

Guide for prospective event hosts

Nature Festival

Sep 25th - Oct 4th 2020

Arts | Wonder | Adventure

South Australia

naturefestival.org.au

Version 4





Sacred stories, sacred sands (Amongst It 2018 project) brought South Australian leaders to a corroboree hosted by Uncle Moogy.

South Australian Nature Festival

25th September - 4th October 2020

In a time of climate change, bushfires, and global pandemics, now more than ever we need to cultivate a deeper relationship with nature as a society.

That relationship is fundamental to our personal wellbeing and is the foundation of all of the other work that we undertake to protect and steward nature.

The South Australian **Nature Festival** is a 10 day program of activities and experiences all dedicated to celebrating South Australian nature in positive, creative, and meaningful ways.

The festival will feature a **diverse program** of free and ticked activities provided by local artists, environmental organisations, and nature connection practitioners.

The Festival is being organised by a coalition of community members and organisations who all care about nature in SA.

We have spent the last few years working under the banner of the Amongst It project to fund and run a variety of creative nature connection activities throughout the year. In 2020 we're experimenting with turning those disparate activities into a coherent program as a new 'open access' festival like the History Festival or Fringe.



We acknowledge the Kaurna, Ngarrindjeri, Adnyamathanha, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, and more than thirty other groups of traditional custodians of the land now known as South Australia.

We walk in your ancestral lands; we acknowledge that your sovereignty was never ceded; and we pay tribute to the stewardship of Elders past, present, and emerging in caring for our precious home.

Example events



Map tiles BY CC 3.0 Stamen Design. Map data BY CC SA OpenStreetMap.

The actual program will depend on creative event hosts like you, but here are some ideas that we're excited about. In this pilot year, we're primarily focused on Adelaide and the surrounding suburbs, but we welcome interest from across South Australia.

1. Creative activities at the SA Museum families and children to reflect on their relationship with nature
2. A walking map of special nature that can be spotted in the city
3. A 'silent nature disco', inviting people to sit and notice nature noises in through three stages of listening
4. VR experience of Nature in SA
5. Kaurna language and stories of nature and place
6. Engaging nature signs at the Joinery
7. Eco-living and community open house at Christie's walk
8. Linear park celebratory cycle to the sea for families.
9. Nature hack gardening group at Diggers in the Botanic Gardens
10. Brewing with native hops workshop
11. Online virtual panel talk about love of nature in South Australia.
12. Nature-in-the-city scavenger hunt for families.
13. An evening of nature music at Troppo
14. Text-a-tree interactive conversation with Dora the lemon-scented gum
15. Take-home summer holidays kit for parents and kids
16. Rooftop garden yoga
17. Guide to befriending a tree in the parklands
18. Double-exposure photo booth superimposing your image over your favourite bit of South Australian nature

Your event here

Why host an event?

Be part of something positive

From bushfires to coronavirus, it's been a difficult year. We could all use some celebration, and we could all use more positive experiences of nature. Spring is a time of new beginnings, and nothing says Adelaide more than emerging from lockdown into a festival of nature.

Nature is good for you, and your brand

Over 90% of South Australians get out into our parks and beaches every year. More than 70% are happy to pay more for environmentally friendly products. 94% think conserving nature is of critical importance. And all of these numbers were from state-wide polling *before* this last bushfire season.

Whether you are an outdoor tourism operator, an eco-friendly cafe, an environmental non-profit, a winery that cares about the land, a yoga studio, a psychology practice encouraging healthy activity, **love of nature** is a strong and powerful differentiator that aligns with the values of the vast majority of South Australians. This festival is a great way to demonstrate and **enact your values** as an organisation.

New supporters, new customers

Our primary audience for the festival are families and professionals who might say something like "*I'm no greenie, but I love going bushwalking whenever I can.*" It turns out that this is most South Australians. Positive love of nature in SA is astronomically high. We're developing this festival as a channel to help you access that audience.

We're louder together

There are a lot of great nature initiatives happening in South Australia. We're louder when we act together. Joining the festival lets you benefit from shared communications and PR and lets you access a larger shared audience.

Tickets + grants

We welcome both free and ticketed events. Like Fringe, you set the ticket prices yourself and keep the proceeds.

Additionally, we will open a round of micro-grants (\$500-\$1,000) to support some of the events.

Move beyond partisanship and division

We don't quite agree with how politicised nature has become. A meaningful relationship with nature is one of our natural rights as human beings and not only contributes to better emotional and physical wellbeing, it also reminds us we are part of a vast and wondrous ecology that we depend on and that depends on us.

This festival is specifically aimed at cutting across division by focusing a relationship with nature that unites all of us.

Who are we?

The Festival is being organised by a coalition of community members and organisations who all care about nature in SA.

We have spent the last few years working under the banner of the *Amongst It* project to fund and run a variety of creative nature connection activities.

This year, we're experimenting with turning those disparate activities into a coherent program as a new 'open access' festival like the History Festival.

We're run by committee and we rotate who hosts the project. Right now, we're hosted by the Nature Conservation Society of SA.

We're also particularly appreciative of the support of Nature Play SA and their decision to collaborate on this shared festival vision.

Supporting organisations include:



What are we trying to do?

While this is still a festival in the traditional celebratory sense, we are also running this as a process of discovering and affirming **identity**.

Specifically, we are interested in **personal identity**, **narrative**, and **personal relationship with nature** as well as our **state identity** and **collective relationship** with nature.

We have arranged a **university research partner** to help us evaluate whether we're meaningfully able to influence individual and state narratives about identity. We know that we won't create the full scope of change we want with any one event or festival, but we want to demonstrate a small movement in the right direction.

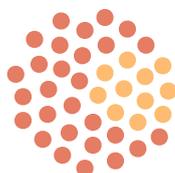
1. Bridge the narrative gap

Societally speaking, we don't want to view nature as 'resources to be managed' but rather to understand that it has intrinsic worth.

We also want to acknowledge that enjoyment of nature is a foundational part of who we are as **South Australians**. Most of us highly value it and more than 90% of us get out into our beaches and national parks each year.

Unfortunately, our **personal values and our collective narrative don't always match**. Some researchers (Common Cause, 2016) suggest that one reason for this is that while the great majority of people (74%) personally prioritise intrinsic, compassionate values like love of nature and community, we think most *other* people prioritise extrinsic values like money, status, and power.

-  Primary values are **intrinsic** (like nature and community)
-  Primary values are **extrinsic** (like wealth and status)



How society looks
Most individuals in are primarily motivated by intrinsic values like nature and community.



How we think society looks
Most individuals think most **other people** are motivated by extrinsic values like wealth and status.

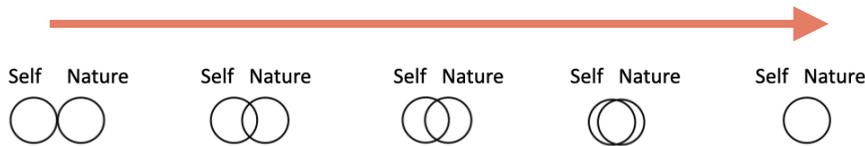
This puts us in a strange position where we can end up with a narrative gap: we can have a social norm and public narrative that is at odds with what most individuals actually value.

From Common Cause, Perceptions Matter 2016.

The **primary goal** of this festival is to make the **personal value** that most individuals already share into a bigger part of our **social norm**, public narrative and **state identity**.

2. Deepen personal relationships

Our **secondary goal** is about deepening personal relationships with nature. We want help people build a visceral understanding that nature isn't something 'over there' that we might visit occasionally, but rather is something we are amongst and part of everyday.



*From Martin, Czeller
Inclusion of nature in
self scale, 2016.*

One way of thinking about what we're trying to do is to move people toward a felt, emotional, understanding of their relationship with nature as self rather than other.

Relationships are built through meaningful experience

We're focused primarily on building that relationship through the lease of **love of nature**. This most commonly includes **emotional**, **creative**, or **meaningful/spiritual** experiences to reinforce our relationship with nature.

There are existing projects that focus on loss, grief, and the scale of the problem facing us. While we don't want to shy away from that challenge, the focus of this festival is the **strength** and **resilience** we can draw from our **love of nature** and ongoing relationship.

Relationships are more than knowledge and facts

If you think about your relationship with loved ones in your life, *part* of your relationship is things you know about them, like their birthday or their favourite flavour of ice cream.

But your relationship is a lot more than just facts. It's about **meaningful experiences** together, **doing things for one another**, the **community** you share together, the **history** you've built and your hopes for the **future**.

While there are many good educational programs around nature that focus on knowledge, we are most interested in events and activities that look at the bigger, emotional, **life-long relationship** with nature.

Narrative reflection can strengthen relationship

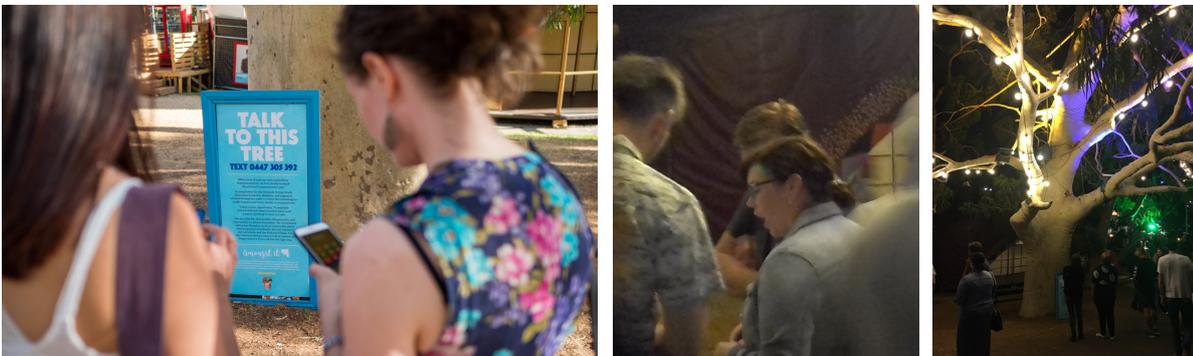
We are inspired by narrative practice and using reflection on past experiences to deepen or 'thicken' our personal narrative around nature. We have a hunch that including a **reflective component** in an event or experience can help strengthen a sense of identity.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for all sorts of creative, participatory, emotional, and remarkable **experiences**. They might be events, workshops, or art projects. They might involve the latest technology from VR to AI or (even better) they might encourage people to put their devices away and focus on direct experience.

This year, we are specifically interested in events and experiences that influence our **shared narrative** around how important nature is to most South Australians and that deepen our **personal relationship** with nature.

Our favourite projects are a bit more notable or unusual: they make a good story to tell. Here are a couple of projects for inspiration:

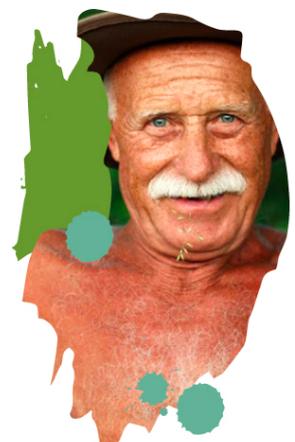


Text Dora the lemon-scented gum

We gave a phone number to 'Dora' the *Corymbia citriodora* (lemon-scented gum) in the Garden of Unearthly Delights. We built an AI that would talk back and forth to people with a personality that was a bit bemused by all of the colourful humans running around. Dora invited people to take a moment of calm out of the bustle of the festival to be present with nature. We only put up a small sign, but had more than 30,000 messages back and forth between humans and Dora over the course of the festival.

The 'Nature Strip' Calendar

Last year the Council of the Ageing created the 'Nature Strip,' a tasteful calendar of older people nude in nature. We loved the whimsy involved, the implied messaging of 'one-ness' with nature, and the focus on an older demographic. The proceeds from the sale of the calendar were donated to The Nature Conservation Foundation of SA, and the whole endeavour was a huge hit with media organisations, so it got a lot of press.



Ideas + starting points

Interested to participate but need ideas? Here are some starting points. For even more ideas, see the map on page 3.

Think about the 'who'

Using another aspect of someone's identity *other* than nature can be a great way to find an unusual or interesting idea. You might choose a group like young or older people, foodies, lovers of sport, urban residents with limited access to green space, international students, or politicians or leaders.

Go into emotion

All of the most successful projects we've seen start with emotion and creativity. This could take a creative, **exciting** approach (scavenger hunt in the parklands, choose-your-own adventure storytelling, art or printmaking) or a **quieter** one (mindfulness, quiet art in nature, reflective walks focused on wonder, forest bathing).

Ground in place

We live in a culture where our connection to place is very tenuous. For any project that you're doing, inviting people to more deeply to the layers of meaning inherent in a particular place is very helpful.

This might include understanding history, how things have changed, historical events, personal events, layers of details big and small. Noticing the human and more-than-human aspects of a place. Or it might include making new meaning, projecting yourself onto a location, or art that gives you a new way to see a place.

Do it together

Natural environments can be great places to deepen our relationships with other people. You might organise a series of picnics in a park, or get friends to reflect together on special places and meaningful past nature experiences.

Build in reflection

We are inspired by narrative practice and using reflection on past experiences to deepen or 'thicken' our personal narrative around nature. We have a hunch that including a reflective component in an event or experience can help strengthen a sense of identity. This might look like detailing personal histories of nature, or remembering places or people that help us hold on to our love of nature.

Notice everyday nature

Invite people to attend to the everyday natural beauty that surrounds them in their streets, backyards and neighbourhoods. You might stick up signs that draw attention to details people overlook, or help them look at things from a new perspective.

Alternatively, you might bring reminders of nature into urban settings where it can be easy to forget. We're excited about things like 'Nature hacks', succulent bombing a street, mobile gardens, transforming a kerb, footpath stickers and whimsical signage, or photographic and storytelling walking tours to help people see new things in their surroundings.

Take action

Sometimes acting to demonstrate your care for nature can be one of the best ways to deepen our relationship and express our love for nature. This might look like writing letters to trees, planting some native plants in your garden to attract butterflies, or volunteering to help nature out through a local environmental not-for-profit.

Festival audiences

Primary audience

”I’m no greenie, but ...”

“I’m no greenie, but I go bushwalking most weekends”

The vast majority of South Australians get out into nature regularly and love it. Odds are excellent that the businesswoman in a suit across the boardroom table from you has a double-life as an avid surfer. She is part of a substantial cohort (over 90%) of people in South Australia who regularly engage with nature (from bushwalking to gardening to swimming) or appreciate nature (who doesn’t love a good dawn chorus?) but who do not actively identify as ‘nature-lovers’ or ‘greenies.’



Hook: We particularly hope to draw people in by ‘pairing’ nature with other contexts and ideas. An example might be a ‘nature slam poetry night’ or ‘brewing with native hops’. Those are poetry + nature and beer + nature. We particularly encourage events that sit at intersections and try to reach interesting audiences. Art + nature, Aboriginal culture + nature (particularly powerful because it is intrinsically linked), technology + nature, friendship + nature, particularly places or history + nature.

Change mechanism: Where possible, we encourage interactive experiences to include a component that prompts people to **reflect with others on their own history** and narrative with nature. This is in order to strengthen a personal narrative around nature and affirm values in a social setting. We’ll also try to include components where they see others doing the same (either live, through video, stories, or statistics) as a way to reinforce **social norms**.

After the event or experience, we hope: these individuals would be more readily able to name that nature was important to their sense of identity and an important part of their life and well-being.

Key assumptions

- We assume that most people have a positive history with nature and place, even if it’s a sparse one.
- We’re assuming that reflecting on that relationship will strengthen their understanding of it and its relationship to their identity.
- We’re assuming that doing that reflection in a physical or virtual social setting (and hearing other people’s reflections in a variety of formats) will influence an individual’s understanding of social norms and identity in South Australia.
- We’re assuming that these individuals will be attracted by the ‘intersection’ of nature with their other interests or identities.

Secondary Audiences

Parents + families

“We want things to do as a family” or “we want more ways to demonstrate our care for nature”

Many parents care about getting their kids outdoors, active and off their devices. Amongst It events so far have had strong appeal to whole families looking for activities to do together.

Events exclusively aimed at children can also be an effective entry point for parents as a secondary target.



Wired but disconnected

“I’m feeling a bit stressed by the busy pace of our society and being constantly on.”

We’ve found a lot of resonance with messaging around being ‘busy’ and stressed, concerns with technology and disconnection, as well as interest in technology as a way in to get people offline.

We successfully engaged people through their devices in the past (see the ‘Text a Tree’ project), we’ve seen a lot of interest in related events (wildly successful VR trees exhibit in Melbourne), and we had a strong response to the ‘overwhelmed’ messaging we tested through Open State.



Overwhelmed nature lovers

“I care deeply about nature. It’s a big part of who I am, but I’m feeling overwhelmed with all of the challenges we face.”

We know that many people who work in the conservation space or who are active volunteers and advocates are often feeling overwhelmed with the scope of the challenges that we face. We hope that this festival can be a place of rest and restoration that reminds them of why they care in the first place: they love nature.

We want them to reflect on and strengthen their relationship with nature and to connect with each other as humans (not just colleagues) to build their resilience for the work ahead.



FAQ's

When is the festival?

The festival runs for 10 days, 25th September - 4th October 2020.

Can anyone run an event?

Pretty much, yes. As long as the event fits our criteria and we approve it (we can work with you to make sure it does), we are happy for anyone to run an event as long as you have an ABN, appropriate insurance, and the resourcing to pull it off.

Can I sell tickets and charge for my event?

Absolutely. We encourage both free and ticketed events. We will manage ticketing through a shared platform, and you will receive the proceeds from your event at the end of the festival.

Will you provide funding for my event?

Probably not. We *will* have an open call to provide a *small number* of events with 500 micro-grants, but definitely not most events.

Can you help me with a venue or event logistics?

If you get stuck finding a venue, we can certainly provide suggestions, but you will need to manage most of the logistics for your own event.

Can you help me with promotion?

We will provide general promotion for the overall festival and we will try to highlight individual events as much as possible. However, you will also need to promote your event and drive attendance.

How do we stay COVID-safe?

We are deeply concerned about health and safety and we will be complying with all health advice. At this time we do not know what the situation will be in September, but we are currently preparing plans for different scenarios. If we experience a second wave of infection and go back into a full lockdown we may have to cancel or postpone the entire festival. Even if all goes ahead as planned, every event host will be required to create a COVID-safe plan for your event. We will provide successful registrants with more information on this process.

Interested in registering an event?

Learn more and fill out an
expression of interest form here:

🍀 naturefestival.org.au/host

Or contact

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Nature isn't a place 'over there' that we visit on special occasions.

We're part of it and fully amongst it every day.

naturefestival.org.au

