

South Australia

# Nature Festival Educator's Guide

26 Sept  
–12 Oct  
2025

Activities and  
curriculum links

[naturefestival.org.au](https://naturefestival.org.au)

Nature  
Festival

# Classroom opportunities for the 2025 Nature Festival: FLOW



The Nature Festival exists to celebrate South Australia's love of nature. Over **90%** of us get out into our parks and beaches every year and an astounding **94%** think conserving nature is of critical importance.<sup>1</sup>

As we approach the Festival this Spring, there are some great opportunities for you, your classroom, and their families and carers to slow down and cultivate a deeper relationship with nature.

## Activities

This year's theme is FLOW, including rivers and oceans, creative flow, impermanence and ephemeral desert flows, and even the flow of communities and generations.

Take this opportunity to strengthen your students' connection to their local waterway, river, ocean and the larger water catchment through contributing to a participatory art experience: **Community Waterway Portrait**.

Share your water and watch it flow to become a collective community river.

Alternatively we suggest four additional activities including "We Are Nature" Identity mapping, "Flow in Art and Science," a "Nature is for Everyone" community accessibility project, and an Aboriginal Cultural starting point with the Tjilbruke dreaming story.

## What is the Nature Festival?

Running during Spring School Holidays each year, we are a collaborative cultural movement organised around a festival. We feature diverse events designed to meet people where they are and invite them into a deeper relationship with nature.

Last year the community of over **200 partners** hosted **404 events** with more than **38k participants** across South Australia.

Events include arts, music, food, family, performance, Aboriginal Culture, gardens, learning, and adventure.

As many as half of the events in the festival each year are free, and we feature many dozens of events for children and families. The program launches August 19th.

More at [naturefestival.org.au](https://naturefestival.org.au)

1. South Australians and the Environment Survey, 2016, SA Department for Environment and Water

# Primary Activity: Waterway Portrait



Contribute to a participatory art experience:  
Community Waterway Portrait.

The collective portrait is being led by this year's 2025 Nature Festival Artist in Residence, **Laura Wills**. Share a photo of yourself with your local water connection and Laura will draw the image, print it onto fabric and stitch it into an evolving portrait.

## Activity

### 1. Tune in with students

- What is a local waterway?
- Who has been to a waterway?
- What were your memories? What did it look like? How did you feel?
- Who else lives in or around these waterways? List local animals who rely on waterways.
- Google map (Earth view) your school or home's closest waterways.

### 2. Personalise it

Ask students to personalise it by each choosing a place or situation answering:

*How do you connect with water – which tap, drain, stream, body of water or water way are you most connected to? Why?*

### 3. Take & upload photos

Students, classes or families are encouraged to take a photo of themselves or a part of them (facing away if consent is an issue) in that place or situation with water.

Upload your photos:  
<https://naturefestival.org.au/photo>

### 4. Follow along

Watch as Nature Festival's 2025 artist-in-residence Laura Wills weaves the photos together in an ongoing community collage. Laura will keep you up to date with the project via email (if you provide) or you can watch the collective portrait come together via Instagram [@waterwayportrait](https://www.instagram.com/waterwayportrait).



# Curriculum links + Resources



*Geography, HASS, Art, Sustainability, Critical and Creative thinking*

## Waterway Portrait Resources

### Catchments – teacher info pack

**Curriculum:** Geography, HASS, Critical and Creative thinking

**What it is:** Information and activities about catchments, stormwater, pollution and how changing land use impacts on catchment health.

### Looking after waterways

**Info:** A property owner's guide with a message from Warpulai Kumangka outlining the importance of water to the local Kurna nation.

### SA Water Wisdom Videos

**Suitable for:** All ages

**Curriculum:** HASS, Sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture

**What it is:** This series of short videos draws on the knowledge, history and culture of community members from Kurna, Barnagarla, Boandik, Ngarrindjeri, and Adnyamanthanha lands. These communities are from varied environments across our state, and share how fresh water has been found and water systems and resources have been managed by traditional custodians of the land for many thousands of years.

### Water Wisdom Workbook

**Suitable for:** Years 4-6

**Curriculum:** HASS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

**What it is:** Water is central to Aboriginal culture and identity, and traditional knowledge of water has been shared for many thousands of years. This workbook invites students to explore water in culture and storytelling, water in our environment, and the wisdom to manage our natural resources.

**Water cycle resources**, including lesson plans via [cool.org](http://cool.org)

# Additional activities



*Looking for other ways to engage?*

## "We Are Nature" Identity Mapping

**Subjects:** Science, Geography, HASS

**Ages:** All levels (adapt complexity)

Students create personal maps showing their daily connections to nature. They identify water sources in their community, trace where their food comes from, and explore how natural cycles affect their lives.

**Nature Festival Link:** This reinforces the festival's core message that "nature isn't somewhere 'over there'" but something we're part of every day.

## Flow in Art and Science

**Subjects:** Arts, Science, Mathematics

**Ages:** Years F-12

Explore different types of flow - water flow, creative flow, mathematical sequences, music rhythms.

Students can:

- Create art inspired by water patterns and movements
- Investigate fluid dynamics through simple experiments
- Compose music that mimics natural water sounds
- Study mathematical patterns in nature (fractals in river systems, fibonacci in plants)

## "Nature is for Everyone" Community Project

**Subjects:** Science, Arts, Community

**Ages:** Years 3-12

Following the festival's inclusive philosophy, students design ways to make nature more accessible:

- Create nature guides for people with disabilities
- Develop multilingual resources about local environments
- Design family-friendly nature activities for their community
- Partner with local organisations to implement their ideas.

## Aboriginal Culture Exploration

**Subjects:** History, Geography, Arts

**Ages:** All levels

Following the festival's focus on Aboriginal culture and with an eye toward the theme of FLOW, educators could focus on the Kaurna Tjilbruke dreaming story, telling the story of six freshwater springs, exploring the significance of songlines for integrating knowledge about the environment and culture into memorable stories.

Resources: [Case study](#), [Story](#)

# Why a festival?

In a time of climate change, bushfires, and global pandemics, now more than ever we need to cultivate a **deeper relationship** with nature as a society.

As individuals, that relationship is fundamental to our wellbeing. As a society, that relationship is the foundation of all of the other work that we undertake to protect and steward nature.

As with any great relationship, we should spend quality time together, go on big adventures, take good care of each other, and, most importantly, take the time each year to **celebrate** what makes the relationship worthwhile in the first place. This is what the Nature Festival is all about.



Want to know  
what it feels like?  
[Watch past  
videos here.](#)

## Nature Festival

We are an annual program of events, encounters, and experiences to celebrate our love of nature in South Australia.

We're an open-access festival (like Adelaide Fringe) with broad community involvement and a focus on arts, Aboriginal culture, food, wonder, and adventure.

### Principal sponsor



### Major sponsors



Adelaide  
Economic  
Development  
Agency



CITY OF  
ADELAIDE



Hinterland  
Strategy + Innovation



SOUTH  
AUSTRALIAN  
MUSEUM



Government of South Australia  
Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

### Festival partners



Trees  
ForLife



Conservation  
Council SA



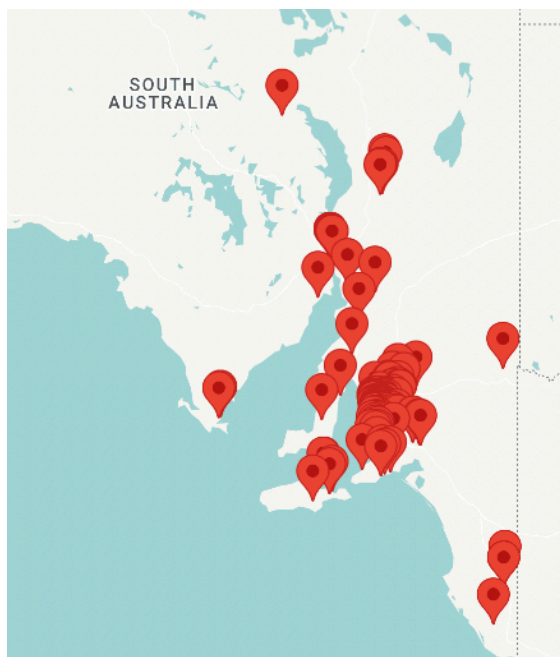
Government  
of South Australia  
Arts South Australia



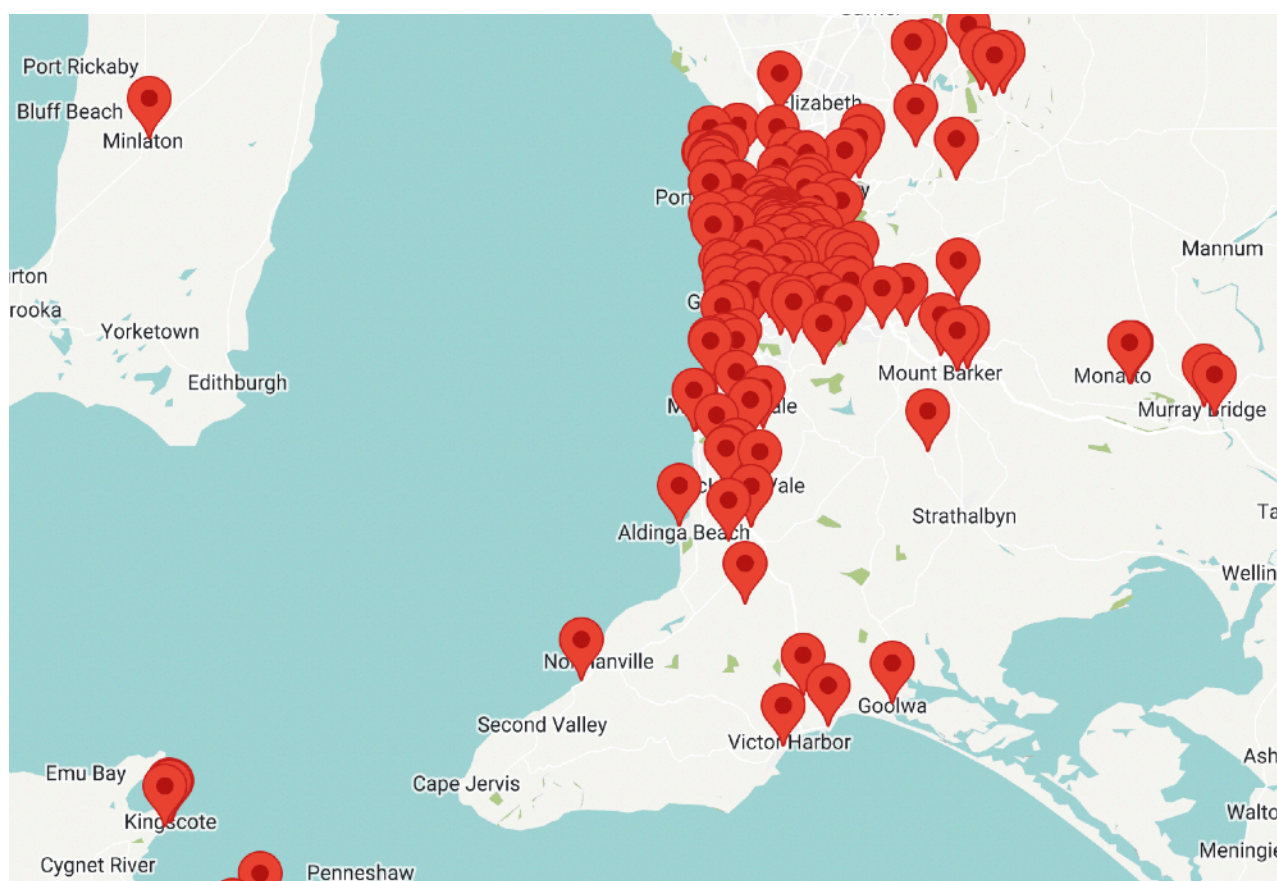
Government  
of South Australia  
South Australian  
Treasures Conservation



As a distributed festival, we bring events to regional and metro areas.



In 2024 there were over 400 creative, cultural, free, and family-friendly events during the Spring school holidays.



26 Sept–12 Oct 2025

# The big picture



## What is the vision of the nature festival?

While we are very much also a festival in the traditional celebratory sense, we primarily view Nature Festival as a process of discovering and of affirming identity.

Specifically, we are interested in **personal identity**, narrative, and personal relationship with nature as well as our **state identity** and collective relationship with nature.

We know that we won't create the full scope of change we want with any one event or festival, but we want to demonstrate a small movement in the right direction by doing what we call '**bridging the narrative gap**':

### 1. Bridge the narrative gap

Enjoyment of nature is a foundational part of who we are as South Australians. Most of us highly value it and more than 90% of us get out into our beaches and national parks each year (South Australians and the Env, 2016).

Unfortunately, our **personal** values **don't always match** our **collective** narrative. Some researchers (Common Cause, 2016) suggest that while the great majority of people (74%) personally prioritise intrinsic, compassionate values like love of nature and community, most of us think most *other* people prioritise extrinsic values like money, status, and power.

This puts us in a strange position where we can end up with a **narrative gap**: we can have a **social norm** and public narrative that is at odds with what **most individuals** actually value.

-  Primary values are **intrinsic** (like nature and community)
-  Primary values are **extrinsic** (like wealth and status)



**How society looks**  
Most individuals in are primarily motivated by intrinsic values like care for family, community, nature, and wellbeing.



**How we think society looks**  
Most of us think most **other people** are motivated by extrinsic values like money, status, and power.

The **primary long-term goal** of the Nature Festival is to make the personal value that most individuals already share into a bigger part of our social norms, public narrative and state identity as South Australians.

---

*From Common Cause, Perceptions Matter 2016.*



## 2. Deepening personal relationships

Our **secondary goal** is about deepening personal relationships with nature. We want help people build a visceral understanding that nature isn't something 'over there' that we might visit occasionally, but rather is something we are amongst and part of everyday.



*From Martin, Czeller  
Inclusion of nature in  
self scale, 2016.*

One way of thinking about what we're trying to do is to move people toward a felt, emotional, understanding of their relationship with nature as self rather than other.

### Relationships are built through meaningful experience

We're focused primarily on building that relationship through the lens of love of nature. This most commonly includes emotional, creative, or meaningful/spiritual experiences to reinforce our relationship with nature.

There are existing projects that focus on loss, grief, and the scale of the problem facing us. While we don't want to shy away from that challenge, the focus of this festival is the strength and resilience we can draw from our love of nature and ongoing relationship.

### Relationships are more than knowledge and facts

If you think about your relationship with loved ones in your life, part of your relationship is things you know about them, like their birthday or their favourite flavour of ice cream.

But your relationship is a lot more than just facts. It's about meaningful experiences together, doing things for one another, the community you share together, the history you've built and your hopes for the future.

While there are many good educational programs around nature that focus on knowledge, we are most interested in events and activities that look at the bigger, emotional, life-long relationship with nature.

### Narrative reflection can strengthen relationship

We are inspired by narrative practice and using reflection on past experiences to deepen or 'thicken' our personal narrative around nature. We have a hunch that including a reflective component in an event or experience can help strengthen a sense of identity.





# Nature Festival

Nature isn't somewhere 'over there' that we visit occasionally. It's all around us. We're part of it and amongst it all of the time.

[naturefestival.org.au](http://naturefestival.org.au)