



CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Annual report

Harvest of 2020 - 21



Cultivating
Community

growing a better world





Cultivating Community

Growing a better food future.

Cultivating Community is a Melbourne-based not-for-profit organisation committed to providing opportunities for low-income and migrant communities to access healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.

Our vision is for joyful, connected communities who care for each other and our earth.

Our purpose is to inspire a healthy and just world.

Our mission is to work with diverse and low-income communities to create fair, secure and resilient food systems.



Welcome

Wominjeka أهلا بك 欢迎 Chào mừng
Добро пожаловать Hoşgeldiniz

Cultivating Community respectfully acknowledges the peoples of the Kulin Nations, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we garden, cook and work. We extend our acknowledgment to the ancestors and elders of our public housing community, and the rich and varied cultures that come together on the estates where we cook and garden.

Despite another year overshadowed by the pandemic, Cultivating Community has been robust in its management of the impact of the pandemic upon its team, participants and its projects and with new challenges emerging at least weekly, we have learnt and adapted as we have gone on.

Credit must go to the team members who have had routines disrupted but have found time to learn new ways of doing things and implement new systems, ideas and embrace opportunities, maintaining their commitment and sense of purpose.

We have been disappointed at being required by public health teams to close the community gardens and its impact upon over 750 gardeners during 2020 but have successfully advocated for this not to occur in 2021 for the benefit of all.

We also advocated for the gardeners' views to be heard regarding standardisation of plots in the public housing garden upgrades but were unsuccessful. We are truly sorry about both these things. Our intention is to look to the future and to find better ways of involving our gardeners and helping them get heard by decision-makers.

We have been one of the leading social enterprises in a collaboration called Moving Feast. This has strengthened our resolve around improving wider food systems with a collective voice but importantly shared actions.

It increased the supply of culturally appropriate fresh food via growing and cooking, brought openness and trust amongst organisations, created employment for many and in the coming year will develop upskilling for many within a Green Jobs Pathway.

Our systems are stronger with a team better informed about digital technology, finance management that is looking to understand pipelines, social media engagement growing, and our workforce better informed about the processes & procedures that impact them. Our wellbeing awareness and value at work is also something we care deeply about, and our team wraps its arms around anyone in our workforce who is challenged by current circumstances.

The board has had a busy year of activity and has established Audit and Risk and Governance subcommittees, both of which have informed board decision making and enabled more time for strategic discussion.



We have also welcomed a new board member, Maggie Mackeand. Thanks to all board members for their active participation, Your commitment, energy and enthusiasm is a perfect match for the purpose and motivation of our team and we thank you for staying with us through a tough pandemic year. Thanks especially to Rob for his continued communication and leadership despite challenging circumstances.

After 12 years we have said goodbye and a big thank you to long-term Board Member Robbie Kershaw. Robbie has been part of so many important and critical stages in the life of Cultivating Community in particular most recently as our Secretary. He has, from a Board perspective, held Cultivating Community together in storms and celebrated it during sunshine and shared not only his knowledge of hydroponic gardening but also his annual calendars from BOM with us. His historical knowledge of Cultivating Community and it's Governance will be hard to replace, and we trust this will not be the last we see of Robbie at Cultivating Community. The team and board will always see him as a friend and would welcome him at any time.



We look forward to the financial year 2022 as we learn to live with Covid. We will improve our impact measurement and expand our social enterprise models that can enable meaningful employment for a variety of groups, especially those from our community of interest. We will develop better ways to empower our participants to have a stronger say in what's right for the spaces they grow and cook their amazing food in and embed ways they can have more control. Our social enterprises will be Hortus, our Garden Design, Build and Maintenance Service, our High Rise Community Bakery and a partnership project with Farmwall developing Microgreens. We will build on the Let's Keep Cooking work that recently started in the North Richmond Estate and look forward to other collaborations in public housing as part of the renewal agenda across the City.

DR KAREN WHITE
Board President

ROB REES MBE DL
Chief Executive Officer

Harvest of 2020 - 21

ENGAGEMENT + COLLABORATION



Passionate volunteers supported our food programs and projects.



Came along to our 23 **workshops and webinars** - learning and building on their composting and food growing skills!

Volunteer hours generously contributed by our interns and our volunteers.



We said goodbye to legends Kaz Phillips, Margaret Suilkowski, Stephanie Bubnich and Max Barlow.

We welcomed Abi Ross, Cassandra Hogan, Callum Rodgers, Cerys ApRees, Dwij Jeetun, Jess Mbaya, Jim Singline, Ruby Power, Stuart Bladin, Simone Broekman, Tara Behen and Maggie McKeand.



Supporters engaged with our stories of food and community through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube and our Seasonal Newsletter.

We continued our **membership** to:



SUSTAIN



IMPACT + EVALUATION

Carlton Kitchen Library's stories of most significant change showed the impact in food security, wellbeing and sustainability.



2 ZERO HUNGER



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Top 5 Sustainable Development Goals our programs addressed.

13 goals & 57 targets aligned to our strategies and programs.



The CKL enabled me to try different cooking equipment and food, to 'expand my horizon'. Also, instead of rampant consumerism, I can use the CKL service to live a more sustainable life.

Keeping Fresh Food On the Table Fresh Food Parcel evaluation enriched how we delivered food relief during and beyond lockdowns. We adapted based on feedback, launching a more discreet and accessible food relief service in a safe space, and transitioning fresh food parcels distribution to an outdoor market style model.



31%

Reported in the past 12 months they had run out of food and could not afford to buy anymore.



93% reported that their worries about how they could afford food had increased since COVID-19.

86.3%

Were happy with the quantity and quality of food received each week

The fresh food you share with us allows us to cook with our cultural flavours... this is very good, as fresh food gives us choice and allows us to enjoy eating

Our Gardens

Public Housing Community Gardens have enabled tenants to connect with each other through growing culturally appropriate fresh food for over 25 years. Our School Food Gardens program enriches the school curriculum by giving kids the opportunity to learn about healthy eating, sustainability and growing food!

21 Community Gardens

On Public Housing Estates across 13 suburbs in Melbourne.

729 tenant gardeners

Growing fresh food for their families and cultivating community across 802 garden plots.

Horticulture/Maintenance

This year we introduced a new team role, with a focus on providing Horticulture and Maintenance support to each community garden community. Our team has worked hard on improving the way we work to best support our gardeners.

Garden Improvements

Garden improvements complete at 25 King and Milarri! Improvement projects at Flemington and Lennox are underway.

Seeds for Joy

15 volunteers raised seedlings to support our community gardeners while in lockdown!

Community Gardens

Ascot Vale, Carlton, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Flemington, Northcote, North Melbourne, Prahran, Richmond, St. Kilda, South Melbourne, South Yarra, Windsor



1,690 students

Learning to grow food, act sustainably and connect with nature and food cycles.

Seven schools

Engaging our School Food Garden Program as part of their curriculum.

3 School Gardens Awards

South Eastern Regional Award - St Anthony's.

Greatest Demonstrated Improvement of Green Space - Our Lady of Fatima and Aberfeldie.

School Food Gardens

At Aberfeldie Primary, Mother of God, Our Lady of Fatima, St. Joseph's, Parkhill Primary, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. Anthony's Primary.



Let's Keep Cooking

Our Food System programs continue to keep our community connected through food - we've supported the community through food relief efforts while fostering food skills through our cooking classes. Let's Keep Cooking initiatives will continue to support our community to get back to cooking and sharing together.

9,611 food relief packs

made up for predominantly public housing residents with our partners Open Table and Yarra Libraries through food relief and fresh food markets.

451 loaves baked

at High Rise Community Bakery - plus 754 bagels, 334 focaccia slices! We welcomed 15 participants to join our crew, increasing local baking skills.



95 youth cooking sessions

delivered in-person and online, fostered food skills and knowledge sharing with around 35 participants. Over 140 ingredient packs were delivered to participants and about 300 healthy meals were served in in-person sessions. All students reported they enjoyed the program, with 87% cooking more at home since joining the class and 85% feeling more confident to cook a meal by themselves.

Let's Keep Cooking

commenced in North Richmond supporting food programs and partnerships on the estate.



116 members

At Carlton Kitchen Library - using our COVID-19 delivery service and accessing equipment from our 431 item inventory.

Compost Projects

We're supporting compost projects at Fitzroy Primary School, Collingwood Children's Farm and North Melbourne from installation, to management and community education. These projects will address local food waste.



Our Food Programs

Fitzroy Urban Harvest Food Swap, After School Cooking, Meet & Eat, Carlton Kitchen Library, High Rise Community Bakery, Fresh Food Relief Packs, Let's Keep Cooking City of Yarra and North Richmond, Project Respect and Emerald Park Hill Community Gardens.



Project Highlights

Moving Feast GROW

Through the lockdowns we have provided organisations with 2750kg of fresh food to distribute for food relief; Fitzroy Yarra Libraries, BANH, Richmond Youth Hub, Feed Me Bellarine, The Venny and DIVRS.

Our collaboration continues with Alphington Farmgate: Farmwall, Collingwood Children's Farm, Melbourne Farmers Market and Melbourne Food Hub. We also support Kensington Stockyard Community Garden.

A huge thank you to CERES Propagation and the University of Melbourne (Burnley Campus) for their plants and produce donations, and to our amazing group of volunteers who lend a hand rain or shine!

After School Cooking

The year brought us some now familiar challenges due to COVID-19 restrictions - but this time we were ready to respond with a plan to keep up engagement no matter what! Our online classes included Prahran, Fitzroy and Ascot Vale, creating a safe online space for kids to meet and learn from one another, which was a joy to watch.

They have been able to show exceptional kitchen skills such as safe knife practices, following instructions, reading ahead in the recipe, measuring ingredients accurately and have shown confidence to determine when their food is cooked or ready for the next step.



High Rise

High Rise Community Bakery has gained momentum this past year, moving from monthly to weekly baking sessions. Each week, our wood-fired oven bakes sourdough loaves, focaccia, and bagels that are then sold at affordable prices at the Fitzroy Community Grocer and via our new online web store.

Between lockdowns, local community members have come together to knead, shape, bake and share knowledge of culturally diverse recipes such as himbasha and stuffed Turkish breads. Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, we have continued to nurture community connections through our weekly market stall and growing social media presence, but we are most excited for local hands coming together once again over a love of bread, fire, and community in the near future.

North Richmond Placemaking

Thanks to the Department of Justice, a partnership Capital Grant Fund North Richmond Precinct Grant was secured to upgrade spaces around the Estate. This includes upgrades to kitchen and toilets, the installation of solar lighting, improvements to the cafe entrance and new garden spaces at North Richmond Community Health and Belgium Avenue. Most of the planned works will happen in year F22.

Hortus - Dementia Garden

This early Hortus contract with the City of Melbourne involved our team maintaining the sensory garden at Kensington Neighbourhood House. We developed materials and activities to engage individuals of multicultural backgrounds including some who may be living with Dementia. We look forward to this project continuing into next year.



Thanks to our partners

Australian Catholic University, Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House, Brimbank City Council, City of Melbourne, City of Whitehorse, City of Yarra, Coop, Department of Education and Training, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, EnviroCom Australia, Ftizroy Learning Network Harold Mitchell, Jack Brockhoff Joe's Market Garden, St. John's Primary School, Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund, MaiTri, Maribyrnong City Council, Moving Feast, North Richmond Community Health, Open Gardens Victoria, Open Table, Perpetual, Planted Places, PwC, RMIT, The Diggers Club, Swinburne, Yarra Libraries

Thanks to our team

Staff

Community Gardens Team

Ben Liney (Team Leader), Abdelaziz Osman, Callum Rodgers, Dwij Jeetun, Heidi Sanghvi, Janice Miller, Jim Singline, Kaz Phillips (2020), Poppy Turbiak, Sifiso Mdluli, Thomas Douglas.

School Food Gardens Team

Ellen Regos, (Team Leader), Jess MBaya, Joanna Temme, Liz Hubbert, Margaret Suilkowski (2020), Maria Tsorakidis, Stephanie Bubnich.

Food Systems Team

Peta Christensen, (Team Leader), Cassandra Hogan, Eloise Easton, Georgia Karavis, Tara Behen.

Projects Team

Cerys ApRees, Simone Broekman, Stuart Bladin.

Finance & Admin Team

Rob Rees (CEO), Abi Ross (2021), Julia Pecoraro, Luke McLennan, Ruby Power, Thi Tran.

Board

Karen White (Chair), Chris Newey (Treasurer), Robbie Kershaw, (Secretary), Chris Williams, Louise Doyle, Jane Hadjion, Maggie McKeand, Dayo Sowunmi.

Volunteers

Ciannon Cazaly, Claire Perrone Eliza Wilkinson, Erika (Vanessa) Garcia, George Clipp, Georgie Davie Gwyneth Salisbury, Holly Willis Isabelle David, James Sunderland Jessica Mantilla, Jing Yi Lee Juliette Guerrero, Karen White Laura Marchese, Lawson Chan Lora Patterson, Margaret Finger Marissya Rafiq, Matthew Woliansky Melissa Buckley, Miranda Gilbert Mo Borghetto, Ruby Power Rui Xu, Sara Loots, Shalini Christodoulou, Shani Shafrir Sofiah Fauzi, Sofie Lemaire Sonya Butler, Stuart Bladin Thi Tran.

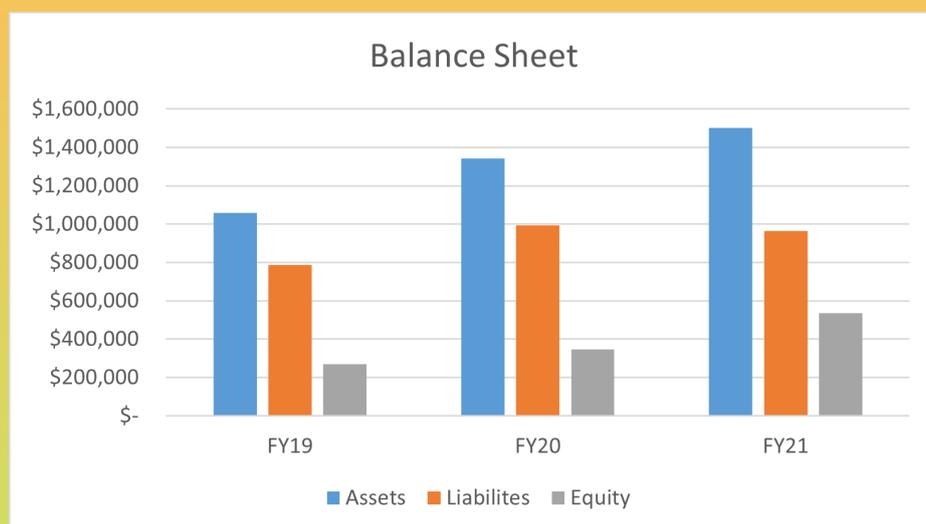
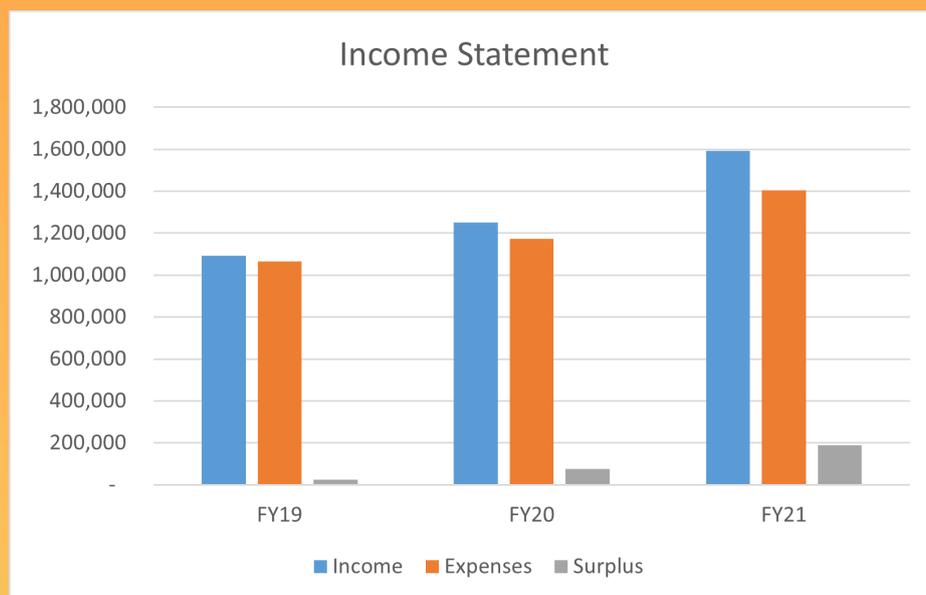
Financial Summary

We recorded a surplus of \$189,120 in the 2020 – 2021 Financial year.

The surplus was larger than anticipated and was mostly the result of project funds being received at a time when those projects were unable to be undertaken. A range of Government support programs during the year including Job Keeper, Job Maker and the Cash Flow Boost program enabled us to deploy our team to other work.

The additional financial support allowed us to protect jobs and critical project funding during the Victorian lockdowns. We formalised our new Audit & Risk Committee which provided improved governance and support the Board.

We have also grown our online fundraising income and have three current campaigns that our supporters can donate to. For more details go to: <https://givenow.com.au/cultivatingcommunity>





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