

NATURE PLAY WEEK 2015



7/20/2015

Selection of media coverage



This media overview was prepared by Kids In Nature Network in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

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www.natureplayweek.org.au

Contact: cvanderburgh@gmail.com



Eloise, 4, Bethany, 4, Banjo, 5, Poppy, 4, and Kai, 4, play in a cubbyhouse they made as part of bush kinder. Picture: JAY TOWN

GO BUSH TO LEARN FROM NATURE

BUSH kinders are sprouting around Victoria in a bid to get today's children back in touch with nature.

The rising movements sees kids unleashed in the great outdoors with nothing but sticks, stones and their imagination.

Such is the popularity of

ELISSA DOHERTY

the grassroots kinders, about 80 are set to be running by the end of this year.

They are among concepts being spruiked as part of Nature Play Week, which aims to encourage children away from screens.

Run by the Kids in Nature Network, more than 40 organisations are banding together to offer activities and events until April 19.

At Westgarth Kindergarten, the first to open a bush kinder in 2011, classroom tools are left behind and a portaloos and

tent are set up for three-hour parkland play sessions once a week. The remaining two days are spent on primary school grounds in a more traditional setting.

"It's come a long way since 2011, from a single kinder," said director Doug Fargher.

"When they are in the parklands, we don't bring any tools or art equipment, we just use what nature has provided.

"There's a lot of climbing, digging, excavating with sticks, playing social games and using their imagination.

"Increasing evidence suggests the more time they spend in nature, the happier, healthier and smarter kids are."

Children were noticeably calmer and confident when playing outdoors, he said, but for some it took some adjusting.

Lola and Jasper test their camping gear near Birrarung Marr.
Picture: IAN CURRIE



GAME FOR SOME FRESH AIR

ANDREA HAMBLIN

CITY-slicker parents are being urged to get their kids into the great outdoors.

The State Government and outdoor educators have teamed up to fight off "nature deficit disorder" — a term they use to describe the poor mental and physical health of children who don't get out of the house to play.

Premier Dan Andrews wants parents to let their kids' imaginations go wild outside during school holidays.

"Some of the best experiences can be had out in nature's playground, where you make your own adventures and have fun away from the iPad and telly," Mr Andrews said.

Meanwhile, the inaugural Kids Adventure Outdoors camp at Anglesea this weekend is part of a global movement encouraging parents to let children have unstructured play outdoors.

Environment Minister Lisa Neville has announced the Government would scrap camping fees in some national parks.

ABC Central Victoria (1 item)

Interview with Carolyn Tavener, Principal, Malmsbury Primary...



ABC Central Victoria, Bendigo hosted by Fiona Parker

6 mins 09 secs - ID: V00061246124

07 Apr 2015 7:38 AM



Interview with Carolyn Tavener, Principal, Malmsbury Primary School, on their launch of Nature Play Week next Tuesday. Parker says a UK report suggests children should go out for at least 30 minutes a week lest they should experience nature deficit disorder, a term used to describe the poor physical and mental health of children who do not get out of the house to play. Parker

suggests letting children out during the school holidays. She mentions the launch of Nature Play Week, in which there will be a seminar about the mental and physical health benefits of nature play. Being in the country, Tavener says the kids at Malmsbury Primary School love to have fun in the great outdoors as opposed to just playing computer games indoors. Tavener explains the differences between nature play and organised outdoor play, and the benefits of unstructured play. She talks about how their children choose to play at Malmsbury Botanic Gardens and how they educate children on recognising potential dangers. Parker mentions that Alison Lester, author, *Are We There Yet*, will be at the Nature Play Week launch and shares that more details can be found on Nature Play Week's website.

Keywords

Principal (1), educate (1), school (1), School (2)



AUD1,522 ASR



N/A ALL

Interviewees

Carolyn Tavener, Principal, Malmsbury Primary School

N/A MALE 16+

N/A FEMALE 16+

Also broadcast from the following 1 station

Picture: JANINE EASTGATE



Party animals

There's a bear in there at Yarra Bend Park in Kew this week, as sisters Mia and Ellie embrace the great outdoors for Nature Play Week. **REPORT PAGE 5**

BOROONDARA

Ears open over auto eruptions

INPUT SOUGHT ON ROAD NOISE

Greg Gliddon

A REVIEW of freeway noise has won loud support from Boroondara Council, which says residents living along the Eastern and Monash freeways need to have their opinions heard.

VicRoads is inviting community input on ways to improve the state's approach to managing traffic noise and ensure noise is kept to a reasonable level.

An online consultation hub has been launched and is open for contributions until midnight on April 19.

Boroondara Mayor Coral Ross said after years of campaigning, she was pleased the roads authority was starting to listen.

The current noise policy allows older freeways – including sections of the Eastern, Monash and Calder freeways – to reach 68db before noise attention meas-

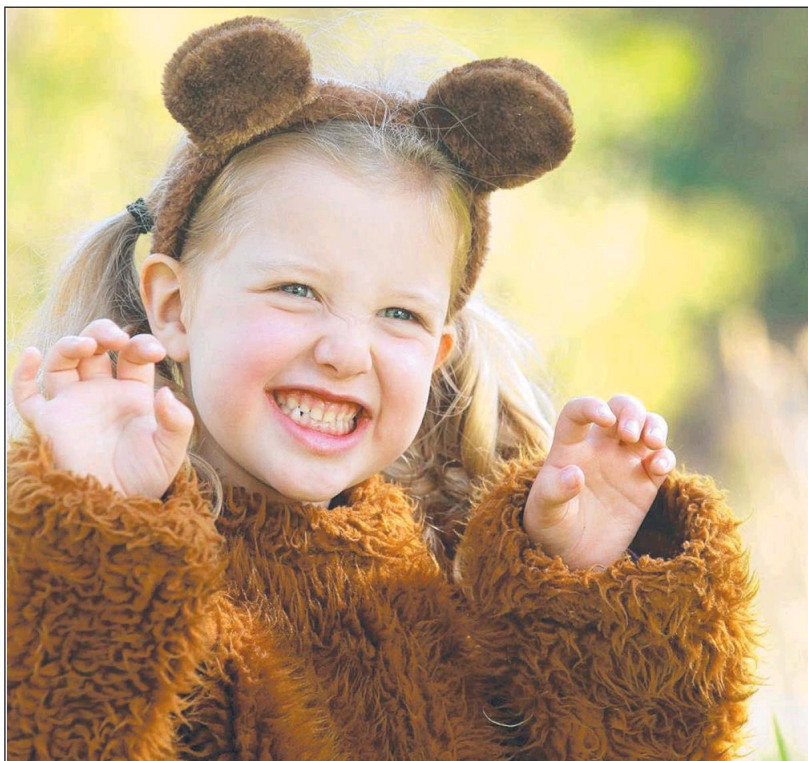
ures like barriers are installed. Newer freeways – including toll roads CityLink and EastLink, as well as Peninsula Link – only allow noise levels up to 63db.

Cr Ross said this meant noise levels along older freeways could be as much as 30 per cent greater than on the new roads. "The more feedback offered by residents whose daily lives are being affected by freeway noise, the clearer it will become to VicRoads that their inconsistent policy needs to change," Cr Ross said.

VicRoads director environmental strategy, Dr Helen Murphy, acknowledged more traffic was on the road than when the noise limits were first introduced.

Have your say by visiting the Traffic Noise Consultation Hub at consult.vicroads.vic.gov.au/trafficnoise, or call 9854 2984 to have a questionnaire sent.

KEW



Mia gets into her bear suit ahead of tomorrow's Yarra Bend Park event. Picture: JANINE EASTGATE

Enjoy a beary great time outdoors

A COLLECTION of lions and tigers and bears (oh my!) will leave their footprints over Yarra Bend Park tomorrow as part of a new movement to get kids back into nature.

Nature Play Week is a chance for youngsters to experience the great outdoors,

with a series of fun and exciting games and programs to get children outside happening throughout the state.

Kew's Yarra Bend Park will host a Wednesday morning event where children will be encouraged to come dressed as an animal and enjoy a morning in na-

ture, discovering all sorts of wonders including the grey-headed flying-fox colony and even a scavenger hunt.

Nature Play Week runs from April 11-19.

To learn more or find your nearest event, log onto natureplayweek.org.au



Students Donald, Maddie, Eliza, Molly, Lily, Cara and Giacomo.

Picture: DENNIS MANKTELOW

Enjoy nature at its best

MALMSBURY Botanic Gardens is set to provide a haven for families wanting to have fun in the sun next week.

The historic gardens is part of a 65-event program across the state which will promote the benefits of "nature play".

Kids in Nature Network is organising the events, with the official launch of the program taking place in Malmsbury on April 14 from 10am-3.30pm.

More than 40 organis-

ations have so far signed on to the movement, which is trying to change statistics which reveal one in 10 Australian children play outside just once a week or less.

Newham Primary School teacher Eron Chapman and families are attending the launch after about 40 students participated in a film project which explores the benefits derived from playing outside.

Four small groups were formed and made their own films, she said.

"We then had kids who interviewed other kids on what the benefits were of playing outside," she said.

"One of the quotes to me says it all and was along the lines, 'Playing in nature seems like it would be dangerous but it makes me feel safe and free'."

The school has a number of programs which are designed around getting their students in the outdoors which include field trips to Hanging Rock and insect studies.

Interview with Doug Fargher, Director, Westgarth Kindergarte...

 3AW, Melbourne hosted by Kate Stevenson and Peter Maher
4 mins 44 secs - ID: M00061330191

14 Apr 2015 6:18 AM



Interview with Doug Fargher, Director, Westgarth Kindergarten.

Stevenson says that she grew up in the Dandenongs, and so she spent a lot of time outside. Maher says that some kinders are encouraging children to go outside by introducing them to the bush. Doug Fargher, Director, Westgarth Kindergarten says that his kinder encourages time spent in nature. He


believes that children learn better outside, and says that they spend a number of hours at the Darebin Parklands per week. Fargher says that most primary schools have vegetable gardens. Stevenson says that there will be 80 kinders running bush programs by the end of the year.

Keywords

Kindergarten (2), schools (1)

Interviewees

Doug Fargher, Director, Westgarth Kindergarten

 AUD4,983 ASR

 94,000 ALL

40,000 MALE 16+

54,000 FEMALE 16+

Picture: SUSAN WINDMILLER

Great outdoors

Getting back to nature is child's play for brother and sister Lazar and Milica. The pair turned an egg carton into their own "hungry caterpillar" as part of the council's Nature Play Week, which runs until April 19.
REPORT PAGE 5



GREATER DANDENONG

**WHAT'S ON**

- Wetland Wonder Bike Ride, April 14, 4pm-5pm, through Tirhatuan Park. Children will learn about birds and animals in the park. Bring your bike or scooter and helmet and meet at: Kriegel Way, Dandenong North. Bookings: 8571 1702
- Bush Bracelet Walk, April 17, 10am-11am. A free nature walk through Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve, collecting bush jewels to make a bush bangle. Meet at Alex Wilkie Nature Reserve, Mackay St, Springvale South. Bookings: 8571 1702

Siblings Lazar and Milica had a blast getting back to nature.

Picture: SUSAN WINDMILLER

Week helps boost play in outdoors

GREATER Dandenong children are being encouraged to explore the natural world around them and learn more about the environment.

Nature Play Week runs from April 11 to 19 and celebrates initiatives that recon-

The kids tested their creativity while transforming recyclable egg cartons into "hungry caterpillar" planter boxes with grass seeds.

Council Waste Education officer Samantha Ondrus said it was a great opportunity to educate children

"The message is getting out there and younger and younger kids are exposed to it."

Dandenong brother and sister Lazar and Milica Matkovic, 7 and 4, enjoyed creating their "hungry caterpillars" immensely.

nect children with nature and the outdoors.

Last week, children got into the spirit during a workshop at Heritage Hill, where they learned about the importance of recycling, composting and growing plants.

about sustainability.

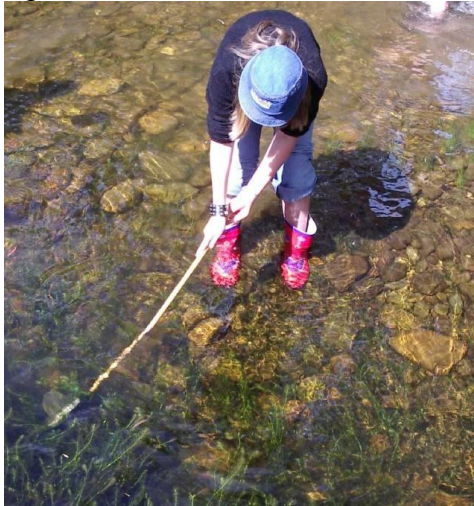
“It is important for kids to be aware from a very early age, and tying in with that, we’re actually tapping into early learning centres ... and educating them on sustainability and recycling.

“They love making things and playing in nature,” mum Marijana said.

To find out about Nature Play school holiday activities, visit the events pages at www.greaterdandenong.com

Send the kids outside to play these holidays

April 4, 2015, 6 a.m.



Nature Play activities - Wednesday, April 15

10am to 11am: Bugs

Explore the world of bugs and learn how to identify the different creatures.

11am to 12pm: Birds

Make your own birds nest from natural materials and learn about how important a birds' nest is.

1pm to 2pm: Plants

Get your hands dirty and use clay to create your own plant fossil, and take a plant home for your garden.

Children can explore and learn about the natural environment at the Botanic Gardens during Nature Play Week.

FREE family activities at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens will encourage children and parents to play, imagine, relax and explore the natural environment.

Nature Play Week will be held at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens on Wednesday, April 15 between 10am and 2pm for children aged three to 12.

Nature Play Week takes place from 11 to 19 April and Eurobodalla Mayor Lindsay Brown said it was great to see opportunities for kids to enjoy more “green time” and less “screen time”.

“From backyards to streets, parks and gardens, from the beach to the bush, we all know that kids do better outside,” he said.

“I encourage any parents who want to have a bit of fun with their kids and help them learn about nature to come along and enjoy these activities.”

The Nature Play Week activities at the Botanic Gardens are free, but bookings are essential because places are limited.

To book or for more information, phone council on 4474 7493.



[Home](#) → [News](#) → [Activity Tips](#) → Nature play week
- kids do better outside

Nature play week - kids do better outside

Premier's Active April is supporting a new movement aimed at getting kids away from TVs, computers and smartphones and back outside to play and connect with nature.



What is Nature Play Week?

'Nature Play Week is a great chance for kids and their parents to spend time outside and get involved in all kinds of events and activities that focus on getting kids reconnected with nature.'

– Cecile van der Burgh, co-founder of Kids in Nature Network

Nature Play week is proudly presented by the [Kids in Nature Network](#) in partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens and is giving kids unique opportunities to really experience nature and the outdoors.



Research has found significant physical, mental, emotional and social benefits for children who play outside. The movement aims to foster local networks giving kids and their families ongoing opportunities to connect with each other and continue to benefit from the natural environment. It's the perfect opportunity to inject some healthy activity into family life and doesn't need to be expensive or time-consuming.

Popular children's author, [Alison Lester](#), is throwing her support behind the initiative and helping to launch Nature Play Week at Malmsbury Botanical Gardens on Tuesday 14 April. She is a strong advocate for kids reconnecting with their natural environment.

'They love feeling the wind in their hair, the sun on their backs. They love seeing and hearing and all the wonderful sights and sounds that are going on every day.'

How to get involved



Nature Play Week is running from 11 – 19 April and is a wonderful opportunity to embrace the outdoors with your kids and have some fun.

Nature play is happening at various locations across Victoria. Check out the [Nature Play Week](#) website today for more details.

Don't forget to be SunSmart

April is a great time of year to be outdoors enjoying the milder autumn weather but ultraviolet (UV) radiation is still a danger. It is regularly at levels high enough to damage the skin and cause skin cancer so don't forget to take proper precautions to protect yourself and your family when exercising or playing outdoors.

The good news is that there is lots you can do to protect your skin and reduce your risk. See our [Being sunsmart while you're being active](#) post to keep yourself SunSmart at all times.

Posted: 14 April, 2015 *in:* [Activity Tips](#), [General News](#) *tagged:* [Alison Lester](#), [Cecile van der Burgh](#), [Families](#), [Family Fun](#), [Healthy lifestyle](#), [Kids](#), [Kids in Nature Network](#), [Nature Play Week](#)

Last updated: April 14, 2015 at: 4:21pm

<https://www.activeapril.vic.gov.au/2015/nature-play-week/>

Join in during Nature Play Week

Nature Play Week 11 – 19 April 2015



Starting this Saturday 11 April, make sure you book early to take part in our special Nature Play Week activities!

Driven by a desire to contribute to a growing culture of change in Victoria, the RBG in partnership with [Kids in Nature Network \(KINN\)](#) is helping to replace screen spaces with green spaces.

Children today have less free time to spend outside in unstructured nature play. Most children exceed the recommended maximum of 2 hours recreational screen time per day. The result of this is revealing frightening impacts on the health and wellbeing of our youth. Problems include obesity, vitamin D deficiency and short sightedness, to mention a few.

The solution: At least one green hour per day of unstructured, outdoor play in a natural setting.

Nature Play Week (NPW) is a signature event that celebrates initiatives of all shapes and sizes that reconnect kids with nature and the outdoors. The inaugural NPW ran in 2014 and was a huge success, with over 40 events running across Victoria and an estimated 2000 children outside playing throughout the week.

The Royal Botanic Gardens will celebrate the second year of Nature Play Week by hosting a series of workshops and activities for teachers, parents and children.

Nature Play Week Celebrations

Launch of Nature Play Week and Ecology of the Imagination Workshop (Malmsbury Botanical Gardens)

Join RBG with KINN to launch Nature Play Week with an inspiring workshop held in the beautiful regional Malmsbury Botanic Gardens. With keynote speakers including Alison Lester, one of Australia's most beloved creators of children's books and a selection of outdoor workshops, participants will discover and exchange ideas on how to utilise local parks, gardens and reserves to inspire healthy and active lifestyles and encourage imaginative play.

- **When:** Tuesday 14 April
- **Where:** Malmsbury Botanical Gardens
- **Time:** 10am – 3:30pm
- **Cost:** \$50 includes lunch
- **Bookings:** Through [Eventbrite](#)

Mini Family Nature Connection Retreat (RBG Melbourne)

Join Nurture in Nature and other nature loving families for some good green family fun at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens during Nature Play Week 2015.

The *Mini Family Nature Connection Retreat* is a chance to dip your toe in the glorious muddy puddles and wonderfully uninterrupted quality-time of one of our fantastic family retreat experiences.

- **When:** Wednesday 15 April
- **Where:** Meet at Mueller Hall, Gate F (off Birdwood Avenue), RBG Melbourne
- **Time:** 10am – 2pm
- **Cost:** \$10 first child, \$5 additional children (from same family)
- **Bookings:** www.nurtureinnature.com.au/miniretreat
- **Further info:** Contact Tania Moloney Email: tania@nurtureinnature.com.au Tel: 0409 843 965 or Web: www.nurtureinnature.com.au/miniretreat

Nature, play and your child – a workshop for parents (RBG Melbourne)

Find out how to make the most of gardens and other natural settings to stimulate your child's imagination, creativity, learning and enjoyment of the natural world. This workshop includes discussion about the value of free and structured play, hands-on experiences designed to support you in your role as parent or as facilitator of nature play experiences. Explore the play potential of plants and landscapes in the Children's Garden and the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

- **When:** Thursday 16 April
- **Where:** RBG Melbourne
- **Time:** 10am – 12pm

- **Cost:** \$25
- **Bookings:** (03) 9252 2358

Free Nature Play activities with Polyglot and RBG (RBG Melbourne)

Join Polyglot with RBG for an exciting day of plant based nature play activities on the Oak Lawn and in the Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden.

- **When:** Friday 17 April
- **Where:** Oak Lawn and IPFCG, RBG Melbourne
- **Time:** 10am – 12pm
- **Cost:** FREE
- **Bookings:** not required

Seminar: Early Childhood Outdoor Learning (RBG Cranbourne)

Bush Kinder is a rapidly growing learning model in Early Childhood settings. Join us in finding out what is so compelling about this model and what is happening throughout Australia and internationally with Sue Elliott. Hear from Doug Fargher, who has led the way in establishing Victoria's first Bush Kinder. Explore RBG Cranbourne to find out what is required of a setting and how to deal with risks in the bush.

- **When:** Tuesday 14 April
- **Where:** Auditorium, RBG Cranbourne
- **Time:** 9.30am – 12.30pm
- **Cost:** \$50
- **Bookings:** (03) 5990 2200

Woodlands Nature Play walk (RBG Cranbourne)

Celebrate Australian flora, fauna and bush traditions during Nature Play Week on an interactive walk to the Woodlands Picnic Area and playground. Adults and children alike will love the storytelling, literacy, and Nature Play activities. Suitable for children aged 0 - 6 years, this program is proudly supported by the City of Casey.

Suitable for children up to 6 years

- **When:** Thursday 16 April
- **Where:** Woodland Picnic Area, RBG Cranbourne
- **Time:** 9.30 – 11.30am
- **Cost:** FREE
- **Bookings:** via the City of Casey, call (03) 9705 5200

Proudly presented by the [Kids in Nature Network \(KINN\)](#) in partnership with the Gardens, Nature Play Week encourages parents and kids to take a break from screens and spend time playing outside in nature.

<http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/news/join-in-during-nature-play-week>

New movement aims to get children playing outside

April 9, 2015

[Parks](#) / [Play](#) / [Recreation](#) / [Wellness](#)

A new movement is trying to get children away from TVs, computers and smartphones and back outside to play and connect with nature.

With fewer Aussie kids playing outside (research suggests that only 1 in ten Australian youngsters play outdoors more than once a week), children are missing out on the significant physical, mental, emotional and social benefits that come from playing outside.

Aiming to reverse this trend, the Kids in Nature Network launched Nature Play Week last year, and will be running the initiative again between Saturday 11th and Sunday 19th April.

Kids in Nature Network co-founder Cecile van der Burgh says that Nature Play Week gives children unique opportunities to really experience nature and the outdoors.

van der Burgh explains “research shows that playing outside can reduce anxiety, improve mood and concentration in children and can make them happier.

“Kids do better when they get a chance to play outside.

“This is why, together with over 40 organisations, we started Nature Play Week ... we want to encourage kids to get outside to play, and to show kids and their parents just how much fun it is when you do.



“Nature Play Week is a great chance for kids and their parents to spend time outside and get involved in all kinds of events and activities that focus on getting kids reconnected with nature.

“Parents will also discover that getting their kids outside to play doesn’t have to be expensive or time-consuming, and the benefits kids get from playing outside are enormous.”

With so many communities and organisations getting involved in Nature Play Week, the movement also aims to foster local networks that can give kids and families ongoing opportunities to connect with each other and continue to benefit from the natural environment.



Popular children's author Alison Lester is both a supporter of Nature Play Week and an advocate for getting children reconnected with nature.

Lester explains "kids love being outside.

"They love feeling the wind in their hair, the sun on their backs.

"They love seeing and hearing and all the wonderful sights and sounds that are going on every day.

"It's very important for children to connect with the real world and to get away from their interior environment of artificial light, plastic and television."

Nature Play Week will feature over 65 events at various locations, primarily in Victoria. It is part of the Victorian Premier's Active April initiative.

For more information go to www.natureplayweek.org.au

Lower image courtesy of Tania Molony.

27th March 2015 - [KIDS' ADVENTURE OUTDOORS EVENT TO ENCOURAGE OUTDOORS ACTIVITY](#)

5th May 2014 - [NATURE PLAY PASSPORTS TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN](#)

19th April 2014 - [HAPPY, HEALTHY CHILDREN DEVELOP ON THE PLAYING FIELD](#)

<http://www.ausleisure.com.au/news/new-movement-aims-to-get-children-to-play-outside/>

Wild

Over 30 years of wilderness adventure heritage



A little mud never hurt anyone.

[Photo: Hlif Savage.](#)

[April 2, 2015](#)

Nature Play Week returns for 2015

For the second year running, Nature Play Week is generating interest in outdoor fun by making it easier for families and children to have positive experiences in natural settings.

[Nature Play Week](#) is promoting healthy, outdoor play for children across Victoria and NSW for the second year in a row.

From April 11 to 19, a variety of official and unaffiliated events will be held to encourage children and their families to spend more time in natural settings, including outings at popular parks, specially-designed activities at zoos, cultural, indigenous experiences and even a launch event with children's author Alison Lester.

Organised by the [Kids in Nature Network](#) (KINN) in partnership with the [Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne](#), co-founder Cecile van der Burgh said the event aims to promote good behaviours and health for all families.

"Nature Play Week is a signature event that celebrates initiatives of all shapes and sizes that reconnect kids with nature and the outdoors. The week features over 65 events put together by more than 40 organisations in Victoria, Australia and beyond," van der Burgh said. "The week includes unique nature play experiences for kids and workshops for parents and educators."

The initiative is also supported by the [Department of Health and Human Services](#), as well as [Playgroup Victoria](#) and is part of the broader [Active April](#) government initiative.



A young girl peers into a seaside rock pool. Photo: Emily Barrow.

Not only is the event itself becoming a popular part of the calendar for families looking for things to keep the kids occupied in the holidays, it's also firmly rooted in research that shows how beneficial these kinds of activities can be, while also highlighting how little children are actually doing them

For instance, van der Burgh points out one report that shows that, on average, one in ten Australian kids play outdoors [just once per week](#) or less. However, this is just one example of a growing body of research that indicates we need to work harder to motivate and inspire children to engage with their wider environment.

"Kids in Nature Network is a catalyst for rebuilding the connection between our kids and their natural world in Victoria, Australia. We are a cross-sectoral network of thought leaders from the health, education, environment, outdoor, recreation, arts and community development sectors."

"Since 2011, we have held over a dozen of networking seminars at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne with local and international speakers including children's author Graeme Base, Dr. Mardie Townsend, Dr. Tim Gill, film-maker David Bond, Dr. Michael Ungar and many others. We have co-hosted the Nature Connect Conference in 2014 together with the Australian Conservation Foundation featuring Richard Louv, author and co-founder of the Children and Nature Network in the USA," van der Burgh says. "We recently presented our work at the [World Parks Congress](#), the largest gathering of conservation professionals in the world."

So if you were looking for another excuse to get the kids out of the house these holidays, this is it. And while many of the events are primarily available in Victoria, a number of NSW based events have sprung up with even more to join in future years.

Visit the [Nature Play Week website](#) for event details and information on how to get involved.

<http://wild.com.au/news/nature-play-week-2015/>

Inspire Me

Parks Victoria Nature Play Week

7th April 2015

Discover Your Own Backyard is proud to work in conjunction with Parks Victoria to promote Nature Play Week, taking over parks, gardens and public spaces throughout Melbourne and Victoria from 9-19 April. Even if you can't make it to these specific events, they'll inspire you and your family to explore the parks that surround us all year round.

Discover Brimbank Park (Brimbank City Council)

When it comes to fun for everyone, Brimbank Park in Melbourne's west has you covered. Join in the fun and explore Brimbank Park's new Adventure Trail, and children of all abilities will be able to enjoy the Brimbank Park Playspace. With wide paths and wheelchair-friendly sandpits, tactile sculptures, braille and Auslan signage, this children's playground is a safe and fun space for all kids to enjoy. And especially for Nature Play Week, kids can join a local ranger to dip a net into the Maribyrnong River and learn about the microorganisms that live there.

Brimbank Park, Park Drive, Keilor East

Thursday 9 April, 10am-1pm

Registrations recommended - parksvictoriadiscovery-melbourne.eventbrite.com.au



Woodlands Nature Play Walk / Early Childhood Learning Seminar, Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne (City of Casey)

Celebrate Australian flora, fauna and bush traditions on an interactive walk to the Woodlands Picnic Area and playground. The walk is designed for adults and their littlest children (0-6 years old), with storytelling, literacy and Nature Play activities for all to enjoy. This isn't the only Nature Play Week event happening at RBG Cranbourne; an Early Childhood Learning Seminar will teach parents about the concept of Bush Kinder, a rapidly growing model in Early Childhood settings.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Corner of Ballarto Road & Botanic Drive, Cranbourne

Early Childhood Learning Seminar: Tue 14 April, 9:30am-12:30pm (\$50). Bookings required – (03) 5990 2200

Woodlands Nature Play Walk: Thu 16 April, 9:30-11:30am (Free). Bookings required – (03) 9705 5200



Discover Werribee Park (Wyndham City Council)

One of the most regal parks in Greater Melbourne, Werribee Park is as breathtaking for children as it is for adults. As part of Nature Play Week, the park will launch an Adventure Trail, seeing park rangers take families along the 'Terrific Trees' adventure trail to discover the secret history behind the park. For smaller kids (3-5 years old), one of the local rangers will share *Ranger Roo & the Lost Shoe*, an interactive, engaging story. And you'll need to use all five senses to discover the treasure at the end of the epic Treasure Hunt!

Werribee Park, K Road, Werribee South

Wednesday 15 April, 10am-1pm

Registrations recommended - parksvictoriadiscovery-melbourne.eventbrite.com.au



Children today have less free time to spend outside in unstructured nature play. Most children exceed the recommended maximum of 2 hours recreational screen time per day. The result of this is revealing negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of our youth like obesity, vitamin D deficiency and short sightedness, to mention a few.

The idea behind Nature Play Week is to get kids away from their screens and into the fresh air. At least one hour per day should be spent outside in unstructured play time. Embrace Nature Play Week and find out more at natureplayweek.org.au.

<http://www.dyob.com.au/inspire-me/parks-victoria-nature-play-week>

Nature Play Week 2015



[Kids in Nature Network](#)'s second Nature Play Week, held between 11th and 19th of April, 2015 was a time to celebrate the important relationship between children and nature in the best way possible - through play, discovery and learning in parks!

People and Parks Foundation's [Active in Parks](#) program was very proud to be a part of the festivities during two special Welcome Days organised and hosted by [Parks Victoria](#).



Brimbank Park Welcome Day was held on Thursday 9th April, technically just outside Nature Play Week in order to ensure that kids on school holidays could also join in the fun. It was a perfect day for families to come out to the park, with over 100 kids joining in on a bunch of different activities, including orienteering (with awesome support from Orienteering Victoria), a Minibeasts Discovery tour, led by Ranger Rodolfo, the self-guided Adventure Trail, brand new to the park, as well as free range fun on the award-winning Brimbank Park playscape.

Werribee Park Welcome Day was held smack bang in the middle of Nature Play Week, on Wednesday 15th April. Over 200 kids, parents and carers came to Werribee Park to discover the delights of one of the most stunning parks in Melbourne. The newly-installed Adventure Trail was a huge hit, and drew attention to several of the oldest and most interesting trees in the park. There was sensory

flora and fauna play for tiny scientists thanks to Western Melbourne Catchments Network.

Wyndham City Council provided an awesome obstacle course, complete with bubbles!, then there was a treasure hunt around the park led by Ranger Helen, who also entertained the kids with a Ranger Roo Story Time session. Phew!

The best part about both days was the feedback - the majority of nature players, parents and carers who attended were amazed that these parks existed right on their doorstep. They loved learning about how much these parks have to offer people both young and old, and that they're free!

Nature Play Week was a fantastic chance to discover new parks, or new aspects to already familiar parks.

We can't wait for next year! <http://peopleandparks.org/news-events/nature-play-week-2015>

Media Release



The Hon Lisa Neville MP
Minister for Environment, Climate Change & Water

Thursday, 2 April, 2015

NO MORE FEES FOR BASIC CAMPING IN OUR REGIONAL NATIONAL PARKS

As of today, Victorian families can have a more affordable holiday and get the chance to experience our regional national parks.

Minister for Environment, Lisa Neville, today announced that unfair basic camping fees enforced by the previous Coalition Government will be scrapped ahead of the Easter break.

The fees imposed under the Coalition made camping expensive for families, affected school camps and buried Parks Victoria in red tape.

From now on, over 500 basic camping sites over 70 campgrounds in 19 parks throughout regional Victoria will have no fees.

The bookings system for these sites will remain in place until 1 July 2015. Customers who have made a booking between now and 1 July will be refunded automatically by Parks Victoria, but the bookings will still be honoured.

A basic site is defined as unserviced, with minimal ranger patrols and pit or no-pit toilets. From 1 July 2015, these sites will no longer require booking and will be available on a first- come, first-served basis.

The Andrews Labor Government has asked Parks Victoria to review all other camping options to make sure we are getting the balance right between affordable holidays and funding for new facilities.

For more information on walks, activities and what's open to visitors during school holidays and the Easter break, please visit www.parks.vic.gov.au or call 13 1963.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Environment, Lisa Neville

"We want Victorian families to have an affordable holiday and get a chance to experience our great national parks."

"The Coalition reduced Parks Victoria funding by \$88 million since 2011, making families pay – charging them a fee for pitching a tent in a park."

"You can't put a price on the beauty of our national parks. They make our state liveable. Go out and visit one this Easter break."

Media Release



The Hon John Eren MP
Minister for Tourism & Major Events
Minister for Sport
Minister for Veterans

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

FEEL FIT AND POCKET PRIZES DURING PREMIER'S ACTIVE APRIL

Victorians can improve their health and wellbeing and pick up plenty of prizes by signing up to *Premier's Active April*.

Minister for Sport, John Eren, and *Premier's Active April* Ambassador, Catherine Andrews, today joined marathon legend Steve Moneghetti and a host of sports stars to launch the month-long initiative aimed at improving the lives of all Victorians.

Each year, *Premier's Active April* encourages Victorians of all fitness levels to dedicate just 30 minutes of each day during April to exercise. More than 60 per cent of Australian adults fail to meet the recommended levels of physical activity, while 80 per cent of children don't exercise enough.

It can be as simple as taking the stairs instead of the lift at work, walking the kids to school, or even getting out in the garden. Participants then log their physical activity online using the *Active April Activity Tracker*.

Premier's Active April is for all Victorians, allowing families and friends to spend quality time together and helping children learn about the benefits of exercise and physical activity. There's never been a better time to start.

It's free to join, and every participant will receive:

- 10 free passes to a participating YMCA or government facility
- 15 per cent discount at Sportsmart
- One hour free tennis court hire at Melbourne Park or Albert Reserve
- A two-for-one ticket offer to Sea Life Melbourne Aquarium
- Entry into the draw to win four tickets to the 2015 Toyota AFL Grand Final

For more information or to register for *Premier's Active April*, visit www.activeapril.vic.gov.au or join in the fun on Facebook or Twitter.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Sport, John Eren

"You don't have to be a top athlete to make a difference. Just by taking part you're setting a great example and you win some terrific prizes, too."

"What better way to boost your health and fitness? You'll be doing your bit to help reverse the alarming rates of obesity and diseases like Type 2 Diabetes that can come with a sedentary lifestyle."

"The time is now to make this positive change in your life. Sign up, get on board and get active."

Quotes attributable to Catherine Andrews, Premier's Active April Ambassador

"As a mum of three and someone who takes my health and fitness seriously, I know the rewards that active lifestyles and healthy choices can bring. I encourage all Victorians to make this the most active April ever."