

# go slow for a mo'

## Nature-based solutions addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

go  
slow  
for a  
mo'

NATURE WELLNESS TRAIL

How do you feel after completing the trail?

**“Restored”**

Trail participant, aged 30 from Potts Point



The Go Slow for a Mo' Nature Wellness Program is an innovative outdoor sensory program designed to help individuals spend more meaningful moments in nature. A rejuvenating experience that refreshes mood, energy and focus...

**“Inspiring, and such a wonderful resource for the community to know and enjoy and benefit from.”**

**“I came away with an increased appreciation of the incredible power that nature can have on my wellbeing - lowering my stress levels”**



**CREATING MEANINGFUL MOMENTS IN NATURE**

## Reporting on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

### **Operating as a social enterprise, a different kind of business**

Our mission is to help rejuvenate communities one moment at a time by creating nature experiences that refresh mood, energy and focus; increasing care and wellbeing for self, community and the natural environment. Our business model reflects the belief that everyone should have access to, and enjoy the health benefits that nature has to offer. We keep our operation costs down to scale our trail delivery up. We feed profits back into research so we can continue to find the best possible nature-based solutions servicing people and planet.

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## Go Slow for a Mo' Program

The Go Slow for a Mo' Nature Wellness Program provides a practical and tangible green space design, training, and trail installation solution to increase nature connectedness - enabling individuals from all walks of life to have more meaningful moments in nature. This program draws on the latest scientific knowledge, creating short slow moments for big lasting impacts, supercharging the health benefits and sustainability outcomes of any type of greenspace - whether it be a national park, local park, pocket park, backyard, learning space or workplace.

## Backed by Research

The Living Lab Go Slow for a Mo' trail research program at Macquarie University continues to design, test and evaluate trail exercises working with students and staff across all faculties. Additionally, the research team is conducting a national survey and interview program to better understand how people use and value their outdoor places while exploring the application of medical 'green and social scripts' within a local context.

The Go Slow for a Mo' program also tracks the latest empirical interdisciplinary research emerging from around the world which is showing that meaningful connections with nature improves:

- Attention, focus, mood, and creativity
- Blood pressure, pain control, immune function, diabetes mitigation
- Stress levels, depression, anxiety, sleep, and resilience
- Respect and appreciation for the natural environment (and 'place')
- Behaviours in addressing climate change and sustainability
- Greater overall happiness, wellbeing and life satisfaction
- Feelings of gratitude and care for oneself and their community

## Go Slow for a Mo' Delivery [#goslowforamo]

Go Slow for a Mo' is a community movement involving, Councils/Municipalities, Botanic Gardens, Universities, Hospitals, Health and Community Services and more, that are committed to helping **Transform Green Spaces into Wellness Places**. Together delivering preventative nature-based health and wellbeing solutions to serve people and the planet.

# Go Slow for a Mo' Program: Performance Achievements Summary

## **Untapping nature's wellbeing benefits.**

A preventive healthcare service solution improving mental, physical, and social wellbeing. With increasing international pressure for nature connectedness to be recognised as an indicator of wellbeing.

## **Increasing sustainability.**

Nature connectedness being an indicator of household pro-environmental behaviours, pro-conservation behaviours and actions on climate change.

## **New sustainability education paradigm delivery model.**

An education model that increases nature connectedness to better facilitate sustainability and conservation behaviours.

## **Activating place.**

Increased connections to place benefits, strengthen community bonds.

## **Providing green script and social prescribing solutions.**

Evidence-led program approach to social and green prescriptions, working with council staff and health professionals.

## **Increasing community resilience.**

Enhancing disaster recovery initiatives and increasing community resilience.

## **Unique design solutions.**

Future-thinking green infrastructure and green space design service for human and ecological health.

## **Enhancing individual learning capability.**

Program design improves learning capacity, attention restoration and performance.

## **Increasing applied learning opportunities.**

Hands-on engagement with outdoor 'classrooms' to provide an experiential learning and teaching platform.

## **Wide-ranging applications and benefits.**

Ability to optimise and harness green space and green infrastructure benefits across a range of places and spaces and their networks.

## **Designed for inclusivity.**

Engaging a wide range of age groups across physical abilities, and in support of cultural diversity and socio-economic locations, backgrounds and status.

## **Accessible and free.**

The program is fun, accessible, and free to all end users.

## **Wide audience appeal.**

Branding and marketing founded on scientific underpinnings to target far-reaching audiences.

## **Multidisciplinary delivery with cross-sector applications.**

Maximising the collective benefits across health, community and the environment.

## **Driving innovation.**

Program design being at the forefront on rapidly emerging transformative global movement.

## **Ongoing movement collaboration.**

Program maintains high end national and international connections across growing movement across Planetary Health, Government Health and Environment, Peak Community Bodies, Planning and Horticultural Industry and Research Institutes.

## 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



### » Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Urbanisation is emerging as an important health concern globally<sup>1</sup> as perceived epicentres for chronic and non-communicable disease<sup>2 3</sup> with nearly 50% of Australians affected<sup>4</sup>. Mental health accounting for 20% of Australia's disease burden, the other 80% is related to physical health, including obesity/overweight, high blood pressure and diabetes. Increasing levels of societal pressures and stresses, and the impacts on anxiety and depression are now a major health concern at an annual cost of \$220 Billion<sup>5</sup> (or \$600 million per day).

### How does Go Slow for a Mo' address societal health burdens?

**1. Untapping nature's wellbeing benefits.** The trail program supports a preventive healthcare service solution improving mental, physical, and social wellbeing.

A large body of research is confirming that nature has a profound effect on our mood, wellbeing and resilience.<sup>6 7</sup> Where psychological measures of how connected we are to nature, commonly known (or termed) as nature connectedness, is correlated with increases in wellbeing.

Importantly, 'it is about moments, not minutes'; what we do and how we notice nature matters more than the amount of time spent. The more meaningful, mindful and memorable the experience, the more profound the benefits.<sup>8</sup> More specifically, the closer the actions influence an individual's emotional connection, the greater the impact.<sup>9</sup>

Increasing nature connectedness is the fundamental premise of the Go Slow for a Mo' program. The program provides a practical and tangible solution to increase nature connectedness by enabling individuals from all walks of life to have more meaningful moments in nature. Drawing on the latest scientific evidence the trail program amplifies the health benefits of just about any type of greenspace - whether is be a national park, local park, pocket park, community garden, backyard, learning space or workplace.

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3. Sundquist, K., Frank,G. & Sundquist, J. (2004). Urbanisation and incidence of psychosis and depression. British Journal of Journal of Psychiatry, 184, 293-298
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics. National Health Survey: First Results, 2017-18 <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4364.0.55.001>
5. Productivity Commission Mental Health Report <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/mental-health/report>
6. Frumkin, H. et al. Nature Contact and Human Health: A Research Agenda. Environ Health Perspect 125, 075001 (2017).
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9. Hatty, Melissa Anne, Liam David Graham Smith, Denise Goodwin, and Felix Tinoziva Mavondo. 2020. 'The CN-12: A Brief, Multidimensional Connection With Nature Instrument'. Frontiers in Psychology 11 (July): 1566. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01566>.



# 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



## » Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Spending time in nature enhances educational outcomes by improving academic performance, focus, behaviour and love for learning.<sup>10</sup> Learning in natural environments help to boost performance in reading, writing, maths science and social studies. Nature-based learning environments enhance creativity, critical thinking and problem solving and improve attention restoration and focus. Increased engagement, exploration and discovery through outdoor experiences help to promote motivation to learn.

### How does Go Slow for a Mo' support quality learning?

**1. Enhances individual learning capability.** Trail design decreases stress and increases attention restoration, to ultimately improve overall learning capacity and performance.

**2. Increases applied learning opportunities.** Hands-on engagement using the trail program provides an experiential learning and teaching platform. The Living Lab program at Macquarie University demonstrating the potential range of student and staff reach and cross-discipline usability benefits. As a learning and teaching model this trail program showcases the role and benefits of outdoor classrooms, working with medical students, environmental science, sustainability, geography and planning students through to psychology and education (teachers from preschool to high school). (see [www.goslowforamo.com/living-lab/](http://www.goslowforamo.com/living-lab/))

**3. Provides a new sustainability education paradigm.** There are increasing calls for a greater emphasis on (re)connecting people with nature to leverage and foster improved sustainability outcomes and conservation behaviours. As example, recent studies of children (aged 9-12) revealed significant associations between nature connectedness and the determinants of sustainable behaviour such as altruism, equity, frugality, and pro-ecological actions.<sup>11</sup> Stark results examining the effectiveness of environmental education working with 250 children aged between 9-11, concluded that the level of children's environmental knowledge accounted for only 2% of the variance in their ecological behaviour, whereas nature connectedness accounted for 69%.<sup>12</sup>

Increasing nature connectedness being the fundamental premise of the Go Slow for a Mo' trail program and education delivery model.

11. [https://www.childrenandnature.org/wp-content/uploads/CNN\\_AcademicOutcomes\\_16-10-27\\_O\\_newlogo.pdf](https://www.childrenandnature.org/wp-content/uploads/CNN_AcademicOutcomes_16-10-27_O_newlogo.pdf)

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**Life moving too fast?**  
**go slow for a mo'**

with a rejuvenating nature experience that will refresh your mood, energy and focus.

**1. Breathe Slowly**  
Inhaling and exhaling a steady pace to clear your mind, soothe, to soothe irritation and breathing stress.  
**Time required:** 2-4 mins.

**2. Relax the Eyes**  
A part of your eyes that is usually under strain, relaxation and reduce stress and anxiety.  
**Time required:** 2-4 mins.

**3. Feathered Friends**  
Feathered friends are a great way to connect with nature, with children to enhance your inner child.  
**Time required:** 2-5 mins.

**4. Smell the Roses**  
Feeling good in nature opens the door and allows you to breathe.  
**Time required:** 2-5 mins.

**5. Sensory Switch**  
Using sensory experience to clear your mind to breathe, to breathe with.  
**Time required:** 2-3 mins.

**6. Focus on Fractals**  
Looking at the repeated patterns, for fractals in nature helps to get you in a state of relaxation and calm.  
**Time required:** 2-3 mins.

**7. Little Things**  
Notice nature's beauty has been shown to increase the satisfaction and happiness.  
**Time required:** 2-10 mins.

**The Benefits**  
Meaningful moments in nature help make you healthier and happier. It's proven, it's easy and it's free!

- Improve stress, happiness, wellbeing and life satisfaction
- Improve mood, presence, pain coping, fatigue, health outcomes and sleep
- Improve learning, creativity, sustained attention and EFSD development
- Reduce stress, depression and anxiety and increase resilience
- Revisit and appreciate our natural spaces
- Enhance feelings of gratitude and care for ourselves and our community

Share your experience with others at [#goslowforamo](https://www.goslowforamo.com)

Wollongong Botanic Garden Trail Welcome Sign

**“An office enriched with plants makes staff happier and boosts productivity by 15 per cent.”**

Wollongong Botanic Garden Trail Welcome Sign

## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



### » **Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.**

When we plan, design, build or maintain infrastructure, it is more than just managing an asset. It is an important service opportunity that can provide and address community needs (economic, social, environmental and cultural). It is also an opportunity to protect and grow environmental, social, cultural and economic capital. There is an increasing call for developers and managers to adopt transformative approaches to infrastructure delivery. One that can better address community vulnerability (e.g. human and ecological health burdens), embraces innovative strategies that 'future-proofs' anticipated changing environments; and one that is flexible enough to continue to incorporate applied research values and lessons.

### **How does Go Slow for a Mo' improve infrastructure and innovation?**

**1. Fostering health and sustainability.** The Go Slow for a Mo' program offers a new, exciting and insightful approach to untap and supercharge a range of health and sustainability benefits from green space and green infrastructure. Fostering a tangible and practical solution that can enhance and rapidly scale liveability, sustainability and community resilience.

**2. Wide-ranging applications and benefits.**

Wide-ranging program exercises ensure that wellbeing and sustainability outcomes can be optimised across a range of places and spaces and their networks. Wide-ranging exercises also enables trails to be tailored to specific outcomes such as stress reduction, attention restoration, place appreciation or conservation behaviour facilitation.

**3. Driving innovation.** Innovation is at the core of trail program design. Being at the forefront on what is a rapidly becoming an emerging global trend in the positive use of nature connection experiences to facilitate increases wellbeing, pro-social and pro-environmental behaviours.

### **Green Space Design Solutions for Nature Wellbeing**

To enhance and maximise the benefits of the trail program and training, the Go Slow for a Mo' team offer unique green infrastructure consulting and design services that:

- Optimises green spaces for human and ecological health.
- Enhances masterplans, addressing major health disease burdens.
- Supports corporate, health and wellbeing and open space plans.
- Provides concept design and construction drawings.
- Adopts interdisciplinary design approaches that:
  - » Acknowledges and works with Traditional Custodians.
  - » Amplifies meaningful moments in nature.
  - » Creates healthcare landscapes with public health and urban planning professionals.
  - » Offers sustainable designs that are ecologically rich and climate proofing.

The Macquarie University Living Lab Go Slow trail has been designed to target mental restoration and repair. This digital trail takes students and staff through six rejuvenation stations aimed at increasing positive mood, emotional regulation, attention restoration and support greater resilience to anxiety and stress.

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<- digital trail rejuvenation  
exercise stations



» **Reduce inequality within and among countries.**

There is a myriad of benefits from embracing and celebrating diversity. As we become increasingly interconnected globally, learning openness and appreciating differences is an important baseline to many aspects of modern life. Encompassing diversity is about acceptance and respect. It recognises that every individual is unique and these differences should be celebrated. Differences may include ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical abilities, socio-economic status, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other.

**How does Go Slow for a Mo' celebrate diversity?**

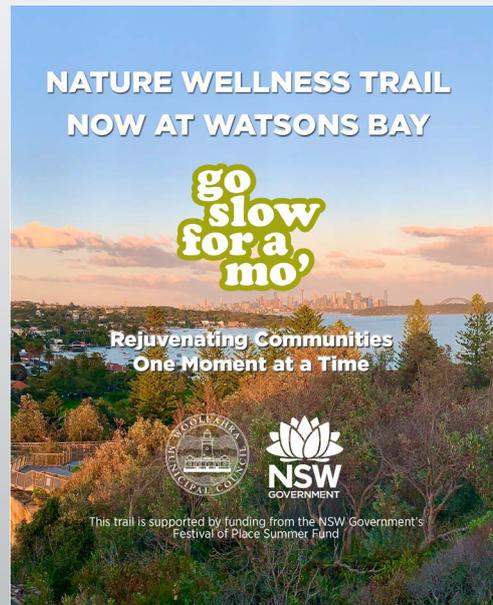
**1. Inclusive of diversity.** The trail program can be utilised across all age groups. With an ability for the trails to target the active young through to the stressed university student, busy parent, overwhelmed executive or slowing down retiree. Trails can also be designed to ensure inclusivity including wheelchair access trails, voice wayfinding options for the visually impaired (sounds-based sensory trail) or braille signage possibilities for the hearing impaired (touch-based sensory trail).

**2. Reflective of real people.** The exercise recordings and video trail promotion are developed working with real people. This includes representatives from the young to old, of mixed gender, and inclusive of the LGBT community and of different cultural backgrounds. Language translation recordings are also a possibility.

**3. Accessible and free.** The trail program is fun, accessible, and free to all trail users. Installations prices have been kept low so the health benefits can be scaled up for the wider community. Users can access the exercises on any day at any time, providing an opportunity support a high volume of community use and scaling of program benefits.

**4. Wide audience appeal.** The trails come with a promotional package to help promote trail benefits to potential users. Trail program branding and marketing is founded on scientific underpinnings and seeks to target far-reaching audiences. The need to 'Go-Slow' being relatable to many.

**“Trail participants ranged across all age groups, providing whole-of- community opportunities to enjoy.”**



Watsons Bay Trail Signage

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



### » **Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.**

The unprecedented scale of the recent Australian bushfires and COVID-19 has left communities with a heightened level of anxiety and stress. These processes have highlighted the importance of outdoor environments to human health and society's deteriorating connection with nature. Lifestyle related chronic health conditions are placing a considerable burden upon society.

The mosaic of the built and natural environment forms a critical part of our living fabric: shaping community identity, defining how we live, and

influencing our social makeup and vital connections with nature and place. The nature in our urban and rural areas is remains underutilised in its ability to promote physical and mental wellbeing, and it is also underutilised in its ability to promote pro-social and pro-environmental behaviours.

### **How does Go Slow for a Mo' support community resilience?**

**1. Activates place.** Being closer to nature make us healthier and happier, providing areas to forge social connections and help communities and businesses prosper. The power of nature as an integral baseline to placemaking is receiving increasing attention. Canopy cover targets to reduce urban heat, the creation of green corridors to increase walkability or the incorporation of biophilic design into existing and new infrastructure developments are some examples of this.

The Go Slow for a Mo' program provides an exciting opportunity to enhance the benefits of connecting to place. Place appreciation exercises can help to strengthen community bonds, not only between each other but to the places that they live in.

**2. Providing green script and social prescribing solutions.** The concept of nature connection, nature prescriptions and social prescribing issued by medical practitioners, has gained increased prevalence internationally since Japanese health professionals began prescribing 'forest bathing'. This was developed as a means to counter the rising mental health issues, including increased suicide rates, in the 1980s. While the issuing of 'nature doses' to treat people suffering a range of physiological and psychological conditions is increasingly undertaken in a number of countries in Asia, Europe and North America, uptake of such prescriptions by Australian health professions still remains low.

The Go Slow for a Mo' program provides an evidence-led approach that can support the design and application of social prescribing and green script applications, working with health professionals across both the public and private sectors. Such strategies are gaining increasing acceptance as a smart and cost effective way to help people stay healthy and socially active. Already a range of Councils and NSW Health

professionals are actively using the Go Slow for a Mo' to deliver guided community 'slow walk' programs.

**3. Increasing community resilience.** Through community and Government support, a range of social and ecological community recovery projects have been initiated in response to the recent droughts, fires and the COVID-19 pandemic. These much needed programs have helped to assist communities and ecological restoration initiatives within impacted areas. Whilst there are many associated positive benefits from such initiatives, there remains a missed opportunity to support physical, mental and social health and wellbeing during these difficult times. Building a nature connection recovery and resilience approach to program delivery can assist communities to address their own anxieties and challenges, building greater community resilience.

A recent publication (2019)<sup>14</sup> highlighted the value of attachment to nature as being a critical factor influencing disaster recovery post bushfire. The authors state that while attachment to nature can create grief at the loss, those with a stronger attachment were less likely to develop major depression, fire related PTSD, and more likely to have high resilience and post disaster growth and life satisfaction. Stating that:

“Quantitative analyses indicated that while social connections are increasingly recognised as supportive of disaster recovery, the influence of landscapes also needs to be recognised in terms of it's therapeutic potential.”

The Go Slow for a Mo' program provides an opportunity to enhance and value add to current recovery initiatives, incorporating nature-based solutions to ultimately improve community resilience.

14. [www.beyondbushfires.org.au](http://www.beyondbushfires.org.au)

## 13 CLIMATE ACTION



- » **Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.**
- » **Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.**
- » **Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.**

## 14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Increasing urbanisation, busy lifestyles, screen-based technologies and reduced access to natural environments are just some of the explanations for our growing disconnection with the natural world and decline in outdoor living. Human disconnection from nature is now a key driver of ongoing planetary health concerns.<sup>16</sup> There are increasing calls for a greater emphasis on (re)connecting people with nature to leverage and foster improved sustainability outcomes and conservation behaviours.

### **How does Go Slow for a Mo' increase actions for the natural environment and climate change?**

**1. Increasing nature connectedness.** Recent research<sup>17</sup> concludes that increases in nature connectedness provides an excellent indicator of:

- Household pro-environmental behaviours (e.g. recycling, buying locally sourced food, eco-friendly products, walking or cycling);
- Pro-nature conservation behaviours (e.g. restoration, habitat conservation and volunteering); and
- Actions on climate change.

However, creating connection must be more than being outside or increasing 'knowledge about nature'. Researchers in both the UK and Australia confirm that a) time in nature, and b) knowledge about nature do not necessarily have a relationship with pro-conservation behaviour.<sup>18</sup> It is what you do there that matters most; more specifically, activities that are able to create meaningful moments with nature.

Increasing nature connectedness is the fundamental premise of the Go Slow for a Mo' program. The trail program provides a practical and tangible solution to increase nature connectedness, awareness and appreciation of the natural world from the young to the old and everyone in between.

**“Go Slow for a Mo' is designed to create meaningful moments with nature.”**

16. Carlos A Faerron Guzmán, A Alonso Aguirre, Barbara Astle, Enrique Barros, Brett Bayles, Moses Chimbari, Naglaa El-Abbadi, Jessica Evert, Finola Hackett, Courtney Howard, Jonathan Jennings, Amy Krzyzek, Jessica LeClair, Filip Maric, Olwenn Martin, Odipo Osano, Jonathan Patz, Teddie Potter, Nicole Redvers, Noortje Trienekens, Sarah Walpole, Lynda Wilson, Chenchen Xu, Matthew Zylstra. 2021. A framework to guide planetary health education. The Lancet Planetary Health. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00110-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00110-8/fulltext)

17. Martin, Leanne, Mathew P. White, Anne Hunt, Miles Richardson, Sabine Pahl, and Jim Burt. 2020. 'Nature Contact, Nature Connectedness and Associations with Health, Wellbeing and pro-Environmental Behaviours'. Journal of Environmental Psychology 68 (April): 101389. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2020.101389>.

18. Richardson, Miles, Holli-Anne Passmore, Ryan Lumber, Rory Thomas, and Alex Hunt. 2021. 'Moments, Not Minutes: The Nature-Wellbeing Relationship'. International Journal of Wellbeing 11 (1): 8-33. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v11i1.1267>

## 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



- » **Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.**
- » **Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.**

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can only be realised with strong global partnerships and cooperation. A successful development agenda requires inclusive partnerships - at the global, regional, national and local levels - built upon principles and values, and upon a shared vision and shared goals placing people and the planet at the centre. Increasing global engagement of the SDGs and the formation of planetary health alliances confirm shifts in perceptions and increases in understanding in the need and value to collectively address sustainability.

## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



### How does Go Slow for a Mo' strengthen sustainable collaboration?

**1. A multidisciplinary delivery lens.** The Go-Slow interdisciplinary team has explored multi-avenues of approach and application and have developed a product that moves across portfolios. Where Go Slow for a Mo' aims to maximise the collective benefits across health, community and the environment.

**2. Supporting a movement.** Go Slow for a Mo' is a community movement involving, Councils/Municipalities, Botanic Gardens, Universities, Hospitals, Health and Community Services and more, that are committed to helping Transform Green Spaces into Wellness Places. Together delivering preventative nature-based health and wellbeing solutions to collectively serve people and the planet [[#goslowforamo](#)].

**3. An emerging trend.** The trail program is at the forefront on what is a rapidly becoming an emerging trend in the positive use of nature connection experiences to facilitate increases wellbeing, pro-social and pro-environmental behaviours.

**4. Ongoing collaboration.** The trail program maintains high end national and international connections across this growing movement including direct associations with Planetary Health Alliances, Government Health and Environment, peak Health and Community bodies, the Planning and Horticultural Industries and Research Institutes.

**“I think what you are doing is wonderful and very necessary!**

**I am very interested to learn how I could contribute in some meaningful way to this movement.”**

Amanda  
Watsons Bay Trail Participant

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