



Green Adelaide

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



Wherever our adventures take us at Nature Play SA, we acknowledge that we are on Aboriginal Country. We acknowledge Kaurna Miyurna as the Traditional Custodians and native title holders of the Adelaide Plains region where we work. We respect Elders past, present and emerging and extend this respect to all Traditional Custodians of Country.

Table of Contents



Section	Page
Executive Summary	3
Purpose	4
Across the reporting period	5
Results Overview	6
<i>Community Events and Programs</i>	7
Forest Festival	8
WOMADelaide	9
Supporting Children and Young People in Care or with a care experience	10
Supporting People Living with Disability	11
<i>Outdoor Learning</i>	13
Outdoor Learning Programs	14
Supporting Inclusive Education	15
<i>Professional Development</i>	17
Go Beyond; Establishing a bush kindy	18
<i>Resources</i>	19
Nature Education Resources	20
Case Studies	21

Welcome Swallow
Hunter, 9 yrs old



Executive Summary



In 2024–25, Nature Play SA's two year partnership with Green Adelaide entered its first year and continued to deliver exceptional outcomes. Our purpose was to connect thousands of children, families, and communities with nature in ways that enhance wellbeing, foster environmental stewardship, and promote inclusive access to South Australia's natural environments. Across large-scale community events, targeted programs, professional development, and resource creation, all deliverables outlined in our agreement with Green Adelaide were achieved or exceeded.

A total of 195 outdoor learning programs reached more than 12,400 students across 165 education sites, while 54 inclusive community events engaged over 14,500 participants from diverse backgrounds and abilities. Professional development for 793 educators ensured these outcomes are embedded and sustained, strengthening capacity across the education and community sectors.

Central to our work this year was an emphasis on accessibility, universal design, and cultural inclusion. Programs such as the Accessible Outdoor Program and Pathways of Hope were co-designed with partners to provide safe, welcoming, and empowering outdoor experiences for people living with disability, young people in care, and communities experiencing disadvantage. Our events integrated Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge in respectful and meaningful ways, deepening connections with culture and Country.

New to the partnership in 2025 is the Birds in Focus program. A standout example of innovation, the program combines art, science, and wellbeing to inspire a deep, personal connection between students and local birdlife, including vulnerable species such as the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. The program nurtured ecological literacy, artistic skill, and emotional resilience, with evaluation showing measurable improvements in calmness, pride, and nature connection. Throughout this report, student-created artworks from Birds in Focus are featured, celebrating youth creativity and demonstrating the program's legacy beyond the classroom.

Resource development was a major achievement, with 18 diverse resources produced, many co-designed with children, educators, and specialist partners to ensure accessibility, engagement, and cultural relevance. These include illustrated wildlife posters, informative blogs, and interactive tools designed to inspire ongoing nature engagement.

Nature Play SA's work this year demonstrates that when connection to nature is intentional, inclusive, and creative, it can transform individual wellbeing, strengthen community bonds, and inspire collective action to care for the environment. Collectively, these achievements advance Green Adelaide's vision for a cooler, greener, wilder, and climate-resilient city.

We sincerely thank Green Adelaide for their continued funding, guidance, and belief in our shared vision. Your support makes it possible for Nature Play SA to deliver programs and resources that connect communities to nature, strengthen wellbeing, and inspire stewardship across South Australia. We look forward to building on this year's achievements and sharing the next chapter of success, innovation, and impact.

Ngaitalya,

Jason Tyndall
Chief Executive Officer



New Holland Honeyeater
Aurora, 12 yrs old

Purpose

The purpose of our current agreement with Green Adelaide is for Nature Play SA to engage children, families, and communities with meaningful, direct connections with nature that promote wellbeing and engagement in nature conservation including:

- Nature-based, hands-on learning experiences, activations and large-scale events for children, families, students and vulnerable communities
- Nature-based, outdoor learning programs for early years and primary schools
- Professional development programs to foster nature relationships with early years and primary school educators
- Resources and evaluation to contribute to the collective understanding and protection of nature narrative

Throughout the 2024-2025 financial year, we have met all meeting and reporting requirements including:

- Quarterly meetings
- Board updates including highlights and succinct updates
- Quarterly invoices with service updates
- Industry participation policy reportingo
- Annual reporting

All funding deliverables and KPI's were either achieved as stated in the agreement or exceeded. This is shown in detail overleaf.



Eastern Spinebill
Violet T, 6 yrs old



Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo
Luca, 10 yrs old



Across the reporting period

Year 1 of 2, 2024 - 2025

Component	KPI	Achievement		Comments
		Achieved	Exceeded	
Community events and programs	2 large events		✓	3 large scale events: Kuitpo Forest Festival, Muddy Hands Festival, and WOMAD successfully delivered
	22 small-scale events		✓	51 inclusive events successfully delivered
	5,500 attendees		✓	14,504 people attended events across the Green Adelaide Area
	15 partners		✓	25 partners engaged across several sectors
Outdoor Learning	120 programs		✓	195 programs delivered across the Green Adelaide Area
	4500 students		✓	12,430 students engaged
	100 sites		✓	165 sites supported
Professional development	14 PD sessions		✓	16 session delivered
	270 educators		✓	793 educators supported through PD
Resources	10 resources		✓	18 diverse resources developed
	4 case studies	✓		4 unique case studies developed
	60 Surveys		✓	60+ surveys distributed and assessed



2024 - 2025

Community Events and Programs

54

Events delivered

14,504

Event participants

25

Partners engaged

Outdoor Learning

195

Programs delivered

12,430

Students engaged

165

Sites supported

Professional Development

16

Sessions delivered

793

Educators engaged

Resources

18

Resources
created

4

Case studies
developed

60+

Surveys distributed
and assessed

Community Events and Programs



54

Events delivered

14,504

Event participants

25

Partners engaged

Research consistently demonstrates that community events held in natural settings significantly enhance wellbeing by reducing stress, fostering social connection, and strengthening people's sense of belonging, while also deepening their connection to the environment. These are critical outcomes that Nature Play SA's programs have effectively delivered over the reporting period.

Nature Play SA's events are underpinned by themes of community wellbeing, connection to nature, Aboriginal culture, and inclusion and accessibility. These key focus areas are consistent across our annual report, strategic plan, and social communications. Our nature-based experiences empower individuals and families to engage purposefully with nature, fostering improved mental, physical, and social health through regular interaction with diverse natural environments.

By incorporating Aboriginal perspectives through respectful collaboration with elders and leaders, our events deepen cultural awareness and support reconciliation thus enriching participants' sense of place and connection to Country.

Central to our approach is a strong commitment to universal design and inclusion, ensuring that people of all abilities can participate and benefit fully. These programs also build ecological literacy and stewardship, nurturing healthier communities aligned with Green Adelaide's vision of a cooler, greener, wilder, and climate-resilient city.

Highlights from our Green Adelaide supported community events and programs are detailed in the sections to follow.



Forest Festival

White-plumed Honeyeater
Noureen T, 11 yrs old



3,000

Attendees

22

Nature + Aboriginal
Culture experiences

9

Partners

The 2025 Forest Festival, Nature Play SA's flagship event supported by Green Adelaide, attracted over 3,000 visitors of all ages to Kuitpo Forest. The Festival provided a unique opportunity to bring together multiple generations, from infants as young as six months to grandparents, in a shared experience within nature.

Guided by Nature Play SA's Reconciliation Action Plan and in partnership with Kaurna Narungga Elder Kauwanu Tamaru, the Festival demonstrated a strong commitment to respect for Country and culture. Attendees engaged in over 22 nature-based and cultural activities, as well as storytelling and performances, offering authentic avenues for families to connect with Aboriginal culture and the local environment.

The event fostered positive and meaningful experiences that nurtured curiosity, encouraging participants to develop a deeper relationship with nature and culture beyond the Festival. It united communities across generations, supporting the youngest attendees' discovery and inspiring older participants' reconnection through play and storytelling.

Green Adelaide resources were prominently featured during the Festival. Wildlife posters and garden brochures were well received by visitors and educators alike. Additionally, a new Green Adelaide-funded illustrated poster highlighting local pollinators was launched, designed to engage both younger and older audiences in learning about these important species. These resources facilitate continued community engagement with our unique and local biodiversity.

Overall, the Forest Festival reflects Nature Play SA's dedication to providing accessible and meaningful nature experiences and cultural inclusion, in alignment with Green Adelaide's objectives to build inclusive, resilient communities connected by place and shared participation.

"Well done NPSA on yet another awesome forest festival. It's always a pleasure to be a part of, and thanks so much for having SA Water this year. We look forward to many more forest festivals to come".

SA Water



"Very meaningful being an Aboriginal family we connect on Country and in nature. We loved that you incorporated Aboriginal perspectives into your festival, it meant a lot to our family".

Forest Festival Attendee



3,500+

Attendees engaged

3,000

Pieces of sustainable
art created

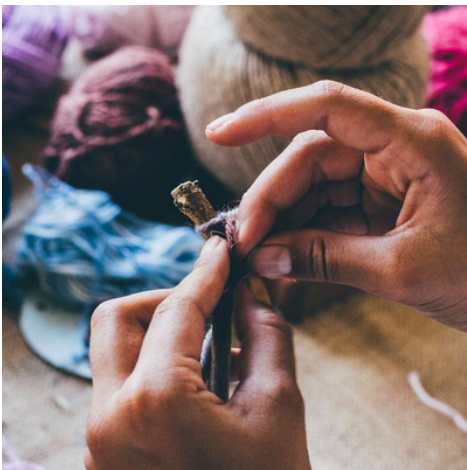
350

Young artists contributed
to butterfly mural

At WOMADelaide 2025, Nature Play SA delivered an ambitious and deeply sustainable KidZone experience engaging thousands of young artists and families in creative nature-based art and play. Activities used natural and repurposed materials such as sticks, seed pods, leaves, bark, string, wool and fabric to create hundreds of hanging mobiles and nature wands providing hands-on imagination-rich experiences free from plastics or disposables.

The highlight was a collaborative painted mural celebrating local butterflies which brought festival-goers together to contribute to a vibrant artwork reflecting community creativity and connection to nature. This living artwork along with the hanging mobiles and nature wands embodied Nature Play SA's vision of nurturing future nature stewards through nature connection and environmental sustainability.

Throughout the multi-day event Green Adelaide QR codes were displayed and discussed as they linked directly to resources such as those associated with butterflies. Through Green Adelaide's support WOMADelaide was enriched with stronger themes of nature across our *National Park City*.



"Thank you Nature Play SA for sharing creative ways to play, create and engage with the natural world with our KidZone families. You are a constant inspiration & a pleasure to work with"

*Leanne Bloomfield, Producer
KidZone families*



"WOMADelaide is my favourite event to work on. It brings together creativity, culture, and community in such a powerful way. Watching families slow down and connect through nature is incredibly special."

Nature Play SA, Team Member



Supporting children and young people in care or with a care experience

Galah
Eloise T, 10 years old



3

Events

154

Children and Young People
engaged

3

Partners engaged

Extensive research shows that access to natural environments supports the holistic wellbeing of all children and young people, including those in care or with a care experience, by providing opportunities for safety, empowerment, connection, and growth. A core value reflected in our work is nature offers a grounding and restorative space where children and young people can engage in play, exploration, and shared experiences that nurture resilience, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

With Green Adelaide's support Nature Play SA is able to partner with organisations such as Create Foundation, Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers SA, and Anglicare to co-create inclusive, nature-rich programs tailored to the unique strengths and needs of children and young people in care. These initiatives provide culturally safe and supportive environments that foster connection to nature and community, promote wellbeing, and support positive identity development through enjoyable, strength-based outdoor engagement.

By prioritising accessibility and inclusion, these programs create meaningful opportunities for children and young people to build positive relationships, develop agency, and create empowering experiences in nature. This approach aligns with Nature Play SA's commitment to fostering healing, growth, and belonging, contributing to healthier, more connected communities that support Green Adelaide's vision.

"Nature Play SA's programs create vital opportunities for children and young people in care to connect with their peers, carers, and community in an accessible, enriching, and deeply beneficial way. Their work is truly invaluable".

Laura Hooper - CREATE Foundation



"We have had the privilege of working alongside Nature Play SA and have witnessed first hand the impact of their programs in fostering positive developmental outcomes for children and young people".

Fiona Endacott - Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers - SA



"This was such an awesome day. Everything was so well thought out. I really enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere and being able to connect with other carers. A special shout out for encouraging and really listening to the feedback from my little mate—they have been telling everyone about Nature Play SA."

Participant, Carer Connection Event



Supporting People Living with Disability

Musk Lorikeet
Hettie Kerr, 10 yrs old



17

Events

670

People Engaged

4

Partners Engaged

Extensive research highlights the positive impact of accessible outdoor programs in supporting wellbeing, skill development, and social connection for people living with disability. Engaging with nature in safe, inclusive environments promotes physical health, emotional wellbeing, and a sense of belonging, while providing opportunities for exploration, learning, and personal growth.

Nature Play SA's commitment to inclusion is embodied in its Accessible Outdoor Program – a partnership between Bedford, SA Water, Forestry SA, the Department for Environment and Water and Nature Play SA. In addition we foster collaborative partnerships with organisations such as ORANA, Minda and Novita. These programs are thoughtfully co-designed with participants and support staff to ensure activities respect individual agency, promote dignity, and provide meaningful enjoyment. By creating safe, welcoming spaces where people of all abilities can engage with nature, these initiatives foster confidence, connection, and empowerment.

Such partnerships reflect Nature Play SA's leadership in building a diverse community of nature stewards who share a genuine connection to South Australia's natural landscapes.

“Our Life Ed group had a fantastic time today at the beautiful Morialta Falls & Conservation Park. They couldn't stop talking about it on the van ride home!

Thank you again, Jason, Emily, and Jane, for hosting us. We would love to do more events like this in the future.”

Isaac Marshall, Orana



“I love sharing my culture with all walks of life and this group is really enjoyable to work with”

Kauwanu Tamaru
Kaurua/Narungga elder and guest facilitator



“I didn't realise all these creatures had homes and stories”.

Participants





Outdoor Learning

195

Programs delivered

12,430

Students engaged

165

Sites supported

Thanks to our partnership with Green Adelaide, Nature Play SA continues to deliver subsidised education programs that embed nature connection and outdoor learning at their core.

Our approach aligns with key state and national education priorities, including the Australian Curriculum and Early Years Learning Framework, and supports Green Adelaide's vision of engaging children meaningfully with nature to promote wellbeing and conservation.

We provide primary schools, early learning sites, and community partners with expert guidance, practical resources, and tailored support to develop rich pedagogical approaches to connecting with nature whilst providing outdoor learning environments where children can play, explore, and connect.

Our programs empower students to:

- Develop confidence and capabilities as outdoor learners, gaining essential skills that foster curiosity, resilience, and stewardship.
- Explore meaningful human-nature relationships that connect ecological knowledge with cultural understanding and respect.
- Take tangible actions to promote sustainable living, sharing hopeful messages that encourage the conservation of local flora and fauna.
- Identify pathways to improved health and wellbeing through regular connection with nature and outdoor activity.
- Support deeper connections and understandings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Culture

Demand for our incursions and excursions significantly exceeded targets this year, reflecting growing community recognition of the value of quality outdoor education grounded in nature engagement and aligned learning outcomes.

We also provided specialised support to inclusive education sites, tailoring programs to be safe, accessible, and enriching for children and young people living with disability. Partnering with sites such as Seaton High School, South Australian School and Services for Vision Impaired, and Suneden Specialist School, our Accessible Outdoor Programs ensure all learners experience the benefits of outdoor play, learning, and connection.



Rainbow Lorikeet
Eloise T, 10 years old

Outdoor Learning Programs



188

Incursions + Excursions

12,255

Students engaged

162

Education sites supported

Nature Play SA's incursion and excursion programs offer hands-on, outdoor learning experiences across diverse natural settings, including national parks, reservoirs, botanic gardens, and schoolyards, that nurture environmental stewardship, celebrate biodiversity, and promote student wellbeing. Aboriginal perspectives are thoughtfully integrated throughout the programs through meaningful collaboration and advice from Aboriginal leaders, ensuring cultural respect and authenticity even when direct engagement does not occur in every session.

Central to the programs is a commitment to universal design, access, and inclusion, with ongoing refinement to ensure that all students, regardless of ability or background, can fully participate and benefit. By immersing students in authentic outdoor environments, these programs foster curiosity, build ecological literacy, and deepen understanding of local ecosystems, inspiring a sense of responsibility for the environment.

Regular, purposeful time spent outdoors supports mental, physical, and social wellbeing by enhancing resilience, creativity, and teamwork. Through these integrated and inclusive approaches, Nature Play SA empowers schools to cultivate environmentally conscious, culturally aware, and thriving students—demonstrating the enduring value and impact of Green Adelaide's support.

"The cubby building excursion with NPSA was an outstanding experience for the Year 1 students. The staff were exceptional, providing enthusiastic support and guidance throughout the activity. The hands-on experience of constructing cubbies perfectly complemented the classroom learning, reinforcing teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving skills in a fun and engaging way"

Educator



"Engaging, respectful and mindful of the environment and history of the lands in which the activity was on. The nature play team were fantastic and supportive with our children, we couldn't fault our experience. It was beautiful to be outside all working together creating some fantastic cubbies! We can't wait to do it again!."

Educator



"Nature Play SA has become part of our annual incursions here at Xavier College. We look forward to it every year because it helps build team work, creativity and best of all, connecting with nature - it's a great way to start the year"

Educator



Supporting Inclusive Education



Noisy Miner
Aurora, 12 yrs old

7

Sessions Delivered

175

Students Engaged

Nature Play SA's collaboration with SASSVI (South Australian School and Services for Vision Impaired), Christie Downs Primary School's disability unit, and Seaton High School's inclusion program demonstrates our strong commitment to access, inclusion, and universal design in outdoor learning. By partnering closely with these schools, we have refined our nature-based programs to support students with diverse needs and abilities, ensuring that every learner can engage meaningfully with nature.

These partnerships feature tailored activities, assistive approaches, and co-designed experiences that promote exploration, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging for all students. By creating inclusive outdoor environments that meet varied needs, we are breaking down barriers to participation to foster empowerment through hands-on engagement with natural settings.

"The session was not only fun and exciting, it also helped learners to build their skills in persistence and resilience. Learners were engaged for the whole session and left feeling accomplished and confident."

Christie Downs Primary School



"We look forward to the possibility of continuing to work with Nature Play SA and would highly recommend your services for any tours or activities involving students with diverse access needs. Your commitment to inclusivity and accessibility made this excursion truly special".

SASSVI



"Painting outside was awesome."

"It was fun spending time outside with friends."

"I was painting a tree where and animal was."

Seaton High Students





Professional Development

16

Sessions delivered

793

Educators empowered

64+

Sites supported

Research by Nicole Miller from the University of South Australia highlights that while educators widely recognise the benefits of nature-based play for children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development, many face barriers related to knowledge and confidence in implementing these approaches effectively. Specifically, seven out of ten teachers reported feeling limited by their own confidence and skills, underscoring the critical need for tailored professional development to support the integration of nature play within educational frameworks.

Responding to these findings and community-identified needs, we have delivered a range of high-quality professional development programs designed to build educator capacity and confidence. A key example is the Bush Kindy Go Beyond workshop held at Belair National Park, which was developed in direct response to Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data identifying crucial domains of childhood development that benefit from immersive outdoor learning. This full-day workshop engaged over 80 early years educators, equipping them to deliver inclusive, nature-based early learning that promotes physical activity, social skills, emotional resilience, language development, and cultural awareness through connection to Country.

By embedding relevant educational frameworks such as the Australian Curriculum and Early Years Learning Framework, and fostering practical, culturally respectful, and wellbeing-centered approaches, our professional development strengthens educators' ability to create enriching, accessible nature play environments. This work directly addresses the knowledge gaps identified by research and supports Green Adelaide's vision for a healthier, greener, and more connected community.



Go Beyond; Establishing a bush kindly

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Violet T, 6 yrs old



79

Attendees

33

Schools represented

18

Diverse presenters
(including 6 schools)

Nature Play SA's Go Beyond; Establishing a bush kindly workshop, hosted at Belair National Park, brought together over 80 early years educators dedicated to guiding and supporting our youngest learners. The workshop was developed in direct response to the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), using this nationally recognised framework to target key domains of childhood development and ensure our approach is grounded in current evidence.

While AEDC data underscores areas such as physical health, social competence, emotional maturity, language, and communication, the true strength of the workshop lies in translating this evidence into practice. Through a balance of interactive learning, practical activities, and peer exchange, educators gained tools and confidence to deliver nature-based early learning that cultivates curiosity, resilience, and wellbeing.

Through the workshop, educators strengthened bush kindly programs that encourage physical activity, appropriate risk-taking, and collaboration - key factors in child development identified by AEDC. Nature-rich settings provided opportunities for exploration and storytelling, supporting language development and critical thinking. The integration of Aboriginal perspectives from David Booth a Warumunga/Yuggera man, further enriched cultural understanding and fostered meaningful connections to Country.

Educators left the workshop with enhanced knowledge, practical strategies, and greater confidence to create inclusive, culturally respectful, and inspiring experiences for children. By responding to AEDC-identified needs and building educator capacity, Nature Play SA, with the support of Green Adelaide, are guiding a new generation of lifelong learners with the curiosity and confidence to build strong relationships with nature and their communities.



"Every aspect of this professional development was fantastic. All presenters spoke about such inspiring and education topics which have not only supported me with my approaches towards the importance of nature in education, but my overall view of education in early childhood. I feel so much more dedicated towards my career in early childhood education and contributing towards making the world of early childhood a better place. Cannot express my gratitude and appreciation for being able to be a part of such a fantastic day." *Attendee*





18

Resources

4

Case Studies

A growing body of research demonstrates that high-quality, accessible resources such as posters, guides, and interactive experiences play a vital role in supporting nature connection and education. These materials not only increase knowledge and stimulate curiosity, but also create tangible entry points for engagement with local ecosystems, ultimately cultivating stewardship values and lasting wellbeing benefits supporting Green Adelaide's holistic vision for a metropolitan region that is greener, more connected, and resilient.

Nature Play SA's resource development is responsive and needs-driven, with resources created in direct response to feedback and requirements identified by the communities and partners we support. For example, our Communications Board was developed in close consultation with Autism SA to support participants with diverse communication needs. The Board was launched at a major event in partnership with Autism SA and SA Water and is now a central feature at our major community events. We are expanding this approach, actively working with agencies such as Bedford and Orana to co-design additional accessible resources.

Student voice and co-design are central to our approach. Our Birds in Focus program demonstrates this commitment, with resources entirely illustrated by students aged 6 to 12. In this funding period, we launched the first in what will become a series of student-illustrated resources by June 2026, supporting nature connection, wellbeing, and building ecological literacy.

These initiatives demonstrate our strategic commitment to inclusion, relevance, and innovation in resource development, ensuring that our materials support meaningful and accessible engagement with nature for all.



Nature Education Resources



I4 Posters

2 Blogs

Nature Play SA continues to expand its suite of nature education resources, with each development tailored to identified community and educational needs. These resources play a pivotal role in enhancing engagement with local biodiversity, fostering ecological literacy, and strengthening community connection to South Australia's natural environments.

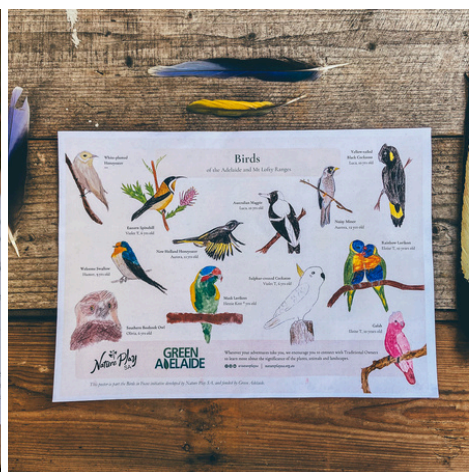
Wildlife posters have been produced in direct response to needs identified through collaboration with schools. These posters spotlight key local species, such as the Threatened Southern Brown Bandicoot in Belair National Park and the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo in Glenithorne National Park. Developed and tested with students for relevance, readability, and appeal, the posters respond to a strong preference for illustrated content, serving as accessible and engaging tools for environmental education.

Empowering student voice is central to resource development. Three resources, including the Birds in Focus poster featuring thirteen bird species illustrated by children, embed youth creativity within public-facing materials, making them relatable and effective for young audiences.

To support connection to Aboriginal culture and Country, we developed a blog about Kaurna education sites to visit which was prepared after research and consultation. This ensures respectful and accurate information that encourages increased visitation to cultural educational sites, deepening community understanding.

Green Adelaide's support also enabled development of the innovative Native Wildlife Geocaching program, first trialled at the 2024 Muddy Hands Festival and subsequently presented at major events like LIV Golf, Dream Big, and at various schools. This initiative has introduced thousands of people to local wildlife species, increasing ecological awareness and visibility of the Green Adelaide brand.

As part of the current two-year agreement, development of more new resources, programs, and initiatives is already underway, ensuring ongoing innovation, inclusivity, and alignment with the collective goal of fostering nature connection, environmental literacy, and stewardship across metropolitan Adelaide.





Case Studies

Birds in Focus

Birds in Focus is an innovative nature-based art and wellbeing program delivered by Nature Play SA and funded by Green Adelaide, connecting primary school students with local birdlife. It aims to nurture creativity, mindfulness, and environmental stewardship.

Conducted over seven weeks in Term 2, the program engaged students in outdoor art sessions where they observed, sketched, and painted local birds, including vulnerable species like the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, while exploring how personal dispositions like curiosity, resilience, and playfulness align with bird behaviours.

Evaluation showed strong impact, with most students reporting increased feelings of calm, pride, and connection to nature, and 91% forming a special connection with a particular bird species. Teachers observed improved focus, emotional regulation, and social connection. The program will see a student art exhibition and the creation of educational resources, leaving a lasting legacy that advances Green Adelaide's vision and sets a replicable model for combining environmental education, art, and wellbeing.

The full case study can be viewed in Appendices 1

McAuley Community School – A Whole School Outdoor Learning Approach

In partnership with Green Adelaide, McAuley Community School and Nature Play SA delivered a large scale outdoor learning initiative that involved over 450 students, 50 educators and over 50 parents in immersive, curriculum aligned experiences across three South Australian National Parks including Belair, Glenthorne and Morialta between July 2024 and June 2025.

Planned collaboratively and supported by professional learning for teachers, the excursions offered full student agency with no fixed schedules, encouraging children to make their own choices from a range of inclusive, slow paced and mindful activities. These included wildlife watercolours, cultural and conservation storytelling, clay sculpture, loose parts play, birdwatching and nature inspired mandalas, each intentionally linked to key dispositions such as curiosity, empathy, creativity and teamwork, and mapped to the Australian Curriculum.

Students consistently expressed awe and wonder at close wildlife encounters from spotting kangaroos and koalas to discovering geckos, scorpions and rare bird species, while parents reported seeing their children visibly relax, focus and reenergise in the natural environment. The excursions not only deepened connection to biodiversity and place but also strengthened social bonds, inclusivity and environmental stewardship across the whole school community.

McAuley's approach, underpinned by universal design principles, biodiversity education and Aboriginal cultural integration, provides an inspiring and scalable model for schools seeking to embed outdoor learning meaningfully into their culture, values and curriculum, proving that nature connection is both essential and achievable at scale.

The full case study can be viewed in Appendices 2



Australian Magpie
Luca, 10 yrs old





Case Studies

Accessible Outdoor Program

The Accessible Outdoor Program (AOP), led by Bedford Group in partnership with Nature Play SA, SA Water, Forestry SA, and National Parks and Wildlife Service SA, provides supported and inclusive nature experiences for people living with disability across metropolitan Adelaide and the Adelaide Hills. Between July 2024 and June 2025, the program delivered eight diverse outdoor sessions at seven different locations, ranging from national parks and botanic gardens to beaches and forests. Activities included guided nature walks, wildlife discovery, cultural storytelling, planting, art workshops, and beach combing.

AOP was co-designed to prioritise physical and sensory accessibility, participant safety and comfort, and deep connection to nature. Survey responses showed 100% of participants felt more connected to nature, experienced greater wellbeing, and enjoyed their time, with personal stories reflecting joy, learning, and a sense of belonging. The program is recognised as a benchmark for nature inclusion, demonstrating that with universal design and strong partnerships, barriers to outdoor access can be overcome.

The full case study can be viewed in Appendices 3

Pathways of Hope - A Co-Designed Work Experience Program

Since 2023, Nature Play SA has elevated its focus on inclusion and accessibility, ensuring children and young people in care or with a care experience are at the heart of our work. Through events and initiatives, we have engaged many young people in care, creating opportunities in National Parks, Reservoir Reserves, and other nature-rich spaces.

In February 2025, thanks to funding from Green Adelaide we launched Pathways of Hope, a weekly work experience program co-designed with Harley, a young person with a care experience. The program was shaped to align with Harley's aspirations and NDIS goals, ensuring each opportunity was relevant, meaningful, and personally motivating.

From the outset, Harley set three personal goals: to improve his confidence; communication; and connection. Together, we curated a program that included:

- Designing and selecting species for two local wildlife posters
- Assisting with plant species selection for a revegetation project
- Reviewing educational resources from a young person's perspective
- Supporting the delivery of geocaching for over 1,500 event participants
- Preparing natural materials for WOMAD activities
- Building a wildlife habitat box for a kookaburra with our Outdoor Education Officer
- Developing an archive system for over 700 illustrations
- Supporting and participating in an event for children and young people at Happy Valley Reservoir

These diverse, hands-on experiences allowed Harley to contribute to real projects, connect with the community, and see the tangible impact of his work. Over the months, his confidence has grown immensely, his communication skills have strengthened, and his sense of pride in his contribution is clear to all who work alongside him.

Pathways of Hope is ongoing with Harley, but its success so far demonstrates the transformative potential of co-designed nature-based work experiences for young people in care. With further resourcing, more young people could be supported through similar personalised pathways building skills, confidence, and lasting connections to nature and community.

A short video case study with Harley and Nature Play SA is currently underway and will be provided upon its completion.



Wittunga House, Kaurna Country
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