



**ANNUAL
REPORT**
2020-21

CERES





CONTENTS

4	OUR VISION
6	CHAIR
7	CEO
8	REACH
10	HOME
14	SCHOOL
18	FARM
22	MARKET
28	STORY
34	ENVIRONMENT
36	GOVERNANCE
38	FINANCE

OUR VISION

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

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

Although we are grounded in our local places, our work spreads out across Victoria and Australia, and our stories are global in nature.

At the deepest level of all our work is a desire to counter the prevailing story of separation with stories of connectedness and love. Through experiences of participation and belonging, we are reminded of our fundamental connection with the human and ecological systems that sustain us.

And from that realisation of connection, we are able to find meaning and purpose in service of others and the Earth.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the traditional custodians of the land on which CERES stands. We pay our respect to Elders, past, present and future. We honour their leadership in caring for Country and support their rights to continue to do so.

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.





CHAIR

In last year's annual report I argued that one word described CERES's response to the COVID-19 pandemic: *resilient*. The board, and even more critically CERES staff and management, demonstrated a willingness to take hard decisions, ending some activities, investing in others – all with the objective of ensuring CERES survival and continuing relevance.

In reporting on the last twelve months, I add the word: *tenacious*. We've demonstrated – if there was any doubt! – that CERES is here for the long-haul. The pandemic has heightened the relevance of CERES and of our core messages.

Resilient and tenacious.

I add to those two words, *renewal*.

We have renewed our strategic direction – looking ahead, ensuring that CERES heightens its relevance and effectiveness. We did so through

extensive engagement of staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders. The result is a visionary, inspiring and, importantly, relevant outlook.

We've also begun the renewal of our Community Garden, including changes to the garden's management and governance. This will ensure the heightened relevance of this signature part of our East Brunswick Park.

The board's ways of working have also been renewed. Last year I reported on the results of an independent governance review. Partly in response to this review, we have revamped our committee structure and changed some of our ways of working. It is envisaged that a revised constitution, which will better equip CERES to respond to the volatile environment, will be brought to the membership for consideration early in 2022. I thank all board members

“The pandemic has heightened the relevance of CERES and of our core messages”

for their contribution, especially Rod Duncan, Deputy Chair, Tom Dobson, who as Treasurer has helped ensure our financial health, Sophie Newing who was Secretary for the first nine months and Nicole Baker, a new board member, who took on the responsibility of leading our new Impact Committee.

I want to pay tribute to the leadership of Cinnamon Evans. She personifies the idea of being a practical visionary, and leads a dedicated and skillful team of managers, staff and volunteers.

2022 marks forty years since CERES foundation. It'll be a time to celebrate and reflect – but also to look forward to the next forty years. I believe that we can do so with great confidence.

Andrew Hewett,
CERES Chairperson



CEO

What is CERES?

If we asked that question of 100 people, 100 different stories would be given - stories of momentary surprise and wonder, of enduring relationships with people and place, of belonging and learning, of beautiful productive gardens and delicious organic meals, of love and transformation.

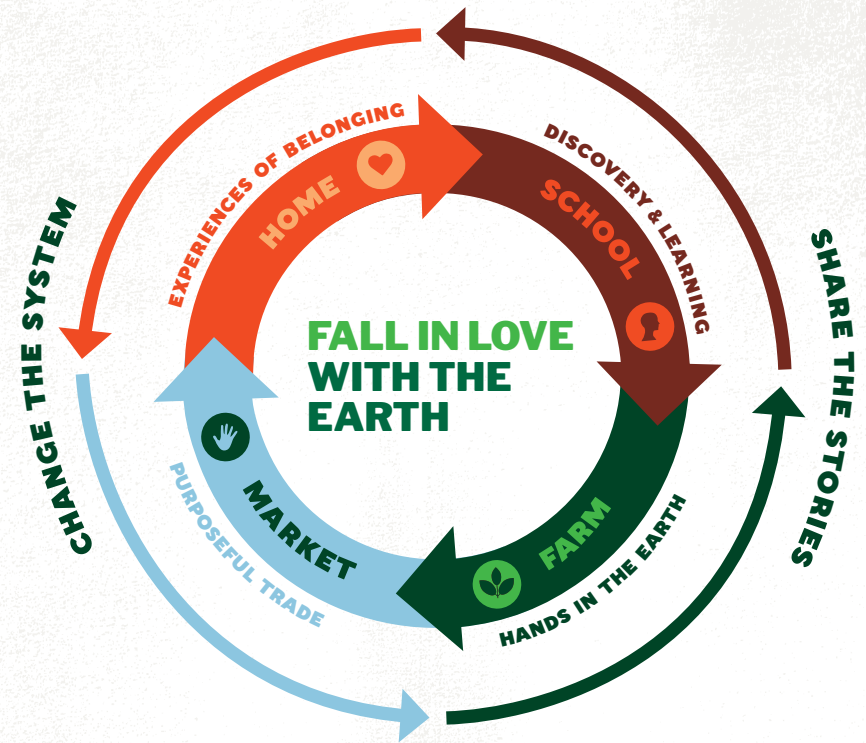
If we asked that same question of one million people, the threads of each person's individual and unique experience of CERES would weave together to make a beautiful intricate fabric that tells a story about our collective longing for healthy ecosystems, resilient communities, regenerative food systems and local wellbeing economies.

CERES continues to grow, to reach out into the wider community and to diversify our activities. The ever-changing CERES Park in Brunswick East will always be our heartland. We have reimagined and

reconstructed gardens and renovated buildings. Joe's Garden in Coburg is a bright light of inspiration along the Merri Creek. Record numbers of people have stopped by for a coffee or to pick up something from our farm gate stall. The Fair Food warehouse in Preston is a bustle of colour and movement. We have delivered fresh food and fresh artistic endeavours all over Melbourne. The nearby Fair Wood warehouse houses the raw materials for endless creativity and beauty. We have expanded our range of rare and special timbers and welcomed a community of makers into our space. And beyond our four physical locations, our online education programs have connected with learners young and old, far and wide, and our consultancies have helped us connect with new audiences.

To better understand how all these diverse activities weave together, we imagined ourselves as a circle made up of four arcs. CERES is a HOME for nature and people. CERES is a SCHOOL for discovery and learning. CERES is a FARM with our hands in the earth. CERES is a MARKET for purposeful trade. Each person's experience of CERES begins in one of these arcs, and hopefully develops and matures to embrace the whole circle. And surrounding this circle of endeavour we drew another bigger circle of narrative to represent our STORIES of change and hope.

The stories we tell about ourselves, our relationships, our Earth and our future are so powerful that they become manifest. CERES is seeking to spin a counter-dystopian story for our times. Through



stories of connectedness, purpose and meaning, we remember that we're part of a bigger story, and our longing for a more beautiful world becomes grounded in local, practical, community-based action.

And when we take such action, we build up our personal experiences of magic and love, participation and belonging, discovery and learning, and weave more threads into our fabric of the future. Thank you to all our community, visitors, members, volunteers, partners, supporters, staff, managers and board members for being part of our collective story.

Cinnamon Evans,
CERES CEO

REACH

HOME

6,078 **-56%**

Visited for room hire and events

453 **-85%**

Volunteered in gardens and maintenance

1,230 **-5%**

Bought or renewed their membership

SCHOOL

12,080 **-68%**

Participants in Student Programs, at CERES and in schools, online and in person

2,235 **-5%**

Participants in Adult Learning Programs: courses, workshops and training, online and in person

2,187*

Online participants in Teacher Programs

FARM

24,090*

Visited Joe's Market Garden for farm gate sales

3,164*

Ordered Joe's Market Garden produce online

185*

Volunteered at Honey Lane and Joe's Market Garden

MARKET

629 **242%**

Ordered sustainably sourced timber from Fair Wood

86,138 **33%**

Ordered organic groceries from Fair Food

229,558 **-2%**

Bought organic food & groceries from the Grocery & Cafe

251,952 **111%**

Had an organic lunch at Merri Cafe

42,480 **-24%**

Bought garden supplies & plants from the Nursery

STORY

26,149*

Subscribed to CERES newsletters

851,311 **21%**

Visited CERES websites

161,474 **-2%**

Followed CERES on social media

646,000 **-19%**

Visits and other in-person contacts

1,055,000 **18%**


Virtual visits

1,701,000 **0%**

Total reach

HOME





We care for our places and foster experiences of belonging through our Staff and Volunteers, Members, Board, Site Groups, Places, and Venue Operations.

CERES' places are always responsive to our community needs. This year, to counter high levels of anxiety among staff and visitors, we found a new theme of "CERES Love Projects" informing much of our work.

Although the team size was greatly reduced due to restrictions limiting the number of volunteers, "Love Projects" such as the Meditation Garden, inspiring new entry points and garden renewals provided opportunities to nurture our spirits.

An important aspect of our approach to creating a feeling of welcome for everyone, is our emphasis on a consultative design development process. The Terra Wonder playspace is an example of one of these consultative processes, and has provided a stream of positive feedback from designers through to parents through to kids. It has emerged as a precious project of connection and purpose, countering the often-overwhelming journey of current times.

Through creating experiences of inspiration and belonging in an ever-changing landscape, we enable visitors

to dream of stronger community connection and an inclusive future full of hope.

Nick Curmi,
Natural and Built Environment Director



NATURAL

Our Garden team uses permaculture principles 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.

Our small, committed team of garden volunteers were on site as restrictions allowed this year, contributing their time, labor and skills.

This year, we:

Created a new food-themed northern entry garden connecting the farm to the Warrk-warrk footbridge bridge across the Merri Creek.

Finalised the meditation garden construction and put the first plants in the ground.

Consolidated and strengthened our many habitat areas, leading to more species of birds returning amidst the reign of the Noisy Miner.

BUILT

Our Natural and Built Environment team maintains the 'ruggedness' and uniqueness of the Park while also ensuring the safety and inspiration of our visitors. We design and implement sustainable technology demonstrations in energy, waste and water, repair and maintain buildings, and manage hard landscaping works and waste. Capital works projects are undertaken throughout the year to ensure vital upgrades are completed across the Park.

This year, we:

Renovated the batik-making outdoor teaching space in the Cultural Village.

Transformed the Lee Street entry using a "habitat" theme. We also designed and started creating a new more accessible and inspiring entry for school students along Roberts Street.

Built a new Bakery adjacent to the Grocery Kitchen.

Began the implementation of the Community Garden Renewal Project.

Lost our beloved DIG office and volunteer space in a fire. With a history connected with the Alternative Technology Association (now Renew) it was a great example of a community build and a sad loss to the community.





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.

Venues were only operational for 8 months this year. Yo-yoing lockdowns particularly impacted the ability to host groups in indoor venues, and even when restrictions lifted, new density limits and a reluctance to return too soon to face-to-face meetings resulted in a high volume of cancellations.

This year, we:

Hosted ten weddings and special events, creating places for celebration, love and ritual.

Identified and developed the opportunity for outdoor end-of-year corporate events, with a two week period of festive gatherings in the Village Pavilion.

Engaged with community hirers and developed opportunities for them to hold outdoor dance classes, small music performances and mindfulness training.

“Thank you for all the support setting up hiring the venue. We all loved the venue and enjoyed a walk around the grounds”

*Amber Preston -
Merri Health*

SITE GROUPS

Our Park is home to eight different community 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, though it was difficult for many of these groups to meet in person this year.

Some of our official site groups have been with us for more than 35 years and they include:

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

Other regular groups include:

Aozora Shokudo Japanese classes
Makers & Flea Market
Rhythm Tree Family Music classes
Melbourne Insight Meditation Group
Shambhala Meditation

Highlights include:

Melbourne Zen Group and Sophia's Spring had higher attendance than before, due to the accessibility of Zoom.

VOLUNTEERS

CERES continues to be blessed by the love and energy of a community of volunteers who work individually and in groups across many aspects of our operations. In less 'unprecedented times' 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.

Restrictions limited numbers of volunteers but whenever volunteers could contribute, they arrived. Their commitment has never been so well demonstrated and it was essential and deeply appreciated.

This year, our volunteers:

Contributed grant-writing expertise to several successful submissions.

Propagated thousands of seedlings

Contributed to all major projects in the Park including gardens and new entries.

Contributed to our strategic direction.

Fulfilled essential governance roles through membership of the CERES Board, Board Executive, Finance Audit & Risk Committee, Impact Committee and Strategy Working Group.

SCHOOLS





We facilitate discovery and learning for all ages through our School of Nature and Climate, which includes Student Programs, Teacher Programs, and Adult Learning Programs.

Until the pandemic, we were predominantly known as a place-based school, where we were easily able to connect people with nature and regenerative practice to create transformative experiences. Throughout this year, the challenge has been to maintain the essence of our programs, while translating them into virtual learning environments.

Although this pivot was challenging, our educators were able to visit the homes of young school students and lifelong learners through the magic of screens, and connect them to their own places, with their hands in their local bit of earth, and some creative new classes were designed. We also made the most of any moments of freedom throughout the year, to welcome students back to our special place in the CERES Park.

We do this work to equip people with skills and practice that respond to environmental and cultural realities, and foster in them a sense of wellbeing and belonging, so they learn how to lead their communities with hope and love. The evolution of learning under the School of Nature and Climate has brought our program areas together as one education

team with a joint voice and vision, at a time when being part of a community is key to maintaining resilience and perseverance.

Lorna Pettifer,
Learning Innovation Director





STUDENT PROGRAMS

Through experiences in our Park and activities in school and online, the Student Programs Team nurtures a love for nature and appreciation of cultures. By engaging hearts, minds and hands we support students to feel empowered, be more resilient in times of crisis and effect positive change. We offer more than 70 activities for students across nine key program learning areas.

This year, we:

Saw more schools than ever book our Indigenous Perspectives program.

Delivered Schools for Wildlife, designing and building a wildlife-friendly garden with students and staff at over 24 schools.

Delivered a Climate Emergency Summit online with 174 primary and secondary school students.

Supported thousands of students to do remote learning.

“CERES made themselves accessible to our remote, country school during COVID restrictions... it gave the students something new and exciting to experience during this tough time”

Teacher

TEACHER PROGRAMS

Our Teacher Programs provide professional learning to teachers in schools to embed a culture of sustainability, in which staff and students practice behaviours that become part of the school cultures and endure as staff and students move through the school. This is primarily done through providing ResourceSmart Schools and Early Childhood programs, some of Australia's longest-running environmental education and behaviour change programs for schools.

We also offer workshops to universities, councils and businesses and lead a regional business consortium of over 85 partners.

This year, we:

Maintained the active participation of over 300 schools in the ResourceSmart Schools program during remote learning.

Supported teachers with lesson plans to facilitate environmental education within a remote setting or in school classrooms.

Presented our full day workshops online and had high levels of teacher engagement.

Created at-home audits for students to engage with sustainability.

SUCCESS STORY:

Not even a global pandemic and remote learning could stop Strathaird Primary School in Narre Warren from receiving their 5 Star *ResourceSmart School* status! Their 7-year journey helped them achieve a number of impressive sustainability features including student run veggie and herb gardens, native wildlife corridors, waste collection hubs, water play infrastructure and one very impressive frog bog.

ADULT LEARNING

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.

A total of 38 weekend days were lost due to restrictions, resulting in 66 workshops being cancelled or postponed. Fortunately we were able to run our deep learning courses and VET programs online. Almost 500 students commenced or continued via our online learning platform.

This year, we:

Launched the School of Nature and Climate website, finally integrating school programs and adult learning

in one place, with an improved user experience.

Delivered an International course:
Sustainable Fashion - building on global relationships.

Created our first asynchronous course:
Sensory Gardens and Sensory Trails.

SUCCESS STORY:

H experienced significant physical and mental health issues and was unable to work. Keen to get back into the workforce with a new focus on horticulture, H undertook both our pre-accredited *Introduction to Therapeutic Horticulture* and our accredited *Introduction to Horticulture* program and was thrilled to gain work in a Production Nursery based on their studies. "Thank you for assisting me over the past few months to get this far."



FARM





We support a more regenerative food system through our Honey Lane Farm, Joe's Market Garden, Microgreens, Community Garden, and all our growers and suppliers.

Community is what connects us; together we are stronger and lighter. It's what creates the interwoven, colourful and sometimes chaotic fabric of CERES, and is what our food system is grown on.

Daily farming life continued, despite restrictions. Our farmers provided connection for volunteers, seedlings for food relief efforts, pay-it-forward food boxes and long table celebrations. Amidst growing tomatoes, farm gate coffees, baby seedlings and chuckling chooks, bright moments of togetherness were created.

Recent collaborations helped us demonstrate a community food system in action - the Olive to Oil day inspires hundreds of people across Melbourne to harvest backyard olives, collecting 6.6 tonnes for blending into a local community oil.

Growing a community food system, where people are physically connected with their food, growers, and soil beneath their feet, is a way we can become practically grounded in hope for the future. And with a bit of determination, produce some award-winning olive oil.

Melissa Lawson,
Community Food Systems Director



HONEY LANE ORGANIC FARM

Covering around a quarter of the East Brunswick Park'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.

Supported by a small core team of essential volunteers, we were able to continue our farm operations throughout the pandemic restrictions.

This year, we:

Sent produce up the hill to the Merri for menu highlights, and to be included in new kitchen experiments such as rhubarb shrubs and feijoa beer.

Hosted a pilot horticulture work readiness program for marginalised,

“Thank you CERES for being a place of refuge - always valued, but even more so during lockdown”

Judith

socially isolated or disadvantaged young people aged 16 to 24, through a newly developed partnership.

Completed a new 10m x 20m garden bed, increasing the growing space by 53% and allowing us to showcase different market garden growing techniques.

Grew larger volumes of produce and more variety than ever before.

Supplied certified organic seedlings to our Nursery, our farms, and local market gardens, and donated some to Moving Feast, supporting their food relief growing efforts.

JOE'S MARKET 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 with the support of volunteers. It operates a popular farm gate stall, cafe and hosts special events and workshops.

This year, we:

Opened the farm gate and cafe every day during lockdowns, providing safe and joyful respite for our community.

Started selling our first large commercial crop of flowers. 650 bunches of flowers sold, with 100 of those “pick your own”.

Erected new polytunnels and greenhouses.

Received support to create a Mums and Bubs Gardening Club in partnership with Islamic Society of Victoria.

MICRO GREENS

CERES Microgreens is a vertical urban farm producing certified-organic sprouts for wholesale and retail, as well as a training program for microgreen farmers. The small team is currently based at the Fair Food warehouse but looking for a new home.

This year, we:

Improved production consistency and efficiency.

Updated our packaging.

Provided support to the Fair Food team when online orders peaked.



COMMUNITY GARDEN

The CERES Community Garden was one of the first projects at CERES, and for 40 years it has played a key role in educating people about localised urban food growing. Following an in-depth engagement and design process, this year we commenced construction of the new Garden, which will include a larger number of allotments, improve safety and access, encourage community participation and enable integration with CERES education programs.

This year, we:

Finalised the design and implementation plan.


Demolished existing gardens.

Installed electricity and water supplies and constructed new fencing and retaining walls.

Established a new governance structure to oversee management of the Community Garden until a new Committee is established.

MARKET





We are building a market for purposeful trade through our Nursery, Fair Food, Grocery, Bakery, Merri Cafe, Fair Wood, and by supporting SENVIC.

Explaining the sheer breadth of CERES' social enterprises to a visitor can be a challenging task. Enterprise consultants, overwhelmed by an organisation that farms, teaches, consults, rents spaces, retails products and feeds people, clamour for CERES to concentrate on "core business".

But this year, more than ever, it's been CERES' diversity that's got us through the pandemic. When one or more CERES enterprises stopped trading because of stay-at-home orders others were able to step up and fill the gap.

This year CERES continues to diversify further with the launch of the CERES Bakery at Brunswick East, the increased resourcing of CERES Consulting, the expansion of Fair Wood's offering in Preston and the promotion of the Victorian social enterprise sector through SENVIC.

With CERES enterprises operating into the community from four different sites across multiple channels, CERES' ethical way of doing business is positively impacting on more people and more businesses than ever.

Chris Ennis,
CERES Business Innovation Director





FAIR FOOD

CERES Fair Food delivers organic groceries to households across Melbourne, sourced from over 150 farmers and ethical grocery makers. Together we support regenerative farming practices, provide employment and career pathways for new migrants, and return profits to support vital CERES programs.

Staying open and taking care of our workers, our farmers & makers, our customers and community through the lockdowns across another year was a huge achievement. Once again, Fair Food stayed open and employed stood-down CERES workers, and packed three times as many groceries for twice as many customers.

This year, we:

Crowdfunded \$15,000 in less than 24 hours with our customers to pay for Mo's mouth operations and new teeth in a "Help Mo get his smile back" campaign.

Provided free fresh food to people who weren't getting JobKeeper with a \$30,000 pay-it-forward scheme with partner support.

Sadly closed the last of our Food Host pick-up points. When Fair Food started, all our orders were delivered to Food Hosts - there were over 70 Food Hosts across Melbourne. COVID-19 put an end to Food Host deliveries but we'll always remember all the hosts who donated their verandahs for neighbours to pick up their groceries, and all the connections and goodwill that grew out of that generosity.

“One great thing that came out of COVID - me being forced to get home delivery of my organics which led to me finding you guys! We are moving interstate and I hope I can find someone similar”

Gemma, Fair Food customer, Taylors Lakes



SALVAGED
BLACKWOOD
38mm & 50mm
THICK

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:

Dramatically increased our range and quantity of timber thanks to our new warehouse.

Adapted to click-and-collect and trade walk-ins.

Employed more staff including an in-house carpenter, customer service representative, marketing coordinator and increased hours for our delivery driver and floorperson.

Grew our customer base from 180 invoices to over 600 invoices in one year.

Expanded our community with maker spaces and a home for business ReBoxCo.

“It’s awesome what CERES Fair Wood are doing. We need more ethical sustainable local companies making our choices as Architects easier when our values are well represented through those of our suppliers”

Drawing Room Architecture

GROCERY, CAFE & BAKERY

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

Despite supply delays and shortages, late and missing deliveries, the Grocery, Cafe and Bakery remained open throughout the year as essential services, and provided much-needed fresh produce and good vibes for visitors to the Park.

This year, we:

Opened the CERES Bakery in March.

With a skillful and passionate third-generation French baker working the ovens and sourcing locally milled organic

“Beautiful, lots of nature and permaculture ideas. Grocery for organics, cafe and everything you need in a peaceful environment”

Livia Faria de Resende

flour, the CERES Bakery now serves up our daily bread and buttery pastries.

Adapted operations regularly to meet restrictions and ensure a safe and smooth flow of service for customers.



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.

Through all of the changes of this year, our community visited on their daily walks to connect, get some local organic goodness, and show their support. Meanwhile, our Head Chef got busy experimenting in the kitchen with house-made kombucha, pickles and ferments, and after lockdown we reopened 7 days a week with a new team, new look space and new farm-focused menu.

This year, we:

Hosted the CERES Harvest Feast, our first dinner celebration following our longest lock down period.

Celebrated Summer Friday Nights with local DJ's, tasty mezze platters and Merri Spritzers.

Reinvented seasonal menus and welcomed the community with daily service.

Featured in popular city and culture guide, Broadsheet.

NURSERY

As a permaculture nursery our aim is to encourage backyard food production. Providing organically-grown vegetable seedlings and a vast range of natives and edibles, the Nursery provides knowledge and support for customers to create their own beautiful, healthy and productive gardens.

The Nursery opened and closed several times over the year, offering an online store and home delivery service during periods of shop closure. Customers love to browse and select their own plants, enjoying the immersive experience of the Nursery, so it was challenging to replicate that experience through an online store.

This year, we:

Created and operated an online store and home delivery service to continue to provide our customers with products and services while the physical store was closed.

Served over nine thousand customers.

Planned for a successful spring trading period whilst managing stock losses and restricted trading.



STORY





We share stories of change and hope through our Communications, Events, Partnerships and Consulting.

As our ancestors knew well, you have to be careful with stories. They have real power, and it's entirely possible that by speaking them aloud, we invite them into being.

Most people can easily roll off a list of stories that lay out the fate of humankind if we do not change our ways. But can you think of one that counters the powerful narrative of disaster, whilst not resorting to escapism? That actively enters the imaginal realm, and brings into being a world of connection, regeneration and beauty?

Although largely absent, in brief periods of the year school kids came back to CERES, and the air was filled with the sounds of awe and laughter as they interacted joyfully with nature and each other. Those little intermissions were the perfect reminder that it's our principal responsibility as human beings to create a future for ourselves and our children that is more beautiful and regenerative, by actively engaging with counter-dystopian stories.

By sharing practical stories of resilient communities, healthy ecosystems, regenerative food systems and local

wellbeing economies, we can provide and normalise the kind of hope that is grounded in reality.

As children so intuitively demonstrate, we need to open our hearts to the future.

Sieta Beckwith,
Narrative Director



COMMUNICATIONS

The CERES Communications Team supports the good work of all the different areas of CERES with digital, design, marketing and social media expertise. In 2021, communications played a vital role in connecting the community with our enterprises and educational services as they adapted to continuous change, planted new seeds, broke ground and branched out.

This year, we:

Hired two wonderful humans through the Working for Victoria initiative, transforming the team and expanding our capacity to tell our stories to more people.

Raised a record amount through our Annual Appeal.

Developed a new system to help us take better care of partners and stakeholders.

Assisted with the development of the CERES Strategy.





EVENTS

Events, festivals and creative engagements 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 focused on hosting smaller events when we could meet in person, and creating online experiences when we could not.

Highlights:

School of Nature and Climate webinar series: Spring Sessions and Autumn Yarnings featuring local legends and First Nations voices.

Great Local Lunch: Joined over 200 farmers, backyard growers and foodies to share the fruits of their labour in one massive locally grown and foraged feast. Meal prepared by the Merri Head Chef, using produce from Honey Lane.

Harvest Celebration: Workshops, music events and a feast to celebrate our food and the harvest season.

Joe's Garden Farm Gate 5th Anniversary: Celebrated by visitors dressing up as their favourite Merri bird.

Olives to Oil: With our friends at 3000acres, we supported olives to be harvested from trees across Melbourne, in private and public spaces, and turned into oil.

“I love what you do,
and that CERES is in
my neighbourhood.
We used to bring
our children, now
I'm looking forward
to exploring
CERES with our
grandchildren”

Marg

CONSULTING

Consulting is a new CERES social enterprise that works with schools, councils, local organisations, developers and place-makers to help grow communities that are strongly connected to each other and their places. Through collaborative facilitation, education and creative processes we draw on 40 years' experience to help organisations create sustainable and connected places, communities, and a future for all.

This year, we:

Supported a local government in reviewing policy, engaging the community and undertaking a significant environmental, social and cultural project.

Developed net-zero roadmaps to guide businesses towards their goal of reducing their environmental footprint and taking ambitious action on climate change.

Provided expert advice on low-carbon living, community & cultural engagement, and social enterprise development for a residential city.

PARTNERSHIPS

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 & Local Government

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Moreland City Council
Darebin City Council
Sustainability Victoria
15 Victorian Local Government Areas

Other

Google
Holding Redlich
Inner North Community Foundation
John T Reid Charitable Trusts
Perpetual
Pinsent Masons
SENVIC

Supporters

AL&T Brosen Family Foundation, Alpha Magnetics Pty Ltd., Connecting Up, Duniya Consulting, Green Acre Pizza, i.e. community, Infinite Automation, Melbourne University Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, Merri Creek Management Committee, Metropolis Metering, Moving Feast, Murgo Constructions, Quatrefoil Consulting Pty Ltd, Salt and Fuessel, Social Ventures Australia, Spirit of Tasmania, STREAT, VicHealth, Westpac Social Sector Finance, Wood 4 Good, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

FUNDRAISING

Each year we turn to our community for support during our Annual Appeal. Thanks to the generosity of 611 donors, we were able to double what we raised last year.

We are grateful to the following individuals for their significant support:

Heather Barr
Kat Brazenor
Bruce Callander
Rosaleen Conroy
Judy Glick
Michael Kane
Brendan Kissane
Irene Lawson
Jon Leighton
Mark Madden
Marsha Merory

“Thank you so much for standing tall as a pillar of courageous hope and resilience in a world that so desperately needs both. May you always be there to shine your green light upon us all!”

Ro

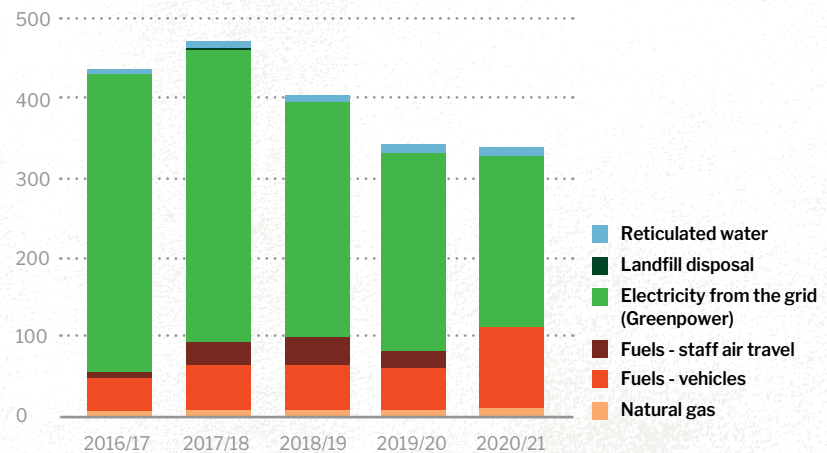


ENVIRONMENT

CARBON EMISSIONS

Overall, carbon emissions have decreased by 38% since our baseline year, mostly due to increased onsite solar capacity. To aim towards achieving zero emissions by 2025, we offset all our electricity use through purchasing greenpower. In the past year, carbon emissions from vehicle fuel have doubled due to the increase in deliveries by Fair Food.

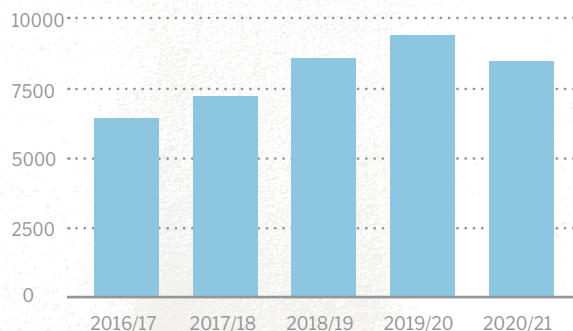
Carbon Emissions (Tonnes CO₂-e)



WATER

Water use reduced this year, however it was still greater than the baseline year. This year the growing space in Honey Lane Organic Farm increased, contributing to the amount of water used. Joe's Garden continued to be the primary water user, with the largest crop growing area. Different rainfall averages and temperatures across the year greatly affect water use.

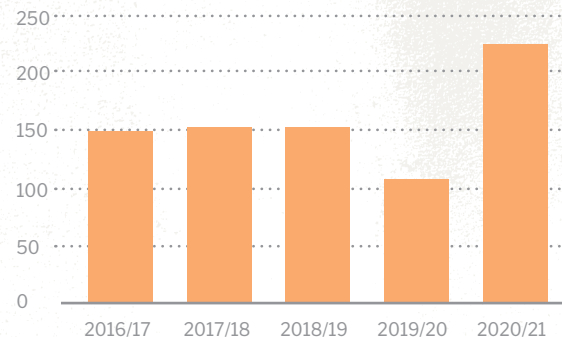
Mains water use (KL)



WASTE

The amount of waste sent to landfill was higher this year, due to increased packaging used during lockdown, more waste left by the public in the CERES Park bins, new inclusion of Fair Wood in the data, and an increase in sales at Fair Food.

Waste to landfill (tonnes)



BIODIVERSITY

Approximately 300 native plants were planted this year. With fewer staff and volunteers onsite at the CERES Park, garden beds were primarily maintained rather than planted, and the higher rainfall has contributed to significant growth across the park.



GOVERNANCE

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

THE BOARD

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



Andrew Hewett



Jo Barraket



Thomas Dobson



Sophie Newing



Noel Blencowe



Cinnamon Evans



Jan Garood



Jessica Dorney



Rod Duncan



Tony Marjoram



Ewan Robertson



Darren Tinker



John Burne



Nicole Baker



Emrys Nekvapil



Dennis Wollersheim



Amanda Lawrence



Lambros Tapinos

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Cinnamon Evans Chief Executive Officer

Sieta Beckwith Narrative Director

Jane Burns Consulting Director & School Programs Manager

Nick Curmi Built & Natural Environment Director

Chris Ennis Business Innovation Director

Melissa Lawson Community Food Systems Director

Lorna Pettifer Learning Innovation Director

Nicolas Porter Chief Financial Officer

MANAGERS

	POSITION HELD AT 30/06/2021	RESIGNED	APPOINTED	A	B
Andrew Hewett	Chairperson			8	8
Jo Barraket		Nov-20		2	3
Thomas Dobson	Treasurer			8	8
Sophie Newing*	Secretary	Aug-21		4	6
Noel Blencowe		Nov-20		3	3
Cinnamon Evans	CEO			8	8
Jan Garood		Nov-20		3	3
Jessica Dorney		Nov-20		1	3
Rodney Duncan	Deputy Chairperson			8	8
Tony Marjoram	General Member			7	8
Ewan Robertson		Nov-20		0	3
Darren Tinker		Nov-20		3	3
John Burne	Staff Representative		Nov-20	4	5
Nicole Baker	General Member		Nov-20	5	5
Emrys Nekvapil	General Member		Nov-20	4	5
Dennis Wollersheim	Site Group Representative	Oct-21	Nov-20	3	5
Amanda Lawrence	General Member		Nov-20	5	5
Lambros Tapinos	Moreland City Council Representative		Apr-21	2	2

A - Number of meetings attended. **B** - Number of meetings held during the time the director held office during the year.

*On approved leave of absence for last 2 board meetings.

John Burne Infrastructure
Luisa Cardamone Adult Learning
Laurel Coad Nursery
Emily Connors Joe's Garden
Hayden Cronin Fair Wood
Tim Dyson/Lester Rajapakse IT
Cass Froese Venue Operations & Events
Isabelle Fouard Fair Food Marketing
Hema Gurung Fair Food Operations
Chloe Horner Student Programs
Jesse Hull Fair Food Operations
Emma McCann Merri Cafe
Karen Kershaw/Bea Viegas People & Culture
Maria McConkey Communications
Kate Mills Finance
Beck Morley Grocery
Dan O'Farrell Microgreens
Nola Pollard Fair Food Human Infrastructure
Meg Stewart Propagation

+101 equivalent full-time staff
 (266 people) across the year.

+many volunteers

FINANCE

In FY2021 we were fortunate to have three key factors in our favour: diversity of our activities, commitment of our staff and support from our community.

The continued impact of the pandemic and 130 days of lockdown in Melbourne severely disrupted some of our education, hospitality, venue hire and retail enterprises. Fortunately, for a short period, CERES was eligible for support through the JobKeeper scheme. This offset some losses and assisted us in protecting the core delivery capability of critically affected areas whose work is at the heart of our mission.

On the other hand, demand for our essential retail enterprises, in particular the 'low-touch' grocery delivery services of Fair Food, saw a significant surge in demand. Fair Food's revenue more than doubled from FY18 to FY21, and grew from representing 35% of CERES' overall revenue in FY18 to 50% in FY21.

Overall revenue for FY21 was just shy of \$20M - a 17% increase on FY20. CERES generated a \$618K surplus for the year and achieved a long-sought-after Working Capital Ratio above 1 for the first time in 17 years. This is a proxy for our ability to cover short term liabilities, and a significant accomplishment.

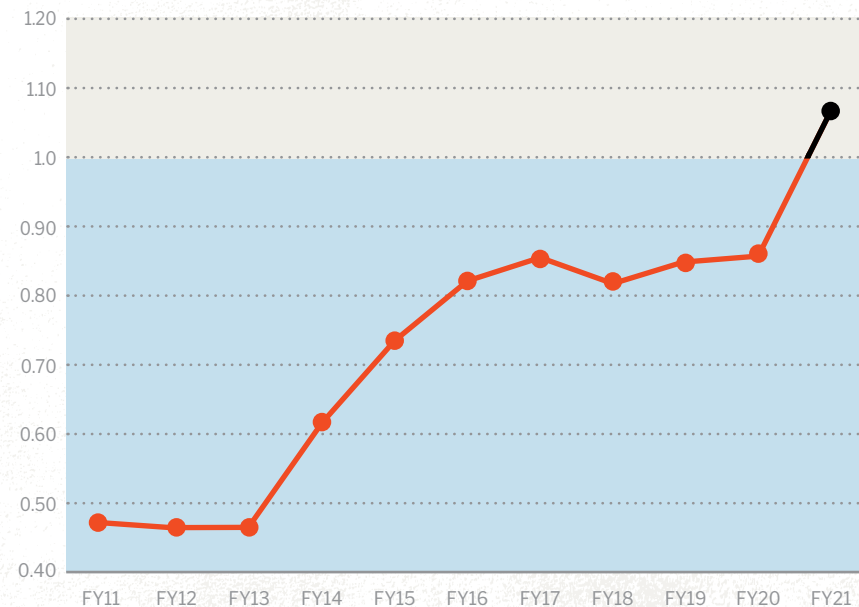
Outlook

Despite closing FY21 in a stronger financial position than in previous years, we remain firmly focussed on improving our financial resilience further.

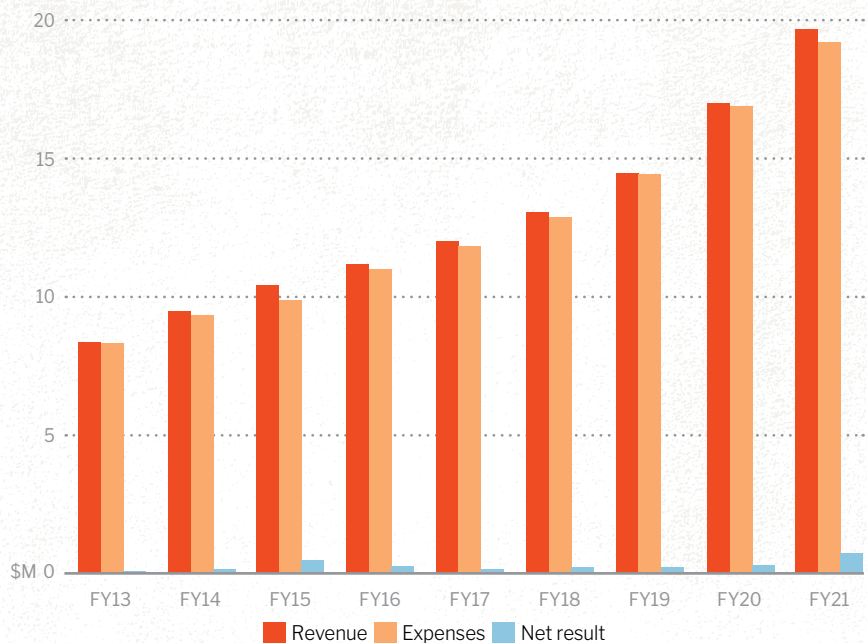
Thomas Dobson
Treasurer

Nico Porter
Chief Financial Officer

Working Capital Ratio



Financial Performance



Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue	19,837,289	17,012,163
Expenses		
Cost of Goods Sold	8,549,309	7,386,847
Employee Benefits Expense	8,181,958	7,240,133
Professional Services	358,515	250,044
Occupancy Expenses	346,826	303,900
Depreciation Expense	296,720	289,255
Other Expenses	1,486,193	1,346,064
Surplus for Year	617,768	195,920
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	617,768	195,920

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June, 2021

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,356,454	1,792,247
Accounts Receivable	716,023	172,728
Inventories	825,563	560,650
Prepayments	129,847	63,153
Total Current Assets	4,027,887	2,588,778

Non Current Assets

Buildings, Plant and Equipment	4,330,562	4,353,163
Total Non Current Assets	4,330,562	4,353,163

Total Assets	8,358,449	6,941,941
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Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable and other Payables	1,140,519	1,128,965
Provisions	804,325	722,173
Borrowings	23,142	23,142
Hire Purchase Commitments	101,350	98,080
Contract Liability	1,712,374	1,029,122
Total Current Liabilities	3,781,710	3,001,482

Non Current Liabilities

Provisions	84,224	59,436
Borrowings	25,538	49,890
Hire Purchase Commitments	269,241	251,165
Total Non Current Liabilities	379,003	360,491

Total Liabilities	4,160,713	3,361,973
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Net Assets	4,197,736	3,579,968
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Members' Funds

Retained Surplus	4,197,736	3,579,968
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TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS	4,197,736	3,579,968
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GET INVOLVED

Donate

ceres.org.au/donate

Become a member

ceres.org.au/membership

Volunteer

ceres.org.au/volunteer

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Page 30: i.e. community



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CERES