



Media Release

15th July 2013

Students escape the classroom for some green time

School students across the country will escape the classroom on Friday 26th July to green their playgrounds and contribute to the health of their school communities, as part of Planet Ark's Schools Tree Day.

Schools Tree Day is the dedicated day for Australia's younger generation to participate in Planet Ark's National Tree Day, Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event.

Each year primary and secondary students from over 2,000 schools across Australia get involved in Schools Tree Day events. This year students will make an important contribution to a milestone event, as Planet Ark and sponsor Toyota Australia prepare to plant the 20-millionth seedling since the event began in 1996.

As backyards shrink and families become time poor, it's more important than ever for students to get outside for their wellbeing and to learn about nature.

"Schools Tree Day is a fun and practical way for students to learn about nature firsthand and the role it plays in the health of our environment and community," said National Tree Day Manager Debbie Agnew.

"Planet Ark's recent research report reveals shrinking backyards, screen time and long working hours have concerning implications for Australia's renowned outdoor way of life and our health, so Schools Tree Day is the perfect chance to inspire a love of the outdoors in Aussie kids."

The research report, titled *Missing Trees – The Inside Story of an Outdoor Nation** and sponsored by Toyota, builds upon previous research commissioned by Planet Ark that shows a direct link between childhood contact with nature and a range of health and wellbeing benefits, including increased academic achievement.

Schools Tree Day also aims to educate students on environmental issues such as the loss of habitat for native wildlife, planting species appropriate to the local conditions, salinity, erosion and long-term carbon offsetting.

Tony Cramb, Toyota Australia Executive Director of Sales & Marketing commented: "Toyota has been involved with Schools Tree Day for the past 14 years, supporting the future growth of our communities. We hope our dedication and genuine global commitment to sustainability will help set an example to Australian children for generations to come.

"Through our network of dealers, we wish to encourage school children across the country to work towards preserving the environment of Australia."

To find out more about Schools Tree Day on Friday July 26 or National Tree Day on Sunday July 28, please visit treeday.planetark.org, call the Hotline on 1300 88 5000 or contact your local participating Toyota Dealership.

National Tree Day is organised by Planet Ark in partnership with Toyota and its Dealer Network, which provides on the ground support at local community tree planting sites Australia wide.

- Ends -

*** *Missing Trees – The Inside Story of an Outdoor Nation*, is an independent report commissioned by Planet Ark, which can be found at treeday.planetark.org/research.**

For all enquiries about Planet Ark, National Tree Day, local case studies and site coordination please contact:

Sara McGregor
PR and Media Manager
Planet Ark
P: 02 8484 7205
M: 0424 591 241
E: sara@planetark.org

Jess McCallum
PR and Media Coordinator
Planet Ark
P: 02 8484 7204
M: 0421 431 016
E: jess@planetark.org

For enquiries about Toyota and its involvement in National Tree Day contact:

Stef Mallaci
Haystac
P: 02 8094 7783 office | 0448 780 399 mobile | stef.mallaci@haystac.com.au

For more information:

National Tree Day <<http://treeday.planetark.org>>
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