



THE CAPE
COMMUNITY
FARM



2025/26

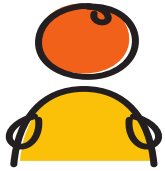
ANNUAL REPORT

A place to connect, learn,
grow and visit



THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

2025 -26



104
MEMBERS



124
PLOTS ALLOCATED



1,488 kg
MEMBER PLOT PRODUCE



1,260 kg
PRODUCE DONATED
TO CHARITY



\$8,000
SATURDAY
MARKET SALES



3,210
VOLUNTEER HOURS



6
MASTERCLASSES
DELIVERED



11
MEMBERS' DAYS HELD



\$2,300
SPRING PLANT SALE



150 kg
PASSATA DAY



4,200 kg
COMMON PLOT
PRODUCE



2,102
SEEDLINGS FOR THE
TREE PROJECT



22 GROUPS HOSTED
ON TOURS

20%

MEMBERSHIP
GROWTH



AT TRIVIA AFTERNOON

110



PASSATA DAY PARTICIPANTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge we are on the traditional land of the Yallock Bullock clan of the Boon-Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. We respect Elders past, present and emerging.

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THE COMMITTEE

Heather Allen - President

Kate Keech - Secretary

Mike Wiles - Treasurer

Robyn Shallard - Vice President

General Committee members: Brendon Condon, Kath Brackett, Jutta Hau, Anthony Newman, Jeanette Martiniello and Tracy McNear

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2026

As our 4th AGM approaches it seems like a great time to look back on where we started almost 5 years ago.

Two small groups (each of 4-6 enthusiastic residents) began regular meetings to start looking at how the farm might function.

From there a committee of management was formed, and although members of the committee have changed over time, the executive and other core members have remained the same.

However not much else has remained the same as we have seen great growth in so many areas of our wonderful farm. Our farm membership has grown each year and currently stands at 104.

Not only do we draw members from our sustainable estate, but we also number many from wider Cape Paterson, and some also from Wonthaggi and Inverloch (so the word is spreading!)

Infrastructure has increased from our initial offering of just food cubes and a water tank to now include a wonderful work space –our beloved POD, as well as a greenhouse, an undercover shade area, a watering system, Coolgardie safe and a beehive (complete with bees).

Volunteering opportunities keep growing with our regular monthly work bees, weekly opportunities to help with harvest, nursery production and other jobs our farmer needs a hand with plus volunteering at some of the events we run.

Nursery production has also increased over time with offerings of seedlings, landscape plants and fresh produce for sale to all.

Education remains a key focus and our farmer is gradually offering more options including school tours, intermittent permaculture and horticulture classes, regular newsletters with tips and of course our

farmer talks at the Saturday work bees.

Corporate programs and other educational offerings are starting to take shape, all of which contribute to the farm's revenue as well as our vision of sharing knowledge.

The farm now boasts a cut flower forest, a wonderful example of an enthusiastic member's initiative, giving us the option to sell fresh native flowers on special occasions.

Over the years there has also been fabulous growth in our farm events, creating many opportunities for community gathering and socialisation, a vitally important aspect of all our lives. Without community the farm is just a food-producing area, certainly important in this era of rising food costs and food insecurity BUT with our community involved as it is, the farm is SO MUCH MORE.



Trivia fundraisers, passata days, spring open days, masterclasses and work bees have all brought many members of our farm together as well as those who live in our general community.

Apart from the learning and fundraising, I see the opportunity to gather together sharing company, experience and support as a vital element in our quest for good health at both an individual and community level.

I am proud to see the Cape Community Farm playing some small role in this essential function of life.

I end this report acknowledging it will be my last one as president of the CCF.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of the farm members who have supported CCF in its journey. Enormous thanks also to the farm

committee (both current and past) for their dedication, hard work and enthusiasm, to our farmer Adrian James for his knowledge, hard work and easy going, happy demeanour, and the Cape board for their unwavering support.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my five years of being a part of the team that has seen so much progress in the farm's journey. Working with our farmer, a great committee and a developer with amazing generosity and vision, I have indeed been privileged.

However it is now time to step down and hand over the reins. I remain a farm member and committed to doing what I can to continue supporting the farm.

It is indeed a wonderful community asset.

Heather Allen
President

The Farm community thanks you, Heather, for your leadership and dedication as President. We appreciate everything you've done!



FROM THE FARMER

Time certainly does move quickly in The Farm, and here we are at our fourth AGM, which seems incredible! We have achieved so much in a short time, and I think we can all be genuinely proud of what has been accomplished this year.

As always, a big shout out to our hard-working Committee of Management, without whom the ongoing operations and management of The Farm would not be possible, and to our wonderful volunteers who come along rain, hail or shine to contribute to our weekly market gardening, propagating and harvesting sessions and our monthly working bees. This year our volunteers contributed an extraordinary 3,210 hours. This is the equivalent of 84 full-time weeks of work, community spirit in action!

I have said this before, but it remains a great privilege to work in The Farm at The Cape, a special and unique community. What we are doing here is significant and groundbreaking in showcasing what a Community Farm can be, and how it can build community and improve access to affordable fresh food.

The AGM gives us a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the year, and there is much to celebrate. On Passata Day we welcomed our 100th member, a proud milestone and membership continues to grow steadily with 20% growth on last year, giving us a solid foundation on which to keep building a vibrant and resilient organisation. Across the Farm, 124 plots are now allocated, and together we grew around 4,200 kg of produce on our

common plots, with a further 1,488 kg estimated from members' plots. Importantly, 1,260 kg of fresh produce was donated to charity through our weekly food donations to Mitchell House.

Passata Day was a standout for the year, attracting 110 participants who harvested, washed and processed around 150 kg of Farm-grown tomatoes. Our Trivia Afternoon brought together around 58 members and residents for a great afternoon of laughter, our Spring Plant Sale raised approximately \$2,300 and was a successful recruitment opportunity for new members, our Saturday Market and Farm produce box generated \$8,000 in sales, and our monthly Members' Days continue to be well supported by Members.



Our Masterclass Program continues to be well supported and is going from strength to strength. Our nursery capacity has grown significantly with new shade structures and watering systems, and The Tree Project volunteers propagated 2,500 native plants for bush revegetation – a fantastic community initiative!

Education has been a major theme this year. Our VET in Schools horticulture program launched in February with an engaged and motivated cohort. We developed and delivered a new program 'Wednesdays in The Farm' and we hosted more than twenty school and community tours.

Looking ahead, our enterprise strategy has identified Programming and Experiences as our top priority on the path to financial independence in 2026. We are expanding school programs, pursuing an RTO partnership to deliver vocational horticulture training to the community, piloting new corporate programs, and promoting Farm membership more widely.

Thank you once again for being part of the amazing community that sustains our Farm. I look forward to the next exciting chapter together.

Adrian James (known as AJ)
Farmer





BRINGING
PEOPLE
TOGETHER
THROUGH FOOD



MASTERCLASS PROGRAMS

The Cape Community Farm Masterclass Series offers intensive, hands-on workshops for small groups, hosted in the welcoming kitchen of The Cape Display House. The series gives people the opportunity to meet others, share ideas, learn practical skills and enjoy experiences that are a little different from our regular Farm activities.

Each Masterclass is led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic facilitator who brings their own skills and experience to the day.

Participant numbers are limited to around 14 people, creating a friendly, relaxed and interactive environment. This small-group format allows everyone to ask questions, work alongside the presenter and develop the confidence to continue using their new skills at home.

Food and traditional skills have been a strong focus, with workshops exploring sourdough baking, preserving, marmalade and jam making, fermentation, and international cuisine. These sessions celebrate the pleasure of making food from scratch while promoting seasonal eating, reducing food waste and encouraging a greater appreciation of where our food comes from.

The response from the community has been encouraging. Across the six Masterclasses presented this year, 62 people have participated, generating more than \$6,000 in ticket sales. This income supports the Farm's activities while the workshops also raise our profile and introduce people to The Cape Community Farm.

The Masterclass Series reflects the Farm's broader purpose of bringing people together through food, growing and practical learning. We thank our facilitators, volunteers and participants for making each workshop possible and look forward to introducing presenters, cultures, topics and opportunities in the year ahead.

Robyn Shallard
Vice President



Masterclasses 2025/26 Summary

- Vietnamese Cooking - 30 August 2025
- Basket Weaving -13 September 2025
- Sourdough Your Sweet Journey - 1 November 2025
- Sourdough Introduction - 2 May 2026
- Balinese Cooking – 30 May 2026
- Marmalade – 27 June 2026

TREE PROJECT

We had another successful year growing seedlings for the not-for-profit organisation Tree Project. Tree Project supplies inexpensive indigenous seedlings to farmers and Landcare groups undertaking revegetation projects or creating wildlife corridors and windbreaks on their properties.

The organisation recruits and trains volunteers, many of whom live in Melbourne and have only a courtyard or small backyard in which to sow seeds and nurture seedlings over a period of four to six months. There are two planting seasons each year—Autumn and Spring—and once the seedlings are ready, they are collected by the participating Landcare group or landholder. Tree Project provides all the seeds and materials needed.

This year, we grew seedlings for Freddy and Christina, farmers near Mirboo North in South Gippsland. A team of seven growers—Naomi, Michael, Janne, Miranda, Gary, Mike and Jutta—raised an impressive 2,102 healthy seedlings, comprising a range of Acacia varieties. Freddy and Christina have been establishing windbreaks on their property, providing shelter for their farm animals while also restoring habitat for native wildlife. In just four years, they have already noticed the return of many bird species to their farm.

Gary, Naomi and I were fortunate to attend a Tree Project volunteers' luncheon at a cattle farm near Fish Creek, hosted by the landholders and the Fish Creek Landcare Network. Farmers Rob and Joan have been revegetating their property since they purchased it 51 years ago and now plant between 2,000 and 6,000 seedlings every year. During a tour of part of their farm, we saw first-hand the remarkable results of decades of caring for the land. Not only has the property become a beautiful landscape, but Rob explained how increasing tree cover has significantly improved farm productivity. Their farm also provides valuable habitat for wildlife, demonstrating how productive agriculture and biodiversity can thrive together.

Our Tree Project team gained valuable experience again this year. After battling snails and slugs last season, we raised the seedlings higher off the ground, which successfully kept the pests at bay. However, we discovered that some seedlings were receiving too much water from the sprinklers in the propagation bays. Because these seedlings are destined for the South Gippsland region, they need to be hardy enough to cope with local conditions rather than being overprotected. Each year brings new lessons, helping us

become better growers. We are very grateful to be able to grow as a team at the Cape Community Farm, using farm resources.

Being part of Tree Project continues to be a rewarding experience, allowing us to contribute to healthier landscapes while supporting farmers, wildlife and our local environment.

Jutta Hau
Committee

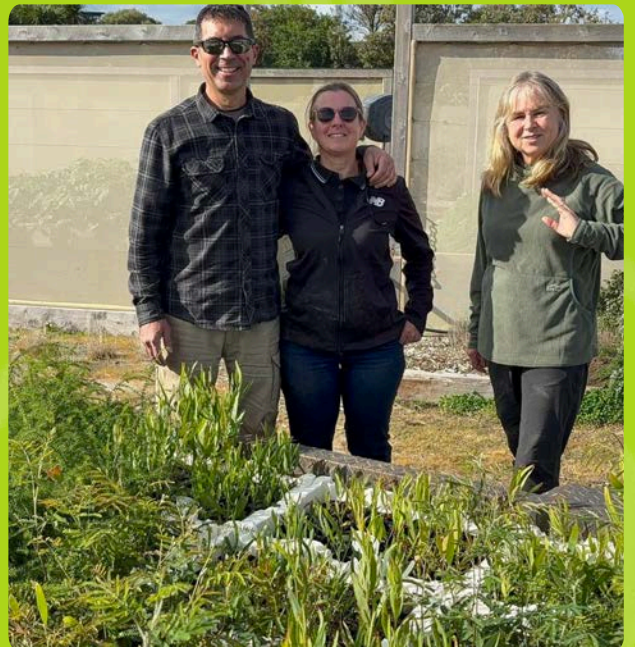




NURSERY



TREE PROJECT



CAPIARY



Our bees have barely slowed down over this mildish winter, and the colony has remained viable without additional feeding.

Their numbers are good and through the window I have seen drones still hanging around inside. I've been told they're good for morale!

It will be interesting to see how they all go as we approach spring. It is becoming apparent to me that bees in Cape Paterson tend to be a couple of weeks ahead of bees across other parts of South Gippsland - they seem to start their cycle of build-up, swarm and calming down earlier than the bees of other beekeepers around the place.

This year we have a different genetic line going into this spring (Italian), so it will be interesting to see what they get up to as things heat up. The Capiary group is planning on splitting the hive as a proactive swarm prevention manoeuvre, and to act as a backup of resources - brood, queens, queen cells. We were really stuck last season after our new queen did not establish herself after the old one left with the swarm.

As for varroa, we are still mite free and will continue our vigilance with soapy water wash tests resuming in August if we get a sunny and still day. When we get a mite count of 5, we will need to take action. This will

begin with non-chemical interventions - removal of drone brood, enforcing a brood break - and we'll try to stay on top of it that way.

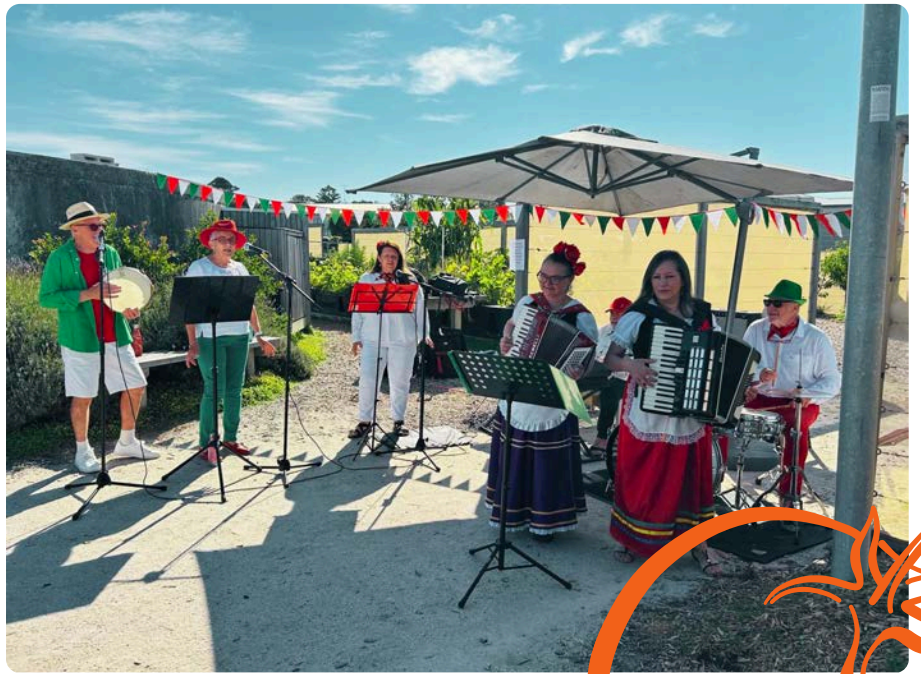
If we can't keep the numbers low, we'll need to consider more serious treatments (beginning with oxalic acid - still organic but requires full PPE).

We are certainly entering a scary new world of bee advocacy... and I don't even want to think about the yellow-legged hornet.

In the meantime, our bees are going about the important business of pollinating hither and thither, keeping their minds on the job and life on the planet. They're an inspiration to us all!

Jane Fennessy
Committee





PASSATA DAY





VISITS





SCHOOLS





THE CAPE
COMMUNITY
FARM



Website:

capecommunityfarm.org.au



Facebook:

facebook.com/thecapecommunityfarm



Email committee:

committee@capecommunityfarm.org.au



Email farmer:

farmer@capecommunityfarm.org.au



Visit us at:

Sunlight Boulevard, Cape Paterson, Victoria