

# STATISTICS SUPPORTING THE NEED FOR CHANGE

## Physical Activity

2016 National Physical Activity Plan of the National Heart Foundation showed that:

- 1 in 5 parents reported their children were inactive (extrapolated, amounts to 600,000 children).
- 7% participated in the recommended 60% of physical activity.

2015 Study on the influence of neighborhood greenspaces on children's physical activity and screentime reports that:

- Improving neighbourhood green space, increases the chances of boys meeting the physical activity guidelines with less TV viewing time.

2015 Planet Ark Research report, *Needing Trees – The Nature of Happiness*, found:

- Children who engage in just one third more outdoor activities than their peers grow up to be happier adults.

2014 Study by the University of British Columbia showed that:

- Natural playspaces make children more active and less depressed.

2013 Planet Ark study, *Missing Trees: The Inside Story of an Outdoor Nation*, reports that:

- Just over 1 in 4 (27%) children have never climbed a tree.

## Technology & Screentime

2015 Growing up in Australia – a Longitudinal Study of Australian children showed that:

- On average, children 12-13yo, spend 3 hours during the week (20% of their waking time) and 4 hours on weekends (30% of their waking time) on screens. This is directly related to increased levels of obesity.
- 1 in 5 children aged 6-9, watch more than 2 hours of TV/day, increasing for 10-13yo.

2012 Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows:

- 29% of children 5-14yo have a mobile phone.
- 45% of 8-11yo use social networking sites.
- 95% of 8-11yo access the internet.

## Learning

2016 Planet Ark Tree Day Research Report showed that:

- Students who take part in outdoor learning programs perform better in reading, writing, maths and science with 77% of teachers reporting student improvement in standardised tests.

2004 Florida based study found that:

- Environment based education increased critical thinking skills in high school students.

2011 University of Illinois study found that:

- Children with ADHD who routinely spent time outdoors in green settings had milder symptoms than those who regularly played indoors or outdoors in built environments.

2015 University of Illinois study of high school students showed that:

- Those who had green views produced better attentional functioning and stress recovery, only when they had a chance to absorb the restorative effect.

## Health & Wellbeing

Australia's Health 2016 Report produced by the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare reports that:

- In 2014-15, 26% of children (5-14yo) were overweight or obese.

2008 Sydney Study on Outdoor Activity and Myopia in children shows that:

- Myopia incidences in children have doubled since 1970, directly related to increased time spent indoors and lack of time outdoors.
- By 2050 half the world's population will be myopic.
- 1/3 of school leavers in Australia have myopia.

2015 Report on the second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing reports that:

- Around one in 35 (2.8% or 112,000) young Australians aged 4-17 experience a depressive disorder.
- One in seven (13.9% or 560,000) young Australians aged 4-17 experience a mental health condition.
- One in fourteen young Australians (6.9% or 278,000) aged 4-17 experienced an anxiety disorder in 2015.

2016 Planet Ark Tree Day Research Report showed that:

- Time in nature reduces a person's chance of developing a range of diseases including diabetes by 43%, cardiovascular disease and stroke by 37% and depression by 25%. Depression related disability costs the Australian economy \$14.9b/year.
- Outdoor activities reduce anxiety, tiredness and stress, and triple a person's chance of having a restful night's sleep.

2015 Planet Ark Research report, *Needing Trees – The Nature of Happiness*, found:

- 1 in 4 young Australians are unhappy with their lives, directly linked to technology behaviours.
- Nature has the ability to influence happiness because it has direct and positive effects on the brain and the body's hormone response to stress.
- Exposing children to environments that reduce stress and increase wellbeing has long-term effects on the structure of the brain and happiness later in life.

## Nature Connection

2013 Planet Ark study, *Missing Trees: The Inside Story of an Outdoor Nation*, reports that:

- Just over 1 in 4 (29%) of children have never planted or cared for a vegetable garden.
- Nearly 1 in 3 (31%) children have never planted or cared for trees or shrubs.
- Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) parents with children under 16 years said their children have never been camping and 29% said their children had not been bushwalking.

## Natural Playspaces vs Traditional

Canadian Paediatric Society in preparing its 2012 *Preventing Playground Injuries Position Statement* identified that:

- Catastrophic injuries are lower on natural features compared to plastic post and platform playgrounds. In SA, during 2015 and 2016, 847 playground injuries presented to the Womens & Children's Hospital. Of these, approximately 70% are from falls from fixed equipment (monkey bars and slides).

According to research conducted by Bienenstock Playgrounds and Henderson Playgrounds:

- The average time a child is engaged in spontaneous play on a traditional post and platform play structure is 19-22 mins. This can be as much as triple on a natural playground.