



# **CERES** **THEORY OF** **CHANGE**

**2023**

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**CERES**



# Acknowledgement

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

## This booklet

This booklet is for anyone who is looking to engage more deeply with CERES, or work with us to make a bigger impact. It explains how we are bringing about the change we wish to see in the world. It's a collective and iterative process.



SYSTEM  
CHANGE



NOT  
CLIMATE  
CHANGE

# The context of our times

In order to understand what is not going well in the world we used an 'iceberg'<sup>1</sup> model of systems change.

The top level shows the events that we can see happening around us, with deeper layers showing underlying contributing factors.

**Compounding disasters:** Storm; flood; fire; pollution; habitat loss & extinction; poverty; pandemic.

**EVENTS**

**Intersecting crises:** Climate and ecological crises; social isolation; economic exclusion; political extremism; civil unrest and war.

**PATTERNS**

**Extractive systems:** Colonisation; globalisation; industrial agriculture; fossil fuel technologies.

**SYSTEMS**

**Stories of separation:** Humans from nature; mechanistic worldview; economic growth paradigm; disconnection & loss of meaning.

**MENTAL MODELS**

When bringing about change, the more deeply we work, the more powerful the leverage point.

This means that we can make an impact at the events and patterns levels, but it's more effective and powerful to work on changing systems and mental models.

1. Adapted from Donella Meadows' 'Iceberg Model for Systems Change'. See [www.donellameadows.org](http://www.donellameadows.org)



# Our model for change

We applied the same 'iceberg' model to explain how CERES is responding to the context of our times, and creating change on multiple levels.

## EVENTS

**CERES experiences:** Moments of magic & love; participation & belonging; discovery & learning; social enterprise & meaningful employment; local action.

## PATTERNS

**CERES activities:** Home, School, Farm, Market, Story.

## SYSTEMS

**Regenerative systems:** Healthy ecosystems; resilient communities; regenerative food systems; local wellbeing economies.

## MENTAL MODELS

**Stories of connectedness:** Humans as part of nature; relational worldview; feeling of gratitude; sense of purpose.

# Our vision

## **CERES helps people fall in love with the Earth.**

At the deepest level of all our work is a desire to counter the prevailing story of separation with stories of connection and hope.

When we understand our lives within the context of the human and ecological systems that sustain us, we find meaning and purpose in service of others and the Earth.

When people have fallen in love with the Earth again, we will see:

**A world where we all belong**

**A world where we all lead change**

**A world fed through regenerative farming**

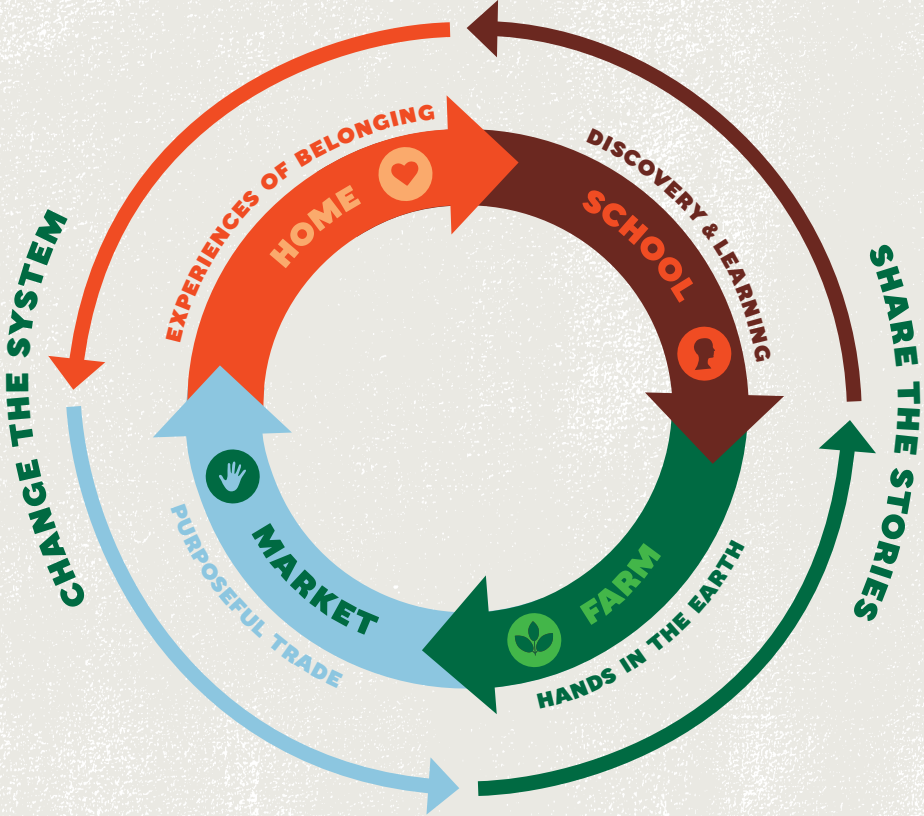
**A world of networked local economies**

**A world filled with empathy and hope**





# Our theories of change





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## Home for nature and people

**Because** our natural and social systems are disrupted and at risk of collapse, and people feel disconnected, lonely, sad and unwell.

**We believe** people can regenerate land, water, plants, animals and themselves.

**So we** invite participation and belonging to people and place through welcoming people to the CERES Park in Brunswick East and Joe's Garden in Coburg.

**That leads to** people feeling part of something bigger.

**And results in** people feeling an increased sense of wellbeing and connection to community and country.

# Our theories of change



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## School for discovery and learning

**Because** we are in unprecedented times and face many challenges, and our education system is not preparing us.

**We believe** communities can prepare for change, whatever the future may hold.

**So we** facilitate discovery and learning that responds to the climate and ecological crisis through our School of Nature and Climate.

**That leads to** people understanding how to lead change.

**And results in** people having an increased sense of agency.



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## **Farm with our hands in the earth**

**Because** industrial agriculture produces low-quality food and depletes the Earth.

**We believe** farming can regenerate our soil and our health.

**So we** demonstrate and invite participation in regenerative urban farming through our organic urban farms.

**That leads to** people developing skills in food production.

**And results in** people participating in regenerative food systems.

# Our theories of change



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## Market for purposeful trade

**Because** global economies extract resources from the poor and concentrate wealth with the rich.

**We believe** a wellbeing economy presents an alternative to the endless growth model.

**So we** make locally and ethically produced goods available to our community through our social enterprises.

**That leads to** people living within thriving local economies.

**And results in** people participating in local wellbeing economies.



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## Story of change and hope

**Because** a mental model of separation gives rise to extractive systems; and stories of dystopia can be self-fulfilling.

**We believe** a mental model of connection gives rise to regenerative systems, and stories are powerful and can change mental models.

**So we** share stories of change and hope to inspire others on the journey.

**That leads to** people having empathy for each other and the Earth.

**And results in** people having more hope for our future.



**FAIR FOOD** CERES

CERESFAIRFOOD.ORG.AU



# Our impact

Local, practical, community-based action, is where change starts, but not where it ends.

People around the world are restoring their connections to community and place. Collectively we are building:

**Healthy ecosystems**

**Resilient communities**

**Regenerative food systems**

**Local wellbeing economies**

# Our values

Our values lie at the heart of our work, and help us hold on to what is important.

## **We're part of a bigger story.**

The Wurundjeri Woiwurrung people took care of these lands and waters long before colonisation. We recognise indigenous sovereignty, and our efforts to cultivate ecological regeneration are interwoven with this work. We also acknowledge that CERES is not working for a better world alone, and that we benefit from the work of previous generations as well as people working alongside us now.

## **Generosity.**

We want to give to the Earth what she gives to us, and to offer the same kindness, reverence, respect, and love that sustains life. We have a responsibility to share what we have and look after each other, following the example of the Earth who is always generous.

## **Everyone is welcome.**

We seek to be a place of unity and invite all cultures, nationalities, abilities, world-views and thought systems. We work to make space for multiple voices, and recognise that there is strength and joy in diversity.

## **We practise what we teach.**

Engaging the whole person - head, heart and hands - lies at the roots of our approach to education. We strive to equip people to think differently, take local action and be resilient and responsive global citizens. We aim to demonstrate what we stand for and share our learnings transparently and accessibly.

## **Our hope is grounded in action.**

Climate and ecological crisis is an urgent and imminent threat to life. Despite that, we have hope that change is possible. This hope is grounded in the knowledge that local, practical, community-based action, on a global scale, is where change starts.

## **We work with love.**

It is our belief and experience that love for the Earth and each other is the motivating force that enables real change. Love can be fierce, urgent and transformative, and inspires us to keep going when the situation seems hopeless. Some of us use different words to describe this force.



CERES is an environmental education centre,  
community garden, urban farm and social enterprise  
hub with four locations in Melbourne's north.

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**Visit us:**

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[ceresfairfood.org.au](http://ceresfairfood.org.au)  
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[sustainability.ceres.org.au](http://sustainability.ceres.org.au)

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