



## HANDS-ON WORKSHOP

### **Collaborating creatively with the community to engage in conservation education through innovative and interactive arts programs.**

Marnie Giroud, Eco Gecko - Environment & Design

#### **Abstract**

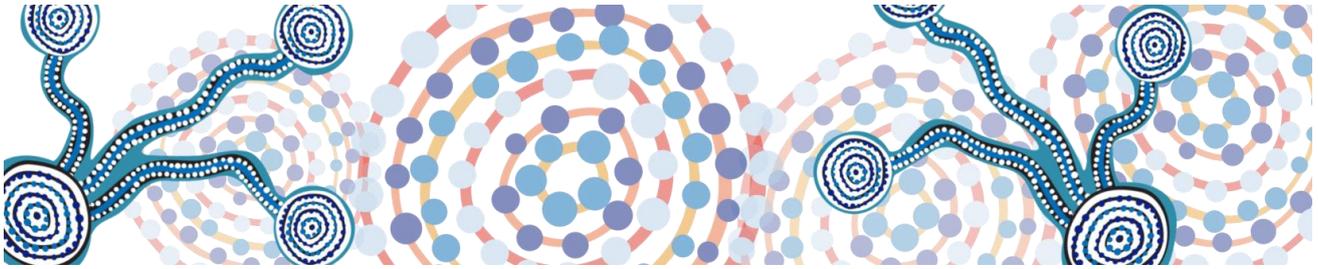
Educators communicating through face-to-face interactions had to quickly reassess teaching methodologies when the news of the COVID-19 pandemic broke.

Environmental education shifted to a lower ranking of importance in a new life-threatening reality. The challenge to continue without audiences in situ, for a prolonged period of shutdown, was a catalyst for educators to look for creative ways to continue their work. The lightning speed of classroom teachers to engage in online learning opportunities for students at home, as well as providing classroom contact for students still attending was commendable. Online learning, zoom meetings and video broadcasts on social media became important tools for engagement.

As a small business owner with a focus on environmental education through events, 92% of my business earning potential was lost overnight. I reassessed my business model and began using video as a medium to showcase current projects and to seek opportunities for work. Delivering conservation messages through artwork translated into physical products. I was also working part time at Kings Park Education & Learning delivering engaging programs for school students and general community.

Kings Park's community engagement response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency was swift and creative. With face-to-face programs suspended, the Kings Park Education team moved to develop a free online remote learning program to engage with all sections of the community. Some existing programs and activities were retrofitted, and new content was created to engage existing and new audiences including regional communities unable to participate in on-site programs.

Collaborating creatively to connect community in conservation in different ways both through my small business and at Kings Park was achieved by working remotely with colleagues to produce learning opportunities. The resulting engagement was evident in social media responses and fostered new planning for future outreach using these mediums.



## Acknowledgement

Marnie Giroud acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pays respects to their Elders past and present.

Other acknowledgments:

Jacqui Kennedy - Manager Community Engagement and Visitor Services - BGPA

Charlotte Vaughan – Kings Park Education & Learning Manager - BGPA

## Speaker Profile

Marnie Giroud is a tv presenter, conservationist, educator and artist. Having worked in schools and state government specializing in arts, community engagement, citizen science and conservation, she now runs her own business. Conservation efforts include wildlife caring, managing mammal and bird monitoring and conservation projects including the world's rarest marsupial. Marnie worked in the Amazon jungle rescuing wildlife, managing an international team of volunteers, scientists and educators and developed an education program. Her mantra is 'Creative Conservation' and includes ways to educate community about the environment through arts and engagement programs to provide opportunities for conservation action.

## Website links

→ <https://www.facebook.com/EcoGeckoEandD/>

