

MEDIA RELEASE

12 AUGUST 2015



MACQUARIE
University

A (re)generation of young storytellers for nature

This week, 'The (re)Generation Project' launched a new program that puts power into the hands of young people to (re)generate an interest and love for nature through storytelling. Young storytellers (15-25 years) are invited to share bold, inspiring stories about a human experience with nature through any creative medium such as film, art, creative writing or photography.

Ten story ideas will then be selected by 'The (re)Generation Project' to receive editorial and production training, including digital storytelling workshops and a mentor to help craft powerful and impacting digital stories to inspire a new generation to visit and value nature.

"Storytelling is a powerful way humans share values, expand knowledge and spread ways of acting. As a storyteller, you are providing the viewer with the material for them to form their own connection rather than telling them what to do," said Dr Iqbal Barkat, member of the project and lecturer in Screen Production at Macquarie University.

The best digital stories will be shared at a premier event on 26 October. An online campaign will also invite other young people to vote for their favourite story and to explain if/why it inspires them to visit and value nature.

"This is an opportunity for young people to build valuable skills and networks, show their work and win prizes. It's also a creative and fun opportunity for them to participate in developing a positive change for our relationship with our planet. We hope to explore ways young people in NSW connect with each other, and use this to form new connections with them and their natural world," said Wendy Goldstein, leader of The Project at Macquarie University.

'The (re)Generation Project' addresses the growing disconnect between urbanised young people and the natural environment because of their shift towards busy and virtually connected lives. The Project's aim is to re-inspire young people to visit and value nature.

Launched in 2014, it is supported by the **NSW Environment Trust** and run by **Macquarie University**.

Since then, 10 projects have been conceived and driven by young people (15-25 year olds) to engage other youth to visit and value nature through social media, art, film, urban gardening and events. The Project believes however, there is more work to do to reach and excite young people.

"Personal connections with nature are powerful. They improve our health and mental wellbeing, and there is evidence that if young people develop a relationship with nature early in life, they are more likely to care for nature and protect it as adults," Goldstein said.

Online applications are due by 6 September 2015 at research.science.mq.edu.au/theregenerationproject/get-involved/propose-a-project/

For information on *The (re)Generation Project*:

W: research.science.mq.edu.au/theregenerationproject

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