



NATURE PLAY WEEK 2019



Evaluation Report



This evaluation report was prepared by Kids In Nature
Network

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Nature Play Week 2019

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 six year of celebration, the week ran from 17-28 April 2019. 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 2019 was built on the success of its previous years, with many organisations hosting events for a seventh 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 the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. The event took place Wednesday 17 April, 9:30-10:00 am (formal proceedings) followed by Nature Play in the Gardens held at the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden within the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. The launch event was well attended. Speakers included David Tournier from the Boonwurrung Foundation, Ed Krutsch from the Australian Youth Climate Coalition and School Strike for Climate, Ultra-marathon Ocean Swimmer and World Champion Chloe Mc Cardel, to Robin Penty and Ella Mulvey from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, to the wonderful Mia (8) and Ellie (5) Renowden from Leap into Nature and Cecile van der Burgh (KINN).

Nature Play Week featured a statewide junior rangers nature treasure hunt in seven national parks, a state-wide big bushwalk which took place in fifteen different locations across Victoria, the Kids Adventure Outdoors (KAOS) at YMCA Anglesea Recreation Camp, family nature club events, garden play, bug hunts, birdwatching and much more. The week also presented a number of events for personal and professional development in engaging and conducting nature play activities and events for kids.

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, Instagram and Twitter as the central social media platforms. Instagram <https://www.facebook.com/kidsinnaturenetwork/> <https://www.instagram.com/kidsinnaturenetwork/> https://twitter.com/Kids_In_Nature

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

Australian Arid Lands Botanic Gardens
Centennial Parklands
Kooweerup Regional Health Service
McClelland Sculpture Park + Gallery
Melbourne Water
Melbourne Zoo
Parks Victoria
Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Larger businesses

Toboggan Hill Park

Local councils

Banyule City Council
City of Boroondara
City of Casey
City of Greater Dandenong
City of Whitehorse
Darebin City Council
Greater Shepparton City Council
Yarra City Council

Community organisations

Ashburton Leisure and Aquatic
CERES Environment Park
Craig Family Centre
Cuddly Bear Templestowe
Firekeepers
Firekeepers incorporated
Friends of Ahimsa
Kids Adventure Outdoors Anglesea

Living Links
Moreland Community Gardening
Nature Play QLD
Northern Bendigo Landcare Group
PEACE Farm
Rosanna Parklands
Port Phillip EcoCentre
Southern Dandenongs Landcare Group

Early childhood and schools

Aurora Early Education
Castlemaine Childcare Centre
Clarendon Children's Centre
Gumnuts early learning Centre
Inspired EC - Inspired Family Day Care
Inspired Family Day Care
Inspired Family Day Care ACT
Jenny's ELC Epsom
Lady Forster Kindergarten
Monash Vale Early Learning Centre
St Andrews Uniting Church Kindergarten Fairfield
Spanish speaking playgroup
Violet Town Kindergarten
Wattle Glen Primary School
Wayburne Preschool

Bush Playgroups and Nature Clubs

Belgrave Lake Park Cottage Playgroup
Eco Explorers
Educated by Nature
Nature. Be in It.
Merri Bush Playgroup
Nature Play Learning
Nature Folk
Nurture in Nature
The Fox Guild

97% of registered participants organising an event were organisations; 3% were individuals.

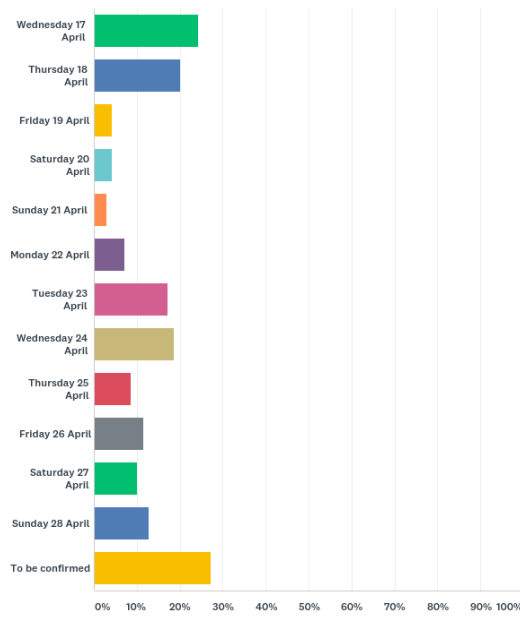
Events and activities

Very Big Bushwalks with Parks Victoria, NaturePlayWeek Treasure Hunts with Parks Victoria, Neon Playground at Melbourne Zoo and Dinopark at Melbourne Zoo, KIN Village (School Holiday Program), Nature Play Kinder Days, Picnic and play at Scotchman's Creek Reserve walking trail, Platypus Picnic, Platypus Picnic, Platypus Picnic, Nature Play in Whitehorse, Bush Babies, Nature Week, Kinder kids in the community garden, Earth kids play day, Nature Play Week, Búsqueda del Tesoro, Easter Bunny's Workshop, Rediscovering Bendigo Creek Streamside Reserve, Nature Mandala Workshop, Bush Playgroup, Moonlight Nature Walk, Creek discovery, Kinder bush walk, Children and Families Picnic, Nature Kinder, Junior Ranger – Sensory Trail, Little Foxes Nature Playgroup, Nature Play - Bush Buddies, Nature Play Week in the Rosanna Parklands, Community Garden Child Care excursion, Discover Dandenong Creek Festival, Connecting children with nature, Bush Explorers, Kids Adventure Outdoors Anglesea (KAOS), Nature Play Day, The Nature Bus event/activity, Botanica: A Village in the Australian Garden, Exploring Botanical Gardens, Beach Kinder, Arid Explorers Children's Garden AND Children's Discovery Walk, Boroondara Wild, Boroondara Wild: Walk with me Wednesdays, Boroondara Wild Launch, Mindful Play, Exploring children's play in natural spaces, Playgroup Lake Excursion, Nature Day, The Birdland Mini-Beasts Festival, Mud World Mackay, Toboggan Hill Park, Wild by Nature Village Camp, Curious Kids Building Cubbies, CERES Bush Kinder Experience, Patterns & Textures in Nature, Nature hut building, Bush Babies Sensory Playgroup, WILD CHILD - Nature Fest, Gresswell Forest School, Mushroom Reef, Nature Detectives Camp, Nature Play Week Mud & Cubby-town Festival, Facilitating Child-led Play Based Learning Outside, Working with Children and Fire Safely, Children's Nature Connection, Nature Play Holiday Program, Autumn Wildlings - Nature Exploration for Kids, CERES Soil Machine/ Adventure Habitat - Play, explore, imagine, Garden Play, Autumn Holiday Farm Play, Veggie Patch planting, Children's Art Activity and bush walk, Currawong Kids Pilot Program, Play in Nature with Merri Bush Playgroup, Nature Play, Make your ELC garden a sensory experience, Bush Kinder through STEAM lens - ELC Educator Professional Development and Darebin Creek Pop-up Forest School.

Timing of events

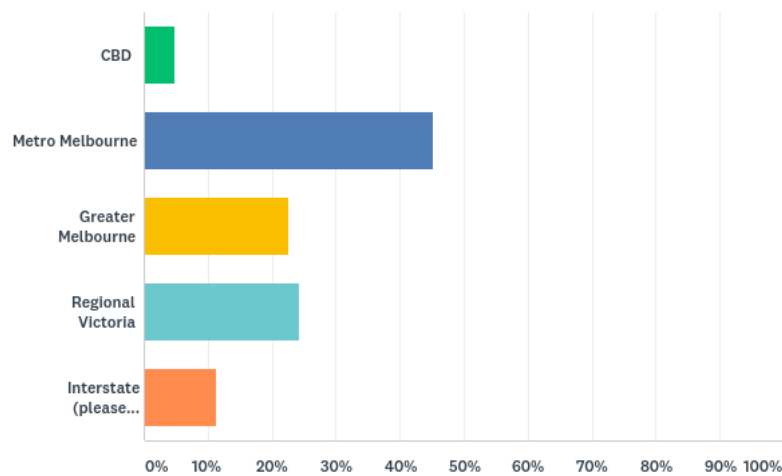
Events were more or less spread evenly across the week, with the exception of Easter Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Majority of events occurred on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Tuesdays.

Q5 Day and date of your event or activity



Locations of events

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

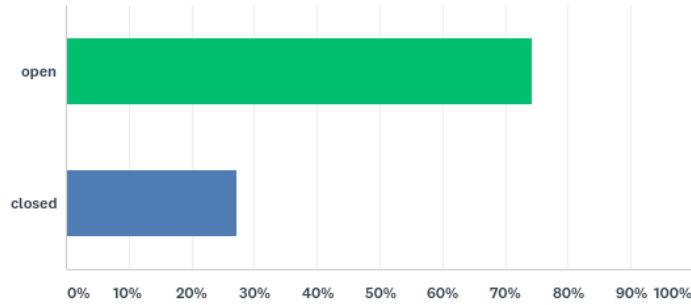


Three events were held in the CBD, 45% in Metro Melbourne, 22% in Greater Melbourne, 24% in regional Victoria and 11% interstate. Some groups organised multiple events in various locations, hence cumulative percentages are over 100%.

Open and closed events

In terms of event audience, 74% of events were open to the public and 27% were closed events.

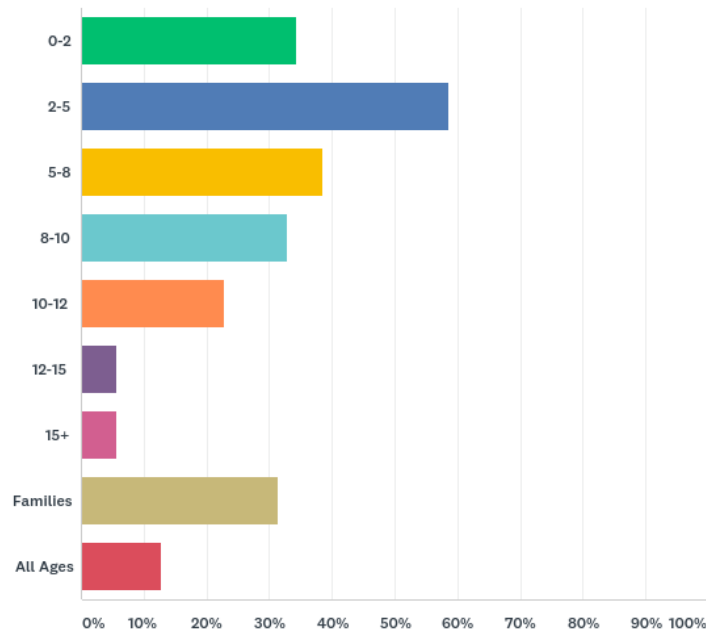
Q15 Is your event open or closed to public?



Age groups targeted by events

Most events targeted kids between 2-5 years of age (58%), followed by events targeted for kids 5-8 years of age (38%), 0-2 years of age (34%) and by events targeted for kids 8-10 (32%) and families (31%). Then came events targeting 10-12 years (22%), followed by all ages (12%). Fewer events targeted kids ages 12-15 and 15+ (both 5%). Many events targeted multiple age groups, hence cumulative percentages are over 100%.

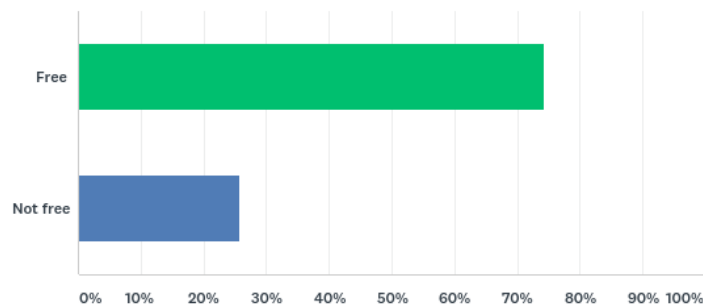
Q9 What is the age group targeted by your activity or event?



Participation cost of events

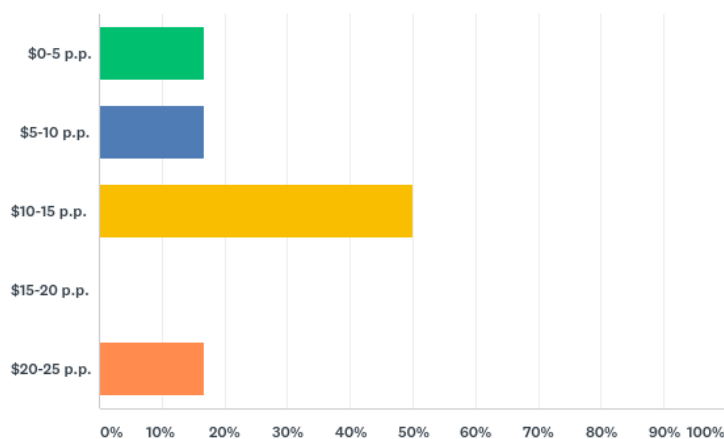
The majority of Nature Play Week events was offered free to participants (74%), with 26% of events incurring a participation fee. This is a slight shift from 2018 where 54% were free for participants, with 46% of events incurring a participation fee, making for a more accessible Nature Play Week in 2019.

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. However, 50% of paid events cost between \$10-\$15. This is also a slight decrease in event fees since 2018, with a higher proportion of events ranging between \$15-\$25. This excludes festivals, such as Kids Adventure Outdoors Anglesea, conferences (higher fees between \$80-\$150) and costs incurred by childcare.

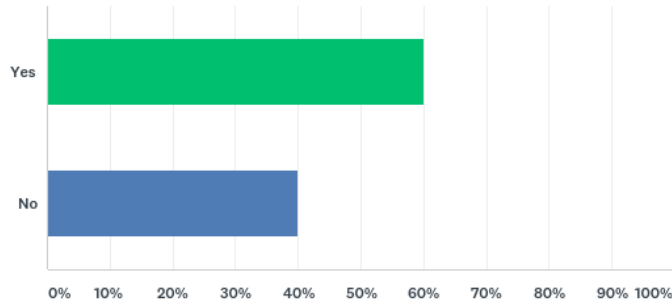
Q13 If the event is not free, what is the entry fee range?



Collaboration

60% of event organisers who participated in the evaluation survey collaborated with other organisations or initiatives to stage their event. This illustrates a higher proportion of organisations collaborating and networking with one another, as in 2018 under 50% of organisations collaborated to stage their event.

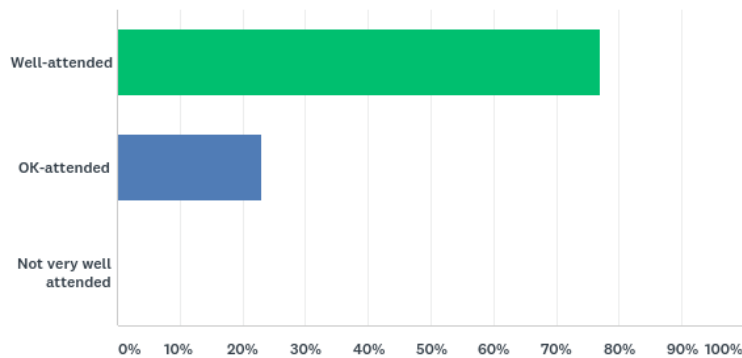
Q8 Did you collaborate with other organisations/individuals on your event



Attendance

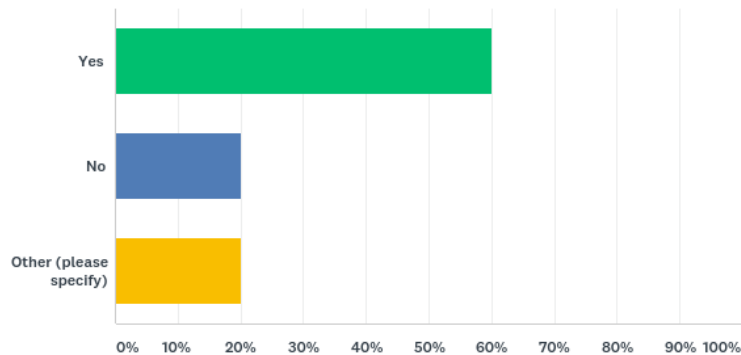
Attendance for nature play week events was high, with 77% of event organisers participating in the evaluation survey stating that their event was well-attended.

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



60% of evaluation survey respondents thought that their event was better attended because it was held in Nature Play Week. This demonstrating an increase from last years survey response with 33% of respondents feeling their events were 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?

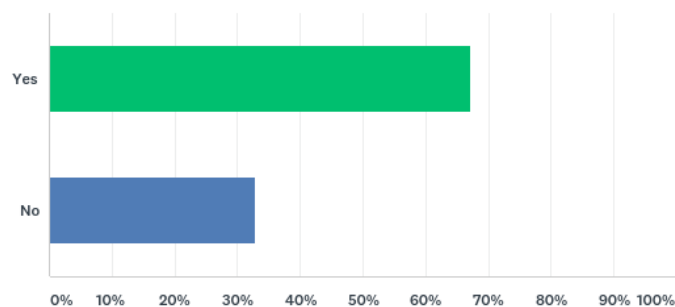


Retention and reach of Nature Play Week

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

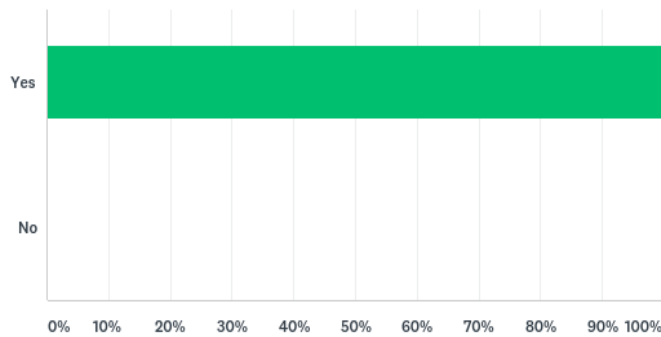
67% of organisers had previously hosted an event in Nature Play Week, 32% of event organisers hosted their first Nature Play Week event. This demonstrates a 12% increase in the number of organisers who previously hosted events in 2018.

Q22 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 2020.

Q15 Would you participate again next year?



Testimonials

We love being involved in Nature Play week as a way to connect as a community across Australia! The idea of people from all across the country, participating in events and activities OUTDOORS all together is heartwarming. It's wonderful to see children and families reconnecting with the natural world, reconnecting with authentic play opportunities and best of all, reconnecting with each other through Nature Play!!! - Daniel Burton, Educate by Nature.

Sharing a love of nature with children is giving them a love of life... in all its beautiful forms - Elspeth Brock, Moreland Community Gardening inc.

Nature Week should be celebrated all over Australia to demonstrate just how easy and entertaining it is for everyone to have fun outside in the fresh air - Vicki Boyle, Southern Dandenongs Landcare Group.

Really fantastic day - the kids are still raving about it! They learnt so much in the happy, relaxed and fun atmosphere - created by their amazing teacher Lauren :)" "Loved the experience. Very relaxed. Great to get the children outdoors exploring. Can't wait for the next one - Lauren Kaszubski, CERES.

Get off the screen and go green - Lisa Moloney, City of Whitehorse.

Suggested Improvements for Nature Play Week 2020

Based upon our evaluation feedback the following points will be taken into account to improve Nature Play Week for 2020:

- Establish an easier way for organisations to upload their events to the Nature Play website
- Establish relationships and included more city councils to aid the promotion of local events
- Explore the notion of engaging adults and older children

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 (Facebook, 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

Whitehorse News (p.9):

https://issuu.com/whitehorsecitycouncil/docs/whn_2019_april_aw_web

Blogs, magazines and websites

Premiers Active April Website:

<https://www.activeapril.vic.gov.au/news/nature-play-week/>

Port Phillip Eco Centre Website:

<https://ecocentre.com/civicrm/event/info%3Fid%3D63%26reset%3D1>

Living Links Website:

<https://livinglinks.com.au/events/nature-play-week/>

Junior Landcare Website:

<https://landcareaustralia.org.au/news/celebrate-nature-play-week/>

Centennial Parklands Website:

<https://www.centennialparklands.com.au/stories/2018/5-reasons-to-get-your-kids-outside-for-nature-play>

Kids In Nature Network - Nature Play Week Video:

[**Watch Now**](#)

Kids In Nature Network - Nature Play Week Live Launch Video:

<https://www.facebook.com/kidsinnaturenetwork/videos/663978197388217/>

Event sites

There were also a number of event listings across local media outlets for various activities across different 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

To all 80 event organisers and hosts, thank you for your passion and your inspiring all-year-round work to get kids playing outside. Thanks to our supporter, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. Thanks to our core partner The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, for hosting the Nature Play Week launch event. Thanks to our speakers, David Tournier from the Boonwurrung Foundation, Ed Krutsch from the Australian Youth Climate Coalition and School Strike for Climate, to Ultra-marathon Ocean Swimmer and World Champion Chloe Mc Cardel, to Robin Penty and Ella Mulvey from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and to the wonderful Mia (8) and Ellie (5) Renowden from Leap into Nature. Thanks to our partners Premier's Active April and Playgroup Victoria for their support. Thanks to our team, Nature Play Week 2019 Coordinator Sanne de Swart and our Deakin University Interns Jenna Hoogeveen and Georgina Maxwell for their incredible commitment, to our co-founders Dr Dimity Williams and Chris Joy, to our launch volunteer Victoria Milne and wonderful photographer Simone Schroeder.