinvertebrate sampling
- Guided walks
- Flora and fauna identification

OCCA has hosted organisations including Sony, Coco Cola Amatil, Ernst and Young, Bligh Tanner, and Telstra to help restore areas such as the Oxley Creek Common, Granard Wetlands and Gay Street, Coopers Plains.

In August 2004 Sony, Landcare Australia and the Oxley Creek Catchment Association (OCCA) undertook the first “Eco-challenge” in Queensland on the Oxley Creek Common at Rocklea. The Common is part of a green corridor from the Brisbane River along Oxley Creek as far as the Ipswich Motorway. It is flood-prone and was previously part of the Queensland Government animal research station. In 2003 the Common was made available to the public as recreational green space.

About 40 Sony staff and their families worked to plant and mulch over 600 eucalypt, acacia and callistemon plants in the riparian zone along the creek that helped to stabilise the creek bank and now provide vital habitat for native fauna and shade and a pleasant environment for people walking or cycling the track along the creek.





Sony staff hard at work in 2004



The planted area in 2016



Weeded and planted area in 2004



The area in 2016

In September 2005 the Brisbane Sony Enviro Challenge was again held at the Oxley Creek Common. About 20 Sony staff joined OCCA to plant 550 native trees and shrubs over a 500m² area whilst their children were entertained by a Geckos Wildlife display.

In 2006, to recognise the work of the Sony Enviro Challenge participants, a plaque recognising their contributions over three years was erected at the start of the walking track. Sony staff's hard work has resulted in a pleasantly shaded pathway for the community to enjoy.



In 2007 Westpac staff took time out to work at Gaddes Park with the Gaddes Park Bushcare Group to maintain the area and undertake some much needed weeding and planting. They were all thrilled to find scratchings on trees indicating some koala activity.



Also in 2007, Coca Cola Amatil staff joined OCCA and spent a day at the Oxley Creek Common where they planted an area with native species. In 2008 Coca Cola Amatil was again keen to support a community environment project and OCCA took about 15 staff to Pallara Parklands. The parkland provides a vital vegetation corridor to Oxley Creek. The Coca Cola staff planted 500 trees, installed three nest boxes and went on a flora and weed identification walk.

In 2009, as part of Coca Cola Amatil's 'Sustainability September' initiative, 20 volunteers joined OCCA staff and volunteers at Granard Wetlands to plant trees and clear rubbish from the area. The Oxley Sherwood Lions Club provided lunch and Coca Cola Amatil provided the drinks.

In 2010, OCCA provided corporate volunteering activities to Coca Cola Amatil, Landcare Australia, and Ernst and Young. 18 staff from Coca-Cola Amatil dressed in their best bright red volunteer uniforms for an afternoon of restoration efforts at the Granard Wetlands on 27 October 2010. They collected almost 100kg of litter and weeds and planted 200 trees and shrubs. Coca-Cola Amatil volunteers had previously visited Granard Wetlands in 2009 when they had planted a section of the site that is now maturing well. They were enthusiastic about coming back to see its progress and to tend their plants once again.

To celebrate World Environment Day in June 2010, 100 enthusiastic and hardworking staff from Ernst



and Young worked with OCCA at the Oxley Creek Common. They tested the creek water, weeded and planted 400 understorey plants, then enjoyed a guided tour of the highlights of the Common.

In 2011 two teams from Coca-Cola Amatil at Richlands in conjunction with Landcare Australia visited Granard Wetlands as part of their Sustainability September. They planted over 100 plants and also removed litter and weeds.



In February 2012, staff from RACQ Insurance's Eight Mile Plains office, volunteered for an afternoon of planting, water quality monitoring and rubbish removal. OCCA, in collaboration with other local community and school groups, has been restoring the banks of Oxley Creek within Oxley Creek Common. The creek has been in need of attention since the January 2011 floods. RACQ Insurance's volunteers' efforts were concentrated on a section of the creek where young native plants were uprooted by the flood water.

2013 was a busy year for corporate volunteering. In February OCCA provided Corporate Volunteering opportunities to Landcare Australia, Coca-Cola Amatil, Telstra and Energex at sites including (then) Nyanda State High School, Granard Wetlands, Watson Road State School, Gay Street, Coopers Plains, Oxley Creek Common, Toohey Forest, and Kookaburra Park, Rocklea.



In March 13 Telstra volunteers joined OCCA volunteers at the Oxley Creek Community Nursery at Nyanda State High School where they propagated seeds, picked out seedlings, cleaned tubestock and tidied the nursery area. In the afternoon they went to Toohey Forest to gather native seed for propagation in the Nursery.

In April eight Telstra volunteers spent the morning at the Oxley Creek Community Nursery where they spent the time pricking out, tidying and cleaning up tubestock. The afternoon was spent weeding recent plantings at the Oxley Creek Common.

In September, 17 Telstra volunteers spent the morning creating a Fairy/Butterfly Garden along the banks of Rocky Water Holes for the Salisbury Kindergarten. In the afternoon they took a leisurely stroll through Toohey Forest where they collected seed for propagation in the OCCA Community

Nursery. In October OCCA was happy to welcome a group of 15 Telstra volunteers to again spend the morning working in the OCCA Community Nursery at Nyanda State High School. In the afternoon they created a Bush Tucker Trail using fallen trees. Also in 2014 OCCA hosted Origin Energy staff who worked at the Oxley Creek Common, removing weeds and replanting some areas.

In 2014 OCCA worked closely with Landcare Australia to again host volunteers from Telstra on four occasions, resulting in over 300 volunteer hours of activity collecting seed propagating plants, weeding and planting at sites throughout the catchment including Oxley Golf Complex, Dan Stiller Reserve at Parkinson, Granard Wetlands at Rocklea, Watson Rd State School, Gay Street at Coopers Plains, Oxley Creek Common, Toohey Forest and Kookaburra Park at Salisbury. Work at these sites was also supported by teams from Conservation Volunteers Australia.

In 2015 OCCA Telstra volunteers worked with OCCA on five occasions to undertake water quality monitoring, collect seeds and remove lantana from a number of sites across the catchment. Telstra volunteers also helped OCCA move into the new Oxley Creek Catchment Centre in Macdevitt Street by installing cupboards, painting, reconstructing the Nursery, removing weeds and most non-native species, building compost bays, knocking down brick walls and clearing rubble.

OCCA also hosted Bligh Tanner staff and their families for a day in May at the Oxley Creek Common providing an opportunity for both organisations to learn more about each other and how we could collaborate in the future. Whilst the adults took a guided plant identification walk and helped to plant out areas along the pathway, the children did various activities including macroinvertebrate sampling.



So far, 2016 has been a busy year. OCCA has run multiple volunteer days with Telstra staff spending many hours removing weeds at The Fort Bushcare Site, Oxley. The site is being restored by the Fort Bushland Reserve Bushcare Group, coordinated by John Lahey, with some help from OCCA and its volunteers. Twelve volunteers from Intergraph (a computer aided design retailer at Dutton Park) also put in a day's work at The Fort where they heard about the history of the site from the John Lahey, and then did some weeding to try and combat the rampant growth of invasive weed species.



In June, OCCA organised for an Indigenous leader, Gaga Kerry, to host an educational workshop with some Telstra staff at the Oxley Creek Common. This was an interesting experience for all involved as we learnt about the history of the Oxley region and its significance to the indigenous community, as well as the importance and uses of native plants for food, medicine and shelter.



The Corporate Volunteering Program has been highly successful in introducing mainly office-based staff to the diverse environments and natural resources in the Oxley Creek catchment and raising their awareness of the issues facing our natural areas and waterways. Oxley Creek Catchment Association has greatly appreciated their help in restoring areas, collecting and propagating seeds, and helping us to establish our current Catchment Centre. We look forward to continuing these fruitful partnerships.