

**Nature Play Week – 1-6 April 2014
Evaluation Summary
Kids in Nature Network**

November 2014



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Summary

This is the evaluation report of the inaugural Nature Play Week, created by organisations involved with Kids in Nature Network (KINN).

Nature Play Week is a new signature event that celebrates initiatives of all shapes and sizes that reconnect kids with nature and the outdoors. The week ran from 1-6 April 2014 and was a key part of Premier's Active April 2014, an entire month initiated by Sport and Recreation Victoria (Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure) to get more Victorians more active, more often.

Overall, Nature Play Week was a big success. **Over 40 activities, events and workshops** were staged in the week across metropolitan and rural Victoria. **We estimate 2000 people participated in Nature Play Week.**

Participating organisations included Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Parks Victoria, The Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary, five local councils, schools, kinders, community organisations, small education services and businesses and outdoor playgroups.

Key events included the launch at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Project Wild Thing film screenings. Speakers at the launch event included Graeme Base, leading creator of picture story books; Prof. Tim Entwisle, Chief Executive Officer Royal Botanic Gardens; Christine Joy, Education Coordinator Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Kids in Nature Network Executive; Charles Solomon, Indigenous Program Manager Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne; Dr. Dimity Williams, Kids in Nature Network Co-founder and Health Advisor; Claudia Levey, Young Leader and Associate Professor Mardie Townsend from Deakin University.

The [50 things for Kids to do](#) brochure was also launched, giving families many more playful ways to explore nature and the outdoors at the Gardens and in their own neighborhoods.

Media coverage of the Nature Play Week launch event included:

ABC TV News Breakfast

ABC 774 Radio News

Radio 3AW

A new Nature Play Week website was developed and a social media campaign run by KINN.

The week was particularly useful to build awareness and connections across Victoria from larger organisations to the grassroots. It functioned well as a springboard for further relationship building and collaborations as well as message development. This was evident from conversations KINN has had with enthusiastic participating organisations and with potential new collaborators.

Several participating organisations reported an increase in uptake of their regular outdoor activities and a clear enthusiasm to participate again in 2015. In September 2014, Nature Play South Australia, a new organisation funded by the South Australian Government,

launched Nature Play Week SA.

Nature Play Week 2014 events can be viewed at www.natureplayweek.org.au

Statistical information and participating organizations

We estimate around 2000 people participated in the inaugural Nature Play Week 2014. Forty-five events were held.

Participating organisations included:

Kids in Nature Network
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne
Parks Victoria
Kids Adventure Festival
Mt Baw Baw Alpine Resort
Melbourne Zoo
Healesville Sanctuary
Victoria Walks
Dunkeld Kindergarten
Muddy Boots and Sandy Hands
Westgarth Bush Kinder
Skipping Stones Dance
Port Phillip Ecocentre
Inspired EC (NSW)
Baerami Bush Camp Out (NSW)
Monash City Council
Newstead Preschool
Mc Clelland Sculpture Park
Manningham City Council
Tiggers Childcare Centre and Kindergarten
CERES
Whitehorse City Council
Natured Kids
Wyndarra Childrens Centre
St Alipius Kindergarten
HumaNature Connect
Dromana Primary School
Vermont Uniting Church
Community Kinders Plus
Kooweerup Regional Health Service
Banyule City Council
Poowong Pre-School

94% of organisers were organisations, 6% were individuals staging an event. Most events were held in greater metro Melbourne, but some great regional events held on Mornington Peninsula, The Grampians, Mt Baw Baw and the Geelong area. Two events were held in NSW. Events were spread across the week with most events held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and weekends. Most events were held in the morning, some in the afternoon,

only two in the evening. 64% of events were free of charge to participants. If participants paid, price ranged from \$5-25 pp. Participants said they engaged with Nature Play Week through hearing from it through a large variety of sources: facebook, our newsletter and through various organisations and networks connected to KINN.

Age groups targeted by events (many events targeted multiple age groups hence cumulative percentages are over 100%):

0-2: 27.27%
2-5: 63.64%
5-8: 36.36%
8-10: 27.27%
10-12: 24.24%
12-15: 15.15%
15+: 12.12%
Families: 45.45%

Sponsors included:

Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne
Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne
Sport and Recreation Victoria (Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure)
Outdoors Victoria

Key people and acknowledgements

Nature Play Week was created by organisations involved in the Kids in Nature Network and facilitated by Kids in Nature Network's Cecile van der Burgh, Christine Joy and Dimity Williams.

The week would not have been possible without the incredible support of the staff and volunteers at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and Cranbourne (RBG). KINN would like to extend a special thanks to Christine Joy and Mick Robertson, RBG education coordinators, for their key involvement and strategic input into the development of KINN from inception to present and for their key role in realising Nature Play Week. The Gardens have been the stage of at least 20 successful KINN networking events to date.

Special thanks to our brilliant, game-changing facilitator and mentor Jason Clarke from Minds at Work.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all speakers at the launch and networking events this year.

Nature Play Week would not have been possible without the kind financial support of Sport and Recreation Victoria (Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure) and Outdoors Victoria.

Evaluations and testimonials

16 evaluations were received from organisations holding events in Nature Play Week.

What worked well: People enjoyed the weather, and the fact that events were well received by locals. One respondent had success by including community members in the planning process. The interactivity of play experiences for children and seeing people interact was a highlight for everyone. The support offered by Council staff and community members was appreciated by many.

Challenges included: the weather was challenging for a couple of respondents. Weather in April can be mixed. One person mentioned that holding NPW on the last week of term one was tricky. One person asked to have the event held in the school holidays. Damage to vegie garden beds was mentioned as a challenge by one respondent. Running two events on one day was challenging for a couple of respondents.

Testimonials (from evaluations)

We received excellent and positive feedback via hard copy and online surveys. The general theme was a sense of unity/ all being on the same page about nature play/ connecting children with nature.

Julia Pickwick, Parks Victoria

Amazing capacity to engage in the natural play space-families were engaged, aspirational and inspirational!

Sherryn Prinzi, Banyule City Council

Well attended. Great vibe, happy families, a beautiful day in the garden.

Aileen Thoms, Kooweerup Regional Health Service

Well attended. Feedback was very positive everyone enjoyed themselves and most parents became involved as well.

Imogen Good, McClelland Sculpture Park and Gallery

Well attended. Every week is a play outdoors week for our participants, they were happy to be recognised as mainstream!

Narelle Debenham, Natured Kids.

Well attended. Great vibe. Overall positive feedback.

April Seymore, Port Phillip EcoCentre



Children's author Graeme Base, Young leader Claudia Levey, Associate Professor Dr. Mardie Townsend with grandson and Kids in Nature Network Co-founder and Strategic health advisor, Dr. Dimity Williams, launch Nature Play Week 2014 at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.