



2023

ANNUAL REPORT



THE CAPE
COMMUNITY
FARM

CAPE PATERSON,
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA



THE
ORIGINAL
TRIAL FARM
IN ACTION
2015-2021



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.

OUR MISSION

At the Cape Community Farm, we aim to strengthen our community by nurturing a shared passion for sustainable food cultivation, fostering a deep connection to the physical environment, and cultivating a culture of inclusive learning, knowledge sharing, volunteering, and respectful communication. We aspire to be a living example of a thriving, connected, and sustainable community, with the hope of inspiring and motivating others to join us on the path to a more sustainable way of life.



Celebrating our first planting with our local member Jordan Crugnale, member for Bass, traditional landowner Sonia Weston, Mayor of Bass Coast Michael Whelan and Ward Councillor Leticia Laing, with The Cape Community Farm president Heather Allen and committee member Brendan Condon



THE CAPE FARM
UNDER
CONSTRUCTION
BY THE
SUSTAINABLE
LANDSCAPE
COMPANY



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It's hard to believe a full year has passed since we opened the farm to membership in September 2022.

We grew our membership to 70 in our first year, which I think is a great achievement, and I am pleased to report that we have a similar number who have renewed for the 2023-24 financial year. We have had strong volunteer engagement through both our weekly sessions and our monthly work bees, and I feel confident we can grow this even more, as we take on new projects and the farm delivers further opportunities for members to be engaged, learn and participate in various activities.

There have been many people involved in this journey and I would like to take the opportunity to thank those individuals. Two working groups were convened at the start of 2022, with a view to looking at how the farm might operate and what we were aiming to achieve. I would like to extend my thanks to the members of those two groups.

- Group one-coordinated by Kate Keech and involving Robyn Shallard, Raelene Joyce, Brendan Condon and Melissa Lowe.
- Group two-convened by Mike Wiles, involving myself, Graeme McAlpine and San Muller.

Meeting both individually to brainstorm ideas, then a couple of joint meetings the groups came up with some great thoughts on what the farm might look like both in the near and more distant future. From these two working groups a committee of management was formed including four office bearer positions.

The committee is currently as follows

- President – Heather Allen
- Vice president – Robyn Shallard
- Secretary – Kate Keech
- Treasurer-Mike Wiles
- General members – Graeme McAlpine, Brendan Condon, San Muller.

During the course of the year we have also added three more to our general committee members –Jutta Hau, Anthony Newman and Duncan Bell. The committee has met every month for well over a year, in addition to undertaking many tasks in between meetings. There has been great commitment and passion shown by the committee and I would like to extend my very sincere thanks to all for their hard work. I have a great belief in the value of community and volunteering, so am delighted to see the strong volunteer support we have had throughout our first year.

I really want to thank all those who have volunteered, either now and then or regularly –if one does what one can when one can, it all builds to create great momentum and move us forward in achieving our goals. Thanks also goes to our farmer, Adrian James. He has brought great passion, knowledge and enthusiasm to his job, and it's been amazing to have such an approachable and happy person working in this role.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Cape Board and especially Brendan as the developer. Without the support of the board, and Brendan's vision, passion and belief in this farm we could not have achieved what we have to date, and all that we will achieve in the future.

We became an incorporated organization in August 2022 and opened to membership in September 22 with our first invoices being sent and paid 12/9/22. We have hosted several events at the farm, developed a number of projects and been able to sell fresh excellently priced produce to the general public as well as our members via the honesty box system and our Saturday market.

There has been a great deal of learning along the way, and many success (and some failures) in terms of crop cultivation, as we have learned together and shared our knowledge. I still consider myself a raw beginner but know I have learned so much from Adrian and my fellow members, and am looking forward to further expanding my knowledge (and produce grown). I hope the rest of you have had similar positive experiences.

My final thanks go to you, our members-without such strong support from the beginning we would not be on the road we are on, a road to building an amazing community farm which I hope will become the heartbeat of the Cape, a place we are so privileged to call our home. The committee looks forward to seeing the farm take shape with the addition of power, farm buildings and other innovative projects in 2024 that we will all work on together over the next year or so.

Heather Allen
President
The Cape Community Farm

FROM THE FARMER

The last 12 months has truly flashed by! It's a great privilege to manage the Cape Community Farm as the 'Farmer' and it's been a joy to work with the local community and the dedicated committee to make it all happen.

The Cape Community Farm has come a long way from the initial farm working group, comprising Robyn Shallard, Mike Wiles, Heather Allen, Kate Keech, Brendan Condon, San Muller, Graeme Mc Alpine, Melissa Lowe and Raelene Joyce, all who worked tirelessly over months to build up the organisation, culminating in an incorporated association and a management committee, enabling us to fling open the gates just in time for Spring 22.

One of the most encouraging and heartening things for me as the Farmer has been the uptake in participation and enthusiasm for the Farm from the local community, reflected in the consistently solid turnouts at our monthly members days, regular participation in the weekly volunteering sessions and a healthy and steadily growing membership base.

Of course, where would we be without a special mention of the amazing contributions from Graeme, Trevor and Ian who spent the best part of 4 months generously donating their time, energy, effort and expertise into upgrading our greenhouse infrastructure, ensuring that our nursery got off on the strongest possible footing. The Coolgardie Safe was another ingenious innovation from Graeme's workshop, now keeping our hard grown produce in the best possible condition, and will surely come into its own as we move into a hot and dry summer.

It's always nice to have an excuse to show off our farm and I have enjoyed working with the committee to host a couple of great events this year with Edible

Gardens Bass Coast 2022 providing an opportunity for us to attract visitors and interest from across the region. Unfortunately, though I was laid up with COVID and ended up missing out (bad timing!). We also hosted an open farm event on Sustainable House Day 2022, where we enjoyed a steady stream of visitors though out the day.

I do enjoy standing up in front of a group of people and recently I've had an opportunity to do that more as The Farm and The Cape Development's been experiencing a significant uptick in interest from schools requesting tours and in one case a complete farm program. Programs and tours will be an important revenue raiser for the farm moving forwards and I've begun working with a small team of volunteers to improve our capacity to run these opportunities moving forward.

I've been attempting to track all of your volunteer contributions over the last 12 months and I came up with 3502 hrs which if accurate is a really staggering figure! Over the last 6 months especially I've felt that we've pushed the car to the top of the hill, and that with just a little bit more of a nudge we'll begin seeing some real momentum building throughout the farm over the coming year, and I look forward to having you all along for the ride!

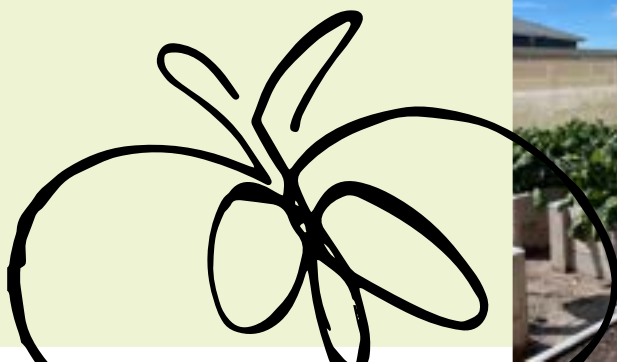
Best regards
Adrian James
(AKA "The Farmer")



**FIRST
PLANTING
+ FIRST
HARVEST**



Our farmer, Adrian James





SOCIAL
EVENTS
REGULAR
TRAINING
DAYS
OPEN DAYS
SCHOOLS
VISITING
GROUPS



KEY METRICS

PRODUCE



3536kg

Total weight in Kg of produce grown in community managed garden beds



1234kg

Total weight in Kg of produce donated to charity



\$14,493

Total retail value of produce donated to charity



\$4,063

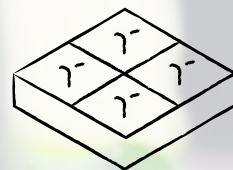
Total earnings through Saturday morning market sales/honesty box of produce to members and the public

MEMBERSHIPS



70

Members



144

Plots allocated to members



VOLUNTEERING



3502hrs

Key volunteering contributions

- Twice weekly harvest of produce
- Weekly market garden session
- Weekly nursery session
- Monthly members days
- Farm committee meetings
- Farm Promotions / Marketing / Website
- Nursery infrastructure
- Coolgardie Safe
- Horticulture student placements



SOME OF THE WEEKLY HARVESTS



PROJECTS



**Projects
completed**

Green house
Total fit out of
greenhouse
Produce storage system
Concrete and drainage
around composting
zone and works yard
Drip line irrigation for
fruit trees



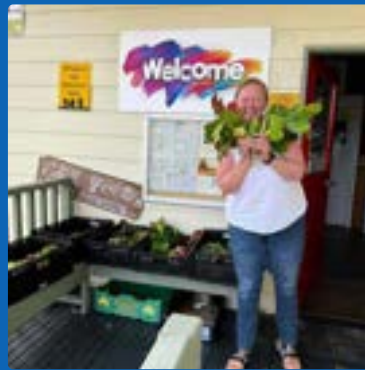
**Projects
to complete**

Potting shed
Farm house
building

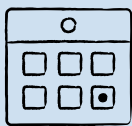


**THE FIRST
BIODIVERSITY
PLANTS TO COME
OUT OF THE CAPE
COMMUNITY FARM
NURSERY**

Coastal Manna Gum for a
koala habitat planting



REGULAR
DONATIONS
WERE MADE
TO LOCAL
FOOD
CHARITIES
ALL YEAR



EVENTS

Public events

Edible Gardens
Bass Coast

Sustainable
House Day 2022

Members days

August 22

September 22

October 22

November 22

December 22

January 23

February 23

March 23

April 23

May 23

June 23

July 23

August 23

September 23

Workshops

Planting fruit trees

Problem solving citrus

Resetting a plot using the reset boards

Composting

Christmas in the Farm

Managing soil fertility

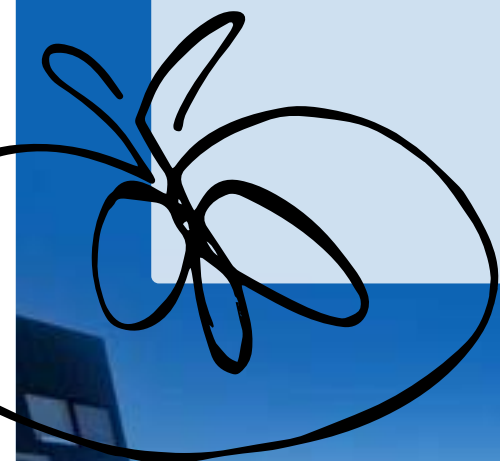
Lessons from member plots

Maintaining healthy plots (AJ and Graeme)

Pruning Fruit Trees

Using the ameliorant tubs to reset a plot

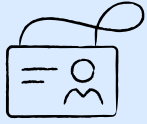
Installing a drip irrigation system



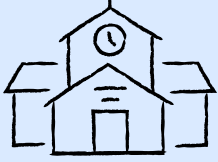


LIFE AT
THE CAPE
COMMUNITY
FARM





TOURS & PROGRAMS



15

Number of schools visited



230

Number of students participated

Schools participating in tours

Bass Coast College
 Foster Secondary
 Leongatha Secondary
 Melbourne Grammar
 Newhaven College
 McKinnon College
 SEDA College
 Trafalgar High
 Federation University
 East Doncaster SC
 Kooweerup SC
 Coronet Bay CG
 Tintern Grammar
 Bass Coast Adult Learning
 Federation University

Visits from other groups and delegations

Joe Dee	Smarter Futures
Sonia Kilkenny	State Minister for Planning
Kelvin Davies	Rainforest Rescue
Chelsea McNabb	Yarra Valley Ecos
Scott Douglas	Green Lab Futures
Bass Coast Shire	Economic Development
Royal Mail Hotel	Kitchen Garden
Mornington Peninsula Shire	Planning team
Ainslie Urban Farm	



OUR FIRST BIRTHDAY. SEPTEMBER 2023 | A lot to celebrate



THE CAPE PROJECT TEAM REPORT

On behalf of the Cape board, it has been wonderful to see the first year of operation of the farm. With looming food system challenges, we were happy to resource the development of a large water efficient farm to complement the other elements of the Cape community – including energy and water efficiency, clean energy and carbon neutral living- that can show how communities everywhere can take positive action to tackle these challenges and live more sustainably.

The original trial section of farm operated from 2015 – 2021 and produced a lot of fresh food over that time and also delivered a lot of valuable learnings, including the need to raise the beds for ergonomics, and the need for well resolved composting systems and protection from the elements amongst other things. The larger farm was designed by The Sustainable Landscape Company, with many improvements made through the input of skilled members and residents of the Cape such as Graeme McAlpine with his horticultural skills. The Cape farm sits within the salt spray zone of Bass Strait and is a challenging place to grow food. Despite this, the clever design of the farm is creating shelter and good microclimates and has produced several tonnes of food in the community garden beds in it's first year of operation.

Our global food supply system has come under serious disruption in the past few years, with the impacts of covid, conflict and climate change all posing challenges to food supply. Rising food prices

are adding to the cost of living challenges being experienced in Australia and around the world. Food security is set to be seriously impacted by rising temperatures in a heating climate in future. With this in mind we need to be taking action on climate change and supporting our farming sector, as well as growing food in community gardens, backyards, rooftops, schools and other spaces is going to become more important than ever. We hope the Cape Community Farm helps to inspire more urban farms in communities across Australia and further afield.

Great progress has happened in the past 12 months in identifying quality nutrient sources to enable food production. This includes inputs from local farms, activating and improving our own compost hub, and sourcing other high quality ameliorants including a bulk source of high quality fertiliser from a wonderful company called Bardee in Melbourne, who are using Black Soldier Fly to process and transform Melbourne's food waste into high quality fertiliser for urban farms like ours. We expect that the farm will be even more productive in the next 12 months.

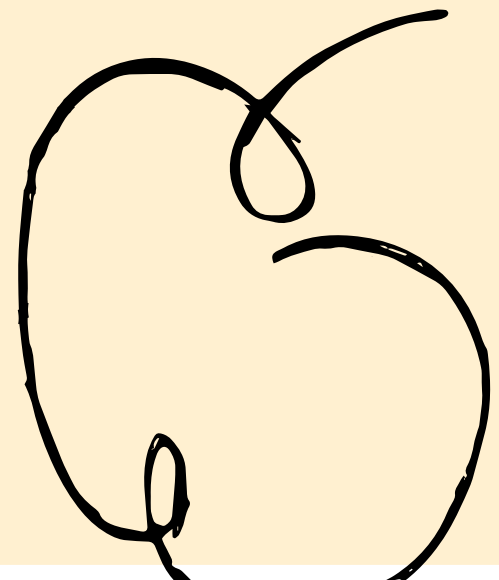
We have enjoyed watching the level of community engagement with the farm, and the benefits it brings, including social interaction, meeting new people and starting new friendships, reduced food bills and food miles, gentle exercise, incidental contact, nutrient cycling and circular economy living. We have also enjoyed watching the skill transfer and development of gardening skills in the farm, with the regular farming workshops that

occur on a monthly basis at the farm, as well as informal learning. We hope people use those skills to have a go at growing food at home. From our perspective as funders of the farm, it has also been very positive to see The Cape Community Farm make regular donations of food to local charities who often have limited access to fresh produce.

Congratulations to the hardworking volunteer committee, and the patience of our full time farmer AJ for a great first year. We are very pleased to see the regular contributions from our volunteers, and student placements at the farm. All of this hard work is making the Cape Farm a welcoming, productive, therapeutic and positive social space.

The Cape project team is working hard on the design of the remaining buildings to go into the farm, and once completed this will provide all weather shelter and undercover social spaces and a large kitchen, and will add to the income streams available at the farm to support it to become a financially self sustaining social enterprise. We are looking forward to this happening in 2024 and are excited to see the next year of operation of the farm commence.

Best regards
Brendan Condon,
on behalf of The Cape Project Team





OUR FIRST
YEAR
AT THE
FARM IN
PICTURES

