

NATURE PLAY WEEK 2018



Evaluation Report



This evaluation report was prepared by Kids In Nature Network

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Nature Play Week 2018

EVALUATION REPORT BY KIDS IN NATURE NETWORK

Nature Play Week is Victoria's annual signature event celebrating initiatives of all shapes and sizes that reconnects kids with nature and the outdoors. In its fifth year of celebration, the week ran from 11-22 April 2018. 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 (RBGV). Nature Play Week is a part of Premier's Active April.

Nature Play Week 2018 was built on the success of its previous years, with many organisations hosting events for a fifth year running. **Over eighty 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**.

The launch event was celebrated in conjunction with *Botanica - A Village in the Australian Garden* in Cranbourne. The event took place Wednesday 11 April, 10.30-11am (formal proceedings) followed by nature play in *Botanica – A Village* in the Australian Garden, at the Cranbourne Gardens (RBGV). Curated by artist Darryl Cordell, and inspired by his childhood in the bush, *Botanica* offers families the opportunity to work together to build a unique village, building cubbies and creatures using natural materials collected from the Gardens. The launch event was well attended. Speakers included Chris Russell (RBGV) and Cecile van der Burgh (KINN).

Nature Play Week featured a state-wide junior rangers nature treasure hunt in over thirteen national parks, the Kids Adventure Outdoors (KAOS) at YMCA Anglesea Recreation Camp, family nature club events, bushwalks for families, bug hunts, birdwatching and much more. The week also presented a conference for practitioners and parents by the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network at the Royal Botanic Gardens.

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

Nature Play Week assists organisations and groups to put their initiatives on the map; facilitates connections and collaborations between a wide range of organisations; facilitates the sharing of experiences, ideas and knowledge; connects families and facilitators interested in nature play; and assists parents new to nature play in meeting like-minded families and local peer support networks. The week is a catalyst event, growing a broad cross-sectoral movement getting kids outdoors and reconnecting kids and nature.

Statistical information and participating organisations

From our registration and evaluation survey responses, it is estimated that 15,000 participants were involved across 150 events in Nature Play Week. These events were staged by at least 80 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. This number included attendance at one-off recurring large events and self-guided activities as well a large number of small, one-off facilitated events spread out over the week.

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)
Melbourne Zoo
Healesville Sanctuary
Werribee Open Range Zoo
YMCA Victoria
Melbourne Water
Parks Victoria The Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden
McClelland Sculpture Park+Gallery
Geelong Botanic Gardens
National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW)
Australian Arid Lands and Botanic Gardens (SA)

Larger businesses

Business and Tourism Anglesea
Lake Mountain Alpine Resort

Local councils

Yarra Ranges Council
Darebin City Council
Moreland City Council
City of Melbourne
Banyule Council
City of Greater Bendigo Council
City of Canada Bay
City of Whitehorse

Community organisations

Landcare
Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network
YMCA Anglesea
Nature Play Queensland (QLD)
Port Phillip Ecocentre
CERES Environment Park
Victorian National Parks Association

Southern Dandenongs Landcare Group
Southern Dandenong Community Nursery
Friends of Birdsland
Yarra Ranges Landcare Network
Yarra Ranges Gardens for Wildlife
Edendale Community Environment Farm
Girl Guides Victoria
Geelong District Girl Guides
Leap into Nature
Firekeepers
Nature's Apprentice
The BushPlay Project
Grong Grong Earth Park
Mullaloo Beach Community Group Inc
Educated by Nature (WA)
The Fox Guild
Earth School
PEACE Farm
Coonaroo Community House
Huntly Nature Play
Yarra Valley ECOSS

Early childhood and schools

Taradale Primary School
Lauriston Girls School kindergarten
Bright Future Early Education Centre
Diamond Creek Memorial Kindergarten
Happy Faces Child Care Centre
Inspired Family Daycare
Quality Kids Childcare and Kindergarten
Lorne Kindergarten
Panorama Heights Preschool
Huntley Kindergarten
Monash Vale Early Learning Centre
Spring Gully Kindergarten
Play Child Care and Kindergarten
Bright Steps Educational Childcare and Kindergarten
Helen Jessen Early Learning Centre
Treehouse Early Learning (Guardian Early Learning Group)
Hopetoun Preschool
Foundations Family Day Care
Wellbank Children's Centre
Lake Boga Preschool
Lake Boga Primary School
Victoria Avenue Children's Centre
Sandstone Lakes Early Learning Centre

Bush Playgroups and Nature Clubs

Point Cook Nature Playgroup
Merri Bush Playgroup

Little Seeds Nature Playgroup
Eco Explorers (various bush play groups across greater Melbourne)
Belgrave Lake Park Cottage Playgroup
Bendigo Family Nature Club
Rainbows and Muddy Puddles
Nature Folk
Growing Green Thumbs

Other

Yarra Plenty Regional Libraries
Soundsations
Splash Physiotherapy

96% of registered participants organizing an event were organisations; 4% were individuals.

Events and activities

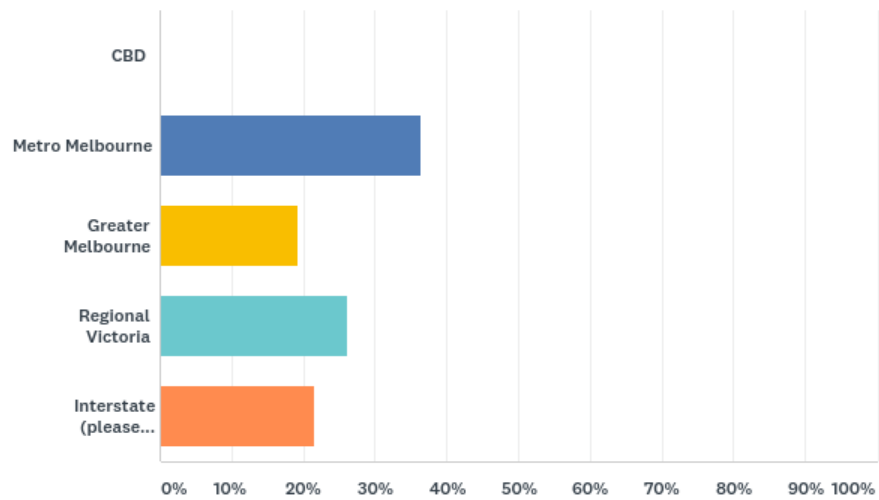
Events and activities staged included the following: Junior Ranger treasure hunt and programs across national parks, Botanica, a Village in the Australian Garden, Wild about Play at the Zoo, Kids Adventure Outdoors Anglesea, sensory art nature play, bush textiles, bush playgroup bring a friend, 3rd Pedagogy and Practice in Nature Education conference, Nature Play Day, creating connection to place, Mud World Ipswich, Junior Nature Club “the little things”, Beach Discovery Day, Nature school in the kitchen garden, wetland bird wander, poetry among the Eucalypts, Be a girl guide for a day!, Discover Dandenong Creek Festival, exploring, creating and being inspired by the sub alpine environment at Lake Mountain, Kids in Nature Village, Wild by Nature camp, Little caves for big kids, we’re going on a bush hunt, farm holiday play, wildling wand workshop, bush detectives, sharing nature tales, Garden-based Nature Play Professional Development Session, Nature mandalas, Forest school: boats, ropes and knots, Australian bush puppetry, fire workshop, pond dipping, beach kinder, wildplay, native bee day, harvest picnic, kids go bush family nature play, Ricketts point marine kids program, welcome walk: grandparents and kids day, Birdsland mini-beasts Festival, splash nature play day, Rewild Fridays. The scope and number of events is likely to be greater than we have recorded as we have observed that several kinders and schools round the country celebrate Nature Play Week in their own capacity, not necessarily registering their events on the calendar of events.

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

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

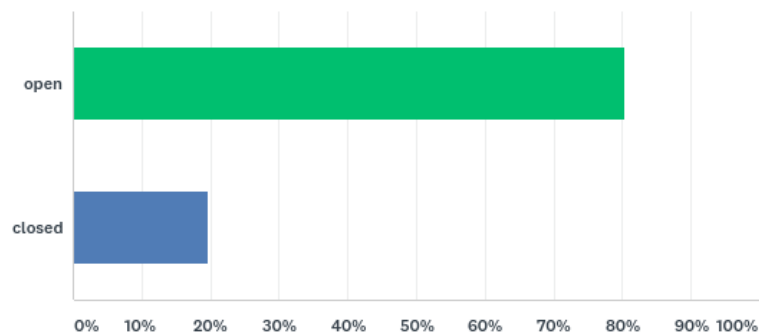


One event events was held in the CBD, 37% in Metro Melbourne, 19% in Greater Melbourne, 26% in regional Victoria and 22% interstate. Some groups organized multiple events in various locations, hence cumulative percentages are over 100%.

Open and closed events

In terms of event audience, 81% of events were open to the public and 19% were closed events.

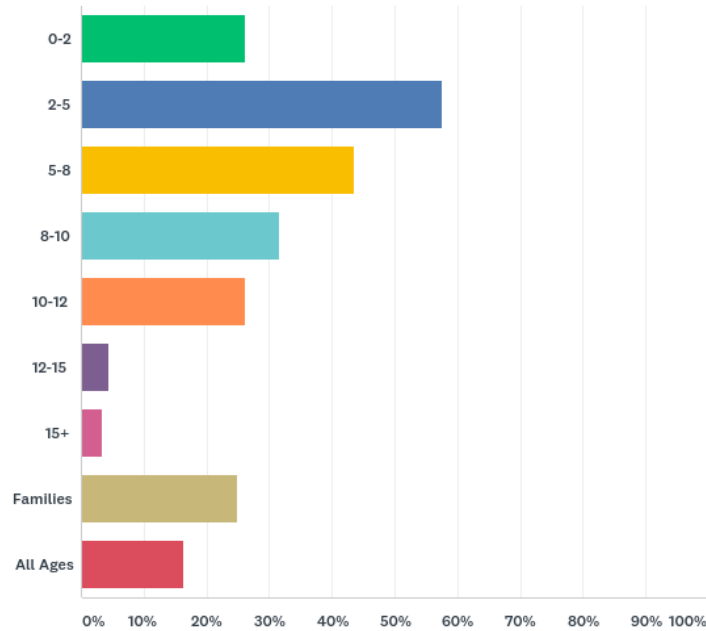
Q15 Is your event open or closed to public?



Age groups targeted by events

Most events targeted kids between 2-5 years of age (57%), followed by events targeted for kids 5-8 years of age (42%) and 8-10 years of age (32%) and by events targeted for kids 0-2 and 10-12 years of age (both 26%) and families (24%). Many events targeted multiple age groups, hence cumulative percentages are over 100%.

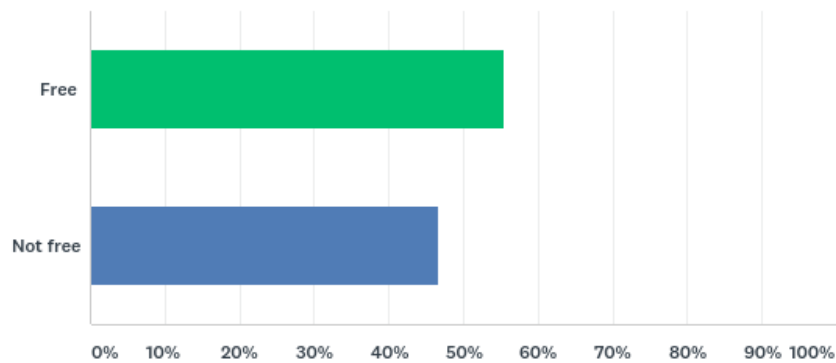
Q9 What is the age group targeted by your activity or event?



Participation cost of events

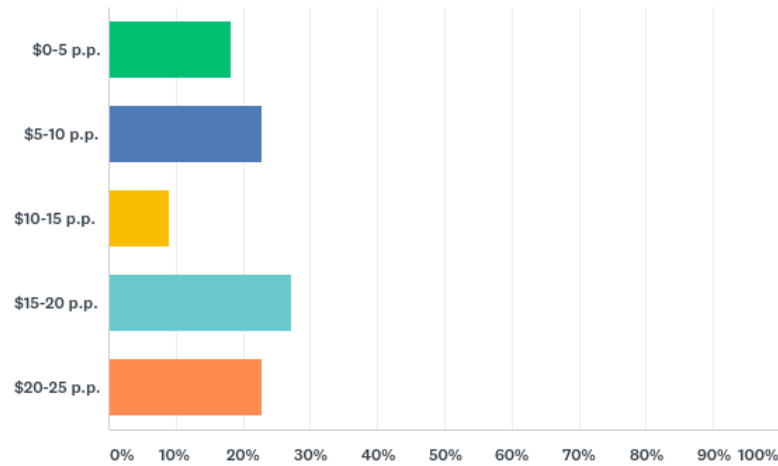
The majority of Nature Play Week events was offered free to participants (54%), with 46% of events incurring a participation fee. This is a slight shift from 2017 where 74% were free for participants, with 26% of events incurring a participation fee.

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-\$25 per participant. This is also a slight increase in event fees since 2017. This excludes festivals, such as Kids Adventure Outdoors Anglesea, conferences (higher fees between \$80-\$150) and costs incurred by childcare.

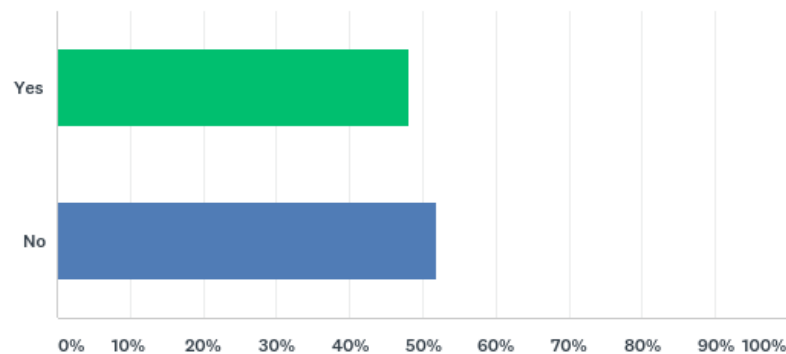
Q13 If the event is not free, what is the entry fee range?



Collaboration

Nearly half of the 28 event organisers who participated in the evaluation survey collaborated with other organisations or initiatives to stage their event.

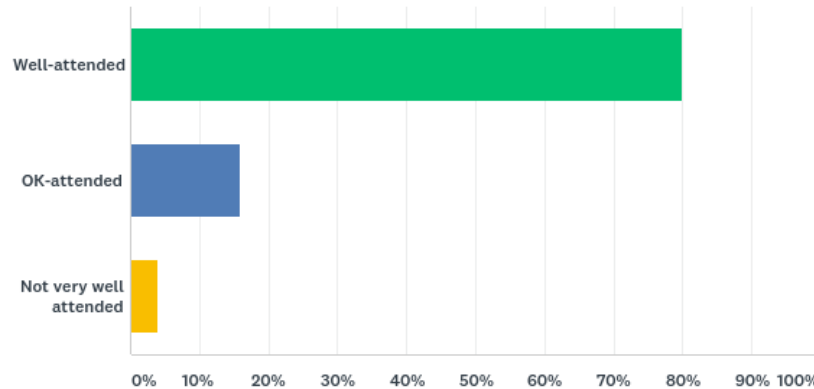
Q8 Did you collaborate with other organisations/individuals on your event



Attendance

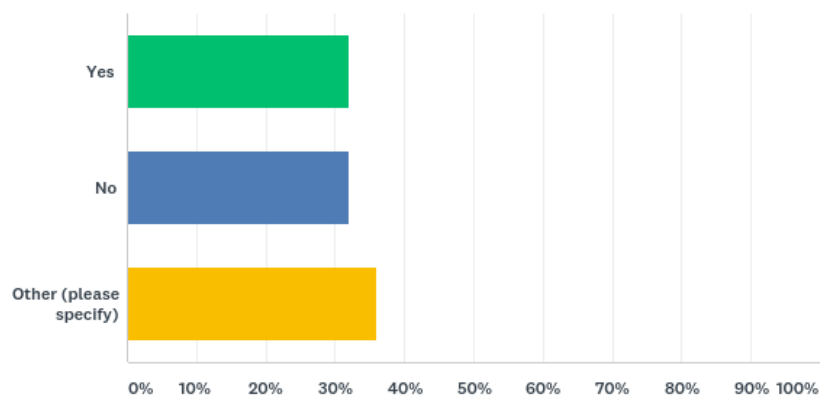
Attendance for nature play week events was high, with 80% of event organisers participating in the evaluation survey stating that their event was well-attended.

Q13 We would love your feedback as organiser on how your event went. Can you rate your Nature Play Week Event from on the 'attendance scale' below



Over 30% of evaluation survey respondents thought that their event was better attended because it was held in Nature Play Week

Q14 Do you think your event was better attended because it was held in Nature Play Week?

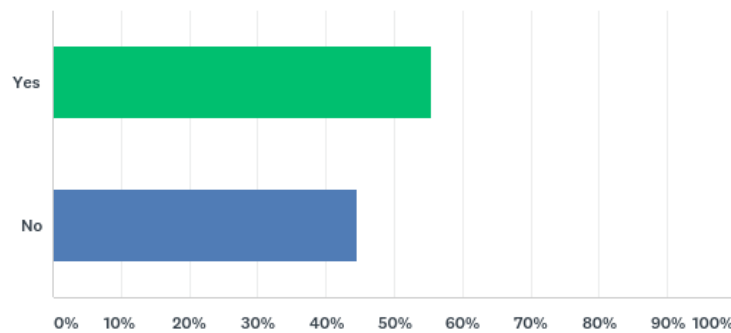


Retention and reach of Nature Play Week

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.

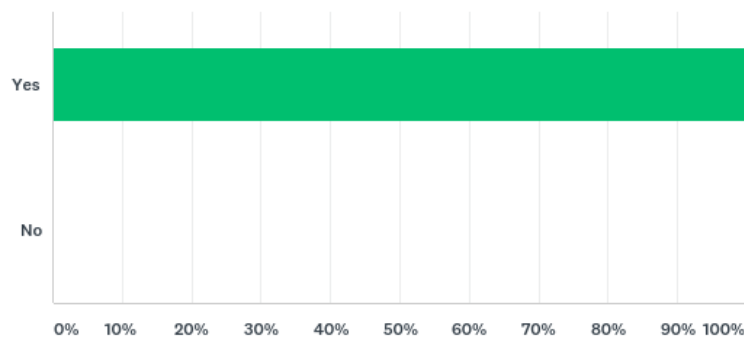
55% of organisers had previously hosted an event in Nature Play Week, 44% of event organisers hosted their first Nature Play Week event. This matches retention and recruitment rates from 2017.

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



All event coordinators who completed an evaluation survey stated their interest in participating in Nature Play Week 2019.

Q15 Would you participate again next year?



Testimonials

Nature Play Week is a great reminder of how important it is to connect with nature & provides an invaluable resource for ways to do so - Alicia Langford, Nature Folk.

Those who attended just loved the event even though the weather was wet and miserable. It is always a popular event – Vicki Boyle, Southern Dandenongs Landcare Group.

As a facilitator, I am always awed when families work together creatively, watching them bounce ideas off each other and bring each other's attention to a new discovery they have just found in nature, then discussing how they can do the same thing later at a park or in Granny's garden - Love it! – Imogen Good, McClelland Sculpture Park+Gallery.

It is such a pleasure to watch the freedom and joy that kids feel when they are allowed to freely interact with nature without adults telling them what to do. Their play is so imaginative and unrestricted, and you can see them shine in this environment. Very happy vibe with several kids saying it was the highlight of their school holidays.

Cat McKay, PEACE Farm.

Lots of squealing with delight as children got bogged in the mud on the edge of the wetland. No complaints about the weather from those that braved it. Nicole Howie, Northern Bendigo Landcare Group.

They want more events like this throughout the year, not just during Nature Play Week - Jacinta Harper, Yarra City Council.

Local residents loved the event, a great way to explore their backyard - Sherryn Prinzi, Banyule Council.

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

A selection of links to online event listings, blogs and articles is included below.

Local media

Wimmera CMA Article, 3 April- Nature Play Week- Get outside! Photo and article in
<http://www.wcma.vic.gov.au/news/news-detail/2018/04/02/nature-play-week-get-outside!>

Blogs, magazines and websites

Active April Website

<https://www.activeapril.vic.gov.au/event/nature-play-week-2018/2018-04-20/>

The Botanic Gardener Magazine November 2018 - *Nature Play in Botanic Gardens* Page 20-22.

https://issuu.com/bganz/docs/tbg_iss51_nov18_final_181130

Growing Green Thumbs Website

<http://growinggreenthumbs.com.au/2018/04/14/nature-play-week-2018/>

Eventbrite Website

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/natureplay-week-17100853860>

Royal Botanical Gardens Victoria Website

<https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/search/eyJyZXN1bHRfcGFnZSI6InNIYXJjaCIsImtleXdvcmRzIjoibmF0dXJlIHBsYXkgd2VlYyJ9>

Centennial Parklands Blog

<http://blog.centennialparklands.com.au/5-reasons-to-get-your-kids-outside-for-nature-play-week/>

Northern Grampians Shire Council website

<https://www.ngshire.vic.gov.au/Events-Directory/Active-April-Nature-Play-Week-Bush-Detective>

City of Whitehorse website

<http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au/sustainability-events.html>

Take 10 social website

<https://www.take10social.com.au/blog/10-social-media-content-ideas-for-april-2018>

First5forever website

<http://first5forever.org.au/fire-up-your-childs-creativity-in-nature/>

Event sites

There were also a number of event listings across local media outlets for various activities across difference areas.

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. Event liaison and support
2. Online events calendar and map (website)
3. The Launch Event
4. Promotion, publicity and media

Acknowledgements

The Kids In Nature Network team would like to acknowledge everyone who made Nature Play Week 2018 possible. A big thanks to all event organisers and the fantastic experiences they offered to children and families across Victoria and beyond. Nature Play Week would not be possible without many hours of dedicated volunteer effort and we thank those who contributed their passion, knowledge, skills and time so generously. Thanks to our core supporters and partners: the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, Premier's Active April and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Special thanks to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria for hosting the Nature Play Week 2018 launch event at The Cranbourne Gardens in conjunction with *Botanica*. Thanks to our Nature Play Week 2018 Coordinator, Sanne de Swart, and to our 2018 Health Promotion Student Intern Alice Cilia from the School of Health and Social Development, Faculty of Health at Deakin University.