

# Speaking 4 the Planet 2017

## Student & Teacher Support Booklet

# Connecting People to Nature

*I'm with Nature  
in the Liverpool area*



**Phil Smith**

**4Sustainability Education Consultancy**

[info@4Sustainability.com.au](mailto:info@4Sustainability.com.au)

0412 338 687



**Before you go any further, watch this!**

<https://vimeo.com/183899670>

**And see this**

## **A Global Movement to Inspire Love of Nature**

#NatureForAll is a global movement to inspire a new generation of thinkers and doers across all sectors of society to connect with nature and take action to support its conservation. At its core is a very simple idea: the more people experience, connect with, and share their love of nature, the more support there will be for its conservation

<http://www.natureforall.global/welcome>

**Consider registering your school!**



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Developed in conjunction with



and



***I'm with Nature!***

## 1. PURPOSE OF THIS BOOKLET

The Speaking 4 the Planet public speaking, drama and art competitions create opportunities for students to express their ideas for a better world. With the UN's World Environment Day theme as the starting point, students prepare and deliver punchy, quirky, creative and pointed speeches, dramatic performances or artworks designed to influence the thoughts, emotions and actions of the audience.

This package provides:

- information on the Speaking 4 the Planet competitions
- background information on the 2017 World Environment Day theme
- links to relevant websites
- suggestions for teaching/learning activities.

The appendices include:

- the criteria that will be used to judge the speakers, performers and artists in the competition
- advice on public speaking
- an essay about the role of art in bringing about a better world
- a registration form for students participating in the art section of the competition.

## 2. SPEAKING 4 THE PLANET

Speaking 4 the Planet (S4P) is a public speaking, drama and art competition for high school students. S4P supports World Environment Day (5 June) and uses the UN's World Environment Day theme as the focal point for speeches and performances.

There are 4 parts to this competition and prizes for each part.

**Prepared speech** One student from each school will deliver a 5 minute speech on a topic linked to the WED theme. This should be based on an **original, innovative and quirky** idea to address the issues facing our planet and linked to the theme.

Speakers will need to state clearly what the problem or issue being addressed. They will also need to make real (and fun) links between problems and solutions. Students are encouraged to use techniques of persuasion that can shift the way the audience thinks and feels about the issues. It's important that the students keep their talks within the time limit.

Students can begin their preparation now! Their talks are to be about some aspect of the theme – *Connecting People to Nature* – and its tagline – *I'm with Nature*. Remember: original, well-researched, innovative, quirky!

**Impromptu speech** One student from each participating school will deliver a 3 minute impromptu talk on a topic provided on the day. The specific topic will be related to the WED theme and students will have approximately 45mins to prepare their talks. This will give them time to prepare a persuasive and quirky talk on problems and solutions. They will be able to confer with their school colleagues during this time. This should help them generate ideas and practice where necessary. Students can, of course, do research before the event and come with ideas.

**Impromptu Eco-drama** A handful of students from each school will perform a short piece (3 – 5 mins) that expresses a point of view on the UN's theme. Students will be given a question or issue related to the WED theme, and they will have at least 45mins to prepare a pointed, influential and quirky drama piece that shifts the audience in some way. They might like to do some research before coming to the event.

For the drama, students are required to wear black. Each school is to bring one prop that will go into a pool of props. Other props will be provided on the day. Each eco-drama team may choose to use one or more of these.

**Visual Arts** This is a new section for 2017. Unlike the other sections of this competition, the theme for the artworks will be **Community Connections to the Georges River**.

There are four art categories, with prizes for each:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Photography
- Cartooning.

All entrants in this category must complete a registration form.

See Appendix D for information on Community Connections to the Georges River. See Appendix E for guidelines and registration form for the visual arts component of this event.

### **Winners**

Students who win in the various sections of this competition may be invited to speak or perform at other local events. For example, local council meetings, community events, and Toastmasters meetings.

Winning students will be invited to participate in the 2017 Youth Eco Summit which will be held in late July at the Showground Amphitheatre at Sydney Olympic Park.

The winning artworks will be displayed in local venues after the Speaking 4 the Planet event and featured in Council media and publications promoting community connections to the Georges River.

## **3. BACKGROUND TO WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY**

World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated every year on 5 June to raise global awareness about the importance of taking positive environmental action to protect nature, our planet and all the species on it. WED is run by the United Nations Environment Program. WED was established in Stockholm in 1972 on the day that the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment began. The first World Environment Day was celebrated in 1973. Since then, it is hosted every year by a different city with a different theme. The first theme was Only One Planet.

"Stockholm was without a doubt the landmark event in the growth of international environmentalism", writes John McCormick in the book *Reclaiming Paradise*. "It was the first occasion on which the political, social and economic problems of the global environment were discussed at an intergovernmental forum with a view to actually taking corrective action."



#### **4. WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY AND SPEAKING 4 THE PLANET 2017**

In 2017, the World Environment Day theme is *Connecting People to Nature*. The tag line is *I'm with Nature*. The host country is Canada.

The World Environment Day 2017 theme is about getting outside in the bush, into nature, in order to appreciate its beauty and its importance. The goal is to inspire closer contact with nature and the natural processes that sustain all life on Earth. To understand how we get clean air, clean water, healthy soils, and rich biodiversity. And to encourage people of all ages and in all places to take forward the call to protect the Earth. Our home.

Here's what the UN's website says about the theme.

In recent decades, scientific advances as well as growing environmental problems such as global warming are helping us to understand the countless ways in which natural systems support our own prosperity and well-being.

For example, the world's oceans, forests and soils act as vast stores for greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane; farmers and fisher-folk harness nature on land and under water to provide us with food; scientists develop medicines using genetic material drawn from the millions of species that make up Earth's astounding biological diversity.

Billions of rural people around the world spend every working day 'connected to nature' and appreciate full well their dependence on natural water supplies and how nature provides their livelihoods in the form of fertile soil. They are among the first to suffer when ecosystems are threatened, whether by pollution, climate change or over-exploitation.

Nature's gifts are often hard to value in monetary terms. Like clean air, they are often taken for granted, at least until they become scarce. However, economists are developing ways to measure the multi-trillion-dollar worth of many so-called 'ecosystem services', from insects pollinating fruit trees in the orchards of California to the leisure, health and spiritual benefits of a hike up a Himalayan valley.

We may not live and work so connected to nature as many other people do, but we are still dependent on maintaining a healthy natural world and the food, water and air it provides for us.

This year's theme gives us an opportunity to recognize that dependence and do all we can to value, cherish and protect nature. Speaking 4 the Planet 2017 will focus on this theme and these ideas.

The UN's website for World Environment Day: <http://www.worldenvironmentday.global/about/what-world-environment-day>

## 5. TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Below are some activities teachers might like to use with their students, regardless of the section of the competition they are entering.

### A. Get Outside

#### Take a hike...in the bush

Read what research says about the benefits of being nature. "While it may seem obvious that a good hike through a forest or up a mountain can cleanse your mind, body, and soul, science is now discovering that hiking can actually change your brain... for the better!"

<http://www.collective-evolution.com/2016/04/08/doctors-explain-how-hiking-actually-changes-our-brains/>

Spend time in nature. Write. Think. Talk. Paint. Draw. Find connections. Take your shoes off. Get your hands dirty. Stand in the creeks. Listen. Smell. Feel connected. Let creative ideas flow.

Then post a photo on Twitter or Instagram with the #WithNature hashtag and say why you love or want to visit that special place. The UN will share some of them on their website and on the UN Environment [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts. Or send the photo directly with a short description to [worldenvironmentday@unep.org](mailto:worldenvironmentday@unep.org).

Here's a link to a Canadian initiative, Take Me Outside: <http://takemeoutside.ca/>

Take Me Outside is a non-profit organization committed to educating and creating awareness with Canadians about our connection with nature and our time spent outside.

Take Me Outside works collaboratively with other organizations, school boards and individuals to encourage children and youth to spend more time outside through various advocacy projects and initiatives.

#### Take a hike...in your suburb or city

You can also connect with nature in your suburb or city, where major parks can be a green lung and a hub of biodiversity. Think about how you can help green the urban environment. Talk to council about tree planting in your local area. Plant some trees in your school. Wherever you are, pick up 10 (or 100) pieces of rubbish! See the Take 3 campaign for information and ideas about litter and pollution <http://www.take3.org/>



## **B. Youth taking action**

### **Earth Guardians**

“We are a tribe of young activists, artists and musicians from across the globe stepping up as leaders and co-creating the future we know is possible. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”  
<http://www.earthguardians.org/>

Check out the site for ideas and activities. It contains some wonderful writing by youth. Examples include:

- A ‘Talking Strike’ for Climate Change
- Education must pave the way for happiness
- We are all indigenous to somewhere – a talk about cultural reconnection
- Fight the war! A call to save the world.
- Sustainability is a lifestyle not a solar panel.

The Earth Guardians site also tells the story of Xiuhtezcatl Martinez. He is a climate change activist, hip-hop artist, and leader of Earth Guardians. Listen to his amazing TED talk and hear him talk about his personal connection to nature. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2V2yVkedtM>

He is one of a group of students suing the American government over climate change. <http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/xiuhtezcatl-martinez-suing-us-government-over-climate-change/8245370>



[Meet the 16yo suing the US Government over climate change](#)

Ask your students to talk about their experiences in the natural world and about their connections to nature. Consider the local and global actions youth can take to prevent their governments from destroying nature through such things as trade and development



policies. Do some research, set up a debate or conversation about the role of government in Australian society, or invite a local MP to visit and talk about these matters.

### **C. So...we're all connected. So what?**

#### **Everything is connected**

John Muir, a Scottish-American naturalist, author, environmental philosopher, glaciologist and early advocate for the preservation of wilderness in the United States, said,

**When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.**

Everything is connected, he said.

It's all well and good to acknowledge that important message. The real challenge, however, is to act on it. With your students, consider the implications of Muir's quote. Watch The Crazy Wombat. This will give you some ideas. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0TslwqOZE>

#### **7 Billion Others**

<http://www.karmatube.org/videos.php?id=4061>

We share this planet with seven billion others. What is our relationship with them? Are we a single unity? Do we belong to one of many tribal divisions? Are we individuals in a planet full of individuality? There is, of course, no single answer to these fundamental questions. Our sense of identity and diversity depends on context. But the way we conceive of our place among the people of the world has profound social, environmental, political, and ethical implications. The GoodPlanet Foundation asked people from all over the world a series of standard questions about the things they value. The survey examines their hopes, dreams, fears, and grounding principles. In bearing witness to the answers, the project allows us to explore the depth of our human commonality against the superficial visual and linguistic signs of difference. These sound-bites provide points of connection between ourselves and others.

#### **The Opposite of Addiction is Connection**

<http://upliftconnect.com/opposite-addiction-connection/>

#### **We live in a blended world**

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/slINMTWjeig>

#### **All that we share – a Danish advertisement about how we are connected.**

[http://mashable.com/2017/01/31/danish-ad-all-that-we-share-box/#MEa3H\\_d7Oq3](http://mashable.com/2017/01/31/danish-ad-all-that-we-share-box/#MEa3H_d7Oq3)

### **D. Who cares?**

#### **Caretakers or Undertakers?**

Will humans prove to be caretakers or undertakers of nature? Here's an article I wrote a few years ago. Ask your students to critique it.

## Caretakers or Undertakers?

Sometimes it seems humans carry a self-destruct gene! History piles example upon example of how human societies have destroyed themselves. In his book, *A Short History of Progress*, Ronald Wright puts it this way: 'Human beings drove themselves out of Eden...and they have done it again and again by fouling their own nests.'

Wright examines the rise and demise of human civilisations, much in the same way as Jared Diamond did in *Collapse*. One of his main findings is that even the mightiest civilisations fell because of their impact on the environment. For example, practices of overgrazing by goats, deforestation, fire-setting, erosion, lime-burning for plaster and whitewash, and the salination of soils were at the core of the destruction of Sumer. In the 5,000 years since Sumerian records began, the twin rivers of the fertile crescent, the Tigris and Euphrates, have carried eroded soils into the Persian Gulf to the extent that Iraq's city of Basra, which was once on the coast, is now over 100 kilometres inland!

Wright laments our inability to think into the future. 'This human inability to foresee – or to watch out for – long-range consequences may be inherent to our kind, shaped by millions of years when we lived from hand to mouth by hunting and gathering. It may also be little more than a mix of inertia, greed and foolishness...' He says this 'parochialism of the present – the way our eyes follow the ball not the game – is dangerous.' Absorbed in the now, we lose sight of our course through time and our impacts on our very survival.

He documents the human record of self-destruction and sums up the major reasons for why civilisations collapse: 'The lesson I read in the past is this: that the health of land and water – and of woods, which are the keepers of water – can be the only lasting basis for any civilisation's survival and success.'

He tells us that the removal of trees has been a key factor for destroying soil and water. Without trees, the soils become unstable and wash away into creeks and rivers...and Persian Gulfs.

Now more than ever before in history, we have the capacity to comprehend the long-term consequences of our decisions, yet we continue to ignore the evidence of science and history. Wright implores us to turn off this impulse to self-destruction and turn on survival thinking. We must flick the switch for long-term thinking and value the bigger-picture, join the dots between actions and impacts, and do some serious planning to ensure the survival of healthy communities on a healthy planet. And we can do some serious planting!

For our future, this vital maxim: *Plant trees. Protect the trees. Protect the soils. Protect the water. Protect and sustain life.*

If we want to live on a healthy planet – an Earthly paradise – it is up to us to shape it, share it and look after it. We have a choice: we can look after our communities and our planet, or we can bury both. Simply put, we can be *caretakers* or *undertakers*.

Phil Smith  
4Sustainability Education Consultancy

## E. Visual Arts Teaching Activities

Students and teachers may use the following information to help support the conceptual and material practice of the students participating in the Art component of this competition. These activities may also be useful for inspiring ideas for speeches and performances by those involved in the other sections of the competition.

### Practical Activities

Here are some suggestions for helping students appreciate the Georges River and community connections to it.

- Visit one or more parts of the Georges River. Examine photographs and art of the river. Draw and/or paint a personal response to the river and discuss that response and the artwork.
- Quick visual responses, words, ideas about the river recorded in the students' VAPDs (Visual Arts Process Diary).
- Talk to a community group that is linked to the river in some way. What do they value about the river.
- Research community use of the river over time – from the earliest settlements to the present.
- Imagine the future use of the river. Imagine how communities up and down it will use the Georges River.
- Think of ideas that will help an audience appreciate that humans are not separate from nature and that rivers are important to human communities.
- Explore emotional and physiological responses to the river.
- Imagine a world where there is NO connection between community and river. What would this look like?
- Create a series of detailed close up sketches, annotate your drawings, work with found materials by the river (soil, leaves, twigs, rocks, shells, etc.) capturing different experiences of the river.
- Gather a variety of natural material- stones, sticks, leaves, etc. – and use as stimulus for art making. Focus on shape, line, texture, tone, colour and pattern – drawing ONLY the stone, stick or leaf, etc., or assemble together to create an interesting composition.
- Visit popular spots along the river and talk to people using it. Why are they there? What do they value about the river? What changes have they seen in their lifetimes?



## Appendix A

### Judging Criteria for S4P

#### Judging Criteria Prepared Speech

Please add comments in the spaces provided.

Within time allocated (5 mins) - Yes/No

Name			Good		Excellent
School	1	2	3	4	5
Originality of Idea How the idea is developed Encourages audience to think or act.					
Content: clear communication of problem and solution that the idea is trying to address					
Choice of style, persuasive techniques and body language appropriate to the speech					

#### Judging Criteria Impromptu Speech

Please add comments in the spaces provided.

Within time allocated (3 mins) - Yes/No

Name			Good		Excellent
School	1	2	3	4	5
Originality of Idea How the idea is developed Encourages audience to think or act.					
Content: clear communication of problem and solution that the idea is trying to address					
Choice of style, persuasive techniques and body language appropriate to the speech					

## Judging Criteria Eco-Drama

Please add comments in the spaces provided.

Within time allocated (3 – 5 mins) - Yes/No

Name			Good		Excellent
School	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Performance Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to use voice, movement, timing and use of space effectively (as appropriate to the style of the piece).</li> <li>Ability to realise and sustain role or character as appropriate to piece</li> </ul>					
<b>Message and meaning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear intention and dramatic meaning</li> <li>Sophistication of the message and meaning</li> </ul>					
<b>Group Equity and Time limit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each performer equally contributing to performance</li> <li>Ability of performers to work collaboratively</li> <li>Length of piece within specified time limit</li> </ul>					
<b>Innovation and Flair</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Originality of the piece, characters, situations and ideas</li> </ul>					
<b>Audience Engagement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the audience was entertained by, or made to think about, the issue presented</li> <li>Appropriateness of the performance for the audience (choice of style and dramatic conventions)</li> </ul>					

## Judging Criteria Visual Arts

Please add comments in the spaces provided.

Name & School	Category (drawing, painting, photography, cartooning)				
	1	2	Good 3	4	Excellent 5
<b>Concept:</b> Visually engaging; imaginative qualities; theme confidently investigated.					
<b>Material Practice:</b> Technically accomplished; skillful interpretation via selected medium.					
<b>Resolution:</b> Successfully resolved; clear communication of ideas; creativity evident in finished artwork.					

## Appendix B

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS**

De Bono, one of the world's most renowned critical and creative thinkers, says, 'There's the car, and there's how you drive it.' For the Speaking 4 the Planet competition, we can say, 'There's the speech and there's how you deliver it.'

Content and delivery matter. Evidence and expression matter. Argument and performance matter. Good public speakers are convincing with the power of their material and the manner in which they present it.

This competition encourages you to research your material thoroughly. If you have good ideas relevant to the topic, research them – see what you can find. High quality content matters. And when you have put the words together, practice them. Ask others to listen to you. Get feedback on the written and spoken words. Refine what you say and how you say it.

Please remember that reading a speech aloud is not giving a speech. You may want to use cue cards. If you do, treat them only as prompts – don't have the whole speech written on them!

In opening the Armidale Speaking 4 the Planet event in 2016, Dr Ian Tiley, the Administrator of the newly amalgamated councils, said, 'Good speeches are succinct and original, and they contain viewpoints substantiated with evidence.' He also observed that good speakers are prepared even though they might be nervous. It's good to be nervous because nerves can keep you focused.

Here are some hints on improving public speaking. Students entering the Prepared and Impromptu Speech sections of the competition will benefit from reading these carefully.

### **10 Tips for Improving Public Speaking**

#### **1. Nervousness Is Normal. Practice and Prepare!**

All people feel some physiological reactions like pounding hearts and trembling hands. Do not associate these feelings with the sense that you will perform poorly or make a fool of yourself. Some nerves are good. The adrenaline rush that makes you sweat also makes you more alert and ready to give your best performance.

The best way to overcome anxiety is to prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. Take the time to go over your notes several times. Once you have become comfortable with the material, practice—a lot. Videotape yourself, or get a friend to critique your performance.

#### **2. Know Your Audience. Your Speech Is About Them, Not You.**

Before you begin to craft your message, consider who the message is intended for. Learn as much about your listeners as you can. This will help you determine your choice of words, level of information, organization pattern, and motivational statement.

#### **3. Organize Your Material in the Most Effective Manner to Attain Your Purpose.**

Create the framework for your speech. Write down the topic, general purpose, specific purpose, central idea, and main points. Make sure to grab the audience's attention in the first 30 seconds.

#### **4. Watch for Feedback and Adapt to It.**

Keep the focus on the audience. Gauge their reactions, adjust your message, and stay flexible. Delivering a canned speech will guarantee that you lose the attention of or confuse even the most devoted listeners.

#### **5. Let Your Personality Come Through.**

Be yourself, don't become a talking head—in any type of communication. You will establish better credibility if your personality shines through, and your audience will trust what you have to say if they can see you as a real person.

#### **6. Use Humour, Tell Stories, and Use Effective Language.**

Inject a funny anecdote in your presentation, and you will certainly grab your audience's attention. Audiences generally like a personal touch in a speech. A story can provide that.

#### **7. Don't Read Unless You Have to. Work from an Outline.**

Reading from a script or slide fractures the interpersonal connection. By maintaining eye contact with the audience, you keep the focus on yourself and your message. A brief outline can serve to jog your memory and keep you on task.

#### **8. Use Your Voice and Hands Effectively. Omit Nervous Gestures.**

Nonverbal communication carries most of the message. Good delivery does not call attention to itself, but instead conveys the speaker's ideas clearly and without distraction.

#### **9. Grab Attention at the Beginning, and Close with a Dynamic End.**

Do you enjoy hearing a speech start with "Today I'm going to talk to you about X"? Most people don't. Instead, use a startling statistic, an interesting anecdote, or concise quotation. Conclude your speech with a summary and a strong statement that your audience is sure to remember.

#### **10. Use Audio-visual Aids Wisely.**

Too many can break the direct connection to the audience, so use them sparingly. They should enhance or clarify your content, or capture and maintain your audience's attention.

#### **Practice Does Not Make Perfect**

Good communication is never perfect, and nobody expects you to be perfect. However, putting in the requisite time to prepare will help you deliver a better speech. You may not be able to shake your nerves entirely, but you can learn to minimize them.

<http://www.extension.harvard.edu/professional-development/blog/10-tips-improving-your-public-speaking-skills>

And here are some more links to great ideas and advice on public speaking.

Direct Speech

<http://directspeech.com.au/Tips/>

Youth Central



<http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/government-info-assistance/do-it-yourself-democracy/telling-the-story/speak-in-public>

Toastmasters

<https://www.toastmasters.org/Resources/Public-Speaking-Tips>

## Appendix C

### Essay: Art can Change the World

Art does not stand apart from the society in which it is created. Art emerges directly from the time and culture, the priorities and expectations, the challenges and opportunities, and the changes and experiences of the surrounding society. It mirrors these things for that society – sometimes in supportive ways, sometimes in critical ways. Art invites – and occasionally forces – reflection about values, beauty, directions, lifestyles and achievements. Minds and hearts are touched by art. Change may follow as a result.

Art has the capacity to uplift and provoke. Art is an expression of passion. We live and breathe inside art, whether it's an item of clothing, a dance, the design of an old steam engine, or a well-composed photograph. Art is a frontier of free expression – about what's happening in our world and what needs to happen. Art crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries because it can speak to the soul and inspire change.

Artists question everything and help us visit places unknown. Artists rather than politicians lead some of the most important discussions about the state of the world. For example, cartoonists poke fun while pointing out new possibilities. Artists challenge us to re-evaluate and reinterpret social, historical and political events. They invite us to reshape society.

Here's what a few artists have said about the role of art in society.

*The artist records history for future generations, art reaches out & touches people around the world, it can lift people when they are down or create controversy, art is a very important part of society. Pearl Rogers, Australia*

*Artists see things in a totally different way; they challenge the boundaries of rules, society and imagination yet also keep us in touch with the past. Linda Hoey, UK*

*Art takes us out of ourselves. It allows us to address the big questions in life. It makes us think of ourselves and mortality. Alice Helwig, Canada*

Art has always embodied the relationship between humans and the natural environment. Artists address concerns about the way we interact with nature. In the 21st century – as in other times – art can and must play a role in focusing humanity on social and environmental issues and on dealing with the sustainability problems of our time. It can and must encourage discussion about community concerns, how we relate with the planet and each other, and possible solutions to sustainability problems.

Art is a compulsory subject in Australian schools. It plays an important role in deepening students' engagement with learning. Through engaging in productive art lessons children develop high order skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation as well as critical thinking, problem solving and decision making. Art also enhances literacy and numeracy skills in children. Art allows children to grasp and appreciate not only their culture but other cultures and traditions. It exposes children to different societies and beliefs. Children learn to respect and appreciate diversity and become more tolerant of different cultures, all through art.

## Further Reading

Check out these clips for more information on the role of art in society.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPk56BR1Cmk> A TEDx talk by Katerina Gregos

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ZS4FKbQUuw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZS4FKbQUuw) The Role of Art in Modern Society

Phil Smith

## Appendix D

### Community Connections to the Georges River

The theme for the Art section is ***Community Connections to the Georges River***. Even a cursory understanding of the Georges River and its region tells us that many cultures and communities have lived along the river – and continue to live along the river. From Aboriginal communities through the colonial period to the modern times and more recent communities such as the Iraqi Mandaeans, the Georges River has been and remains a close neighbour, a source of food and water, and a place of enjoyment and adventure. It is used for baptisms, weddings and other significant celebrations. The Georges River carries powerful spiritual force along its length.

In your artwork, you may choose to tell your story of culture and place and connection to the river, or you may go wider and consider how the various communities along the river value and use it.

**Liverpool's Regional Museum and Liverpool library have useful resources.** For example:

#### The New Guardians of Sydney's Georges River



Once heavily polluted, the Georges River – one of Sydney's great waterways – remains a fragile resource. These days its water quality is monitored not only by environmental scientists, but by Iraqi Mandaeans.

For Mandaeans, followers of an ancient Middle Eastern religion, regular immersion in fresh flowing water is an important religious ritual. In Sydney, their favourite spot is the Nepean River. However, they closely observe other waterways, making them sometimes better informed than their longer-established neighbours.

Heather Goodall, a cultural and environmental historian at the University of Technology Sydney, has been researching how migrants perceive and use the Georges River and its patchwork of suburban parklands: the Georges River National Park.

In common with many new arrivals, Mandaeans have settled in Sydney's densely populated and ethnically diverse southwest, through which the river winds.

Like other Arabic-speaking Australians, and like the Vietnamese, the southwest's

other major ethnic group, they are frequent visitors to the national park.

These new Australians value water highly. Muslims consider it a scarce and precious resource. For Vietnamese, all rivers have spiritual significance. The Georges River “evokes memories of the ‘water world’ of their homeland, with its ubiquitous paddy fields, high rainfall and numerous rivers”, as Professor Goodall writes.

These different park users all bring to Australia a fund of knowledge and expertise, as well as experience of a different natural environment. That makes them highly motivated to care for their surroundings.

Growing numbers of Arabic speakers participate in Clean Up programs along the riverbank. But all the migrant groups share a deep interest in water quality and conservation, and keep a sharp eye on the river’s health.

The migrant experience reinforces this behaviour. One of Goodall’s studies has examined ‘place-making’ – the way new Australians create a feeling of home by exploring their surroundings and forging attachments to certain locations.

As Goodall watched Vietnamese people fishing, young Arabic men playing football and extended families from both communities picnicking, she realised they were place-making – and, in the process, developing a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Migrants, she believes, are an untapped resource, and she hopes that the reports and books generated by her five-year research program can prove an impetus for change.

The program, entitled *Parklands, Culture and Communities: Ethnic Diversity on the Georges River*, involved a partnership with the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), which oversees New South Wales’ national parks.

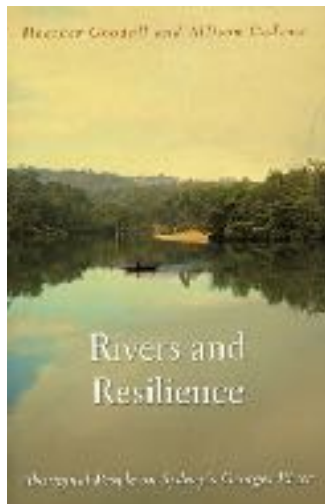
As well as updating its management models to reflect the multicultural backgrounds of today’s park users, the OEH hopes to draw on their knowledge to manage green spaces more effectively.

Kathy Marks (Photo: Picnic Point Yeramba Lagoon, by Adam.J.W.C. via Wikimedia Commons)

<http://www.humanities.org.au/Portals/0/documents/Publications/PowerHumanities/txt/AAH-PowerHumanities-NewGuardiansGeorgesRiver.pdf>

## **Rivers and Resilience: Aboriginal People on Sydney’s Georges River**

Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow



From colonisation through to the present, *Rivers and Resilience* traces the social and cultural history of Sydney's Georges River and its interaction and connections to Aboriginal lives. The authors assert the centrality of this beautiful river, comprised of sandstone escarpments, overhangs and plateaus; a network of creeks and marshy swamps that yield all manner of produce from fresh and salt water fish, eels, crabs, yabbies and oysters and an abundance of berries and wildflowers. If you have an association with the Georges River you'll really enjoy this book, as you could slot your own story into the stream. The intellectual contribution continues Goodall's thesis about the centrality of land demands to the everyday social, cultural and economic lives of Aboriginal people. But there is an extra dimension that details both the production of locality – that is the active process of connection to place – and the significance of the past, as it is permanently etched in the land (and water) and continues to shape relations among the river people.

Heidi Norman

<http://newsroom.uts.edu.au/news/2009/10/rivers-and-resilience-aboriginal-people-on-sydneys-georges-river-by-heather-goodall-and> (Available in Liverpool library)





## Appendix E

### Art Competition Guidelines and Registration Form

#### GUIDELINES

Here are the guidelines for the Visual Arts component of the competition:

- Artworks must be about the theme, Community Connections to the Georges River
- Maximum 2 entries per school. Students may be from years 7 to 11
- The artworks will be painting, drawing, photography or cartooning
- Each artwork must include a title
- Artworks will be up to 1 metre square. Students may produce 1 artwork that meets this size or a series of smaller works that meet the dimensions
- Students must put their names and contact details on the back of the artworks they submit
- Students must submit a completed registration form for each artwork. Registration forms must be submitted by 7 June. See below for the form
- Artworks must be submitted framed. (If you are able to bring an easel, that would be great.)

#### REGISTRATION TERMS and CONDITIONS

A completed Registration Form is required for each entry. It must be signed by either a teacher or a parent. A hard copy is to be included with the submission of the artwork. An electronic copy needs to be sent to Phil Smith at [rephilled@hotmail.com](mailto:rephilled@hotmail.com). All registrations will be acknowledged by email.

Registration Forms must be submitted by 7 June to Phil Smith at [rephilled@hotmail.com](mailto:rephilled@hotmail.com)

Artworks will be delivered by student/school/parent on the day of the competition (14 June) to the Casula Powerhouse Art Centre. Artworks will be displayed in the CPAC for judging on the day. See criteria in Appendix A for the criteria.

All artworks will be handled with reasonable care by Liverpool City Council, 4Sustainability Consultancy and other organisations that elect to display the winning artworks. Staff cannot be held responsible for any damage that may occur during delivery and installation of the artwork and also during the display period.

When Liverpool City Council has finished with displaying the artworks, the artworks will be returned to the appropriate school.

Information and photos of the winning entries may be published on LCC website and social media pages; they may also be published in the local newspapers.

All entrants grant permission for Liverpool City Council to publish and/or broadcast the names and photographs of the winners and their artworks. This may occur through print and electronic media, including council's website and social media pages.



## Speaking 4 the Planet 2017: Artworks Registration Form

<b>Student Name</b>	
<b>School</b>	
<b>Year</b>	
<b>School Contact Person: name, phone and email</b>	
<b>Parent/Guardian: name, phone and email</b>	
<b>Signature of Parent/ Guardian</b>	I grant Liverpool City Council and 4Sustainability Education Consultancy permission to publish and/or broadcast the names and photographs of winning students. This may occur through print and electronic media. <b>SIGNATURE:</b>
<b>Artwork Category (painting, drawing, photography or cartooning)</b>	
<b>Artwork Title</b>	