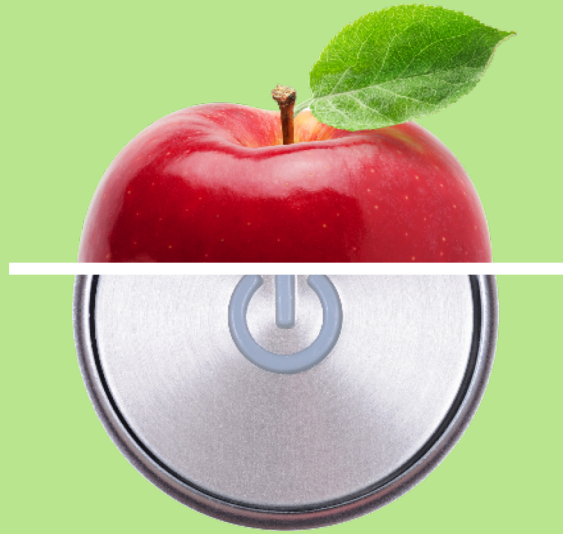


Bernard Visperas  
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## Connect in Nature

The role of technology in  
spending time in nature



Pollinate

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1

# Background and objectives

# Background and objectives

National Tree Day (NTD) is Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event. The aim of NTD is to inspire and educate Australians to actively care for our land and spend time in nature.

In the lead up to National Tree Day 2018, Planet Ark has commissioned research to understand the benefits of being in nature and explore the role of technology in encouraging time spent in nature.

Specifically the research aims to:

- Understand and measure how Australians spend time in nature and engage with their local community.
- Understand people's perceived benefits of being in nature.
- Understand and measure the attitude towards technology and the role it can play in enhancing time spent in nature.



# What we did

8 min online quantitative survey among n=1000 Australians.

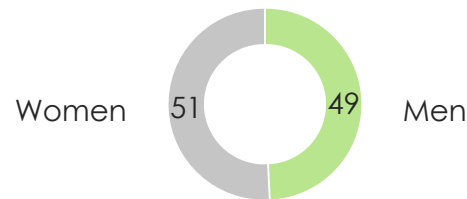
Representative of the national adult population.

Fieldwork occurred: 24<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

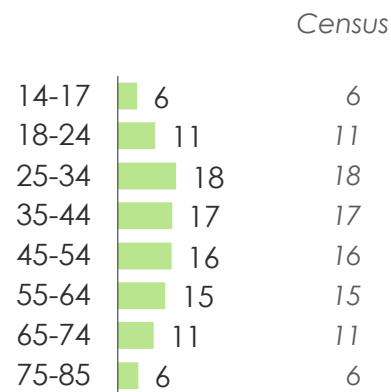
## Who we spoke to

All numbers shown are percentages %

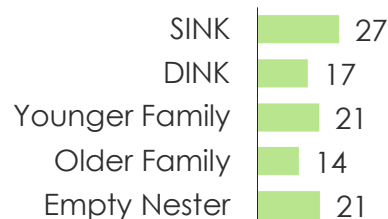
### Gender



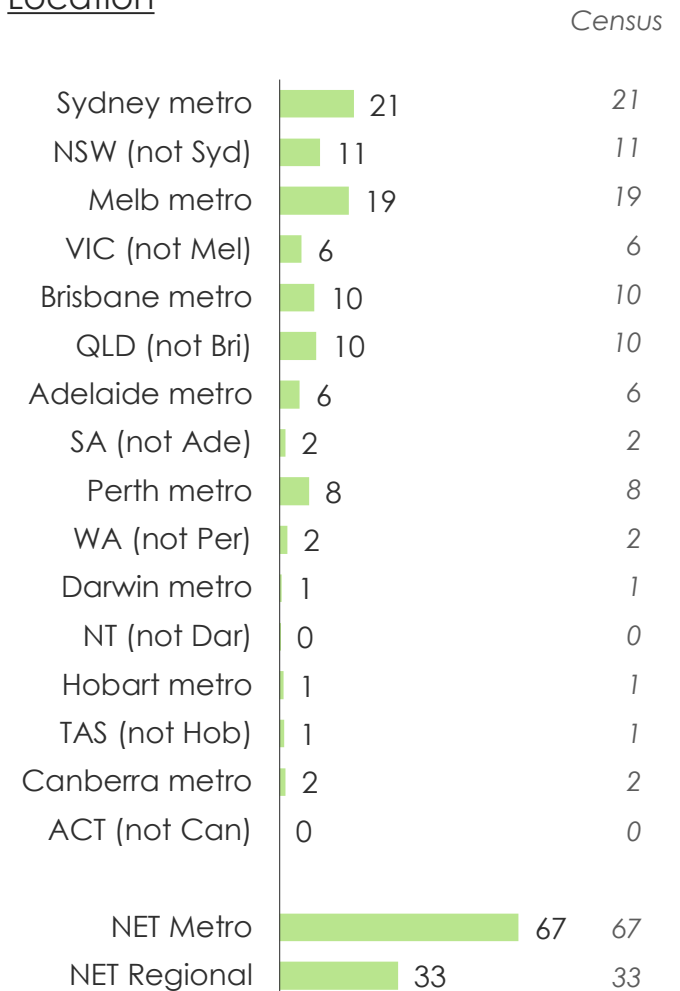
### Age



### Lifestage



### Location



2

## Executive summary

## Executive summary

People believe we aren't spending enough time in nature (75%), and 62% say they want to spend more time in nature.

The more time you spend in nature and the more connected you feel to your community, the happier you are.

About 1/3 of Australians believe technology can enhance people's time spent in nature

... through making it more easy to appreciate its beauty, learn information, navigate and exercise.

Those who think technology has a role to play in nature spend more time in nature and feel more connected to it.

*For about 1/3 of Australians, technology and nature aren't mutually exclusive.*

3

Connecting with nature  
and community

... where  
they  
typically  
relax, walk,  
play or  
exercise.

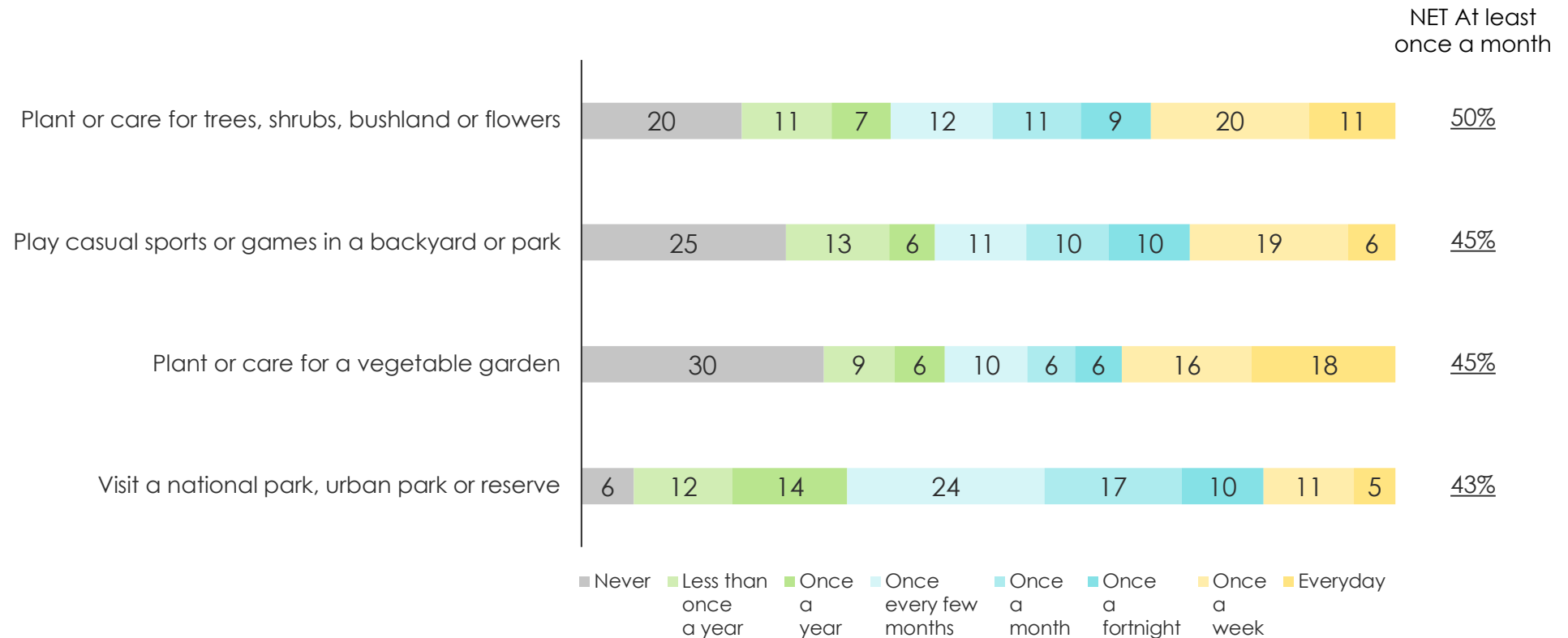
Hours Spent	Number of People
None	7
Less than 1 hr	14
About 1-2 hr	21
About 3-4 hr	22
About 5-7 hr	15
About 8-10 hr	9
About 11-14 hr	5
About 15-17 hr	2
About 18-21 hr	2
21 hr+	4

Average number of hours: 5.0

[illegible]

# Other common outdoor activities are gardening and playing backyard sports.

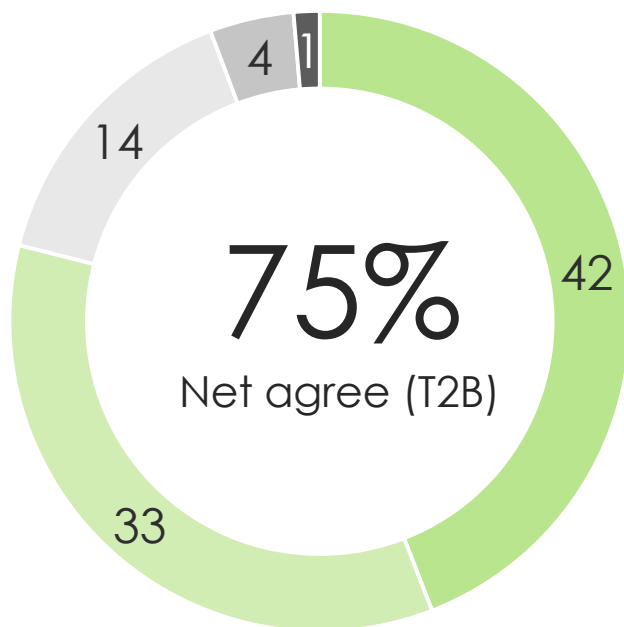
## *Frequency of outdoor activities (%)*



Australia is an outdoors nation.

3 in 4 say  
Australians are  
not spending  
enough time in  
nature.





- Strongly agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Strongly disagree

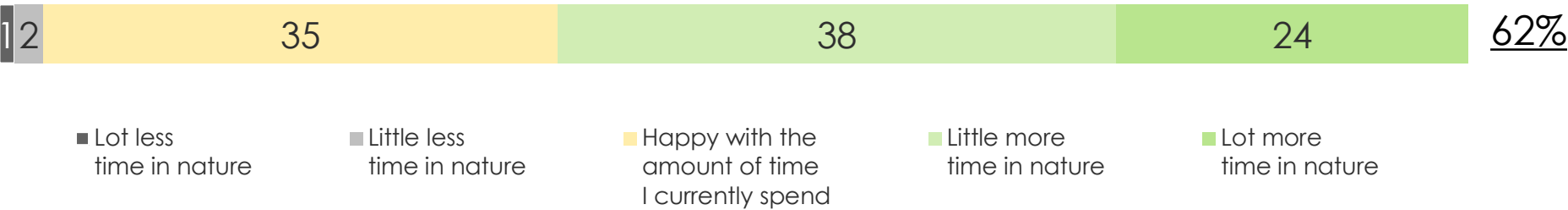
Agreement  
to...

*Australians  
aren't  
spending  
enough time  
in nature*

# And most say they want to spend more time in nature...

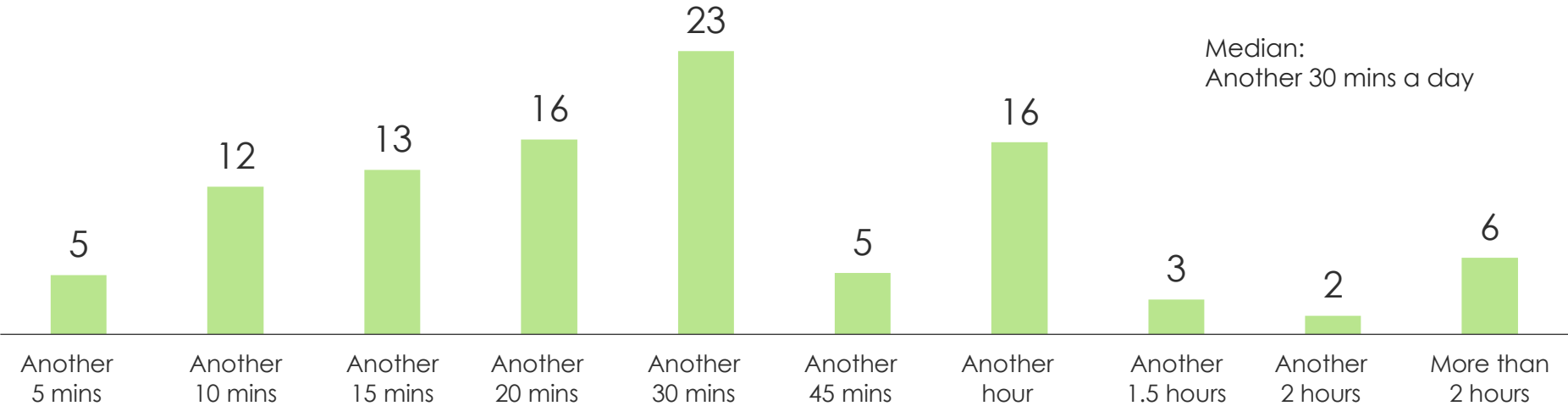
Additional time to spend in nature (%)  
I would like to spend a...

Top 2 box:  
Want more time in nature



## ... wishing they could spend another 30 minutes more.

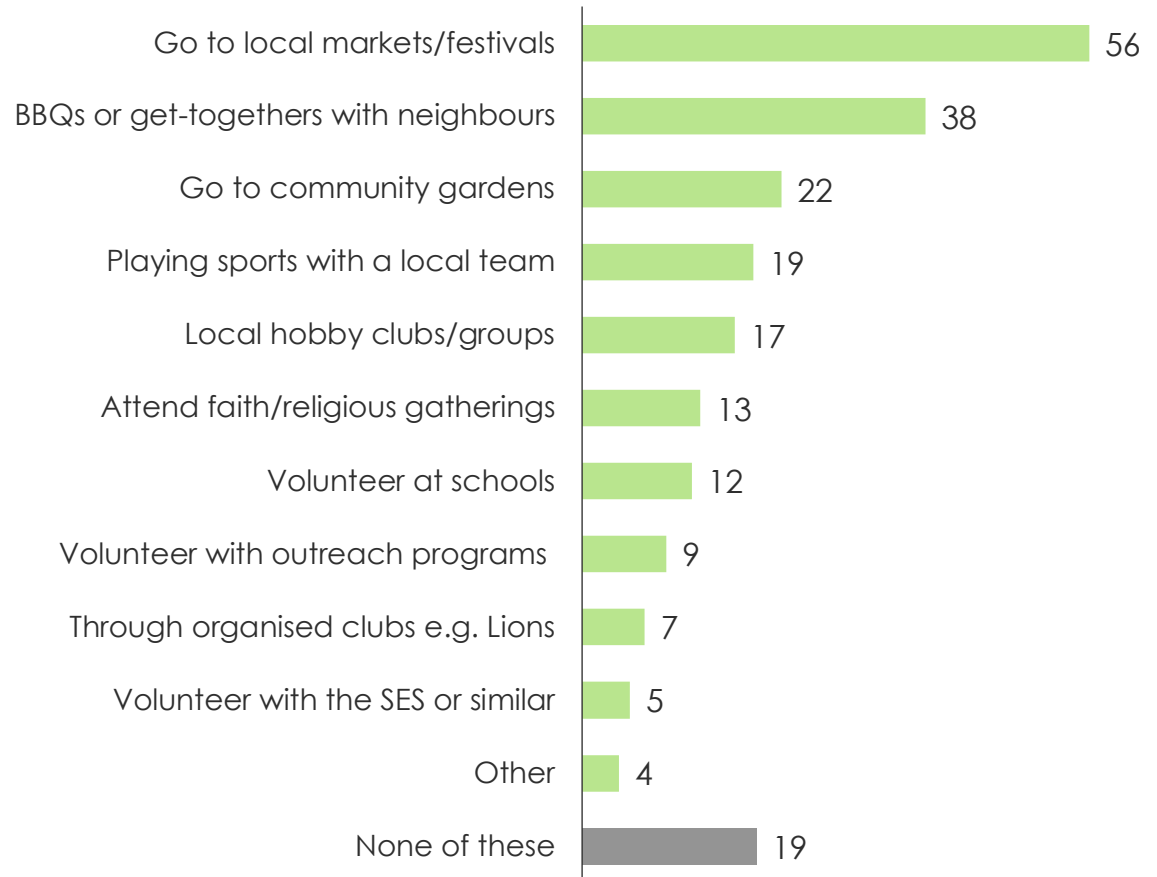
Additional time to spend in nature (%)



Median:  
Another 30 mins a day

Australians feel they regularly connect with their community through local markets and get-togethers with neighbours.

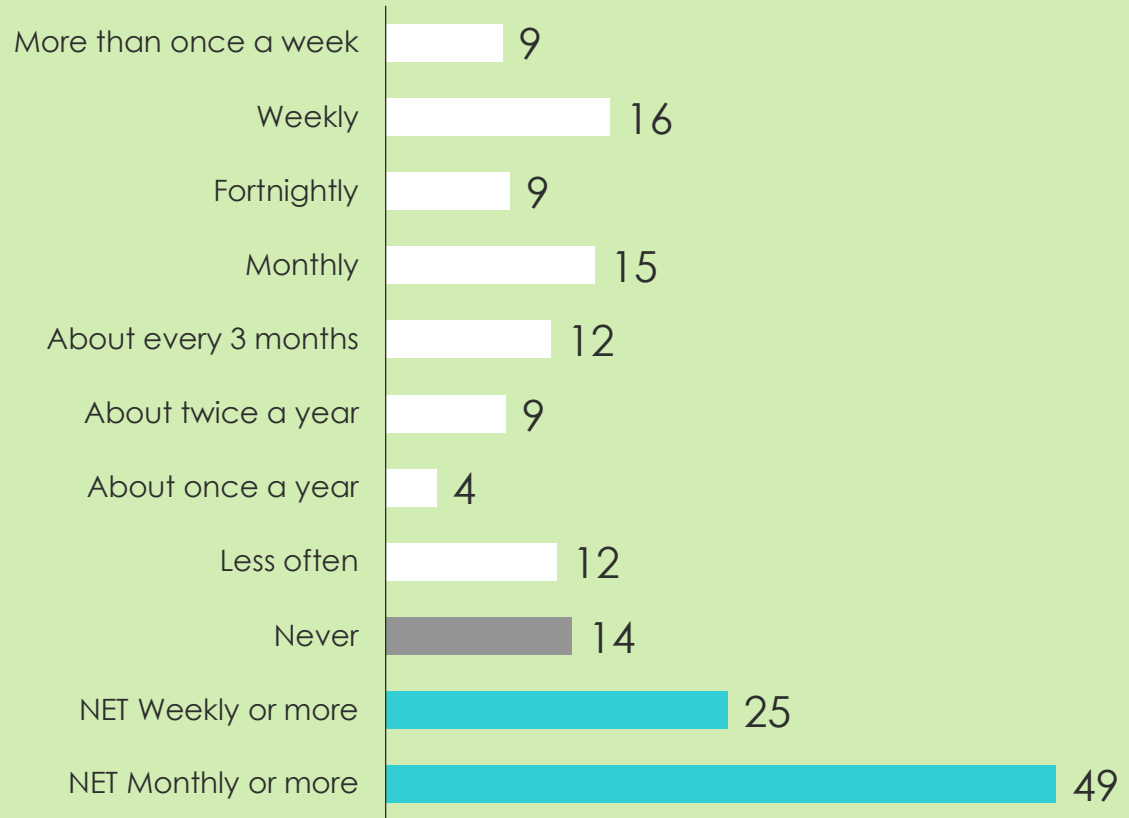
*Activity regularly participated in (%)*



Only 1 in 5 don't do any of these things – and they are less happy.

But when it comes to meaningful connections, half claim to connect with their community to support good causes at least once a month.

*Frequency of community engagement to support a good cause (%)*



Australians are interested, generous and want to help out in their community.

4

The benefits of  
being in nature

# Being in nature has a huge positive impact on mental and spiritual health.

## *How does being in nature affect you?*

(Coded open ended responses)

	%
Relaxing/relaxed	33
Its calming/calm/calmness/feel calm/at ease/tranquil	19
Makes me happy/content	12
Peaceful/at peace	8
De-stresses	6
Clears my head/my mind/helps me think/my thoughts	5
To feel good/great/it feels good/nice	5
I feel fresh/refreshed	5
Energised/revitalised/invigorated/inspired	4
I feel healthier	4
Grateful/thankful/appreciative	4
I feel free/liberated	3
I feel alive	3
I feel connected/a feeling of connection	2
I enjoy it/enjoyment	2
...	...



## Selection of quotes

*It makes me feel calm, relaxed, free, happy and healthy.*

*Calms me and makes me feel happy and at peace.*

*It always leaves our family feeling happy and revitalised.*

*It lifted my mood a lot.*

*Makes my mind feel clearer, my skin feel fresh. I feel relaxed.*

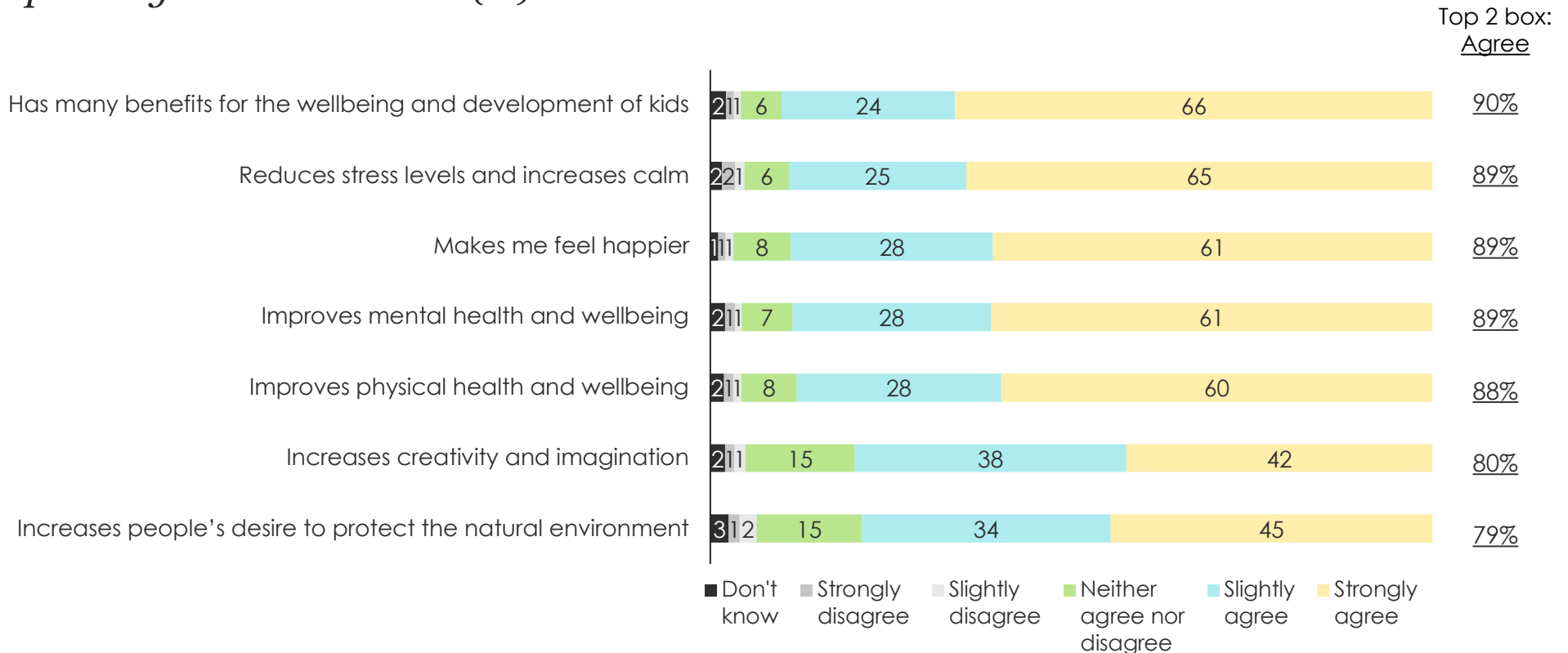
*Makes everything in life seem more 'simple'. Helps you appreciate the beauty that is naturally around us.*

*Fresh air and greenery affects my mood a lot. I find being outdoors getting sun very important for one's mental health.*

*Peaceful and relaxing. Calms and destresses.*

# Most Australians recognise the many benefits of being in nature.

## *Spending time in nature... (%)*



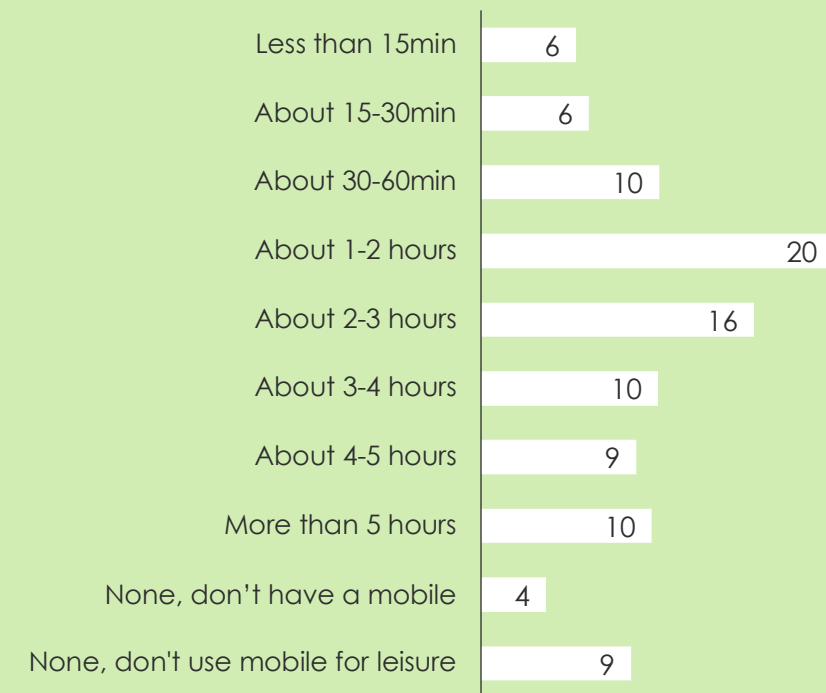
They don't need to be convinced of these benefits.

5

## Technology and nature

On a typical day, Aussies spend about 2.5 hours on their mobile devices for leisure...

*Time spent on phone per day for recreation (%)*



... mainly on social media  
platforms like Facebook,  
Instagram and YouTube.

*Apps or programs used on mobile device*

(Word cloud: the larger the word, the more times it was mentioned)



# While most people say they prefer to switch off completely from technology while in nature...

*Attitude towards the role of technology in spending time in nature (%)*

Top 2 box:  
Agree



Strongly disagree   Slightly disagree   Neither agree nor disagree   Slightly agree   Strongly agree

... about 1-in-3 believe technology can enhance people's time outdoors.

# Technology can help us appreciate nature's beauty, help us navigate and inform/ educate.

## How technology can encourage/ enhance people's time spent in nature (coded open-ended responses) %

Photos/photography/video	23
Get information about the area/park/nearby trails/ places to explore	13
To research plants/wildlife	11
To educate/create awareness/inform	11
GPS/maps/location apps	11
Fitness apps/training/running	8
For activities/planning/finding activities	7
Inspires/inspiring/inspires me/others/encourages	7
To share with others/social media/Facebook	6
(-) It doesn't / I don't use it	6
Music	6
Other app mention (stargazing/grow plants/fishing)	4
Connects people	4
Relaxing/relax/meditate/calming	3
Pokémon Go	2
...	...



## Selection of quotes

Note: a mix of uses before (i.e. to encourage us to get us in nature), and while people are in nature

*Instagram is amazing for play ideas and garden inspiration.*

*Photos can be a great incentive to see and share the beauty of nature.*

*Get information about the environment you are in. Get directions.*

*You can learn about what you're seeing outside, i.e. look up plant or animal details as you interact with them.*

*Interactive apps for children to learn about nature etc.*

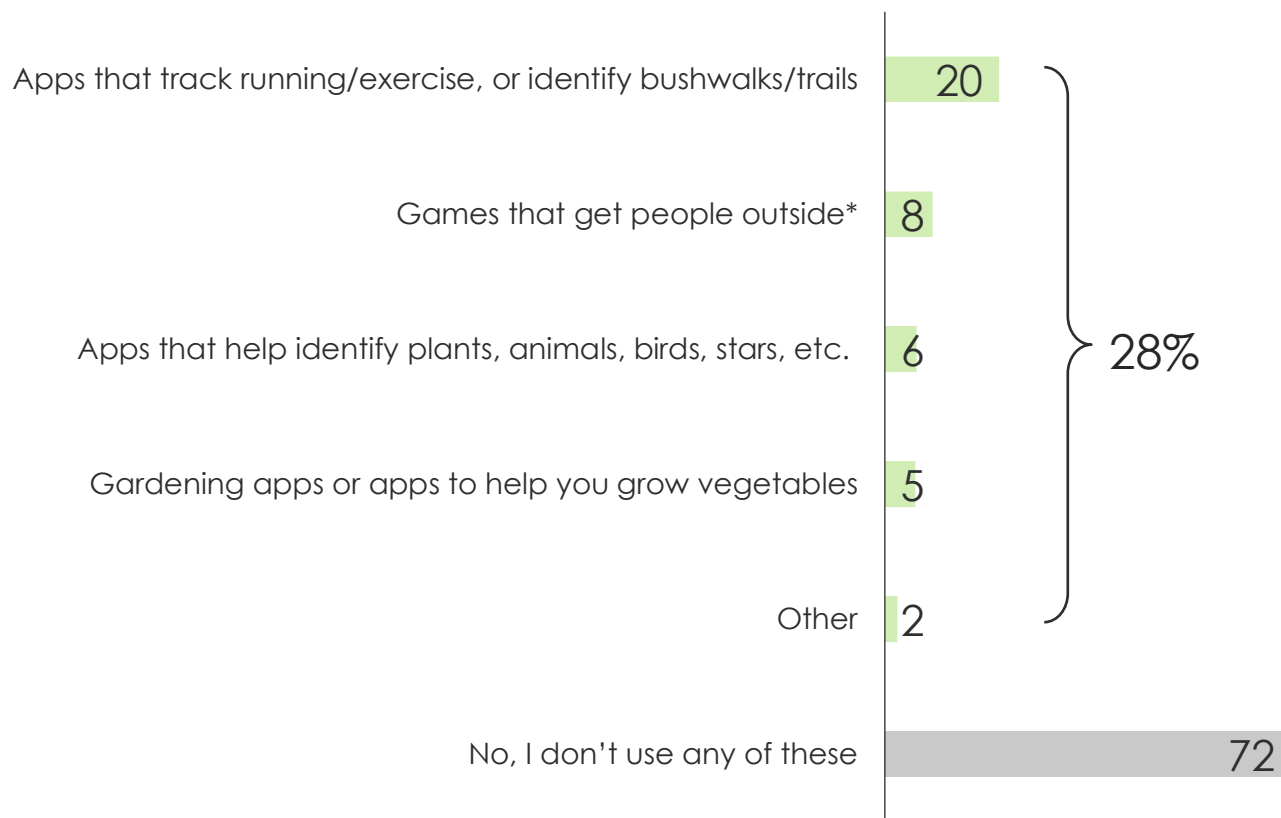
*I like to map my fitness and see how kms I do and the amount of steps and calories burnt.*

*Explaining what different types of plants are, maps to different locations, how to find out what is on in your area/community.*

*When augmented reality games came out, like Pokémon Go, where individuals went out and caught Pokémon at certain locations.*

1-in-4  
Australians  
use nature-  
related  
apps (or  
apps that  
encourage/  
enhance  
time spent  
in nature).

### *Use of nature-related apps on mobile phone (%)*



\*(e.g. augmented reality games, treasure hunts, Pokémon Go! etc.)

Those who use these nature-related apps use them frequently.

	Use weekly (%)	Use monthly (%)
Exercise apps or bushwalking apps	73	91
Garden apps	53	80
Outdoor game apps	42	67
Identification apps	44	62

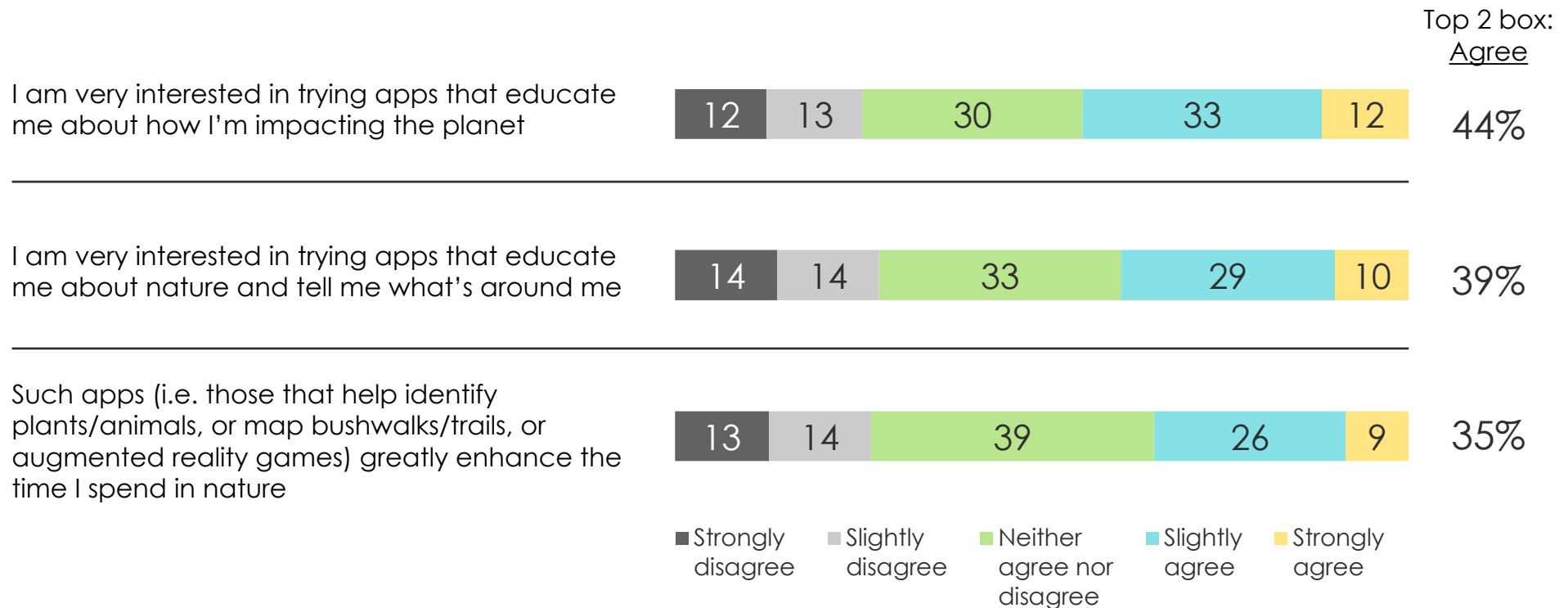
## Profiling those who use nature-related apps

They:

- Are younger (<45 years, singles, or families with kids <10 years)
- Are happier due to time in nature
- Spend more time in nature
- Spend more time on mobile devices for leisure

# 1-in-3 Australians believe such apps greatly enhance time spent in nature.

*Attitude towards apps that enhance or encourage the time spent in nature (%)*



And over 1-in-3 people claim to be interested in trying apps that educate them about nature and how they're impacting the planet.

# 6

## Summary

# Summary

People know spending time in nature is beneficial to their wellbeing, and know they are missing out by not spending enough time in nature.

As well as nature, connection to community also contributes to people's sense of happiness.

About 1/3 Australians believe technology can have a positive effect on people's time spent in nature by:

- Encouraging them to spend more time outdoors.
- Enhancing their experience while they are there.

Specifically apps make it easy to:

- Appreciate and share nature's beauty.
- Learn information.
- Navigate outdoors.
- Exercise and keep fit.

Current users of these apps use them frequently and there is a wider interest and appetite for trying such apps.

- Opportunity for Planet Ark to develop an app, or partner with existing nature-related apps.

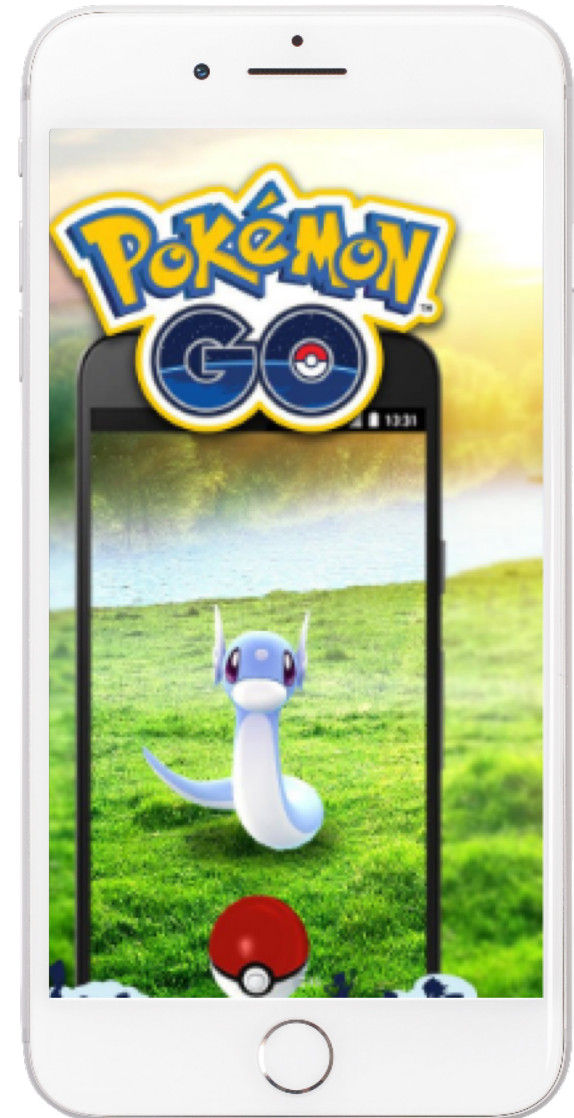
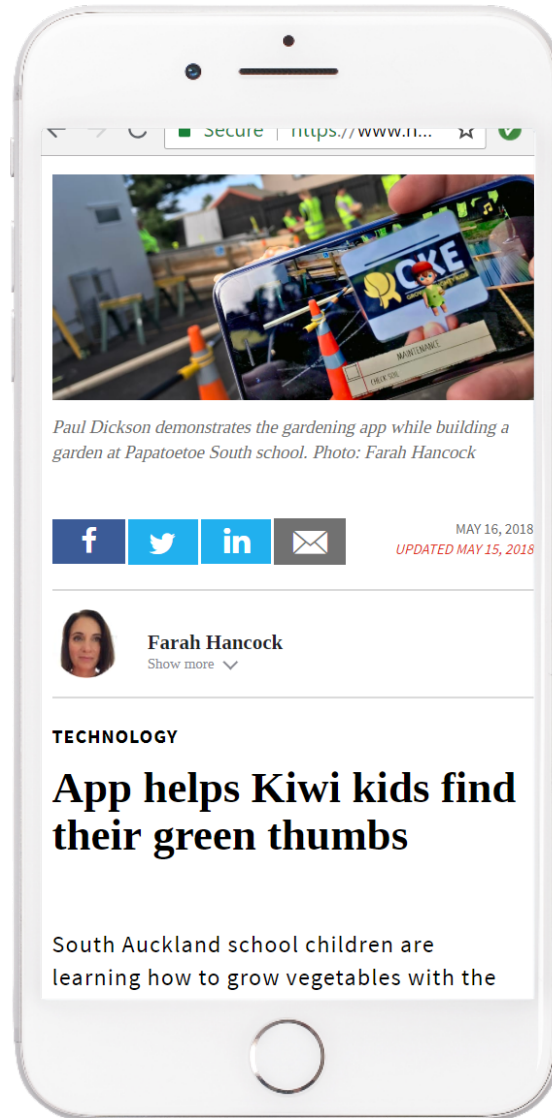
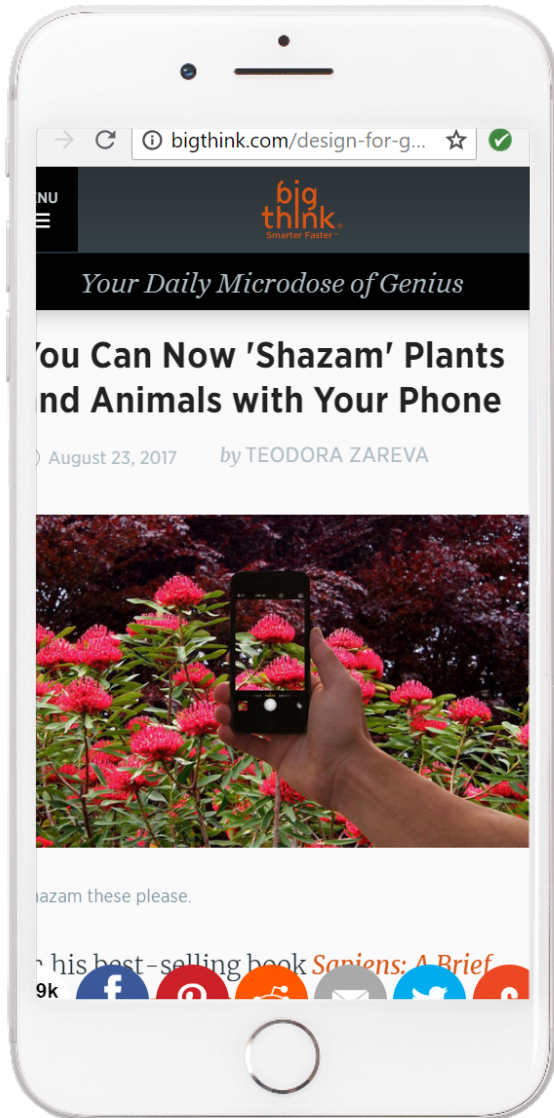
*Technology can play a role in getting people to spend more time in nature.*



In an age where people are spending most of their time indoors, on screen, stressed and anxious.

... nature can be an effective therapy that brings instant relief, can be accessed by anyone and is free.

... And technology can encourage and enhance this.



# 7

## Appendix:

We used two academic scales (NRS and SHS) to explore connection to nature and happiness.

# Introducing the Nature Relatedness Scale

The Nature Relatedness Scale measures people's connectedness to nature.

NRS has been shown to have a positive correlation with a person's sense of well being.

## How we ask it

For each of the following, please rate the extent to which you agree with each statement, using the scale from 1 to 5 as shown below (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree). Please respond as you feel, rather than how you think 'most people' feel.

- 1 My ideal vacation spot would be a remote, wilderness area.
- 2 I always think about how my actions affect the environment.
- 3 My connection to nature and the environment is a part of my spirituality.
- 4 I take notice of wildlife wherever I am.
- 5 My relationship to nature is an important part of who I am.
- 6 I feel very connected to all living things and the earth.

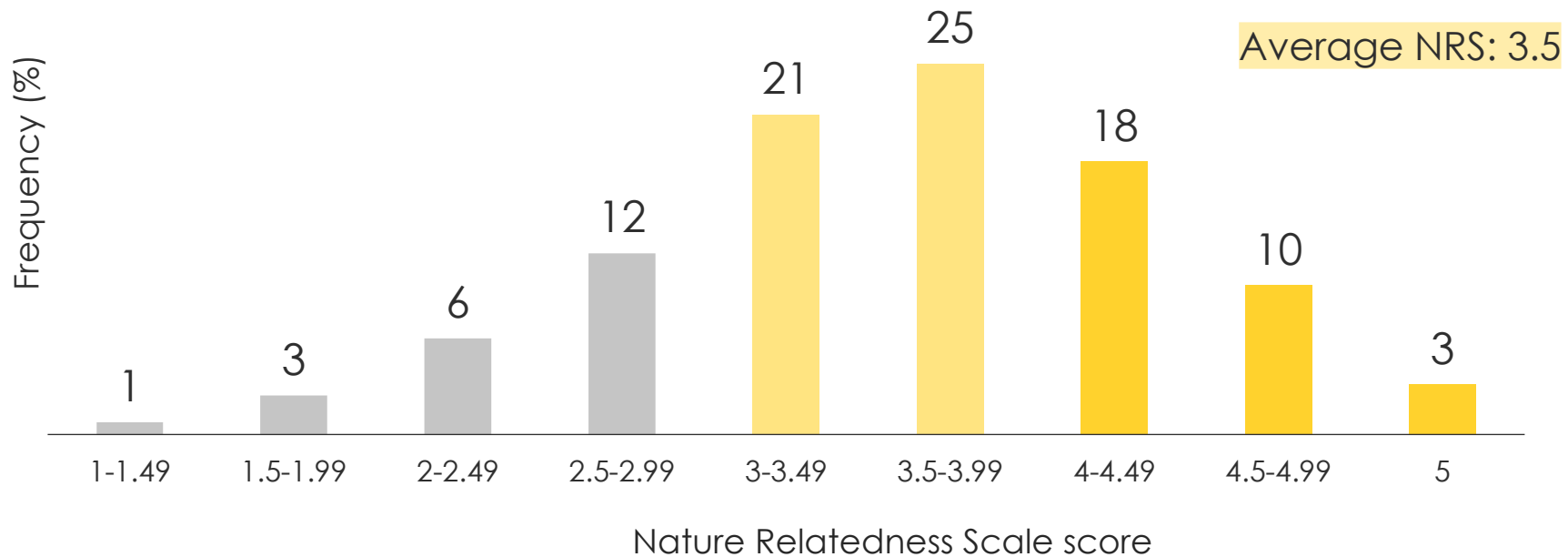
The Natured Relatedness Scale is determined by calculating the mean from the six answers.

*The higher the score, the more connected you are to nature.*

1

## NRS score: a person's connectedness with the natural world

Frequency of NRS scores among Australian population, in %



# Introducing the Subjective Happiness Scale

The Subjective Happiness Scale measures a person's sense of happiness, as an absolute rating and a rating comparative to their peers. The score ranges between 1 – 7.

## How we ask it

For each of the following statements and/or questions, please circle the point on the scale that you feel is most appropriate in describing you:

1. In general, I consider myself:

Not a very happy person      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      A very happy person

2. Compared with most of my peers, I consider myself:

Less happy      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      More happy

3. Some people are generally very happy. They enjoy life regardless of what is going on, getting the most out of everything. To what extent does this characterisation describe you?

Not at all      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      A great deal

4. Some people are generally not very happy. Although they are not depressed, they never seem as happy as they might be. To what extent does this characterisation describe you?

Not at all      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      A great deal

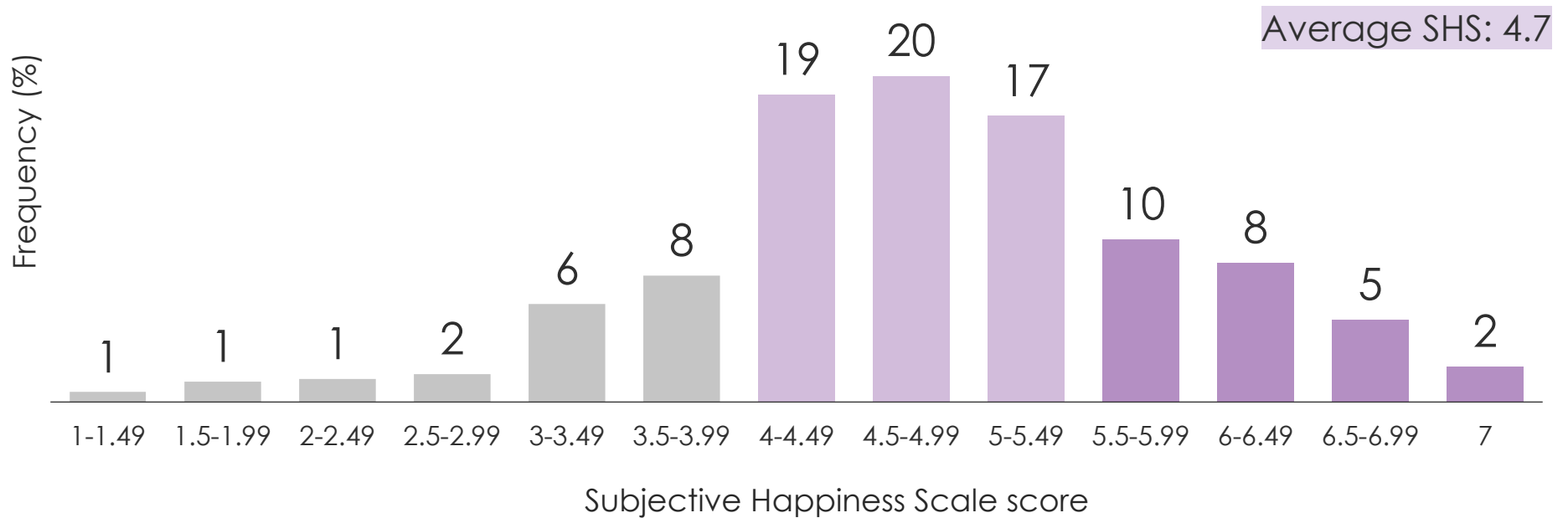
A person's Subjective Happiness Score is the average of their answers to the above (with Q4 reversed) and can range from 1-7. Scores are best compared within a relative cohort.

The higher the score, the happier you claim to be.

## 2

# SHS score: a measure of an individual's happiness

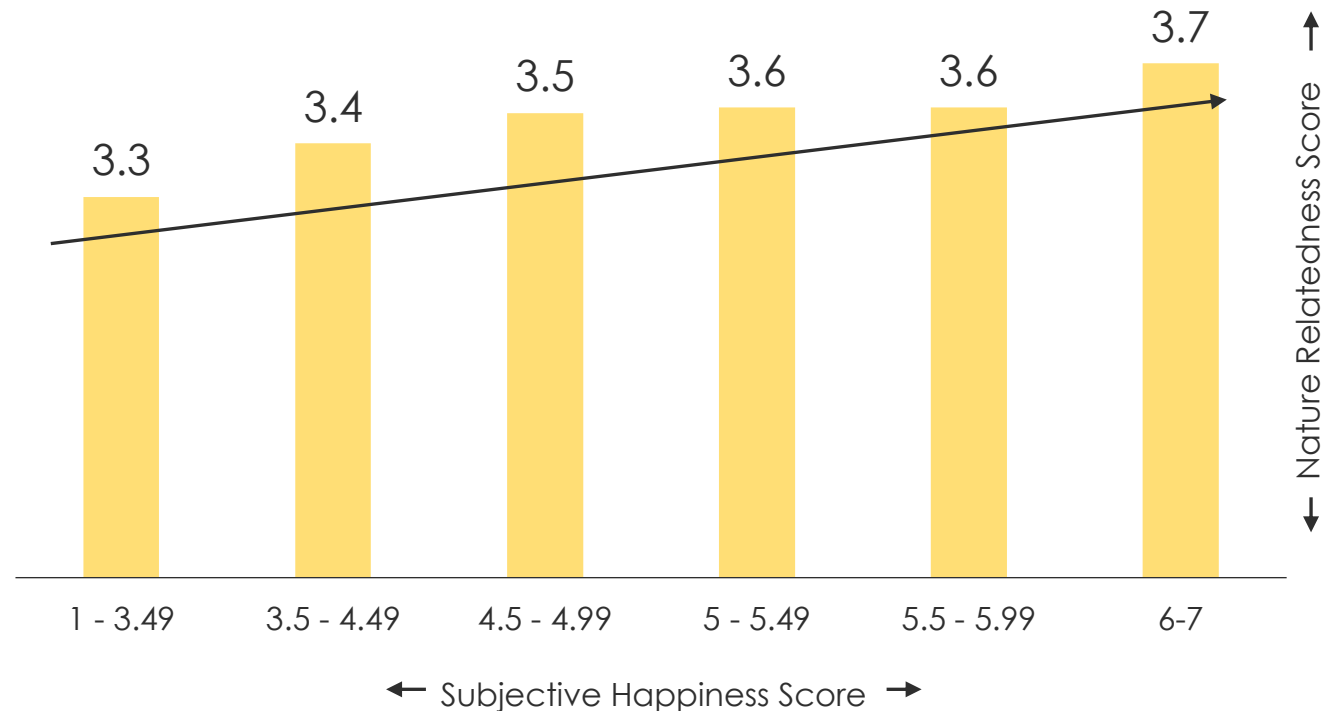
Frequency of Subjective Happiness Scale score, in %



Connection with  
nature and community  
leads to greater  
happiness levels

Positive  
correlation  
between  
happiness  
level and  
NRS score

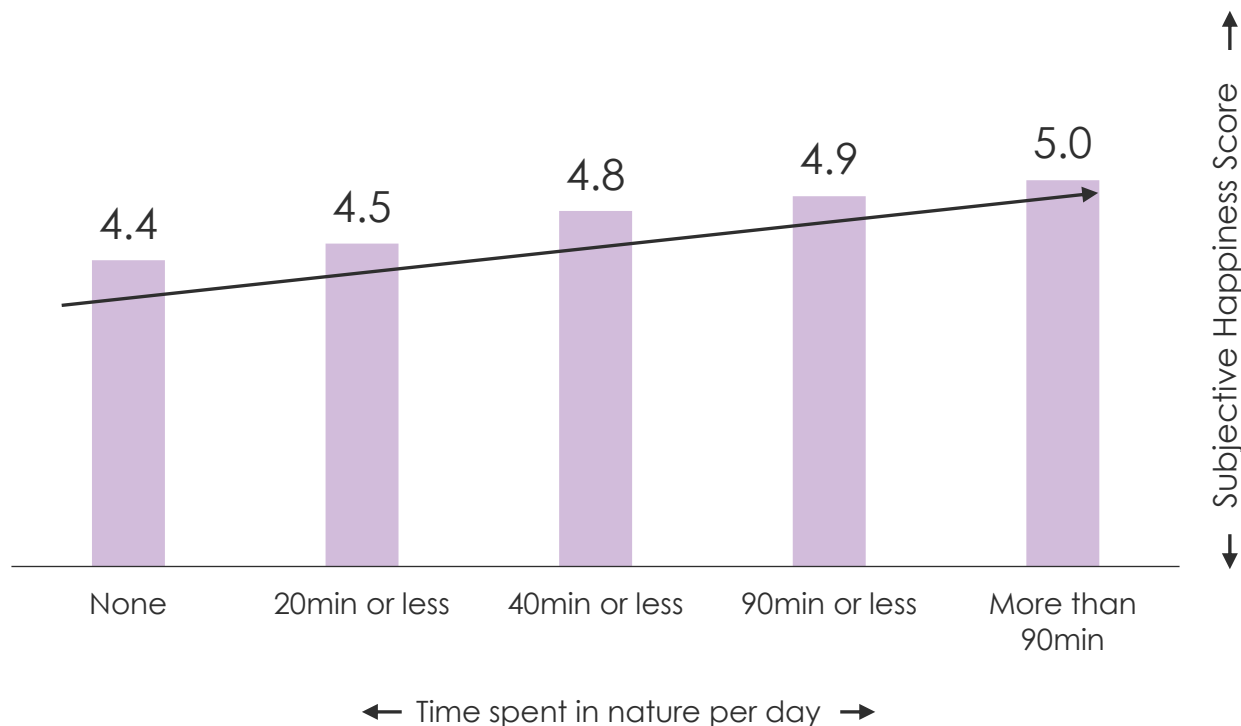
*Nature Relatedness Scale score by  
Subjective Happiness Scale score*



The more connected you are to nature, the happier you feel.

Similarly, a positive correlation between happiness level and amount of time spent in nature

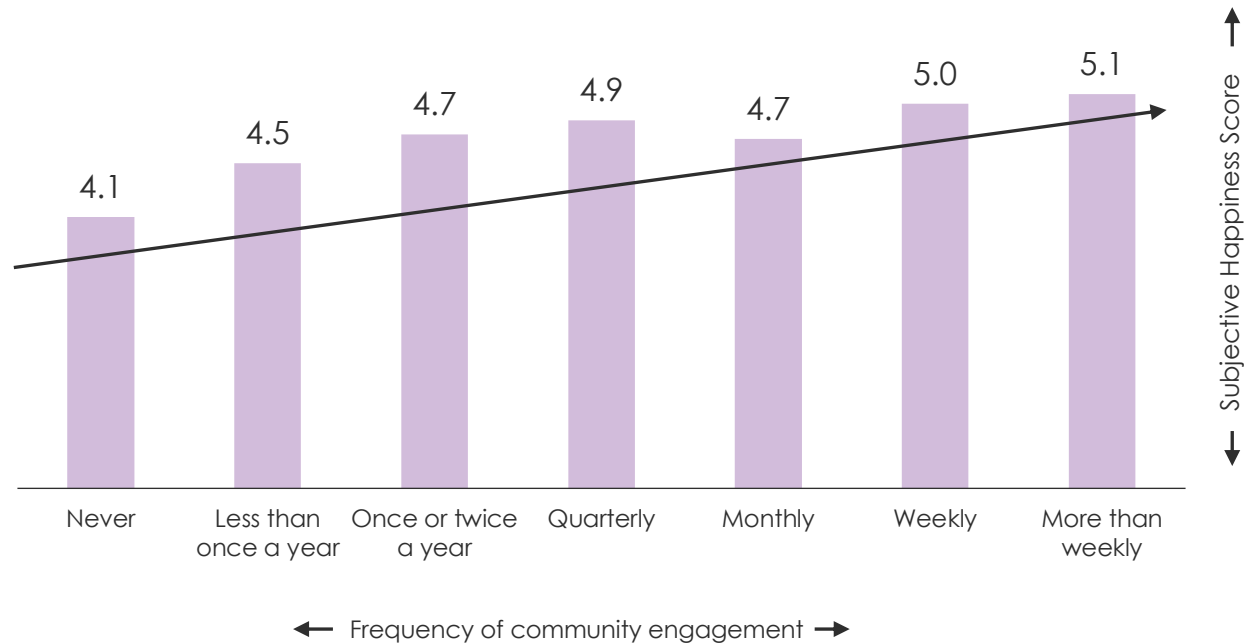
*Subjective happiness score in relation to time spent in nature per day*



Those who report spending more time in nature report greater level of happiness.

Also positive correlation between happiness level and connecting with the community

*Subjective happiness score in relation to community engagement*



Those who actively engage with the local community report greater level of happiness.

# Thank you

## Pollinate

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