

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Collingwood Children's Farm respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri-Woiwurrung of the Kulin Federation as the traditional owners of the Abbotsford Precinct Heritage Farm-lands, 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.

FARM PATRONS

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



Our Reason for Being



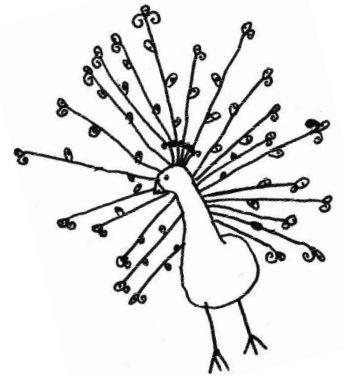
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
EDUCATION
NATURE CONNECTION with
GREEN SPACE and ANIMALS



Collingwood Children's Farm supports social inclusion through a range of programs on a working community farm.

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 year ended June 2020 has been a year of change, both at the Farm and around the world. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, normal operations ceased for much of the year.

The Farm has utilised this time and its resources to re-invigorate so that it will be better prepared on reopening. Never in the Farm's history have the gates been closed to visitors for this length of time. Such a cruel situation that meant the closure of our programs and the standing down of staff. However it has enabled the staff to invest the time in our infrastructure by landscaping, building upgrades and healing the land which is forever weary from utilisation. In line with recommendations from the University of Melbourne's horticultural consultant Dr Chris Williams, we have started to make much needed changes to operations and invest in our grounds and gardens.

Although the Farm has historically enjoyed quite a diversified stream of income, many of them are uncertain in a post-Covid world. Car-park revenue, weddings, event bookings and even general gate takings are uncertain on reopening. Government grants, gratefully received, have historically enabled specific programs/projects to happen, but have not funded the base Farm operations. Of special note this year is the Victorian Government Building Works package through DELWP (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) \$1 million capital grant which will further improve our facilities and environment. We receive this donation incredibly gratefully. Notwithstanding, the Farm has not rested and has been busy boosting its social media presence and seeking to recreate income streams to enable financial as well as environmental sustainability into the future. Participation in *Moving Feast* is an example, where the Farm has transformed some pastures into market gardens enabling the growing of produce to support meals for disadvantaged people. The success of such activities will be crucial in ensuring the Farm can continue its important mission - to enrich the lives of disadvantaged people, in particular those of children. A mission that is more important than ever in these times.

The Farm is what it is thanks to the efforts of many people. Our manager, farm supervisors, staff, volunteers as well as our stakeholders and the local community, all play a role in making the Farm an amazing place to be a part of. With each year that passes I learn more about the operations of the Farm, the hard work involved and also the lives that are enriched because of it. Although there are current limits on participation, we will need the full support of all for the Farm's reopening to be a success. To all our contributors, great and small, on behalf of our wonderful organisation and all our stakeholders, I wish to extend our sincere thanks and look forward to your continuing participation soon.

Every year we have a budding team of fresh talent wanting to become part of the Farm Committee of Management and last year was no exception. The new members were Andrew Chan (lawyer), Jess West (risk professional) and Sue Zhang (urban planning). This year we were again fortunate to be supported by Councillor James Searle as our City of Yarra Council representative. Many thanks to these individuals for their efforts throughout the year.



Regrettably we are having to say goodbye to some great talent from our Committee this year. These individuals are Joshua Hale and Elisa Turco. Joshua has been our Vice President and powered through a mountain of work as our leader of the Farm Operations Sub-Committee, while Elisa, our current Secretary, has been invaluable on the Governance Sub-Committee and guided us particularly on matters of our constitution and statutory obligations. Thank you both for your incredible commitment and countless hours of service to the Farm and its mission.

The Farm is truly a great organisation to be a part of. The Committee of Management members and I are all truly honoured to be a part of this wonderful community organisation. We all look forward to a productive and exciting next twelve months.

Lachlan Turner,
President, on behalf of Collingwood Children's Farm Committee of Management, October 2020

**COMMITTEE OF
MANAGEMENT 2020**

- President:* Lachlan Turner
- Vice President:* Joshua Hale
- Treasurer:* Isabel Schoen
- Secretary:* Elisa Turco
- Lachlan Cook
- Kieran Dickson
- Nina Collins
- Evan Zly
- Sue Zhang
- Andrew Chan
- Jess West
- James Searle (Cr City of Yarra)
- Conor Hickey



Manager's Report

2020. I don't think this is a year that anyone is going to forget in a hurry.

With the global pandemic leaving the world in disarray, it is hard to think about much else whilst attempting to recall what happened prior to March.

My contribution to last year's Annual Report was celebrating 40 years of the Collingwood Children's Farm - looking forward to the launch of our book, our podcast and the upcoming birthday party! Even though the weather did not look favorably upon us that day, our celebration was amazing. Hosted by the wonderful Costa Georgiadis with musicians, community, growers, producers, artists and more, the day was a (very wet) delight for all those in attendance. A huge thanks to all those that helped organise and those who joined us in celebrating the very special place that is the Collingwood Children's Farm.

Not long after the party, Australia - and indeed the world - was shaken to witness the devastation caused by the bushfires that destroyed so many homes, properties, habitats and native bushland. The community outpouring that followed was like nothing I have ever witnessed. Bushfire appeals were raising funds everywhere and the world got behind the communities in need. CCF played host to one of these events for *BlazeAid* and the day was such a perfect example of how community, working together, can make a positive impact.

It was in the aftermath of the bushfires that I attended the Climate Emergency Summit at the Melbourne Town Hall, presented by some of the world's leading thinkers and activists. At once terrified and empowered, I was fortified in my belief that the role CCF can play in education and demonstration, was exactly what we needed to be focusing on as the world heads for potential catastrophe.

We spent 12 months working with Dr Chris Williams on a *Landscape and Vegetation* report, gathering all the past work completed across the Farm in the form of masterplans, designs and trial and error and wrapped it up into a new scope of works. Adopting a 'Regenerative Agricultural Framework' within which to work, CCF and Dr Williams began discussions on how to



The Honorable Lily Dambrosio
with Conor at the Farm.

roll out the recommendations of the report. The whole staff met early March to map out a plan and I believe it was said, 'If only we could shut for a couple of weeks so we could really work out how to tackle this'. And not 2 weeks later, we were closed...

COVID-19 hit like a sledgehammer and I don't think any of us knew exactly what was ahead for us. While the rest of the world is attempting to deal with the spread in a myriad of ways, Melbourne has been in some form of lockdown now for seven months and CCF has been closed to the public for all but one week of it. There was a glimmer of hope back there in June...

That glimmer of hope hung around as we worked out how best to continue our mission with our doors closed. It came in the form of *Moving Feast*. Joining the *Moving Feast* team meant that some of our staff could be redeployed into the 'Essential Work' of growing food for those in need and, with the support of the incredible 'Social Enterprise' teams behind the movement, CCF continues to be able to meaningfully contribute fresh food to fill produce boxes. To date, over 700kg of food has been harvested and delivered to those who need it most. And when you're all able to return, you will see that the Barn Paddock is under redesign as it turns from pasture into a huge market garden to grow yet more food for those in need and for our Farm gate stall!

Our other work continued in the form of planning and policy development as well as care for the animals and gardens. We also agreed that while we were closed, we would be able carry out a number of improvements across the site, infrastructure, landscaping, pasture regeneration and a general 'Spring Clean' of the property.

I cannot emphasise enough the incredible work of every staff member that has worked tirelessly (on and off site) across these difficult months with a significantly reduced team. The work you have achieved is substantial and the CCF community will benefit from your commitment to the Farm. THANK YOU!

As always, a sincere thank you to our Patrons, The Honourable Linda Dessau, AM, Governor of Victoria and His Honour Judge Anthony Howard. An enormous thank you to our volunteers, our members and the generous supporters of the Farm. When we announced we were closing, the community rallied behind us in so many ways. Your generosity in our time of need was so greatly appreciated.

As you read through the following pages, you will see that, even though we have been closed for most of the year, an enormous amount of activity took place.

Exciting news came early in the year with the announcement of the Victorian Government's Building Works program. Before the hard lockdown was implemented, The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio visited the Farm to announce a \$1million contribution to fund the building of a new multipurpose space, greenhouse and nursery and cafe area revamp. It couldn't have come at a better time. This funding will be a game changer for the Farm. A large thankyou is due to DELWP for their assistance with this project. Our intention is to involve our community in the construction of these spaces so they become a community-built and shared space for learning and connection.

Many thanks again to our friends at City of Yarra for their continued support and cooperation. With their generous assistance, the Farm's entry bridge was rebuilt and strengthened to last another





decade, keeping pedestrians safe from cyclists on the shared path and allowing a stunning view of the community gardens as you make your way into the Farm.

City of Yarra also approved our budget submission from 2019 to rebuild our compost area, laying a new concrete slab to allow for safer management of the compost site and setting the scene for exciting talks with the Yarra's Waste Services and Minimisation team and Cultivating Communities to develop new services and education programs for the public.

To the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and the amazing NARRAP team who have continued to provide guidance and support on numerous projects across the site, our collaborative partnership means so much to all of us. We are beyond excited about the work we have started and look forward to all that is to come.

Sincere thanks to Chris Williams for his ongoing support and advice to all staff at CCF. His assistance has extended well beyond his contracted consultancy piece and we are most grateful!

Our dear friends at CWA have supported the Farm's new kitchen build at #18. When COVID-19 restrictions lift, this space will provide opportunity for workshops, meetings and classrooms with its new equipment and fresh lick of paint. We look forward to welcoming community groups to pickling and preserving workshops!

Thanks must also be extended to Ciara Denham and the *Kids Own Publishing* team for developing our wonderful book! *We Went to the Collingwood Children's Farm* is a delightful collaboration with the children who visit the Farm and it was launched at our party by Costa. If you haven't yet got a copy, it makes a wonderful Christmas gift (nudge nudge). The illustrations are so very beautiful!!

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To Yarra Energy Foundation and Canadian Solar, an enormous thank you for the donation of the solar panels now in operation atop our workshop. Our next step is to set up a display to show how much energy these things are generating and eventually run workshops for the public in setting up solar.

Thanks to the Community Gardens Working Group who have kept the place in shape for those that couldn't come in. The community spirit is alive and well in that space and I am so excited about the new projects that are bubbling for down there.

To Patrick Beggs of PUR Production, your thorough work on our 40th Birthday Farm Podcast has created a time capsule for folks to enjoy well into the future. This now sits in our Education Page on our website for all those interested in this space's fascinating history.

To the Apiary Association for your patience and perseverance in working towards a more accessible space for our community to enjoy your informative workshops. Thanks also for providing CCF staff with invaluable hands-on sessions so that we might improve our educational program on the importance of caring for our bee friends!

My thanks must also go to TONIC for their amazing consulting work assisting with a financial overhaul behind the scenes of systems and processes finally bringing the Farm into 2020!

And my final thanks to the Committee of Management who have worked alongside us through so many changes. The Farm has had to bend and flex throughout this difficult year and the expertise of each of the committee members has been called upon to navigate, strategise, prioritise and implement all the initiatives you will see when you return.

On a sad note, we lost four members of our community this year and, on behalf of the CCF staff and committee, we wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of Julia Smallwood, Denis Coghlan, Dimitri Vlamis and Vangel Trajcevski who we all knew as 'Bill'. Julia was a long term staff member at the Farm and a cherished friend to so many. Denis was the long-serving treasurer of the RDA. Bill and Dimitri, pillars of the Community Gardens community. All will be sorely missed.

The Collingwood Children's Farm community is like a big family and when we reopen it will be a celebration of making it through and welcoming back our incredible community that we have missed oh-so-very much.

YOU are the reason we exist.
YOU make this place the incredible place it is.
YOU are the heart and soul of this little slice of paradise.
I hope to see you all again very soon!

Conor Hickey



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2020-2025 PROGRESS UPDATE



CCF will strive to provide program opportunities for people experiencing adversity, many of whom face significant barriers to inclusion.

During covid closure, our Community Engagement team has been working on developing new and improved programs. With generous funding from Community Bank - Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy; Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation; and the Besen Foundation we have begun work on a new Woodwork space for our groups to train and work in. We continue to work with Inner Rhythm to develop low to no cost Equine Assisted Coaching for community groups. We have initiated talks with Outdoor Healthcare providers to develop new means for healthcare professionals to use our space to run their services. We continue to discuss opportunities for City of Yarra service providers to partner with CCF on programs and services on our site. We have initiated discussion with the Department of Education and neighboring schools to develop alternative education opportunities for at-risk and disengaged youth and we have begun exploring online functions to bring the farm to those who can't physically attend such as an online tour for the children at the RCH. Through Moving Feast, CCF is committed to developing employment and training pathways through hands-on learning experiences for at-risk youth and long term unemployed through Urban Agriculture and Horticulture programs in partnership with Cultivating Communities, STREAT and other connected social enterprise organisations.



CCF will demonstrate best-practice farming, focusing on sustainable practices and will take a regenerative approach to agriculture.

Through implementing the recommendations in Chris Williams' Landscape and Vegetation report, CCF has adopted a Regenerative Agricultural focus and will continue to improve our practice whilst developing opportunities to engage and educate the community through the process. Our continued partnership with Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation will ensure our practices are developed in consultation with the NARRAP team. Our new compost slab, re-vamped worm farms, newly installed solar and hydrology report will ensure that CCF continues to review and improve our footprint whilst harnessing as much natural resources as we can, promoting all we do to our visitors in the hope they too can adopt sustainable practices at home.

CCF will leverage public workshops, events and experiences to fund and support community programs.

CCF is in the early process of developing an Events Coordinator role to develop a suite of workshops and events at the Farm to engage a wider number of community stakeholders. The exciting Building Works funding from the Victorian Government will see the construction of a Multipurpose space designed specifically for workshops and programs, a nursery and greenhouse for workshops and a revamp of the cafe area to allow the development of new events and uses of the Farm as a venue to generate much needed revenue to support the delivery of low to no cost programs for our community.

CCF takes its custodianship of these heritage farmlands with the utmost seriousness and is committed to passing on this community asset to the next generation in a state that is both environmentally and financially sustainable.

As we face the threat of the continued issues presented to us from an inaction towards climate change, CCF acknowledges the importance of improving and maintaining the incredible asset that we manage. Green space and a connection to nature grows ever more important as we continue to see our population growing and moving into small spaces with no access to a backyard or natural settings. CCF is ideally located on the banks of the Birrarung and we are committed to ensuring that this space remains an oasis for city folk for generations to come. To do this successfully, CCF has developed a set of Key Guiding Principles to ensure that every new project's impact is measured to ensure environmental sustainability is top priority.

CCF recognises that increased/diversified revenue is critical to supporting new ventures and programs and the staffing and infrastructure necessary for their successful delivery.

Now, more than ever, the farm is needing to think creatively as we face the uncertain road ahead. What if we can't book as many weddings as before? What if the number of people we can have through the gate remain restricted indefinitely? What if these inclement weather events become so frequent that spending time outside is a less enjoyable pursuit than before?

The extreme summer, bushfires and smoke haze left the farm virtually empty for 3 months and then COVID-19 hit - closing us down for 7. In order to rebuild and remain a vital space for our community to meet, engage, learn and connect with nature, we know that inventing new ways for people to use the farm is imperative to our continued operation.

CCF is developing new roles in events and marketing to develop a suite of workshops and events the year round. We're talking with theatre companies, music event producers, caterers, producers and facilitators. We're building new spaces to work in and we're always exploring new ideas and partnerships with other like-minded organisations to grow and diversify our offerings for our community.

CCF recently launched our new-look website and began increasing our social media presence. With a regular newsletter going out to our mailing list and constant updates being shared with our online following, CCF hopes to increase our readership and bring new clients to our site. Our recent certification with Social Traders will increase our visibility to Business and Government looking to Social Procurement opportunities and so CCF aims to improve our corporate wellness program, use of our open spaces and develop new programs to expand our reach.

Conor Hickey



The Numbers

As we have been closed, we have come up with some alternative numbers.....



10,000 + cuts to prune the Farm!



180kg of quinces sold at the Farm gate stall



1 new staff baby 'Rory'



3 sets of twin goats in 2020



1 new puppy 'Alfie'



250 kg of citrus harvested and sold at Farm gate stall



1500 + bunches of greens (parsley, kale, chard, basil) sold at the Farm gate



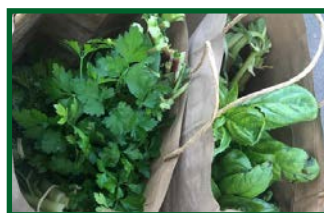
700kg of bok choy/greens harvested for Moving Feast



50 kg of figs sold at the Farm gate



over 20,000 peeks at peacocks (iso feathers...)



1300 + bunches of greens to Farm Cafe



300 + bunches of flowers

Community Engagement

With the many challenges and traumas of 2020, it is easy to forget that up until late March, the Farm's community programs were in full swing. The Farm works to support people experiencing adversity, engaging a cohort of 150+ children, young people and adults with a program of meaningful work, teaching skills, bringing people closer to nature and building connectedness.

Now more than ever, it is important to acknowledge the efforts of this army of volunteers, so on behalf of the entire Farm community - thank you!

It is also an important time to say thank you to the wider community. Your support for the Farm comes in many forms, paying for entry, buying memberships, holding your event at the Farm, making donations and the list goes on! It is this support that directly funds the Farm's community programs and it is the reason that we have been able to deliver programs at no cost to special development schools, adult disability support services, community schools and other service providers as well as to individuals in the community. On behalf of every person that benefits from these programs - thank you!

Sadly, the Farm has been closed to the public since late March, with community programs being suspended indefinitely since that time. This has been an incredibly challenging time for so many people in the Farm community. A number of staff have been stood down and many volunteers have endured severe social isolation. For many people, the Farm is more than a place to visit, it is their primary social hub - it's where their friends are (human and furry) and it's a place where people feel they belong.

But while 2020 has been a period of great uncertainty, it has also opened our eyes to how much support and goodwill exists for Melbourne's community Farm.

When we put the call out for help, your response was overwhelming. You supported our socials, you got our message out to funding bodies, you sent us the most beautiful messages and even at a time when hundreds of thousands were losing their jobs and experiencing personal hardship,





you donated. This community response isn't something that we're going to forget in a hurry and we cannot wait to welcome you back to your Farm.

While we wait for restrictions to ease, to welcome you all back, you might be wondering what more you can do to help. The truth is, there's plenty!

If you're in the position to do so, you can buy a Farm Membership as it's a wonderful way to support the Farm and its work AND you'll enjoy 12 months of free entry AND you can do it online! But times are tough and there's plenty of other ways to help. You can jump on our socials, follow our pages, like and comment on our posts and share them with your networks. Help us to build the kind of social media following that can be leveraged for corporate, government, philanthropic and community support.



You can jump on Facebook, Google and Tripadvisor and leave us a 5 star review! Teach everyone about the Farm and tell them what the place means to you, why you love it and why it's important. This will help us to build our reputation, many people have no idea of the Farm's community, education and sustainability work. And when we're allowed to reopen, you can come back. We've missed you - it's been too quiet!

But while we might have been closed to the community these past months, we haven't been idle. The Farm is proud to be a part of *Moving Feast* and as part of the *Grow team*, we've activated spaces across the Farm to produce fresh food for people in need. This collaboration of for-purpose enterprises have joined forces to create a pandemic food response that creates justice, sustainability and resilience, and with partnering organisations including STREAT, CERES, Common Ground Project, Community Grocer, Cultivating Community, Fruit2Work, Melbourne Farmers Markets, Open Food Network, ACRE, ASRC Catering, Kinfolk, 3000 Acres, Good Cycles, Whittlesea Food Collective, Laneway, Free to Feed and RMIT's Bowen Street Press, it truly is a thing to behold!

With relaxed restrictions in sight, we've been working with an eye to the future. We're developing a really enjoyable program of activities in preparation for your return to the Farm, activities that are engaging and fun but also compliant with predicted COVID-normal restrictions. There's no getting around that your experience at the Farm will be different to what it was, but we hope that you'll bear with us and enjoy reconnecting with nature, with animals and with the community.

We've also been developing our community programs. Pre-COVID, the Farm's programs were operating over-capacity, continually limited by a lack of suitable work. Closure has provided the opportunity to assess every facet of our operations and reduced staffing has forced us to find efficiencies and better ways of doing things. But an inevitable consequence of this is that the pool of available work shrinks even further.

While there will always be some opportunity for farm-chores work, the key to growing the Farm's programs is to develop opportunities for engagement that operate in cooperation with, but independent of, farm operations and on that front, we have some really exciting news. The Farm has secured the funding to transform its workshop storage bay into a self-contained and fully-equipped woodworking space.

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We're calling it 'The Big Green Shed' and the programs it will host will be a game changer for the Farm's community engagement work.

Community Shed sessions will offer an accessible pathway to volunteering for those that find the physical requirements of farm work a barrier inclusion. This includes current volunteers who find their roles increasingly arduous, helping people to stay involved with the Farm and supporting long term friendships as people get on in age.

The Shed puts CCF in a wonderful position to develop programs (and secure funding) in partnership with schools and service providers. We see time and time again the effectiveness of Farm programs when engaging with young people and it's incredibly exciting to think what opportunities we can build around this new space.

With the wonderful support of program partner Community Bank Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy, the shed has been transformed. It's insulated, the wiring is done, it's been designed to be safe and it's even heated!! Anyone who has volunteered during a bleak Melbourne winter will know how much more pleasant this will make life for our volunteers! Community Bank Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy's profits go back into supporting the local community and we're so excited to see where this new partnership leads.

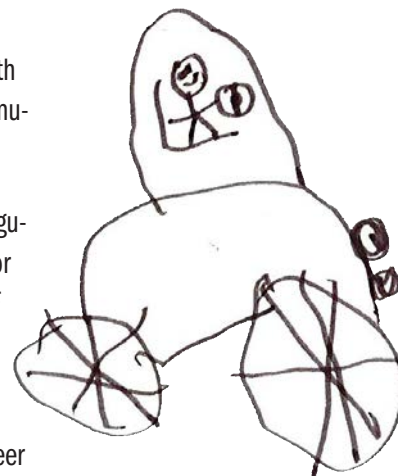
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation has contributed very generously as well. Their funding of top-of-the-line woodwork machinery makes the space very safe and means our volunteers will want for nothing. Australia's largest independent community foundation, Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation provides grants of more than \$10.4 million annually to not-for-profit organisations throughout Melbourne to increase life opportunities and promote social inclusion.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Besen Family Foundation who reached out with program funding that was as generous as it was unexpected. Established in 1978 to build on the philanthropic endeavours of Eva and Marc Besen, the Besen Family Foundation supports the immediate and long-term needs of the wider community in Victoria and Israel, assisting these communities to build capacity and community connection and to achieve long-term change towards a better quality of life.

On behalf of the entire Farm community, a huge thank you to Community Bank Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation and the Besen Family Foundation as your community spirit has brought this project to life.

And while we're talking community spirit, we have to acknowledge AGCO Australia - Massey Ferguson who continue their generous support of the Farm and its programs. This is the third tractor that AGCO Australia has loaned CCF over the years and we have to say the Massey Ferguson MF 4610 we received in October 2019 is a gem! Running such a modern, powerful and reliable machine is a real luxury for a small non-profit organisation like Collingwood Children's Farm.

Thanks also go to Toyota Material Handling for their assistance in upgrading the Farm's skid steer at generous mates rates! These machinery upgrades leave the Farm well placed to continue making improvements across the property which will benefit the entire Farm community.



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We have big news on the digital front too - the Farm's new website is live and it is PURDY! We hope you love the clean new look as much as we do and we hope you all jump online to buy your Farm Memberships! Yes, Memberships have gone online!! Speaking of Farm Memberships, you'll notice that memberships are now non-transferable - every person entering the Farm on a membership will need to be included on that membership.

We know you'll understand the need for this clarification. Your membership fees (along with entry fees, event hire and other trade) directly fund the Farm's inclusive community programs, engaging hundreds of children and adults that experience adversity and helps us to care for our animals and preserve the Abbotsford Precinct Heritage Farmlands.

2021 shapes up to be a year of challenges but also of opportunity for CCF and its programs.

In the face of 7+ months of closure and an extended period of compromised trade, the financial reality is that some things will need to change - the Farm just won't be in a position to devote the \$200K+ per annum to delivering no-cost community programs that it has in the past. We'll need to develop new ways to fund Farm community programs and to do that, we will monetise the Farm's corporate volunteer program. We'll require a contribution from participating companies that both covers the Farm's costs and goes towards funding its low cost/no cost community programs.

We'll seek funding opportunities and partnerships with the business, philanthropic and government sectors to continue our work and create opportunities for people experiencing adversity and will ally ourselves with like minded for-purpose organisations to deliver on our community mission.

We will need to consider the way we allocate resources and this may require an increased focus on supporting individual volunteers, many of whom lack NDIS support or the like. And this may mean that participating schools and service providers need to attend Farm programs with increasing independence.

While the Farm remains eager to partner with schools and service providers to develop new programs that support young people and people experiencing adversity, these programs will need to be funded and the onus on securing that funding will fall on the school/service provider.

These will be seismic changes and take some getting used, but if the Farm is to continue its mission for another forty years, its programs (and its wider operations) must be financially sustainable.

Very sadly, we must close with the news that long term staff member Julia Smallwood passed away peacefully and with dignity on October 10, 2020. Julia will be remembered by everyone at the Farm, including the many hundreds of volunteers who she made feel so welcome of the years. Everyone connected with the Farm and especially its supported volunteer program, witnessed Julia's kindness, humour and energy on a daily basis. Always quick to remember a name, Julia made sure that every volunteer knew they were valued and appreciated.



To Julia's family and to her friends, we are very sorry for your loss.

Steve Costello, *Community Engagement*

TUESDAY GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

On Tuesday afternoons the Farm conducts a volunteer gardening group that has for the last couple of years included such dedicated regular members as Phyl Halpin, Serap Akan, Kelvin Prior, Stephanie Kramer, Cody Broxham, Ann Stevens and Jacqueline Hope. his group welcomes volunteers and usually over the year attracts many new and casual members. They learn and carry out some of the more skilled garden tasks that often cannot realistically be achieved by other volunteers. Unfortunately, because of Covid pandemic this year, the group has been suspended since March. I have been in regular contact with all the core members. They have been missing the group, the Farm, the animals and Farm staff and are anxious and very keen to return.

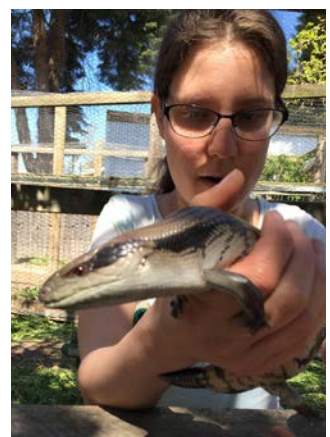
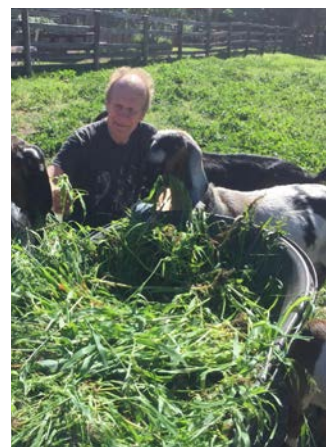
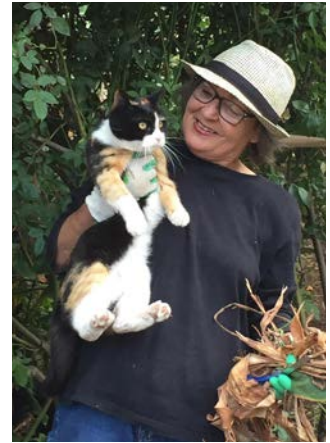
For these volunteers it is more than just gardening, as Serap says 'I normally look forward to Tuesday because I go to the Farm and that makes me happy, joyful, relaxed and keeps me active'.

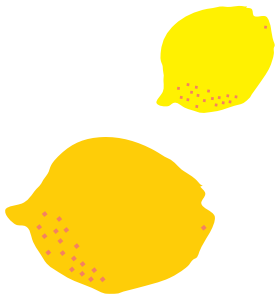
'My Tuesday Group is something that I always look forward to, it has taught me so much knowledge that I have been able use in my own garden', says Kelvin. 'I like to come to the gardening group as I believe my volunteering is helping the community in a small way and it is also intensely satisfying on a personal level. It is such a peaceful and rich learning environment and you are interacting with like-minded people, exchanging thoughts and ideas and the staff are knowledgeable and incredibly helpful and supportive on so many levels. It's great for my mind, mental and physical health to have the opportunity to contribute in this way to CCF'.

Jacqueline says she 'liked that there was an opportunity for occasional participation so that she is able to come to the gardening group when she can between work commitments. She learns about plants and horticulture, there is the physical nature of gardening, being outside, interacting with lovely people (volunteers and staff) and feeding and getting to know animals'.

The Tuesday group will continue when the Farm is able to resume normal operations. We welcome new members that are over 18 and (like all Farm volunteers) must have a Working With Children Check. This group is held from 1.30pm on Tuesdays and will involve many aspects of horticulture both for the beginner to the very experienced.

Toni Phillips





Sev's Spiel

WE'RE MAKING LEMONADE!



As the saying goes, 'when life gives you lemons...'

Well, we are trying our best to adapt and use this tumultuous year to re-focus and make the best of a very difficult situation. Being open seven days a week (in normal life) and with hundreds, if not thousands of people milling around, it is often hard to get those bigger jobs done that might need areas of the Farm to be closed, make lots of mess and noise or need big machines to be driving all over the place.



With each next step toward (or step back from) reopen, we have been changing quickly so that we can get the most done with the people, time and resources we have had available. It's been a constant balance between keeping the Farm, animals and gardens happy whilst actioning many of the projects you will see when you next visit. The on-ground team has worked both tirelessly and tiredly to make sure that when we are able to welcome back our visitors and volunteers, the Farm is in a better place than when you last visited. This is no small feat with the small number of people we are able to have on-site.



Since March, the compost area has been sealed, the Barn was re-grouted, the fireplace completed and many fine detailed trims added. The Picnic Area has had all the tree guards removed, a new wall, garden beds (with irrigation) added and levelling the area above the Barn Paddock. This paddock is being converted into our new market garden. The 'Party Shed' has been repurposed as a post-harvest space and the toilets have had a face-lift. These are just a few of the projects that we have been ploughing through over the past months and they don't even touch on many of the animal and garden projects underway!



Following on from Bridget's sign off in the 'Ode to the Water Mains' in last years' Annual Report, 'now we just have to get on top of the tank water, the windmill and the run-off', we are on our way to being able to action these areas. We can now proceed having engaged hydrologists to get a detailed breakdown of storm and ground water on the Farm, where it comes from, where it goes and how we can best use it whilst improving the health of our paddocks, revegetated areas and the river boundary.

The year to come will be bringing countless milestones, challenges and opportunities and it promises to be as much of a 'pivoting' year as the one we have just seen!

Sev Darwell
Acting Farm Operations



A year in the life of the Queen of the Farm

Hi there everyone! My name is Miso and I am the Queen of the Collingwood Children's Farm. For those of you mere mortals who do not know who I am, please refer to the picture (left) and remember that fab feline physique so you can pay homage to me next time you visit CCF.

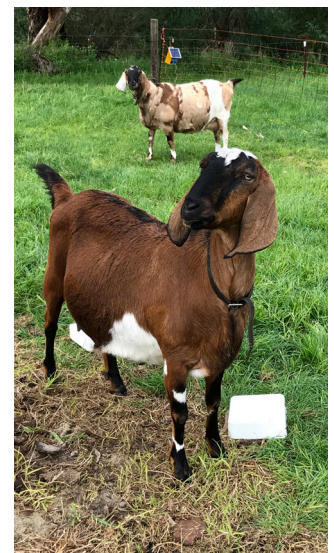
The last 12 months have been very interesting. You may think that all I do is sleep and get in the way, but cats, and more importantly me, are the most important animals on the Farm. We help keep the pest populations down (when we can be bothered) but most important to know is, *NOTHING* happens on the Farm that we don't know about. *EVERYTHING* on the Farm (including the farmers) report back to us so we always know what is happening *EVERYWHERE* on the Farm. This means sometimes we need our space to work, but here is my recounting of the year 2020...

Casting my mind back to those long ago days of July 2019, brings forth the memories of rain, cold and mud *EVERYWHERE*. For those of you unfamiliar with my needs, I don't like being cold or wet. And I most certainly do not like mud! The months of July and August passed in a blur of sleeping in warm offices, while keeping one eye on the running of the Farm. The noisy geese and waddling ducks seemed to love all the puddles and rain, but I avoided them as much as I could. My spirit animals, the goats, did their best to avoid the worst of the wet and mud, but they can't come inside like I can. Some of them were getting almost as wide as they were tall while growing their babies inside them. The sheep were also busy growing babies but were being much more stoic than the goats and I about the inclement weather. Maybe it's because they have such nice woolly jumpers on.

Slowly, slowly the weather started to improve. I ventured out more and more looking for some sunshine to nap in undisturbed (which can be a bit hit and miss living on a city farm). Spring is a busy time at CCF and I enjoyed gambolling in the long grass in the paddocks and stalking through the flowers and growing vegetables in the gardens. The farmers were kept busy with the 12 lambs and 5 kids born, so I had to entertain myself. The public helped me with a few pats sometimes, but often I needed my space to work so may have scratched a child or two (sorry about that).

In between naps in the sun I am working very hard making sure the Farm runs properly! I checked on the new babies when I could (I mean who doesn't love nose kisses with baby animals?), but they grow so fast that before long they were bigger and stronger than me. All in all though, it was a delightful few months sunning myself while watching and listening to the world growing and blossoming around me.

Christmas came and went (with no presents for me I might add!) and summer settled in. We welcomed some new guinea pigs to the CCF family (one of my many jobs is looking after the newcomers and making sure they know how everything works). The baby goats and sheep grew up and started their life by themselves while the chickens and I competed for the best





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shade spots. I tried my best to hide inside with the humans and the air conditioning when I could, but sometimes I had to come out to make sure everything was working smoothly. There were flies everywhere which I occasionally batted at lazily when they got too close, but in general though, the whole Farm slowed down and settled in to wait out the hotter days. Our large Berkshire pigs made great use of their mud wallows and I was almost jealous of how cool they stayed (but remember I do not like mud!). The grasses dried out, so the larger animals had to be fed more by the farmers, but I was very helpful and stayed very low maintenance. Things picked up a bit when my humans organised a bushfire appeal to help everyone affected by the horrible bushfires.



We also welcomed a new horse, although I don't get too close to the horses if I can avoid it, so only said hello from a distance. We also said goodbye to two of our young heifers, Nikki and Juniper, who headed off to their own farms to start their own lives and Finna, our Ayrshire cow, went off on her honeymoon. I also mostly avoid the cows (they are a bit big and curious for a small cat to deal with), but I waved regally to them from my perch up at the toilets as they headed off up the driveway.



Then the world changed. I don't know what happened, but suddenly I was left with only a few of my servants (ahem, farmers, I said farmers) to cater to my every whim. Those that were left were too busy running around looking after the rest of the Farm and it's animals to look after me, so I was left chasing their tails and entertaining myself. It was pretty cool having the run of the Farm to myself though. Did you know that humans eat lunch everyday? Although I found out the hard way that they don't always share! I also learned that just because I want to eat something doesn't mean it's good for me. Who would have thought? Daphne our cow went off on holidays to get pregnant and the sheep and goats are happily growing more babies in their tummies. The farmers also started this cool idea of cell grazing. It basically means that all the animals are in smaller paddocks for a shorter amount of time so that the grass can grow back better. I am far from an expert, but would highly recommend chatting to one of our farmers about it next time you're at CCF. An important part of cell grazing is the use of electric fences. One of my favorite jobs is to help set the fences up by stalking the farmer and the electric tape through the long grass (I was just told that apparently this is not helpful of me, but clearly the farmers are wrong). It has been a steep learning curve with the electric fences for us all and I would definitely recommend not touching them if you come across them in your travels at CCF, but it will have many long-term benefits (also something you should talk to the farmers about).



All in all it has been a big year with lots of changes, but time moves on and things come back to what we know and look forward to. I miss having lots of people around to say hello to (even though I don't always like pats) and am looking forward to CCF being back to the vibrant, busy, engaging place that it is supposed to be. So please, from the Queen of the Farm, be safe and see you soon!

(Translator - Mia Sutherland, *Animal Supervisor*)

Gardener's Report

FIRST NATIONS GARDEN

This project has been in the works at the Farm for a few years and has been pushed along by many individuals, financial donations (thankyou to some small financial contributions from ANZ, The Bennelong Foundation and the Collingwood CWA), community volunteers but mostly by passion. Throughout the process the Farm has consulted and collaborated Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to develop the project and we look forward to continuing working together on the river bend stretch of Wurundjeri Land that has been cared for and farmed for over 40,000 years.

The past year has seen the construction of this garden come together and many hands have helped in this process. With the welding of fantastic garden hoops made from repurposed rebar thoughtfully designed by Keiran and considerately constructed by Paul, to the building of a retaining wall that shapes the two planting zones and the formation of the paths designed to give everyone access and to see the plants from all angles. Shane has spent many hours patiently installing the Corten edging (thanks to our friends at Greenlines Gardenware for this fantastic product). Many hours of soil work has gone into this garden, Tom, Ollie, Melina and Shawn, Simeon and Rach are now trained up for the wheelbarrow Olympics.

Mark, Glen and Rephael of the Narrap rangers helped us get some plants in the ground. If you peek over the fence you will be able to see the Bulbine, Chocolate and Vanilla lilies along with Murnong - these are all flowering now! You will see the Kunzea starting to climb up a trellis, and the bower spinach sprawling along the ground. Synti, Conor and Helen planted the Appleberires along the fence line and they are reaching and twining their way up the wire to form a green (edible) screen.

The Irrigation was installed the first week of October, just in time for the hot weather and is linked to wifi that can be turned on with a swipe on our gardener's smartphone. It also talks to a weather station and so will not go on if it has rained making sure we only use water when the plants need it, very nifty!

This is a space for learning, sharing, and growing together. We look forward to growing this food and sharing this space with the community for years to come.

MARKET GARDEN

From the initial small trial market garden at the bottom of the Orchard, the Farm has reinvigorated and expanded the food production on the Farm and is now growing even bigger and moving production up a notch in Barn paddock. This is a big transition from being a paddock to becoming our market garden. This will be a wonderful example of urban agriculture in Melbourne and Australia. For the past 5 months, we've grown a cover crop of oats and broad beans to build organic matter, suppress weeds and improve water retention. Now, we are looking forward to summer planting and getting on with growing several tonnes of fresh food each year for and with



Building the indigenous garden
Mark from Narrap rangers planting
Yam Daisy's and Bulbine Lillies
Goats eating cover crop of barley



the wider community. A new post-harvest shed for cleaning and packing produce is underway, and a bigger Farm gate stand in the coming year will have more regular fresh food available to visitors and members as the past year has been wonderful but sporadic in its offering. An anonymous donor, also gifted the Farm with some updated gardening tools to get on with the job and the horticultural team has done just that!

MOVING FEAST

Since March, the Farm has already turned several unproductive spaces (totalling nearly 1/8th of an acre - 500m²) into food production, alongside our growing involvement with a collaboration of enterprises in a project called *Moving Feast*. As part of the 'Grow' team in *Moving Feast*, we've grown and donated more than 700kg of fresh leafy green food to our partners who have distributed it in boxes and ready-made meals to people doing it tough and who are food insecure.



CAFE AREA UPGRADE

Without the community of the Farm being able to come, we have been able to tackle a few larger projects (mostly make a big bog mess for a few months). The sitting area near the Barn and the Cafe has been levelled, new plants are growing, we have pots coming to decorate the space this week and hope to make a welcoming and interesting nook for you to enjoy a snack in the sun! A special thanks to our volunteers Mike, Alex, Rhiannon and Antonia for all your labour and smiles.



CEP GRANT

The Farm was awarded a Community Environment Program Grant which Adam Bandt came to hand over and look at the site that is to be planted out with hundreds of Indigenous plants all the way along the banks of Birrarung. While the lockdowns have halted our progress and meant that we can't get community volunteers involved in the process we have started work on a small section of the stables paddock that has prime river frontage. The Narrap Rangers have started work on the site, managing weeds, removing and lopping up fallen trees and planing a river bank restoration for spotting native blue banded bees, observing the Rakali (indigenous water rat) nimbly negotiate the running river, or listen to a pobblebonk frog call.

FRUIT TREES AND ORCHARD

Toni, Nick, Bridget and many others have given the visitors of the Farm today a wonderful gift by planting many diverse fruit trees over the past 20 years. We have many heritage varieties of stone fruit and interesting fruit trees that are not commonly seen such as the Sapote and Medlar. Maintaining fruit trees can be rewarding but is also a year round job, watering, fertilizing, weeding around, pruning, netting and picking. This year we had the opportunity to do a big renovation of a lot of the trees and shape them up nicely for many harvests to come, a big thank you to Scott (STREAT) and Antonia for lending your horticultural expertise. Most of the trees are on the Farm but some of our fruit trees are planted along the Main Yarra Trail that runs through the middle of the Farm, in October you'll be able to see the Quinces delicate flower, the figs sprouting their first leaves, the crabapples in bloom and the very small flowers on the Olives. This year we have



Moving Feast planting
Bok choy ready to go
Cafe area retaining wall
Another view of Cafe area redo

added three Davidson plums, a sandpaper fig and a native tamarind to our river bank indigenous food garden (all species from Northern NSW and Southeast Queensland). We hope to harvest and sell all this fruit at our Farm gate stall to keep raising money to put back into this wonderful space for the whole community to enjoy.

This past year in the gardens has been a juggle of maintenance and exciting new projects.

In the orchard, we've worked at removing several invasive species that have hampered the health, productivity and accessibility of the garden for the past few years. Pruning maintenance is a big seasonal annual job with 100's of trees on the Farm, the team has made 10,000 plus of calculated cuts to stimulate good growth on strong branches and produce more fruit! Last summer, the Farm purchased a few fruit nets to protect harvest from bats and birds to great success. School groups and corporate volunteers helped in many of these tasks to coordinate getting nets over several difficult trees and it was great to witness the teamwork and communication of various groups and individuals in these practical and meaningful tasks.

Ollie and Tom have repurposed timber from the old boardwalk and crafted it into a delightful fence to frame the orchard, great work team!

THANK YOU

Thank you to our volunteers and corporate groups (when on-site in 2019 and early 2020) who have been huge contributors in achieving several of these new projects and assisting with the mammoth maintenance list of things to do.

Big thanks and warm wishes from the Hort team for a year that has been hard work, full of surprises and unique challenges but a year of growth all the same! We can't wait to see your faces alongside the changes and greenery at the Farm. What a truly beautiful place to be.

Kindly,
Rachel, Simeon and the garden crew



Ollie and Tom's fence
Lime harvest
Antonia pruning a quince tree
Gourd teepees

European Federation of City Farms



As the world seeks to address the Covid-19 pandemic, the opportunity has presented itself to reflect how working together to address global problems (such as pandemics, poverty, climate change etc) is more critical than ever. In the First World we also face other harmful issues such as ever-more intrusive corporatisation of personal life, continued disconnection from nature and erosion of knowing actual food sources. The consequences are a reduction in understanding ourselves as individuals and its impact on forming cohesive and supportive communities. Through our use of care farming, the Farm seeks to play its part by responding to local issues of disadvantage (in many forms), supporting social wellbeing and reconnection to the cycles of nature. However idyllic our lovely farm is, one location can't possibly hope to tackle the bigger issues without connecting to an international network that provides a supportive voice and 'family' connection. Others that truly 'get' what you do, and why you do it.

Ever since 2012 when we became an Associate Member of the European Federation of City Farms (EFCF) the Farm has actively formed part of that international voice. And as the first member outside of the European Union (EU), it could be offered that the Farm has encouraged the broadening of that to include members in North America and Africa. Without a local peer network or national peak representative body for care farming in Australia, the importance of being a member of this body is reflected in the 500-plus overseas city farms available for our staff, users and general visitors to benefit from. The inherent value of this is best appreciated by sharing the following positive outcomes of eight year's membership.

Since joining the EFCF family the Farm has actively supported the opportunity for nine staff to attend five Annual Conferences and Annual General Meeting (AGM) in:

Germany - Lübeck (2012) and Bremen (2018)

Wales - Swansea (2016)

Sweden - Växjö (2014)

Northern Ireland (AGM) - Cullybackey (2019)

This travel also allowed our staff to conduct extra site visitations in Sweden, Belgium, the UK (Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales) and Denmark. Taken as a whole, this has allowed for discovering new ideas, skills, peer review/benchmarking and networking. And of course making new friends! From attending our first AGM in 2019 (and being offered a position on the EFCF Strategic Review subcommittee), the role and knowledge we were able to offer has gradually increased. Sharing is of course a two-way path and with our international family curious to learn about us, with regular items and photos prepared for the quarterly EFCF online newsletter.



We've successfully hosted two international visitors, Sophie (on a Landwirtschaftsschule (Agricultural school) exchange from Austria) and Paul (on a private visit from Germany). Paul was our most recent visitor, and with great generosity (plus sense of humour) assisted our 40th Birthday Celebrations as well as taking time to teach the Young Farmers to cook sweet/savoury spätzle (a type of noodle) and Farm/Farm Cafe staff brew a non/low-alcoholic beer (made from bread!). Each interaction with Sophie and Paul offered a unique opportunity to learn, share and appreciate another's language, culture, point of view and different understanding on the world.

Through the EFCF one of our Young Farmers was able to participate in a two-week experience in Norway, travel to the Arctic Circle and meet Sami People with their reindeer herds. The Young Farmers also had two Swedish children take part in the program whilst their parents were on work exchanges in Melbourne. Leading on from these examples, one clear potential future opportunity for our Young Farmers is to engage with the annual EFCF Youth Exchange. Whilst this currently takes place in the EU (with logistics an obvious challenge for attendance), given that young people globally are facing immense future challenges, knowing they are not alone and have others experiencing the same concerns is critical. Living in a digitally-connected world offers that the Farm can explore and encourage online connection as a way for them to engage. Given the current failure of government to address issues such as climate change, as a planet our collective future depends on the effort of young people - as we truly 'borrow it from them'.

The Farm successfully completed an international staff exchange in 2017 with a two-week hosted visit to Kelmarna Gardens in Auckland. Given that reaching Auckland takes less travel time than Perth(!), our Kiwi cousins offer a fantastic opportunity for both organisations to be exposed to other ways of doing things, appreciating differing views/priorities, networking and advocacy. Having the potential to host onsite also provides the Farm to offer an exchange with Kelmarna in-turn. And given the current lack of an Australasian peak representative body for care farming, having a city farm in New Zealand offers a great opportunity to build on this relationship to see if a group can be created to increase support for this work in our region.

Finally, the most recent development represents another highpoint in the ongoing growth of the Farm's international place and role on a global stage. From being offered a sub-committee position in 2019, at this year's most recent (online) EFCF AGM we were elected onto the EFCF Board. Our first meeting has already occurred (meaning a local 3.30am start incorporating lots of coffee). This achievement, combined with growing awareness of the value in the work we do, the many languages heard at the Farm daily and Australia's role as a multicultural nation means having a seat at an international table confirms the Collingwood Childrens Farm is truly a local, national and global icon. Long may it be so.

Andrew Phillips
CCF EFCF Representative



Young Farmers Program



What a year!

Sadly the Young Farmers only got to participate in around 3 months of activities on the Farm this year, and as much as we would have loved to provide 'home schooling', the main purpose of the program is to be hands on and learn by doing group activities in this fabulous outdoor environment.



We were lucky enough to have the Apiarist Society invite the Sunday Young Farmers to participate in a Young Beekeeping Program this year.

The participants were shown how to make native bee hotels, got to see inside the hive, learnt how to make a frame for the beehive and helped out with the honey extraction.

Many thanks to Mike, Krista and Barry for running these sessions, they were a real hit with those who participated.

Another project the Young Farmers worked on this year was cleaning and washing wool that had been shorn from the Farm's sheep in November.

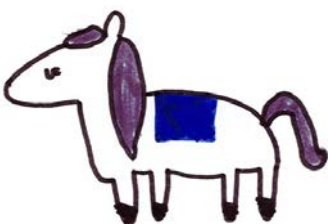
Not as easy a task as you might think as the sheep are often hand fed by visitors and quite a bit of the food, plus grass seeds, seems to end up stuck in the fleece. It's quite a fiddly job trying to pick it clean before washing, but with much perseverance they managed to get quite a bit of wool given a first clean.

This clean wool can be used as a more environmentally friendly stuffing for toys or animal beds and the project will be continued once we can safely resume the program.

It has been lovely to see some of the Young Farmer families on their walks along the bike path on weekends and is heartening how much the Farm means to them and their love for the animals.

We can't wait to welcome everyone back and share this wonderful space again.

Susan Pitman
Weekend Supervisor



Horses and RDA

Like everyone else, the horses have had a very unusual year. Due to Covid, some have been off-site for six months now. The others have been in minimal work and seem to be getting bored without all the interaction they are used to.

From back when things were normal:

Young Farmers gymkhana/games day was held on December 15th. It included traditional favourite horse dress-ups plus the egg and spoon race (always hilarious). Ribbons were awarded for best sitting and rising trot, the bending race, walk/trot race and more. Cavi the pony proved the wildcard- seemed to either come first or last in all his events, nowhere in-between.

Thank you to the judges for the day and everyone who helped the event run smoothly. Apple bobbing and donut eating were a couple of the activities that didn't require a horse. Some of the Young Farmers are fiercely competitive and passionate about apple bobbing, its always very entertaining to watch.

The RDA Christmas party was a bright and fun affair. The back of the stables and arena fence were covered in festive decorations. Charlie and Becky were in attendance for photos and to give our riders' families the chance to get up close to a horse. This is especially nice to offer the siblings that come every week to watch their brother or sister ride. Carols were loudly sung and a tasty BBQ was provided by the Collingwood RDA committee.

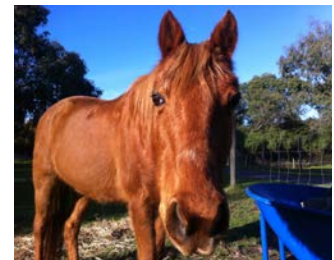
In January we were lucky enough to be loaned a lovely mare called Charm. Belonging to our Tuesday RDA coach, she has lots of experience in the RDA setting and is a real sweetheart. The boys (Aussie, Ollie and Jim) were all very excited to have a new girl on the scene and she quickly became the boss of the group. It was a great opportunity to learn about horse behaviour and body language, especially as the boys were such show-offs around her. The Young Farmers were all big fans and helped to get her used to the strange sights and sounds of the Farm.

And now that things have changed...

Sadly, we only got about two months of riding in this year before Covid hit us. Gay Lewis (owner of Charm) very generously offered to house our horses at her property while lockdown was in place... Who would have thought it would last this long? A huge thank you to Gay for this!! Brandy, Becky, Cavi and Charm have all been together with their mate Harry and a small herd of horses enjoying their extended holiday.

Jim, Ollie and Aussie stayed on-site so they could be kept in a bit of work (these three tend to get very fat very quickly if they are not being exercised regularly as being overweight can lead to all sorts of health problems for horses so we must do all we can to avoid this).

Charlie's old friend Zac has returned to the Farm. His agistment arrangement fell through and due to advanced age, he requires daily hard feeds to stop him from losing condition (just like





Charlie). They are both very happy to be back together and can often be seen grooming each other in the paddock.

I'm sad to report that at the end of July we lost our long-serving RDA treasurer, Denis Coghlan. He did so much work behind the scenes and volunteered countless hours in this role. Our thoughts go out to his wife Carol and family. His years of service were very much appreciated, and will be sorely missed.

Things for moving forward...

Unfortunately, despite plenty of interested volunteers, we have been unable to utilise them while in stage four lockdown. Fingers crossed restrictions begin to ease soon so we can prepare the horses to start (social distanced) public activities again.

Michelle Jessop
Horse Coordinator



The Community Gardens

The Collingwood Children's Farm Community Gardens were initiated collectively in 1979 by members from the Greek Elderly Citizens and the Turkish Association of Collingwood when they approached the newly established Children's Farm to be able to have some unshaded space to grow food as they had done in their former countries. At that time, Collingwood had a migrant population of over 25% of residents and these 'New Australians' were very keen to be assimilated into the strong community sentiment that 'Old Australians' displayed. In their new home they also found that the traditional conflict and antagonism they left behind were replaced with new friendships and bonds which grew through community gardening.

The Farm and the local community have mutually benefited from this association for 40 years and there have been many changes over that time in the plots, on the Farm and in the local area. A significant change to the Community Gardens occurred in the 1980's when their popularity was so great that with the ever increasing applicants, the plot size was halved to allow for 40 plots, with 15 of the original participants maintaining their double plot. By the mid-90's more and more residents wanted to join the gardens and the waiting list was at least 6 years. The Farm allocated more paddock space for community gardening, increasing the area from 40 to 70 plots. Since that time whenever an original Community Gardener gave up their plot, it was halved.

After forty years, times have changed and gardeners, like plants do grow old. Our last two original Community Gardeners, Angelo Athanasiades and Vangel (Bill) Trajcevski relinquished their plots as both entered Mercy Place Care home. Bill sadly passed away in September and Angelo is too unwell to return. Both these men loved their plots as we loved them and are well known to the Farm community. We would see them in their plots most days and have a chat on the path on the way to and from their beloved gardens. They are very greatly missed.

Angelo came to Australia from Greece in 1964 and moved to Collingwood with his family and worked for General Motors Holden. He moved to Valiant St in 1974, where his daughter Mary still took him each day until the recent restrictions prevented these visits. His plot has been taken over by the community groups Cultivating Community and STREAT to provide young people a place and opportunity to learn food production.

Bill came to Australia from Macedonia in 1970 and lived in Sydney before coming to Collingwood where he enjoyed the people and neighbourhood and found much more acceptance. He worked as a forklift driver at the Abbotsford Brewery and would entertain us with many stories of that workplace. He built a new home in Charles Street in 1978 where he raised 5 children. Bill loved the plots and his son Lee, as a tribute to his father and the last original plotter, will grow a final spring/summer crop before it is handed back to the community in autumn. These two 'Pillars of the Gardening Community' will be remembered by having 'avenues' in the Community Gardens named after them. The community gardens are in the process of being rejuvenated to make them safer, more accessible across the site and more connected internally and externally.

We are also welcoming new, enthusiastic gardeners and those eager to learn to help make the gardens more productive through the exchange of knowledge, skills and experience. The nature



of the Community Garden, like the city, has been evolving to provide more access to communal gardening to achieve these goals. As well as the traditional allotment of plots to individuals, a plan to encourage plot sharing with 2 to 4 others has been instigated and a concept for communal gardening areas where the work and the produce are shared is in the early stages of development. These approaches to gardening are suitable for people who may not have enough time to devote to make full use of a plot or be interested in learning from others to grow their own food.

The Community Gardens Working Group guiding this transformation consists of Kieran Dickson from the CCF Committee of Management, Helen Semmler who is on the administration staff at the Farm and a gardener and Steve Costello (CCF's Community Engagement Officer) and myself and a dedicated and hard working group of gardeners; Jennifer Bowen, Clive Rumney, Barry Hahn, Shumon Khan, Tim Handfield and Peter Barber.

The Community Gardens were developing into a revitalised group of local gardeners, who were enjoying gardening within their community at the Farm, then COVID struck and everything changed. As Melbourne went into a series of lockdowns, access and people's commitment and involvement changed drastically. We have many senior members in our community who for their own and other family members' safety have had to self isolate.

From the beginning of the restrictions in March, a small group of gardeners who have been able to come to the site regularly have been maintaining their own gardens, the communal spaces and the paths and plots for those that have been unable to visit. As a result, the site is in excellent condition and is ready for spring and the coming summer season to which every gardener looks forward to with great anticipation.

Toni Phillips (Farm Staff) in collaboration with
Peter Barber (Community Gardens Working Group)

The 40th Birthday Party

Turning 40 is a significant milestone for anyone - by this time you've (hopefully) learnt a bit about life's travails, the ups and downs of relationships, achieved a few things plus established meaning and purpose for what you'd like to achieve. Although not having human form arguably the Farm has a purpose, beating heart and soul that has aged and changed since it opened in September 1979. In many ways the world it operates in has intrinsically changed from that time, however its mission of addressing local disadvantage in its many forms remains undimmed. And with their unique value as heritage farmland, the Abbotsford Precinct Heritage Farmlands (APHF) in their ancient agriculture use to supporting community have also quietly observed these alterations.

No celebration of the Farm and APHF can be properly observed without recognition that the Wurundjeri-Woiwurrung are its true owners (sovereignty was never ceded) and in this sense celebrating 40 years represents a blink in an unending custodianship that takes in thousands of generations of care, memory and sustainable use of Country. The ancient farmlands we caretake today for all to enjoy, have worth far more than any monetary value placed upon them.

With this respectful recognition also comes the fact that a celebration needs a party! The Farm approached turning 40 as an opportunity to showcase its unique location and the important work done there. As had occurred in 2013 (when it reflected on 175 years since the first local land sales occurred in 1838), the Farm combined external skill and internal staff experience to plan, create an exciting schedule and theme. And of course then the question what date to select for the big bash? Due to the popularity of the farm as a wedding venue, September couldn't accommodate the plans put forward and so Sunday November 3rd November was chosen and work began. 'Party Animals' was the theme chosen, with the desired goal to re-plough (farm joke) all funds raised to help the Farm continue for many years more.

An incredible amount of behind-the-scenes effort, skill and kindness then went into creating an activity schedule that encompassed celebration, education and entertainment. Kindness especially shone through from the minute planning began - the entire day would not have been possible without the generous donation of time, materials and funds by many individuals, groups and businesses. We were thrilled that much-loved 'Gardening Australia' host Costa Georgiadis agreed to MC the day and he didn't disappoint for one moment, moving deftly between pathos and hilarity with the boundless energy. The running of the day, ably lead by the team of Katie, Emily, Zoe, Claire plus a multitude of farm staff and volunteers day covered:

- Food - found across the Farm with the intention to offer something for everyone, a highlight was the creation of a 'Food Village' (a first at the Farm) in the Stables Paddock, featuring many producers from our regular monthly Farmers Market. This area also offered classes (fermentation, beekeeping and pie making to name a few) along with delicious produce, beverages and yummy picnic baskets.
- Fun - across the Farm, multiple sites provided activities for children and adults to enjoy. The manège was transformed into the biggest free play/craft area imaginable, our Young Farmers



and staff ably provided facepainting for hours on end, fence weaving decorated the Guinea Pig yard and ukulele workshops strummed away to name a few!

- Festivities – this is where the program really shone (even though the skies didn't seem to provide the much-needed sun), where musicians and performers came together on a truck-stage (another first). The day included sets by the Burnt Sausages, the Orbweavers, Cold Gold, Emma Donovan and the Putbacks, Cosmic Psychos, Saint Jude and Jess Ribeiro, along with two rap groups LSG (Lit Savage Girls) and RYMS (Real Youth Music Studios). But of course (and we might be happily accused of bias here) the highlight was of course 'The Farm Band', featuring several staff members and locals passionately performing 'At the Farm' (written by Peter Barber and A J Leonard from *Playing Our Part*).

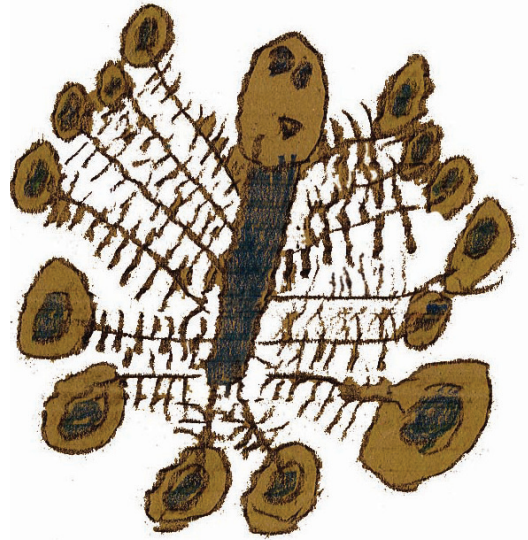
At the end of the final song (Cosmic Psychos doing 'down at the farm' of course) one of the core reasons we exist took hold – that is the Farm's role in supporting childhood. A joyous hay fight developed from broken bales and a wild flurry then covered multiple children, their parents - and at one point, a surprised Costa! With the less-than-favourable overcast and drizzly conditions (thanks weather gods!) duly ignored throughout the day, an exhausted and happy crowd slowly emptied the Farm and pack-up commenced. A few hours later, Farm and event staff also headed home. I think the Farm's ancient lands slept well that night (although it may have had a slightly sore head in the morning) – happy 40th to the most unique farm in Australia!



AT THE FARM

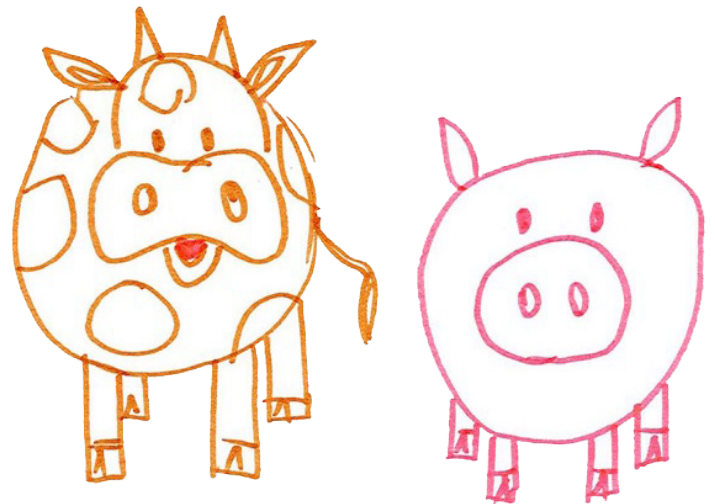
Travelling through the city for a special day
To a place we know and love that's not too far away
We'll see lots of animals, plants and people too
Wander through the paddocks, so many things to do
At the Farm, at the Collingwood Children's Farm

Horses neigh and flick their tails, sheep graze all day and bleat
Ducks and chickens roam about, goats eat and eat and eat
The pigs are funny that's for sure, the way they make their beds
Nosing straw around their pens with their sleepy heads
At the Farm, at the Collingwood Children's Farm



Hear the tractor, see it coming, bees are buzzing, hear them humming
Rain starts falling, river's flowing, sun is shining, plants are growing
At the Farm, at the Collingwood Children's Farm

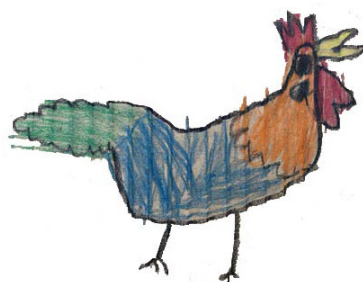
Brush and pat a milking a cow, cuddle a guinea pig
See the peacock spread its tail so colourful, so big
Everyone is friendly, the farmers shout "G'day!"
At this place we know and love, on this special day
At the Farm, at the Collingwood Children's Farm



There's lots to do, do, do
It's not a zoo, zoo, zoo
It's here for me and you
The Collingwood Children's Farm

A.J. Leonard and Peter Barber

<https://ajleonard.com/animal-songbook>



Friends of the Farm



THE FARM CAFE

2020 has been an incredibly challenging year for The Farm Café. The 2019-20 summer and wedding season was proceeding well with a full calendar of weddings rolling out smoothly with lots of glowing feedback from clients. We enjoyed hosting a trainee from Vietnam via the charity KOTO and he was with us until December.

Takings in the café were down in January with the summer weather being more challenging than usual with storms, heat and then smoke and dust haze. The terrible bushfires dampened everyone's mood and the Farm Café supported the relief efforts including the BlazeAid event at the Farm.

In March the Corona virus hit. We scrambled to implement social distancing in the café and as Melbournians were emptying supermarket shelves, we devised a plan to sell produce boxes. On March 22nd we held our last wedding and on March 23rd we closed the café. The next 4 weeks were an exhausting and terrible period where we had to lay off most of our staff, postpone weddings and find the energy and creativity to launch into online produce box sales.

Produce boxes have been our constant throughout the lockdowns providing us with an opportunity to employ staff, stay connected to our customers and suppliers and earn some income to help meet overheads. We have also been able to support the farm by buying honey and surplus garden produce to include in our boxes.

Our location on the bike track has also been an advantage in selling take away food as Melbournians flock to the trail to get their daily exercise.

During lockdown we have been using our time to clean, renovate and review and revamp our wedding and café offerings to be in good shape when we re-open. We have developed several ideas with CCF to bring people back to the Farm when restrictions ease. The Farm is looking terrific with all the hard work undertaken by CCF during lockdown. We are looking forward to having people back to enjoy it. *Carina Watson, Co-owner*

MELBOURNE FARMERS MARKET

Greetings from Melbourne Farmers Markets at enforced distance.

It's been a very tough year, and we have so very much missed you all. With the closure of the Farm, we hosted the market at our Alphington site from April to September, and then were thankful to one of our other site partners, Carlton North Primary School, for having us in October where at least we were back in Yarra and more accessible for shoppers given the 5km radius.

This marked the 18th birthday of Melbourne's first farmers market, launched at CCF in October 2002. I think back to those days so proudly and fondly, collectively we made such a strong and united impact in community voice.



.....

We all wonder what the future will hold, and I wish I could say with certainty that the farmers market will return to CCF. We sincerely hope so, in some form, even if it's the end of an era for its first wonderful iteration. 2020 has brought many changes and we admire the decisions made at the Farm to seize the opportunity to rest the paddock, take time to reflect on priorities, and establish new directions including significant space for food production – being fellow founding partners in Moving Feast has been one of few positives about this year.

The conversation between MFM and CCF continues openly as we now look to 2021. We are very prepared to wait and see what's realistic as we optimistically emerge from the Covid restrictions.

In the meantime, we wish all our Farm friends the very best of strength and good health, from Miranda and the MFM Team

Miranda Sharp
Founder, Melbourne Farmers Markets & Collingwood Children's Farm Farmers Market

'PLAYING OUR PART' AT THE FARM

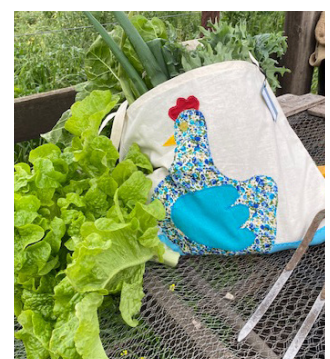
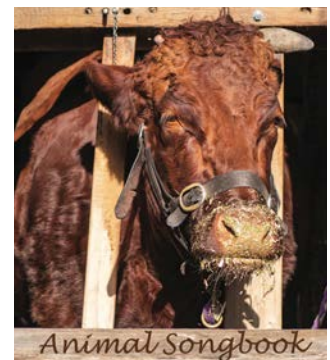
Playing Our Part has completed its second year at the Farm, participating in and contributing to a number of areas which we hope have complemented the objectives of the Collingwood Children's Farm. These include regular Sunday gardening sessions with a group of volunteers of all ages and abilities, the creation of the CD *Animal Songbook* and the song *At the Farm* to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Farm, forming the *Farm Hand Band* to perform at the celebrations and ongoing fund raising including sales of Jerusalem Artichokes for the Farm Cafe's produce boxes to support our gardening program and Carolyn's Hand-Crafted Chicken Bags to support our projects and the Farm.

Central to all our activities is making a contribution and sharing, which is realised predominantly through the Sunday Gardening Group where skills are acquired and developed, connections are made, relationships built, knowledge, experience and wonderful fresh veggies are shared.

The corona virus pandemic restricted our activities from March but as the abundant produce began to be harvested from the autumn planting, it was distributed to volunteers and to two community groups on a weekly basis. The following words from the Manager of Servants Community Housing Women's House, captures the essence of this small contribution to the community.

My name is Rebekah and I manage a house for vulnerable people in the local area. I have known Peter and Playing Our Part for several years and having the connection with the gardens through them has been invaluable.

Not only does it offer access to fresh, nutritious produce, but as we look toward the future and nurturing relationships within the community, the gardens are a vital resource for connecting people and offering opportunities for growth and development.





Since late May we have received a weekly box of assorted freshly picked fruit, vegetables and herbs and pickles and preserves, giving us the opportunity to make and eat delicious, nutritious meals. This gift from the gardens offers access to fresh ingredients to those that might not normally have such a resource.

As well as managing the house, I have a background as a chef, so I have been able to create different types of meals and teach others how to use this produce. As a result, more and more of the vegetables are being used by the women in the house each week. Many of these meals have been enjoyed together which helps foster community and relationships within the house.

The boxes of ten include flowers and this helps make our house beautiful and fragrant. In this time of lockdowns, where there is so much uncertainty and fear, we have things which bring life, peace and beauty into our environment. We are grateful for this connection and look forward to seeing where it will go and the other opportunities it will bring.'

This feedback summarises our purpose well; connection, contribution, community. We thank the Farm for the opportunity to play our small part and help the neighbourhood, for access to this unique resource and for the special relationship we have built over the past two years.

Peter Barber
Founder, *Playing Our Part Incorporated*



THE HANDWEAVERS AND SPINNERS GUILD

We at the Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria have greatly missed our time at the Collingwood Children's Farm over the past months. Many of our members have been following the Farms progress over lockdown and loved the way the staff have continued to keep their followers informed and amused with their constant updates. (loved the baby sheep and goats specifically).

It has been a difficult time for the Guild and our members with lockdown, we have created an Instagram page for sales from our Gallery@spinweavevic.sales where we are selling our members work. This has also been a bit of a challenge getting our members contributions across the 5klm limit. But when we get back to some normality, we will have some great new stock made by our members during lockdown.

We love our time at the Farm and miss our regular supporters and look forward to what is ahead in the future.

Handweavers and Spinners Guild of Victoria

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The Collingwood CWA has continued to have an active interest in and engagement with several of the Collingwood Children's Farm's key projects as it revitalises its status as a Regenerative Urban Farm.

The Victorian CWA is celebrating the use of First Nations edible foods throughout 2020 and the Collingwood branch donated \$800 of CCF 40th Birthday Party stall takings to the Farm's First Nations Showcase Foods Garden.

In keeping with the *Moving Feast* project, CWA members are growing food from their own plot in the community garden and with additional Farm produce to making, cooking and delivering marmalade, citrus cordials and preserves.

Prior to the pandemic, CCWA members were regular volunteers at the Market Garden Pilot in the Farm orchard. Engagement like this has shown the remarkable productive potential from every small plot and demonstrates the valuable resource of every piece of garden.

Collingwood CWA members assisted with the grant costings, then purchase of essential items for the No: 18 house kitchen upgrade. They also held a working bee to thoroughly clean the kitchen before painting and fitting out. A washing machine and kitchen furniture was donated.

The kitchen and meeting room upgrades at No: 18 will enable practical workshops in cooking and preserving, as well as potential to build on the popular CWA's Barn Yarns concept.

The offer of raw sheep wool to the CCWA initiated a new collaboration with the Farm and its friends involving fibre. The hope is to process the wool from the Farm sheep and use it both educationally, socially and productively for fundraising.

The CWA's diverse community outreach activities included raising money for bushfire relief, the distribution of 'Thank You' packages for Aged Care health workers in Abbotsford and a lavish morning tea at State Emergency Services in East Melbourne thanking the hundreds of staff who worked tirelessly through the extended fire emergency.

The Collingwood branch was also instrumental in formulating the 2020 Victorian CWA resolution calling for implementation of the recommendations within the 'Roadmap for a resilient and Sustainable Melbourne Foodbowl'. The report from Melbourne University emphasises farm land protection, farm viability, water access, nutrient recycling and sustainable farming.

The Collingwood CWA has indeed found its home at the Collingwood Children's Farm.

Collingwood CWA





COLLINGWOOD CHILDREN'S FARM APIARY

The Collingwood Children's Farm's Apiary is located next to the Main Yarra Trail near the northern boundary of the Farm. The apiary consists of ten main hives of various designs, an educational display caravan, an equipment shed, and a surrounding garden of bee friendly plants.

It is jointly managed by the Farm and the Melbourne section of the Victorian Apiarists' Association Inc (VAA MS) according to a mutually agreed "Memorandum of Understanding". This is effected by sub-committee of the VAA MS whose current members are Barry Cooper (convenor and CCF contact), George Fox, Doug Heckathorn, Ian Hunt, Rob Kerr, Mike Love, Krista Mogensen, J-P Scheerlinck, Louise Tyler and Tony Wilsmore.

The apiary's management and operations support the Farm's Vision, Priority Directions and Key Strategic Initiatives through the following three overall purposes.

1. The main purpose of the apiary is to educate and inform people about bees, beekeeping and bee biosecurity and the importance of bees for pollination and food security. Since the introduction of Covid-related visiting restrictions to the Farm in late March 2020, the achievement of this purpose has been severely limited. Nevertheless, the following outcomes have been delivered.

- Up until late March 2020 and during school weeks, the educational caravan was visited by numerous groups of school children under the direction of the Farm's staff, principally as part of its 'Paddock to Plate' program.
- On twelve Sundays from October 2019 to late March 2020, the Farm's volunteer beekeepers opened the apiary to the general public. This allowed them to inspect the educational caravan and the bee garden, and to don bee keeping suits to open and inspect hives under the direct supervision of the Farm's volunteer beekeepers. Members of the Farm's Young Farmers' Program attended these sessions to receive instruction in basic beekeeping practice.
- Educational services have been provided to apiary visitors who have included Melbournians, country and interstate visitors as well as overseas tourists.
- The apiary volunteers have catered to a multi-cultural interest in beekeeping with at least fifteen different language groups noted visiting the apiary. On occasion, educational information has been presented in French, Indonesian / Malay and Vietnamese.
- On four days from October 2019 to late March 2020, the apiary was used by beekeepers from VAA Melbourne Section beekeeping group to formally train beekeepers as part of beekeeping courses and workshops. The course delivery team had, in total, over 100 years of beekeeping experience in both commercial and recreational settings, as well as over 100 years of professional teaching experience at primary, secondary and University institutions.
- 3rd November 2019: Participation in the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the opening of the Farm by the delivery a public beekeeping presentation in the Farm proper.
- 10th November 2019: Celebration of "Pollinator Week" at the apiary with distribution of free Yarra Valley plants and the making bee motels by Young Farmers.
- Production of a free 2020 apiary calendar.
- Publication of articles about the apiary in the January and February editions of the Australian Bee Journal.

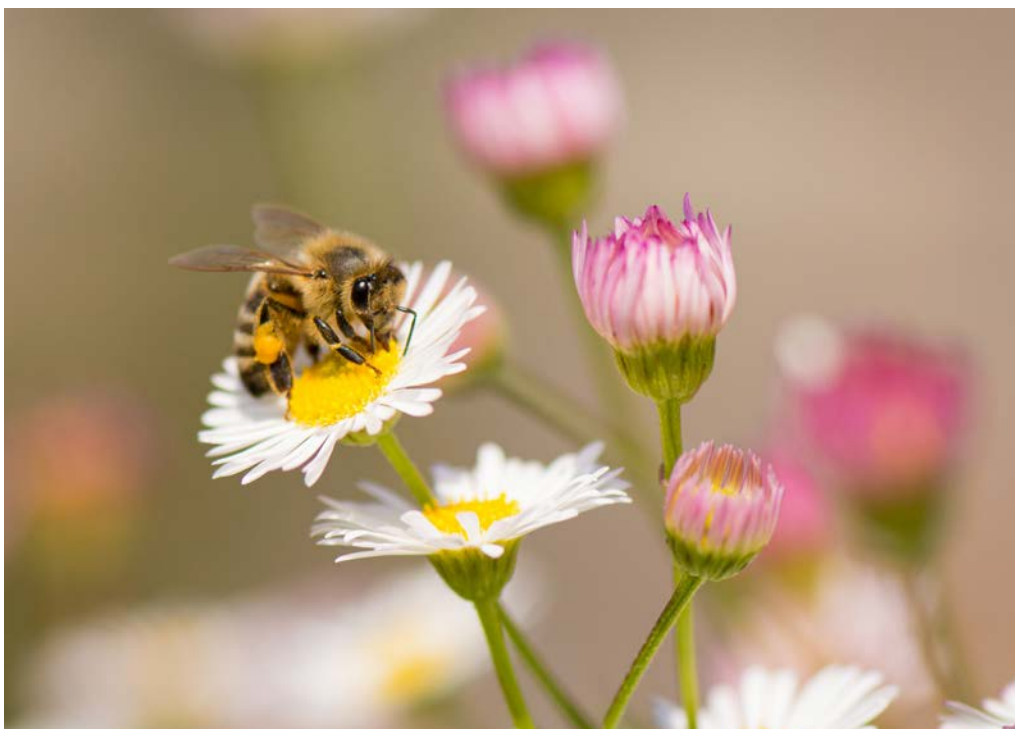




- January 2020: Two late afternoon beekeeping training sessions for CCF board and staff members.
 - March 2020: Harvesting of approximately 140 kg of honey which was bottled into 320 x 400 gram labelled jars by CCF staff. There were 29 honeycomb sections also harvested.
 - March 2020: Photographing of bees by artistic photographer, Jeremy Blincoe.
 - From late March 2020 to now, the management of the apiary has been conducted by no more than two beekeepers at a time according to agreed Covid-safe policies and procedures.
 - April to current: 90 minute Sunday beekeeping discussion meetings mostly for those beekeepers who would have attended the apiary if it were not for the Covid restrictions. Up until September, these meetings were held weekly and are now held twice monthly.
 - In order to improve disability access to the apiary and to better enable its educational objectives to be achieved, the apiary beekeepers continue to collaborate with the Farm management and other stakeholders to develop a Master Plan for the apiary. This was supported by a substantial pro bono contribution from 'Architects Without Frontiers'.
2. The apiary continues to support the Farm's farming and horticultural operations by its bees pollinating its pastures, orchards and community gardens.
 3. The apiary continues to support Victorian and Australian governments biosecurity programs by regularly testing its bees for the presence of varroa, an exotic bee pest which, if it arrived in Australia, would have a severe impact on agricultural and horticultural industries.

Email: collingwoodbees@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/collingwoodbees



Thank ewes so much

All our donors
All our members
DELWP
City of Yarra - the bridge & compost slab
Community Bank - Clifton Hill/ North Fitzroy
Besen Family Foundation
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Costa Georgiadis
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Wurundjeri-Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
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The Vet Surgery -Yarrambat & North Warrandyte Clinics,
Alphington and Fairfield Vet
313 Vets Hawthorn
Peter Pryor
Gavin Wall
All who celebrated our 40th Birthday (musicians, artists, storytellers, food, drinks etc)

With a special mention to our dedicated volunteers;

Hugh
Deb
Anastasia
Annika
Ben
David
Christian
Connie
Danielle
Dean
Graham
Hendricke
Jen
Mahali
Meghan
Olivia
Samantha
Thomas
Stephen
Serap Akan
Stephanie Kramer
Phyl Halpin
Cody Broxham
Jaqueline Hope
Ann Stevens
Lyndale Cooper
Brendan
Operation Newstart
Alkira
Bayley House
Bulleen Heights
Burke & Beyond
Collingwood Alternative School
Heatherwood School
Hume Valley School
Kensington College
Lynall Hall
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Montessori School
OC Connections
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Yooralla

We are sorry if your name is not there as we so appreciate all of your support, thanks.