



Nature Connection



Natural experiences can transform how we learn, work and live

Increasing urbanisation, busy lifestyles, screen-based technologies, reduced backyards and access to green space, and growing phobias of the perceived dangers of outdoor environments have all contributed to the decline in outdoor livingⁱ. With less time to spend in nature, many people are losing their understanding about how the natural world works and their place in it.

Urbanisation is now emerging as one of the most important global health issues of the 21st century where cities are becoming the epicentres for chronic health conditions. The role of nature in helping to address this public health

Research confirms that people living in neighbourhoods with more trees, shrubs and birds are less likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and stress. Where birds and nature around the home show great promise in preventative healthcare.ⁱⁱⁱ

concern has now become a focal point, backed with over 40 years of researchⁱⁱ.

Many of these health concerns can be addressed by connecting people to the natural environment. Research shows that positive nature-based experiences^{iv} have direct benefits on our health, wellbeing, workplace productivity and care for the natural environment - improving our physical and mental health.





We are scientific professionals that tailor make nature and place-based programs and biophilic design recommendations to improve health, wellbeing, productivity and sustainable behaviours.

Nature Connection Workshops & Information Session Services

Our workshops and information sessions introduce the concept of nature connection and sense of belonging to place - introducing the benefits as linked to the local natural environment, people's health, wellbeing and productivity. Participants will learn techniques to enable ongoing nature connection practices for both their personal and work lives.



Our information sessions and workshops are held in a bushland, parkland or workplace setting covering mindfulness techniques, local ecological and heritage values, environmental stewardship, connection to place and biophilic design principles. Our delivery model is tailored to individual needs and extends beyond traditional knowledge based nature workshops by incorporating experiential learning techniques.

*In Australia, it is estimated that \$12 billion a year in lost productivity and job turnover has been linked to mental health**

Workplace designs that incorporate natural elements and support social interactions with nature can have a significant influence on employee wellbeing.

Research demonstrates that nature connection improves:

1. Concentration and learning
2. Creativity and initiation of new ideas
3. Decision-making and problem solving
4. Reduced stress and mental fatigue
5. Critical thinking
6. Motor and cognitive function
7. Social and workplace cohesion
8. Mood improvements, enhanced coping skills and tolerance
9. Workplace health and safety



"We were guided on a beautiful and mindful walk which was different to any other walks I have done before that churn out information. This walk was different. By incorporating sensory interactions using feel, touch, smell and taste, we as participants felt more present with nature."

- Park Ranger, Sydney Olympic Park

"Thank you. We rarely receive 100% very high rating for workshops so this is a real measure of the all-out appreciation for what and how you presented."

- Willoughby Council





Our Nature Connection Green Space Design Services

Incorporating a range of biophilic elements into green space planning, the workplace or home enables opportunities for daily connections with nature.

Elements such as running water, sensory variables including touch, texture and smell; natural materials drawing on wood and stone as well as designs that follow natural patterns to provide curiosity and awe, all create important points of connection.

Importantly the biophilic design concept creates engaging spaces to help people to stop, laugh and relax.



“The presenters have a great deal of knowledge and experience, presenting in a way that I could easily understand and knowing how I could apply this into my day to day personal and work life.”
– Workshop participant

“Waminda and John have created an oasis, a little piece of tranquility that we enjoy and admire daily. We have noticed that after spending time in our garden we feel more composed, connected and relaxed. It has become a bit of a talking point with those that come to visit.”
– Residents in new housing estate, Central Coast



Our services provide

- **Nature-based Approaches to Learning:** Experiential and sensory approaches to learning and teaching
- **Employee and Community Training:** Understanding nature's health, wellbeing and ecological benefits and applications within the work and home environment
- **Delivery in Engaging Spaces:** Creating a new approach to workshop delivery that is safe, fun and inspiring
- **Biophilic Designed Places:** Advising on supporting places inspired by nature to help connect with nature
- **Connection with Place:** Inspired by local content and context to create a sense of connection and belonging with place
- **Sustainable Communities:** Advising on actions and strategies aligned to the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals



Our unique services include:

- Nature and place-based community workshop or corporate training programs.
- Information sessions on the benefits of nature connection, belonging with place and biophilic design principles.
- Customised biophilic designed recommendations for urban and green space planning, for the workplace, home and garden.

Our ecological, economic and social systems are all dependent on a healthy natural environment - for people and planet. All sectors must come together under a new understanding and vision for nature. Creating positive daily experiences with nature will ultimately transform the way we learn, work and live.



John Allen: 30 years of experience working with State and Local Government, self-employment and community organisations. John has worked in the fields of biodiversity and landscape conservation, threatened species management, environmental education, Aboriginal cultural practice and heritage conservation, fire management and environmental planning. As an experienced place and nature-based facilitator, John's authenticity, honesty and experiential approaches to facilitation creates intimate and meaningful outcomes across both individual and group work. John also has extensive experience in horticulture and landscape design.

Waminda Parker: 20 years of experience working in program management and strategic planning across the environment and community development not-for-profit sectors and research. Waminda has been actively promoting the co-benefits of nature and biophilic associations through presentations and State Government policy and planning. As a manager of a nature-based and placemaking research program at Macquarie University, Waminda knows first-hand the many benefits that connecting with nature and place can bring. She is also a member on the Biophilic Design Initiative Advisory Panel and a hands-on supporter of the global #NatureForAll movement.

For more information contact:

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ⁱ Planet Ark (2013). Missing Trees: The Inside Story of an Outdoor Nation Key Findings: <http://treeday.planetark.org/documents/doc-1049-missing-trees-keyfindings.pdf>

ⁱⁱ D F. Shanahan, R Bush, K J. Gaston, B B. Lin, J Dean, E Barber & R A. Fuller. (2016). Health Benefits from Nature Experiences Depend on Dose. Scientific Reports | 6:28551

* National Mental Health Commission (2014) The National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/watching-birds-near-home-good-mental-health/> University of Exeter

^{iv} Beyond Blue to Green: The benefits of contact with nature for mental health and well-being:

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/research-projects/research-projects/beyond-blue-to-green-the-health-benefits-of-contact-with-nature-in-a-park-context-literature-review>

Kuo M, Barnes M and Jordan C (2019) Do Experiences With Nature Promote Learning? Converging Evidence of a Cause-and-Effect Relationship. Front. Psychol. 10:305. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00305

