



# Collingwood



# Children's Farm



# Annual Report



# 2021-2022





## Farm Patrons

Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC,  
Governor of Victoria and Mr Anthony Howard AM KC.

## Acknowledgement

The Collingwood Children's Farm respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung of the Kulin Federation as the traditional owners of the Abbotsford Precinct Heritage Farmlands, the lands we respect, care for and farm on behalf of all Victorians. The Farm thanks all Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elders past and present for their guardianship of these lands.



# our Reason for Being

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT • EDUCATION

NATURE CONNECTION with GREEN SPACE and ANIMALS

## our Aims

- To develop self-esteem, self-worth and connectedness, particularly of children and those experiencing adversity.
- To facilitate participation of children and their families in broader community life and a connection to nature.
- To provide educational opportunities around urban agriculture for students and community as well as pathways to further employment.



# President's Report

The 2021/22 financial year was a year of significant challenges and opportunities for the Collingwood Children's Farm. While we were closed for ninety days of the financial year, we had to juggle staffing issues due to COVID-19 for many months. We also realised some dreams, including holding the much-loved *Winter Solstice Bonfire* again, welcoming children to our school holiday programs and seeing the Farm enjoyed by all our visitors again.

After four years at the helm, Conor Hickey left the Farm in early 2022 leaving an extraordinary legacy behind her. In her time as General Manager she fostered a tight-knit workplace culture with a strong focus on community engagement. Conor oversaw and promoted a new commitment to Regenerative Agriculture, reaffirmed the Farm as a willing partner to many local initiatives and developed and maintained programs for disadvantaged and marginalised groups in our community; core to the Farm's mission and purpose. Conor was a compassionate and enthusiastic leader who made staff and Committee members alike feel proud to work for the Farm. We wish Conor well for the future and sincerely hope she'll remain part of our Farm community.

We are indebted to Lorna Carey who, following Conor's departure, stepped up as Interim CEO (a small restructure coincided with Lorna's appointment). Lorna brought her impressive business skills, knowledge of the Farm and strong work ethic to the position, and in doing so, not only held the fort, but improved our systems, provided assurance to our projects and maintained strong relationships with our partners.

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2021/22

*Left to right:* Lorna Carey,  
Cr Amanda Stone,  
Chris Williams, Lachlan Turner,  
Margot Foster, Andrew Chan,  
Jess West, Nina Collins,  
Ben Neil, Lachlan Cook

*Absent:* Isabel Schoen,  
Rephael Lankri, Evan Zly,  
Conor Hickey



Just weeks before the 2021/22 financial year, we received advice on the safety status of the Community Gardens. It was unexpected and created a huge challenge for our Committee, staff, those who could no longer access the plots they had loved, and the community more broadly. It was a difficult time as we tried to navigate the course for determining what was required to make the space safe and accessible, learning what expectations the Department of Land, Water and Planning had of us as a Crown Land Reserve and investigating how we could source input from our community, while managing expectations. This was all done under the stress of lockdowns and funding insecurity. We were so relieved when the Minister for the Environment, Lily D'Ambrosio awarded us a significant sum to be able to run a proper community consultation process, and design and deliver the refreshed Community Gardens. The consultation process was in progress by mid-2022, and in viewing the preliminary report, it was heartening to see the breadth of community engagement, the grand vision of the gardens and the Farm generally, and the opportunity we have before us.

We're also thankful for the ongoing support from the State Government through the Working for Victoria funding received which has allowed us to maintain our wonderful staff and build our education and community programs ready for welcoming visitors back to the Farm. And, to our friends in the Moving Feast collective who have offered practical and emotional support during a difficult year.

I would like to thank the outgoing Committee members: Andrew Chan, Sue Zhang, Kieran Dickson, Rephael Lankri, Evan Zly and Lachlan Turner. Each of these members brought their passion and expertise to the Farm, and gone above and beyond the standard duties required of a Committee of Management member. They have also contributed significant amounts of time to supporting the Farm all in a voluntary capacity. Lachlan Turner, our former President, is stepping down from the Committee after serving for ten years, the maximum allowed for under the Constitution. His calm and steady approach has guided the Farm through significant change and we are indebted to him and thank him for his extraordinary contribution.

We were delighted to have Margot Foster, Ben Neil and Councillor Amanda Stone join the Committee. We look forward to enjoying the wealth of experience and passion they bring with them to their roles.

Finally, I recommend to you all the *Farm Diaries*: short stories that are shared on our social media pages penned by Committee member, Margot Foster. They offer short insights into topical events at the Farm, from the significance of the riverside wattle, to demystifying the medlar or celebrating our first ginger crop.

Our programs are back, the lambs are bleating, the Orchard smells of blossom and we're looking forward to seeing you down at the Farm.

Nina Collins

*President, Committee of Management*



# CEO's & Farm Manager's Report



We embarked on the new year eager to go into the summer months with new programs, activities, workshops and community events that had been planned and developed during lockdown periods. We were all hopeful and looking forward to the return to pre-COVID times. It was a short-lived plan as we didn't even get through July before we were back in lockdown.

With over ninety days closed due to lockdowns and continued uncertainty, it was of course a very challenging year for the Farm financially. It also delayed the implementation of new programs and revenue streams developed during the first lockdown, which has meant financial recovery has been delayed but is on track.



From a people perspective, the lockdown felt tougher than previous ones for many of us. While we did of course have staff on site to look after the gardens and animals, it wasn't quite the same without non-operational staff, or our volunteers and community here. For those that had to return to working from home ... well we thought we'd seen the last Zoom meeting for a while!

The whole team showed resilience, flexibility and creativity during what was a hugely challenging period with everyone making the best they could of the situation. 'Social O'clock' over Google Meet each week was a welcome break from the day and an opportunity to check in with the whole team and test our trivia skills!



The Maintenance team was kept busy both while shut and upon reopening with a number of maintenance projects undertaken. We developed quite a few wee projects across the Farm that we managed to finish ahead of schedule due to lockdown—an upside to the challenging times.

A fantastic little project has been the Farm Gate produce stall outside of our Reception area, where the produce from our Market Garden and Flower Garden, as well as our Farm-produced eggs is sold. We sourced the wood from Ceres Fair Wood to build the stand, ensuring that we were using sustainably-sourced timber and an unused fridge from the Farm to put together a rustic little Farm Gate.



Another project was an upgrade in our Tag Paddock, repurposing an old marquee used for sheltering our goats when the rains hit to a proper animal shelter, improving the rain and wind factors for our darling goats.

Little projects, such as removing old worn-out fencing to expose garden areas and further increase the opportunities for visitor/horticulture interaction have happened across the Farm as well as some upgrades to fences to ensure our animals are kept safe in their paddocks.



Signage and the 'little details' across the Farm have been a major project focus over this past year. Smaller projects such as our animal cut-outs (where both children and adults can put their head through to take photos dressed up as a sheep or pig) have been major successes.

A few shipping containers were purchased to improve on our storage and allow for more efficient use of space to be used across the Farm, as well as increasing our program numbers if needed. A huge amount of re-organising in our main 'Farm Hub' (Workshop area) to match our current operations has been a focus too and it's nice to have a tidy bedroom :).

With an element of uncertainty in the community remaining after reopening in late October, programs were a bit slow to get up and running again. Since reopening, we have welcomed back nearly 90,000 members and visitors to the Farm, hosted over fifty education school groups, the *Young Farmers Program* participants have returned and our *Farmer for a Day* holiday workshops and tours are back up and running.

We also welcomed back our individual volunteers in addition to over sixteen different volunteer groups comprising like-minded schools, services and organisations in the community who returned to the Farm to volunteer their time and learn new skills.

Reflecting on the year gone by, so much has been achieved on the Farm in developing community and education programs, as well as community partnerships. All the hard work has us in a strong position moving into the new year to recover financially and further extend our reach into the community through programs, education and having this amazing space looking as amazing as it is for all to enjoy.

Lorna Carey, *CEO*

Jimmy Duffield, *General Manager*



# Numbers on the Farm



We have on the Farm this financial year :  
**120** laying chickens (80 Hyline Browns & 40 New Hampshire x Rhode Island Reds) and  
**26** 'Orchard Raiders' (on the right)



**166**

'Farmers for a Day'  
 at the Farm in the school holidays  
 (that's 166 woodworking  
 projects, thanks Nick!!!)

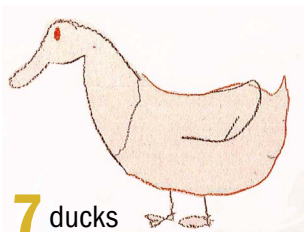


**6** new goat kids

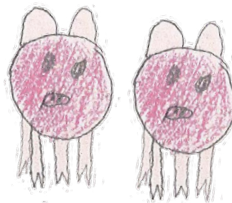
**21** goats



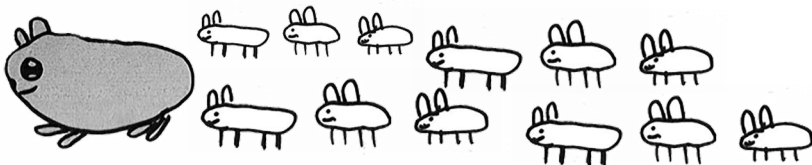
**13** lambs



**7** ducks



**2** pigs



**23** guinea pigs

**3600 tickets sold**

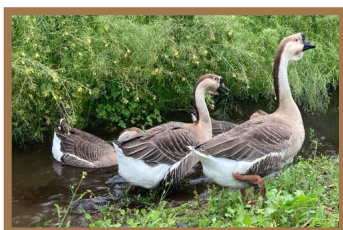
(actual attendance 3200)

to the Farm

WINTER SOLSTICE BONFIRE

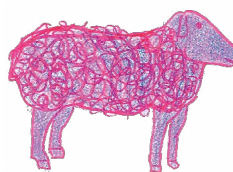
Number of Face Painters at the Bonfire = **4**

(number required = **20**!!!)



**4** geese (1 didn't want to  
 be photographed ... )

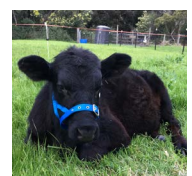
**2** cows **8** calves



**29** sheep



**5** horses



**1** black calf





**188 dozen eggs sold**

All laid at the Farm!



**54**

Weddings on the Farm  
(and unknown divorces ...)



**1000s**

of sugar snap pea seeds planted by  
school students on Farm school excursions



Over **1200** bags  
of **mixed** salad sold



About **500** bunches  
of beets sold!



Over **100kg** of fresh ginger sold

# Community Engagement

In the rush to get back to 'normal', it's easy to forget that this time last year, COVID-19 restrictions were in full force and the Farm was closed.

In many ways, that feels like a lifetime ago.

But it wasn't. The effects of the pandemic are profound and ongoing, and they underscore the importance of community resources like Collingwood Children's Farm; inclusive spaces where people of all ages can connect and experience the therapeutic benefits of time spent in nature and with animals.

We know that for many, the Farm is their primary source of community, friendship and fulfilment, and for that reason it is such a relief to be open, to stay open and to be working to the Farm's primary aim: to improve the lives of children and people experiencing adversity.

Returning to program normality has been a major focus of 2021/22 and to that end, the Community Engagement team have worked tirelessly; building programs, establishing new relationships and rekindling old ones.

Our Education Officers—Asia, Beth, Dani and Melina—have completely revamped the Farm's *Education Program* to offer engaging and curriculum-aligned school excursions from Foundation all the way through to Year 6, and with the construction of a Community Hub on the horizon, there are exciting opportunities to expand the program even further.

It has been a joy to see school children return to the Farm. For many, this has been their first excursion experience after repeated interruptions to face-to-face learning throughout 2020/21. We missed your smiling, excited faces and your questions—welcome back!!

Education Officers have been busy outside of the school term as well, undertaking a complete program overhaul of *Farmer for a Day* to rave reviews! A combination of place, people and hands-on experiences gives the Farm a unique ability to connect with young people and so it's little surprise this program experienced such great success—keep an eye out on our socials to see upcoming dates for school holiday periods.

Community Program Officers—Cicily, James, Nick and Toni—have been very busy too, welcoming back Farm volunteers, both individuals and participating *Farm Hands*







schools and services. COVID-19 lockdowns allowed the Farm to pause, take stock and ask if we could be doing things differently; CCF community programs have been a major beneficiary of that process.

With David Lewis OAM taking on the role of Community Program Coordinator and overseeing a diverse team delivering innovative workshops focusing on woodwork, farm maintenance, horticulture and farm chores, the Farm is better placed than ever to support vulnerable communities. It's exciting to see our Big Green Shed community woodwork space operational and the raised wicking garden beds rejuvenated— thank you to the team for your efforts. A big thank you as well to Bunnings (Collingwood), Inner City Floorworld (Abbotsford) and The Ugly Duckling/Supply & Demand (Richmond) for their donation of clean pallets. This source of no-cost reclaimed timber is key to CCF removing costs as a barrier to inclusion for Shed programs.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the work and advocacy that outgoing Volunteer Coordinator, Renee and Community Engagement Officer, Nicole contributed over the course of 2020/21, thank you both!

After the trials and traumas of 2020/21, there is so much for the Farm community to look forward to in 2023 and beyond.

A rejuvenated Community Gardens space that is safe, accessible and inclusive! Onsite nursery facilities! Program partnerships with Villa Maria Catholic Homes and Worcester Polytechnic Institute! A Sustainability Hub with a commercial worm farm! An expanded *Farm Hands Program*! VCE vocational placements!



Happily, the Farm's decision back in 2020 to double down on its community mission means it is well resourced to take advantage of these opportunities—get excited! This is in no small part due to funding support and so we gratefully acknowledge the following people and organisations: Adam Bandt MP, Community Bank Clifton Hill/ North Fitzroy, Department of Education and Training, Inner North Community Foundation, VicHealth, Yarra City Council.

Thank you to our wonderful Farm volunteers! Thank you for donating your time to the community, thank you for your efforts and thank you for enriching our workplace. Thank you to our individual volunteers: Adam, Anika, Deb, Helen, Hugh, Jen, Mahali, Margot, Meghan, Nick, Rob, Sam, Serap, Stephanie, Susan and Tom to name a few! Some groups that have kindly volunteered their time include: Bayley House, Bulleen Heights School, Collingwood Alternative School, GenU, Heatherwood School, Hume Valley School, Hume Valley School (Thursday Group), Interchange, Kensington Community High School, Nature Connect, Onemda (Group One), Onemda (Group Two), Onemda (Group 3), Victorian College for the Deaf, VMCH and YourDNA.



Thank you to all Farm members. You supported us through lockdown after lockdown and it's great to have you back! Thank you for your patience as we navigated reopening, and for helping us to care for our animals, regenerate this heritage farmland and deliver inclusive programs that support those experiencing adversity.

Finally, having made the difficult decision to find work that is closer to home, this *Annual Report* submission is also my last. It has been a privilege to work alongside the Farm community these past few years, and especially with those exceptional people who make up the CCF staff and volunteer cohorts. Having been involved with the Farm in some capacity since 2008 and as Community Engagement Manager since 2019, the changes I've witnessed have been profound. While it's true that we have a lovely canvas to work with, I have to pay tribute to my friends and colleagues whose knowledge, dedication, skills and tireless work make Collingwood Children's Farm the unique and special place that it is today.

Steve Costello

*Community Engagement Manager*

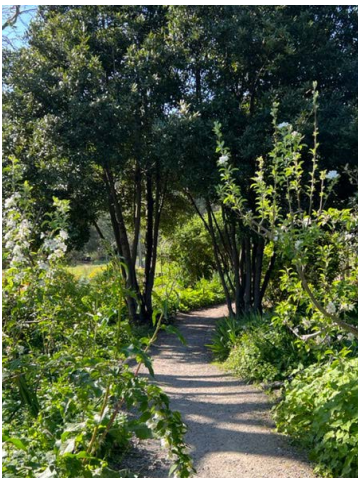


# Horticulture



## In the Gardens

The landscape and gardens of the Collingwood Children's Farm are a refuge for all. Quality green space is important for human health and wellbeing, and its impacts are hard to quantify. Why do we feel calm in a landscape filled with shades of green, soft scents of flowers or decomposing leaves and background bird songs? What makes us sit down and breathe deeply, become aware of ourselves and present in that moment? Green space, connection with plants and nature are always on offer at the Farm, and a focus over the last year has been on increasing access to this, diversifying texture, creating new paths to wander and sit in a quiet location for a moment of solitude and peace.



The past two years have seen us set up and develop the Horticulture department. Everything involving the environment takes a long time; lots of planning and observations of seasonal and environmental happenings are required to set out a successful, long-term and multifunctional Landscape Plan. Small-scale production systems have been implemented in stages which have restored and enhanced the wider landscape, from simple improvement tasks like regular mowing and whipper-snipping for weed reduction, aesthetic benefit and safety to more complex policies and procedures around





long-term tree management, nutrient runoff systems, organic waste systems and much more.

Development of routine, production and landscape complexity has therefore enhanced the experience of all who visit the Farm; from supported volunteers now harvesting and using interesting tools to weed paths in the Market Garden, to our *Young Farmers* digging up sweet potatoes, school groups walking down a row of trellised snow peas to discover how pea flowers grow into pea pods, to general Farm visitors preparing picnics to come and sit on the grass under a tree for a few hours—where there was previously dusty, dry ground—then buying a bunch of flowers or a bag of the best local salad mix grown here on the banks of Birrarung on their way home.

There have been long-term programs planned and developed, one being with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation through collaboration with the Narrap Rangers. This partnership has had many funding streams over the years, and with ongoing funding from the City of Yarra in the last year, the partnership has seen a consistent program develop for Narrap Ranger trainees. This program allows us to have a two-way knowledge exchange between the teams and has seen us further improve the biodiversity on the Farm, develop a yearly, local food plant growing system, and collect and use seed from these spaces to share and grow in the years to come.

From 2021–2022, we have taken the next steps to lock in programs, including refining and developing programming of the garden spaces and enhancing the depth of engagement for group participants and individual volunteers gaining more skills and knowledge across our growing spaces.

In early 2022, Melbourne Farmers Market, CCF and Abbotsford Convent decided to make the Farmers Market a weekly event as a precinct market, known to the public as the Abbotsford Farmers Market. This model changed what and how we grow and harvest, flipping us more towards leafy greens, chard and kale, salad mixes and quick turnaround vegetables like radish and Hakurei turnips to meet the weekly demand. There's not many places where you can go to a stall and purchase vegetables from the grower—who has planted, cared for and harvested the produce just 200 metres away. We appreciate all our customers who visit us every week and support Melbourne Farmers Market and CCF.

## Pastures

One of the Horticulture team members, Michael, has been working one day a week over approximately nine months to improve pasture systems and management. It's been recognised that we have room to grow within the *Pasture Program*, and alongside the general maintenance and documentation following the rotations of animals, we've been working on some reports for the future. Simple applications of compost





to pasture at a rate of roughly 10 tonnes per hectare, focusing on the areas with the most need of remediation have been implemented alongside annual soil testing and consultation with an Agronomist.

Planning has begun to incorporate chickens into the *Pasture Program*. A seasonal *Pasture Species Report* has been taken for summer with a notable amount of summer-sensitive species still persisting in some of the more friendly microclimates within the Farm's pastures through the cooler months.

A *Fodder Plan* for the pigs has been written, as well as a detailed six-month plan to implement more models of pasture-based agriculture and a potential *Species Planting List* for upcoming silvopasture plans.

There are also more plans for one-year and three-year timeframes, all guided by the principles of increasing climate uncertainty resilience, reducing the need for external fodder and regenerating ecosystem health as such an integral part of the Birrarung network.

## Cut Flower Production

In October/November 2021, the first crops of cut flowers went in the ground after the construction of paths, irrigation installation and many months of a cover crop growing to improve the soil. By mid-January, we were in full production mode, harvesting most days and learning and upskilling in floristry—undertaking a full floristry program that went beyond growing to arranging flowers ready for point of sale. We learnt a lot about the complexities of cut flower production and moved to early starts on site to support this program, harvesting in the cool air of the morning, storing flowers in cool rooms and the art of bunching up.

This first season was a steep learning curve, but has enriched the overall Program at the Farm and offered visitors and staff a great platform to have a discussion about the Cut Flower industry and how we can all make informed choices about where and how our flowers are grown. The second phase of the Program was installed in winter 2022: the retaining wall planting down the laneway of perennial cut flowers and foliage will come into production in winter 2023, and thus, stretch our production across the year. In developing this program we have learnt that flower harvesting has some challenges, however, most of the *Flower Program* conjures joy, including watching





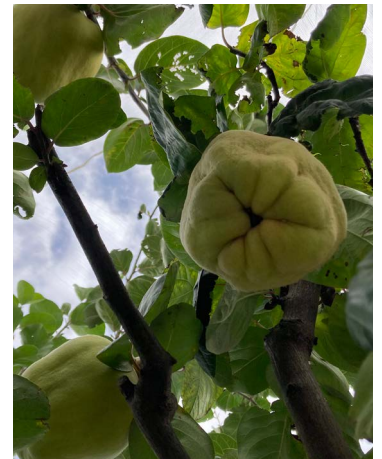
people’s reaction to the beautiful bunches, or a child’s delight at being offered a flower as they walk past and then carrying it with them while they wander about the Farm feeling special and seen. Our weekly stall at the Abbotsford Farmers Market is greatly enriched by the addition of flowers, with customers often disappointed when we have sold out.

Winter 2022 has seen us extend our growing space to the Old Apple Orchard, some call this the Steiner Orchard since it’s not part of the publicly accessible space on the Farm, but has been the only space we can expand onto for more production in order to keep up with demand.

This has been an exciting new venture for the Farm and has so many positive implications for the future, and to put it simply ... flowers just make people smile and that’s a wonderful thing all on its own!

## Fruit Production

Fruit yield and quality has improved, with trees undergoing renovation pruning and integrated pest management techniques. The Old Apple Orchard produced its first full crop in April 2022. This orchard was rife with pests and disease just a few short years ago with poor fruiting wood and form. We are pleased to report that the old trees are now back in action with irrigation and are set to produce tasty, fresh apples for years to come! We are working on plans to replant the central Orchard on the Farm and look forward to more diversity. For anyone who walks along the shared path, we hope that you enjoy observing the seasons of quinces and figs on your stroll and look forward to cooking the quince in autumn.





## Programs

The Horticulture team have now begun their twelve-week *Market Garden Experience Program*, which has been a long time in the making with contributions from many CCF employees—so thank you to everyone for your support and contribution to the design. We would like to acknowledge the work of Simeon, Steve, Renee, Rach, Sam, Jesse and Chris. We are so happy to share this work with the wider CCF team.

This Program has been designed thoughtfully and is aimed at a diverse group of people that have shown a high interest and dedication to working in Horticulture, and specifically in market gardening. We hope the skills they get here help them on their way to gaining employment in Urban Agriculture, Horticulture and Therapeutic Horticulture. The Market Garden team is able to provide the students with a safe and inclusive learning space that is quite rare on other working farms due to the nature of the Farming industry existing in mostly remote areas and also being a high-stress, high-pressure work environment. As you know, Farming is such an under-resourced industry which results in learning opportunities to become scarce, so market gardening is something that is especially difficult to gain access to otherwise.

We are feeling so lucky to have our Market Garden here at CCF for this educational purpose and are so excited to be able to provide this learning opportunity for Horticulture students and aspiring farmers and gardeners that would otherwise not be able to access this experience.

These participants will also provide CCF with their own expertise, individual interests and much needed support to the Horticulture team through the busy season this summer and throughout the year—giving the Horticulture team a greater capacity to expand our abilities for further work here at CCF.

We will be excited to hear the participants' feedback and closely observe the Program, before providing further feedback to you as we tailor its design. This is a great beginning for the Horticulture team and CCF more broadly; involving participants in this educational way adds another cohort ready to engage with our space, along with those involved in the *Young Farmers Program*, our dedicated weekly roster of volunteers, and our partners Moving Feast and STREAT who run their ready-to-work programs.

## Trees

The team has developed internal policies and plans around tree management and their long-term care. Maintaining and caring for a 20-acre property of trees is a huge responsibility.

Over the years, CCF has been fortunate to work with an Arborist who has a holistic approach to tree care. This relationship continues to this day and expertise like this

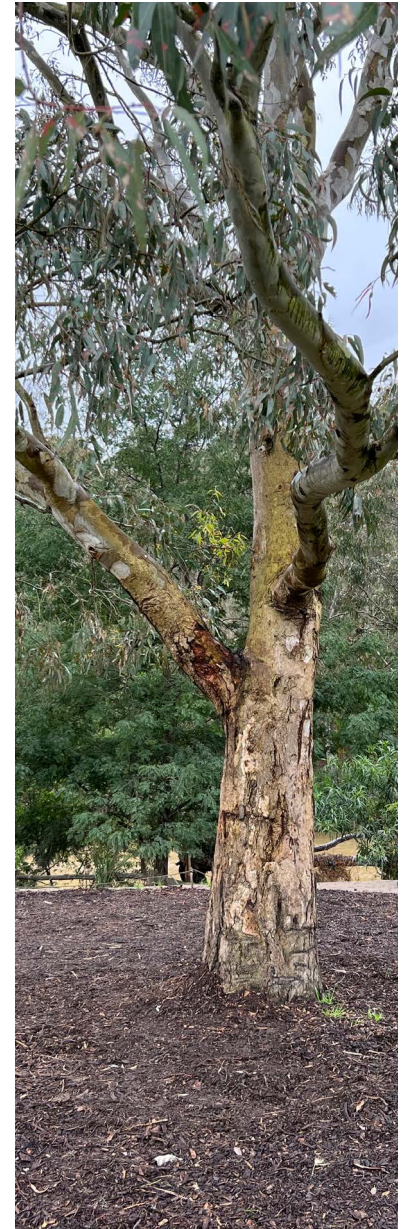
have seen tree health and safety improve on the Farm in recent years. The two River Red Gums in the Stables Paddock were in poor health a few years ago, but have improved exponentially due to reducing compaction in their root zones, removing grass from under the canopy, aeration of the root zone and multiple applications of mulch. This success story may seem small, but considering the trees could be here for 100 years + (if cared for) makes us take this responsibility seriously.

A short-term goal of developing an Urban Forestry Plan for the Farm to increase canopy coverage, species diversity and tree quality across the whole site is underway. This Plan was kickstarted by Taylor Richard, who was on the team but has since moved on to pursue a career as a Consultant Arborist. This will not only improve the quality of vegetation and beauty of the Farm, it will provide cooling and shade for the animals and people who visit, as well as habitats and food for many creatures who share the urban environment with us.

## Waste Management

Organic waste management systems have been significantly improved and as a result we are now producing quality compost from waste generated by our animals and gardens.

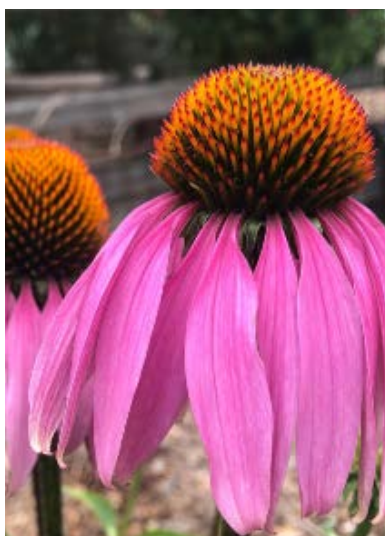
Almost 100% of the compost we use on site is now produced on the very same site, with weekly *Farm Hands* volunteers collecting manure from our paddocks—so thank you to those volunteers, you are an integral part of this system working! It's so great for the Education team to drop by the compost and use the thermometer to show students how hot the pile gets and hear kids say, 'So you're telling me that there are tiny things in there that I can't see or feel?' while inspecting a handful of compost!





This year, Cultivating Community has collaborated with us to set up a commercial worm farm system and with funding from Sustainability Victoria we have installed a TAT-G system near our compost. The aim of this project is to divert our food waste produced on site from landfill.

Due to vermin and pest prevention, we do not put this food waste through our compost. The closed worm farm will enable us to process this on site. A weekly roster of jobs will be set up, from checking moisture and temperature levels, to sorting and processing waste into smaller particles and loading the system to eventually collect usable castings and leachate for our gardens and pastures. Thank you to Cultivating Community for driving this project!



Further goals for waste management include addressing nutrient runoff, planting our swales to capture this and further increase education and engagement in water-quality monitoring.

### Sign-off

It's easy to forget that a year ago we only had half of the Market Garden set up, the Cut Flower Garden was still being constructed, we weren't doing weekly markets nor had half the programs that we have now. We were still digging irrigation lines in and the compost system was only just starting out. This has all been possible due to all staff and volunteers, so everyone should feel a real sense of pride and achievement.



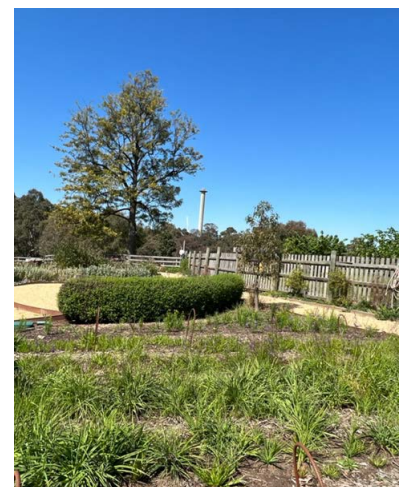
Thank you to all of our volunteers who show up every week and help us out, to all the school and service groups that come by Monday to Friday and assist us with jobs, and to all who have provided supportive comments and encouraging feedback—whether it be from staff, our regular visitors, new visitors or people returning after many years.

Thank you to all the staff who have left in the past year, you are missed and your contributions are still felt and thought of fondly.

To those that have moved on: Simeon, Taylor, Lucy and Michael ... and a big thanks to Conor, Steve and Sev for all your encouragement, guidance and support. We hope you can all return as visitors and enjoy the gardens you helped create.

Thank you to our dedicated volunteer Committee of Management, who have supported us, and to all the wonderful staff at the Farm for getting involved and enthusiastic about plants: Sam, Jesse, Antonia and Toni. A huge thank you to the staff who have dedicated their days, bodies, all their passion, skills and expertise into developing the gardens on the Farm. We still have a lot to do, but wow, have we achieved a lot!

Rachel Freeman  
*Head of Horticulture*



# Animal Husbandry

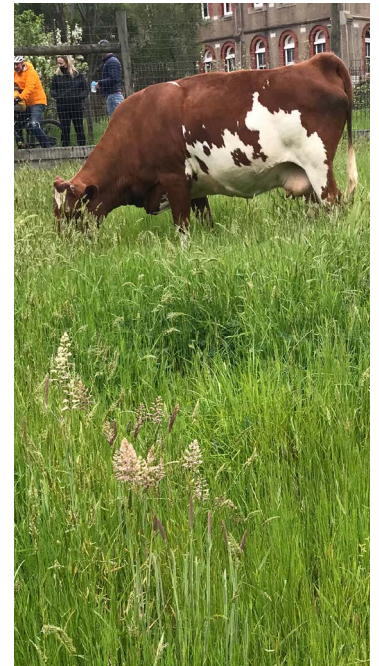
The year that was ...

It has been exciting to welcome visitors back to CCF and to start building back up to business as usual (whatever that may look like) in FY21/22. The animals and pastures continue to grow and help to achieve CCF's primary mission: to support those facing adversity, as well as providing connection to nature and the food system for locals and non-locals alike.

*Meet the Guinea Pigs* continues to be a popular public engagement offering for visitors every day, as well as an optional add-on for many of our programs and events. Animal Husbandry staff have been developing a system that balances animal welfare with the needs and requirements of other aspects integral to CCF; part of this system is the development of a training program that balances the individual needs and personalities of the guinea pigs, while setting them up to succeed with the public-facing elements of their job. This also helps build in redundancy, which allows for sick guinea pigs to take a break from public-facing activities or for the older guinea pigs to retire as required. Staff are constantly reassessing and readjusting these systems to make sure that we can offer the highest possible service while maintaining gold-standard animal husbandry. As part of this program, we have welcomed Charlie, Chet and Curtis (who are brothers) and Mario to the guinea pig 'muddle' here at CCF. Keep your eyes out for them next time you visit!

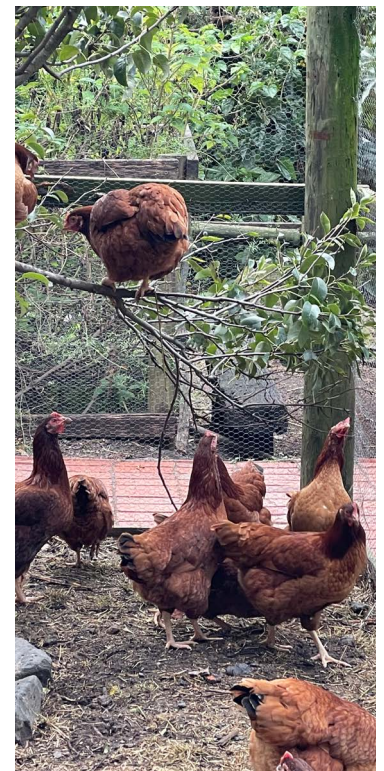






One of our cows, Finna, has been re-established as a CCF icon, with cow brushing being a popular daily activity again. We increased our cow herd this year by welcoming eight new calves in early June who will spend a few months here at CCF. Having the calves at CCF offers a multitude of benefits by providing engagement with visitors, demonstrating farming practices and a connection to food production systems. Once the calves are a little older and weaned off milk they will be moved on to other like-minded farms and continue to grow.

By far, the largest increase in numbers this year has been the forty New Hampshire x Rhode Island Red hens that we welcomed to the Farm in April. It is an exciting new step to bring egg sales back to CCF. Keep your eyes peeled for fresh eggs ready for sale at Reception and the Farmers Market!



Staff continue to work hard to develop systems around peafowl husbandry to provide the best possible care for the peafowls, while also minimising the negative impact they have on the beautiful gardens at CCF. Trials continue around peafowl housing with the peachicks that hatched this year starting to live inside, joined by some adult peafowl. Hopefully as the peafowl get more settled inside we will be able to trial releasing them during the day to interact with the public, then have them housed inside overnight to protect the gardens.

Sadly, we said goodbye to a few animals this year, as is expected when farming. A few of our older ewes were put to sleep on humane grounds, as well as a few of our guinea



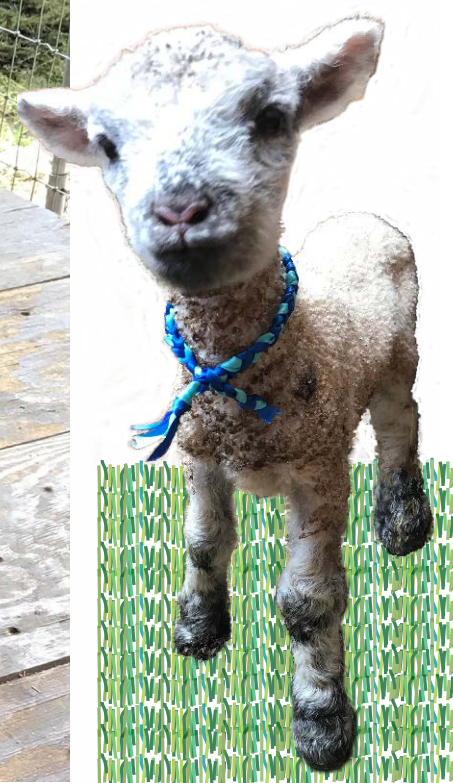


pigs and chickens passing on. Myrtle, our Berkshire sow and Jacob, our Berkshire boar, both passed away—each at the ripe old age of ten and a half. All the animals we said goodbye to will be missed dearly.

We welcomed two new Large Black piglets to the CCF Farm-ily in April as a part of next steps in the *Pig Program*. The piglets were only a few months old when they arrived and even though they are growing extremely fast they still have a way to go until they are fully grown. Once they are fully grown they will play an important part in the *Pig Breeding Program* for years to come. As they were unnamed when they arrived, a naming competition was held to help welcome them to CCF and engage the public with their arrival. The names chosen from the submissions were Eadie and Alice. The piglets were born at Good Life Farm, who like us, are a working farm with a similar mission to CCF. Staff from CCF were lucky enough to visit and tour Good Life Farm in April, followed by hosting them in return in June. It is always exciting to connect with like-minded organisations to see what we can learn from each other.

The lambs born in spring 2021 have all grown up and are a key part of the public engagement herd of sheep. We continued the breeding of our Shropshire and English Leicester herds by borrowing rams from other farms to keep the breeds pure. In order to protect our soil health, the rams were only on site for a few months as we only join for six weeks, and this way we don't need to feed and support the rams all year round unnecessarily. A big thank you to Clarendon Shropshire stud and Towamba English Leicester stud for lending us a ram each for the 2022 joining season. Hopefully come spring 2022, CCF will have a herd of little lambs running around. It was very exciting this year to partner with Collingwood CWA, shearing with the lovely ladies who took the wool from our sheep to be processed and spun into yarn. We are looking forward to shearing again in late spring 2022 when we hope to continue the partnership and potentially have some wonderful woollen products available from our sheep too.

The goat kids have grown and joined what we call the non-breeder herd of goats that visitors can come and pat. The goats are continuing to be housed in specialised paddocks for their health, however, the Animal Husbandry team are working extremely hard to make sure all their needs are met and that we continue to reassess and to re-develop our systems to provide gold standard animal care. The Animal Husbandry and



Horticulture teams have also been working together to provide as much fresh fodder for the goats as possible. We joined our breeder goats for the 2022 season and they are due in early spring at the same time as the sheep.

Staff have continued to plan and implement actions in line with the Regenerative Agricultural Framework adopted by CCF. The rotational grazing of the pastures has resulted in increased ground coverage as well as increased pasture growth across the year. While there are still certain animals that are being fed grass hay as part of their diet (for example, the goats and ponies), in general, the reliance on hay has greatly decreased for horses, cows and sheep; including over summer and winter which used to be common times for a lot of hay usage. There has been extensive work put into planning the year ahead, setting our goals and measurements up. It is sure to be a great year full of consolidation, progress and cute animals. We look forward to sharing the journey with you as we navigate FY22/23.

Mia Sutherland  
*Head of Animal Husbandry*



# Young Farmers Program

Working with our fabulous Maintenance crew, the *Young Farmers* have been able to gain some practical experience in the Workshop learning carpentry skills, both with hand tools and power tools this year. They started with very basic cut and joinery jobs and have now been working up to building beautifully designed seating benches that will be placed at various locations around the Farm for our visitors.

A strong emphasis was again in place this year on ‘where does food come from?’ and ‘what’s involved?’. The marvellous weekend Horticulture team have been doing a great job involving the *Young Farmers* in all aspects, as well as introducing them to the new Cut Flower Garden and the intricacies of putting a floral posy together.

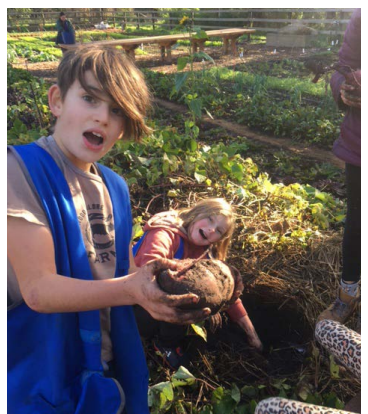
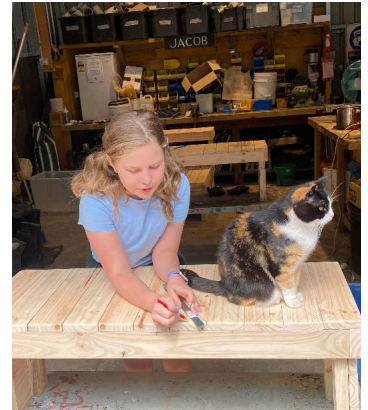
As always in gardening there are weeds! One of the most rampant, hazardous to touch and also the most delicious to eat is the Stinging Nettle. Every year the YFP get the opportunity to try cooking and eating this weed and this year’s delicious pasta was combined with herbs from the Market Garden–yum!

The *Young Farmers* also took on an arts project, designing and painting a mural for the new cupboards in the Lambing Shed. *The Lambing Shed Cupboard Mural* will be completed soon!

We are very grateful to City of Yarra for providing funding for the *Young Farmers Program* through the Community Partnership Grant. This funding is vital in keeping the program running and providing such wonderful experiences for young people in our community.

Susan Pitman

*HR Advisor & Weekend Supervisor*



# Events at the Farm



## ABBEY COLLABY (MAY)

*Abbey Collaby* is an annual beer collaboration between Mountain Goat, Matilda Bay and Moondog Breweries. The three breweries work collectively on a special one-off beer launched at an event during Good Beer Week. The proceeds from the beer sales are kindly donated to the Farm. This is the eleventh year of the *Collaby* and the first which has been launched at an event held on the Farm, rather than at one of their venues. The three breweries set up temporary bars selling their collaborative beer—‘a hazy IPA using champagne grapes’—while three artists performed in the Barn: Jess Ribeiro (solo), Steel Wheels and ex-PBS radio host/now rising DJ star, Adriana. A wonderful time was had by all and around \$7500 was raised for the Farm.

## MAN VS PIG (JUNE)

The hosts of *The Christian O'Connell Show*—the morning breakfast show on Gold 104—had an on-air debate about whether one of them could outrun a pig. So they organised a race in which the Host, Jack Post would race a pig, and broadcast it live on the radio. And they held it on the Farm. Their Production team, along with a Pig



Farmer from Colac met at Zora's Paddock at 8am with a few dozen fans of the show and miscellaneous walkers from the bike path assembled to watch. After an intense week of build-up, the race itself was a fizzer; after being held in his owner's arms for five minutes raring to go, the pig became all too cool, calm and collected and opted for a gentle trot around the starting line instead. He might have regretted not having a good stretch after hopping back in the truck for the long trip back to Colac.

### WINTER SOLSTICE BONFIRE (JUNE)

After the lockdowns in 2020 and five attempts in 2021, this was the first *Bonfire* the Farm has held since 2019. Finally, the phoenix which lay in waiting for the last year was given a chance to rise! After a quick introduction from MC Margot, Uncle Bill Nicholson performed the Welcome to Country and a Smoking Ceremony, followed by Farmer Floyd's Stories, Songs and Rhymes, and a special performance with guitar and yidaki from Amos Roach (Archie's son).

### GROUNDSWELL GIVING (JULY)

Groundswell Giving is a Sydney-based climate advocacy organisation. They organised their annual fundraising event in the Barn with a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony by Uncle Bill Nicholson, live performances from Paul Kelly, Ziggy Ramos and DJ Rona and a series of speakers from Groundswell about their work raising climate awareness. The event was a great success and we hope to work with them again. **THE**



## THE RIVERS SING (JULY)

*The Rivers Sing* is a broadcast of a seven-minute acapella vocal performance composed by Aboriginal soprano Deborah Cheetham AO, and broadcast from seven speakers located around the Precinct-two on the Farm and five in the Convent. It was first broadcast in 2021 as a preamble to the *RISING Festival* at several locations along the Birrarung and Maribyrnong Rivers. This year *The Rivers Sing* was broadcast at dusk for ten days in July, solely on the Farm and the Convent. The turnout was fantastic and built steadily over the course of the week.

## INTERSPECIES (AUGUST)

*Interspecies* was an after-dark exhibition held at Abbotsford Convent throughout August and September. It featured photos taken by notable Sydney-based photographer, Abdul Abdullah which were shot on the Farm. The photos show our animals interacting with fake animals and people wearing animal masks introduced into their normal habitats. The way they responded forms the basis of the photos, which were blown up to larger-than-life scale. It was the first such collaboration between the Farm and the Convent to occur since the lockdowns and we hope to have many more.



## FROCKTOBER PHOTO SHOOT (SEPTEMBER)

The Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation runs an annual fundraising event called *Frocktober*. This year's ambassador is Emma Watkins, who has departed the Wiggles and has launched her solo musical project, Emma Memma. Emma lives on a farm of her own in NSW with a large menagerie of animals, and her Emma Memma project features farm animals so it was a perfect fit—as you can see in the photos. Research into ovarian cancer is lacking so the Farm is honoured to play a part in raising awareness of this critical issue.





# The Farm Shop

There have been and will continue to be changes to the Farm shop. There are to be new roller doors at the entrance, giving us a lot more usable space and allowing us to leave most of the stock in place as needed. This will also make room for more shelving which will hopefully be built in the coming months and then we can branch out to increase the range of stock available.

Meanwhile, we have been trying a number of new stock items during the year and most have sold well. We continue to focus on buying locally-made, sustainable items with a farm theme wherever possible. Some of the new items that have done particularly well include the kids' hats and beanies (with CCF logo), the kids' gardening tools and the very cute finch boxes made in our Workshop from recycled materials. And of course, eggs laid by the Farm chickens which have been extremely popular. Visitors love that our eggs are so fresh and are laid by the chickens they see on the Farm.

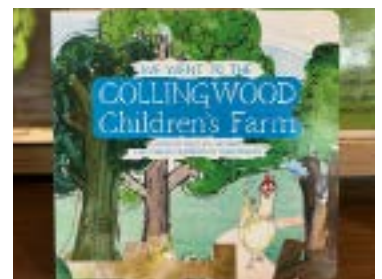
The perennial favourites—the little book *We Went to the Collingwood Children's Farm*, our kids' CCF t-shirts, and our *Common Garden Health* naturopathic remedies continue to sell well. Farm volunteer Annika, provides us with regular deliveries of her homemade doggy treats that are much appreciated by lots of lucky dogs.

Unfortunately, we have no Farm-produced honey at the moment. The weather this past year has been too wet and the rain has wiped out the flowers on the flowering gums, leaving the bees without enough nectar to produce honey. Happily though, in the absence of CCF Apiary honey, we have been able to source honey from another farm that has proved popular. Our visitors particularly love products that are made on the Farm, from our Farm programs, or grown here and those from our Farm animals.

We hope to expand into bigger and better things next year, with our proposed new shelving and improved lighting. There will be better displays for books and cards, more toys and some small branded items such as fridge magnets. We will also look at stocking more food items and hopefully products made from Farm beeswax such as candles, wraps and polish.

Visitors love the shop and already we need to find more room for new and interesting stock items! Next year we hope to launch a range of gift cards that can be used to buy shop products, garden produce, memberships or Farm entry. Come on down and have a browse.

Anne Becker  
Receptionist



# Friends of the Farm



## COLLINGWOOD COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

It's been another rewarding year for the Collingwood Country Women's Association (CCWA) and we are grateful for the ongoing support of the Farm.



Our main project for 2022 has been the *Wool Project*, funded by the City of Yarra in partnership with CCF and the Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria.

This amazing partnership, coordinated by one of our dedicated members, has resulted in the development of *Collingwool*. The fleeces from the Farm's sheep are gathered and processed into yarn. This yarn is then used for various CCWA projects such as hand-knitted scarves, beanies, gloves and toys which may be used to support those within our community.



We also run *Collingwool* workshops at the Farmhouse (No.18). So far, three workshops have introduced beginners to the crafts of knitting, crocheting and weaving. These popular gatherings are supported by the Handweavers and Spinners assisting as tutors. The CCWA bakes a classic CWA morning tea in the Farmhouse kitchen.



At our popular monthly *Craft-Chat & Cake* gatherings, CWA members and women interested in joining our group meet with us informally over a cup of tea in friendship to craft together, share freshly baked scones and other treats from the Farm kitchen. We try out new recipes, glean helpful cooking tips and joyously share our baked goods with the Farm staff.



Our Christmas and Mother's Day stalls at the Farm were most successful with funds being donated to the Farm and the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria to support recently arrived families fleeing war.

Proceeds from our annual cupcake stall at the Farm's exciting *Winter Solstice Bonfire* event and a raffle of a handmade shawl were donated to Djirra (ATSI) Corporation's Family Violence and Prevention Legal Service for women and children.



We look forward to continuing our partnerships in 2023 and beyond.

Margot Foster

*Collingwood Country Women's Association of Victoria*

## THE FARM CAFE 2021-22

At the Farm Cafe, we have always felt great privilege to work on the Abbotsford Precinct Heritage Farmlands. We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung of the Kulin Federation as the First Nations people of these lands.

Once again, the year started under the cloud of the pandemic, which had an effect on weddings at the Farm as well as general Cafe trade. Fortunately for all involved, both the Farm Cafe and CCF became well adept in managing the ongoing issues and ensuring wedding couples and the public were treated with care and open communication during this trying time. We were grateful to see most wedding couples postpone their celebrations to a later date rather than cancel their celebrations at the Farm all together.

We began to see some normality return from January and started the ongoing process of returning to business as usual. We were able to cater for approximately sixty weddings on the Farm between January to May this year, ranging in sizes from 40-130 guests. The majority of these weddings had been postponed from 2020 and 2021. It was a great relief for all involved to see weddings return to their former capacity and the wedding couples enjoying the celebrations they had planned. New wedding enquiries and sales have begun to regain traction, providing a positive sign for future bookings.

The Cafe has slowly been returning to normal service, albeit with the post-pandemic staffing challenges experienced by many in Melbourne and the Hospitality industry. It has been great to have the public back in the Cafe and enjoying the surroundings. We continue to improve our offerings and the uptake of sustainable practices that we have become known for.

The Farm's Market Garden has continued to provide a healthy and consistent supply of salad varieties, including farm fresh greens and rhubarb, which we have incorporated into our menu and as such offer an experience of one of the lowest food miles available in Melbourne; this is something we are incredibly proud of. We are greatly appreciative of all the excellent work the Farm Horticulture team has done and continues to do, as well as the educational elements it provides for the community.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with CCF to provide great hospitality experiences on the Farm.

Mark Robertson  
*The Farm Cafe*





## HANDWEAVERS AND SPINNERS GUILD OF VICTORIA

The Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria have been attending the Collingwood Children's Farm on the second Saturday of the month for many years, bringing our *Yarn in the Barn* stall. We sell our members' hand-spun yarn, knitted items, hand-woven articles and other pieces as our members enjoy using their craft skills.

We also demonstrate our crafts and encourage children to have a go. Our aim is to encourage adults and children to try these age-old crafts and be inspired by the items we have for sale.

We have continued to work with the Collingwood CWA in running the workshops in their *Farm to Garments* program, covering areas such as crochet and knitting over the past year, but will expand these to include spindling (at an introductory level) and dyeing this year.

We love the concept of the Farm and the great environment created by the Farm's community. The team are always so welcoming and helpful, we could not enjoy our days spent at the Farm more.

Carmel Parker

*Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria*



## MELBOURNE FARMERS MARKET

Melbourne Farmers Markets is celebrating a twenty-year anniversary since the very first Farmers Market was established in Melbourne in 2002 at the Collingwood Children's Farm.

While no longer held on the Farm itself, the now weekly Abbotsford Farmers Market has been trading since February 2022 at the Abbotsford Convent. We are all working hard to rebuild after the disruptions of the past few years. CCF have established their stall, selling produce every week from their productive Market Garden, and the quality and variety is impressive.



The Farmers Market was initially part of a collective effort to oppose the residential development and boutique hotel proposal in St Heliers Street, which threatened to close the Farm and steer the Abbotsford Convent in a very different direction to what the community cherishes today. Community opposition to the development was successful, with then Premier of Victoria, Steve Bracks, announcing in 2005 that the site was gifted back to the people of Victoria.

In 2013, the financial impact of the then monthly Farmers Market was publicly acknowledged by CCF's previous General Manager, Alex Walker, for saving the Farm. We are very proud to have made such a contribution and hope that CCF members and friends will continue to support the market on an ongoing basis. Everyone who shops at our market stalls plays a part in the future of local Agriculture.

Miranda Sharp  
*Founder and Director*  
*Melbourne Farmers Markets*

## COLLINGWOOD CHILDREN'S FARM APIARY

During 2021–2022, the Apiary has provided education to the public and training to young, and not so young, beekeepers. Open days, held on the second and fourth Sunday of the month are now running regularly again after COVID-related interruptions from previous years. The *Young Beekeepers Program* is active, with participants from CCF's *Young Farmers* and other keen youngsters.

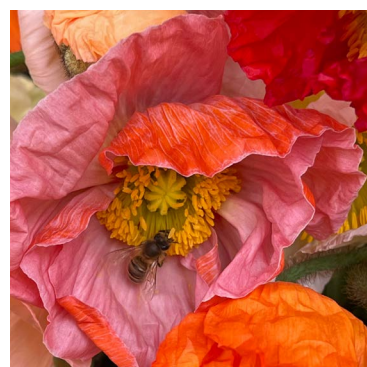
The La Niña weather events over the last two years and the slow start to spring in 2022 have markedly reduced honey production. In the cool, wet and windy weather, the eucalypts have decided on foliage growth, over flowering, and so the local nectar sources have been minimal. As a consequence, plans to increase honey production by allocating some hives as 'production only' rather than 'demonstration' have not progressed.

The exotic bee pest, Varroa mite, was found in NSW in June 2022. This has not spread to Victoria and has had no effect on the Apiary, although it is commonly discussed with visitors. The Apiary is healthy with regular disease and pest checks being part of the education process.

A flow hive has been placed in the Orchard Paddock to increase bee awareness. The chimney entrance keeps visitors and staff safe from crossing paths with the regular bee traffic. A Kenyan top bar hive has been donated to the Apiary as we provide a range of bee experiences for the public ... and for the bees.

The VAA Melbourne Section is proud to be advising and supporting CCF in bringing the Farm to the city.

Rob Kerr  
*Secretary*  
*Victorian Apiarists' Association Melbourne Section*



# Thank ewes so much

All our donors

All our members

All our volunteers

All our staff

Participating *Farm Hands*: Bayley House,  
Bulleen Heights School, Collingwood  
Alternative School, GenU, Heatherwood School,  
Hume Valley School (Thursday Group), Hume  
Valley School, Interchange, Kensington  
Community High School, Nature Connect,  
Onemda (Group One), Onemda (Group Two),  
Onemda (Group 3), Victorian College for the  
Deaf, VMCH and YourDNA

Victorian Government

DELWP

Yarra City Council

Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage  
Aboriginal Corporation

Massey Ferguson-AGCO Australia (thanks for  
the tractor!)

Community Bank-Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy

Inner North Community Foundation

Melbourne Water

Everyone in the *Moving Feast project*

STREAT

Cultivating Community

Narrap Team

Yarra Energy Foundation

Social Traders

MF Foundation

Collingwood CWA

Justice Connect

Melbourne Farmers Market

Farm Café

Dr Chris Williams

Heritage Tree Professionals

James Hough Landscapes

Will Richards

SENVIC

Captain Robbo's Adventure Pants

Collingwood Children's Farm Apiary

Victorian Apiarists' Association

Five Ways Motors

John Briggs Architecture

Sonya Parton

Abbotsford Convent Foundation

Our *Young Farmers* & their families

Produce and Pet Supplies

The Vet Surgery-Yarrambat & North  
Warrandyte Clinics,

Alphington and Fairfield Vet

Peter Pryor

CCF Voluntary Committee of Management

Adrian-Club Creek Bulb Farm Adrian

Bulleen Art and Garden

University of Melbourne-Katherine Horsfall

Thanisa-Wattle Gully Produce

Greenlink Box Hill

VINC Fairfield

Bili Nursery-Westgate Biodiversity

Matt - Ryset

VicRoads

Healesville Sanctuary

Mike Perry

Ros Cohan & Stuart Miller

Mackinnon Project

E&A Salce

Hoogies-Yarra Glen

Marilyn Mangione

New Gippsland Seeds

Sustainability Victoria

Bunnings (Collingwood)

Inner City Floorworld (Abbotsford)

The Ugly Duckling/Supply & Demand  
(Richmond)

We are sorry if your name is not here as we greatly appreciate your kind support, thanks.