

Hear Me, See Me, Employ Me

Burwood Brickworks Rooftop Farm



Cultivating
Community
Growing a better food future

Project Report
Q2 23-24



Hear Me, See Me, Employ Me

Hear Me, See Me, Employ Me is a WISE (Work Integrated Social Enterprise) program for CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) deaf and hard of hearing people to develop their employability skills. The key outcome of this program is to create opportunities for CALD deaf and hard of hearing groups to secure meaningful employment.

The delivery of this program is funded by Brian Davis Foundation, Victorian Department of Jobs and Lord Mayor Foundation with delivery location support from Frasers Property, and our generated income from collaborations and fee for services.

Key Program Area Outputs

18 Deaf & Hard of Hearing participants over 3 years

12 Scholars (paid participants)

75 Hrs of Deaf awareness training for employees/employers

15 Team members trained in Australian Sign Language over 3 yrs

300 Participants in workshops

4 Part time jobs for program development and delivery

17 Sustainable Development Goals to map project against

4 Principles of Social Justice to align project against



Update Q2FY24 / Totals

5/8 Deaf & Hard of Hearing participants.

4/4 Participants paid award rate Casuals.

177/260 Hours worked by WISE participants.

120/772 Hours of employment and skills training.

34/238 Participants in workshops

4/4 Part time program delivery roles created.

10 Sustainable Development Goals linked.

4 Principles of Social Justice align to program.

Sustainable Development Goals

When mapped against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Hear Me, See Me, Employ Me Project & the Rooftop Farm have made steps towards achieving these outcomes for low-income communities & CALD groups.



We have learnt a great deal from our first year delivering the Hear Me, See Me, Employ Me program. This includes the need to understand the diversity, different abilities and needs of the deaf community better in Yr2, engage deeper with the deaf community and to utilise independent interpreter services at critical times. We also see the need to broaden our links to other deaf groups and connected organisations beyond initial partners. We will be recruiting for a new Link Worker in 2024 and consideration to contract with Deaf Community members is likely so that a more robust co design process can support Yr. 2 into Yr. 3 of the program. We also very much hope to join up the dots across other WISE organisations within the Community of Practice so that a super employment pathway could benefit our participants. We also learnt the need to spend more time sharing our experiences and any reasonable adjustments with our colleagues and therefore other employers to support any overcoming of employment barriers.

We have worked with Auslan Services and Expression Australia including cultural briefing for Frasers Property. This has increased our Deaf Cultural awareness hours to 60. In December 2023 Gardening Australia have filmed the program. We have had site meetings with Federal MP Chisholm, Local MP for Box Hill and State Minister for Employment during Q2 FY24. We will be investing into 4 team members for Auslan training in Q3 FY24 and a further 3 in Q4 FY24 to a higher level.

One of the participants could join the Cultivating Community Team on part time permanent contract in Q3 FY24 as Hortus growth continues subject to interview in Q3FY24.

Year 2 starts Feb 2024 with current proposed 2x 10 week programs (Foundation and Experience). We've built a robust system to help us evaluate everyone's progress and we will use it to inform employment stage. We will be extending HMSMEM to Baking in late Q3 FY24 linking to Foundation and Experience elements only.



General Farm Update Q2 2024

5 Deaf & Hard of Hearing participants

4 Participants have secured casual employment (4 scholars)

177 Hours of employment completed by participants.

120 Hours of employability skills training on site

34 Participants in workshops on site

6 Free workshops and additional activities planned for Q3 and Q4 FY24 funded by Whitehorse City Council

1 Communal Growing space active

1 Local group for farm tours

6 Volunteer groups on site including Deloitte's, ERM, AMES, Frasers, Wiley, Quinn House

3 Language groups represented on the farm (Chinese, English, AusLan)

305 kgs of fresh produce for food literacy programs during Q2FY24

Overall Rooftop Farm Objectives

- Learning & Education Pathway location
- Develop a Seasonal Grow Plan
- Develop a Workshop program.
- Engage community groups in Burwood & Box Hill
- Develop meaningful education resources.
- Maintain space to high ethical standard.
- Grow produce for food literacy.

Spring has been busy at the Farm as we continue to navigate our first full calendar year on location (March 2024 being a year). We unfortunately lost many seedlings due to surprise heat and the poor glass house. We are grateful that Frasers will be investing in a new green house for our propagation in 2024 and they secured the procurement of additional Biofilta Wicking Beds for improved sustainable growing. We will be sourcing our seedlings and seeds from ethical organisations and collaborative groups in 2024.

The installation of the Wicking Beds highlighted challenges with rooftop farming in terms of soil, infrastructure, price and sustainability and we are grateful for the volunteer support with these. Volunteer groups are critical for the space to keep on top of the weeds and larger tasks to maintain the farm and its quality. OHS continues to be important to us in an open environment such as the farm and watering systems have been improved to avoid leaks, weekly systems checks are carried out and in Q3 FY24 improvements will be made to the fenced areas and sheds.

There is now in place new signage at the Rooftop in languages and welcome video that includes Auslan and Chinese translations. The Communal Hub is now much more active and housing practical workshops and activities and is growing a variety of items for community use including a stronger emphasis on First Nation items. The space housed a school visit from a CC Garden Program that also resulted in the procurement of Biofilta beds and additional employment for Hortus to install them.

Q3 will have a scarecrow competition launched at the Farm with additional workshops and a series of activities will be planned funded by Whitehorse Council to engage more CALD communities. CC is planning also to hold a Harvest Festival event for its team at the Farm in March. The anticipated opening of the restaurant will also be something we look forward to collaborating on.



