

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

# ANNUAL REPORT

July 1st 2022- June 30th 2023





HAMIDA



Growing a  
better food future

# ABOUT CULTIVATING COMMUNITY



**Cultivating Community is an accredited Australian social enterprise, a nonprofit and a public benevolent organization. We tackle social justice issues via the form of gardening, cooking, baking and helping to create spaces to develop skills, connection and employment.**

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 lands where we cook, bake, farm and garden.

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.





# CEO MESSAGE

## **ROB REES MBE**

*Chief Executive Officer*

A trading year that had a return to post pandemic services, relative normality and a year when covid is no longer an excuse. It's been another year of growth and change in improving our systems, evaluation and reporting as well as the ways in which we co design programs. Our first year of new strategy has been completed with some strong progress in many areas such as work pathways, new sites and programs, creating social connection roles, increasing collaborative approaches and creating a strong maintenance team within the community gardens. It's been a pleasure to finally return to face to face at 106 impacted due to covid and building upgrades. Some capital grants have allowed us to create better hybrid opportunities of working as well as invest in some new equipment to increase our capacity and diversity across many programs.

The small part time team continue to work with purpose and aligned to our values working hard across thirty-nine different locations. We look forward to the next year and building upon our sustainable development goals, increase our social connection and create meaningful ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) models for organisations across Victoria alongside the scale up of our WISE (Work Integrated Social Enterprise) pathway Hear Me, See Me, Employ Me.



# BOARD MESSAGE

Its been a time of positive change within the Board at Cultivating Community. We were sorry to see longstanding Board Member Louise Doyle leave us at the November AGM and also a change in treasurer with the departure of Chris Newey. Both had made huge contributions in helping us manage during the pandemic and with strategic changes and improvements in our systems and governance operations. At the last AGM we increased our Board Membership with the appointment of three new individuals - Haley, Jasmin and Pirathap who have all eagerly taken on accountable roles within the Board as Company Secretary, Chair of Governance Committee and Treasurer. They have joined the board bringing refreshed insights, skills and innovation that add value to our purpose now and for the future..

I lead a Board that is majority identifying as female - something reflected within the executive also and one that has lived experiences of our community of interest. This reporting year we have been particular pleased by the relationship with Homes Victoria and are grateful for the conversations, openness and vision for the future. Its been a delight to see the vision for our WISE pathway come to fruition made even more special by the opportunity to manage Melbournes largest Rooftop Farm as a new hub for our learning and education work. Our ability to be able to measure impact, utilise modern systems, improve our social connections is notable and is something we will continue to invest in over the coming financial year. May I thank my Board Colleagues, all our volunteers, our executive team and all our customers, investors, donors and collaborators , gardeners and program participants for your work and contributions in making this year as impactful as it has been.



**JANE HADJION**

*PRESIDENT*



# Harvest

of 2022-23

## VOLUNTEERS

A return rate of  17%

NPS of  69%

Promoters **10**

Passives **2**

Detractor **1**

## WORKSHOPS

NPS of  100%

**847** participants

**73** workshops

## EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY

Individuals directly employed from CALD community.

### Full Time Equivalent

**14.56** +1.98  
from  
2022

2021 **3**

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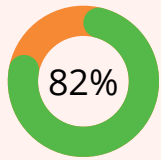
2022 **15**

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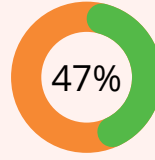
2023 **18**

# SOCIAL CONECCTEDNESS RESULTS

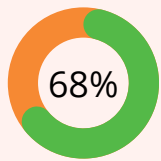
Our first-2023 results across 11 of our programs measuring social connection:



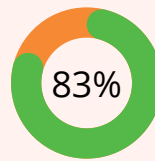
of respondents said they feel good when taking part in the specific activity



Of respondents said they feel comfortable talking about problems with others in their respective activities



Of respondents said they believe that members of their activity care about each other



Of respondents said they believe their activity is lead well

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

- 21** GARDEN LOCATIONS
- 800+** GARDENERS
- 151** ON WAITLIST
- 81** EMPTY PLOTS
- 36** NEW INDUCTIONS

## YOUTH COOKING

- 4** LOCATIONS
- 11** VOLUNTEERS & PLACEMENT STUDENTS
- 25** NEW YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATING
- 110** SESSIONS
- 750+** MEALS FOR PARTICIPANTS AND FAMILIES



# Hear Me, See Me, Employ Me & Rooftop Farm (March 2023)

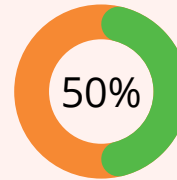
- 6** DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PARTICIPANTS
- 31** HOURS OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TRAINING ON SITE
- 46** WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
- 2** PAID WORKSHOPS DELIVERED
- 17** LOCAL ORGANISATIONS ENGAGED

## 419 KG

FRESH PRODUCE FOR  
FOOD LITERACY  
PROGRAMS



PRINCIPLES OF  
SOCIAL JUSTICE  
ALIGNED TO  
PROJECT



PARTICIPANTS  
HAVE SECURED  
CASUAL  
EMPLOYMENT  
WITH US

Ethical Report  
to decision  
making  
0 RISK 22-23  
1 RISK 21-22

Ethical  
Procurement

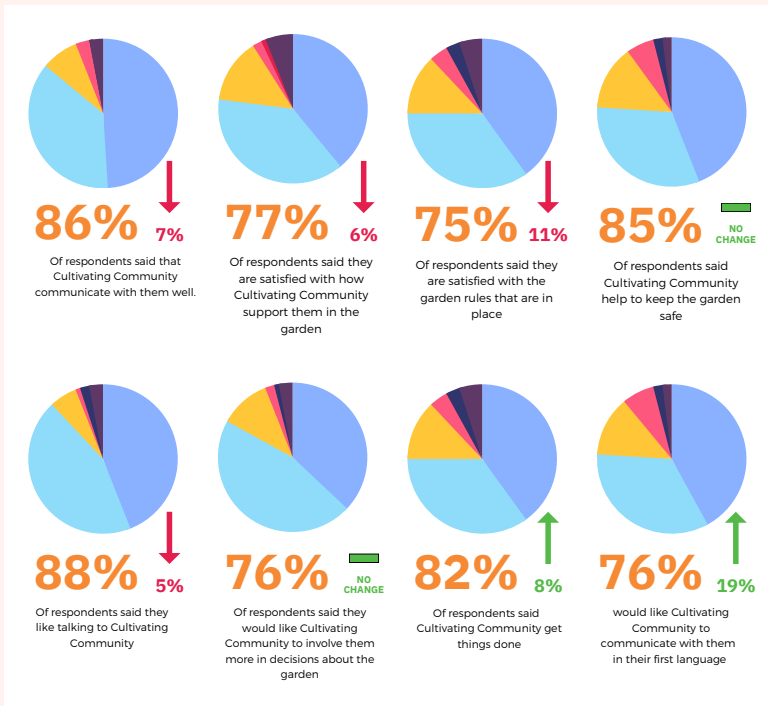
9 SOCIAL  
ENTERPRISES 2023  
6 SOCIAL  
ENTERPRISES 2022

## Greener Practice

- 1% FOR PLANET MEMBERS
- MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY ESG REPORT
- ROOFTOP FARM MANAGEMENT
- INCREASED GREEN WASTE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS
- 3 GREEN DESIGN CONSULTS +2 SINCE 2022



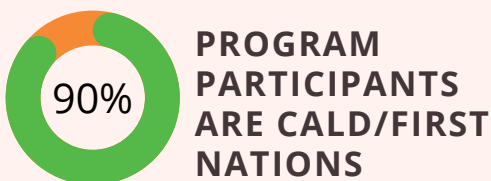
# Gardener Feedback Survey Results 2023 vs 2022



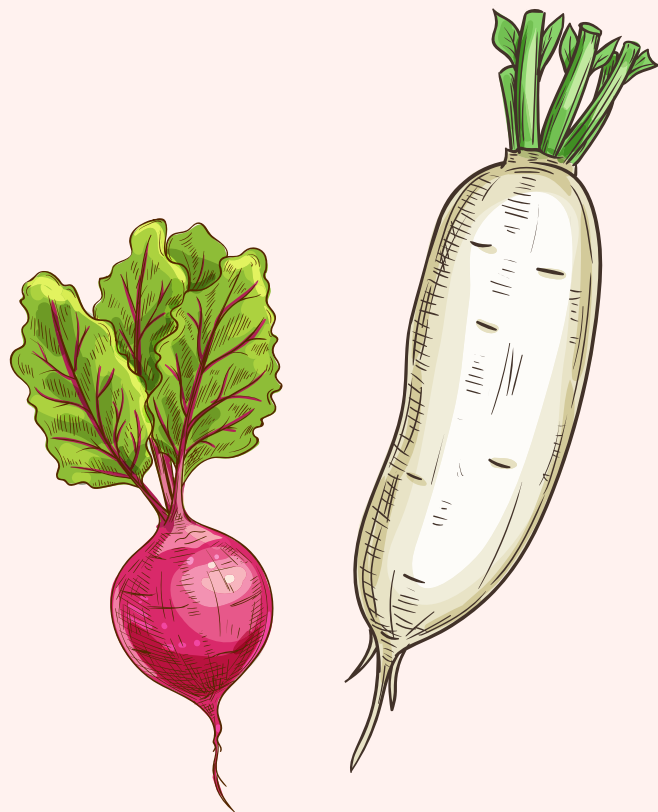
117 gardeners participated in the survey. The survey link was translated into six most common languages: English, Russian, Chinese, Turkish, Arabic, and Vietnamese.

The survey has shed light on important issues related to infrastructure, human resources, enhancing connections, and ensuring safety within the garden community. These findings serve as valuable input for our ongoing efforts to address these areas.

● Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Not Sure ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree ● Blank ↑ Increase ↓ Decrease ■ No change



ESTIMATES FOR THE GENDER AND CULTURAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY AS THEY ARE NOT CURRENTLY FORMALLY MEASURED



# Education Settings Engaged

## Who have we advised:

- Victorian College for the Deaf- input into Social Enterprises and programs, secondments of team members from VCD to CC
- Fitzroy North Secondary – curriculum and garden advice.
- Footscray North Primary – garden design, build and collaborative garden advice.
- Home Economics Victoria – presentation at annual conference on work of CC
- Debney Meadows Primary- input into cultural school canteen design, possible supply chain from Farm.
- Presbyterian Ladies College – Y12 field trip visit and collaborative possibilities with rooftop farm.

**HIGH RISE  
BAKERY** 4

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**AFTER SCHOOL  
COOKERY** 2

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**MELBOURNE CITY  
FC - JUMPSTART  
PROJECT** 4

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**COLLABORATIVE  
SCHOOL  
GARDENS** 3

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**INTERNSHIPS  
AND PROGRAM  
LINKS** 6

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**GARDEN  
EDUCATOR  
SCHOOLS** 5

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**WORKSHOPS** 3



# Employee Survey Results

## 2022 vs 2023

Gallup's engagement survey has identified the 12 employee needs that are essential to team satisfaction.

- +0.1** HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR COMPANY AS A PLACE TO WORK?  
= I KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AT WORK.
- 0.05** I HAVE THE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT I NEED TO DO MY WORK RIGHT.
- +0.35** AT WORK, I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO WHAT I DO BEST EVERY DAY.  
= IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS, I HAVE RECEIVED RECOGNITION OR PRAISE FOR DOING GOOD WORK.
- 0.1** MY SUPERVISOR, OR SOMEONE AT WORK, SEEMS TO CARE ABOUT ME AS A PERSON.
- 0.1** THERE IS SOMEONE AT WORK WHO ENCOURAGES MY DEVELOPMENT.  
= AT WORK, MY OPINIONS SEEM TO COUNT.
- +0.05** THE MISSION OR PURPOSE OF MY COMPANY MAKES ME FEEL MY JOB IS IMPORTANT.
- 0.15** MY ASSOCIATES OR FELLOW EMPLOYEES ARE COMMITTED TO DOING QUALITY WORK.
- +0.15** I HAVE A BEST FRIEND AT WORK.
- +0.05** IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, SOMEONE AT WORK HAS TALKED TO ME ABOUT MY PROGRESS.
- 0.05** THIS LAST YEAR, I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITIES AT WORK TO LEARN AND GROW.

## Sustainable Development Goals Mapping



This year, **Partnerships for the Goals** joined our top five with 35 projects matching. This moved **Reduced Inequalities** to 6th place, and **Responsible Consumption and Production** to 7th place.

## Mapping against each SDGs and their targets

This year we mapped 63 of our current projects against the SDGs and their targets: aligning to 16/17 SDGs, and 80/169 targets.

**63**  
projects mapped to the SDG targets

**16/17 +2**  
SDGs aligned to one or more of our projects

**80/169 +14**  
Targets mapped to one or more of our projects





# Project Highlights

## Let's Keep Cooking North Richmond

Thanks to Frasers Property and their Living Building Challenge we have been able to maintain a key element of our Let's Keep Cooking work in North Richmond. This funding supported our Friday High Rise Baking sessions as well as our cooking projects within the precinct for young people and adults.

Cooking club has been a hugely successful program on the Richmond estate. After its slow burn from December 2022, with 3 participants, we now have 17 young people signed up (a number which still continues to grow!) and 7 regular and enthusiastic volunteers.

Cooking Club creates opportunity for young people to learn important and life-long kitchen skills, be exposed to new foods, connect with others, make friends and be themselves in a safe environment. The consistent amount of regular volunteers allows the young people to be supported with where they're at. Some young people are super enthusiastic about cooking and learning new recipes - a couple now aspire to be chefs! Other young people enjoy chatting about their life while mindfully preparing veggies.



Cooking club caters for all. Cooking Club has also been a space for parents to gather at pick up time and connect while trying the delicious food that their child is proud to show them.

We have continued delivering our High Rise baking group program, that runs Fridays where we bake focaccia, pizza, pide, and other cultural bread. This year we have had 12 people help bake bread, and around 25 people regularly come through the garden to have a chat and/or experience the serenity of the garden and the ovens' smell.

Anyone is welcome to get their hands in the dough and learn the process of bread making, share a home recipe with others, bring something along to cook in the wood-fired oven or sit and chat with others while enjoying the garden space.

The baking group means different things for different people, and is a space to feel connected to ourselves, each other and nature.

# Project Highlights



## Hear Me, See Me, Employ Me

in January 2023 thanks to Philanthropic Funding from Brian Davis Foundation and the amazing contribution of in-kind support from Victorian College for the Deaf Cultivating Community began its WISE (Work Integrated Social Enterprise) pathway support young people from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community into the world of meaningful employment. Based within our collaborative garden spaces the initial stages of the program that is funded for three years has begun the process of developing soft skills around empathy, growth mindset, leadership and responsibilities as well as specific work ready skills.



# Project Highlights

## Community Gardens Rules and Guidelines



Homes Victoria invested in the first review of the Community Garden Rules since 2012. The process involved engaging a variety of gardeners, local offices of housing and our team members. A new set of rules have been proposed that also includes opportunity for new space use such as shared spaces for neighbours who may be facing physical challenges and we have tightened the process around serious breaches to conform to modern legislation to protect our team as well as users of the spaces.

This development work has also helped shape updated memorandums of understanding with local offices of housing and clearly defined agreements between all parties withing the Public Housing Community Gardens.



# Project Highlights

## Rooftop Farm at Burwood Brickworks



In March 2023 Frasers Property approached us with regards to the management of their rooftop farm. This is the largest rooftop farm space in Melbourne that sits above the most Sustainable Shopping Centre in Australia – as of June 2023. We agreed for a twelve-month lease of the space to invigorate the growing areas, develop sustainable growing models and engage CALD communities and others in this beautiful space.



# Thanks to

Hortus Customers, High Rise Customers and all our Fee for Service Customers.

*Major supporters include:*

Plantfulness, Frasers Property, Bendigo Bank, Bank Australia, PwC, ERM, Optimising, AS Planning, Yarra City, Homes Victoria, DFFH, DoJ, Vic Health, BANH, NRCH, Department of Education, Jobs Co, Jobs Victoria, Brian Davis Foundation, Paul Ramsey Foundation, Humanists Victoria, Moving Feast , Open Gardens Victoria, Paving the Way Forward North Melbourne, Lords Majors Charitable Foundation, Grant Thornton, Melbourne University, La Trobe University, ACU, Deakin University, Co Health, Yarra City, BANH, Engage North Richmond, Salvos.

# Thanks to our Team

## **We said goodbye:**

Asmaa, Ben, Janice, Julia, Rosie, Maddie, Sophia, Chris (Board Member) and Louise (Board Member)

## **We said hello:**

Amy, Sam, Joel, Henri, Wisnu, Mustafa, Judith, Samadi, Michela, Emily, Emma, Fraya, Haley (Secretary, Board Member) Pirathap (Treasurer, Board Member) and Jazmin (General Board Member)

## **All our volunteers and interns.**

## **Board**

Jane (President), Dayo (Vice President), Diana (General), Maggie (General), Karen (General).

## **Team Members**

Sifiso, Jess, Joanna, Heidi, Cerys, Thi, Simone, Tara , Eloise, Cassandra, Abdelaziz, Almari , Peta, Poppy, Jim, Rob

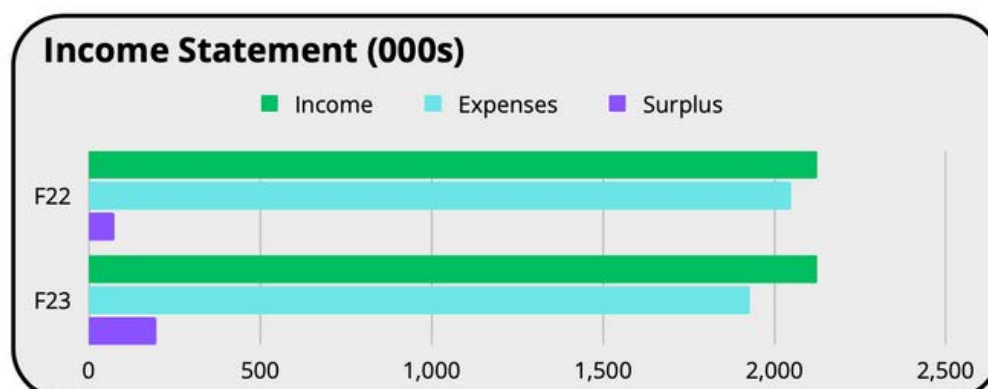
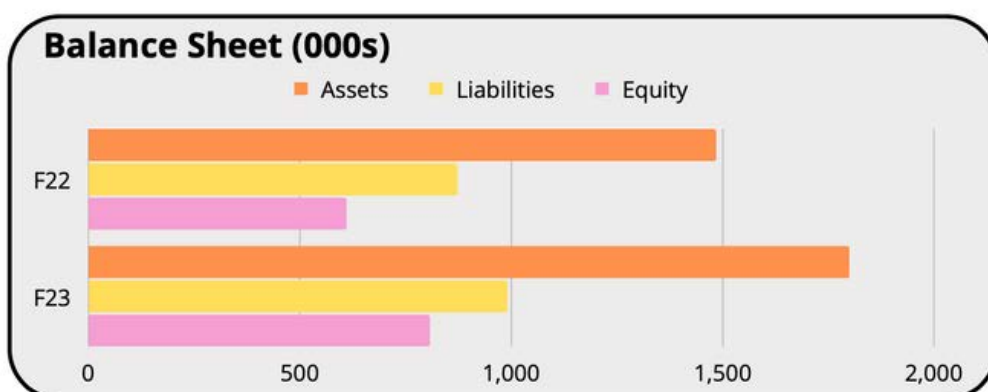


# Financial Summary

Cultivating Community generated a surplus of \$197,044 from a turnover of \$2,122,807 in the year ending 30 June 2023. This surplus has been added to Equity Funds and will be invested into areas where we see sustained meaningful measured impact or need aligned to our current strategy. This includes opportunities to secure collaborative impact opportunities with philanthropic, government and other social enterprise non profit and public benevolent partners. The organisation is in a good position for the forthcoming operational period and strategic direction.

The surplus has increased as a result of a reduction in associated staff costs combined with an increase in fee for service operations, a review of its contract arrangements with State Government, some large garden design and build activities and the first full year of trading post pandemic. As we enter FY 2024 Cultivating Community will strategically consider areas for investment, partners to collaborate with and the use of relevant equity to match fund and leverage with others even stronger social impact.

During this Financial Year the Board appointed a new Treasurer to the organisation and a new external Auditor and has maintained Audit and Compliance standards throughout the course of its business as part of good governance



# Learn more

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

**See our programs in action and find out about upcoming workshops, events and ways to get involved:**

**[cultivatingcommunity.org.au/](http://cultivatingcommunity.org.au/)  
[info@cultivatingcommunity.org.au](mailto:info@cultivatingcommunity.org.au)**

**[facebook.com/CultivatingCommunity](https://facebook.com/CultivatingCommunity)  
[instagram.com/CultivatingCommunity](https://instagram.com/CultivatingCommunity)**

