



MEDIA RELEASE

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NATIONAL TREE DAY CALLS ON AUSTRALIANS TO EMBRACE REGENERATION

New research has shown over 50% of Australians have said they felt compelled to act in the interest of environmental causes after witnessing the devastation of the 2019/2020 summer bushfires. Young Australians aged 18-29 desired to take action most strongly, with over 60% compelled to act.

The research also found approximately 55% of Australians felt that time in nature improved their mood or eased anxieties during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The statistics come as part of a new report from environmental foundation Planet Ark, released ahead of National Tree Day on 2 August. The report, **Regeneration: for our land, our people and our future**, focuses on the impact of the year's unprecedented events, the bushfire season and the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, on Australia's environment and collective wellbeing.

The report incorporates insights from experts in the fields of regeneration ecology, indigenous fire management practices, psychology and child/family wellbeing to explore how our land and communities have been impacted and how together, we can start the journey towards regeneration.

In response to the report's findings and following the cancellation of public plantings for the first time in 25 years, Planet Ark's National Tree Day is encouraging Australians to share a photo of themselves with a tree or their favourite plant with the hashtag **#HugATreeForNTD** as a commitment to regeneration.

"After the unparalleled start to the year we have had here in Australia, regeneration of our land and our wellbeing is more critical now than ever," said Planet Ark Deputy CEO Rebecca Gilling.

"We are calling on all Australians to make a pledge to regenerate through connecting with nature, whether that be by planting a tree in the backyard, doing some weeding in local bushland or simply hugging a tree!"

Schools Tree Day (31 July) and National Tree Day (2 August) are Australia's largest annual tree-planting and nature care events and take place on the last weekend of July. Whilst official National Tree Day group planting events have been cancelled this year due to the impact of COVID-19, Planet Ark remains committed to celebrating trees and helping communities around Australia connect with nature on these days.

The organisation encourages Australians to plant in their backyard or garden where possible, access the range of resources online and get involved with the **#HugATreeForNTD** campaign to show their commitment to regeneration. For more information, visit treeday.planetark.org.

National Tree Day is an initiative organised by Planet Ark in partnership with major sponsor Toyota Australia and its Dealer Network.

The report is available for download at <https://treeday.planetark.org/research> from July 20.

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For further information, interviews or images please contact:

Liam Taylor

Communications Manager

liam@planetark.org

0449 530 525

Guidance for the Public

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across Australian communities and the ongoing uncertainty around potential restrictions on gatherings, Planet Ark has made the difficult decision to cancel official National Tree Day planting events this year.

For more information, please visit treeday.planetark.org.

About Planet Ark

Planet Ark Environmental Foundation is an Australian not-for-profit organisation with a vision of a world where people live in balance with nature. Established in 1992, it is one of Australia's leading environmental behaviour change organisations with a focus on working collaboratively and positively. Planet Ark promotes and creates simple, positive environmental actions – for everyone.