



Annual Report



Financial Year
2022-2023



Acknowledgement of Country

Collingwood Children's Farm respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people 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 Elders past, present and emerging for their guardianship of these lands.



A Registered Charity

Collingwood Children's Farm (CCF) is a registered charity. Your support helps us to care for our animals, conserve the heritage farmland and fund inclusive programs to support those experiencing adversity.



Social Trader Certified

CCF is a Social Traders certified social enterprise. CCF:

- operates with a primary social, cultural or environmental purpose
- derives a substantial portion of revenue from trade
- reinvests profits towards its purpose such that public benefit outweighs private benefit.

Who We Are

Collingwood Children's Farm is a not-for-profit organisation based on a working community farm. We exist to support children and adults experiencing adversity through social inclusion.

Nestled on the banks of the Birrarung and only five kilometres from the city, CCF provides a connection to friendly farm animals, gardens, community, events and inclusive and educational programs.

Our industry experts work collaboratively to promote life-long learning towards an environmentally sustainable future and respect for the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, the Traditional Owners of the land we farm on.

Marketing

Sophie Rasic, Marketing & Projects Coordinator

This report reflects some of the major changes CCF has made over the financial year to mirror the beauty of the Farm online and visually communicate the expertise each team contributes to the organisation.

In only a few months, we completed a digital rebrand with a team of three staff members and an exceptional contractor from One Girl Agency. We launched a new Style Guide, website and membership system; all of which are designed to increase functionality and accessibility, and will grow alongside the Farm.

Credit: Amelie Mcandrew

Services

Icons have been created to communicate the different services the Farm provides to its community.

Most importantly, these services are delivered by teams who share their knowledge and skills with each other to engage, educate and entertain visitors 365 days of the year.



Events



Farm Experience



Education



Horticulture



Animal Husbandry



Community Programs

President's Report

Nina Collins, President

The 2022/23 financial year was a year of change and growth. In the first quarter of the financial year, the Farm benefited from the steady hand of Lorna Carey who was acting CEO until November 2022. Lorna's ability to juggle the many squeaky projects at the Farm and her professionalism was highly valued.

We then welcomed CCF's new CEO, Bert Ferro. Bert has a strong background in the not-for-profit sector, specifically in the disability space, and extensive management experience. Bert has been busy learning about the many legacies of the Farm and has already found his way to work with our wonderful staff to elevate the Farm and build on the momentum from the last few years.

At the last Annual General Meeting (AGM), we were delighted to have Elyse Hogan, Erika Russell, Jacqueline Edge and Imogen Henry join the Committee of Management (CoM) as well as Jessica West and Chris Williams return. Lynn Koh and Jessica Voglis also supported the Committee this year, for which we extend our thanks. Councillor Amanda Stone has continued on as the Yarra City Council representative and we are lucky to benefit from her nous, clear headedness and community knowledge.

I would like to thank outgoing Committee members Isobel Schoen, Imogen Henry, Margot Foster and Lachlan Cook. Isobel was a huge support to the Farm as Treasurer through the COVID years and we wish her and her new family well. Lachlan served the Farm for 6 years, most recently as Treasurer, and his mix of practicality and humour were a boon for the CoM. Imogen's enthusiasm for the Farm was appreciated by all and we wish her well. Margot's strong relationship with the Farm, the precinct and the local community was particularly valuable to the CoM, and despite her formally stepping down, we are thankful that she will continue as a friend of the Farm.

The end of the financial year coincides with our annual Winter Solstice Bonfire and this year's celebration was a heartening mix of creativity, community and care for this special place. May that spirit live on.





CEO's Report

Bert Ferro, CEO

By the time of our AGM, I will have been with the Farm for just over a year, and what an exciting and full twelve months it's been.

As well as gaining a deeper understanding of the breadth and complexity of the Farm, it's been a pleasure getting to know members, the broader community of visitors and, of course, also working closely with our wonderfully dedicated staff and Committee of Management, to make the Collingwood Children's Farm even more special than it already is.

In addition to progressing work within our allocated grant budgets on the separate Community Gardens and Community Hub projects, my focus has been on developing a whole-of-organisation rigour and financial robustness, essential to supporting our purpose.

From my conversations about Collingwood Children's Farm, I've come to really appreciate that it means many things to many people; whether it be a place of education, engagement or entertainment (or combination of all three) for children and adults alike, everyone is welcome.

The Annual Report will give you a better understanding of the year that was and some valuable insights for the year to come.

Enjoy your reading.



Farm Shop

Sarah Vercoe, Administration Support Officer

The Farm Shop received some exciting updates recently and is looking fresh for spring. The Maintenance team expanded our shelving and installed a neat t-shirt rail, which provided extra space to merchandise our stock and gave visitors better visibility of our popular t-shirts. The ability to flip through sizes and colours has proven to be particularly useful for parents choosing a size for their little ones. We've also streamlined the entrance for a clearer thoroughfare, repainted all blackboard signage and introduced some new items for sale.

Our new knitted and crocheted toys have been extremely popular. Handmade by the makers of our beloved guinea pig toys, we now offer a range of farm animals, bees and a fruit and vegetable basket. It's endlessly heartwarming to watch our youngest visitors pick their favourite keepsake to take home as a memory of their time at the Farm.

Our variety of Collingwood Children's Farm branded items continue to sell well, whether you're after a sun hat, beanie, tote bag, magnet or a storybook about the Farm for bedtime reading. We've continued to make our in-house products, including My Farm Passport, which has quickly become a family favourite; kids start their journey at the Farm Shop by picking from a rainbow of coloured lanyards to wear their passport before they're off to spot and stamp the animals they find across the Farm.

The wonderful team of volunteers in the Workshop have been busy making wooden garden signs for sale in our shop. The team has been expanding our wooden planter range to include smaller sizes to suit urban spaces, and we continue to sell wooden finch boxes, chopping boards and children's table settings. Our at-home gardening offering has grown with seed packets from Transition Farm and a range of tools for kids and adults.



We launched a new membership platform in July this year. It has been exceptionally user-friendly for our visitors and the Farm Shop team, creating a swift entrance to the Farm and an option to add your membership QR code straight to your mobile's digital wallet—a very welcomed and overdue upgrade we're proud to have rolled out.

We look forward to bringing in some new items for the festive season, always with a spirited farm theme in mind and an importance on handmade products and local sellers. Our raw honey (a visitor favourite, especially for gifting) is sourced from Rushworth State Forest, Northern Victoria and Annika's Healthy Dog Treats are baked by one of our long-standing volunteers.

As always, our farm-laid eggs, fresh produce and flowers are all farm-grown and for sale via our Farm Gate stall; all of which will be available in abundance throughout the warmer months.

Meet Our Bees

Our first batch of crocheted bees buzzed right out of the door within a week! Meet some real bees at one of our Apiary open days on the second and fourth Sunday of the month.

Mike and Rob from the Victorian Apiarists' Association—Melbourne Section are professional beekeepers who love to talk to our visitors about all things related to bees!





Horticulture

Rachel Freeman, Head of Horticulture

Farm Gate

Located right outside Reception overlooking the bike path, our Farm Gate stall was built from cypress pine by our Maintenance team in February 2022. The Farm Gate stall was developed to showcase the produce we grow and functions as a fresh food and flower outlet for visitors and foot traffic from the shared path. The structure was completed with a small display fridge to keep salad cool and custom-made blackboards for pricing.

Farm Gate contributed around 5% of CCF's overall revenue for the financial year. Sales are split roughly into 40% flowers and 60% veggies, herbs and fruit sold. The Horticulture team generated revenue through other income streams too, which included tours, produce sold to the Farm Café and seed packets purchased by visitors. This has been a great display of small-scale urban agriculture generating revenue to feed back into the system and support other social outcomes from food production, such as education, food literacy, and access to sustainable food and green space.

Not only has our *Cut Flower Program* increased our offering at Farm Gate, the program has sparked intrigue from visitors into how this production system works and put CCF on the map as a legitimate local grower and contributor in Melbourne's urban agriculture scene.

It's been a pleasure to invite visitors into our growing spaces and give them the opportunity to snack on a carrot as they pass through when we're harvesting in the Market Garden or see them watch in wonder when the team bunches up buckets of fresh flowers in the Post-harvest Shed.

In January 2022, Melbourne Farmers Markets consolidated their sites and as a result we closed our stall with them. This meant that over the last financial year we have relied on our Farm Gate stall as our primary distribution space. While we've looked into other opportunities, our small, public-facing stall is the least labour-intensive way to sell produce on a site that is open year round.

Farm Gate is a visual cue to visitors and the many people who use the public bike path that there are alternative ways to sell and buy produce in the city. The Horticulture team set this goal back in 2020 when they were developing the Market Garden. This visual cue is especially important for people less familiar with the Farm.

Unlike chain supermarkets, our produce is sustainable and celebrates seasonal varieties that have been harvested on the same day mere metres from where it's sold. A Horticulture team member works the stall for two hours every Saturday morning to maintain a vital connection point between growers and buyers.

Looking ahead, we are streamlining processes and increasing crop diversity for the stall. We hope to expand some of our growing spaces and invest in equipment and infrastructure to develop our production further. In years to come, we hope this stall will be well established in the community and children will revisit as adults.



Gardens & Landscape

The Horticulture team successfully managed 20 acres of green space, with most of this space open to the public every day of the year. The team expanded in size, skills and knowledge working towards their goals, the Farm's mission and their responsibilities as land managers of a Crown land reserve.

We continued our partnership with the Narrap Rangers Unit from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, working together to maintain a two-way knowledge sharing system and co-manage three specific sites at the Farm. Narrap worked with us on site where we focused on natural resource management, riparian revegetation zones, and growing culturally significant food and medicinal plants.

Our ongoing work with Narrap has enhanced the landscape and biodiversity through First Nations' agricultural practices at the Farm. We were able to deliver paid tours led by Elders, showcasing the key sites co-managed with Narrap. Fees from these tours contributed to the sites' ongoing maintenance. This collaboration is invaluable, not only as land managers operating on Wurundjeri Country, but its continuation will allow us to deliver on our responsibilities in the *Yarra Strategic Plan* and *Healthy Waterways Strategy*. We have applied for multi-year funding in an effort to support this partnership.



The Horticulture team supported other departments by providing jobs for community program participants and corporate volunteers. They also co-hosted a tour for the Royal Botanic Gardens, VicHealth, landscape architects and disability consultants with the Community Programs and Education teams.

We've been chipping away at landscape restoration, rebuilding and improving the paths, vegetation quality, diversity and reducing weed pressure on the Farm. Weed management and improvements to accessibility around the house at No. 18 has been in development, but a larger infrastructure project is required to finish the job.

Long-term planning and short-term actions have begun on our *Urban Forestry Plan* to care for the current tree population on the Farm and create space for new areas and species. By focusing on diversity of species and canopy coverage, the team will provide shade and shelter from the elements in a changing climate and improve the site for decades to come.

Our well managed compost system has been a great engagement and educational opportunity to talk about the realities of dealing with waste on a small urban farm with mixed animal species and limited space.

The Horticulture team recognises and thanks the volunteers and program participants who have contributed to the landscape at CCF, with special mention to Hough Gardens who provided hundreds of hours of labour. Thank you to everyone who supported our team and local food system.





Animal Husbandry

Mia Sutherland, Head of Animal Husbandry

It's been another successful year for the Animal Husbandry team at CCF. We started the financial year with the recruitment of four new staff, taking the team from two to six staff members. The new team members were given first-hand experience of farm life with lambing season kicking off in July when we had sixteen rambunctious little lambs born from nine of our ewes. The lambs were of course extremely popular with staff, volunteers and visitors alike.

The expansion of the Animal Husbandry team gave us the capacity to revitalise our *Pig Breeding* program. We've had to say goodbye to some of our old piggie friends over the last couple of years, however, in March we welcomed our new sow, Winnie. Once Winnie is old enough she will become a part of our breeding plans, alongside our Large Black sow, Alice.

Through the process of taking on Winnie, we were able to connect with other like-minded farmers and this relationship building led to us 'pig-sitting' a Berkshire boar named Danny while his farmer was overseas.

We also welcomed June, a Jersey X Hereford calf, named in memory of June Bradbury, who was instrumental in establishing CCF. To replace Finna, the main cow we currently run public engagement activities with, June will continue to live at CCF and be trained, along with our Angus X Dairy Shorthorn steer.

Public engagement continues to be a key function of the Animal Husbandry team and we developed and implemented many new activities over the last year. The activities are designed to engage visitors with our amazing animals and educate people on the hard work involved in managing them and the beautiful space we work on at CCF. Favourites include weekly Meet the Horses and Guinea Pig Hair Salon sessions, and the daily Egg Grading activity.



We were lucky to welcome back the Waler horses twice this past year, once for a demonstration on the Horses' birthday weekend and again on ANZAC Day. It was a lovely way to celebrate and connect with these majestic horses, as well as educate visitors on horsemanship.

We were able to find homes for sixteen of our sheep, as well as sixteen hand-reared calves, as we continue to put CCF on the map as an important contributor to urban agriculture. Through finding homes for some of our animals we are able to keep our total numbers to a level that is manageable within our regenerative agricultural framework.

Our beloved chickens had a fruitful year, with egg sales proving popular year round. This year was one of the first in a long time that we had highly consistent egg production and sales to match. We have worked tirelessly to develop systems to have our chickens grazing on and helping to remediate the pastures, and we're also beginning to implement a sustainable and long-term succession plan for our laying flock of hens. The aim here is to continue to produce fresh, delicious eggs in a regenerative manner that benefits CCF and the land we farm on, and is engaging for our visitors by introducing new breeds and implementing other husbandry practices. These improvements are still in progress, so keep your eyes peeled for exciting new developments on ground.

Partnerships

Ongoing partnerships with other English Leicester and Shropshire breeders continued with pure bred rams leased to CCF early this year to join with our two breeding sheep flocks. A short breeding period helped to support our pasture management and meant that we welcomed another batch of adorable lambs!

Our partnership with the Victorian Apiarists' Association—Melbourne Section continued with their management of CCF's Apiary. While the bee season wasn't as productive as we had hoped for, overall, it's been a successful year with an education box available for visiting school groups as well as regular open days, honey extraction demonstrations and workshops for both budding and experienced beekeepers in the community.





Further opportunities to upskill volunteers in animal husbandry practices became available in 2023, highlights include having volunteers assist in grading and packing eggs for sale as well as supporting Animal Husbandry staff with regular pen cleaning and maintenance jobs.

There are sure to be more new and exciting adventures in Animal Husbandry in the next year and we look forward to having you on the journey with us.

Thank you for all of your support!





Farm Experience

Susan Pitman, HR Advisor & Weekend Supervisor

Shawn Augustin, Events & Farm Experience Coordinator

It's been a pretty big year for Farm Experience from a structural and tactical point of view. We started to sync our days up with other departments more and established processes to roll out visitor engagement opportunities using the routines and resources these departments already had in place.

The Animal Husbandry team has been our metaphorical and sometimes literal guinea pig! The Farm Experience team workshopped new visitor experience activities in collaboration with Animal Husbandry, and after successfully trialling a Guinea Pig Hair Salon both teams incorporated this activity into our weekly rosters. We're now running Meet the Sheep and Meet the Goats sessions when possible too. The Animal Husbandry team simultaneously established a Meet the Horses activity on Sundays. They used Farm Experience to field a lot of visitor interaction for this activity and upskilled staff to be more familiar with our larger animals in general.

We welcomed another new activity on weekdays, where visitors can sit on our tractor, generously donated by Massey Ferguson and nicknamed 'Big Red', for a country-style photo opportunity. This activity is supervised by a staff member for occupational health and safety reasons. After a trial period, we decided to run the activity on busy weekends and in the school holidays. Families tagging the Farm in their tractor photos on social media has also helped to promote CCF.

Shawn officially stepped into the Coordinator role for Farm Experience. He refined systems for inventory, maintenance and communications for a pool of casual staff to pick up and run with. Under Shawn's direction, the Farm Experience team collaborated with Animal Husbandry to develop better communications for visitors to the Farm. One of these highly successful ideas has been the Daily Activities board. The large board is updated every morning with a schedule of fun farm-themed activities. He also created the aptly named *Fowl-weather Policy* that supports quicker responses to seasonal shifts and keeps the public engaged with activities while we experience the impacts of climate change.



My Farm Passport

We launched My Farm Passport, a visual hunt for animals on the Farm with a stamp at each location to record the sightings. The kids love it and our volunteers have been a great help with reprinting and restocking these passports available for sale at Reception.

Educational Activities

The Education team developed educational displays and visitor experience activities like themed craft and readings in the Barn for key cultural dates, including Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week. The Education and Farm Experience teams have collaborated to look ahead and raise awareness around key dates that align with the Farm's values and community.

Lastly, we managed to implement a few self-guided as well as farm-run activities. These include: Pig Enrichment, Pony Promenade, Egg Grading and the Toddler Discovery Table. The Farm Experience team is looking to expand photo opportunities and potentially collaborate with Animal Husbandry again now that a chicken tractor used to safely house our chickens overnight has arrived—keep your eyes on our socials for more activities as we roll them out!



Events

Rich Stanley, Events Manager

The largest change for the Events team over the last year was the breaking up of Events and Marketing and the marriage of Events and Farm Experience. This has been a great fit and allowed us to design and deliver events more effectively, incorporating Shawn's extensive experience with the Farm's daily operations. Marketing has since gone from strength to strength under Sophie's direction.

We hosted the City of Yarra's Children's Week Family Fun Day in October 2022, which brought a variety of community organisations, information stalls and kids' activities to the Farm for a free day aimed at providing fun, engagement and connection for those in social housing. We had 500 adults and children in attendance and received fantastic feedback about the day.

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) ran their Rainbow Yarning workshops for the LGBTIQA+ community from VACCA's broader community over two days in October 2022. The Farm held the first of a planned annual Peninsula Party, inviting several of our neighbours from the Precinct (or 'peninsula') for an informal social gathering in the Barn, giving us all a chance to meet each other and rebuild social connections for the first time since COVID.

We held the first When Pigs Fly event in the Stables Paddock and Barn on New Years Eve, with 1600 people in attendance for an eclectic music program from 3:00 pm. Similarly, the first Echo Beach event happened in February, with DJs performing in the Stables Paddock and Barn. Around 1500 people attended, many of whom either had never been to the Farm or hadn't been since they were children. The Farm has programmed these events before to varying degrees of success, however, providing venue hire to external promoters who specialise in programming outdoor events has proven to be the best way forward.

We co-hosted our first joint venture with the Abbotsford Convent in February 2023, running a conference and Farm tour for VicHealth with our Horticulture, Community Programs and Education teams.

The number of film and photo shoots steadily increased with clients ranging from local clothing labels, large advertising agencies, student films and major television networks. Clients included Channel 7's *Sunrise* program who broadcasted their live weather cross with Sam Mac interviewing several of our farmers, and the ABC who filmed a closing segment for their *Utopia* series.

We also held a host of miscellaneous events like book readings in the Barn (Elizabeth Mary Cummings' *Ruby's Rescue* and Ross Knight's *The Incredible Tale of Little Roo*), a pasta-making workshop at No.18, the annual return of the Australian Rat Fanciers' display and the Handweavers and Spinners Guild ran their monthly Yarn in the Barn display and workshop.

There were a considerable number of weddings repeatedly rescheduled due to the lockdowns, and most of them were eventually held this financial year. This in turn meant that a higher than usual number of new weddings were booked well into the future.

To cap off the financial year, we held our 20th annual Winter Solstice Bonfire; the second since COVID and a huge improvement from the previous year. We had just under 3000 guests, with a wide variety of activities including face painting, dancing, live music, wandering animal costumes and even an improvised sawdust play pile.

Uncle Bill Nicholson performed a Smoking Ceremony, the Djirri Djirri dancers performed and siblings Nayuka and Paul Gorrie DJ'd, prior to the lighting of the bonfire itself. This was considered a (cough) raging success and we can't wait to build on the success for next year.



While the post-lockdown environment was felt in Events, we saw a steady increase in the Barn being hired out for music and private birthday and staff parties.





Education

Alice Sainsbury, Community & Education Programs Manager

The interdependent Education and Community Programs teams experienced some big changes this year, including a new Manager, Community Engagement Coordinator and a couple of Educators and Program Officers.

We're so proud of the Farm as a special learning place for people young and old.

The Education team ran 75 curriculum-linked school excursions this year from Kinder to Year 12 for schools from across the state. Students explored the Farm and learned about landscapes, ecosystems, life cycles, where animals live, what they need to survive and stay healthy, how food and fibres are produced, biodiversity and soil health. The team led students to observe, investigate, and build terminology and vocabulary in our hands-on program across the Birrarung Bank Restoration Site to the Lambing Shed and paddocks.

We welcomed Little Sophia Kindergarten every Friday afternoon for their wander and story time. We also hosted adult students on placements from Melbourne and Swinburne universities to support their early childhood education and language studies.

Over the school holidays, 277 children enjoyed our *Farmer for a Day* program. These little farmers went on tours, met different animals, made garden signs and insect hotels in the Workshop, potted up pea seeds, and got to work doing farm jobs to help the Animal Husbandry and Horticulture teams. We also welcomed 65 self-guided group tours over the holiday periods—we just love seeing kids exploring and learning on the Farm all year round.

Next year we want to provide more educational activities for visitors, from games that will teach little ones new things to setting up First Nations displays for special dates for our adult friends. We're teaming up with the Victorian Apiarists' Association and creating some buzz for an apiary-themed tour and working with our friends at the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation on an exciting new project. Keep your eyes peeled on the Farm!



Overheard on an Excursion

When explaining why we have netting over some of the beds in the Market Garden ...

'But what if a swarm of insects work together to pull the net up and the peacock goes in?'







Community Programs

Alice Sainsbury, Community & Education Programs Manager

Our *Farm Hands* program grew this year from twelve to eighteen groups coming to CCF, and from ten to twenty-five individual volunteers coming every week. Volunteers make an invaluable difference to the Farm by helping us with jobs, keeping the place neat and tidy for visitors, and by creating a sense of community, joy and learning. In total, they donated over 11,000 hours of their time this year!

Thanks to our community friends who put in these hours: Alkira, Bayley House, Bulleen Heights, Dementia Australia, Giant Steps, genU, Having a Yarn, Interchange, Milparinka, Onemda, Operation Newstart, Star Health, STREAT, The ACM Project, YourDNA and our fabulous schools Collingwood Alternative School, Concord School, Heatherwood School, Hume Valley School, Kensington Community High School, Lynall Hall Community School and the Victorian College for the Deaf.

We've been inspired by visits to our friends at Sages Cottage Farm, Caring Farms and The Veggie Empire, Myuna Farm and FareShare. We played host to a researcher from Uncommon Folk Farm to help us create accessible job instructions for participants and group profiles so we can best support people on the Farm.

We continued to build our relationships with City of Yarra (CoY) services like Yarra Volunteer Leaders Network, Communities That Care, Onwards Collingwood and Richmond Youth Hub. We also hosted the City Nature Challenge with Yarra Libraries and CoY's Biodiversity and Urban Agriculture team, where we invited community members to help us observe and record plants and animals at the Farm in a global biodiversity competition.

We've provided free entry and events to NatureConnect, Safe Steps, Bright Futures at Merri Outreach Support Service, River Nile School, Royal Melbourne Hospital patients and Launch Housing.

Highlights

- Able Australia visited with a group of deafblind people and their communication guides. Alice, Cicily and Bridget ran a sensory tour of the Market Garden, the Horticulture team prepared sensory materials from across the Farm for people to engage with, and the visitors brushed the cow and participated in a Meet the Guinea Pigs session.
- We supported students from Worcester Polytechnic, Massachusetts who did a six-week project with us researching and building prototypes for our *Farm-made Products* program repurposing donated pallet wood from Inner City Floorworld to make and sell items with our volunteers like finch boxes and chopping boards.
- We were chosen as a soothing and safe event venue for Monash Sustainable Development Institute's *Fire to Flourish* community leaders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders from fire-affected communities in New South Wales and Victoria.
- We celebrated 25 years of Toni's ongoing dedicated service in nurturing our community, seeding innovative ideas and sparking creativity at the Farm.

A big thank you to Villa Maria Catholic Homes who supported our woodworking projects in the Workshop and provided free disability awareness training for our team.

Next year, we will be revamping our community programs, launching our *Volunteer Program* and building the verandah across the Workshop to expand our woodworking programs—with thanks to Community Bank Clifton Hill–North Fitzroy!





Overheard from Young Farmers

'Being part of the Farm's community makes me feel happy and I belong.'



Young Farmers Program

We welcomed nine new Young Farmers to the program this year, supporting a total of forty-four children during this weekend program. The *Young Farmers Program* encourages children to participate in the community they reside in and facilitates a connection with nature by providing hands-on experiences for 8 to 14 year olds across the Farm's Animal Husbandry, Horticulture, Maintenance and Farm Experience departments.

Our Young Farmers gardened, cleaned animal pens, cleared paddocks, handled animals, cooked, made art and crafts, and completed building, maintenance and woodworking projects.

We're also proud of the incidental learning participants received through educational opportunities while working onsite, connecting socially and developing practical skills.

Highlights

- making insect hotels and finch boxes in the Workshop using donated pallet wood
- constructing and drawing designs on lanterns for the Winter Solstice Bonfire
- building and decorating wooden benches for visitors to use, made from sustainable wood from CERES
- cooking with stinging nettles harvested from weeding jobs with the Horticulture team.



The Collingwood Country Women's Association of Victoria

The Country Women's Association (CWA) continued to run sold out workshops at the Farm in 2022-2023. Working with Peter the Shearer, the CWA collected the wool as it was shorn off the sheep, with the help of children on the Farm picking burrs and other organic matter out of the wool before it was sent off to a mill for proper cleaning and turned into yarn. The CWA organised for the commercial grading and cleaning of the wool, reporting that the haul in 2022 was exceptional.

With support through funding from the City of Yarra, we used this haul to run *Collingwool* workshops in 2023. Together with the Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria, we ran slow-fashion workshops covering crocheting, indigo dyeing and hand spindling. We hope that knowing where your clothing comes from and the effort that it takes to make a quality garment will not only have a positive impact on the environment but the community too.

The CWA also ran a fruit bottling and jarring workshop as part of the Paddock to Project workshop series for Climate Justice Action. Excess produce from the Horticulture team's rhubarb, seville oranges, figs, zucchini, cucumber, radish and turnips were turned into pickles, relishes and jams.

The CWA held their bi-monthly Food Swap stall, joined CCF at the Bonfire selling their famous cakes and sweets, and held a Mothers and Others Day stall where they sold beanies made from the *Collingwool* project alongside delicious cupcakes. A big thank you to the CWA for baking scones and treats for the Farm team, particularly on busy Saturdays!



Maintenance & Amenities

James Morton, Head of Maintenance

Maintenance & Amenities at the Farm have been developing capacity as a team with the addition of another staff member, John Bugge. To add to the team's skills and expertise in plumbing, carpentry, fencing, painting and concreting, John brings great skills in engineering and is a very handy welder!

The team has continued to support the *Young Farmers Program* by running Saturday workshop programs. We've really enjoyed teaching woodworking and safe use of hand tools to a fun and receptive group of young people.

As always, our work has been divided between reactive repair jobs and opportunities to improve and add to the facilities and experience for visitors. Following ongoing issues with soft, boggy ground along the lower section of the Laneway, we scraped up the mulch surface and replaced it with Dromana toppings. This mix made of fine gravel and clay particles was spread and then compacted to form a surface that's now much more accessible for prams and wheelchairs as well as bringing a far greater resilience to vehicle traffic. We intend to apply this same treatment to the remaining mulched section of the Laneway in 2024. We completed a similar process in the Lambing Shed, which is now fit-for-purpose in terms of the school groups and Young Farmers who frequent the space.

Modifying the area right in front of the Farm Cafe's decking was a small job with a great outcome. Previously a step up to the deck, these works now allow wheelchair access to the area and direct access to the Volunteer Room without the use of stairs. It's very satisfying to see how many people in wheelchairs now dine in what used to be an inaccessible area.

Following the floods in October 2022, the team was involved in clean-up and remediation works which, despite the damage done, gave us the opportunity to observe surface runoff issues and plan prevention strategies. We are gradually developing surface water flow systems to reduce the impact of surface damage when heavy rain descends upon the Farm.

Beginning in May and continuing all the way up to the day before the event, the Maintenance & Amenities team—with plenty of assistance from staff and volunteers—built a bonfire that performed exactly as we'd planned. A rapid ignition and spectacular burn with a moderately short burn time was achieved by building the fire on top of a full deck of pallets with a timber 'igloo' in the centre of the build. This allowed us to get the fire rapidly roaring up the centre, drawing plenty of air from underneath.

We were fortunate to have Massey Ferguson generously continue their relationship with CCF by supplying us with a brand new tractor at no expense. This was swapped with the previous tractor they had supplied and, as well as being a great practical help in a work capacity, the tractor is a huge source of delight and excitement for younger children. Honking the horn and waving are mandatory requirements for any of the team when driving aptly-named 'Big Red' around the Farm!

Constructing the new chicken caravan was a significant job completed by the team. In terms of large-scale flat pack assembly, this was one out of the box! The entire caravan had to be riveted and screwed together on top of the supplied trailer chassis. Wheels, axles, mudguards and a conveyor belt were all secured into place to provide a new paddock-based movable home for our laying hens.

There's always something new to tackle on the Farm and these experiences and learnings keep the Maintenance & Amenities team on our toes and coming back for more!



Financial Summary

The full Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2023 is available on our website on the *About Us* page. The figures below are a summary of these findings.

Profit or Loss

	2023 (\$'000)	2022 (\$'000)
Revenue	2,468	2,183
Expenses	2,724	2,662
Surplus (Deficit)	(256)	(479)

Balance Sheet

	2023 (\$'000)	2022 (\$'000)
Total Assets	1,898	1,650
Total Liabilities	1,413	909
Equity	485	741



Credit: Amelie Mcandrew

Thank Ewes

A big thank ewe to everyone whose support shapes the Farm and our future.

A special mention to our donors, volunteer-run Committee of Management, members, visitors, volunteers, community program participants and staff—thank you for helping us grow.

3MBS | Abbotsford Convent Foundation | Aboriginal Housing Victoria | Alkira | Alphington & Fairfield Vet | Alaia Zhan | Amelie Mcandrew | ASB Branded Merchandise | Bakers Delight Chirnside Park & Lilydale | Bayley House | Blak Pearl Studio Fitzroy | Bodriggy Brewing Company | Bunnings Collingwood | Bulleen Heights School | Burke and Beyond | Channel 7's *Sunrise* | Channel 9's *Postcards* | City West Water | Club Creek Bulb Farm | Collingwood Alternative School | Collingwood Country Women's Association | Common Garden Health | Community Bank Clifton Hill-North Fitzroy (Bendigo Bank) | Concord School | *Corporate Volunteering* program participants | Cultivating Community | Dementia Australia | Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action | DSS Handmade | E&A Salce | Equine Dentistry | Equine Sports Massage | FareShare | Farm Café | Fire Rescue Victoria | Flash Branding | genU | Giant Steps | GroLink | Having A Yarn | Heatherwood School | Heritage Tree Professionals | Hough Gardens | Hume Valley School | Inner City Floorworld Abbotsford | Inner North Community Foundation | Innovative Hoof Care Australia | Interchange | Justice Connect | Kensington Community High School | Little Sophia Kindergarten | Marilyn Mangione | Massey Ferguson | MF Foundation | Matilda Bay Brewing Company | Melbourne Water | Moores: Lawyers & Solicitors Melbourne | Moving Feast | Mountain Goat Beer | Narrap Rangers Unit | NatureConnect | New Gippsland Seeds | Onemda Doncaster & Glenroy | Onwards Collingwood | Operation Newstart | Paul Ramsay Foundation | Pink Noise Audio | ReWine | Richmond Youth Hub | Roogulli Farm | Ryset | Seaview Park Farm | Social Enterprise Network of Victoria | Social Traders | STREAT | Supply & Demand Richmond | Tara Treasures | The Veggie Empire | The Veterinary Surgery North Warrandyte & Yarrambat | Transition Farm | Uniting | University of Melbourne Burnley Campus | Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency | Victorian Apiarists' Association-Melbourne Section | Victorian Government | Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-Operative Fairfield | Villa Maria Catholic Homes | Victorian College for the Deaf | Will Richards at Big Chip | Worcester Polytechnic Institute | Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation | Yarra City Council | Yarra Communities That Care | Yarra Energy Foundation | YourDNA | Young Farmers & their families.



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