



ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Department of
Sport and Recreation

Foreword

Message from the Chair - Allan Tranter



When your year is punctuated by your office burning to the ground, an invitation to enter an arrangement with a world leading organisation, a rising demand for information and resources, as well as just doing the day-to-day, you must wonder what is normal!! Ably led by Griffin Longley, that is just the tip of the ice-berg of what Nature Play has both endured and achieved in the last year.

The year has also seen a significant shift in the manner in which the Board is constituted with an increase in emphasis on the range of expertise, experience and network added to those who play a key role in being custodians of the vision of the organisation.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that the contribution of the retiring board members is acknowledged as they have been pivotal in being the platform on which Nature Play currently stands. Melissa Stoneham and Piers Verstegen were founding members of the Board while Zoran Jovanovic and May Carter had joined more latterly.

Newly elected to the Board are Professor Desiree Silva, Linda Daniels, Darren Cooper, Richie Baston and Will Peart, joining the re-elected Stephen Breen, Charles Haynes and myself.

Nature Play has had an excellent year despite the unpredicted, but more than that, is poised to make an even greater contribution to the development of children through play.

Message from the CEO - Griffin Longley



It has been a year of enormous challenges for Nature Play WA and yet, as is so often the case, those challenges have been mirrored by successes, of which we should be genuinely proud.

Despite the profound disruption of losing our offices to fire in October, the Nature Play WA team was able to continue to strongly advocate for the value of unstructured play; to maintain its presence in the hearts and minds of Western Australian families; to work with the decision makers and organisations who impact the lives of children; to elevate our work in events and consulting to new heights; and to deliver a mobile phone app we believe will prove to be a powerful tool for our movement.

The commitment and resilience of the Nature Play WA staff and Board has been a great credit to them this year and bodes extremely well for the many years ahead of this dynamic organisation.

About us

Our vision

For unstructured, outdoor play to become a normal part of every Western Australian child's daily life, so they can develop into resilient, healthy and creative members of the community.



Our mission

To work innovatively and collaboratively to make nature play a normal part of childhood again.



Our primary target group

Western Australian families of children aged 0-12 years.



Our strategic priorities

Increase awareness amongst all Western Australian parents of the benefits of nature play.

Increase opportunities for families to participate in nature play activities.

Create new resources and promote existing resources that make taking part in nature play easy.

Establish a broad communication network with partner groups and Western Australian families.

Advocate the importance of nature play to government, private bodies and agencies who work with children.

Develop Nature Play WA's organisational capacity.

Be financially independent of Government within three years.



The Year in Brief



Raising awareness

- New app launched
- 59 news media stories
- 70,480 web users
- 11,000 e-news subscribers
- 12,000 Facebook followers
- 33 speaking engagements
- 5 'Project Wild Thing' events
- 2 social media campaigns
- Early years web pages launched



Programs & initiatives

- Major geocaching event
- 35,743 Nature Play WA passports distributed
- 9 new family nature clubs
- 5 Camp Quaranup family adventure holidays
- 3,087 active school diaries ordered
- Early years active play strategy delivered
- Camping video series launched



Growing our capacity

- Elizabeth Quay Island Play Space: collaborative design team
- Braithwaite Park: collaborative design team
- Wickham Nature Play Space (Rio Tinto): community engagement consultant
- 12 school play space consultations
- 3 community play space consultations
- Constitution amended
- New office secured and moved into
- New Board empanelled

Raising awareness

Launch of the Nature Passport App

We started the year on a high - launching our Nature Passport App, an exciting new tool in the battle to get kids outside and engaged in active play.

The app is the story of two organisations, Nature Play WA and IslandWood (Seattle, USA) separated by over 16,000 kilometres but united by a common goal – to get kids all over the world moving, exploring, learning and most importantly, having fun, in nature.

The beta launch is just the beginning – it's a platform to build a network of partners to take it to the next level.

A photograph of a young child standing on a grassy bank, flying a kite. The child is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt, grey pants, and a pink beanie. They are holding the string of a kite that is flying high in the sky. The background features a large body of water, likely a lake or bay, with a distant shoreline visible under a clear sky. The kite is a diamond shape with a patterned tail.

**Rated by 'Daily Trek'
as one of the world's
top 15 app's for
experiencing nature
and the great
outdoors.**

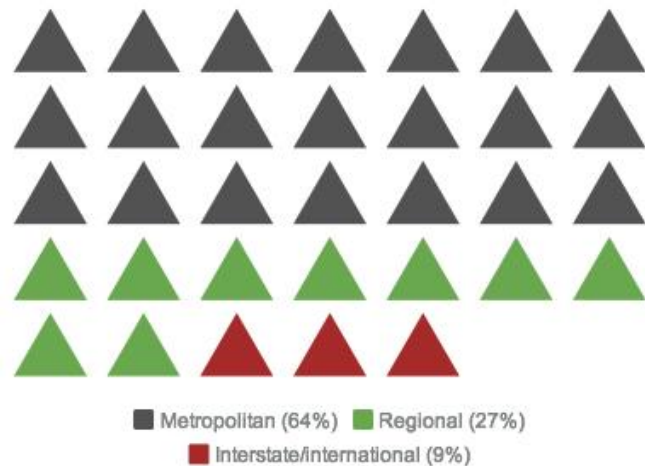
Speaking engagements

PRESENTATIONS	2014/15
33	

Another key area of focus was engaging decision makers and industry professionals from sport and recreation, health, Local Government, planning and development, community, environment, Education and the early years' sector.

To this end we delivered a total of 33 presentations/workshops locally (27% in regional areas), nationally and internationally.

Location of presentations

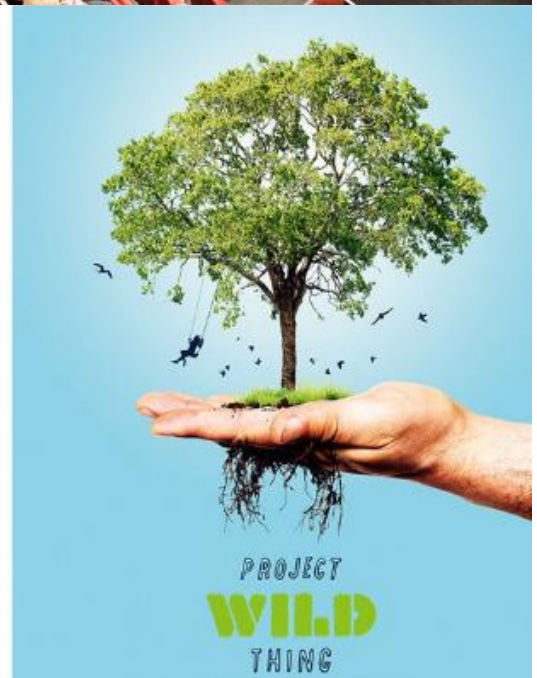


'Project Wild Thing'

PROJECT WILD THING	2014/15
5 SCREENINGS	

We also sold out the UWA Octagon Theatre (500 tickets) with our screening of 'Project Wild Thing' - a film led movement to get more kids (and their families!) outside and reconnecting with nature.

We then went on to host further community screenings in Albany, Harvey, Donnybrook and Bridgetown.



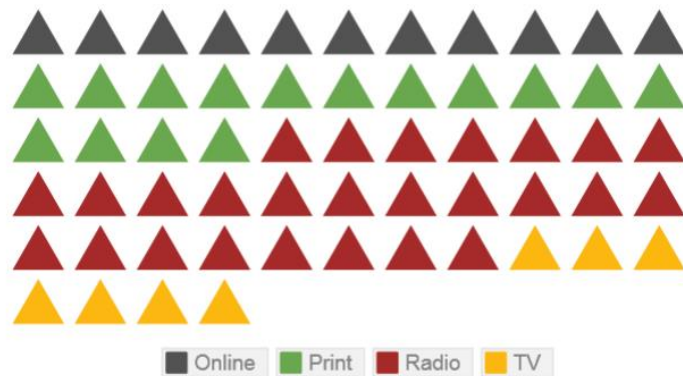
News media stories

NEWS MEDIA	2014/15
59 STORIES	

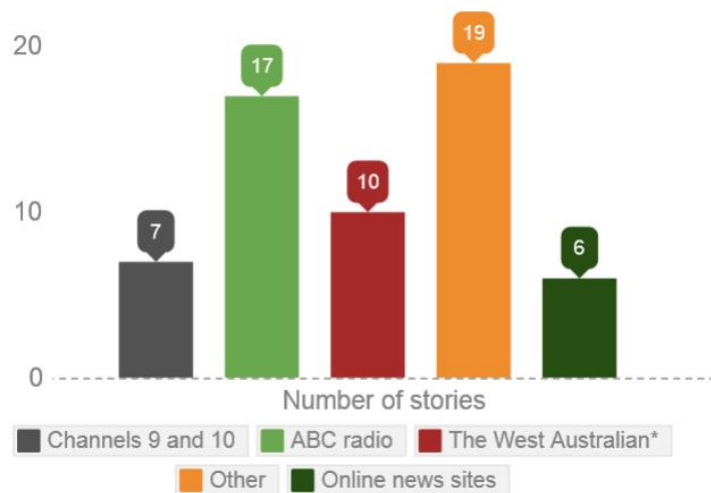
Our efforts were amplified by our 59 media hits - broadly spread across traditional and new media.

They included seven television stories and a particularly strong showing on ABC metropolitan radio and The West Australian; the two key drivers in the State.

Media hits - format



Media hits - outlet



**The West Australian: includes five print and five online articles*

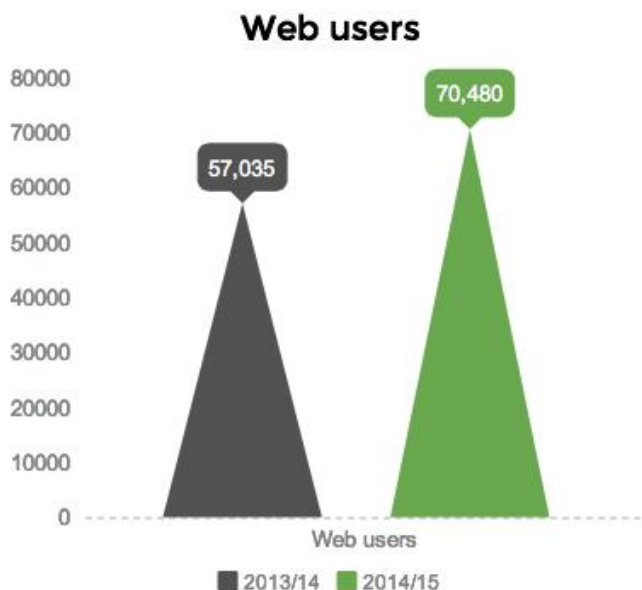


Nature Play WA website

WEBSITE	2014/15
70,480 USERS	

Our wins in the media attracted people to our website, a fantastic resource for parents with hundreds of things to do, places to go, research, competitions and deals.

More than 70,000 people used the site, a 24% increase on last year.



Quarterly e-newsletter

NEWSLETTER	2014/15
11,000+ SUBSCRIBERS	

We also engaged industry professionals and Western Australian families alike through our quarterly e-newsletter.

Packed with great seasonal activity ideas, competitions, blogs and upcoming events and programs, the newsletter database grew steadily to reach more than 11,000 subscribers.

Nature Play
WA News



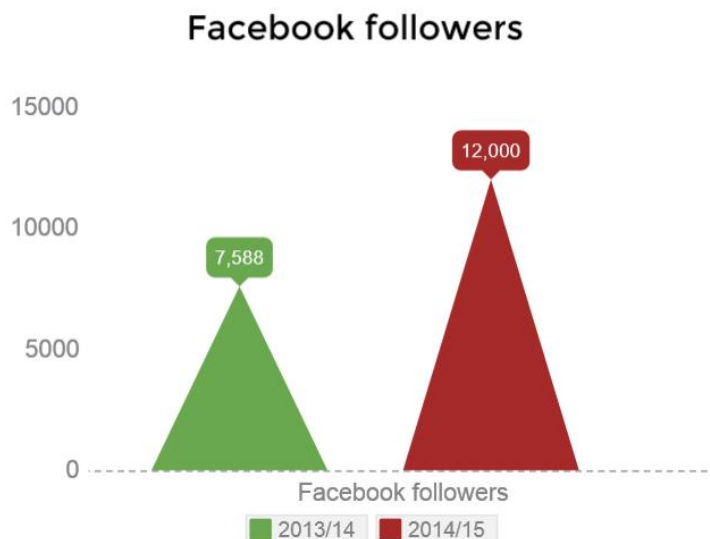
Social media

FACEBOOK	2014/15
12,000 FOLLOWERS	

Facebook

Our Facebook page also proved valuable in promoting articles, images and ideas that supported and inspired Western Australian parents and their families to get outside, get moving, play and have fun.

On average we reach over 40,000 people through the sharing and liking of our Facebook posts.



This year we gained 4,412 new followers, reaching a total of more than 12,000 likes.

Campaigns

In December 2014 the new Minister for Sport and Recreation, Hon Mia Davies MLA, launched our 'Nature Play Summer' social media campaign, where we challenged parents to get their kids spending two hours outside playing for each hour they spent indoors on electronic devices. We helped families by posting daily activity ideas on our Facebook page right through to 2 February 2015.

Later in the year (May 2015) we ran a second campaign where we asked parents to help us prove outdoor kids still exist - posting photographic evidence of kids having played in their neighbourhood and tagging it 'Footprints of play' (#footprintsofplay).



Programs and initiatives

Major geocaching event

One of our most significant offerings this year was our major event - our Family Geo-challenge weekend held 1-3 May 2015 at Wharncliffe Mill Bush Retreat, Margaret River.

The event sold out in just three days with 60 families from all over Perth and as far away as Bindoon, Northcliffe and Kalgoorlie taking part.



96% gave it the highest possible event rating.



Excited families set out on the trails and paths armed with GPS-enabled smartphones, searching for the 50 geocache canisters we hid around the national park.



Six news media stories were generated including: an article in The West Australian, an interview on ABC radio and local news coverage.



"On Monday morning my eldest son got out of bed and said he wished we were still at Wharncliffe! - my youngest asked if we could go geocaching today" - participating parent

RUN IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF SPORT AND RECREATION AND OUR PRINCIPAL EVENT SPONSOR - ILUKA RESOURCES.



Department of
Sport and Recreation



ILUKA



'Passport to an Amazing Childhood' program

PASSPORTS	2014/15
35,743 DISTRIBUTED	

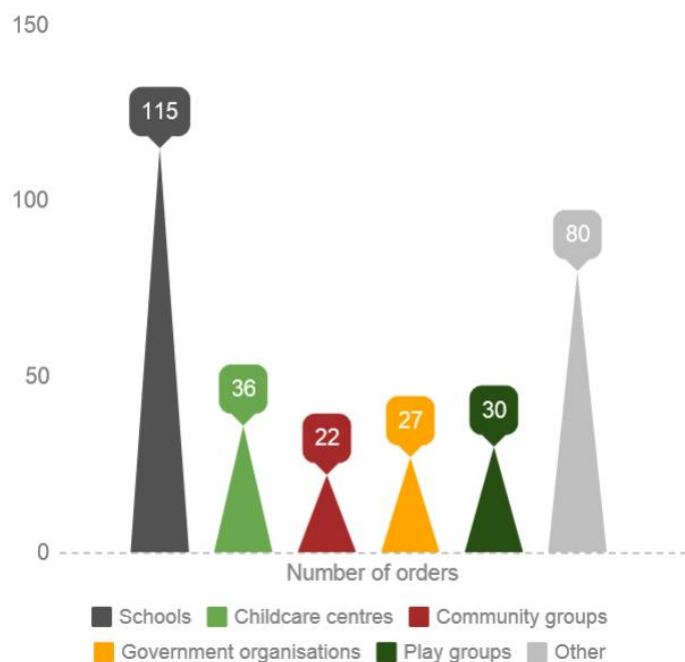
We also continued to get runs on the board with our flagship 'Passport to an Amazing Childhood' program - an exciting, interactive and fun way to get kids mucking around outside.

Kids (3-12+) are provided with a series of no (or low) cost "missions", delivered through our signature passport booklet that Western Australian schools, child care centres, Government and community groups can order from our website, free of charge.

This year we distributed 35,743 passports, bringing the distribution total (since April 2011) to over 190,000!

Most orders came from schools, with the intention of using the passports in the classroom or sending them home as a resource for parents.

Origin of passport orders



How they were used



■ In the classroom (35%) ■ Sent home to parents (28%)
■ Special event (22%) ■ Other (15%)



Hundreds more missions available online

For those seeking more missions than they are already getting through the hardcopy passport booklet, our exciting online interface offers a further 551 missions, broken down into three age categories (0-5 years, 6-9 years and 10-12 years).

By registering online and then going outside to complete the missions, kids earn virtual points that can be used to build avatars and win great prizes.

Around 14% of kids chose to access these additional outdoor mission activities via our online interface.



Zac Topping

29

Missions completed

44

Unspent points

Earn points by completing missions to unlock new avatar accessories. Missions must be confirmed by an Adult.

10

20

30

EDIT YOUR AVATAR



Mission log

Missions must be confirmed by an Adult before you will receive points.

12 Mar 2014

☒ Balloon scramble 2 points

This was so much fun. Mum kept tying up more and more balloons for me to jump to and then I had a water balloon fight with mum.

☒ The discovery board 1 points

Finding some slater bugs under my board. It was hard not to look for 2 days!

Case study: Freshwater Bay Primary School

"Children respond so well to the Mission experiences and we get really great feedback from parents as well. We can watch the students becoming more resilient: in the classroom, they'll figuratively pick themselves up and try again."

(Beth Chesney, Year One Teacher)

Freshwater Bay Primary School caters for children from Kindergarten through to Year 6. Beth Chesney is a Year One teacher and advocates for the importance of unstructured, outdoor play in building well-being and resilience in children.

The Opportunity

Beth saw the Nature Play "Passport to an Amazing Childhood" program advertised in The West Australian and contact with Nature Play confirmed the program could be adapted to the classroom environment and complement the curriculum.

Initiatives

Passports are an integral part of the Nature Play toolkit and help build a sense of ownership and excitement among the children; these are issued to Year Ones at the beginning of the new school year, sporting their names and photographs.

Missions are designed around the stickers provided with each passport and completed in and around the primary school over a ten-week period.

One day per week is set aside for Nature Play missions; providing both a learning platform and something for children to look forward to.

Missions may look "simple"- such as making boats from a leaf or climbing a tree"- but each is designed to encourage children to explore their world.

Challenges

The Passport Program needed to be justified against the curriculum. Missions needed to be designed to feed into key learning areas such as Science and Language. At times, lesson plans from the Nature Play website have been helpful

The school has implemented simple steps to ensure the health and safety of students undertaking unstructured play activities (such as clearly marking height restrictions on climbing trees). Children have proved willing to "play by the rules".

"Selling" the program to parents has not proved challenging; families are enthusiastic about the opportunities and benefits the program provides to children.

Outcomes overall

The program has delivered significant benefits to individual children, to the Year One class room, and the wider school community.

As individuals, children demonstrate greater resilience, ability to problem solve and willingness to try new things

Each new cohort of students demonstrates greater cohesion and willingness to cooperate at the end of the program.

The school community is moving toward a philosophy of outdoor play as integral to childhood development, demonstrated by:

Parents report being more deliberate about including unstructured outdoor play in the home environment.

Students of all years are more active at recess and lunchtime

The school is currently planning to build its own Nature Play playground

Success factors

Success factors include:

The support of parents and the school community and the enthusiasm of past Year One's in promoting the program to younger children; and,

The flexibility of the program allows missions to be designed to suit the needs of the classroom.

"I encourage other teachers to use this wonderful resource in any creative way they can. The possibilities are endless."



Family Nature Clubs

FAMILY NATURE CLUBS	2014/15
51 CLUBS	

Another great initiative that continues to do well is our Family Nature Club program - growing to 51 clubs with nine new clubs (7 metropolitan, 2 regional) created this year!

Each Family Nature Club is unique but whatever their forms, all share these basic goals: get outside in nature on a regular basis; gather families to share outdoor adventures; and experience the benefits of time spent together outside.

Western Australian families can use our online directory to join an existing club or create their own with the help of our toolkit.



"They play better together; you see them helping each other out, encouraging each other. If they have problems, they're more inclined to work things out themselves now than come straight to us."

- Family Nature Club parent

Case study: NPPS Family Nature Club

**"You can see it in the kids – they're more cheerful, more secure – less timid.... We need to let them get out there and try things...As parents, we learn our kids are tougher than we think; that getting outside and climbing a tree or getting their hands dirty is good for them."
(Sonia Hills)**

North Perth Primary School (NPPS) Family Nature Play club was established in 2014 and is a thriving club comprising 38 families from within the school community, with children ranging in age from toddlers to young teens. Its purpose is to "get together and enjoy time with our kids outside."

The opportunity

In 2012, the North Perth Primary School built a nature playground, with the purpose of encouraging children to engage in unstructured outdoor play. The idea strongly resonated with Sonia Hills, founder of the NPPS Family Nature Club, who recognises the demands and structure of daily life limit opportunities for children (and their families) to play. A Family Nature Club represented the opportunity to make spending time "outdoors" a priority. Interest grew rapidly: with more than 100 children and parents in its ranks, the Club now represents a sizeable part of the school community.

The process

The website provided early guidance for Sonia in establishing the club and she reports that the Nature Play staff were "always helpful." The school helped spread word among parents but word-of-mouth proved quick and effective.

Outings are planned and members emailed the information in advance; no RSVP is needed and turn-out is always good. Sonia also maintains the website and regularly blogs about Club activities.

Ideas for activities are often suggested by other members and the resulting mix is diverse, reflecting the interests and experiences of different families. The Club has picnicked at Matilda Bay, taken a surfing lesson, gone rock-climbing and camping and participated in harvesting olives from the streetscapes of North Perth.

Challenges

Sonia says the Club has not really encountered any challenges; club members are enthusiastic and always ready to pitch in and help.

Sonia was surprised when the Club began receiving requests to join from families living well outside the local area. After some discussion, the Club reluctantly decided to restrict membership to the school community.

Outcomes overall

Outcomes have been many and varied - always positive but not always expected. Sonia sees the growth in her own children's confidence, their willingness to take risks and their ability to solve their own difficulties. From her own experience and feedback from other parents, Sonia says:

Club children are growing in confidence, physically stronger and more willing to take risks. They're more cheerful, better able to work together and to sort out their own difficulties.

Parents are becoming more confident to let their children try new things and rediscovering their own sense of fun and adventure.

The Club has helped "legitimise" "play time" and families report finding it "easier" to make the time to spend outdoors.

Regular group outings are fostering a sense of belonging and community identity. The Club has provided kids and adults with the chance to build connections outside the child's year group. Strong friendships have been formed; the whole area feels more like a "neighbourhood".

Success factors

Sonia attributes the Club's success to a number of factors including:

The enthusiasm for the Nature Play concept;

The Club members being a "great group", good sports, willing to try new things and their "lack of preciousness";

Restricting membership to "local" families, and;

Keeping things simple!

"My advice? Just give it a go. I'm so glad we tried it. It's turned out better than I think anybody could have expected – and it's just fun to get outside and play."

Camp Quararup

ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS	2014/15
5 CAMPS	

We also partnered, once again, with the Department of Sport and Recreation's Camp Quararup to offer Western Australian families five, cost effective three day adventure holiday camp sessions, each accommodating up to ten families.

The camps provide a great tangible nature play experience with amazing outdoor activities such as canoeing, crab hunting, rogaining, cubby building, spotlighting and exploring the beautiful Albany surrounds.



Active school diaries

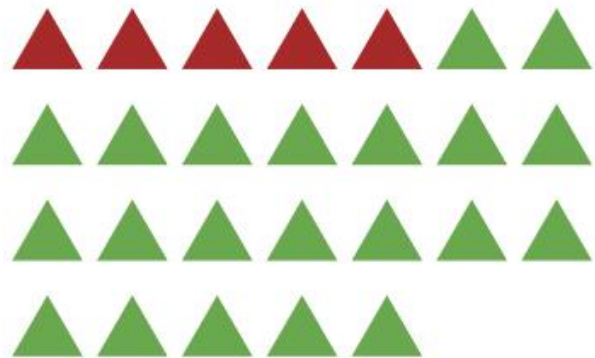
DIARIES	2014/15
3,087 SOLD	

For Western Australian schools, our Active School Diary is specially designed to encourage active, outdoor play after school with each day including a printed line of homework saying 'go outside and play for 30 minutes'.

This year we sold out of diaries with 3,087 distributed to kids via the 26 bulk orders we received from schools.

Nineteen percent of orders were from regional schools.

Where the orders came from



■ Regional schools (19%) ■ Metropolitan schools (81%)



Early years active play strategy

EARLY YEARS	2014/15
5 WORKSHOPS, 2 SURVEYS	

As for the early years (0-5 years), we worked with the Department of Sport and Recreation to build the capacity of the sector to increase active play opportunities by:

Running two full day metropolitan workshops to a total of 115 early years' professionals;

Providing the Department of Sport and Recreation with recommendations based on the findings of two surveys we conducted with 54 early years' centres; and

Running full day workshopping sessions with key stakeholders in Harvey, Donnybrook and Bridgetown, where we helped identify early years' active play opportunities, barriers and aspirations specific to each of their communities.

97% rated the workshops either 'incredibly informative and encouraging' or 'very good'.

Growing our capacity



Public open space should be the heart of a community. A place used and loved by residents of all ages to meet, relax and play.

We are helping developers, schools, businesses, state and local governments to get it right and avoid those 'green elephant' spaces that look good but sit empty.



Our mission is simple;
we are dedicated to
increasing the time
kids spend in
unstructured play
outdoors.



We don't design or construct play spaces, but our insight into the way kids communicate, learn and develop through play means we can help ensure a project steps beyond the formulaic, has great outcomes for kids and appeals to Western Australian families.

We explore each
community's
specific needs and
objectives and
translate that into
great play
experiences.



This year we were
involved in three
major projects, as
well as completing
three community
and 12 school/early
learning centre
consultations.



HIGHLIGHTS	2014/15
3 MAJOR PROJECTS	

Elizabeth Quay Island Play Space: member of the collaborative design team

Braithwaite Park Nature Play Space: member of the collaborative design team

Wickham Nature Play Space (Rio Tinto): community engagement consultant

Our consultation team



GRIFFIN LONGLEY

Griffin is an internationally recognised advocate for play who has contributed to conferences in Australia and internationally. He has consulted to state and local governments and developers on achieving great play outcomes. He is also an award winning journalist and has been a weekly columnist with The West Australian newspaper.



SHEA HATCH

Shea has experience in designing and managing construction of public landscapes including schools, parks and play spaces. Along with a degree in landscape architecture, Shea has a diploma in Conservation and Land Management and is undertaking her Masters in Public Health. Shea is passionate about the benefits of healthy play and is excited to work closely with her clients to create a nature play outcome.



DANIEL BURTON AND TRUDI BENNETT

Daniel and Trudi both have formal qualifications in Education and are able to provide specialist advice on nature and pedagogy, facilitating community engagement with the environment and using the environment as an outdoor classroom. Both Daniel and Trudi are passionate about increasing community connectedness with nature and the associated benefits of that.

Thank you



Nature Play WA thanks the Western Australian Government and the Department of Sport and Recreation for their ongoing monetary, in-kind and moral support.

We also thank our Board and member organisations for the time and effort they have invested in our organisation and our mission.

We are a dynamic organisation that is continually evolving and seeking new ways to engage families in unstructured outdoor play. We are brimming with great ideas and, in order to kick start new initiatives and expand the reach of existing programs, we welcome financial or in-kind support from businesses and philanthropists in the form of partnerships, donations, sponsorships and/or advertising.

We are most grateful to the following organisations for their pro-bono, financial and in-kind support this year:

- Caravan Industry Association of WA
- Clayton Utz
- Department of Parks and Wildlife
- Grant Thornton Australia Ltd.
- Iluka resources
- Lotterywest
- MYR Consulting

Please contact our Communications and Membership Manager, Katherine Healy, on 9389 4050 or katherine@natureplaywa.org.au to discuss opportunities to work together to achieve great outcomes for Western Australian families, kids and communities.

Join our movement



At home:

Allocate time every week for nature play; incorporate 'nature hour' each day, when your kids know this is a time for them to be outside.

Become a 'Friend of Nature Play WA' family (launching 1st December 2015) to receive discounts and special offers on nature play activities, events and programs and gear.

At school:

Incorporate the natural environment into the design of kid's outdoor spaces; use vegetation and the landscape as the playground not the background.

Incorporate nature play into outdoor education and make it part of the curriculum.

Incorporate the 'walking school bus' program into school and neighbourhood groups – use this time to integrate nature learning and interaction.

For further information, lesson plans and ideas register for Nature Play WA's professional development sessions.

In the community:

Support organisations both at a local and national level that are driving programs and initiatives to get children outdoors.

Protect open spaces and natural bush areas and encourage people to use and interact with them.

Incorporate natural spaces into urban designs and plans.

Create neighbourhood watch groups that watch over children but don't interfere or dictate children's play or interaction with nature.

Engage Nature Play WA's consultation service to help ensure your public open spaces have great play outcomes for kids and appeal to Western Australian families.

At a corporate of agency level:

Advocate for nature play.

Support organisations that facilitate nature play.

Facilitate research into the importance of nature for children's development.

Create legislation that supports children's nature play in both urban design and education.

Become a 'Friends of Nature Play WA' partner organisation, event or program sponsor.