



Nature Play^{WA}

NATURE PLAY WA 2020/21

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 health and wellbeing of Western Australian children through outdoor play and connection to nature.

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 WA; 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.



Nick Sloan
Chair

On behalf of the Board of Nature Play WA I'm delighted to present this report which does great credit to the remarkable efforts of our CEO Griff and the dedicated team he leads.

The creative and adaptive approach to diversifying the support and resources provided during these challenging times to families, community groups, State and local Government, has positioned the organisation positively as we move into a future with greater certainty.

I'd like to acknowledge the commitment of the Board and the support they provide our small but dynamic team. I'd also like to acknowledge the legacy that outgoing Nature Play WA Chair Allan Tranter leaves as he moves onto new challenges. Allan is a tireless and formidable advocate for Nature Play WA and his contribution in shaping social and public policy over many years has been extraordinary.



Griffin Longley
CEO

It has been another challenging year for the Western Australian community. Despite our relative good fortune in having only three short COVID-19 lockdowns, it has remained a time of uncertainty and disruption for many families. But there have also been many bright spots.

A great many families have rediscovered the beauty of our own little corner of the world as the tyranny of distance has morphed into the sanctuary of proximity – proximity to the endless space and extraordinary biodiversity of Western Australia's natural places.

And at Nature Play WA we have adapted by decreasing our delivery of events and increasing our free resources to support families, schools, and local governments in self-led outdoor play experiences – and as the CEO, I couldn't be more proud of the work our small team has delivered.



AT A GLANCE

Nature Play WA 2020/21



1.06 Million kids participated nationally (to date)

5,970 downloads of lesson plans and booklets

51 countries reached



18 Play Trails created

1,761 families reached



88,673 website users

177,101 page views



58 news media stories

7.2 Million news media reach

10,130+

Facebook reach (per week)

29,007

Facebook followers



4,795

Instagram followers



12,336

Nature Passport app users (to date)

Nature Passport



15 LGA's

hardcopy activity booklets developed



11,282

Play in WA app users (to date)



4 professional learning webinars

1,000 registrations

1,080 webinar views

Digital Wellbeing

12 new community partners



5 seminars

366 attendees

3 walking apps developed with community partners

GREEN CODE
creative





ADVOCACY

Sharing our story - inspiring our community

Nature Play WA uses a strategic approach to sharing our story through targeted communication channels to engage, support and inspire families, schools and communities to make nature play a priority in the lives of the children they care for and support.

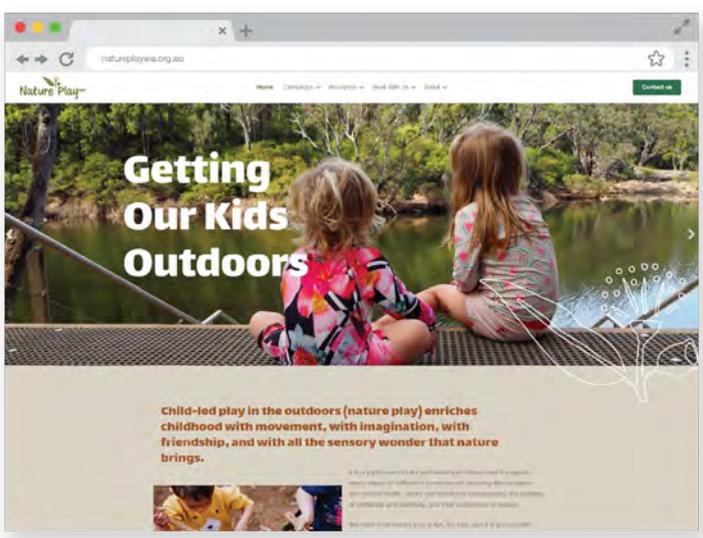
As our audience grows we are committed to elevating awareness of the value nature play brings to children’s development and to ensure every child has access to the time, space and permission they need for play to support their health and happiness.

New Nature Play WA Website

Nature Play WA’s original website was designed and built over 10 years ago, and with the fast pace of technology change, the rise of social media as a new communications platform and the growth and development of Nature Play WA as an organisation, it was time for a redesign and refresh.

The new Nature Play WA website is a more sophisticated and professional presentation of our organisation, showcasing our journey over the past decade, while being firmly focused on where we are heading in the future. It features a simpler, cleaner design, is easier to navigate, and clearly shares the message of Nature Play WA’s unique offering and our collaborative approach to supporting children’s health and wellbeing through outdoor play.

Website Statistics





ADVOCACY

Sharing our story - inspiring our community

News Media

Nature Play WA continues to have a strong presence in the WA news media despite the steady reduction in localised content.

Our team are regularly called on for comment on breaking stories that impact child health and wellbeing, and our programs and campaigns consistently picked up across TV, print, radio and online formats.

News Media Reach

7.22Mil

News Media Stories

58

Social Media Reach

Social media is an important channel for Nature Play WA to reach families and the broader Western Australian public.

Changes in the algorithms used by social media companies to limit the 'organic' reach of content has impacted the rate of our growth in this area, nonetheless, our audience continues to grow.

New Facebook Followers

1,219

Facebook Reach (per week)

10,130+

Facebook Following



Instagram Following



2020/2021



2019/2020



ADVOCACY

Sharing our knowledge - empowering our community

Beyond mass communication, our advocacy efforts focus on preparing the ground for positive change in the community by supporting adults to increase the time the children in their care spend in outdoor play. We do that by sharing practical and useable ideas that can make outdoor play achievable in the home, at school, and in the community.

Live Interactive Outdoor Play and Learning Webinar Series

From September to November 2020, Nature Play WA created and presented four interactive professional learning webinars, on topics related to outdoor play, to Western Australian educators.

Participants in the webinars came from government, Catholic and Independent schools, from early learning and family day care centres, across the state.

The webinars were extremely well received with the majority rating them as “incredibly informative and inspiring” or “very good - I’m pleased I attended”.



“The best online PD I have attended during Covid.”

“Relevant, useful and inspiring information that is used in practice.”

- Participants,
Outdoor Play and Learning
Webinar Series 2020



ADVOCACY

Sharing our knowledge - empowering our community

Digital Wellbeing

With the support of Lotterywest, Nature Play WA continued the Digital Wellbeing campaign to support families in navigating the impact of digital entertainment on their children’s lives. A suite of downloadable resources for parents was created, including practical information on everything from creating a Family Media Plan to sourcing active play ideas.

In addition to downloadable resources, three seminars in regional locations were delivered through this campaign. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, two online webinars were also held.

Twelve regional and metro Western Australian communities were selected to be involved in the campaign, and were provided with the opportunity to work with Nature Play WA staff to create Nature Passport booklets for their local communities. These communities included:

- City of Albany
- City of Canning
- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley
- City of Fremantle
- City of Swan
- Shire of Northam
- City of Joondalup
- City of Karratha
- City of Mandurah
- City of Geraldton
- City of Wanneroo



Play Matters Collective - WA Play Charter

Nature Play WA was proud to contribute to the establishment of the Play Matters Collective alongside the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Early Childhood Australia, Play Australia and others.

With the support of Nature Play WA the Collective was successful in drafting and launching the WA Play Charter, which is a tool for collaboration in supporting children’s right to play. Support for the Charter continues to grow with **434 endorsements** from individuals and organisations around the state.





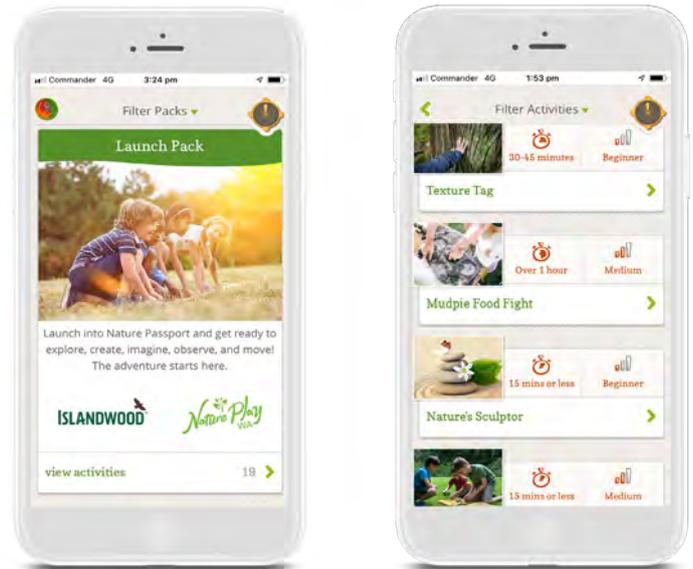
12,336

users to date

26%

increase from last year

Nature Passport App



Nature Passport App and Booklets

The Nature Passport project continues to be one of our signature tools 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 15 hardcopy activity booklets, that work in conjunction with the Nature Passport app. The booklets are localised and were developed in collaboration with local governments and government organisations.

“The support for the Passport booklets has been overwhelmingly positive.”

- City of Karratha

“The Passports have been a great hit in encouraging families out into our spaces and finding new treasures.”

- City of Kwinana





PARTICIPATION

Campaigns

Outdoor Classroom Day

Nature Play WA led the delivery of Outdoor Classroom Day in Australia for the fourth year in 2020/2021. Since our work on the campaign began in 2017, more than **1.06 million** Australian children have been registered to take part, through connection with 9,200 teachers and educators.

In WA, more than 200,000 children and 1,900 teachers and educators across the entire state, in every electorate, have participated over the course of the campaign.

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.

New Resources for Schools

With the support of the Education Department of WA, new versions of the popular Outdoor Classroom Nature Passport packs were created. These packs included a downloadable activities booklet consisting of 5 new activities, unique lesson plans (upper and lower primary versions), and a new four-part webinar series to support enriched play-based learning.

The updated package, which the Department of Education funded as part of the 2020 My Outdoor Classroom Campaign delivery, has had significant uptake with 5,970 downloads of the booklets and lesson plans across 51 countries around the world, and 1,950 views of the webinars by parents and teachers from all around Australia!





PARTICIPATION

Events and digital activation

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on community gatherings, Nature Play WA saw a decrease in our event delivery. A number of events were cancelled including Cubby Town and Meerilinga's Children's Week.

When restrictions were eased, however, we were able to partner with the City of Canning to deliver the Muddy Hands Festival at Kent Street Weir. This free event featured a variety of activities including mud kitchens, two giant mud pits, loose parts play and more. With more than 6,500 attendees at the most recent Muddy Hands Festival, the event is now one of City of Canning's most popular recurring events.

Play Trails - an events alternative

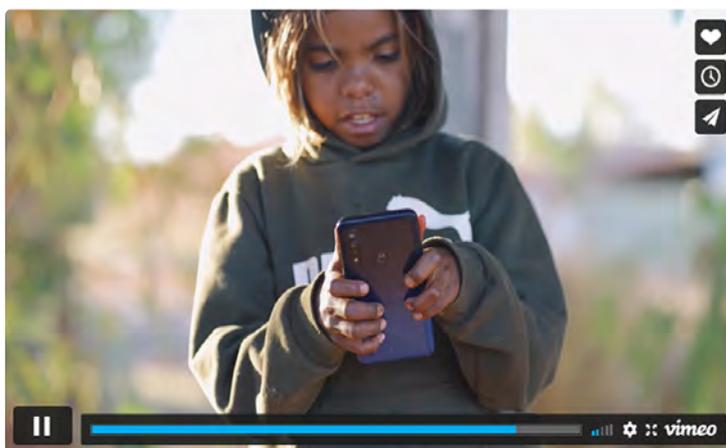
In response to COVID-19 restrictions on community gatherings Nature Play WA developed a treasure hunt trails app, '**Play Trails**'. The app provided us with a platform to work with stakeholders to create site-specific, interactive nature activity trails that support families to have fun outdoors together in a COVID-safe way. Families use the app to navigate to trail locations in order to unlock information, complete challenges, solve quiz questions and score points.

Since the launch of the Play Trails app in September 2020 we have partnered with local governments and community organisations to bring WA families **18 trails** that provide a unique and fun way to explore National Parks, shipwrecks, historic buildings, artworks, playgrounds, the environment and much more!

One of our favourite trails - the Newman Play Trail - was developed in consultation with the Year 3 students and teachers from South Newman Primary School. With funding from Creating Communities, as part of *Newman Futures*, Nature Play WA staff visited the school to pilot activity ideas for the trail.

The trail also incorporates some Martu-Wangka language and was launched over two days as part of the *Newman Futures* July school holidays program for the local Martu children.

The Play Trails app is already developing a strong following with 1,761 app users.





PARTICIPATION

Digital Activation

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.

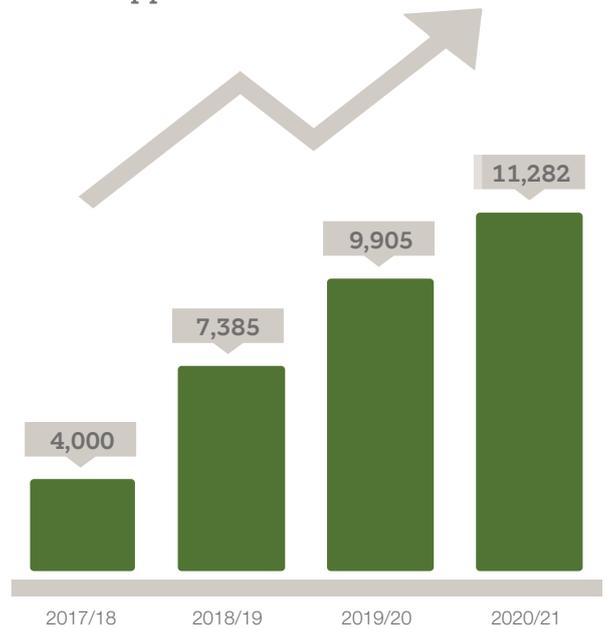
Play in WA Web App

Our Nature Play WA app, popular with families looking for places to play, camp and adventure, is now available as a web app 'Play in WA' that can be accessed on desktop, tablet or smartphone.

This year we moved to a web-based platform to remove the barrier of having to download an app and improve the user experience. Parents can use the app to explore a curated list of rich nature play opportunities in Western Australia, 'favourite' places they'd like to visit, share them with friends via social media, and navigate to them with ease.

Content is continually being reviewed and updated with a series of 'Top Five' recommendations for family hikes, adventures and off the beaten track campsites added throughout the year.

Total app downloads





RESEARCH

Building the knowledge base for outdoor play

In 2020/21 Nature Play WA 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.

Curated research

The launch of the new Nature Play WA website has made our curated list of more than 450 research articles more accessible and more useful for our audience. The research articles can now be found in a list form displaying them in order of their date of publication, via an alphabetical category list, or through a search function.

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 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 progress towards sustainability in 2020/2021 despite the uncertain economic climate created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our financial goal is to diversify the sources of income that drive our mission and to provide a 'service dividend' to the community of Western Australia, such that every dollar we receive in taxpayer funded grants results in the delivery of services worth more than the value of the grant. We achieve this by seeking corporate co-funding and by conducting fee-for-service activities that allow us to invest earned income directly into our charitable mission.

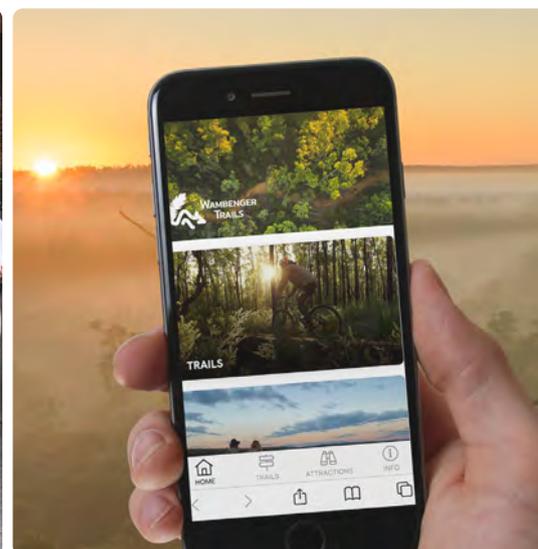
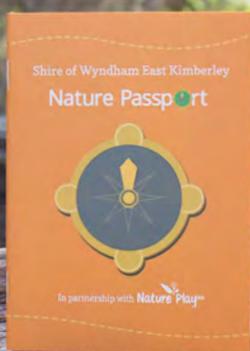
Funding

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 and Department of Education)
- Partnering with Local Governments to run Nature Play events
- Creating Nature Passport booklets and Play Trails with Local Governments
- Professional Development workshops for educators
- Lotterywest grants

Nature Play WA also has a consultancy business Green Code Creative which supports government and community groups in developing outdoor discovery apps and trails that connect people to place.

This year Green Code Creative developed the **Wambenger Trails** app for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, the **Explore Broome** app for the Shire of Broome and the **Historic Heart Perth** Walking app. For more on Green Code Creative's services and portfolio, visit www.greencodecreative.com



The table and graph below show the proportion of our total income that is made up by our primary grant from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, and the return on investment to the community as a result of that grant.

Financial Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
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	\$978,000
Grant as % income	72%	62%	52%	62%	54%	55%	46%	41%
ROI	\$1.38	\$1.61	\$1.92	\$1.60	\$1.85	\$1.83	\$2.15	\$2.45

