

ANNUAL REPORT



Cultivating
Community
Growing a better food future



**JULY 1ST 2023-
JUNE 30TH 2024**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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.



A NOTE FROM



ROB REES MBE

CEO Cultivating Community

An amazing year of continued growth and considered changes that brings Cultivating Community to a place of opportunity and control with its most diverse team in 26 years, a leadership group of ambition, and a portfolio of programs with a workforce of dedication and purpose.



JANE HADJION

Board President

Our Board are proud to have agreed a cutting edge employee agreement this year that sets the tone of our culture, aspirations and value we have in our employees. Alongside a refreshed Board we can now focus on our next 5 year plan that elevates the most impactful elements from our portfolio of programs



ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

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

Our Values

Positivity

Connection

Opportunity

Creativity

A PLACE THAT HAS SHARED PURPOSE

At Cultivating Community, we pride ourselves in sharing a common purpose which unites our leaders, employees and the organisations we partner with, fosters a collaborative and supportive work environment and guides our strategies, decisions and responses to challenges.

12

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES PROCURED FROM

14

NOT FOR PROFITS COLLABORATED WITH

500

SCHOOL LEADERS ENGAGED

2

POLY OR TAFE EXCURSIONS

12

SCHOOL INCURSIONS

6

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS



A PLACE THAT CARES ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

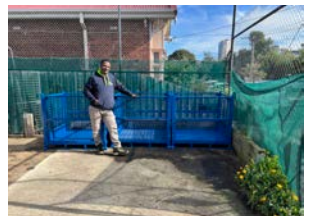
In a continuous effort to become a greener company, we actively encourage the adoption of sustainable practices within the organisation. This is done through education and employee engagement, waste management and recycling programmes, greener transportation and work ethics and the choice of green suppliers.

2023-2024 OVERVIEW



5
ADDITIONAL AEROBINS AT ROOFTOP GARDEN

100%
BATTERY POWERED TOOLS



2
NEW GREEN GARDEN DESIGNS



3000
PLASTIC BOTTLES UTILIZED IN NEW HQ FURNITURE



417KG
REDUCED LANDFILL WITH RECYCLED MATERIALS FROM OLD HQ

60%
OF HQ FURNITURE IS REPURPOSED

100%
SOLAR POWERED HQ



1%
PLANET MEMBERS

2650KG
FOOD GROWN FOR COMMUNITY FOOD LITERACY



100%
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS USING BOKASHI SYSTEM

100%
ETHICAL CLEANING MATERIALS AND CLEANING CONTRACTS



3
HYBRID VEHICLES



10
NEW HQ DESKS FROM ETHICAL WOOD PRODUCTION

1
NEW ORG-WIDE FOOD PROCUREMENT STANDARDS



A PLACE THAT ADDS VALUE TO GLOBAL GOALS

Each year we review our contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, mapping new projects or new ways we are delivering existing projects. This process informs where we are delivering, where we can improve and if we have been successful in our aims of the previous year.

Top 5 Sustainable Development Goals in 2023-2024



This year, **Reduced Inequalities** and **Responsible Consumption and Production** are back in our top five with 39 and 37 projects matching respectfully. This moved **Sustainable Cities and Consumption** to 6th place, and **Partnerships for the Goal** to 7th place.

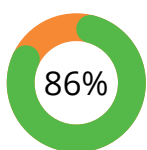
[See full SDG Report here](#)

A PLACE TO SOCIALLY CONNECT

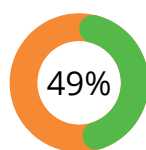
2024 Social Connectedness Survey Results

Our 2024 results across 11 of our programs measuring social connection:

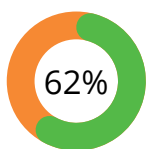
Most of our programs promote social connectedness by providing a space where people with shared interests, values or goals can connect. It creates a sense of belonging; people support and care about each other. This in turn leads to safer, healthier and more resilient communities.



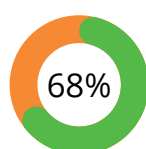
86% of respondents said they feel good when taking part in the specific activity



49% of respondents said they feel comfortable talking about problems with others in their respective activities



62% of respondents said they believe that members of their activity care about each other



68% of respondents said they believe their activity is lead well



A PLACE TO WORK AND VOLUNTEER

As part of our 2022-2025 Strategy to drive positive change using an asset-based approach, this year saw a significant increase in the employment and inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds. The approval of a new EBA also provided employees with several work benefits.

2023-2024 OVERVIEW

WORK AND LEARN WITH CULTIVATING COMMUNITY



PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT



VOLUNTEER WITH CULTIVATING COMMUNITY





A PLACE TO WORK AND VOLUNTEER

Employee Survey Results 2024 vs 2023

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

Each question asks for a rate between 0 (strongly disagree or low) and 5 (strongly agree or high)

8.94 -0.01

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR COMPANY AS A PLACE TO WORK?
(RATE BETWEEN 1 AND 10)

4.41 -0.14

I KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AT WORK

4.12 -0.33

AT WORK, I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO WHAT I DO BEST EVERY DAY

4.65 -0.15

MY SUPERVISOR, OR SOMEONE AT WORK, SEEMS TO CARE ABOUT ME AS A PERSON

4.53 -0.18

I HAVE THE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT I NEED TO DO MY WORK RIGHT

4.12 -0.43

IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS, I HAVE RECEIVED RECOGNITION OR PRAISE FOR DOING GOOD WORK

4.65 +0.15

THERE IS SOMEONE AT WORK WHO ENCOURAGES MY DEVELOPMENT

4.53 +0.03

AT WORK, MY OPINIONS SEEM TO COUNT

4.59 +0.21

THE MISSION OR PURPOSE OF MY COMPANY MAKES ME FEEL MY JOB IS IMPORTANT

4.53 -0.27

MY ASSOCIATES OR FELLOW EMPLOYEES ARE COMMITTED TO DOING QUALITY WORK

3.65 -0.10

I HAVE A BEST FRIEND AT WORK

4.24 -0.26

IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, SOMEONE AT WORK HAS TALKED TO ME ABOUT MY PROGRESS

4.24 -0.46

THIS LAST YEAR, I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITIES AT WORK TO LEARN AND GROW



TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Hi everyone! My name is Connor and I have been the Landscape Designer at Cultivating Community for the last year. I studied both a Bachelor of Environments majoring in Architecture and a Masters in Urban Horticulture, learning all things from design methods to plant science as well as environmental and sustainability practices for our cities.

My role at CC includes going to different sites across Melbourne ranging from our own Community Gardens in Public Housing to private residential gardens and schools, in order to generate a design based on the clients wishes and servicing the people who will be using the space. My design process involves meeting with people, finding out a wide range of stakeholder interests and ideas, and trying to blend them into a cohesive design which is accessible and open to all.



It feels a great honour and responsibility to help and be a part of the process which services so many people and it is always a special moment seeing designs come to fruition, made possible by the great people here who work so hard to build, service and maintain these spaces. A really proud moment was seeing the first Community Garden upgrade at Park Towers in South Melbourne, as we worked to convert the space to have easier access, safer walking conditions, larger vegetable plots at a more appropriate height, finishes which will reduce weeds and more sustainable design choices to reduce the amount of waste and materials needing replacement. We currently have another community garden under build and other HORTUS jobs in the wings, and I am really looking forward to seeing the final product of those other projects. I feel very lucky to be working here and have learnt so much from the rest of the team, and look forward to designing more gardens from here and beyond!

2023-2024 OVERVIEW

5 Designs/Projects for Cultivating Community (whether for construction or not), 1 gone to build with 1 more under construction

10 Designs/Projects for external clients, including consultation designs and documents, with 4 Projects planned to be completed by end of January 2025





A PLACE TO SOCIALLY CONNECT

Green Gathering overview

We have developed the Green Gatherings Model, which is a collaborative approach to fostering community development. Through activities focused on gardening, cooking, and sustainability, the gatherings promote environmental and social goals (ESGs) while building strong community connections. Central to the model are **Co-design** and **The Spectrum of Participation**, ensuring community members are active in shaping and managing their shared spaces, fostering a sense of ownership and collective growth

Green Gatherings and Ground Lease Model 1 (GLM1)

We introduced Green Gatherings at GLM1 sites in Brighton and Prahran, focusing on community development and food-growing literacy in the communal gardens. These sessions engage residents in cultivating their communal gardens while learning sustainable gardening practices and enhancing their knowledge of food production. Through co-design and The Spectrum of Participation, residents actively shape their shared spaces, building stronger community bonds and promoting environmental sustainability through hands-on learning and collaboration.

Spectrum of Participation

Varying degrees of engagement or involvement that participants can have in any program



2023-2024 Overview





A PLACE THAT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES

Paving The Way Forward: Cooking Up Change Program

The Cooking Up Change program, co-designed with participants completing Food Safety Training at Kensington Neighbourhood House, empowered individuals through food production, cooking, and sustainability skills. Using the Moving Feast Kitchen at the Queen Vic Market, participants developed and tested food products, gaining hands-on experience in food safety, sustainable sourcing, and entrepreneurship. They also explored cultural connections, sharing their heritage while adapting products based on customer feedback. The program fostered skill development, cultural expression, and community impact, equipping participants to create positive change through food.

6
PARTICIPANTS



100%
PROGRAM SATISFACTION

1
INDIRECT EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME

“ WORKING TOGETHER WITH A DIVERSE GROUP. GETTING TO KNOW THE LOCAL WAYS OF DOING THINGS AND LEARNING ABOUT BUILDING A BUSINESS BASED ON THE PRODUCT ”

HMSMEM Work Pathways

23
DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING PARTICIPANTS



42
MEMBERS FROM 6 ORGANISATIONS ATTENDED DEAF AWARENESS TRAINING

6
PARTICIPANTS IN CASUAL EMPLOYMENT WITH CC



2000+
HOURS OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TRAINING ON SITE



3
PARTICIPANTS IN PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT WITH CC





HARVEST 2023-2024

Workshops

119

WORKSHOPS DELIVERED IN TOTAL FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS, HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS, SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES



Across the organisation

3500+

APPROXIMATE PEOPLE WE SUPPORT



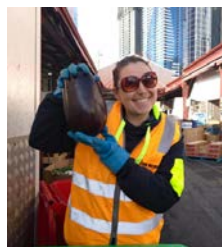
QVM Food Waste Audit

20.556

TONNES TOTAL WASTE AUDITED

937

GREEN BINS AUDITED



1128

APPROXIMATE STAFFING HOURS SPENT COLLECTING DATA

TOP 3 ITEMS FOUND IN GREEN BINS

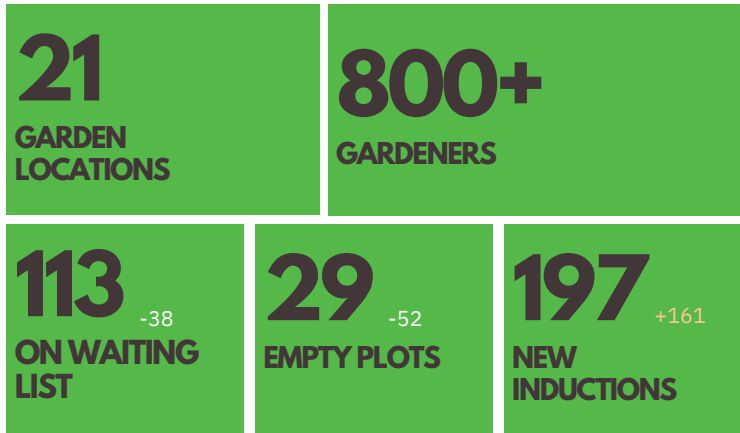
CAULIFLOWER LEAVES
CABBAGE LEAVES
MIXED LEAVES



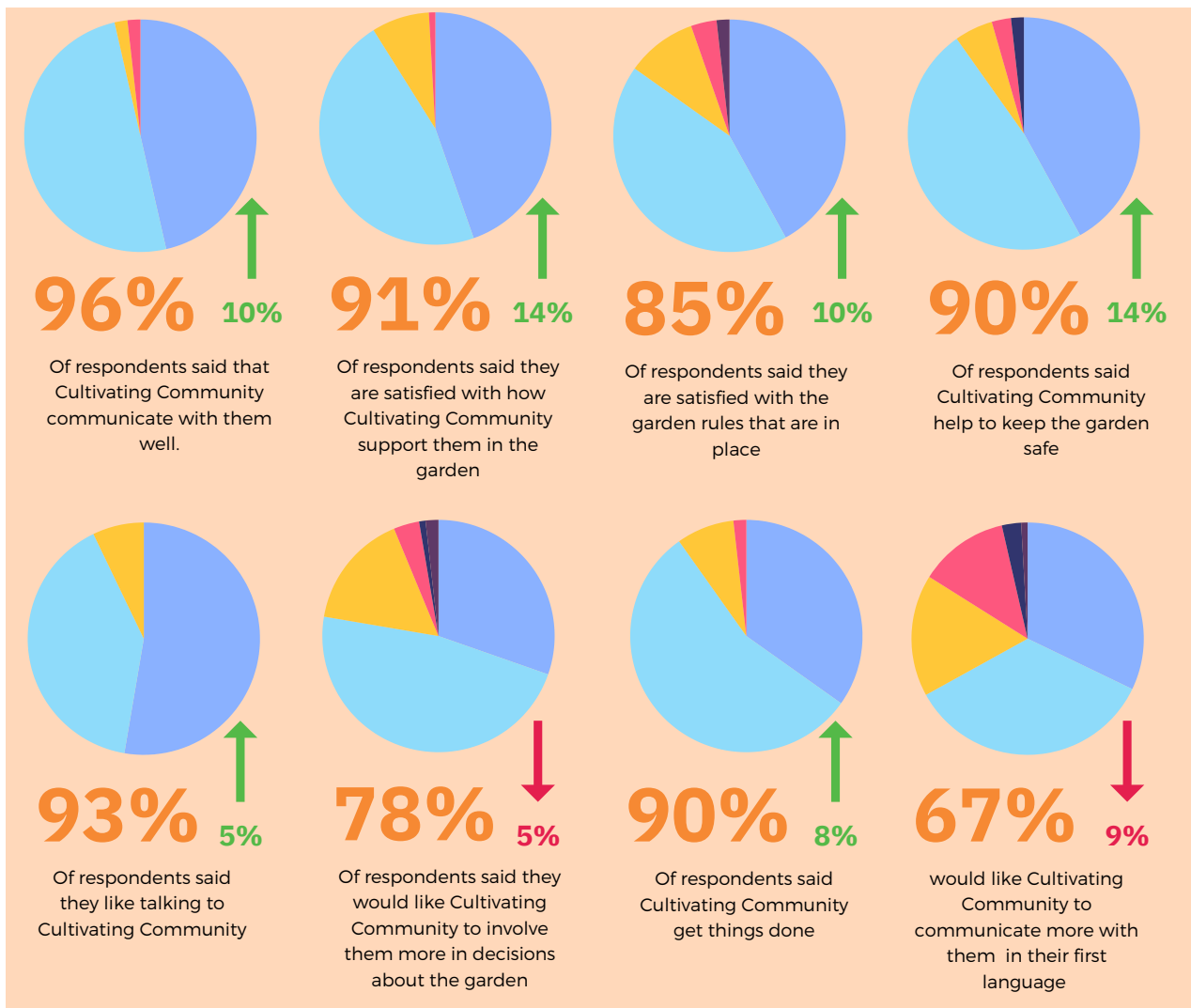


HARVEST 2023-2024

Community Gardens



Community Gardeners' Feedback Survey (112 participants)





COMMUNITY GARDEN REBUILD: PARK TOWERS





HARVEST 2023-2024

Rooftop Farm

1463KG

FRESH CULTURAL
PRODUCE HARVESTED

25

NEW WICKING
BEDS



4

COMPOST
BINS

4

WORM
FARMS

25

COMMUNITY
GROUP MEETINGS

20

WORKSHOPS

90

CORPORATE
VOLUNTEERS

125

PARTICIPANTS



**FOOD
SUPPLIED
TO:**

5

LOCAL
GROUPS,
CAFE AND
RESTAURANT

5

METRO
ORGANISATIONS

3

FOOD
LITERACY
PROGRAMS



Youth Cooking

3

LOCATIONS

29

SESSIONS



5-18

YEAR OLDS

8

PARTICIPANTS
ON AVERAGE



15

PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED SPECIFICALLY IN FOOD
WASTE REDUCTION CONTENT





FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Cultivating Community generated a surplus of \$496,423 from a turnover of \$3,322,026 in the year ending 30 June 2024. The organisation is in a strong financial position for the forthcoming operational period.

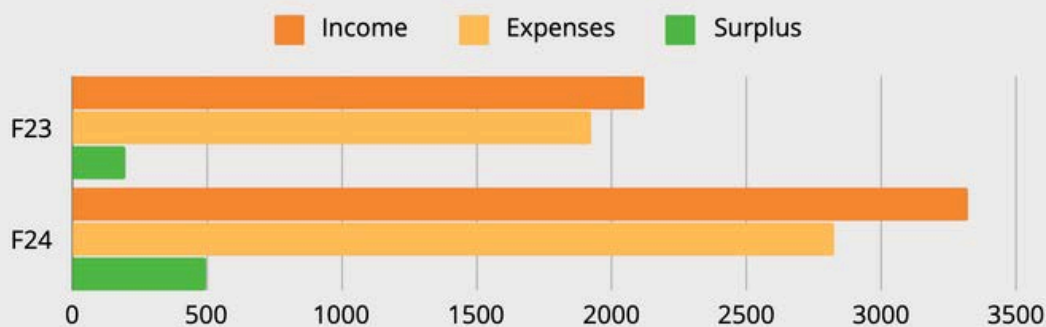
It's been a year of growth for Cultivating Community thanks in particular to the recognised need to invest in our Place Based community development work by Homes Victoria. The changes in this funding took some months into the financial year reported to come to fruition and had an impact on our end of year surplus as we managed uncertainty.

We also made a strategic move to diversify our income and improve other income streams. This has helped create the reported surplus. As our Annual Report goes to print and after taking into account a strategic conversation around risks and liabilities we are actively considering where to invest our "surplus for purpose ". This will position Cultivating Community to deliver additional place-based community development activities that add value to nature, the environment and opens up employment for those facing barriers to meaningful work.

Balance Sheet (000s)



Income Statement (000s)





FUTURE OUTLOOK

We are creating a new strategy for July 2025 - July 2030. This coming year will allow us to scale up and deepen certain areas of our work. We will test potential portfolio areas of considered impact around opening up employment, creating sense of belonging and ability to join in for others. We will utilise our expertise in design, build, maintenance and governance of green spaces. We will enhance our knowledge in cooking for independence and ageing well and activate a new kitchen in Prahran. In parallel to this we will review our measurement and evaluation framework and invest in quality internal systems to create effective solutions and greater impact.

We cannot ignore the challenges around the local and global economies and the impact that has on all our services, but we will with a strong governance structure, open and transparent process and an investment into our people steer through these difficult times for our sector.





A PLACE TO BE OPEN AND TRANSPARENT

At Board Level, we have Board Members with links to VicHealth and Regen Melbourne in the financial year reporting. No actual conflict occurred.

We have team members who work with partner organisations at CERES, Free to Feed, Collingwood Children's Farm, Fitzroy Learning Network. No actual conflict occurred.

We had one former team member who worked for Expression Australia whom we procured interpreter and cultural support from. No actual conflict occurred.

We are delighted that former team members continue to operate similar activities to those they had at Cultivating Community and see this as success in generating new micro enterprise opportunities with purpose.

A former team member of influence had close family members working for CERES from whom we procured items. This individual also had a close association with and is employed at Open Table and contributes strategically with another collaborator of ours, Community Grocer. Our related payment policy was activated for 6 months after this person of influence left Cultivating Community. We continue to engage with these partners and procure, fund, or sell as required. No actual conflict occurred.

At operational level, we partner with Moving Feast, a collaborative network of social enterprises that can often intertwine funding, decision-makers, and organisational links. We have also procured services from Moving Feast partners such as Streat, Open Food Network, Fruit 2 Work, Community Grocer, CERES. No actual conflict occurred.

We have received donations from an organisation where a team member's family is casually employed. No actual conflict occurred.





A PLACE TO COLLABORATE

We would like to thank in particular:

**FRASERS PROPERTY - BRIAN DAVIS
FOUNDATION - LORD MAYOR CHARITABLE
FOUNDATION - HOMES VICTORIA
DEPARTMENT FAMILIES, FAIRNESS AND
HOUSING - DEPARTMENT FOR JOBS, SKILLS
INDUSTRY AND REGIONS - YARRA CITY
HOUSING OFFICE - PLANTFULNESS - ROMBE
BAKED WONDER - CITY OF STONNINGTON
CITY OF YARRA - CITY OF WHITEHORSE - CITY
OF HOBSON'S BAY - CITY OF MELBOURNE
AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
PERPETUAL - SCANLON FOUNDATION
ROTARY BOX HILL BURWOOD - DELOTTES
LODDONSHIRE COUNCIL - OPEN GARDENS
VICTORIA - TETRIS - COMMUNITY HOUSING
LTD - BOX HILL TAFE - EXPRESSION AUSTRALIA
- VICTORIAN COLLEGE FOR THE DEAF -
BELGIUM AVENUE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE -
DEAF CONNECTED - SIGN FOR WORK MOVING
FEAST AND STREAT - HUMANISTS VICTORIA -
ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS - ALL OUR INTERNS -
ALL OUR BOARD - ALL OUR TEAM ALL OUR
CONTRACTORS - ALL OUR SUPPLIERS ALL OUR
PARTICIPANTS - ALL OUR COMMUNITY
GARDENERS - ALL OUR DONORS ALL OUR
CUSTOMERS**

Glossary

WISE	WORK INTEGRATED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
ESG	ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE
SDG	SUSTAINABILITY DEVELOPMENT GOALS
CALD	CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE
GLM1	GROUND LEASE MODEL 1
DFFH	DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES, FAIRNESS AND HOUSING
NES	NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
PTWF	PAVING THE WAY FORWARD



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