

An aerial photograph of a farm or agricultural facility. The image shows several large buildings with solar panels installed on their roofs. There are numerous trees, some with yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. A dirt road or path winds through the property. In the lower right, there are rows of what appear to be raised garden beds or seedling trays. The overall scene depicts a sustainable agricultural operation.

CERES

2019-20 **ANNUAL REPORT**



CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Our vision | 4 |
| Reach | 6 |
| Chairperson | 8 |
| CEO | 9 |
| Highlights | 10 |
| Social Enterprises | 12 |
| School of Nature & Climate | 18 |
| Farms & Habitat | 20 |
| Environment | 23 |
| Community | 24 |
| Governance | 28 |
| Finance | 30 |

OUR VISION FOR CHANGE

A world where people
*have fallen in love
with the Earth again.*

CERES is an environmental education centre, urban farm and social enterprise hub spread across four locations, linked by the Merri and Darebin Creeks on Wurundjeri Country, Melbourne.

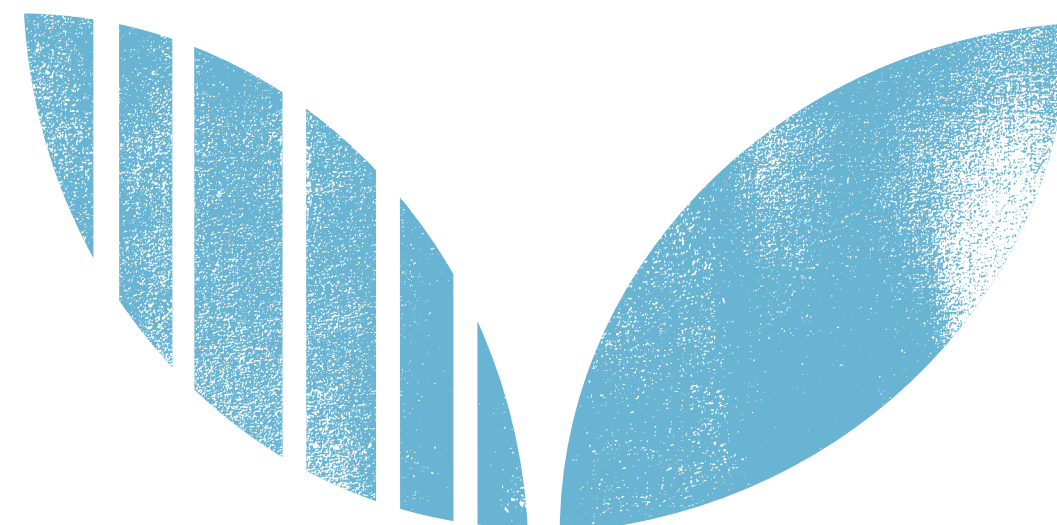
Our vision is for people to fall in love with the Earth again, and to that end our work spans environmental, social, economic, spiritual and cultural dimensions.

We receive around half a million visits per year to our original park in Brunswick East, and reach nearly another million through our other locations, school outreach programs and online services.

All CERES' activities are designed to reconnect people to each other and the Earth, developing the practical skills, knowledge, leadership qualities and community resilience that will be needed in the coming decades.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands CERES is located on, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and we pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the relationship between people and country, and we acknowledge Country itself.

We acknowledge that we are facing a climate and ecological crisis, and we are grateful to all those who are working to protect our Earth and our future.



REACH

464,000 VISITS

to Brunswick East (estimated)
↓14%*

3,100

VOLUNTEERS
in Honey Lane, Joe's Garden, Tamil Feasts and across the park
↑10%*

1,291

MEMBERS
bought or renewed their memberships
↑17%*

ONLINE

221,665 VISITS
to our primary website
↓29%*

20,528
receive our regular newsletters

483,066 VISITS
to Fair Food website

164,878
follow us on social media channels
↑15%*

EDUCATION

INCURSIONS

8,943

students teachers had CERES attend their school for incursions
↓27%*

EXCURSIONS

28,335

visits by students, teachers and parents for excursions and tours
↓131%*

ADULT PROGRAMS

2,344

participants in courses and programs
↑15%*

OUTREACH

234,600

staff & students worked with the Education Outreach team
↑10%*

GLOBAL PROGRAMS

251

participants on our Global programs overseas and at home
↑15%*

95%

of CERES' income is from social enterprises & educational services

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

FAIR FOOD

64,954

ordered organic groceries
↑19%*

MERRI CAFE

29,832

ate organic food with their friends
↓36%*

NURSERY

56,177

bought plants to grow at home
↑7%*

FAIR WOOD

184

ordered sustainably sourced timber
↑46%*

GROCERY

116,882

visited to buy organic food
↑10%*

TAMIL FEASTS

6,786

shared a meal
↓16%*

EVENTS & FESTIVALS

13,748

came to the park for events run by outside groups
↓84%*

185

attended our seasonal events in person
↓1626%*

8,477

attended our seasonal events online

9,350

saw or interacted with us at events outside CERES
↓103%*

TOTAL REACH

464,000

visits to Brunswick East ↓14%*

335,000

other in person contacts ↑10%*

894,000

virtual visits
↑49%*

Our reach across all realms (including digital) is approximately:

1.7 million ↑24%*



Resilient. That's the word which sums up CERES in 2020. Faced with the extraordinary challenges posed by the once-in-a-century pandemic, CERES has survived and in some critical ways, prospered.

It has led to the suspension of some programs and radical changes to others. Some programs have been scaled up. No aspect of CERES has been unaffected. That includes CERES governance – the board.

I was appointed Chair of the CERES Board at the February board meeting. It was to be the last face to face board meeting; from our March meeting Zoom ruled. At that meeting we empowered a combination of the board executive and finance committees to work with management to oversee CERES' response to the pandemic. Ensuring CERES' solvency was crucial, as was, within the bounds of government directions, maintaining as much as possible CERES' core activities. Supporting staff through the response was also seen as a priority.

So far we have done it!

Tribute should be paid to management and staff, led by Cinnamon Evans. Cinnamon's leadership has been outstanding. The professionalism of Chief Finance Officer, Nico Porter has facilitated close monitoring of financial trends and informed decision making. I'd like to also acknowledge and thank the members of the COVID-19 Response Committee, Tom Dobson, Sophie Newing, Jo Barraket and Ian Thomas as well as Cinnamon and Nico.

This year has also seen an external review of CERES governance. This review highlighted the need to refresh our governance arrangements. CERES is a sizeable

entity – our income is approaching \$20 million and we have over 200 staff – and is an extraordinarily complex organisation. The results of this review and proposed changes will be brought to members for consideration early in the New Year.

A review of CERES strategy, commissioned by the board, is also under way led by board member Rod Duncan and Narrative Director, Sieta Beckwith. This will need to take into account the – hopefully soon – post-pandemic environment and the subsequent heightened relevance of CERES' core mission of community action to defend and enhance the environment.

I am also pleased to inform members that the board agreed to a further extension until 2024 of Cinnamon's tenure as CEO.

Finally, I would like to thank board members for their commitment, their contribution and their support. I would single out for special mention my predecessor, Jo Barraket, for her wise counsel and invaluable support.

Andrew Hewett
CERES Chairperson

At the beginning of 2020, as SARS-CoV-2 started its inexorable creep across the globe, the Melbourne community turned to CERES in search of the things we hold dear.



Outdoor spaces, trees and birds, chooks and gardens, seedlings and organic food. In a time of crisis, we instinctively seek the essentials of life that keep us healthy and whole. So how can we remember that in addition to this years' health and economic crisis, we are also in a climate and ecological crisis? And how can we respond similarly, by seeking out that which will sustain us, our community and all life on Earth? And how can CERES be ready to guide and share?

This year the CERES community has responded to wave after wave of restrictions and change. As country borders closed, we stopped running international friendship trips. As schools closed, we stopped running face-to-face education programs, and moved them online. We closed our community meeting rooms, waiting until people are ready to return. We closed the Merri and Tamil Feasts and sadly could not continue to employ many of our long-serving hospitality team members. After taking the time over winter to renovate the kitchen, we have recently reopened with a team of old and new faces, serving takeaway food and drinks.

In March demand for CERES Fair Food home deliveries tripled, and our capable warehouse team and driving crew responded to the call. Our Grocery and Nursery also remained open, with loyal customers waiting patiently in socially-distanced queues for coffees and groceries, potting mix and seedlings. When retail closed, our Nursery team quickly opened an online shop which ensured customers

could still get essential supplies for lockdown gardening. CERES Fair Wood moved into a new home (our second warehouse in Preston) with plans to expand our range of farm-grown timber and establish makers' studios.

Throughout the year our farmers in Honey Lane (Brunswick East) and Joe's Garden (Coburg) continued to produce food for the people. In addition to farm gate sales, Joe's Garden started a hyper-local veggie box system which helped nearby residents remain connected to the source of their food. Our park maintenance and gardening crew also worked hard all year.

In this year of uncertainty and change, I am reminded that the source of our resilience is our diversity. As some parts of CERES have been forced to contract, others have been called on to expand, and therefore as a whole ecosystem we have weathered the worst of the storm. Having said that, I would like to acknowledge and thank those staff who have left us this year, and Board members who have contributed significantly to help guide our safe passage.

As we all reflect on a year of change, and consider which changes to discard and which to carry forward, it is my deepest hope that CERES helps us all fall in love with the Earth again, and reminds us that a good life can be lived with our local people in our local place.

Cinnamon Evans
CERES CEO

HIGHLIGHTS

CERES is a place for community-based learning and action. We create better ways of living together in five domains:

ENVIRONMENTALLY BENEFICIAL

Launched the **CERES School of Nature and Climate** to directly respond to the climate and ecological crisis.

Supported **environmental advocacy organisations** with free community meeting spaces.

Attended the **School Strike for Climate** in September with banners and the kingfisher puppet.

Advised on development of a **wetland and education centre** at a water treatment plant in Beijing.

SOCIALLY JUST

Partnered with local organisations to ensure **fresh healthy food reached people who needed it** during COVID-19 restrictions.

Participated in the **Social Enterprise World Forum in Ethiopia**, exploring inclusion in emergent economies.

Provided training options for employment pathways into sustainability, horticulture, permaculture and environmental education.

ECONOMICALLY SATISFYING

Food-based social enterprises were key to the financial resilience of CERES during COVID-19 restrictions.

Supported the **emergence of a new economy** through SENVIC's social enterprise network building activities.

Purchased directly from **150 organic farmers and producers**, sustaining livelihoods and supporting regenerative farming practices.

CULTURALLY ENRICHING

Hosted a series of **live music events from Fair Food's packing floor** during COVID-19 restriction.

Recognised staff who had given 10, 15 and 20 years of service to CERES at an afternoon tea.

Completed the epic **Terra Wonder nature playspace**, featuring the giant millipede.

Winter Solstice, Long Farm Lunch and Joe's Bush Dance connected people to their place through **ritual and celebration**.

SPIRITUALLY NURTURING

Held a series of **community grief rituals** to help our community process their response to the bush fires.

Provided respite from COVID-19 restrictions by keeping our parks open, COVIDsafe and free for all.

Spiritual Ecology Retreat connected people to the earth and each other.

Sophia's Spring and Melbourne Zen Group offered meetings online for the first time.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Social enterprises deliver targeted social and environmental benefits using traditional business principles.

CERES operates an integrated portfolio of social enterprises that help customers meet their material needs in a sustainable and ethical way, provide livelihoods for staff and suppliers, and generate funds to support the parks and educational purposes.

Our social enterprises are part of the 'new economy', a movement that seeks to transform Australia's economic system, so that achieving ecological health and social justice are the foundational principles and primary objectives of the economic system.

During the pandemic, our social enterprises, in particular Fair Food, have been central to our survival.

NURSERY

The CERES Nursery provides knowledge and support for customers to create their own beautiful, healthy and productive gardens. As a permaculture nursery our aim is to encourage backyard food production. Our range of organically grown vegetable seedlings, natives, edibles, books, pots, indoor plants and locally made items ensures we are visited by customers from across Melbourne.

This year, we:

- **Experienced our first "panic buying" event during autumn.** We had to limit customer purchases of seedlings and bagged items such as compost. Wholesalers across the state ran out of stock, and still have not caught up with demand.
- **Built a webstore** which enabled us to transition to online sales when retail was closed to in-store customers.
- **Offered delivery for the first time** through our online store with the support of Fair Food, who provided drivers and vehicles.

"CERES Nursery is a magical place, have been going almost from its inception, it was a well kept secret back then!"

Steven, via Facebook

8,720 SEEDLING PUNNETS SOLD

in March 2020 compared to **4404** punnets in March 2019.

1,165 BAGS OF POTTING MIX SOLD

in March 2020 compared to **552** bags in March 2019.

MICROGREENS

CERES Microgreens is a vertical urban farm producing certified-organic sprouts for wholesale and retail, as well as a training program for microgreen farmers.

This year, we:

- **Grew 3,600kg of pea shoots** in a polytunnel 5m x 9m.
- **Offered 'learn-how-to-grow-microgreens' workshops** through the School of Nature and Climate.
- **Almost moved to Docklands** to set up a community farm before COVID-19 caused the plan to be shelved.

[opposite] Freshly baked pastries from the Grocery.

FAIR FOOD

Ten years ago in July 2010, CERES Fair Food opened its digital doors. In that first week we delivered 129 fruit and veg boxes and 20 different grocery items (including 3 boxes of Madelaine's eggs, a bag of Tradewinds coffee and a bottle of Mt Zero olive oil) to 122 customers.

In a typical pandemic week Fair Food drivers delivered 1095 fruit and veg boxes and 23,356 different grocery items including 950 dozen eggs (228 dozen of them from Madelaine) to 2008 customers.

This financial year began positively, with many new customers taking up Fair Food's free delivery offers. But when the bushfires hit in December, Fair Food changed focus, joining with a local organic farming investment co-op to raise over \$100,000 for our bushfire affected organic farmers.

As the fires subsided it seemed like a blink before the first COVID-19 lockdown was declared.

Orders flooded in but when Coles and Woolworths delivery services closed, the initial wave grew into a tsunami. Fifteen hundred new members were put on a waiting list while we expanded our capacity. At its peak, Fair Food drivers were delivering more than three times the amount of food they had in the same period the year before, a shift that happened almost overnight.

To help get us through, our CERES brothers and sisters from Education, Venue Hire and the Merri Cafe came to the warehouse and pitched in - some have even stayed.

As the lockdown dragged on we looked to help people in our

184% increase in demand for Fair Food boxes at the height of Stage 4 Lockdown (compared with 2019).



community who weren't being supported. To raise awareness about musicians who had lost gigs Fair Food put on six livestreamed warehouse concerts called "Live from the Packing Floor".

Events like the bushfires and the pandemic have not only changed Fair Food as an enterprise they have also deepened the way we relate to our community - which seems like the only way we are going to get through these times.

Chris Ennis, CERES Business Innovation Director



Chris Ennis (right) with Vanessa Chapple and 'Live from the Packing Floor' performer Carl Pannuzzo

"The excitement of receiving orders from you during this lockdown has been the most consistent positive of my weeks...thank you to all for all your amazing hard work."

Francesca & Greg, Coburg

GROCERY

From the heart of the CERES park, the CERES Grocery provides local, organic and ethical produce and groceries. With wide open doors that connect visitors to the Isa brown chickens and Honey Lane farm, and fresh coffee and food, we offer an opportunity to connect with each other and the Earth whilst shopping sustainably.

This year, we:

- **Adapted operations quickly** in response to government restrictions and requirements, looking after our staff and customers.
- **Offered new initiatives** to support customers including a phone-and-collect service for groceries and a takeaway service in the cafe.
- **Remained open** 7 days a week during restrictions.
- **Started baking** organic croissants and pain au chocolat on the weekends.
- **Engaged a landscape designer** to redesign the Grocery courtyard area.

[this page] A stack of Fair Wood.
[opposite] Fair Food team in PPE.

"My absolute go-to for groceries and inspiration. Fantastic food and household supplies that come at a fair cost. Every time I visit they've thought of a new innovation."

Ruth, Google Review 2020

MERRI CAFE

The Merri Cafe provides seasonal, organic and low mileage food to our customers. Working closely with CERES farmers, the Merri Cafe features weekly specials that include produce grown at Honey Lane Market Garden and Joe's Market Garden.

In March, sadly we closed the Merri Cafe due to the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions on our ability to trade as a seated venue as well as reduced site visitation. We developed a plan to reopen as a counter service cafe, and used the time to complete some much-needed repairs.

FAIR WOOD

CERES Fair Wood connects Australian farm foresters and sawmillers with socially and environmentally conscious consumers, and educates on sourcing ecologically sustainable and ethically sourced timber.

This year, we:

- **Expanded our range of timber products**, knowing that more space was on the horizon.
- **Bought a truck** so we were able to offer delivery and continue working through Stage 4 restrictions.
- **Dove into the world of bulk firewood supply**, as well as bagged firewood sales through Fair Food and the Nursery.
- **Found and moved into a new warehouse** just around the corner from Fair Food.

TAMIL FEASTS

The Tamil Feasts were lovingly cooked by four Tamil men seeking asylum in Australia, supported by a coordinator and a team of volunteers. The project provided an opportunity for the men to share their cultural food heritage with the wider community, offered them ongoing employment, and raised awareness about Melbourne's asylum seeker community.

The team pivoted to home delivering meals in March, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, Tamil Feasts was unable to continue, and we served our last feast in July.

Although it was sad to say goodbye, Tamil Feasts fulfilled its purpose above and beyond what the team set out to achieve. From a one-off shared meal to the creation of a special community that lasted nearly 6 years, Tamil Feasts fed more than 25,000 people and opened up countless conversations about what it really means to seek asylum in a foreign country. The core team of Tamil men have all moved on to the next phase of their lives including running their own food and cleaning businesses.



SCHOOL OF NATURE & CLIMATE

The CERES School of Nature and Climate is the evolution of our education programs into a focused response to the climate and ecological crisis we are facing.

Our education offerings at Brunswick East, in schools and online, are designed with intention and impact to ensure our learning experiences are regenerative, inclusive, life-changing and leading. We do this through connecting to peoples' hearts, sharing knowledge to empower their minds, and teaching applied skills they can implement with their hands.

Our learning areas:

School Programs - for students at CERES, in schools and online.

School Programs - for teachers Whole school sustainability programs and professional learning in schools and early learning centres.

Adult Programs Workshops, courses and accredited training for youth and adults, including disability programs.

Global Programs International and domestic engagements and cultural connections for youth, universities and individuals.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS - FOR STUDENTS

Through experiences in our park, activities in school and now online, the Student Programs team nurtures a love for nature in thousands of hearts, minds and hands.

Our curated collection of student programs for all ages offers hands-on educational experiences with an emphasis on achievable actions to environmental problems. The knowledge gained through these programs can be applied in the classroom or at home, providing a link to the wider community.

Our program learning areas are:

- Caring for climate and change
- Farming for our future
- Exploring ecosystems
- Towards zero waste
- Water cycles and solutions
- Indigenous perspectives
- Global perspectives

This year, we:

- **Reinvented and redesigned our programs to online**, sharing countless activities and resources with teachers and students learning from home.
- **Increased our reach through our Virtual Excursion programs** and provided schools in NSW and Queensland with an opportunity to connect with CERES Education for the first time.

- **Developed a suite of online resources**, excursion programs and projects for a wind-based community energy project.
- **Delivered hands-on gardening sessions** for children at an environmental film festival.
- **Initiated the Schools for Wildlife Program**, in collaboration with local government.
- **Delivered inter-school conferences in regional Victoria** as part of our Student Environmental Leadership Program.

“The online program has been extremely beneficial to the students’ learning journey and promoted much discussion afterwards. Thank you CERES Education for designing and delivering such high-quality online courses for our students”

VCE Teacher, Thomas Carr College

717 students participated in our Student Environmental Leadership Program across regional Victoria

[opposite] A school takes part in a CERES excursion.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS - FOR TEACHERS

Our Teacher Programs provide professional learning to teachers in schools to embed a culture of sustainability, in which staff and students practice sustainable behaviours that become part of the school cultures and endure as staff and students continue to move through the school.

CERES is the leading provider of ResourceSmart Schools - one of Australia's longest-running environmental education and behaviour change programs for schools. We also deliver a ResourceSmart in Early Childhood program, because sustainable behaviours formed early in life require less behaviour change later on.

In order to support teachers in schools and early learning centres, we lead a regional business consortium of over 85 partners that assist school-based sustainability programs across metropolitan Melbourne. We also offer workshops to universities, councils and businesses.

This year, we:

- **Launched CERES Education Online** at the commencement of remote learning to ensure continuity of support for teachers and students during this period.
- **Enabled the schools we work with to save \$3,180,385** through reducing their environmental impact.
- **Celebrated with CERES schools as they won six categories** at the ResourceSmart Schools Awards, including Mount Waverley Primary School who was awarded "ResourceSmart School of the Year".
- **Continued our role as the Sustainability Partner** for the New Schools Public Private Partnership.



Our schools were able to make the following changes:

10,268 TONNES
of greenhouse gases
reduced

88,465 KILOLITRES
of water saved

**26,207 CUBIC
METRES**
of waste diverted
from landfill

12,021 TREES
planted

ADULT PROGRAMS

Our adult learning programs create opportunities for people to connect with nature and themselves, learn about sustainable agriculture, permaculture, horticultural therapy and environmental education, and improve their skills to live more sustainably. Our programs create pathways for employment and further education and foster a connected learning community.

This year, we:

- **Celebrated our Learning Innovation Director** being awarded Australian Environmental Educator of the Year 2019 by the Australian Association of Environmental Education.

- **Developed a new Learning Innovation Framework** and launched it to the adult learning sector.
- **Added six new "deep learning" courses** to our suite including: Introduction to Green Roofs and Walls, Landscape Restoration and Indigenous Ecology, Circular Economy and Zero Waste, the Herbal Apprentice, Urban Rewilder and the Permaculture Demonstrator Skill Set.
- **Persevered, pivoted and pirouetted into online learning**, delivering our courses, workshops and new webinars online under lockdown.

160 ADULTS & YOUTH

with a disability in our farm and food-based VET and NDIS programs

323 PEOPLE
attended Winter Webinars
on topics such as
regenerative agriculture,
climate change,
permaculture solutions in a
crisis and new economies

"ResourceSmart Schools is a fantastic program for anyone considering environmental education and needing guidance. The resources, CERES Outreach Team expertise and friendly help, networking and current learning professional development workshops is second to none."

Jo Menzies, Whitefriars College

"Really appreciate all of your help and sharing of knowledge and how you hold space for everyone in class to share ideas and build community. Has really been invaluable to me on an educational and personal level! Thank you!! Have found my love of learning again."

Intro to Therapeutic Horticulture participant

GLOBAL

CERES Global engages with issues of global equity and sustainability, linking our local community to friends and partner organisations around the world. Over the past 15 years we have established extensive, long-term friendships with urban and rural NGOs and communities in Arnhem Land, Chile, China, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, Samoa and Timor Leste.

We work with local partner organisations on environmental education, IT for social impact, sustainable and traditional housing design, sustainable agriculture, social enterprise development, community energy projects, women's empowerment, climate change resilience and community advocacy. We run both public trips and trips tailored to university study tours.

From March this year, all overseas trips were paused indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Global team shifted their focus to explore ways to create new cultural engagements and transformative experiences within Australia.

This year, we:

- **Designed and delivered the Victorian Young Leaders to India program** for 40 year 10 students, including a visit from the Education Minister The Hon James Merlino MP.
- **Completed the Jamnya Sustainable Housing Project**, working with tribal locals in Maharashtra on sustainable housing design and construction.
- **Hosted Indonesian partners** from the Sembalun Community Centre rebuild on professional placement at CERES.
- **Facilitated a group of Bendigo Kangan Institute students through a Japanese Typhoon** while engaging on traditional techniques of sustainable housing design.
- **CERES Global Manager travelled to China** with the CERES CEO and Learning Innovation Director, to consult on establishing a CERES-like environment park in Beijing.

[top] A school group makes ochre.
[opposite] CERES Global in India.

FARMS & HABITAT



Our parks and gardens demonstrate food systems, innovative landscape design, emerging ideas, ecological building practice and green technology for community learning.

Our physical parks at Brunswick East and Coburg are community oases, and the main source of engagement with volunteers throughout the year. We could not achieve what we do without them.

ORGANIC FARMS

Together, our two Farm teams propagate plants, grow, harvest and sell locally grown organic produce. They are also the basis of our demonstration of a community food system that consists of:

- Seedling Propagation
- Honey Lane Market Garden
- Joe's Market Garden
- Chooks
- Urban Orchard project (managed by Urban Orchard members)
- Bee Hives (managed by the Bee Group)
- Microgreens
- Nursery, Grocery, Fair Food and cafes

[opposite] A volunteer with Honey Lane chickens Hazel and Hazel.

HONEY LANE

Covering around a quarter of the East Brunswick site's footprint, we aim to demonstrate how urban city farms contribute to the local economy by providing an ethical marketplace, employment and opportunities for farmers, producers, teachers and food workers in an environment where we can celebrate the harvest.

This year, we:

- **Grew more produce** in the Honey Lane Market than we ever have before: 2150kg.
- **Supplied CERES enterprises** with wholesale fresh organic produce, eggs and seedlings.
- **Removed redundant aquaponics ponds** and began preparing the ground for increased food production.

60 GUESTS attended a Spring Long Table lunch

2,730 DOZEN EGGS were laid by our chooks and sold in our Grocery

JOE'S GARDEN

CERES Joe's Market Garden (Joe's) is a one hectare market garden located 2km north of the main park, along the Merri Creek. Joe's has been continuously farmed for the past 150 years, and grows produce for Fair Food and the Merri Cafe. It operates a popular farm gate stall every Saturday, and during the week community and corporate volunteers come to connect to the land and help out.

This year, we:

- **Started selling veggie boxes online** in March through Open Food Network, selling over 100 veggie boxes a week during Stage 4 restrictions.
- **Continued developing our infrastructure** including purchasing our first cool room, installed our first poly-tunnel and purchasing a walk behind tractor, assisting in transitioning the farm towards low-till/regenerative farming.
- **Facilitated a large mourning ceremony** with Aunty Annette at the site of an attack on a local woman close to the farm.
- **Successfully matched 50 weed daters as lovers.**

3000 BUNCHES of spring onions sold to the wholesale market

“One of the best, most engaged and community minded places I have ever come across. This place practices what it preaches and is a home for the novice gardener, farmer, activist, wanderluster and philosopher.”

Rachel, Google Review

GARDENS

Permaculture principles are used in the design of the gardens, which consist of a combination of indigenous, native and culinary plants. The team is also responsible for the management and maintenance of several energy, water and waste systems such as composting, worm farms and irrigation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to pause our volunteer program from March through to October. The absence of 60 plus extra pairs of hands per week has made maintenance of the gardens a feat on its own.

This year, we:

- **Built new garden spaces** at our playspace, Grocery entry and olive grove.
- **Reworked the compost system** to ease production. The final product is far superior than we were previously producing, and the gardens are soaking up the goodness.
- **Expanded the hugelkultur terrace** (no-dig raised bed) to assist in dealing with the immense amount of green waste produced on site in a fast and efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly manner.
- **Planned and started renovations** to our entrance courtyard and gardens on the Merri Hill.

The rains contributed to an outstanding floral display this spring, and we are looking forward to welcoming back our volunteers, to tame the remaining 'jungle' the rains have brought.

MAINTENANCE &

“This place is like a whole different place on its own. The ambience & vibes... the temperature is cooler with so much greenery.”

Eric, Google Review

[this page] Kingfisher at Merri Creek, November 2020. Photo: Filomena Renzi.



CAPITAL WORKS

Our Maintenance team maintains the 'ruggedness' and uniqueness of the park while also ensuring the safety and inspiration of our visitors. We focus on designing and implementing sustainable technology demonstrations in energy, waste and water, repairing and maintaining buildings, gardens and paths, hard landscaping works and waste management.

Capital works projects are undertaken throughout the year to ensure vital upgrades are completed across the park.

This year, we:

- **Commissioned our “ATEC” bio-digester in the Energy Park.** This was first of its kind in Australia and included approvals from Energy Safe Victoria for this unconventional system.
- **Completed a detailed investigation and report** on improved thermal comfort for the Van Raay office and meeting rooms.
- **Removed five large ponds** that were part of an early aquaponics experiment, liberating a significant area in Honey Lane Farm.
- **Hosted students from Melbourne University** who developed concepts to inform future development of the Energy Park.
- **Rolled out COVIDSafe** signage, infrastructure & equipment to keep us all healthy.
- **Completed a major refurbishment of Merri kitchen** equipment and dining area.
- **Completed the Terra Wonder Playspace**, featuring a giant “mechanical millipede.” The playspace design is based on all the tiny creatures and microorganisms that can be found in a handful of soil, and includes a new sandpit and climbing areas to explore, all made with recycled and donated materials.
- **Continued work on the Meditation Garden**, including the building of over 100m of stone walls which has been a much more time consuming process than we initially anticipated! Each individual unique stone is carefully considered and placed to create our beautiful garden beds and labyrinth-inspired pathways.

CARBON EMISSIONS

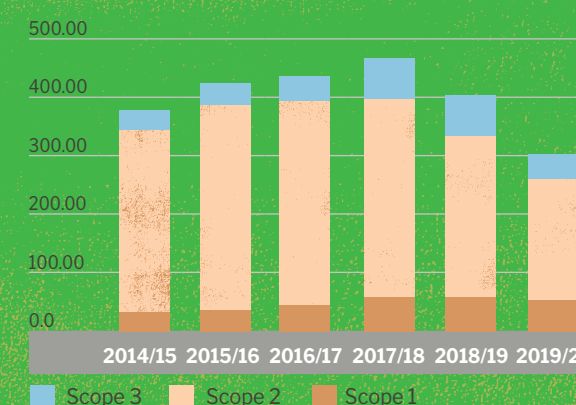
The primary goal of our Environmental Management Plan (EMP 2017-2020) was a 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020, as a step towards achieving zero emissions by 2025.

By far our largest emissions source is electricity (see Scope 2 emissions in the chart below). Over the past 3 years, we have installed multiple photovoltaic systems across our sites in an attempt to generate as much of our electricity as possible from our own sources. While this has reduced our emissions somewhat, it became clear that it would be impossible to achieve zero emissions in the time required if we do not allow any kind of offsetting.

We reviewed our approach to emissions reduction and sought the advice of Council and Community Action in the Climate Emergency (CACE). CACE recommended that in order to realistically achieve zero emissions, we need to review our Carbon Budget Policy to allow offsetting, and claim any energy use offset with 100% renewable energy as zero emissions, in line with national practice.

As we already purchase certified “greenpower”, these recommendations would legitimately allow us to report our electricity consumption as zero emissions (removing 80% of our total emissions in reporting). This will allow us to focus on reducing Scope 1 emissions, and be on target to achieve zero net emissions by 2025.

Total Emissions



Scope 1 Direct combustion, gas and transport
Scope 2: Indirect combustion - electricity
Scope 3: All other emissions

WATER, WASTE & BIODIVERSITY

The EMP also contains targets related to improving biodiversity, reducing waste and saving water. In reviewing the EMP targets over the past 3 years, we realised we needed a better way of assessing our impact in these areas, as well as better methods of data collection.

For the next iteration of the EMP, we will align our targets and methods with those of ResourceSmart Schools.

ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY

Community connectedness forms the foundation of CERES, and we are committed to providing many different avenues for meaningful engagement with our community.

Since 1982, generations of visionary and hard working people from all cultures have been joining together to transform and reclaim this well-loved piece of land.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Our festivals are an opportunity for us to share our work with our community, to reflect on the seasons and our connection to the earth and to celebrate together with music, colour, food and heart.

This year we had to get a bit creative and from March adapted our program to offer our first livestream events.

Highlights:

- **Return of the Kingfisher Festival:** celebrated the 25th anniversary.
- **Long Farm Lunch:** banqueted down Honey Lane.
- **Winter Solstice - Beautiful Darkness:** Our first online streaming version of The performance and ritual was watched by 5000 people on YouTube.
- **Spiritual Ecology Retreat:** connected with nature over four days in the Otways for the second time.
- **Live from the Packing Floor:** six livestream events from the Fair Food warehouse featuring local musicians.

Harvest Festival, usually our biggest annual event, was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In addition to the events we produced, we also hosted a huge variety of other community events including three major music events: MelBurners Decompression, Sounds of Africa Festival and Where The Wild Things are, all of which were low impact, sustainable events that were praised in the wider CERES community.

VOLUNTEERS

CERES continues to be blessed by the love and energy of our large community of volunteers who work individually and in groups across many aspects of our operations. Volunteers contribute to governance, partnership development, grant writing, communications, marketing, urban planning, site planning, architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, green technology, metal fabrication, carpentry, maintenance, propagation, farming and gardening.

This year, we:

- **Welcomed around 1000 corporate volunteers**, who lent their enthusiasm and good will to strengthen their teams, deepen their community engagement and grow and regenerate our park.
- **Engaged with volunteers to contribute to our strategic direction** on CERES committees including the CERES Board, Site Planning and Infrastructure Committee, Carbon Policy Working

Group, Fair Food Working Group, the Playspace Steering Committee, the Meditation Garden Working Group, and the Community Garden Design and Implementation Committee.

“Volunteering at CERES has been a perennial favourite with our organisation. Being outdoors and getting your hands dirty, undertaking a variety of tasks whilst chatting to people you might never otherwise have the chance to connect with, are just some of the reasons our people rate volunteering at CERES so highly.”

Lynton Brewer, Vanguard

152 VOLUNTEERS
pre-COVID

61 VOLUNTEERS
current

[opposite] A wedding at CERES.

VENUES

The Venue Operations team coordinates the internal and external hire of all venues at CERES and supports the planning and delivery of CERES festivals and events. With such a variety of hire spaces to manage and large number of users, from corporate to community, as well as our own workshops, the team and the spaces are a constant hive of activity.

This year, we:

- **Hosted ten weddings and special events** at CERES, creating places for celebration, love and ritual.
- **Fostered several partnerships** with local organisations who are engaging communities on climate action, offering free room hire during off peak times.
- **Engaged with community hirers** across an incredible range of programs including Campfires for Science, panels talks on nature and plants and a First Nations earth mindfulness & action training.

Venue operations were closed from March due to COVID-19, but have since picked up quickly, with outdoor hire spaces proving popular.

SITE GROUPS

Our park is home to eight different community groups ("site groups") and many other groups who use spaces to offer classes, skill development, resource sharing and community connections. All these organisations and regular gatherings add to the diversity and complexity of our organisation.

Some of our official site groups have been with us for more than 30 years and they include:

- Bee Group
- Bike Shed
- Chook Group
- Community Garden Group
- Melbourne Zen Group
- Moreland LETS
- Sophia's Spring
- SOTEMS

[this page] Kingfisher celebration.



Other regular groups include:

- Aozora Shokudo Japanese cultural classes
- Chant and Chai Collective
- Down to Earth Cooperative
- Makers & Flea Market
- Melbourne Insight Meditation Group
- National Electrical and Communications Association
- Rhythm Tree Family Music classes
- Shambhala Meditation
- Young Shaman Foundation

Highlights:

- **Melbourne Zen Group** were able to shift all weekly meditation sessions online.
- **Sophia's Spring** doubled the attendance at CERES with three virtual groups each week, and participants Zoomed in from regional Victoria, Canada and Indonesia.
- **Chook and Garden groups** were able to continue tending their gardens and caring for their flock throughout COVID-19 restrictions, however many of the site and regular groups were on pause for a large part of the year.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Team supports the good work of all the different areas of CERES with digital, design, marketing and social media expertise. In 2020, communications played a vital role in connecting the community with our enterprises as they adapted to continuous change, planted new seeds, broke ground and branched out.

This year, we:

- **Assessed entry signage** and developed specialised science communications in line with education programs, with the support of volunteers.
- **Continually updated all digital platforms and physical signage** as some projects were paused, others were put high on the priority list, and communicating the many changes across the park took precedence.
- **Supported new online learning platforms** for the School of Nature and Climate.
- **With the help of the Visitor Centre team**, improved visitor experience both digitally and in person.

Our 200+ different partners include individuals, community organisations, all levels of government, corporate organisations and industry. These relationships bring about mutual benefits and vary from in-kind supporters, program co-deliverers, grant givers and philanthropic trustees.

All of our partners are important and assist us in delivering our mission. In this Annual Report we would like to acknowledge our financial and in-kind partners.

STATE GOVERNMENT

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Department of Education and Training

Pick My Project

Sustainability Victoria

Department of Social Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Moreland City Council

Darebin City Council

15 Victorian Local Government Areas

OTHER

Catholic Education Melbourne

Holding Redlich

Inner North Community Foundation

Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation

Perpetual

Pinsent Masons

SENVIC founding members

SENVIC

CERES is auspicing SENVIC (Social Enterprise Network Victoria). Our CEO is the Chair of the Advisory Board, which includes nine of Victoria's longest-standing and influential social enterprises. In the year to October 2020, SENVIC had:

- 465 members
- 1590 followers on social media
- 1000+ at events
- 5 Local Leads
- 2 sub-networks
- 80 learning and development participants
- 500 e-learning courses

SUPPORTERS:

AMP Foundation • Aoracreo • ATEC Biogas • Australian Community Support Organisation • Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade • Banyule City Council • BDC Group • Frank Cichello • Brunswick Bowls Club • City of Boroondara • Connecting Up • Data Runs Deep • Emergence Magazine (US) • Engineers without Borders • Environmental Film Festival Australia • Flowers Across Melbourne • Frankston City Council • Hepburn Wind Community Energy • Hume City Council • Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design • Manningham City Council • Melbourne University Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning • Melbourne Zen Group • Merri Creek Management Committee • Metropolis Metering • Murgo Constructions • Ori Co-op • Salt and Fuessel • Social Ventures Australia • Sophia's Spring • Stella Fund • The Social Food Project • Westpac Social Sector Finance • Whitehorse City Council • Wood 4 Good • Yassar & Jyoti

We would like to thank everyone who has shown their support to CERES this year, including our regular donors, all those who gave to our Annual Appeal, and those who contributed to our bequest sub-fund. We couldn't do it without you.

PARTNERSHIPS

GOVERNANCE



CERES is a not-for-profit organisation and is managed by a voluntary Board with representatives elected from the membership.

The Board appoints a CEO to oversee the activities of the organisation. CERES activities are divided into six portfolios, each with a Director, and Managers who oversee each enterprise and project.

Executive Team



Cinnamon Evans
CEO



Sieta Beckwith
Narrative Director



Nick Curmi
Built & Natural Environment Director



Chris Ennis
Business Innovation Director



Melissa Lawson
Food Systems & Engagement Director



Lorna Pettifer
Learning Innovation Director



Nicolas Porter
CFO

Managers

John Burne - Infrastructure

Jane Burns - Teacher Programs

Luisa Cardamone - Courses & Training

Laurel Coad - Nursery

Emily Connors - Joe's Garden

Hayden Cronin - Fair Wood

Tim Dyson - IT

Cass Froese - Venue Hire & Events

Chloe Horner - Student Programs

Jesse Hull - Fair Food

Sally Kennedy - Merri Cafe

Karen Kershaw - People & Culture

Emma McCann - Tamil Feasts

Maria McConkey - Communications

Kate Mills - Finance

Beck Morley - Grocery

Dan O'Farrell - Microgreens

Meg Stewart - Propagation

Ben Walta - Global

OUR PEOPLE

CERES Board

Committee Members (Board of Management) in office at any time during the financial year ended 30 June 2020:



Andrew Hewett



Jo Barraket



Thomas Dobson



Noel Blencowe



Jan Garood



Jessica Dorney



Rodney Duncan



Ewan Robertson



Sophie Newing



Tony Marjoram



Darren Tinker



John Burne

| | Position held at 30/06/2020 or Resignation | Resigned | Appointed | A | B |
|-------------------------|---|----------|-----------|----|----|
| Andrew Hewett | Chairperson | | Jan '20 | 5 | 5 |
| Jo Barraket | Deputy Chairperson | | | 9 | 12 |
| Thomas Dobson | Treasurer | | | 11 | 12 |
| Sophie Newing | Secretary | | | 12 | 12 |
| Noel Blencowe | General Member | | | 10 | 12 |
| Cinnamon Evans | CEO | | | 11 | 12 |
| Jan Garood | Site Group Representative | | | 11 | 12 |
| Jessica Dorney | Moreland City Council Council Representative | | | 8 | 12 |
| Rodney Duncan | General Member | | | 12 | 12 |
| Tony Marjoram | General Member | | | 11 | 12 |
| Ewan Robertson | General Member | | Jan '20 | 4 | 6 |
| Darren Tinker | Staff Representative | | Nov '19 | 4 | 7 |
| Mikaela Stafrace | Deputy Chairperson | Nov '19 | | 4 | 4 |
| John Burne | Staff Representative | Nov '19 | | 3 | 5 |

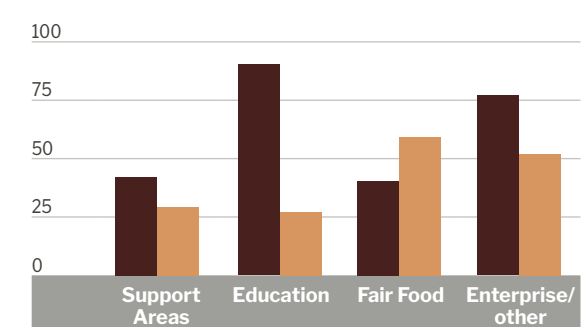
A - Number of meetings attended

B - Number of meetings held during the time the director held office during the year

Change in staffing

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our staffing community, with a decrease in the number of staff employed overall, as well as a change in proportions of staff working in each area. We would like to acknowledge that this year has been a tricky time for staff across all areas, and appreciate all the teams for their hard work, innovation and resilience throughout the year.

Total Staff



FINANCE

TREASURER'S REPORT

FY20 was a turbulent and unpredictable year which tested all of us, but we are proud to report that to date, CERES has been able to weather the storm and innovate.

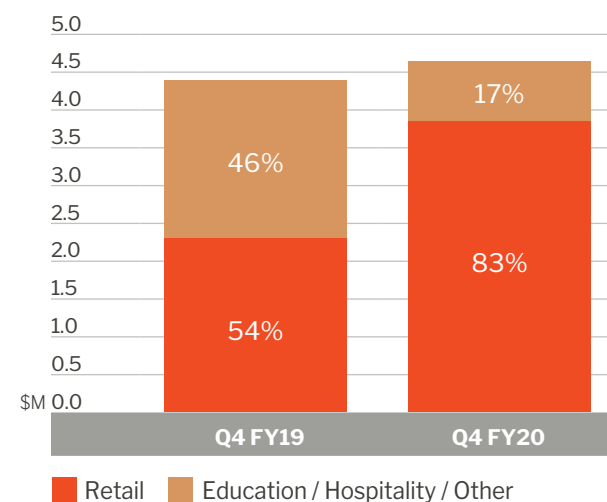
The keys to our success have been:

- Diversity of activities
- Nimble adaptability with a focus on customer experience
- Staff resilience, flexibility and commitment
- Community support and trust
- Board and Management alignment and trust

When COVID-19 struck and restrictions were imposed in late March, the permaculture principle of using and valuing diversity served us well. Most of our educational and hospitality enterprises were forced to abruptly cease activities but demand for our essential retail enterprises (in particular the 'low-touch' grocery delivery services of Fair Food) saw a significant surge in demand.

Immediate pivots included: Our educational areas quickly shifted their focus to online delivery, hospitality enterprises to take-away / delivery, bricks and mortar retail enterprises to socially-distanced services, and admin staff to working from home. CERES was not eligible for JobKeeper in FY20, which meant many staff were stood-down or worked reduced hours - although we were able to redeploy a good number of staff to assist Fair Food and the Nursery in meeting increased demand. Our Board swiftly established a COVID-19 Response Committee which provided clear direction and met regularly to review financial / operational impacts and contingency strategies to ensure business continuity.

Change in Q4 Revenue Profile

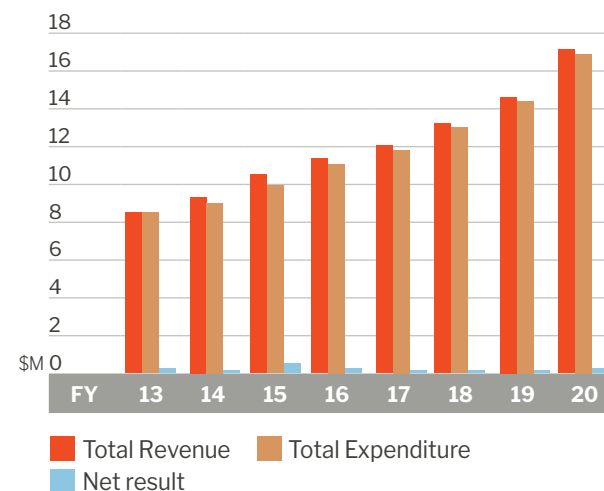


Q4 overall revenue grew 7% year on year, but the underlying revenue profile changed dramatically - with retail operations revenue growing by 65% whilst all other revenue areas combined decreased by 61%.

| Income Statement | FY20 | FY19 |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Total Revenue | 17,012,180 | 14,460,349 |
| Total Expenditure | 16,816,260 | 14,391,949 |
| Net Result | 195,920 | 68,400 |

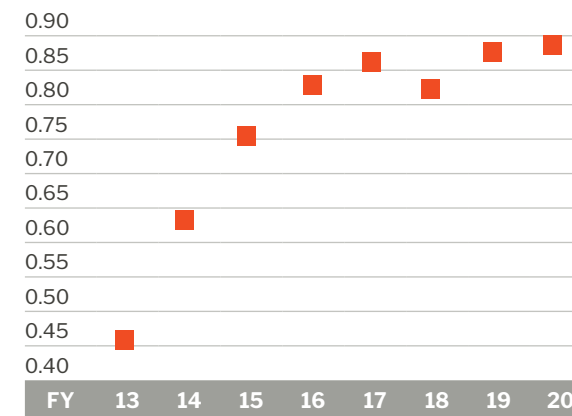
Despite the headwinds, CERES delivered another financial surplus in FY20 (our seventh consecutive operational surplus) and overall revenue surpassed \$17M (an 18% increase on FY19, and more than double the revenue of FY13).

Financial Performance



During the 2020 financial year a historical liability totaling \$205K was recognised, relating predominately to Nominal Interest and Administrative Charges on the inadvertent late settlement of some historical superannuation obligations dating back eight years. The recognition of this liability meant that despite our surplus for the year, our Working Capital Ratio and Retained Surplus at 30 June 2020 remained essentially the same as in the previous year.

Working Capital Ratio



FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

2020 has been stressful and disruptive but it has also been a catalyst for innovation, creativity and change. There is a lot of uncertainty around the continuing and longer term economic and social impacts of COVID-19 however we are encouraged by trends of hyper-localisation and our community's desire to reconnect with each other and the natural environment.

Although Victoria's lockdown restrictions caused a hard pruning of some of our most vital mission delivery areas, we have been busy bees and are ready for vigorous re-growth with our community as restrictions ease.

We remain firmly focused on improving our financial resilience and a brief period of eligibility to JobKeeper in early FY21 provided welcome support to this end.

We are deeply grateful to our staff and our community for their unwavering support and commitment to CERES and the possibility of a better tomorrow.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT AS AT 30 JUNE, 2020

| | 2020 \$ | 2019 \$ |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Assets | | |
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash and Cash Equivalents | 1,792,247 | 1,359,422 |
| Accounts Receivable | 172,728 | 365,666 |
| Inventories | 560,650 | 450,362 |
| Prepayments | 63,153 | 54,420 |
| Total Current Assets | 2,588,778 | 2,229,870 |
| Non Current Assets | | |
| Buildings, Plant and Equipment | 4,353,163 | 4,274,596 |
| Total Non Current Assets | 4,353,163 | 4,274,596 |
| Total Assets | 6,941,941 | 6,504,466 |

Liabilities

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Accounts Payable and other Payables | 1,128,965 | 904,603 |
| Employee Provisions | 722,173 | 584,157 |
| Borrowings | 23,142 | 24,325 |
| Hire Purchase Commitments | 98,080 | 77,448 |
| Income in Advance | 1,029,122 | 1,001,104 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 3,001,482 | 2,591,637 |
| Non Current Liabilities | | |
| Payables | 49,890 | 73,059 |
| Employee Provisions | 59,436 | 92,018 |
| Hire Purchase Commitments | 251,165 | 158,787 |
| Total Non Current Liabilities | 360,491 | 323,864 |
| Total Liabilities | 3,361,973 | 2,915,501 |
| NET ASSETS | 3,579,968 | 3,588,965 |

Members' Funds

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Retained Surplus | 3,579,968 | 3,588,965 |
| TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS | 3,579,968 | 3,588,965 |

There are three key ways
you can support CERES:

- **Donate**
ceres.org.au/donate
- **Become a member**
ceres.org.au/membership
- **Volunteer**
ceres.org.au/volunteer

Thank you for your love
and support!



CERES Community Environment Park

Corner of Roberts
& Stewart Streets,
Brunswick East VIC 3057

phone +61 3 9389 0100
email ceres@ceres.org.au
web www.ceres.org.au

CERES