

Abstract Submission Form and Speaker Profile

Complete your details by typing in the **green** sections of the digital form below. If there are multiple presenters, please include their details where applicable (name, organisation, personal bio)
 Save your completed form in PDF format and submit via the [submission form on the website](#).

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|--|--|-------------------|--------|--------------------|-------|
| Title | Mrs | First Name | Nicole | Family Name | Maier |
| Position/Role | Regional Landcare Coordinator | | | | |
| Organisation you will represent | Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc | | | | |
| Personal Bio Max. 100 words | <p>Nicole has worked in sustainable agriculture and natural resource management for twenty years, working in technical and research roles before joining Murrumbidgee Landcare twelve years ago. Her current role is Regional Landcare Coordinator for the Riverina, which allows her to support the many passionate and dedicated Landcare groups and volunteers on a diverse range of educational, engagement and on-ground projects.</p> <p>Through her role at Landcare, Nicole has been involved in numerous educational projects, with audiences ranging from pre-schoolers to school and university students, along with community members of all ages and backgrounds.</p> | | | | |
| Title of Presentation | Connecting young people with nature: Benefits for biodiversity, mental health and social connection | | | | |
| Format of Presentation (please select) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oral Presentation (20 minutes) <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop - 60 minutes (eg interactive indoor session) <input type="checkbox"/> Workshop - 120 minutes (eg outdoor activity) Indicate your preferred presentation types (you may select more than one) NB: We may not be able to offer your preferred option | | | | |
| Which theme would you prefer to present under? (please select) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theme 1: Listen <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 2: Learn <input type="checkbox"/> Theme 3: Transform | | | | |
| Introduction | Our project is both supporting and empowering local adolescents to address climate change impacts at a local level, and restore local biodiversity. We are providing high school students with the opportunity to take time to connect to nature, undertake experiential learning about climate change and biodiversity, and experience a deep understanding of connection to Country through knowledge-sharing by Wiradjuri Elders. | | | | |

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| <p>Presentation Abstract: max. 300 words</p> | <p>It is widely acknowledged that time in nature can provide many benefits to young people, and can positively influence their mental health. However it has been found that adolescents typically spend far less time in nature than either younger children or adults.</p> <p>In parallel, emerging research has noted the conflicting impacts from the benefits of connecting with nature and the realisation that the natural world is under threat due to the impacts of climate change and other human-induced actions. This phenomenon, labelled "climate grief", can include anxiety over the future in terms of loss of nature, frustration over the lack of dedicated action from successive governments at an international scale, and fear that these problems are bigger than an individual can solve themselves. All of these emotions have a negative impact on the mental health of young people.</p> <p>Our project is creating a safe space where small groups of adolescents can spend time in nature to connect with the natural world and each other. These meetings also allow young people to make a positive contribution to the restoration and enhancement of remnant areas of native vegetation through plantings and other restoration works.</p> <p>Our team of environmental educators, Landcare volunteers, youth mental health services and members of the Wiradjuri community are providing the necessary combination of skills to engage the adolescents in work that creates positive change for the local environment, in a way that also empowers them and is self-directed. The participants provide guidance and decision-making around the direction of the project, with opportunities to focus on art, science, mindfulness, connection to Country and other areas of interest. The senior students involved will also have the opportunity to educate younger children about their learnings, helping to build their leadership and connections, and further spread the impact of the project.</p> |
| <p>Key Message: A short summary of presentation</p> | <p>An innovative collaboration between Landcare, headspace, Wiradjuri Elders and local schools is working to connect adolescents to nature, manage climate change anxiety and help restore natural biodiversity.</p> |

All abstracts must be received by 5pm **Friday 28 April 2023 (AEST)**.

We expect to notify speakers by mid June

Note: confirmed presenters will be required to register for the conference and pay the relevant registration fees.