



**CERES**

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## **CERES Joe's Market Garden and farm gate remain open**

25th May 2023

CERES Joe's Market Garden is on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung country. People have gathered here and all along the banks of the Merri-Merri for thousands of years, harvesting, singing and being in relationship with each other and the Earth.

Following colonisation, Chinese and Italian market gardeners grew food here for more than 150 years. In 2003 Joe Garita started handing over the farming one row at a time to Chris Ennis, a CERES farmer. In 2008 CERES accepted a lease over the land from Merri-Bek City Council. Since then many CERES farmers have been involved, and all kinds of initiatives have grown out of the relationship between community and farming. We want to ensure that continues long into the future.

In the last 12 months, since lockdowns lifted and foot traffic lessened, floods engulfed half the farm and the cost-of-living crisis became more acute, together the market garden and farm gate have been operating at a significant financial loss. We need to make some changes.

We are currently reviewing operations and this is what we're proposing:

**The farm gate to open on Saturday mornings only, over winter.** Coffee, snacks and a small amount of produce and flowers grown at Joe's will be available for sale. We will review again in spring.

**The market garden to remain operational 7 days per week, with a renewed focus on farming.** Activities such as volunteering, education and nature play will continue. We will focus on looking after the land which is entrusted to us, and ensure it remains beautiful, productive and sustainable. Food grown in the market garden already goes to CERES Fair Food for delivery to homes across Melbourne, and this will continue.

We understand how much the community loves CERES Joe's Market Garden and have been moved by the level of community support. The farm gate is open this week from Thursday to Saturday. We encourage you to come down to the community-organised event on Saturday 27th May from 9am.

We're deeply honoured to be the ongoing caretakers of this unique and special community place.

Please email [feedback@ceres.org.au](mailto:feedback@ceres.org.au) with any comments and suggestions.

Andrew Hewett, Chairperson  
Cinnamon Evans, CEO

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