



ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23

CERES



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.

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CHAIR

“Organisational resilience” has been a consistent theme of recent CERES annual reports. We have sought to respond to the devastating global pandemic as it challenged our various programs. We have ceased some of our activities, changed the way we deliver other programs and given greater emphasis to others.

The pandemic continues, though fortunately not as severely as it was at its height. But new challenges have arisen, as a cost of living crisis takes hold. Australians are increasingly acutely conscious of what they spend their income on. Discretion is the order of the day.

As is noted elsewhere in this annual report, over ninety per cent of CERES income is a result of our trading activities. And this trading income is dependent upon the discretionary choices and expenditure of our supporters and customers.

This report’s financial picture demonstrates that we have only been partially successful. We report a loss for the last twelve months. Clearly this is not sustainable. As CERES’ ultimate guardians, turning this around has been a focus of the CERES board in the last twelve months. Working closely with the CEO and the Executive Team we are

fashioning a longer term financial strategy. The early signs are that this is having an impact.

As we navigate the choppy financial waters we have been emboldened by the signs of confidence in CERES management and governance, reflected by the financial support of the Victorian Government and the warm and tangible support of the councillors and officers of the Merri-bek Council.

I pay tribute to the visionary leadership of Cinnamon Evans, our CEO, and to the contribution of management, staff and volunteers. I also acknowledge the voluntary contribution of board members. The role of two board members – Deputy Chair, Nicole Baker, and Treasurer, Tom Dobson – is particularly noteworthy. They go above and beyond!

I am confident about CERES’ future – our vision remains relevant and exciting.

Andrew Hewett,
CERES Chairperson

While we have understandably been focused on the financial bottom line, the last year has also demonstrated CERES’ capacity to regenerate and renew.

CEO

People frequently ask me, ‘How’s CERES going?’ and I notice this question has more than one answer. In the grand scheme of things, CERES is going really well. Day in, day out, the trees and the gardens grow, the bees pollinate, the birds call and the chooks forage. People visit the CERES Park and CERES Joe’s Market Garden, participate in meaningful activities and learn valuable skills, buy permaculture plants and books, sustainably-sourced timbers, ethically-produced groceries and organic coffees, and the Earth keeps turning.

At the same time, our socially-constructed economic system is under pressure. As a local business, 90% of CERES’ revenue comes from trade. Our social enterprises enable us to provide meaningful jobs and public good, such as our beautiful green spaces and community events. In Melbourne, having lurched from a pandemic into an economic crisis, our community has less financial freedom to support our social enterprises, which in turn reduces the resources we have with which to serve our community. We closed the financial year with an operating loss for the second year in a row, a trend which obviously cannot continue. We continue to make adjustments to our operations and seek a balance between living within our means and fulfilling our aspirations.

On a global scale, we know the pursuit of endless economic growth is not a viable path. How do we shift our mental models away from extraction and consumption and toward relationality and regeneration? How do we build and maintain an economic system that supports human flourishing within planetary limits?

Ecological economist and writer Tim Jackson says, ‘To do well is in part about the ability to give and receive love, to enjoy the respect of our peers, to contribute usefully to society, to have a sense of belonging and trust in the community, to help create the social world and find a credible place in it.’ CERES is this hope in action.

So when people ask me, ‘How’s CERES going?’, I could reply as a CEO and talk about our ongoing financial struggles that keep me awake at night. But I’d much rather reply as a human and talk about our abundance of love and belonging, community and trust, participation and employment, all of which pave the way to true prosperity and resilience. And so I reply ‘CERES is going really well, thanks’, and I feel grateful.

Cinnamon Evans,
CERES CEO

This year:

583,629

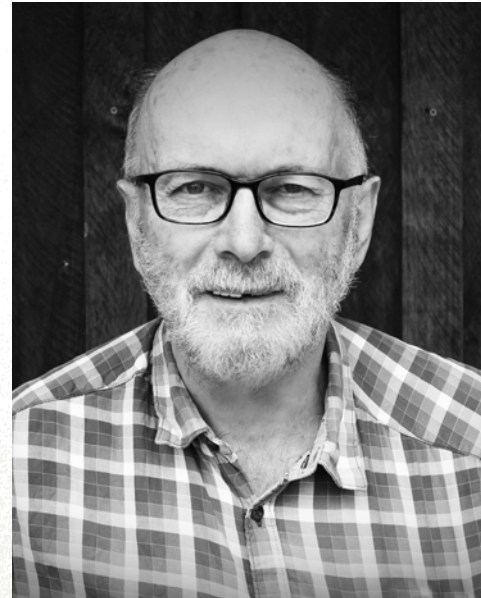
interacted with CERES at one of our locations, or were visited by CERES.

703,812

interacted with CERES online.

1,287,441

were reached in total.



This year:

885

bought or renewed their membership.

17,400

attended an event we hosted.

30,520

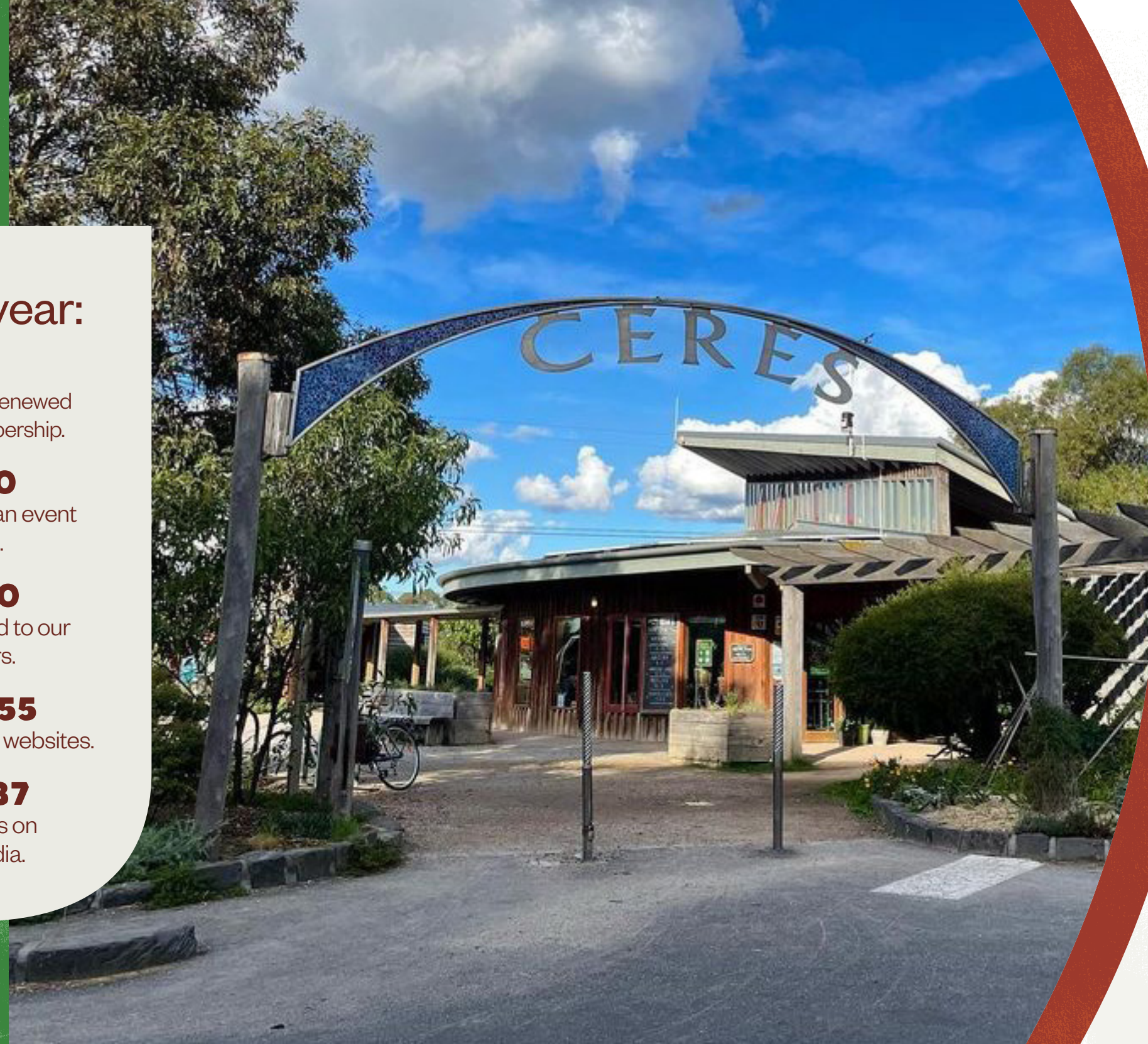
subscribed to our newsletters.

448,555

visited our websites.

174,737

followed us on social media.



We invite participation and belonging through welcoming people to our park and farms, and share stories of change and hope to inspire others on their journey.

A sense of belonging or connection with others is often considered a fundamental aspect of human nature. However, approximately one-third of us report experiencing loneliness at least weekly in Australia.

For those of us who haven't experienced a sense of community in our personal lives, the mere mention of it can be estranging. It often feels like an elusive glimmer of hope that fades as we approach it. We speak of it longingly, as if it were a mythological story in which we yearn to immerse ourselves, and its absence exerts a significant influence on our lives.

The good news, according to *Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home* author Toko-Pa Turner, is that community is a practice, not a place. She suggests that instead of asking, 'Where do I belong?' we can say, 'I belong myself to that which I love.'

More than a million people 'belong themselves' to CERES each year, in as many different ways as there are people. We're so grateful. We love you too.

Sieta Beckwith,
Narrative Director



PARK

Our Park Team maintains the buildings, equipment and gardens across our 4-hectare community and social enterprise hub in Brunswick East, with assistance from volunteers.

In the gardens, the team uses permaculture principles as the basis for growing a combination of indigenous, native and culinary plants, and applies horticultural, grassland and wetland expertise. The team is also responsible for the management and maintenance of energy, water and waste systems such as composting, worm farms and irrigation.

This year, we:

- **Planted over 1000 indigenous species** throughout the park
- **Renovated the CERES wetlands** including the installation of a water aeration system
- **Welcomed two local cafes to our compost system** to help them close the loop on their food waste
- **Expanded the gardens at our Northern entry**, around the Merri Cafe and throughout the park
- **Implemented new waste management systems** throughout the park

DESIGN

Our Design and Development team is responsible for designing and implementing new builds throughout the East Brunswick Park and beyond.

This year, we:

- **Upgraded the Pavilion deck** to a more hard wearing commercial grade surface
- **Completed a new chicken viewing and teaching space** along Honey Lane
- **Installed the new Microgreens enterprise at Brunswick East**, consisting of new polytunnels, shipping containers, coolroom and seed store. This is four times larger than its predecessor, formerly located in the Fair Food carpark.
- **Began the fit out of a new office space** at 269 Stewart Street, using 90% recycled materials and furniture.
- **Submitted designs for planning approval** for: a new gateway on Roberts Street; a new Grocery Pavilion; the Community Hall and the Red Train renovation.



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.

Highlights:

- **Garlic Incubator Fiesta (November 2022)**
- **Australian Community Gardens (ACG) Conference (November 2022)** - Featuring Costa Georgiadis and CERES workshops.
- **CERES 40th Birthday celebrations (December 2022)** - Celebration with over 100 supporters including staff, volunteers, board members, donors and founders.
- **Harvest Festival (March 2023)** - Celebrated our local community food system.
- **Olives to Oil Festival (May 2023)** - 26 tonnes of community-harvested olives collected across Melbourne delivered to CERES and celebrated.
- **Winter Solstice Festival (June 2023)** - 1,110 people came to celebrate the darkness with music, performances and a ceremonial fire.

STORIES

The IT and Marketing Teams support the good work of all the different areas of CERES with digital, design, marketing and social media expertise. We aim to share stories of change and hope from across all aspects of CERES that inspire others on the journey.

This year, we:

- **Worked with a design agency on a new face for the website**, and launched this in June 2022.
- **Shared dozens of photos of the last 40 years of CERES** through social media and the website
- **Supported CERES enterprises to grow their engagement** and tell their stories through web, signage and social media
- **Assisted with communications support** for major events such as Harvest and Olives to Oil.

VENUES

The Venues Team coordinates the hire of all our venues and supports the planning and delivery of CERES-run festivals and events. We host visitors and community members in a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces, providing endless opportunities for the community to connect.

This year, we:

- **Hosted 20 weddings** and 136 children's birthday parties
- **Introduced new catering options and upgraded audio visual equipment** in the meeting rooms
- **Hosted many different local community groups.** Our venues are regularly used by independent community groups on an ongoing basis. Some of the groups have been part of CERES for almost 40 years, and collectively host thousands of visitors every year.

Community groups include:

- Aozora Shokudo Japanese cultural classes
- Australian Shiatsu College
- Bee Group
- Bike Shed
- Chook Group
- Community Garden Group
- Makers & Flea Market
- Melbourne Zen Group
- Melbourne Insight Meditation Group
- Rhythm Tree Family Music classes
- Sophia's Spring
- Shambhala Meditation
- SOTEMS

This year, after many years located in the Red Train, Moreland LETS moved on. The Australian Shiatsu College joined the group, making their home in the Learning Centre.

This year:

34,440

participated in Student Programs at CERES, in schools and online.

851

participated in Teacher Programs to build ResourceSmart Schools.

2079

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



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

Responding to the needs of the times, over 90 educators work together across our School of Nature and Climate to teach learners of all ages about climate change, regenerative living, nature connection, food systems, culture, community, and systems change. We have welcomed hordes of young people and adult learners back to our Park, and visited hundreds of schools and community groups across the state.

This year we designed a new impact measurement framework for our programs across early learning, student and teacher learning and adult learning. We are measuring exactly how we impact people's skills, knowledge and agency in creating change, as well as their confidence, resilience and connection to Country.

To equip people to lead change, we need to ensure we're constantly adapting and adding new learning opportunities.

Lorna Pettifer,
Learning Innovation Director



EARLY LEARNING

Our carefully designed learning experiences connect young children with nature, allowing them to explore independently, discover the wonders of our natural world and participate in caring for our environment.

Programs include a regular nature playgroup, excursions for kids aged 3-5, professional learning opportunities for educators, and an initiative to assist early childhood centres to manage their energy, waste, water and biodiversity.

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.

Student Program activities continue to have a positive impact on our environment by regenerating land and enriching biodiversity. Our Indigenous Perspectives program shares Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung culture through Connection to Country programs and practices.

This year, we:

- **Connected and inspired 150 primary and 45 secondary leaders** in the Mornington Peninsula with our Student Leadership Summits that brought students together for full days of leadership, behaviour change and sustainability learning.
- **Designed and planted 17 wildlife gardens in metro and regional schools** with our Schools for Wildlife Program

- **Delivered a week long experiential learning program for year 10 - 11 students.** Working with educators at CERES Brunswick East, Joe's Garden and Merri Creek Management Committee, students gained a deeper understanding of themselves and their surrounding environment
- **Hosted 153 budding, gumbooted little environmentalists** in our explorative Nature Playgroup sessions at Brunswick East and Joe's Market Garden.

“It was such a diverse and supportive group influenced by the teachers and mentors, I could not recommend this enough. I learnt so much about gardening and pathways but also about myself and what I want to do in life. I love these people with all my heart and have made lifelong friends.”

Green Gap Year participant

TEACHER PROGRAMS

Our Teacher Programs Team delivers sustainability education to over 180 schools in the Northern and Southern regions of Melbourne, and 12 early childhood centres primarily through the ResourceSmart Schools (RSS) program.

We support schools to minimise waste, save energy and water, improve biodiversity on their school grounds, and cut greenhouse gas emissions. The RSS framework helps guide schools to develop a 'whole school' approach to sustainability, weaving it into the fabric of everyday school and community life. It integrates educational, environmental, social and economic outcomes so that schools do not work with each area in isolation but as components of the bigger picture of sustainability.

This year, we:

- **Collaborated with other Victorian environmental education providers to deliver Student Environmental Leadership and Action (STELA) meetings**, providing a wonderful opportunity for students to share their sustainability projects with students from other schools.

- **Ran a Sustainability and Wellbeing for Students with Additional Needs professional learning day** for teachers. This event evolved in response to requests to support Specialist Schools to engage their students with additional needs in sustainability projects.
- **Provided training for a group of Korean principals** who had heard about the ResourceSmart Schools program. They were passionate about sustainability and really wanted to explore ways they could embed sustainability in their schools in South Korea.
- **Conducted an evaluation of the ResourceSmart Schools program** which found that 89% of schools involved in the program find it helpful in supporting their sustainability journey.

ADULT LEARNING

Our Adult Learning Team creates 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.

Through regular workshops and courses in person and online, our workshops and programs create pathways for employment and further education, and foster a connected learning community.

This year, we:

- **Designed and delivered our new flagship program: Green Gap Year**, a seven-month program that provides a learning and work experience pathway to a green career, participants completed learning and work-based programs, community projects, volunteering and were connected with mentors in the sector.
- **Celebrated the graduation of the 2nd cohort of the Nature Based Leadership Training** program and moved into evaluation and re-design for our next delivery in 2024.
- **Returned to Mapuru community in East Arnhem Land** to support Yolngu elders to deliver two immersive learning on country workshops.

- **Doubled the number of people** attending our sessional and deep learning programs from the previous year
- **Provided 53 students with subsidised learning opportunities** supported by ACFE (Adult, Community and Further Education).

FARM

This year:

19,690

visited Joe's Market Garden for farm gate sales.

1,522

volunteered in our farms, gardens and maintenance teams



We demonstrate and invite participation in regenerative urban farming through our organic urban farms.

With the cost of living rising, families struggling to make ends meet, and our earth crying for change, there is an opportunity to come together to seek relief and find creative ways to survive and thrive.

Each week our Farm Team weaves in the threads of community, through welcoming volunteers, providing seedlings to fellow urban farm projects, or taking time with horticulture students. Our invitation for connection shone brightest at our annual olive community harvest, with hundreds of people of all ages and backgrounds joining in the beautiful chaos of collecting 26 tonnes of olives from backyards and street trees across Melbourne. Gathering together around a ceremonial fire in the dark of Solstice night, witnessing each other and hoping for new light, our community whispered, "Thank you. I didn't know I needed this."

CERES farms are not just growing food to share, but growing ways that we can genuinely support each other through changing times.

Melissa Lawson,
Community Food Systems Director



MICRO GREENS

CERES Microgreens is a vertical urban farm producing certified-organic sprouts for wholesale and retail.

This year, we:

- **Brought Microgreens to Brunswick East** to join the rest of the Farm family, with support from our community through the Urban Farm Renewal project.
- **Cut the ribbon on the new purpose built vertical farm** in July 2023, and now there is plenty of room to grow.

JOE'S MARKET GARDEN

CERES Joe's Market Garden (Joe's) is a one hectare market garden located in Coburg, beside 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. We operate a popular farm gate cafe and host special events and workshops.

This year, we:

- **Faced a natural disaster challenge**, with October flood waters wiping out more than a third of our market gardens.
- **Were lifted by generous community support** with hundreds of local people attending clean up days.
- **Redesigned our market garden and farm gate operations** to better match visitor patterns
- **Felt the love and support for Joe's Farm Gate** with hundreds of community members coming out to show their support during change discussions.



HONEY LANE ORGANIC FARM

Covering around a quarter of the footprint of the CERES Park, 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 31,470 seedling punnets** for sale through CERES Nursery, including 5,500 cucumber plants and 26 different varieties of tomatoes.
- **Grew 3,000kg of produce** for our CERES enterprises.
- **Progressed the Urban Farm Renewal project** with design development
- **Continued working with marginalised young people each week**, through a partnered training program.
- **Collected 37,764 eggs** laid by CERES chooks

“Joe's is a source of fresh, local organic food, but it's so much more. It's a centre of community connection, it's an inspiration for a more connected, local way of living.”

SJ, Joe's Market Garden visitor

COMMUNITY GARDEN 3000 ACRES

The CERES Community Garden was one of the first projects at CERES, and for more than 40 years it has played a key role in educating people about localised urban food growing. The garden is a beautiful, abundant and creative space, home to over 50 local gardeners with a vibrant program of working bees and events.

This year, we:

- **Held an open day, BBQ and series of natural dyeing activities** during Harvest Festival.
- **Continued to strengthen community engagement and governance** with monthly working bees and monthly meetings of the interim committee.
- **Built a new demonstration** hot composting system

3000acres provides community garden design and facilitation services and runs events and community food festivals across Melbourne.

We work with local organisations to create a social movement that strengthens our food system and builds community connection.

This year, we:

- **Represented CERES in the Moving Feast network** of for-purpose social enterprises working as catalysts to create a connected, fair and regenerative Victorian food system.
- **Participated in the Merri-Bek Food Leadership Action Group** to establish a new Food Hub in the north of Merri-Bek.
- **Supported three emerging community groups** to deliver sustainability projects through auspicing grant funds and providing advice and mentorship.
- **Worked with five property companies** to build or facilitate community gardens and food growing skills in their communities.

MARKET

This year:

2,570

ordered timber or carpentry services from Fair Wood

49,115

ordered groceries from Fair Food.

212,168

bought organic groceries from the Grocery & Cafe.

240,000

ate an organic lunch at Merri Cafe.

50,698

bought garden supplies and plants from the Nursery.

2,211

were reached by Consulting projects.



We make locally and ethically produced goods available to our community through our social enterprises.

CERES depends on its enterprises; they fund the core services that keep our Park open and help maintain our independence. The transition out of COVID restrictions and into a cost-of-living crisis has presented challenges. Working closely with the Finance Team, CERES enterprises have remade and refashioned themselves to operate and thrive in a new trading environment. These challenges are also bringing our teams together to collaborate in new ways and share diverse audiences.

It's this willingness to change, and openness to try new things that allows CERES enterprises to employ increasing numbers of people and create impact through purposeful trade. This is reflected in the incredible increase in sales over the past 20 years from \$2 million in 2002 to almost \$20 million in 2023, and the number of jobs from 50 to over 220.

Chris Ennis,
Business Innovation Director



FAIR FOOD

CERES Fair Food delivers organic groceries to over 2000 households across Melbourne, sourcing groceries from almost 200 farmers and makers. Together we support regenerative farming practices, provide employment for a diverse workforce, and return profits to support vital CERES programs.

The cost of living crisis has been challenging for Fair Food. Customers are going back to supermarkets seeking cheaper groceries. We have been tightening our belts but we've also been improving our service, packaging and range.

This year, we:

- **Launched the “Can Food Be Fairer?” campaign**, rebuilt and re-skinned our webshop
- **Introduced the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) range**, featuring affordable, sustainably grown produce
- **Replaced polystyrene coolers** with reusable, recyclable cardboard
- **Finally rolled out an electric van**, imported from the UK.

“A brilliant company. Perfect deliveries every time. Always innovating, always improving the functionality of the web shop and adding new and interesting products that I would otherwise not have access to out here in the suburbs. Friendly customer service and real care for the environment and their workers. The antidote to the supermarket.”

Fair Food Google Review, April 2023



GROCERY

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 Honey Lane Organic Farm, and fresh coffee and food, we offer an opportunity to connect with each other and the Earth whilst shopping sustainably.

This year, we:

- **Refreshed the produce display** to highlight CERES-grown produce
- **Replaced many single use plastic packaged items** with home compostable, reusable packaging, or package-free bulk alternatives
- **Introduced new ranges** to better meet community needs: of Australian native bushfoods, more vegan and gluten free items
- **Gained more wholesale customers** for the Bakery
- **Diverted more than 266 kg of plastic** to be reused by a local partner

NURSERY

As a predominantly permaculture and native plant nursery, our aim is to encourage backyard food production, habitat building and biodiversity. 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, organic and productive gardens.

This year, we:

- **Continued to expand our edible, native plant and seed ranges**, such as our native grass lawn options, as well as our organic plant care products.
- **Increased the range of local authors and artist products** in our bookstore, including childrens' books
- **Hosted two sold-out book launch events** - Underground Lovers: Encounters with Fungi by Alison Pouliot and Earth Restorer's Guide to Permaculture by Rosemary Morrow.

MERRI CAFE

The Merri Cafe is an organic cafe serving a seasonally changing menu, which showcases our favourite organic, local food and drinks and supports our local farmers and producers, including produce grown at Honey Lane and Joe's Market Gardens.

Our focus is on celebrating growing, cooking, eating and learning together – putting food back at the centre of our table to create community and support community food systems.

This year, we:

- **Increased our percentage of produce from Honey Lane and Joe's Market Gardens** by adapting menus to suit seasonal harvests
- **Fermented and pickled excess food**, including making our own vinegar from leftover wine
- **Introduced a keg system for milk** to alleviate the use of plastic milk bottles
- **Catered for over 100 groups** and workshops using the meeting rooms
- **Worked with the CERES Bakery** to supply bread and pastries to the kitchen and customers

“Amazing place to spend some time in nature, in the sun or doing some work. They have a great selection of conscious food that does good.”

Merri customer, 2023

FAIR WOOD

CERES Fair Wood offers locally sourced quality timber from sustainable sources, connecting small-scale growers and millers directly to timber buyers. We sell farm-forested, agroforestry and salvaged timber. We also offer carpentry and product design services.

This year, we:

- **Supplied timber to build the foundations for the NGV Architectural Commission, Temple of Boom** and brokered a buy-back arrangement, saving the material from landfill.
- **Curated Origin to Object**, a group exhibition of 12 local makers that celebrated the origin of our timber as part of Melbourne Design Week.
- **Launched our Urban Forestry pilot project** at ecologiQ 2022, re-imagining where forestry happens and placing value in waste wood

- **Secured funding to support employment pathways for refugees and immigrants** through a work-ready program.
- **Held our first ever in workshop event** that brought 40 people together to listen to a tree grower, an indigenous architect and a fine furniture maker talk about their journeys with sustainable timber.



CONSULTING

CERES Consulting 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:

- **Delivered a Sustainability Plan for Camberwell Grammar School** to help guide the school's journey to net zero by 2030 and beyond that, a climate-positive school.
- **Delivered a Community Priorities Report for Merri-bek City Council on 'Merri Merri Wayi'**, a community-led collaboration to enable our natural and urban worlds to thrive along the Merri Creek.
- **Designed a 4-hectare food hub and environmental education centre concept** and provided advice on sustainable living, transport, community infrastructure and 20-minute neighbourhood living for a sustainable peri-urban development of up to 20,000 residents.

“We have learned that we can make small changes, and that those changes accumulate to make a big difference. This is one aspect of a multifaceted approach to get to our target of zero emissions by 2030.”

Dr Paul Hicks, Camberwell Grammar School Headmaster

PEOPLE

This year:

980

donated to our fundraising appeals

219

were employed by CERES (73 full-time equivalent)



We believe in the power of the collective. Together we lead ourselves, our customers and our communities back to our roots and back to this beautiful Earth.

Research tells us that supporting people to apply their own unique strengths to everyday tasks, sees them six times more engaged in their jobs and 38% more productive. CERES has always encouraged staff to find the right intersection between their passions and their position descriptions, and this year we have been offering more focused strengths-based approaches to employee development.

The HR team continued to focus on strategic planning and process improvement, finalising our people architecture and frameworks which has given us a clear sense of direction and priority projects for 2024. In addition, we have made significant enhancements to work health and safety, records management and compliance.

While reflecting on the new era of hybrid working, the HR team has started progressing a “flex working” philosophy so employees can thrive, connect and collaborate strongly.

Wendy Grenfell,
Human Resources Director



VOLUNTEERS

CERES relies on the love and energy of a community of volunteers who work individually and in groups across many aspects of our operations.

Volunteers help keep our park beautiful and maintain our urban farms, growing organic produce for sale in our social enterprises. They also fulfil essential governance roles through membership of the CERES Board and committees.

This year, we:

- **Contributed more than 5000 hours of labour** through group volunteering from 42 organisations, ranging from small local businesses to large international firms.
- **Planted, watered, weeded, mulched,** composted, harvested and assisted with general maintenance.
- **Fulfilled essential governance roles** through membership of the CERES Board, Board Executive, Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, and Impact Committee.

“Our team hasn’t stopped talking! They loved the experience and felt uplifted by their time at CERES. Our host was gorgeous, her passion for the work was palpable [and] a hands-on educator who took the Hines team on an educational journey.”

Hines - corporate volunteer



THE BOARD

CERES is a not-for-profit organisation and is managed by a voluntary Board 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 several Managers who oversee each enterprise and project.

Andrew Hewett Chairperson	Nicole Baker Deputy Chair	Liz Martin Secretary	Thomas Dobson Treasurer	Giselle Pinto General Member	Ashley Clarke General Member	Laura Vickers General Member	Sophie Arnold General Member	Tonya Scibilia General Member	Emrys Nekvapil General Member	Tony Marjoram General Member	Rodney Duncan General Member	Cinnamon Evans CEO
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Number of meetings attended	8	8	6	7	5	5	4	3	0	5	4	4	8
Number of meetings held during the time the member held office	8	8	6	8	7	8	4	4	0	7	4	4	8
Appointed			Aug 22				Nov 22	Nov 22	Aug 23				
Resigned										June 23	Nov 22	Nov 22	

PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

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.

Government Partners

Australian Government Department of Home Affairs
 Banyule City Council
 Barwon Water
 Boroondara City Council
 Darebin City Council
 Greater Dandenong City Council
 Hobsons Bay City Council
 Hume City Council
 Maribyrnong City Council
 Merri-bek City Council
 Monash City Council
 Mornington Peninsula Shire

Sustainability Victoria
 VicHealth
 Victorian Government Department of Education and Training
 Victorian Government Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry & Regions
 Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness & Housing
 Yarra City Council

Philanthropic Partners

Collier Charitable Fund
 Common Goodness Foundation
 Inner North Community Foundation
 John T Reid Charitable Trusts
 Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
 Sustainable Table
 Whittlesea Community Connection
 Worldwide Fund for Nature

Supporting Partners

Aussie Broadband
 Citizens Own Renewable Energy Network Australia Inc
 ecologiQ
 Farmer Incubator
 Google
 Green Sheep Collective
 Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools
 Melbourne Design Week
 Moving Feast
 The Good Car Co
 Social Enterprise Network Victoria
 Spotless
 STREAT
 Vet Development Centre
 White Box Enterprises
 Williams and Company

Donors

We are grateful to the following individuals for their significant support during both our end of financial year appeal, and at other times throughout the year :

Brendan Kissane
 Ingrid Jolley
 Irene Lawson
 Josephine Barraket
 Jun McLatchie
 Katherine Brazenor
 Sally Sheppard
 Sarah Charlton
 Sarah Huffman



STAFF

Executive Team

Cinnamon Evans - Chief Executive Officer
 Sieta Beckwith - Narrative Director
 Chris Ennis - Business Innovation Director
 Melissa Lawson - Community Food Systems Director
 Kate Mills - Finance Director
 Lorna Pettifer - Learning Innovation Director
 Nicolas Porter - Chief Financial Officer

Directors

Jane Burns - Consulting Director
 Wendy Grenfell - Human Resources Director

Managers

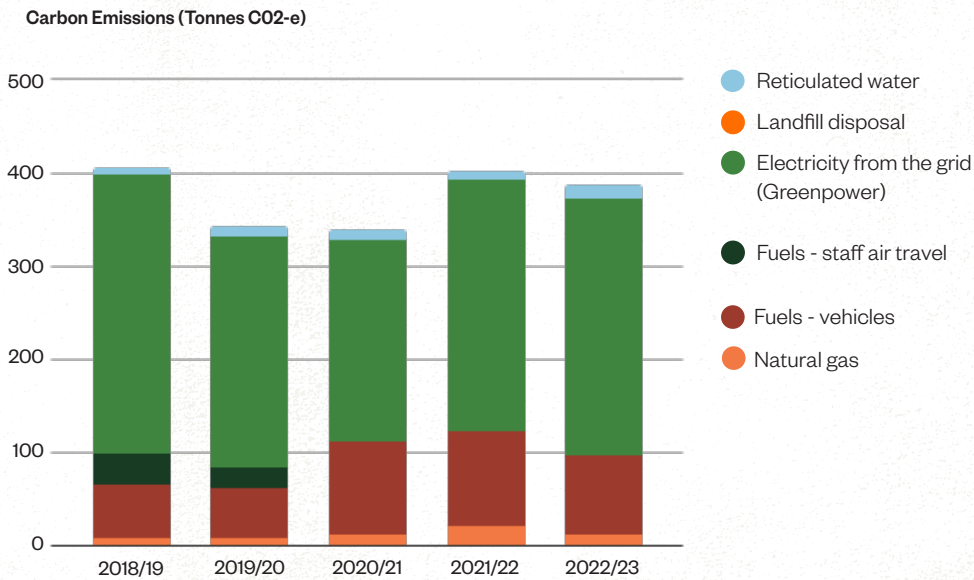
Luisa Cardamone - Adult Learning
 Laurel Coad / Amanda Shone - Nursery
 Emily Connors / Rachel Rubenstein - Joe's Garden
 Hayden Cronin - Fair Wood
 Nick Curmi - Design & Development
 Isabelle Fouard - Fair Food Marketing
 Hema Gurung - Fair Food Operations

Naomi Hanna - Grocery
 Jess Holland - Microgreens
 Chloe Horner / Jonathan Noble - Student Programs
 Jesse Hull - Fair Food Operations
 Belinda Kennedy - East Brunswick Park
 Merrin Layden - Community Food Systems
 Karen Mengell - VET, Projects & Inclusive Programs
 Ben Manassah / Adele Price - Partnerships
 Emma McCann - Hospitality & Venues
 Maria McConkey / Andrea Nelson - Marketing
 Lester Rajapakse - IT
 Bryan Rivera - Finance
 Meg Stewart - Honey Lane Organic Farm
 Pia Wrafter - Teacher Programs
 Kat Young - Student Programs

CARBON EMISSIONS

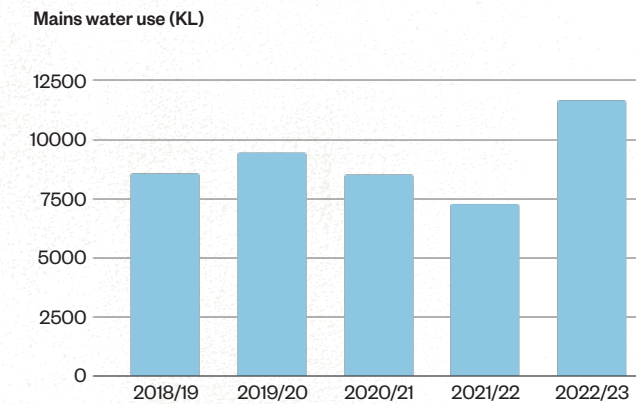
Overall, carbon emissions have decreased since our baseline year. This is due to electrifying our gas infrastructure and installing onsite solar generation to meet a substantial amount of our electricity needs. The remainder of electricity is offset through purchasing greenpower. To achieve zero emissions by 2025, we are addressing our current challenge of

affording electric vehicles to decrease carbon emissions from vehicle fuel in deliveries by Fair Food, and electrifying the remaining gas infrastructure.



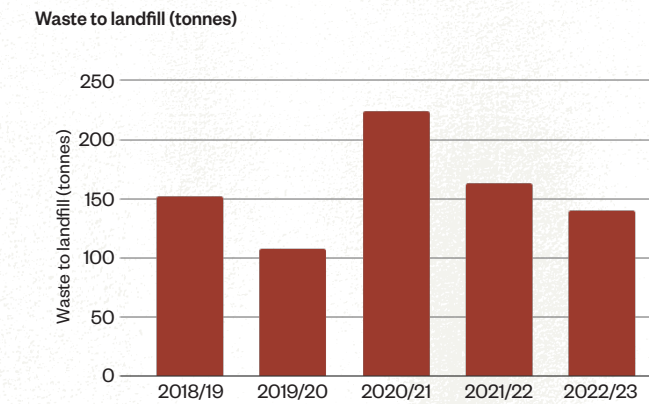
WATER

Water use increased this year due to expanded food production at Honey Lane. Agriculture continues to be our largest consumer of water across the East Brunswick Park and Joe's Garden. Additionally, a year of lower rainfall has contributed to higher water use.



WASTE

Our waste to landfill has continued to decrease with soft plastic recycling and removal of single-use waste items such as take away cups at enterprises. Our recycling programs are strong but to achieve zero emissions by 2025, we are focussed on the circular economy and removing items from our supply chain that originate from fossil fuels.



BIODIVERSITY

Indigenous plantings in the CERES Park included a large habitat garden at our northern entry, additions to our wetlands surrounds, and the expansion of the wildlife corridor on our eastern fence, linking the park with the Merri Creek.

Our resident magpie families had three offspring. The tawny frogmouths were back to roost in the casuarina trees of Terra Wonder, and the wetlands ducks once again walked their fluffy flock of ducklings from the banks of our dam through the farm and out to the Merri creek.

We have embraced the presence of the growing noisy miner bird population as they sound out the alarm if there is a fox or cat around, and we have been adding to our collection of prickly local plants to encourage smaller finches and wrens back into the park.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Our FY23 financial result is an operating loss for the second year in a row. We knew that the economic challenges faced by our customers and community are significant but we had hoped that operational adjustments would offset the cost of living pressure. This was not the case and experiences across the organisation were varied as we settled into a post-pandemic reality.

Our social enterprises were the most significantly impacted with a 6% (\$1M) decrease in revenue from the previous year. While measures were taken to lessen the impact in FY23, we are looking to be even more agile in our operational responses to any financial pressure in the coming year.

CERES suffered from a decrease in donations and philanthropic funding to the organisation in FY23, reducing the availability of untied funds for building capacity.

Our education teams grew revenue 22% (up \$406k to \$2.3M) from the previous year, taking their total operational income back to within half a million dollars of pre-pandemic levels. This is a great achievement.

Overall employee benefits remained flat despite the 4.6% increase on base wages. With the decrease in revenue, employee

benefits represent 48% of total revenue (up from 44% YOY) and the effort continues to ensure this is at the right level.

Historical ATO obligations were met and long term loans were cleared. This was a commitment we focused on in the past twelve months.

\$1.25M in capital works funding was awarded in FY23 to be realised in FY24. With this significant amount of funding, careful management of these project budgets is another key focus in FY24.

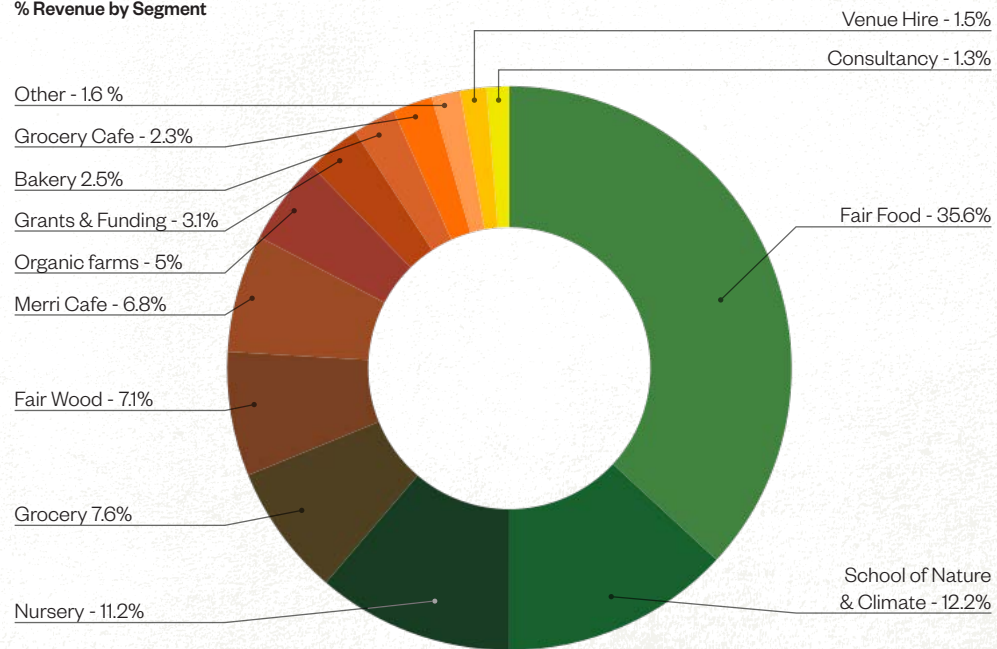
Our Working Capital has unfortunately entered negative territory to -0.87 and correcting this is a key priority. Put simply this means that the funds available to meet our current, short-term obligations are lower than they should be.

We have robust processes in place to monitor our forecasts and performance. We've set a challenging but achievable FY24 plan and are committed to getting back to surplus.

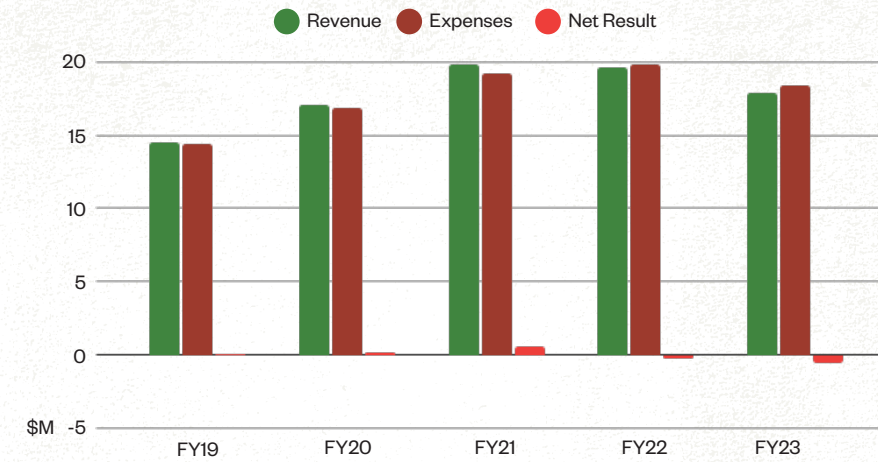
Thomas Dobson
Treasurer

Kate Mills
Chief Financial Officer

% Revenue by Segment



Financial Performance



Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue	17,844,337	19,573,923
Expenses		
Cost of Goods Sold	7,100,097	8,433,337
Employee Benefits Expense	8,559,867	8,623,640
Professional Services	103,586	315,060
Occupancy Expenses	416,911	415,068
Depreciation Expense	340,246	277,590
Other Expenses	1,845,675	1,740,385
(Deficit) for Year	(522,045)	(231,157)
Total Comprehensive (Deficit) for the Year	(522,045)	(231,157)

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,189,423	1,419,134
Accounts Receivable	544,935	363,842
Inventories	819,345	762,781
Prepayments	130,891	122,568
Total Current Assets	2,684,594	2,668,325
Non Current Assets		
Buildings, Plant and Equipment	4,694,431	4,626,968
Total Non Current Assets	4,694,431	4,626,968
Total Assets	7,379,025	7,295,293
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and other Payables	1,480,927	1,190,613
Provisions	748,802	797,599
Borrowings	-	24,328
Hire Purchase Commitments	38,262	67,538
Contract Liability	1,448,083	955,833
Total Current Liabilities	3,716,074	3,035,911
Non Current Liabilities		
Provisions	105,774	91,100
Borrowings	-	-
Hire Purchase Commitments	112,643	201,703
Total Non Current Liabilities	218,417	292,803
Total Liabilities	3,934,491	3,328,714
Net Assets	3,444,534	3,966,579
Retained Surplus	3,444,534	3,966,579
Total Members' Funds	3,444,534	3,966,579

GET INVOLVED

Our work in environmental education, building community, providing research and practical solutions for climate change and regenerating our land, wouldn't be possible without the generosity of the community that supports us.

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!

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CERES