

*Why do we feel so good when we lie down in the grass on a spring day? Why are doctors now handing out 'green prescriptions'? How do green spaces help in the healing process? And what has this got to do with learning?*

After the outstanding success of our last seminar "Inspiring Nature Play" on 3 June, the **Victorian Child and Nature Connection** is excited to announce our second mini-seminar ...

## "Connecting with nature: the health benefits"

**Friday, 28th October 2011**  
**9.15am - 12.30pm**

**Melbourne Royal Botanical Gardens**  
Mueller Hall, National Herbarium, Gate F.

Free, but a \$5 door donation would be very much appreciated to help cover event costs.

**Bookings:**

[www.naturehealthbenefits.eventbrite.com](http://www.naturehealthbenefits.eventbrite.com)



Photo: Dimity Williams

### **It's on! Again! And we would love to have your input!**

Our second mini-seminar investigates the health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in a natural environment - especially for young people. Together we'll explore what we know, what works, what we need to change and how we'll do that.

The Victorian Child and Nature Connection will once again bring key thought leaders together to share their experience and wisdom with anyone who suspects that kids need more time outside.

Discover the growing body of evidence that time outdoors is fundamental for children's health and wellbeing.

Share your own thoughts and experiences with other passionate and intelligent people and discuss what we can do to get our kids outside, where they belong.

Get up to speed with the latest research and innovations and grab this rare opportunity to pick the brains of some of the most inspiring people you might ever meet.

**Dr Dimity Williams** is a General Practitioner who works in private practice in inner Melbourne. She is one of the founding members of the Victorian Child and Nature Connection and is the Victorian Secretary of Doctors for the Environment Australia, an organisation which promotes nature as our 'life support system'.

Also, as the mother of 3 boys she's acutely aware of the challenges faced by parents in giving children the time and space to be outside. Dimity will outline the current health issues faced by children today and discuss how nature can be both prevention and cure.

**Basil Natoli** is a Special Education Teacher, Community Gardens advocate and keen gardener who brings more than 25 years of experience in developing garden programs and initiatives for children and adults in a wide range of settings.

Basil will be drawing on his experience working with children and adults who have been disadvantaged or marginalised due to their health or living circumstances. Basil will share his passion and enthusiasm for the garden as a place where children and adults from varied circumstances can enjoy the health benefits of a connection with nature.

**Dr Ian Williams** is a Postgraduate Research Fellow at the Centre for Adolescent Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital, an Honorary Fellow at the University of Melbourne, and psychologist at Spectrum Personality Disorder Service in Victoria. With professional training in Psychology and Education, Ian has a particular interest in adolescent mental health and wellbeing, positive youth development, and outdoor and nature-based health promotion. In 2009 he completed a PhD thesis examining relationships between adventure participation and youth depression, and developed and evaluated a new framework to promote wellbeing through structured outdoor experiences. Ian will provide a brief introduction to the area of health and nature and outline the growing body of evidence that points to the health promoting aspects of contact with nature

**Dr Kathleen Bagot** is a Research Fellow at the University of Queensland (School of Psychology) and an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne (School of Population Health). Kathleen has a broad and varied applied social psychology background investigating positive outcomes for children and adult's mental and physical health. Kathleen will discuss how physical environments affect the way people think, behave and feel, with a specific focus on the role of vegetation and green spaces in the daily lives of children living in urban communities.

The mini-seminar will be facilitated by **Jason Clarke** from Minds At Work.

Optional: after the seminar there is opportunity to explore the **Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden**.

We'll provide coffee, tea, water and some nibbles. Please bring your own cup or water bottle.

**For more information**, please contact the Education Office at the Royal Botanic Gardens on 9252 2358, or on [edserv@rbg.vic.gov.au](mailto:edserv@rbg.vic.gov.au)

**Directions:** Click [here](#) for directions, we recommend public transport or bike. The Botanic Gardens are a big place, please click [here](#) for a map of the gardens and plan your visit in advance.

## **Victorian Child and Nature Connection**

The Victorian Child and Nature Connection (VCNC) is a cross-sectoral network of thought leaders from the health, education, environment and community sectors. We exist to link up key initiatives that promote nature play in order to enhance child health, promote creative play and facilitate connection to the natural world.



We work by providing unique opportunities for collaboration and capacity building and through the open sharing of experiences, ideas and knowledge amongst our members and allies.

We are dedicated to the idea that all children deserve to have every opportunity to experience, love and protect nature, and we serve that notion by acting as a catalyst for rebuilding the connection between our children and their natural world.

For more information on VCNC, please visit [www.victorianchildandnatureconnection.org](http://www.victorianchildandnatureconnection.org)

### **Why don't you join us?**

**Please forward to your networks, all welcome!**

Need a quick way to share this event? Just copy the link below:

[www.naturehealthbenefits.eventbrite.com](http://www.naturehealthbenefits.eventbrite.com)

### **What people said about first seminar, "Inspiring Nature Play", on 3 June 2011:**

*"Inspiring, refreshing, heart-warming"*

*"Engaging, clever, inspiring and educational - good speakers, good venue, important topic"*

*"Excellent speakers, excellent content and information. A lot to think about and bring to my program"*

*"Appropriate length, short, concise, inspiring, thought provoking"*

*"Good organisation and interaction"*

*"Went home thinking of lots of ideas to integrate into work and personal life"*

*"A big 10, all of it, fantastic morning, very inspiring"*