

CASE STUDY

Ian Geddes Bush Reserve, Holbrook



Ian Geddes Bush Reserve, is a reserve in central Holbrook that is a little piece of the bush along the Ten Mile Creek. It is used by locals and tourists alike. It was put aside in the 1990's and rehabilitated by community including Rotary and local schools to honour Ian Geddes, a long-time resident and community member in Holbrook who was particularly interested in the environment.

The Ten Mile Creek was affected by the millennium drought 2000-2009 and then a record-breaking flood in 2010. The creek geomorphology changed post flood and instream works were undertaken to secure the bridges, creating some points of bed stability and creation of a large refuge pool at the upstream bridge.

As a demonstration site it gives the opportunity to educate the public on river friendly practices including the Importance of large woody debris in maintaining and creating instream pools that are summer refuge for aquatic species, such as the endangered Southern Pygmy Perch that still survives in the Ten Mile Creek. As a site with Squirrel gliders, it also showcases the importance of these riparian corridors for terrestrial species that use the hollow-bearing large trees.



Woody weed control

Refreshing Rivers supported the first wave of woody weed control in 2023

Woody weeds were cut and painted with chemical by a contractor from the bush area, and piles were removed by Greater Hume Council.

Community Resource

In November 2023 we held the Great Southern Bioblitz in the Upper Billabong, and the two primary schools were involved in aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity activities in the Reserve.

Friends of Ian Geddes Bush Reserve group

In the Spring of 2024, we followed up with some planting and the creation of a Friends of Ian Geddes Bush Reserve group to help. Working bees were organised to get planting. There were a series of working bees held through 2024 and 2025 to do follow up planting and weed control – cutting and painting of the smaller weed trees and regrowth. We also tackled the Ivy infestation by pulling it back off the trees (to prevent flowering and fruiting) and preparing the area for spraying in the Autumn 2026.

In June 2025 stage 2 of the woody weed control and instream work was completed, with the flood debris logs cut and realigned instream to reduce the risk of damage in the next flood and provide instream woody debris to protect eroded banks from erosion and provide large woody debris for instream habitat

In 2025 we were able to continue planting, especially the Poa tussock grasses that proved successful. Disturbed areas were planted out with natives including River Bottlebrush (*Callistemon seiberi*).

Stats from the Ian Geddes works

- 550m of stream treated for woody weeds
- 2 days instream work with excavator
- 4 days woody weed removal – excavator and ground team
- 6 Community working bees following up weed control and revegetation
- 10 new nestboxes installed
- 138 students and community members involved in activities on the Reserve
- 1000 seedlings were planted (grasses and understorey species)



Top bridge Before and after

After the soil con works, the tree was cut up and placed on the erosion bend to protect it, and encourage vegetation to grow and lock it place.

The willow were removed from the island. In a wet Summer the exotic kikuyu gives some protection to the raw bank, but this area has been targeted for instream revegetation with River Bottlebrush, Poa tussock and and rushes to provide year round protection.



Aquatic vegetation sod establishment Trial

In 2024, we teamed up with a local fish enthusiast which introduced us to the concept of sod planting of aquatic species. We did a couple of trays of mainly Common milfoil (*Myriophyllum* spp.) that was collected from local areas and grew them over Winter under cover, so they form dense mats. They can then be broken up and planted. There has been successful establishment - drought conditions during 2025/6 have meant that the spread has been limited so far but plants are waiting for the right conditions.



Ian Geddes Bush Reserve is an important community resource that provides a place where people can go and see river friendly practices that can be implemented across the Upper Billabong.