



## A CAMPAIGN FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTION TO NATURE

By

<sup>1</sup>Rachel Haydon

<sup>1</sup>National Aquarium of New Zealand, New Zealand  
Presenter and Corresponding Author

Rachel Haydon  
[Rachel.haydon@nationalaquarium.co.nz](mailto:Rachel.haydon@nationalaquarium.co.nz)

### ABSTRACT

Nature Connectedness describes an individual's sense of their relationship with the natural world, their emotional attachment and beliefs about their inclusion within nature (Schultz 2002). Research shows a positive relationship between one's nature connectedness and their engagement in household pro-environmental behaviours, pro-nature conservation behaviours and wellbeing (Martin et al. 2020). Acknowledging aquariums are predominantly indoor manmade spaces with 'nature' within exhibits, the National Aquarium of New Zealand (NANZ) team was keen to explore expanding its reach outside its walls through partnership and public engagement in, and connection to, nature.

In May 2022, NANZ and Biodiversity Hawke's Bay (BHB) collaborated to deliver *The Beautiful Bay in May* campaign in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand. The campaign aimed to build Nature Connectedness in participants from across the region's community. 31 free, simple activities in nature were developed for the core of the campaign which were underpinned by the 5 Pathways to Nature Connectedness model - using contact (sense), emotion, beauty, meaning, and compassion as routes to build connection to nature (Lumber et al. 2017).

The resources were easily available to download, in addition to print versions being available through NANZ, BHB and other partner organisations. Participants were encouraged to share their nature experiences through social media with appropriate hashtags. A 'family adventure prize pack' of nature-related prizes (including an overland gannet safari, NANZ annual family membership, native plants and nature activity book etc.) was offered as an incentive, though this was also to encourage contributing partner organisations to promote and share the campaign through their channels too. Due to hesitancy around time and resourcing for the project, evaluation methods were kept to quantitative measures of physical and digital engagement with aspirations for more qualitative measures in future.

This presentation will discuss the project development, delivery, participation and future plans to measure impacts as an ongoing annual event.

### BIOGRAPHY

Rachel Haydon is the General Manager of the National Aquarium of New Zealand. Rachel has a MSc in Marine Science, Bachelor of Science (Zoology) and Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Primary). She has over 16 years' experience in zoos, museums and aquariums, including the Natural History Museum (London), Zoological Society of London (UK) and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, across education programming, interpretation, evaluation and also research focusing around the social science elements of conservation engagement. She is currently the Chair of the Zoo Aquarium Association (ZAA) Australasia's Conservation Engagement Committee. She is a published author passionate about fostering connection with nature - helping people build understanding of their impact on the nature but also nature's impact on them.



8 - 11 August 2022 • Melbourne Zoo  
**inspiring sustainability action**  
HYBRID CONFERENCE & WORKSHOPS

ZOO AQUARIUM  
ASSOCIATION AUSTRALASIA

ZOOS  
VICTORIA  
*Fighting Extinction*

## References

Lumber, R., Richardson, M., & Sheffield, D. (2017). Beyond knowing nature: Contact, emotion, compassion, meaning, and beauty are pathways to nature connection. PLoS One, 12, e0177186. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0177186.

Martin, L., White, M.P., Hunt, A., Richardson, M., Pahl, S. and Burt, J. (2020). Nature contact, nature connectedness and associations with health, wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviours. Journal of Environmental Psychology. Volume 68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2020.101389>.

Schultz, P. W. (2002) Inclusion with nature: The psychology of human-nature relations. In: P. Schmuck and P.W Schultz (eds) Psychology of Sustainable Development, pp.61–78. Boston, Dordrecht, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.