

A scenic landscape featuring a waterfall cascading over rocks in the foreground. In the background, a sunburst illuminates a valley with a prominent rock formation. The sky is blue with some clouds, and the overall scene is lush and natural.

# Back <sup>TO</sup> Nature



# BACK TO NATURE

## A 8 x 30' TV SERIES

BACK TO NATURE is a visually stunning and authentic documentary nature series that will attract new audiences and appeal to all demographics.

The series tells compelling and enchanting stories exploring our universal need to reconnect with nature.

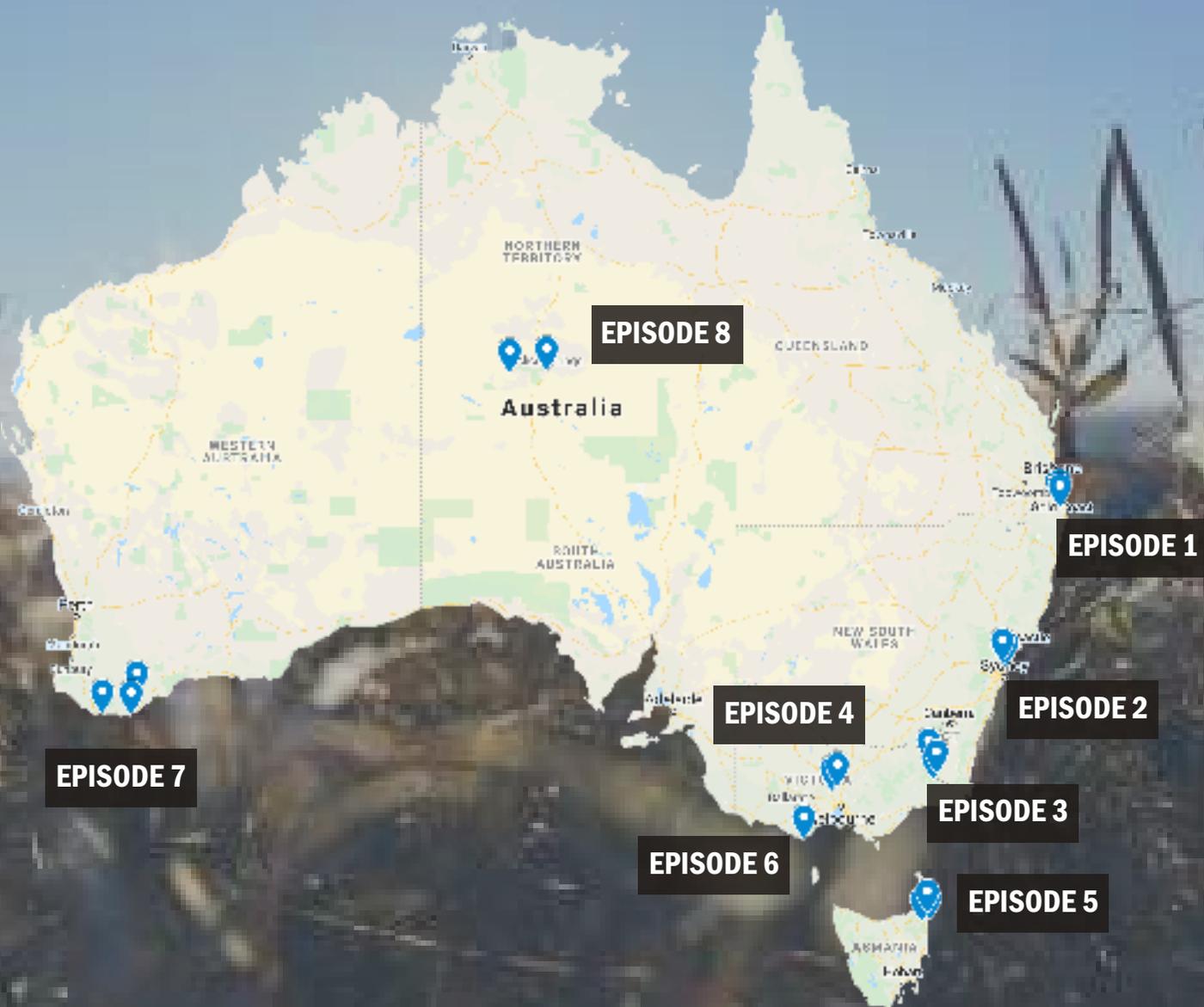
The gorgeous landscapes and fresh aesthetic are a visual feast for viewers around the world, appealing to the global market.

The series is based on the format of the successful Finnish series *Metsien Kätkemä* (“*Hidden by the Forest*”) which has broadcast two seasons on Finland’s YLE in 2016 and 2018 with a 22% audience share.

BACK TO NATURE’s domestic broadcast will be prime time on ABC TV, Australia’s national broadcaster, with further reach through streaming and repeats.

Budgeted at AUD \$300,000 per episode, this is a high end series with outstanding production values.

# LOCATIONS



# THE SERIES

**CONCEPT:** BACK TO NATURE is a series that explores our need to reconnect with the land around us for our physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The series looks at nature through mythology, geology, unknown and unexpected stories, traditional Indigenous knowledge, new scientific understandings (for example, how trees communicate via the 'wood wide web'): underlining how each of these supports and carries the world we live in.

The series features two hosts who are both yearning to reconnect with nature themselves. Our hosts guide viewers through the wonder and awe of the landscape, exploring our deep human connection with the natural world, bringing us all into a deeper understanding of ourselves, and our place in the world.

Each episode is set in one main area, and then focuses on three locations within that area (that will be within driving distance). The locations featured in each episode will be clearly presented by maps, providing key takeaway content for viewers. The diverse locations will contrast with one another, so that stories of a river system may be next to stories of a rainforest.

**AESTHETIC:** With outstanding production values, the gorgeous cinematography, layered sound design and music aim to give the audience the experience of being fully immersed in nature, not just a bystander. The series is instantly recognizable by its visual style, with jaw-dropping aerial shots, flowing slow motion sequences, beautiful close-ups, and a stunning grade that references the style of nature blogs.

**GUESTS:** Our hosts will often meet guests on their journey, each specialising in their field and offering a warm, enlightening and sometimes emotional insight into their connection to the location in compelling and unexpected ways – perhaps an artist who works with found objects in nature, a geologist who understands the landscape’s deep history, an Indigenous astronomer, a rock singer whose mental health was restored by nature, a scientist researching plant communication, an elder who tells 30,000 year old stories.

**CALLS TO ACTION:** Each episode has 1-2 audience ‘Calls to Action,’ inviting viewers to engage with nature in imaginative and creative ways, using a Twitter and Instagram hashtag #BackToNatureTV for use by domestic and international audiences, connecting to existing online and social media communities.

**VLOG STYLE INTIMACY:** There’s no traditional pieces to camera. Instead, the hosts address the audience directly in VLOG-style “Selfie-cam” pieces, where they are ‘holding’ the camera to share something personal and intimate. Either host can have these moments, which will arise from an authentic response to the landscape. This ‘Selfie-Cam’ draws on the style popularised on Insta-blogging and social media, and creates a friendly, ‘just between us’ intimacy with the audience.

**WILD COOKING RECIPE:** At the end of each episode there’s a wild cooking sequence, using wild food caught and foraged from the area and cooked on an outside flame. This segment feels to the audience like a well earned meal after a long walk. Each recipe will be available on social media and online to enable the audience to further participate in the sensual journey.

# EPISODE STRUCTURE

Each episode features three locations within **one main area**, allowing for compelling stories to be explored within those locations.

 **PREVIEW** teases out upcoming episode.

 **OPENING SEQUENCE** - opening titles and introduction of our two co-hosts, Aaron Pedersen and Holly Ringland.

 **LOCATION ONE**

 **LOCATION TWO**

 **LOCATION THREE**

Depending on the stories being told, 1-2 locations will feature **GUESTS**

 **WILD RECIPE** that relates to the environment.

 **PREVIEW** of next week's episode



GUEST(S)



VLOG SELFIE CAM



CALLS TO ACTION



BOOK TIP



WILD RECIPE

# THE HOSTS

## AARON PEDERSEN



A beloved Australian film and television star, Aaron was recently called “one of the greatest actors of his generation” by *The Guardian*. His ancestors are Arrente and Arabana people, who’ve lived in Australia more than 60,000 years

**“This is a breakthrough series. Nothing like this has been done before. We’re all connected to all of life. Most nature shows feel like they sit above the earth, like they’re separate from it. This series feels like we’re part of it – there’s a relationship.**

***Back to Nature* is medicine for all of us. And it’s medicine for me. I need to do this.” - Aaron**

## HOLLY RINGLAND



Holly is the author of the international bestseller *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart*, which has sold to 28 territories. Widely praised for its evocation of landscape, it won the Australian Book Industry Award ‘General Fiction Book of the Year’ for 2019. It has also been optioned by Bruna Papandrea’s TV production company *Made Up Stories*.

A former ranger in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Holly was born in Australia with Irish and Danish ancestry, and has lived in Britain.

**“One of my greatest passions is sharing the magic of the natural world through story. Stories cultivate empathy and understanding: nature offers us stories that reflect our common experience of what it is to be alive. Being in nature, and connecting to nature through story, is how we come home to ourselves and each other.”- Holly**

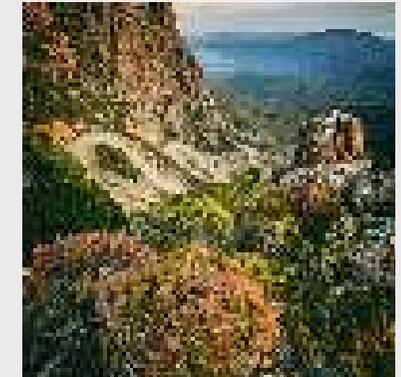
# ZEITGEIST

BACK TO NATURE is a series made for this moment.

Extraordinarily connected to the universal zeitgeist, it speaks to these trends:

- 🍃 Reconnecting with nature
- 🍃 “Shinrin-yoku” aka forest bathing
- 🍃 Wellbeing
- 🍃 For non-Indigenous viewers: Respect and curiosity about Indigenous cultures and worldview
- 🍃 For Indigenous viewers: Celebrating and honouring one’s culture
- 🍃 Human beings spiritually and scientifically connected to all of nature
- 🍃 Rewilding of degraded environments, and human rewilding that reclaims our affinity with nature
- 🍃 Microadventures and weekend hiking
- 🍃 Escape and adventure
- 🍃 Mindfulness and the ‘Slow Movement’
- 🍃 Nature and lifestyle blogging
- 🍃 Wild swimming, wild cooking, wildcrafting and foraging
- 🍃 Warm-hearted friendliness, authenticity, imperfection
- 🍃 Ecotourism, sustainability, the local and accessible
- 🍃 Worshipping in the awe-inspiring temple of nature

BACK TO NATURE's fresh  
aesthetic references  
nature & Instagram blogs  
and re-imagines nature  
television for our era.

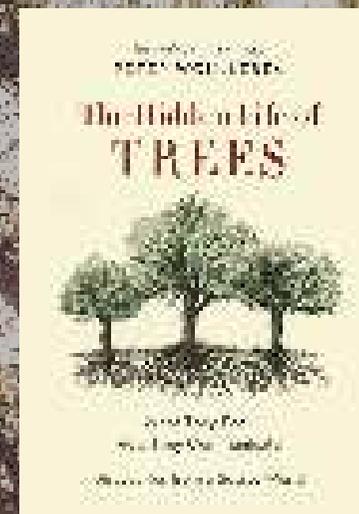
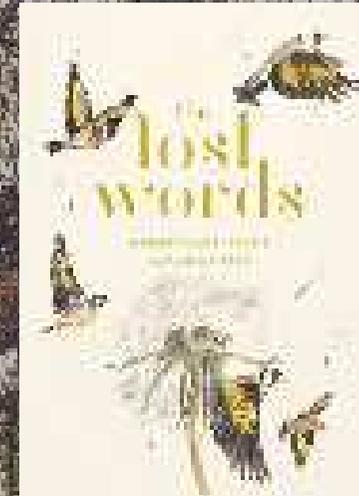


# BOOK PUBLISHING ZEITGEIST

The international publishing world is tapping into a universal hunger to reconnect to the natural world, with hundreds of titles on trees, forest-bathing, sentience in nature, wild cooking and related themes. Two unexpected publishing sensations of recent years have been Peter Wohlleben's *The Hidden Life of Trees* - which weaves together his own observations and science to show that trees have feelings and communicate via the "woodwide web" - and Robert MacFarlane and Jackie Morris' *The Lost Words* - which reclaims words that were being lost in our rush away from nature and towards screens.

Across the planet there is a universal appetite to reconnect to nature with enchantment and childlike wonder.

BACK TO NATURE taps into that appetite.



# THE AUDIENCE

BACK TO NATURE has been created to appeal to a culturally diverse and social media savvy generation.

In our frenetic media and news environments, the series offers audiences an enchanting and aesthetically seductive reprieve from their busy lives.

It will show them an Australia they've never seen before, in its unexpected stories and dynamic evocation of the landscape.

The series will also reawaken the viewer's own relationship with nature, whether it's the tree outside their city window or the wilderness that beckons for a weekend adventure. Inspiring the viewer to unwind and achieve balance in their lives, whilst reminding ourselves how very important our ecosystem is.

As confirmed by the Finnish series, this format appeals to a wide demographic, from a young adult to an older audience.

# THE PRODUCERS



Media Stockade is an independent, award winning Production Company based in Australia. We combine years of experience, awards and strong track records in delivering award winning, quality programs to broadcast documentary television and digital platforms. Our programs have broadcast on the ABC, SBS, National Geographic, Discovery, BBC and many others. We have access to award-winning crews, a sophisticated infrastructure and world class production. Today we lead a diversely skilled team of industry professionals, known for delivering to the highest production standards. We love working with great people and telling stories that matter.



**THRESHOLD  
PICTURES**

Threshold Pictures is the production company of Jane Manning, a multi-award winning director and writer who is *Back to Nature's* series director. Jane has many years' experience directing high end, quality TV series such as *Who Do You Think You Are? Coast Australia*, and *In Their Footsteps*. Her work is known for its sensitivity, gentle humour and emotional power – but most of all for its compelling storytelling. She loves working with good people on beautiful projects that contribute to life on earth.

# THE EPISODES



## EPISODE 1

### THE GREEN CAULDRON (QLD/NSW)

**Is this the birth place of the world? The Gondwana rainforests are the Southern hemisphere's largest volcanic caldera landscape, with Australia's richest biodiversity.**

*1.5-2 hours south of Brisbane. Area: Lamington National Park, Springbrook National Park, Mount Warning.*

Every songbird on Earth is descended from avian ancestors still flying in these Gondwana rainforests | Birdwatching with a beloved musician | Much of the planet's vegetation evolved from the ancient Gondwana plants and trees that still thrive here | The rare and ancient Beech trees that once covered Antarctica | The hidden Natural Bridge and glow worm cave | A sacred mountain of rare spiritual significance



## EPISODE 2

### GREAT OTWAYS (VIC)

**Southwest of Melbourne we explore forest bathing, the power of nature and the landscape created by Bunjil.**

*3hrs - 1.5 hours southwest of Melbourne. Area: Great Otways National Park, Lake Elizabeth*

Bunjil, the creator of life who took both human and eagle form | The scent medicine of the Redwood forests | The koalas of Blanket Bay | On Lake Elizabeth, beloved Australian singer Missy Higgins shares how nature is the touchstone for her purpose and creativity



## EPISODE 3

### BOODJA (VIC)

**From the Giant Tingle Forest to the coast the Stirling Ranges.**

*Near Albany, 5 hours south of Perth.*

The Bibbulmun Track and Peaceful Bay | The Wood Wide Web | The Enchanted Giant Tingle Forest | Can Trees hear, learn and remember? | The Whale People | The Land's Recovery after Fire | The Culturally Significant Site of Bula Meela in the Koi Kyenunu-ruff (Stirling Ranges)



## EPISODE 4

### STORIES OF THE HIGH COUNTRY (NSW)

**The Wild, Rugged Snowy Mountains Landscape.**

*2-3 hours from Canberra, 5-6 hours from Sydney. Area: Kosciuszko National Park, Snowy River National Park, Byadbo Wilderness*

The Alpine fields where Bogong festivals were held for thousands of years | The Bundian Way, a millenniums-old ancient route from mountain to sea | Tarangal / Mount Kosciuszko, the Roof of Australia | Cascade Hut and writer Elyne Mitchel | The Granite Tors | The Songlines of the Byadbo Wilderness | One of the Oldest Stories on Earth.

# THE EPISODES



## FIRES OF LARAPUNA (TAS)

**In the land and sea country of Tasmania's North East we travel between turquoise bays and rainforest.**

*2-3 hours north of Hobart. Area: Bay of Fires, St Helen's Island, Blue Tier Forest*

The kinship between all of life | Seals and the Selkie myth | The creative power of lichen | The relics of Chinese Tin miners' camps | The tree with the widest circumference in Tasmania | A Smoking Ceremony and Black Peppermint Kinship Trees



## THE DEEP RIVER (NSW)

**The beautiful river system just north of Australia's biggest city.**

*1 - 2 Hours North of Sydney.*

*Area: Hawkesbury River, Muogamurra Nature Reserve, Brisbane River National Park, Dharug National Park.*

Rock art along a river journey | Carvings of Creation spirit Biame | The dance between wildflowers and birds | The Legend of the River Monster | Wild swimming | Kariong Brook Falls | Scribbly gums and Ephemeral Art | The Old Convict Road and Hangman's Cave



## MYSTERIOUS MACEDON (VIC)

**Just north of Melbourne, Macedon has long been associated with mystery, health-giving landscapes, and bushranging gangs.**

*50min - 1.5 hours north of Melbourne. Area: Area: Organ Pipes National Park | Mount Macedon, Hanging Rock*

Encountering the Rainbow Serpent at Organ Pipes | The eerie presence of Hanging Rock | The mysterious creation of Joan Lindsay's famous novel, and her experience with 'time slips' | Bushranging gangs and Captain Melville, the gentleman bushranger | Fungi | Australia's most famous artist's golden period | The symbiotic dance between lichen and trees | The medicine woman of Ngannelong (Hanging Rock)



## DEEP LISTENING (NT)

**In the dramatic landscape of Central Australia**

*1.5-3 hours from Alice Springs - Area: Trepghina Gorge, John Hayes Rockhole, Tnorala*

Rockpools and Gorges in the Desert | Elder Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr shares dadirri or deep listening – what she calls the greatest gift her people can give the world | Ghost Gums | How Tnorala was formed from the stars



## EPISODE SAMPLE: Episode 3 Stories of the High Country.

The wild Snowy River landscape is considered harsh but when you know it, it's a land of plenty, and filled with stories.

A theme of this episode is story-telling, and the older generation passing stories to younger generations.

Another theme is about the paths and songlines in the landscape.

*(subject to small changes)*

## LOCATION 1: The Alpine Slopes of Tarangal (6-8 mins)



**THE GRANITE TORS (2 MINS):** Holly and Aaron wander through the surreal landscape of the Tors, through sections of jutting granite that have resisted erosion, unchanged by time, even as the rest of the landscape has broken down over millions of years by lichens, mosses and weather.



**BOGONG CAVES (1 MIN):** Aaron and Holly walk to a vast cave whose granite walls are covered with hundreds of thousands of bogong moths. The moths make an annual migration here, from 1000 kilometres north – it remains a mystery to science how they know their way here.



**SNOWY GUM TREES (1 MIN):** Aaron, Holly and a guest tell stories near a snowy gum tree – a tree that thrives all year around, even in deep snow.

**CALL TO ACTION (30-40 SECS):** Befriending a tree, connecting with their lifeforce, and contemplating their generosity – their bark, leaves, shade, food and medicine.

**THE ROOF OF AUSTRALIA: (1-2 MINS):** Tarangal, or Mt Kosciusko, is Australia's highest peak. Tarangal is also one end of an ancient pathway that runs 250 kms to the ocean. It's a route used for tens of thousands of years. Aaron and Holly follow the path...



### POTENTIAL GUEST JAKELIN TROY

Jakelin Troy, professor and Ngarigu woman. She tells Holly and Aaron about the ceremonies held on this land, the Indigenous names of the snowy gum trees, and that trees are community members, part of 'our mob': "In Indigenous philosophies, all elements of the natural world are animated, having individual personalities and a lifeforce."

## LOCATION 2: The Bundian Way to Cascade Hut (6-8 mins)



**BUNDIAN WAY (1-2 MINS):** Beginning at Dead Horse Gap, our hosts follow this ancient route through wild country. They find artefacts along the path - worked bits of stone, axe heads and middens: reminders it's been used for tens of thousands of years.

**BOOK RECOMMENDATION (40 SECS- 1 MIN):**

*On Track*, John Blay – the naturalist, poet and bushwalker's decade long search for the Bundian Way. (There will book recommendations in the series only where there is a particularly evocative and relevant book.)



**CASCADE HUT (2 MINS):** Holly and Aaron come across a wooden hut, Cascade Hut, that was built in 1935 to shelter wanderers from storms.

One who took shelter here was Elyne Mitchell - writer, ski champion, and local station owner. She was so inspired by the landscape she wrote *The Silver Brumby* for her daughter – immortalising this country and its wild horses in the hearts of millions of readers around the world, and the brumbies who spoke to each other in a language called 'Horse.' Holly tells us about her connection to Elyne Mitchell's books.



**CALL TO ACTION (30-40 SECS):** Viewers asked to go into nature to write a story, even just a paragraph. Elyne believed writing allowed her to express a mystical bond with the landscape.



### BOOK RECOMMENDATION

#### SPEAK TO THE EARTH BY ELYNE MITCHELL, 1945

Elyne Mitchell sheltered from the storm in the cascade hut. Known as a children's writer, she also wrote non-fiction books about connecting with the earth.

# LOCATION 3: The Byadbo Wilderness & Snowy River (6-7 mins)



**BYADBO WILDERNESS AND SONGLINES (1-2 MINS):** Our hosts travel by canoe with a guide. One of the most extraordinary locations in Australia, but very rarely visited. Unused to humans, the wildlife here isn't shy: gungwaun (emus), kangaroos, sea eagles, dhurrawarri (water dragon), galgun (eels) and djamala (platypus). On the right is a track by the river, a songline: there, the birds sing, the wind is calm and the air feels positive. If you veer off track the hairs on your neck stand up and things just don't feel right.



**CEREMONY SITE (2 MINS):** Holly, Aaron and our guide pull into a creek on their canoes. Our guide lights some fungus and uses the smouldering candle to perform a cleansing ceremony. Our hosts are about to enter a special place. It's a clearing abundant with sharp edged artefacts strewn on the ground, and a large grindstone left as though somebody simply upped and walked away. This was an historic ceremony place where boys came to become men. Aaron shares his feelings about the role of men's ceremonies.



**CAMPING AT BUDJAN (BIRDLIFE) BEND (1-2 MINS):** Aaron, Holly and our guide make a camp fire under Wildwoman Ridge, where the great sea eagle soars overhead. They forage and fish for the evening meal, and cook it on an open flame.

**STORYTELLING (2-3 MINS):** Around the glowing embers of a campfire our guide and hosts share stories, some that have been told here for hundreds of generations.

Our hosts breathe in *nadgan* (Mother Earth) and listen to the wind, the birds, the water and the trees, feeling the connection to country. There's a spirituality here where landscape is inseparable from our being, and where the country talks to us through its stories and songlines, if we're quiet enough to listen.

**UPLIFTING END SHOT:** A stunning Overhead shot of the Byadbo wilderness, evoking a feeling of awe.



## POTENTIAL GUEST RICHARD SWAIN

Richard "Swainy" Swain, who has Monaro ancestors, is one of Australia's most experienced river guides.

# CALLS TO ACTION

Each *Back to Nature* episode will have 1-3 “Calls to Action” (CTAs) where the audience is asked to directly engage with nature in fun, pleasurable and creative ways. They will be invited to share their experience on social media with the #BackToNatureTV hashtag.

The CTAs will directly encourage the audience to go outside into nature, and develop a relationship with nature.

The CTAs will appeal to all ages. Some CTAs may include:

## 1: CREATING EPHEMERAL ART IN NATURE

For adults, creating ephemeral art is a pleasurable meditation, a letting go of stresses and worries, and a creative way of practising mindfulness. For children, it's a pleasurable creative activity in its own right. For both, it's a way of honouring nature and leaving a gift.

The materials are free: leaves, feathers, pebbles, twigs, flowers, seedpods.

People will be invited to share photos of their creations on Twitter and Instagram at #BackToNatureTV.

## 2: NATURE'S ORCHESTRA

The audience are invited to sit or lie down in nature for 10 minutes and listen to the aural symphony of nature. What sounds can they hear? How many types of birds? How many insects? Can they hear wind through the trees, a running waterfall? How is their body responding to the sounds – can they feel it relax?

They are invited to write down a list of the sounds they heard – do they know the bird calls, or can they just describe them? - and share it at #BackToNatureTV.

## 3: BEFRIEND A TREE

Can be done in the city or the bush. Find a tree and get close, feel its bark. Does its leaves have a scent? Hug the tree, feeling how you're giving it carbon dioxide, it's giving you oxygen. Notice how it's rooted in the ground yet reaching to the sky. Indigenous Australians traditionally believed that trees have spirits or lifeforce, and western science is discovering more how trees communicate with one another via the wood wide web. Does this tree have a lifeforce? Can you imagine its communication lines underfoot? Take a photo or draw your tree and tell us about it at #BackToNatureTV.

