

# NATURE PLAY WEEK 2017



## Evaluation Report



reconnecting kids to nature

This evaluation report was prepared by Kids In Nature Network

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# Nature Play Week 2017

## EVALUATION REPORT BY KIDS IN NATURE NETWORK

Nature Play Week is an annual signature event staged in Victoria which celebrates initiatives of all shapes and sizes that reconnects kids with nature and the outdoors. In its fourth year of celebration, the week ran from 12-23 April 2017. Nature Play Week was co-developed by organisations and individuals involved in the Kids In Nature Network (KINN). The week is facilitated by the KINN and is supported by the Department of Health and Human Services and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Nature Play Week is a part of Premier's Active April.

Nature Play Week 2017 was the **Winner of the the "Event of the Year 2017 VIC/TAS" Award**, presented by Parks and Leisure Australia at their state conference in Creswick VIC and was a **National Finalist in the 2017 National Awards of Excellence**, presented by Parks and Leisure Australia on the Gold Coast QLD in October 2017.

Nature Play Week 2017 was built on the success of its previous years, with many organisations hosting events for a fourth year running. **Sixty organisations** and/or individuals registered events. The week featured over 100 separate events, several of which were held more than once during the week, totaling in **150 events** throughout Nature Play Week and an estimated **15,000 participants**.

Key events included the launch at the Wombat Bend play space in Templestowe organized in partnership with Manningham City Council. The launch event featured a Welcome to Country, smoking ceremony and reading by Aunty Joy Murphy-Wandin, a welcome by Local Councillor Mike Zafiropoulos AM, a Q&A with Trace Balla, author of Rivertime and Rockhopping and a welcome by Cecile van der Burgh of Kids In Nature Network. The formal launch was followed by a wide range of nature play activities for kids and families provided by Victoria-based organisations and small local businesses. The launch event was attended by 250 people.

The week featured a state-wide junior rangers nature treasure hunt in over thirteen national parks, an adventure outdoor festival for kids at Anglesea YMCA Recreation Camp, family nature club events, bushwalks for families, bug hunts, birdwatching and much more. The week also presented two conferences for practitioners and parents by the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and a conference by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria for practitioners and land managers at the Australian Garden, Cranbourne Gardens. Both events were very popular, with one fully booked. Speakers included Mick Robertson (Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria), Cecile van der Burgh (Kids In Nature Network), Karen Anderson (Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network), Angie Zerella (Bubup Wilam for Early Learning), Sam Crosby (Centennial Parklands, Sydney) and Doug Fargher (Westgarth Bush Kinder).

The Nature Play Week website formed the central communication platform for the event calendar of events: [www.natureplayweek.org.au](http://www.natureplayweek.org.au) - In addition, Kids In Nature Network ran a well-followed social media campaign in the lead-up, during and after the week at <https://www.facebook.com/kidsinnaturenetwork/>

Nature Play Week puts a spotlight on people and organisations facilitating nature play and outdoor learning in Victoria. Although on a grass-roots level nature play is happening every day, a need was identified for a broader network to connect people in the field with ideas, support and contacts. The continuation of Nature Play Week helped to further build relationships and connections between families and facilitators interested in nature play.

The week also assists parents new to nature play to meet other families and build local peer support networks. Nature Play Week has helped to map organisations and initiatives, bring people together to share ideas and resources, and ultimately celebrate together the fun of simply going outside and play.

### **Statistical information and participating organisations**

As in 2016, we estimate that 15,000 participants were involved across 150 events in Nature Play Week. This included attendance at several recurring large events and self-guided activities as well a large number of small, one-off facilitated events spread out over the week. These events were staged by at least 60 groups and individuals, ranging from small parent groups, community not for profits and small businesses to large government-funded organisations and agencies, like Parks Victoria, Zoos Victoria and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

### **Participating organisations this year included:**

#### **Larger organisations**

Parks Victoria  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Melbourne Gardens  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Cranbourne Gardens  
Botanic Gardens and Centennial Parklands (NSW)  
Werribee Open Range Zoo  
Healesville Sanctuary  
Melbourne Zoo  
Melbourne Water  
McClelland Sculpture Park+Gallery

#### **Local councils**

Manningham City Council  
City of Casey and City of Cardinia  
City of Melbourne  
Yarra Ranges Council  
City of Greater Dandenong  
Whitehorse City Council  
Banyule City Council  
Maribyrnong City Council

#### **Community organisations**

Port Phillip Ecocentre  
YMCA Anglesea  
CERES Environment Park  
Early childhood Outdoor Learning Network  
Victorian National Parks Association  
Landcare  
Edendale Community Environment Farm  
Girl Guides  
The BushPlay Project  
Grong Grong Earth Park

### **Small organisations and businesses**

Leap into Nature  
Firekeepers  
Eco Explorers  
Hike it Baby  
Educated by Nature (WA)  
The Fox Guild

### **Early childhood and schools**

S Peter Chanel Primary School  
Guardian Early Learning Centre Collins Street  
Yarralea Children's Centre  
Clarendon Children's Centre  
Goodstart Early Learning  
Jenny's Early Learning Centre Strathfieldsaye  
Barefoot Family Day Care  
Snadstone Lakes Early Learning Centre  
Huntly Kindergarten  
Quality kids Childcare and kindergarten

### **Bush Playgroups**

Castlemaine bush play group  
Fawkner Community House Outdoor Playgroup  
Merri Bush Playgroup  
Little Seeds Nature Playgroup  
Bush Playgroup Maryborough  
Bright Wild Things Bush Playgroup

### **Other**

Wdea Training  
The Tumbarumba Homeschool Group  
Bendigo Family Nature Club

92% of registered participants organizing an event were organisations; 8% were individuals.

### **Events and activities**

Events and activities staged included the following: Garden Sensory Safari, Junior Ranger treasure hunt and programs across national parks, Kids Adventure Outdoors Anglesea, bush textiles, The Werribee George Circuit Hike, Bush Playgroup bring a friend, Conference: Engaging Young Children in the Outdoors, Conference: 2nd Pedagogy and Practice in Nature Education conference, Nature Trackers at Lilydale Lake, Nature Play Day, exploring habitat in Royal Park, outdoor playgroups, New Hippo Keeper Talk at Werribee Open Range Zoo, See the Seal Keeper Talk at Melbourne Zoo, Visit Koala Forest at Healesville Sanctuary, Celebrate Nature Play Week at the Magic Circle, Rainbows and Muddy Puddles, Jeannie Baker's Circle exhibition, 50 things for kids to do, sticks and stones feathers and bones, bush kinders, Firekeepers' Autumn Bush Days, nature exploration day, Create your own Nature Journal, Bug encounters school holiday workshop, Teddy Bear's Picnic in the Bush, Playdate in the gardens, Wombats corner bushwalk, Enviroguide day, Who lays eggs? Egg hunt with a difference, adventure mountain, bush detectives, bush rangers, kids in nature village, Sand play and stick cubby making, connecting to nature, Platypus Picnic, wild picnic, Nature Play Learn Connect.

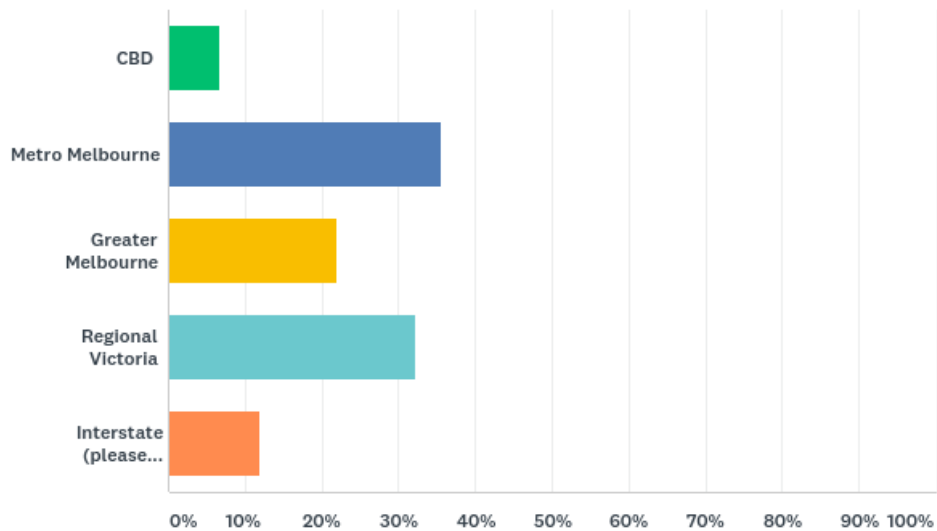
### Timing of events

Events were more or less spread evenly across the week, with the majority of events occurring on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

### Locations of events

5% of events were held in the CBD, 36% in Metro Melbourne, 22% in Greater Melbourne, 32% in regional Victoria and 12% interstate. Some groups organized multiple events in various locations, hence cumulative percentages are over 100%.

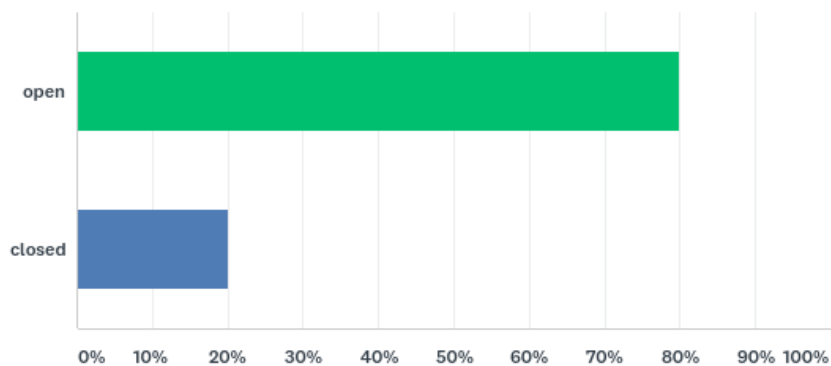
## Q7 Where in Victoria will your event or activity be held?



### Open and closed events

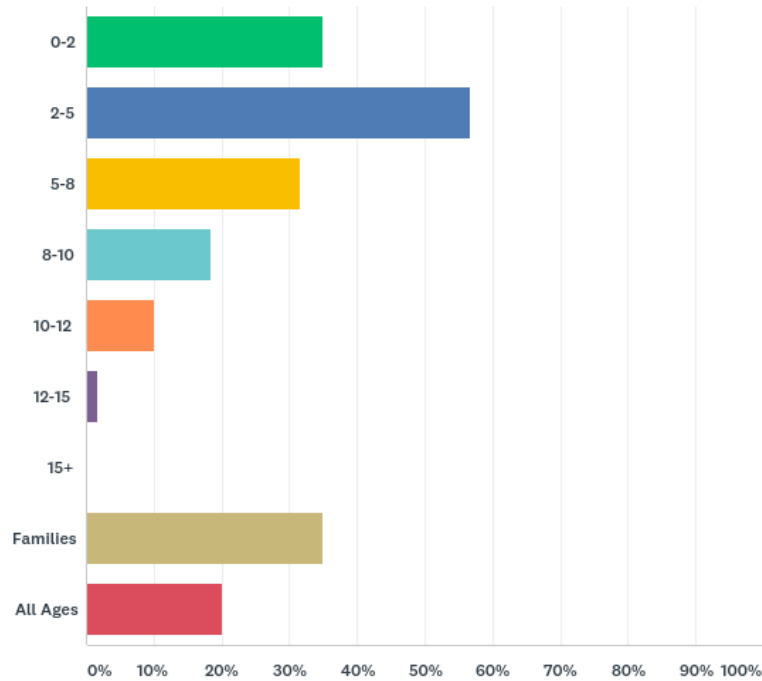
In terms of event audience, 80% of events were open to the public and 20% closed events.

## Q15 Is your event open or closed to public?

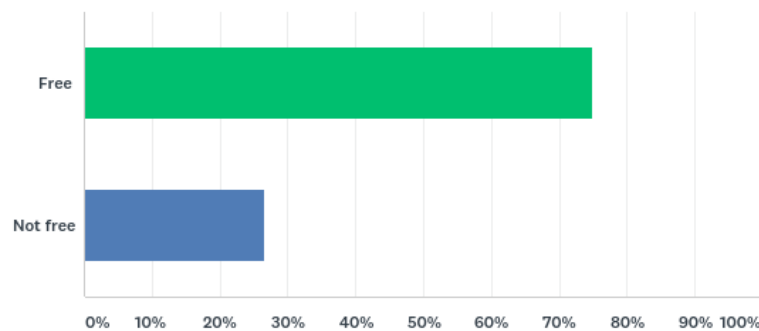


**Age groups targeted by events**

Most events targeted kids between 2-5 years of age (57%), followed by events targeted for kids 0-2 of age (35%) and families (35%) and by events targeted for kids 5-8 of age (31%), and all ages. Many events targeted multiple age groups, hence cumulative percentages are over 100%.

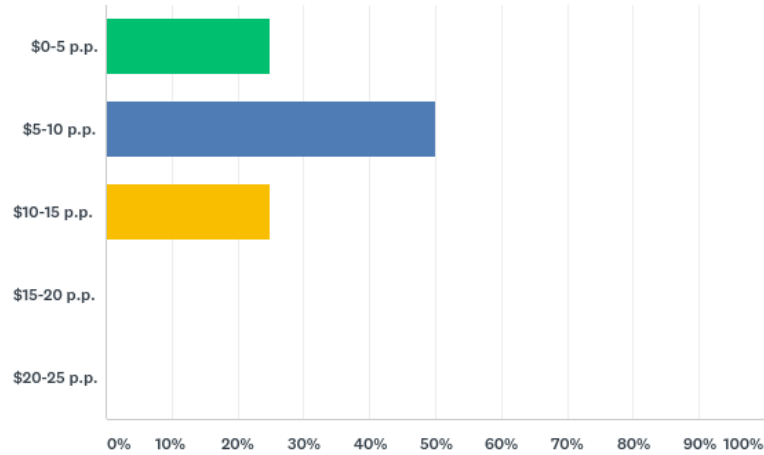
**Q9 What is the age group targeted by your activity or event?****Participation cost of events**

The large majority of Nature Play Week events was free to participants (74%), with 26% of events incurring a participation fee.

**Q12 Is the event/activity free or is there a cost to participants?**

If events were not free, the entry fee for events ranged between \$0-\$15 per participant. This excludes festivals, such as Kids Adventure Outdoors Anglesea, conferences and costs incurred by childcare.

Q13 If the event is not free, what is the entry fee range?

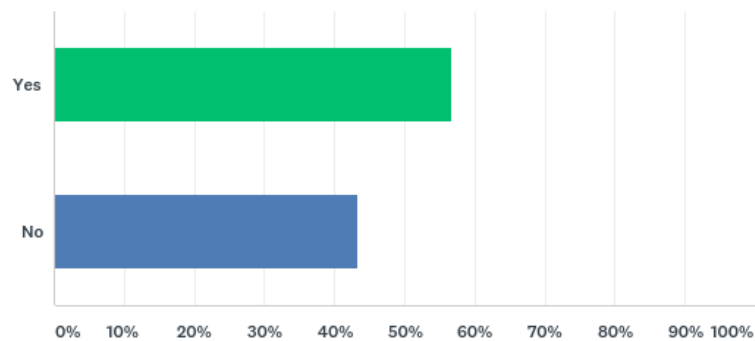


**Retention and reach of Nature Play Week**

Organisers of events said they heard about Nature Play Week from a variety of sources: KINN mailout; facebook; word of mouth; various other organisations and networks, or through previous involvement.

55% of organisers had previously hosted an event in Nature Play Week, 44% of event organisers hosted their first Nature Play Week event.

Q23 Have you hosted an event in Nature Play Week in previous years?



### **Promotion of Nature Play Week and events by event organisers**

Event organisers used a range of ways to promote Nature Play Week and their own events:

- group email contact lists
- newsletters
- school bulletins
- social media (FB, Instagram, Twitter)
- blogs
- websites
- brochures and flyers in holders and handed out
- posters in local community and schools
- targeted promotion at other events
- word of mouth promotion on event location
- local newspaper - news
- newspaper editorial coverage
- media releases
- through kinder enrolment packages
- community and local council events calendar
- floorbooks
- networks of organizing group
- mothers and parent groups
- contacting local kindergartens
- local council parent networks
- what's on local free press listings

### **Key work components of Nature Play Week**

The organization of the week consisted of five key work components executed by Kids In Nature Network.

1. Invitations for event hosts, event liaison and support
2. Online events calendar and map (website)
3. The Launch Event
4. Promotion, publicity and media
5. Awards 2017

### **Acknowledgements**

The Kids In Nature Network team would like to acknowledge everyone who made Nature Play Week 2017 possible. A big thanks to all event organisers and the many fantastic experiences offered to children and families across Victoria and beyond. Nature Play Week would not be possible without many hours of dedicated volunteer effort. Thanks to our core supporters: the Department of Health and Human Services, Premier's Active April and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Special mention to Joey Boothby, Sharon Peters and their team at Manningham City Council for hosting the 2017 launch event at Wombat Bend Playspace.