



Speaking 4 the Planet Australia 2024

TREES

the Guardians of Life

Information and Support Package

*Use this S4P opportunity to speak through your words,
your art, your performance and tell the world
what you think about the importance of trees and bushland and forests.
Use this opportunity as a time of change for yourself.*

**Speaking 4 the Planet Australia 2024
Information and Support Package**

TREES

the Guardians of Life

**A competition for young people and
teachers around Australia**



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Competition Summary

1. This Information and Support Package is for the 2024 Australian S4P competition. It contains information about the competition categories, and the judging criteria; it also provides some links to articles relevant to the theme.
 2. The topic for the competition is **Trees, the Guardians of Life**. This is linked to Sustainable Development Goal #15.
 3. The competition will be held online. This package explains how to make your submissions online.
 4. The deadline is Friday 26 July. The winners will be announced on 31 August. Check the website on that day.
 5. This competition is for high school students (aged 12-18) and for teachers. For the first time, teachers are invited to participate in the writing category.
 6. There are four competition categories:
 - **Speaking** – prepared speeches. Maximum time is 4mins.
 - **Writing** – have your say in 30 words.
 - **Visual Arts** – a range of materials/styles can be used.
 - **Performance** poetry – write and perform your own poem. A time limit of 4mins.
 7. Participation is free for students and teachers whose councils are supporting the initiative. This link identifies participating Councils: [Trees, Guardians of Life – 2024 – Speaking 4 the Planet](#). If your council is not on the list of supporters, please contact Phil at phil@speaking4theplanet.org.au to discuss how you might participate.
 8. Research is vital. This package contains links to useful articles and programs and talks. All participants are encouraged to do their own research.
 9. Participants are to produce or present items that are original. They are also invited to make their work quirky.
 10. Prizes will be awarded for first and second place.
 - First: practical item plus \$100 voucher from Paddy Pallin (outdoor adventure store).
 - Second: \$100 voucher from Paddy Pallin.
 - Councils are invited to offer local prizes.
- All participants receive a certificate.
11. Winning entries will be published on the S4P website and form a part of a new digital magazine that will be sent to decision-makers in our communities and country.
 12. By submitting their works, participants give permission for their entries to be placed on the Speaking 4 the Planet website and/or used on the Speaking 4 the Planet YouTube channel. Participating councils and competition partners may also wish to place some of the entries on their websites.

Trees Matter

improve health

are beautiful and
inspirational

generate oxygen

sequester carbon

boost wildlife

TREES

help science

reduce pollution

grow the economy

grow the economy

protect the soil and
improve soil quality

help conserve
water

ameliorate climate change
and counter-act global
warming

can be a flood-
proofing tool

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Prepared by **Phil Smith** and **Hanh Do**

With support from



<https://www.ssec.org.au>



<https://www.paddypallin.com.au>

S4P competitions are supported by the Australian Association for Environmental Education and the World Environmental Education Congress Secretariat



<https://www.aaee.org.au>



<https://weecnetwork.org>

Design and layout by **Petur Farkas**

1. Purpose of this booklet

Trees, bush, bushland, forest, scrub.... Which word do you use?

This year, the Speaking 4 the Planet competition creates an opportunity for you to express your ideas about the importance of trees. You are invited to prepare and deliver punchy, quirky, creative, and pointed submissions that seek to influence the thoughts, emotions, and actions of the audience.

This information package is designed to help you prepare quality entries for the competition. It provides:

- Information on Speaking 4 the Planet and the competition categories
- Judging criteria
- Links to relevant websites and articles.

You are strongly encouraged to research widely and build evidence-based and powerful messages.

2. Speaking 4 the planet: Changing the world, one presentation at a time

Speaking 4 the Planet (S4P) is an arts-based approach to sustainability education. It is a competition for secondary school students that invites students to express their views on matters related to the planet and the future – their future. S4P creates space and opportunities for young people to intertwine humanities and sciences, to philosophise about human actions, and to imagine a better world while standing deep in the science of the world they live in. Youth marches and student strikes are the very public faces of (climate change) protest. Speaking 4 the Planet is an equally powerful opportunity for students to speak up and advocate for a healthy future – for humans and all species.

S4P events inspire young people to think creatively, critically, independently, and courageously; they create space for students to ask challenging questions. S4P creates opportunities for youth voice not silence. The sustainability changes that the world needs won't occur by following existing dogma and practices. New thinking is required. Youthful thinking is required. Speaking 4 the Planet is founded on the belief that science provides the information we need to achieve sustainability, and the arts deliver the vehicles for transformation. Science provides the data; the arts change the world.

Here's a video prepared to support the nomination of S4P for an international Earth Prize. It tells you more about the initiative and demonstrates some of the skills of the students.

[Advocates 4 the Earth](#)

This 2024 S4P competition gives you a chance to step up and speak up about your concerns and fears, about your hopes and dreams and ideas, about the work that needs to be done to create a healthy, sustainable world. The competition moment also invites you to think about how you can help bring about such a world.

Here's [an article on the importance of speaking up](#)

And another article on the importance of public speaking: [Ideas, Inspirations and Incites - with Phil Smith - New Bush Telegraph](#)

Here are some links to great performances from previous S4P events.



[Mother Earth, Chloe. The winner of the first Performance Poetry category 2022.](#)



[Dance and art, Bayview Secondary College, Tasmania, in support of restoring Lake Pedder.](#)

Get inspired by last year's contestants



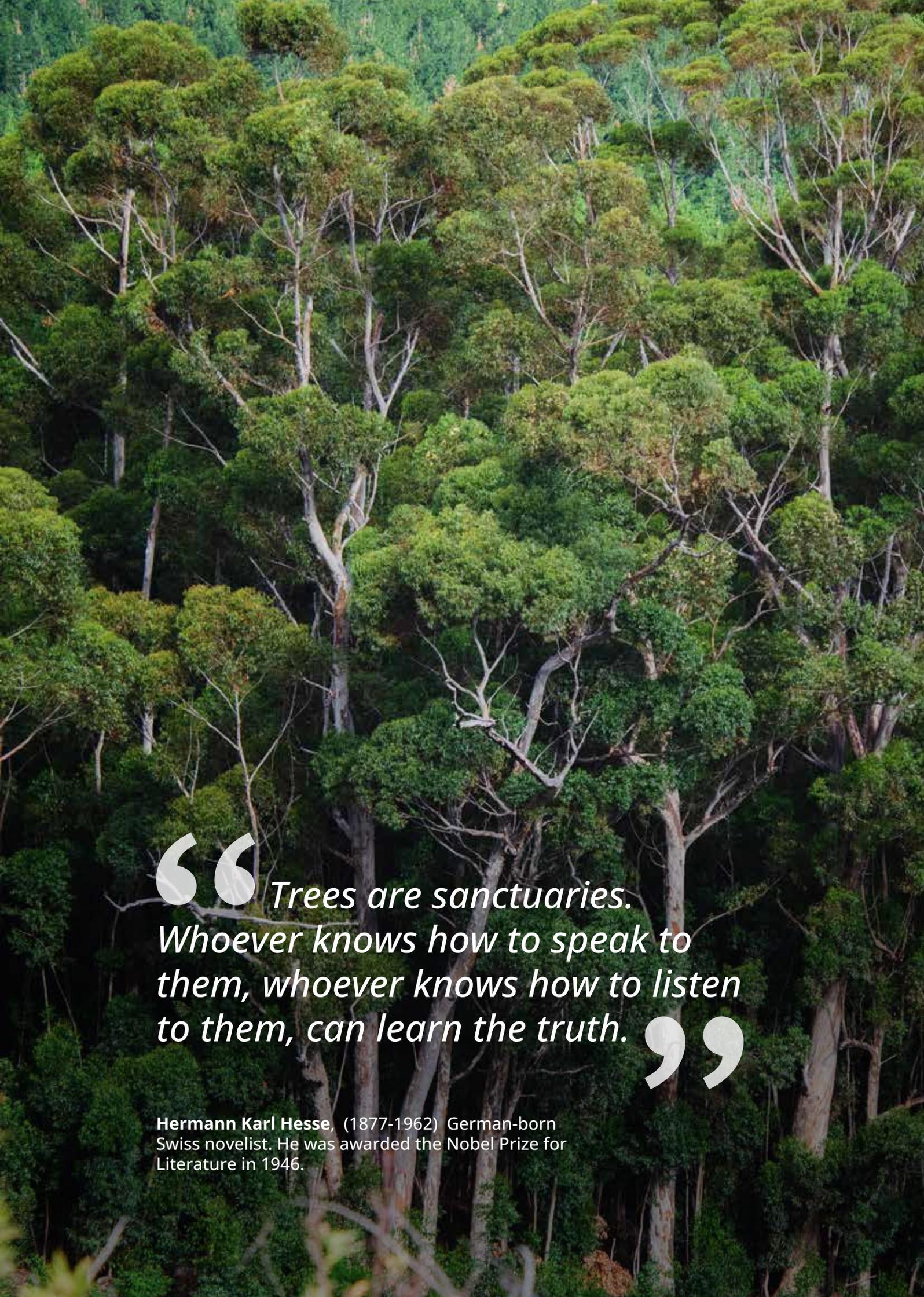
Roseanna
<https://youtube.com/shorts/dbyOtQ2mDoU?feature=share>



Anthony
<https://youtube.com/shorts/Kboj5Y85QU0?feature=share>



Ashwini
<https://youtu.be/hMMvHyZVsns>



*“ Trees are sanctuaries.
Whoever knows how to speak to
them, whoever knows how to listen
to them, can learn the truth. ”*

Hermann Karl Hesse, (1877-1962) German-born Swiss novelist. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946.

3. Competition partners

AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

For the first time, S4P is partnering with the Australian Association for Environmental Education to host this inaugural competition. AAEE is Australia's peak professional body for Environmental Educators. Members work in government agencies, schools, universities, businesses and community organisations. AAEE does these things:

- Advocates for Environmental Education and promotes best practice.
- Supports and contributes to skills development among educators across Australia and internationally.
- Helps members to stay at the forefront of sustainability education and models of change.



Read more: www.aaee.org.au

PADDY PALLIN

Paddy Pallin has supported S4P since the beginning. Paddy Pallin is the first outdoor and adventure company in Australia, and it's also the first outdoor business to support S4P to connect with the next generation of environmentalists. Paddy Pallin sells clothing and equipment to help you get outside and into nature. Paddy Pallin wants to help maintain the quality of the environment so there's something to enjoy when you get out there!



www.paddypallin.com.au

4. Target audiences

This competition is for high-school-aged youth (12-18) and for teachers.

For the first time, **teachers** are invited to participate in the S4P competition – in the writing category.

Teachers are invited to submit a piece of writing – under the same conditions as those for the students. 30 words. Any genre. Any style. Impact matters.

Teachers, please also note that the links in the Resources section below can provide useful ideas for teaching.

5. Competition categories and criteria

There are 4 categories in this competition. All submissions must focus on the competition topic, *Trees, the Guardians of Life*. And all entries must capture something about the local region.

Below is information about each of the competition categories. The judging criteria are also included. **Specialists in each of the competition categories will judge the submissions.**

SPEECH

Participants prepare and deliver a speech on the competition topic. Maximum time 4mins. Remember to include something about your local region in the speech.

The speech is an opportunity for you to suggest innovative ways to raise awareness, influence policies and behaviours, and to improve the integrity of forests and bushland in your area.

Speakers will need to state clearly the problems or issues being addressed. They will also need to make links between problems and solutions, and speakers should also use techniques of persuasion that can shift the way the audience thinks and feels about the issues. The time limit is important. Please avoid reading your speech.

Here are some public speaking tips: [Public Speaking Tips – Speaking 4 the Planet](#)

Here's an article with good advice on public speaking Communication habits that can undermine women's power [The communication habits that can undermine women's power – Speaking 4 the Planet](#)

Here's an article that gives you [Tips on videoing yourself](#)

Judging criteria

A small panel of judges will use the following criteria to judge the speeches and find a winner. You should use them in your preparation.

On topic.

Within the time limit.

Idea:

- Originality of idea.
- How the idea is developed.
- Encourages audiences to think or act.

Content:

- Clear communication of problem and solution that the idea is trying to address.
- Structure: coherent, logical, clear.

Choice of style:

- Engaging.
- Persuasive techniques.
- Body language appropriate to the speech.

“*Trees give peace
to the souls of men.*”

Nora Waln, (1895 – 1964) American writer and journalist.

WRITING

This category requires you to write only 30 words on the topic of the competition.

Remember to ensure your writing refers to local trees and bushland.

Note that you can write in any genre – poetry, prose, drama. You can write fiction or non-fiction. Your writing can be expository, descriptive, narrative, persuasive, creative. Submissions that exceed 30 words will not be considered. Submit your writing as a Word document.

Here's a tip for writing [Tips for Better Writing – Speaking 4 the Planet](#)

Judging criteria

A small panel of judges will use the following criteria to judge your writing submission. You should use them in your preparation.

On topic.

Within word limit.

Clarity of purpose.

Accuracy:

- Spelling.
- Grammar.
- Sentence structure.

Resolution Impact:

- Does the piece move the mind or imagination of the reader and prompt a response?

VISUAL ARTS

Artworks need to be related to the competition topic, Trees, the Guardians of Life. Artworks can be paintings or drawings. Paint, charcoal, ink, graphite, pen, etc. may be used. You may wish to do a cartoon strip.

Here's an article that may be of interest: [Art can Change the World](#)

Judging criteria

Use these criteria in your planning.

Concept:

- Visually engaging.
- Imaginative qualities evident.
- Theme confidently investigated.

Skill in production

- Technically accomplished.
- Skilful interpretation via a selected medium.

Resolution:

- Successfully resolved.
- Clear communication of ideas.
- Creativity evident in finished artwork.

Impact/Meaning

- Clarity of message.
- Makes an impact on viewer.

PERFORMANCE POETRY

Write your own poem. Video yourself performing it. You may invite one other person to help with the performance. Maximum performance time is 4minutes. Ensure your poem and performance are about the competition topic.

Here's an article that gives you [tips on videoing yourself](#).

Read more about performance poetry here [Tips on Reciting](#)

Judging criteria

A small panel of judges will use the following criteria to judge your performance poetry. It will be judged against these criteria. You should use them in your preparation.

On topic.

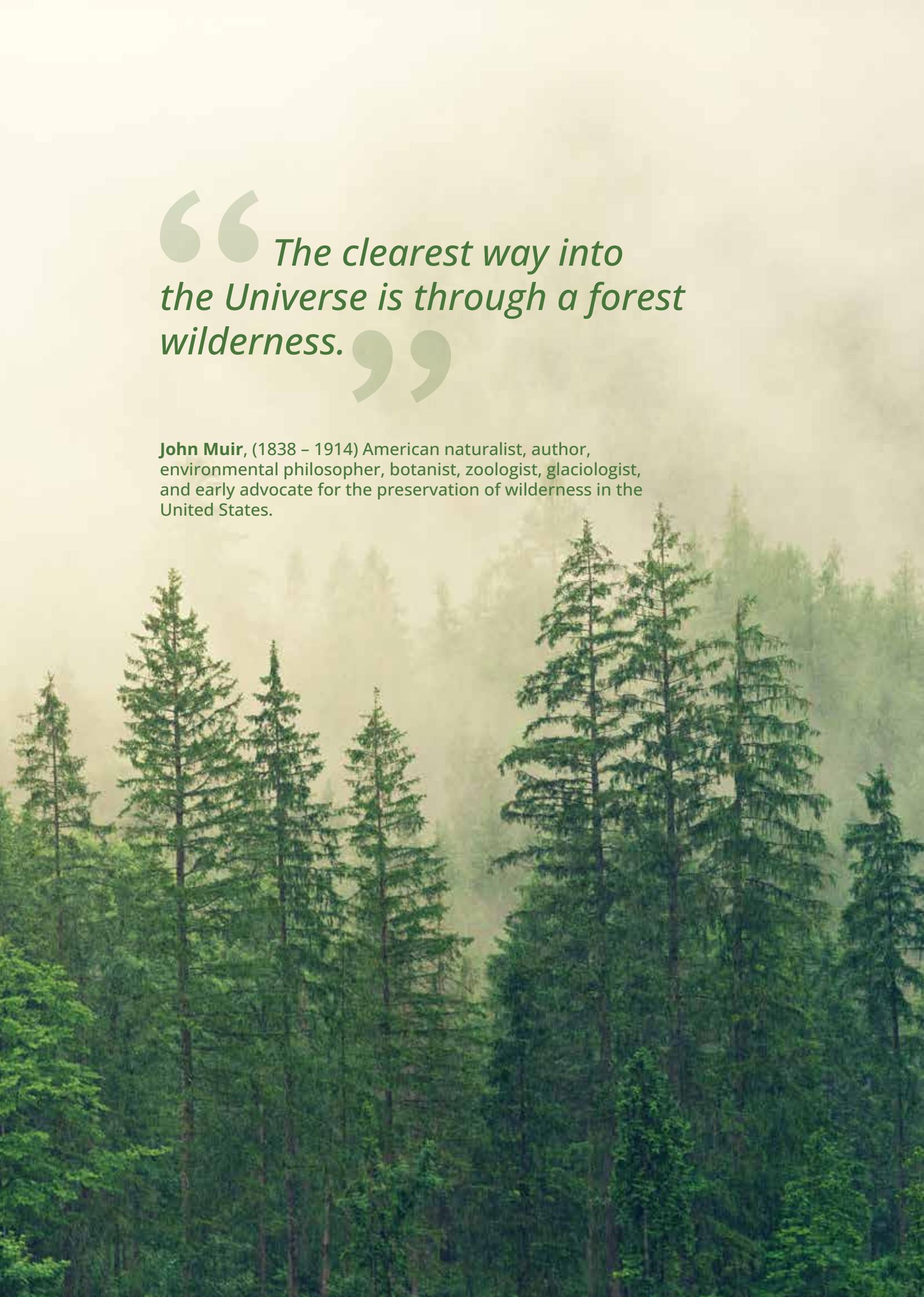
Within the time limit.

Physical presence.

Voice and articulation.

Use of literary devices.

Dramatic appropriateness.

A misty forest of tall evergreen trees, likely spruce or fir, with a soft, hazy atmosphere. The trees are densely packed and reach towards a pale, overcast sky. The overall tone is serene and natural.

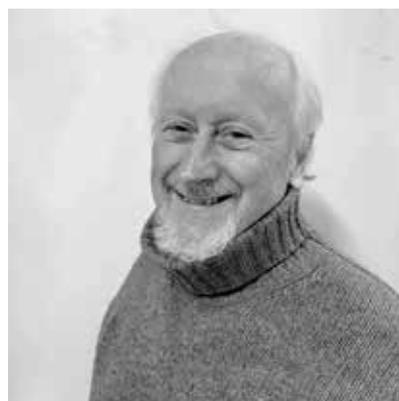
“ *The clearest way into
the Universe is through a forest
wilderness.* ”

John Muir, (1838 - 1914) American naturalist, author,
environmental philosopher, botanist, zoologist, glaciologist,
and early advocate for the preservation of wilderness in the
United States.

6. The judges

Specialists in each category will assist with the judging. Some are writers and artists, some teach in universities and communities, and some are performers and public speakers. S4P draws on expertise to determine the winners in each category.

For the Writing Category for teachers, S4P has secured the support of a published writer, Rowan Cahill, a graduate of the universities of Sydney, New England, and Wollongong. Prominent in the student, anti-war and New Left movements of the 1960s and 70s, he was a Conscientious Objector during the Vietnam War. He has variously worked as a farmhand, teacher (in the technical education, secondary school, prison, and university systems), freelance writer, and for the trade union movement as a publicist, historian, and rank and file activist. Currently an Honorary Fellow at the University of Wollongong, he has published widely in mainstream, trade union, social movement, and academic publications. His most recent books, co-authored with Terry Irving, are *Radical Sydney* (2010) and *The Barber Who Read History* (2021). His website is at <https://rowancahill.net/>



7. Prizes

Winners will be announced on the S4P website by the end of August. Winners will receive a combination of practical and monetary prizes.

Once again, Paddy Pallin, a competition partner, will provide very practical items for first place in each category. This year, we have added a monetary element to the prizes. In addition to the item from Paddy Pallin, first place winners will each receive vouchers to the value of \$100. Second place winners will simply receive the \$100 voucher.

Councils are invited to provide prizes for any students in their LGAs and find opportunities for students and teachers to present/display their submissions after the competition finishes.

All participants will receive a certificate.

8. Submitting your work

Submit your work here: <https://forms.gle/6KLkY8ffWjKrYAc96>

All submissions are to be made through the portal above. Click on the link – it will take to you a page with questions about name, age, etc., and it will ask you to upload the link of video of your speech or the document with your writing. You must make your videos public so we can access and download for evaluation.

To submit your speech items as a URL, you must create a channel in YouTube.

- You can sign in with your Gmail account and click on the user icon at the top right of the screen
- Click on the gear icon to get to your account's YouTube Settings
- Click on Create a new channel

Upload your video in the channel and **keep in as public or unlisted**. Do not use background music as it may lead to copyright violations.

- After logging into YouTube, click on the 'create a video or post' button in the top right corner of the page.



- From the drop-down menu, select the 'Upload video' option to be taken to the upload page.

While choosing a privacy setting option, select the option of **"Unlisted" or "Public"**. Once the uploading completed, add a title and a short description of your video.

9. Resources

All participants are urged to research the topic. This section contains some links to websites that will help in the preparation of submissions. Search for more.

Sustainable Development Goals

Protecting trees and bushland and forests and their habitats and species is the focus of Sustainable Development Goal #15, Life on Land. Check out this specific goal and all the others – they are all connected!

Find the SDGs here: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Achieving the SDGs requires the partnership of governments, private sector, civil society and citizens alike to make sure we leave a better planet for future generations.



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Your Local Council

Check your local council's tree policy and other policies related to the management of trees and bushland in your area.

Also check local community organisations that look after bushland.

Songs of Trees

We have learned from ecological science and evolutionary science and studies of the physiology of plants that, when we walk into a forest, we're not walking into a place that is full of separate interacting individuals. That was the old view of ecology. Instead, we now know that we're walking into a living network, a place where every creature exists only through relationships with others. And so, for example, a tree is not just one species, one individual, but a tree is a living community. Every leaf on a tree has hundreds of species of bacteria and fungi living within its leaves. Without those other species, the leaf cannot function; it gets overrun by pathogens, it can't protect itself from drought.

The message here is to listen to the songs of trees.

<https://www.dailygood.org/story/3176/david-george-haskell-songs-of-trees-preeta-bansal/>

It's the Trees. Are we caretakers or undertakers?

<https://newbushtelegraph.org.au/ideas-inspirations-and-incites-with-phil-smith/>

We breathe out. They breathe in. They breathe out. We breathe in. Exchanging oxygen for carbon dioxide for oxygen. In out. In out.

We live in an intimate relationship with trees. We need to value that relationship and love those trees. David Attenborough has forever told us that, 'We depend upon the natural world for every mouthful of food we eat and every lungful of air we breathe.'

National Tree Day

<https://treeday.planetark.org>

Australia's largest tree planting and nature care event.

Schools Tree Day Friday 26 July

National Tree Day Sunday 28 July

Tropical Tree Day Sunday 1 December

<https://nationaltoday.com/national-tree-day/>

This link includes a history of national tree day.

Schools Tree Day Education Resources

<https://cool.org/schools-tree-day-education-resources>

Tree-Planting

<https://conservationvolunteers.com.au/plant-a-tree-this-national-tree-day/>

This site provides “five incredible reasons why the simple act of planting native trees is so much more than meets the eye.”

Mending an Ecosystem

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL-i_yNcFVY

Permaculture instructor Andrew Millison explains the process for repairing a degraded ecosystem. We begin with the metrics for assessing ecosystem health, and then go over the steps to triggering biological activity and ecological succession.

Trees provide...

<https://www.co2australia.com.au/why-are-trees-important-to-the-environment/>

[Why Are Trees Important to the Environment?](#)

Most people recognise that trees play an essential role in the environment, but they perhaps undervalue the true extent of these incredible organisms’ benefits. Trees provide oxygen and limit carbon in the atmosphere. They reduce air pollution, provide food and shelter for wildlife, minimise erosion and maintain healthy soil, increase rainfall, and absorb sunlight as energy. Simply, trees are an essential component of life on Earth.

Trees and past civilizations

<https://newbushtelegraph.org.au/ideas-inspirations-and-incites-with-phil-smith/>

6 Ways Trees Benefit All of Us

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-priorities/build-healthy-cities/cities-stories/benefits-of-trees-forests/>

From a city park to a vast forest, trees deliver for us when we help them thrive.

Australia’s forests at a glance

https://www.agriculture.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/forests_at_a_glance.pdf

Australia has few native conifers, therefore 99% of our native forest area is broadleaf. In contrast, about 60% of plantations are exotic conifers. Native forests are dominated by eucalypt species (78%), followed by acacia species (10%) and melaleuca species (4%).



30 Australian tree statistics 2022

<https://treesdownunder.com.au/australian-tree-statistics/#:~:text=Native%20Trees%20and%20Canopies,is%20Australia%27s%20oldest%2Dknown%20tree.>

The country has a staggering 24,000 species of native plants and trees. Acacia, grevillea, emu bushes, and gum trees (eucalyptus) are among the most common Australian trees found in native forests. The King's Holly from Tasmania is Australia's oldest-known tree. May 17, 2022

The forests of Australia

<https://www.integratesustainability.com.au/2019/03/29/the-forests-of-australia/>

Forests extend across Australia's northern tropical regions, and down the east coast through sub-tropical regions to temperate cool-season wet and cold-wet zones in the south-east; they are also found in Mediterranean climate zones in the south-east and south-west.

Deforestation in Australia

Australia is the top country among developed countries which has the highest rate of deforestation. More than 135,000 trees are bulldozed on the shores everyday that's 57 times of the area of Sydney Harbour destroyed every 365 days. The urgency of saving trees in Australia. [Why do we need to save trees in Australia? | Why do we need to save trees in Australia? | WWF Australia](#)

Australia has a long history of forest clearing. [Australia spends billions planting trees - then wipes out carbon gains by bulldozing them | Deforestation | The Guardian](#)

Tree myths

<https://forestrynews.blogs.govdelivery.com/2020/03/23/common-tree-myths-and-why-you-shouldnt-believe/#:~:text=Myth%20%231%3A%20A%20tree%27s%20root,as%20the%20tree%20grows%20taller.>

Losing tree cover

https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/jan/04/its-slipped-off-the-radar-why-are-there-fewer-street-trees-in-the-australian-bush?fbclid=IwAR2KkP2o5XucJ5IfaL9KOZWdHgkSYiTgtd33vyfj786_-6w2Uii8xXN4aMU

'It's slipped off the radar': why are there fewer street trees in regional towns across Australia? Beyond the tree-lined high streets, many regional towns are lacking tree cover and experts say the reliance on cars could be to blame.

Sydney kids, no matter where they live, must have trees to climb

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/sydney-kids-no-matter-where-they-live-must-have-trees-to-climb-20240104-p5ev7o.html>

As Sydney moves to higher density living – and we need to – there must be a focus on green spaces. While more of us live in apartments and townhouses, we must make sure there are appropriate options for generations of screen-focused kids to spend time outside, even in a warming climate.

“But tell me,” Yusuf/Cat Stevens asked, “where do the children play?”

Tree Canopy Indicator

Video included in the document from NSW State Government

<https://www.movementandplace.nsw.gov.au/place-and-network/built-environment-indicators/tree-canopy>

Lots more!

Trees: [5 reasons we need trees for a healthy planet - Earth Day](#)

Trees' values: [The Importance of Trees - Learn Value and Benefit of Trees \(savatree.com\)](#)

More trees' values [22 Benefits of Trees - TreePeople](#)

The power of one tree: [The Power of One Tree - The Very Air We Breathe | USDA](#)

Trees can live long. One tree need other trees. Do trees need people? [Do Trees Need People? · Idaho Forests Products Commission](#)

Native trees in Australia: [Why Trees? | Carbon Positive Australia](#)

Impacts on one of the oldest tree of Australia: [Scientists rush to save Australia's loneliest tree — the 'ice age gum' — from the brink of extinction - ABC News](#)

Tree protection laws in Australian states and territories: [Microsoft Word - Urban Trees_Lensink.docx \(treenet.org\)](#)

Ways to save trees in Australia: [10 ways to help save trees in Australia | 10 ways to help save trees in Australia | WWF Australia](#)

10 facts to fall in love with forests

- 1) Forests are home to over 80 percent of land animals and plants and cover 31 percent of the world's total land area.
- 2) A tree can sequester up to 150 kilograms of carbon dioxide per year. The world's forests store an estimated 296 gigatonnes of carbon in both above- and below-ground biomass.
- 3) Trees are important for creating sustainable cities: in urban areas, they can cool the air by up to 8 degrees, reducing air conditioning needs by 30 percent. Urban trees are also excellent air filters, removing harmful pollutants and fine particulates.
- 4) Wood fuel provides 40 percent of today's global renewable energy supply – as much as solar, hydroelectric and wind power combined.
- 5) Forest products contribute to reducing and replacing polluting and carbon intensive materials.
- 6) Using wood for construction saves about 40 percent of carbon emissions in comparison to concrete, and about 30 percent in comparison to steel.
- 7) More than 25 percent of the medicines we use originate in rainforest plants. Yet only 1 percent of rainforest plants have been studied for medicinal properties.
- 8) More than one third of our biggest cities, including New York, Bogota, Tokyo and Barcelona, get a significant proportion of their high-quality drinking water from protected forests.
- 9) The tallest tree in the world is called Hyperion. It's a coast redwood from California that is an incredible 115.61 metres tall. The largest tree in the world by volume is a giant sequoia called General Sherman which has a trunk 10 metres round and contains an estimated 1486 cubic metres of wood.
- 10) A large oak tree can transpire 151,000 litres of water in a year. On average, 40 percent of rainfall over land originates from evapotranspiration from plants.

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)