



Media Release

29th July 2016

## Adding nature helps students grow

*Schools Tree Day inspires kids to reach their full potential*

Students across Australia are racing outside today to green their schools and connect with nature for Planet Ark's Schools Tree Day.

More than 2,500 schools get involved in Schools Tree Day each year as part of National Tree Day, Australia's biggest community tree-planting and nature care event. It's an opportunity for students to plant and care for the seedlings as they grow; a hands-on experience which also beautifies school grounds.

National Tree Day Manager Debbie Agnew says that participating in Schools Tree Day, which has been running since 1996, is a fun, exciting way for students to have an authentic nature experience and benefit from learning outside.

"Planet Ark's research<sup>i</sup> shows that nature enhances academic performance across all curriculum areas. 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," she says.

"These outdoor settings have a positive impact on a range of student behaviours and are linked to cognitive function, memory, imaginative play, creativity and enthusiasm for school."

This year's theme, *Grow More – Just Add Nature*, highlights how everyone, whatever their age, can use the power of nature to help reach their full potential in all aspects of their lives.

Schools Tree Day also aims to engage children at a young age to care for and protect our native flora and fauna and understand the importance of nature to life on our planet. Planting seedlings and habitat to encourage native wildlife, sowing veggies or vertical gardens, and creating worm farms or nesting boxes are all popular activities for Schools Tree Day. These often mark the beginning of a lifelong connection with nature for the students.

Although Schools Tree Day will be officially celebrated on Friday, July 29th, teachers can register a site for any day of the year. Teachers can also gain [access](#) to learning resources.

Schools Tree Day is organised by Planet Ark in partnership with Toyota Australia's Dealer Network, which provides on the ground support at local tree planting sites Australia-wide.

To find out more about Schools Tree Day on Friday July 29th or National Tree Day on Sunday July 31st, visit [treeday.planetark.org](http://treeday.planetark.org), call the **National Tree Day Hotline on 1300 88 5000** or contact your local participating Toyota Australia Dealership.

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<sup>i</sup> Planet Ark's *Adding Trees – A Prescription for Health, Happiness and Fulfilment* report, sponsored by Toyota Australia, explores the many wellbeing benefits of nature and is available at <http://treeday.planetark.org/research>

### **About Planet Ark**

Planet Ark Environmental Foundation is an Australian not-for-profit organisation with a vision of a world where people live in balance with nature. Established in 1992, we are one of Australia's leading environmental behaviour change organisations with a focus on working collaboratively and positively. We help people, governments and businesses reduce their impact on the environment in three key areas: sustainable resource use; low carbon lifestyles; and connecting people with nature. We promote and create simple, positive environmental actions – for everyone.

### **About Toyota Australia**

Toyota Australia – now in its 14th straight year as the best-selling automotive brand in Australia – has a long tradition of supporting the community through sponsorship at both local and national levels. In 2016, Toyota will celebrate its 17th year supporting Planet Ark's National Tree Day. These longstanding partnerships are characterised by a shared passion for people, activities and organisations that benefit the community.

**For all enquiries about Planet Ark, Schools Tree Day, and local case studies please email [pr@planetark.org](mailto:pr@planetark.org) or contact:**

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### **For more information:**

<http://treeday.planetark.org>  
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[Twitter.com/Planetark](https://twitter.com/Planetark)  
[Instagram/OurPlanetArk](https://www.instagram.com/OurPlanetArk)  
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