



NATURE PLAY WA 2019/20

Annual Report



supported
by



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries



INTRODUCTION

About Us

Nature Play WA is an incorporated association and a registered charity, with a mission to support the happy and healthy development of Western Australian children aged 0-12 through unstructured play outdoors.

Our mission reaches across all realms that impact children and sees us working closely with leading organisations in health, education, environment, recreation and beyond. Those collaborations are at the heart of what we do.

We are indebted to the Government of Western Australia for its ongoing support of our mission, to our partners, and to our Voting Member Organisations, the: Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; Australian Medical Association; Western Australian Council of State School Organisations; Heart Foundation; Playgroup WA; Western Australian Primary Principals' Association; Royal Australasian College of Physicians; Public Health Advocacy Institute of Western Australia; Bibbulmun Track Foundation; and, the Western Australian Local Government Association.



Allan Tranter
Chair

While taking a very conservative approach to the pandemic challenges of 2020, by meeting more often, the Board has endeavoured to provide greater than normal support to the organisation and staff.

This, plus the outstanding performance of Griff and the staff has ensured the achievement of very strong outcomes and the organisation is even better positioned than ever to witness even stronger outcomes going forward.

In expressing my very sincere thanks to the Board, Griff and staff for the manner in which they have all contributed far beyond expectations this year, I trust that the coming year allows us to reap the benefit that has been created.



Griffin Longley
CEO

COVID-19 made 2019/20 the most challenging year for families in a generation. But through the stress and anxiety of raising children during the pandemic, we saw WA families instinctively turn to play and to nature for relief, for solace, and to find community.

Rainbows were drawn in chalk on driveways. Teddy bears were placed in windows. Families occupied their neighbourhoods on bikes and scooters, our parks were full, our trails were brimming.

And Nature Play WA responded by doubling its efforts and delivering new resources to help families looking for nature play experiences, including the hugely successful Great Backyard Campout.

As the CEO of this small not-for-profit, I couldn't be more proud of the efforts, the dedication, and the passion of our small team during this time of community need.



ADVOCACY

Mass communication

At Nature Play WA we utilise a broad suite of communications channels to reach the widest possible audience. As our advocacy footprint grows, we remain dedicated to keeping our aims consistent and our message front and centre.

COVID-19 Resources

With COVID-19 changing the way we live our lives, and many events and gatherings being cancelled or postponed, we thought it was important to remember that not everything we love to do is on hold.

We put together new resources to support families spending time together during the COVID-19 pandemic, including 25 Things to do in Social Isolation, and a series of “Top 5” and “Top 10” lists of our favourite places to take part in socially-distancing outdoor activities.

Website



News Media

Reach

7.7 Mil

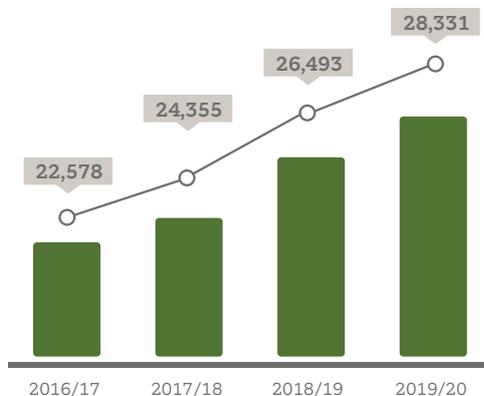
Stories

75+

Digital and News Media

There was significant growth in the number of active users on our website with a 22% rise. In 2019/2020, more than 7.7 million readers, viewers and listeners were reached through 75 media stories.

Facebook Following



Instagram Following



2018/2019



2019/2020

Social Media Reach

Our social media engagement has seen a steady growth throughout the year, with 1,849 new Facebook followers and a reach of 1.642 million. Our Instagram following has also grown, with 667 new followers in 2019/2020.



ADVOCACY

Professional development and public speaking

Beyond mass communication, our efforts focus on preparing the ground for positive change through seeding ideas with decision makers and industry professionals.

Public speaking events

This year we delivered presentations to more than 2,000 decision makers and industry professionals from Local Government, Education, Health, Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Regional WA and the Early Years.

Professional development workshops

In 2019-20, we had a total of 154 educators from 10 schools and early learning centres attend our professional development workshops.

Our efforts in this space allow us to impact the practice of those working directly with children, bringing our potential reach to more than 5,000 kids.





PARTICIPATION

Campaigns

Nature Play WA's campaign work in 2019/20 included reaching nearly a quarter of all Western Australian children through the Outdoor Classroom Day movement, and the establishment of our Digital Wellbeing initiative.

Outdoor Classroom Day

Nature Play WA led the delivery of Outdoor Classroom Day in Australia for the third year in 2019/20, with more than 314,500 children participating around the country. In WA, 376 primary schools (45% of all WA primary schools) from every corner of the state, took part in the campaign. And more than 72,000 WA children (22.9% of all WA children aged 0-12) participated.

Outdoor Classroom Day is part of the growing outdoor learning movement around the world, and a chance to celebrate and inspire outdoor learning and play in school settings. More than just one day, our aim is to get as many children as possible playing and learning outside, every day.

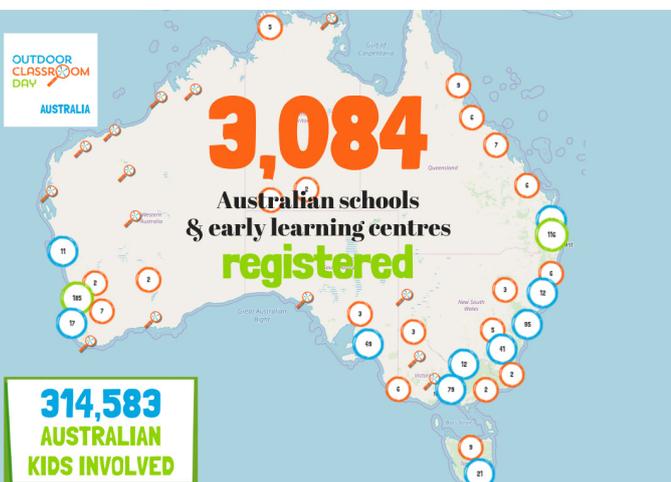
Why? Because outdoor learning improves children's health and wellbeing, engages them with learning, and leads to a greater connection with nature. And as the coronavirus crisis continues, and children around the world are spending more time indoors and in front of screens, the need for outdoor learning and play is growing.

Digital Wellbeing

With the support of Lotterywest, Nature Play WA embarked on its Digital Wellbeing campaign in 2019/20 to support families trying to navigate the impact of digital entertainments on their children's lives.

Nature Play WA created 11 downloadable resources for parents providing practical information on everything from creating a Family Media Plan to sourcing active play ideas.

Nature Play WA has also chosen 12 WA communities spread across the state from Kununurra to Albany where we will deliver Digital Wellbeing seminars, as well as create Nature Passports for the area to help families identify local active play opportunities. The seminars were not delivered in 2019/20 due to the impact of COVID-19 but are planned for 2020/21.





PARTICIPATION

Events

Despite losing nearly a quarter of our planned events for the year to COVID-19, Nature Play WA events still saw 14,700+ Western Australians participate to play, to connect, and to build the memories that are the lifeblood of family and of community.

As ever, all Nature Play WA events are designed to be replicable by families and schools so the play can keep rolling in the weeks, months, and years to come.



Timeline of events

Gosnells International Play Day
25 August 2019
1,000+ participants

Baby Steps into Nature Play
19 September 2019
500+ participants



Cubby Town
14 September 2019
5,000+ participants

Muddy Hands Festival
13 October 2019
6,500+ participants



8

events

16,200+
children & parents

Events

“It was well facilitated by the adult staff in attendance, who did a sterling job of keeping the kids entertained despite the bad weather.”

- Event Participant,
Baby Steps into Nature Play 2019



Curtin Explorer

7 December 2019
1,000+ participants

Play in May

May 2020
6,000+ reached
300+ families participated

**Children’s Week
Get Out and Play Day**

26 October 2019
600+ participants

The Great Backyard Campout

18 April 2020
56,300+ reached
1,300+ families participated



PARTICIPATION

Apps and downloadable resources

Nature Play WA encourages participation beyond our events and campaigns by promoting and supporting self-directed activities through apps and downloadable resources, that empower families to create their own outdoor play adventures.

The Nature Play WA App

Our Nature Play WA app, an on-the-go pocket resource featuring trails, play spaces, campsites, resources and inspiration, has continued to prove popular with WA families.

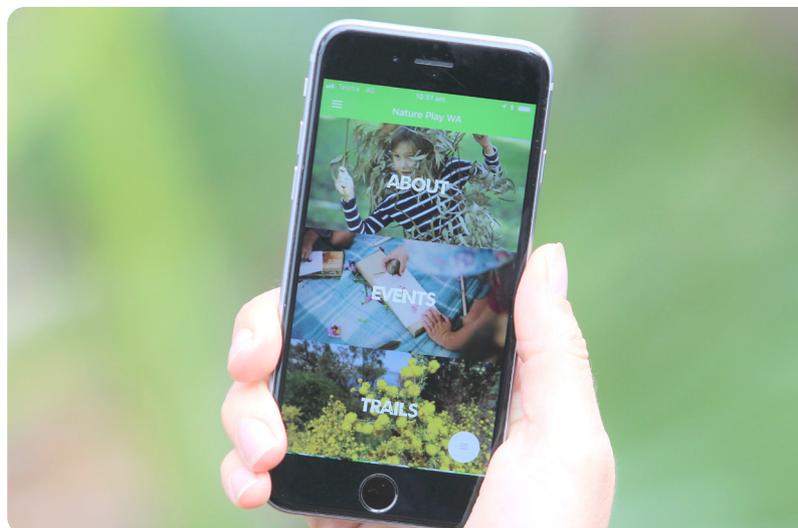
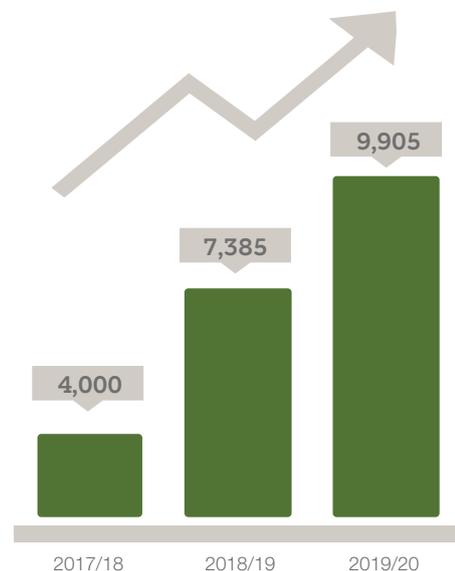
The app format allows parents to explore a curated list of rich nature play opportunities in Western Australia, 'favourite' places they'd like to visit and navigate to them with ease.

Content is continually being reviewed and updated with a series of 'Top 5' recommendations for family walks, bike trails, picnic and unique swim spots added this year.

"I went to Bushmead yesterday afternoon and walked the trail. The content is so engaging and interactive even without being on site so when fully immersed in the bush it was truly special."

— Nature Play WA app user

Total app downloads





9,200
users to date

51%
increase from last year

Nature Passport App



Nature Passport

Nature Passport is our tool to support kids and families in getting outdoors with more than 100 activities designed by experts in outdoor play and experiential education.

Originally facilitated through our international 'Nature Passport' app alone, families now have many ways to access the passport activities. This year saw the creation of a web app (app.naturepassport.org/) and development of a City of Subiaco activity booklet, with a further 15 booklets (developed in collaboration with local governments) in production for 2020/21.

For Schools

We also developed and launched a Nature Passport Educators Package, consisting of a downloadable activities booklet and suite of lesson plans (upper and lower primary versions), to support enriched play-based learning.

The package, which the Department of Education funded as part of the 2019 My Outdoor Classroom Campaign delivery, has had significant uptake with 3,160 downloads by teachers throughout Australia in the lead up to Outdoor Classroom Day 2019!





RESEARCH

Building the knowledge base for outdoor play

In 2019/20 Nature Play WA has continued to collate high-quality research on the impact of nature play on children from around the world on our website, to work with leading research groups in the field, and to integrate research and evaluation into our projects.



The ORIGINS Project

Nature Play WA is a member of the Environment and Lifestyle research-in-action group, contributing to projects related to the impact of nature connectedness on children's health.



The DIGITAL WELLBEING Campaign

Nature Play WA, in conjunction with researchers from the Telethon Kids Institute, has created a 'what you need to know' guide for parents on the impacts of excessive screen time, highlighting new and relevant research in the field.



The PLAYCE Study

Nature Play WA is part of the research team alongside the University of WA, Telethon Kids Institute, the University of Southern Denmark, and others, working to understand, and improve, children's physical activity levels in the early education and care sector.





SUSTAINABILITY

Financial sustainability

Nature Play WA made significant progress towards sustainability in 2019/2020. Our goal is to diversify the sources of income that drive our mission, and to provide a return on investment to the taxpayer, such that every dollar invested in Nature Play WA through grants provides a return in services beyond the value of that investment.

Funding

In addition to DLGSC grant funding, the ways in which we expanded our operations, projects and events this year include:

- Outdoor Classroom Day campaign sponsorship (Unilever)
- Partnering with Local Governments to run Nature Play events and create Nature Passport booklets
- Professional Development workshops for educators
- Lotterywest grants

Financial Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 (Est)
Grant Income	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$450,000	\$400,000
Total Income	\$691,532	\$804,761	\$958,078	\$800,986	\$925,562	\$913,718	\$965,329	\$874,000
Grant as % income	72%	62%	52%	62%	54%	55%	46%	46%
ROI	\$1.38	\$1.61	\$1.92	\$1.60	\$1.85	\$1.83	\$2.15	\$2.19

The table (above) and graph (below) show the proportion of our total income that is made up by our primary grant from DLGSC, and the return on investment to the community as a result of that grant.

Return on Investment of Grant Funding from 2013 to 2021

