

urban
agriculture
forum

Care Farming & Gardening in the Climate Emergency

22nd – 24th April, 2021



SUSTAIN

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Sustain: The Australian Food Network

Sustain is a think and do network with extensive experience in delivering positive outcomes in food systems change. Our expertise covers project management, events coordination, consultancy, research and network development. We work with multiple individuals and organisations from the public, community, business and academic sectors to design and deliver innovative solutions and approaches to a range of food system challenges.

Our work creates multiple avenues for shaping food systems thinking and practice. As a result, our work directly impacts optimising health and wellbeing outcomes for the Australian community as a whole. We are trialling collective impact models and new forms of engagement between producers, distributors, businesses, consumers and government in Victoria through food systems and social enterprise projects.

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Welcome to the Urban Agriculture Forum 2021

Dr Nick Rose

As I write these words, in late March 2021, much of the New South Wales coast is experiencing its worst floods for many decades. A little over a year ago, huge swathes of the same coast, and further south into Victoria, was experiencing the worst fire season on record.

We hardly need further reminders that the era of the Climate Emergency is upon us, although nature will undoubtedly provide them. In the intervening 14 months, we've lived through the catastrophic COVID-19 global pandemic, which continues to reverberate around the world.

What do COVID-19 and extreme climatic and weather events have in common? The drivers for both of them - and many of the other contemporary crises we face, from dietary-related ill-health, to accelerating loss of biodiversity, to soil degradation - have their roots in a food system that has become life-destroying. COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease, passing from one species to another. As Rob Wallace demonstrated in *Big Farms Make Big Flu* (2017), the exponential growth of factory farms and the monocultures they represent have created ideal breeding grounds for the development of new, highly infectious and lethal pathogens. Meanwhile, the International Panel on Climate Change says that the food system accounts for as much as 37% of all greenhouse gas emissions, making it one of the leading contributors to non-linear and increasingly dangerous climate change.

Major change in our food system is no longer optional. It's urgent and essential.

The good news is that other paths are open to us. These are paths in which we manage our land and ecosystems respectfully and in a stewardship relationship, learning from and acknowledging the First Nations of this continent. Paths in which our children, youth and all Australians have access to good and healthy food, at all times. Many of these paths begin with the simple, yet profound act, of growing one's own food.

Sustain's national Pandemic Gardening survey, conducted over a month in the middle of last year and which received over 9000 responses, stands as a powerful testament to the restorative, healing and connective properties of edible gardening and urban agriculture. The mental health benefits are especially significant at a time when many thousands of Australians, and young people in particular, are struggling with heightened anxiety and depression in the wake of COVID-19, and existential anxiety over the current and anticipated impacts of destructive climate change.

The many contributors to this Forum, from around Australia and around the world, are leaders in forging this path to a flourishing present and abundant future. From the urban farmers of Seoul and Melbourne, to the city farms of Singapore, Social Farms and Gardens in the UK, community-supported agriculture in Norway, First Nations urban agriculture in Armidale and Sydney, to therapeutic horticulture worldwide, inspirational people, actions and projects can be seen everywhere. There is so much energy, and so many reasons to feel hopeful and positive about the future.

We know that much more can be done and needs to be done; and we call on all governments in Australia - local, state and federal - to commit to a major expansion of edible gardens and urban agriculture throughout the country, demonstrating leadership both nationally and globally. In the Pandemic Gardening survey we have laid out an Action Agenda and Roadmap for Transformation, the centrepiece of which is a \$500 mn annual Edible Gardening Fund to drive a mass expansion of urban food growing and sharing across Australia. It can be done. Of our \$185 bn annual budget, less than 1.5% is spent on prevention. We can afford to invest seriously in our children's health and the integrity of our ecosystems.

In closing, and in welcoming you to the 3rd national Urban Agriculture Forum, I leave you with the words (see box) of a young gardener responding to the Pandemic Gardening survey – one of more than 25,000 similar comments - reflecting on the extraordinary year that was 2020 and how he understood it by reference to gardening.

“

I'm so glad someone is recording this awakening. I feel that gardening keeps me in touch with the basics of our existence. It reminds me that the complexities of life can sometimes just require observation and interaction. It reminds me that the graciousness of life is abundant. These are qualities learnt in a garden.

*Young Gardener,
Pandemic Gardening survey*



Urban Agriculture and Care Farming

Chris Blythe

The concept of urban agriculture (UA) has been variously defined and understood from the complex explanation of activities to the more simplified statement of where it occurs (Caputo, 2012, Lohrberg et al, 2016, Bell et al, 2016). Most definitions tend to involve a variety of activities and refer to a number of settings and actors. UA crosses the farm size boundaries ranging from the small community growing patch through to the substantial urban farms which exist in many parts of the globe, and more recently has also included the higher-tech approaches to growing provided, for example, by controlled environment agriculture. These various combinations of size, activity and actor involvement often lead to the view that UA is an all-encompassing and multi-headed phenomenon. This can often cause confusion for outsiders.

Recent evidence has suggested that if the focus of growing projects is placed on the food produced the social value reduces, yet if placed on 'people' the social value is vastly enhanced (Schoen et al, 2020). Similarly, a recent study of community gardens, has suggested that those involved in growing in the community have a better diet and health outcomes (Mead et al, 2021). Both studies add to an evidence base that demonstrates that the value of food growing projects in urban areas goes far beyond their food output and this perhaps is another reason to move away from the all-encompassing term 'urban agriculture'.

The evidence for activity in green spaces having substantial health and well being benefits, is well rehearsed in the literature and in the examples we all know from our roles as community activators working with the grassroots in many of our day-to-day roles.

Of the many forms of UA, care farming, social and therapeutic horticulture and community gardening activities are recognised as providing an effective offer that helps improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Therapeutic horticulture in particular, is successful with supporting wellbeing for an individual with a defined need, and, both farming and horticultural practices are well established in the delivery of therapeutic interventions to specific individuals.

These activities are forms of 'Green Care' which can be defined as: nature-based therapy or treatment interventions - specifically designed, structured and facilitated for individuals with a defined need. However, and it should be noted that Green Care is used alongside many other activities, which are not exclusively delivered in urban settings. For example, health can be promoted through a mere access to nature – or being able to connect in a green space. There does not need to be a 'therapeutic intervention' for UA to benefit people. This can be referred to using a 'circles model', describing the wide range of activities from everyday life engagement with nature, through to Green Care. Many forms of urban agriculture (if we use the traditional definition) contribute to nature-based health and wellbeing as described in the circles model (Bragg & Atkins, 2012). Equally, Jules Pretty advocates that seeing, being in, and participating in nature can boost wellbeing. All of these types of engagement are offered within the UA context.

Care Farming (sometimes called social farming) can be defined as the therapeutic use of farming practices, and in the UK, has been part of the agriculture system for some time (Social Farms & Gardens, 2020). The first care farms were established in the Netherlands, and the activities associated with care farming have since spread across the globe.



Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) has been delivered by community gardens and growing spaces for many years. One of the longest established STH projects in Scotland has been delivering since 1913. Often involving food growing, but also many other nature-based activities it is just one form of activity that often falls within the often-used definition of urban agriculture. I will expand more on this in my keynote at the conference.

Community gardens and city farms form the third group of project/activity types in this discussion. They are an eclectic mix of spaces and activities, often managed within a local community for the benefit of that community, and usually delivering a wide range of social, educational, health and other benefits. Recently the first randomised control trial using community gardens has shown that they can have positive impacts on a variety of health conditions.

It is currently difficult to put numbers on the scale of activities in the UK. While previous studies have estimated nearly 1,000 STH projects are active, SF&G's recent Care Farming State of the Sector Report, showed nearly 300 active care farms in the UK. Combined with over 1500 community gardens (likely a very understated figure) it is clear that the potential for this part of the nature-based health and wellbeing sector is huge.

Within the UK context, all these activities and spaces have great potential to contribute to the Health and Social care system, whether that is through approaches such as social prescribing or personalised care and budgets. This demonstrates the value that such projects offer to areas other than pure food production. Recent approaches funded by Natural England and supported by the National Social Prescribing Academy, have led to the development of several pilots around 'green' social prescribing. A number of these include community gardens and urban growing activities. These have just been launched and in the UK we await the results. At present we are not aware of any care farms involved in these pilots.

The question of whether these spaces should be called 'agricultural' is both important and sizeable, often causing confusion, and sometimes derision from those from a traditional agricultural background or stance, whether they be a reviewer of a funding bid, a policy maker or quite simply a member of the public. Here I propose that the term 'urban agriculture' be used only to describe or classify those spaces in the urban and peri urban fabric where production is the primary focus of the space, and that a combination of clearer terms should be used for projects where the production of food is not the primary aim.

Bell, S., Fox-Kemper, R., Keshavarz, N., Benson, M., Caputo, S., Noori, S. & Voight, A (Eds.) (2016): Urban Allotment Gardens in Europe.

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Regenerate Earth: Growing our Health and Wealth with Nature's Solutions

Walter Jehne

Regenerate Earth was established in January 2019 after having previously been Healthy Soils Australia since 2005. Our core team has been guiding and supporting leaders to find innovative ways, particularly across Australia, to increase the amount of land being transitioned to regenerative agriculture management.

Our goal is to provide soil-related solutions and to communicate and substantiate the veracity and benefits of these innovations. Soil rehabilitation, hydrological reinvigoration, landscape cooling, regenerating biosystems and nutrition and health are an inclusive part of our work to provide progressive ideas based on a strong foundation of knowledge, and to offer innovative, positive and natural solutions.

Regenerate Earth's film 'Fire vs Fungi: Our choice to naturally cool the planet and in time' as seen here www.regenerate-earth.org tells an overwhelmingly important, interconnected and inspiring story that uproots the narrative of doom and gloom and replants it with an empowering 'yes, we can regenerate earth's bio-systems to cool the planet naturally and in time and reverse climate change'; urban agriculture plays an important role to enable this.

Regenerating what's known as the Earth's soil carbon sponge via microbial ecologies recharges water, natural cooling, nutrient-dense and healthy food and overall planetary health and indeed our own. Creating oases of urban agriculture based on these ecologies in our cities is simple, empowering and essential, as seen at www.regenerate-earth.org/urban-agriculture.



We are also focused on commercialising leading bio-innovations which will urgently help restore agro-ecosystems and urban agriculture and ecologies. There are now 7.4 billion of us on this finite planet. There may be 10 billion by mid-century. The size and well-being of our future world population will be governed by their access to adequate water and food, which can only be provided by healthy bio-systems—the same bio-systems that provide the stable hydrology, weather, economies and societies we depend on.

Aside from regenerative soil-related solutions, audacious bio-system regeneration questions fuel our imagining: 'Can whales cool Antarctica?', 'Can we reinstate Monsoons across the Himalaya; and Australia?' 'Can we cool and rehydrate the Australian Alps to reduce wildfires and increase soil hydrology?'

Thursday 22nd April**9:15 – 10:15AM**

Keynote: Care Farming and Gardening
Chris Blythe (Social Farms and Gardens UK)

10:30 – 11:30AM

Parallel 1A: Local Government and Urban Agriculture
Belinda Reeve (University of Sydney Law School), Dr Jenny Kent & Belinda Thackeray (City of Sydney), Fay Loveland & Paula McLeod (Local Food Connect)

10:30 – 11:30AM

Parallel 1B: International Urban Agriculture
Jin-Deok Kim (Seoul City Farmers), Mr. Kim Gwang-deok (Seoul Metropolitan Government)

10:30 – 11:30AM

Parallel 1C: Farming Incubation and Next Generation Farmers
Jules Laidlaw (Farmer Incubator), Joel Orchard (Young Farmers Connect), Thuch Ajak (United African Farm)

12:30-1:30PM

Parallel 2A: Therapeutic Horticulture: Healing in Nature
Pauline Marsh (University of Tasmania), Jonathan Kingsley (Swinburne University of Technology)

12:30-1:30PM

Parallel 2B: Moreland Case Study
Lee Tozzi (Moreland City Council), Sally Beattie, Kelly Gillespie & Greg Lorenzutti (Fawkner Food Bowls), Stuart Muir Wilson (Jesuit Social Services)

Friday 23rd April**9:15 – 10:15AM**

Keynote: Urban Agriculture and the Climate Emergency
Walter Jehne (Regenerate Earth)

10:30 – 11:30AM

Parallel 3A: Community Food Growing in Practice
Gavin Hardy (Community Gardens Australia), Charlie Brennan & Bridget O'Brien (Garden Juju Collective), Darryl Nichols (Grow it Local)

10:30 – 11:30AM

Parallel 3B: Urban Agriculture and Education
Josephine Duffy (Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation), Sonia Nuttman (Deakin University), Pete Dawe & Phil Pettitt (Royal Botanical Gardens Sydney)

10:30 – 11:30AM

Parallel 3C: Planning: Enablers and Barriers
Annemaree Docking & Linda Martin-Chew (Plan-It Rural), Leila Alexandra (The University of Melbourne)

12:30 – 1:30PM

Parallel 4A: Minimising our Footprint while Growing Food
Benedict Hughes (The Practical Beekeeper), Geert Hendrix (Farmwall), Tim Sansom (The Diggers Club)

12:30 – 1:30PM

Parallel 4A: Community Gardens and Pandemic
Anita Peerson & Janet Novak (Hilltop Garden), Catherine Phillip (The University of Melbourne), Kelly Donati (William Angliss Institute)

Saturday 24th April**9:15-10:15AM**

Keynote: Empowering Indigenous Communities with Urban Agriculture
Clarence Slockee (Jiwah)

10:30-11:30AM

Parallel 5A: Urban Farming: Practice and Business Models
Lucille Kelly (Strettle Street Market Garden), Emma Bowen (Pocket City Farms), Clare Harvey (Melbourne Food Hub)

10:30-11:30AM

Parallel 5B: Care Farming and Gardening in Practice
Chris Blythe (Social Farms and Gardens UK), Josh Fergeus (Kevin Heinze), Bjorn Low (Edible Garden City, Singapore)

10:30-11:30AM

Parallel 5C: Urban Agriculture and Education: On-the-ground Local Approaches
Kieran Christopherson (Echo Floria), Conor Hickey (Collingwood Children's Farm)

12:30-1:30PM

Plenary: Growing Indigenous Plant Foods as an act Reclaiming Sovereignty
Kate Wright & Uncle Steve Widders (Armada Community Garden), Synti Ng (Synti Ng), Tracy Hardy (Wattleseed Nutrition), La Vergne Lehmann (Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation)

Charlie Brennan PhD & Bridget O'Brien

Food Forests and Perennial Foods Systems are a Necessary Part of any Regenerated, Healed Future

Unfortunately, many projects we visit, and even some we ourselves have created, are not particularly successful. So much can be learned from these experimental perennial food projects. We do, however, have thriving examples of perennial food systems that we and many others, over millennia, have put into practice. During our workshops and presentations we share the 'Tips & Tricks' that we have seen to work time and again.

We are increasingly drawn to, and exploring, decolonizing co-design practices. This approach seems to be part practical, part ideas, and part ways of interrupting unconscious epistemic framing. Recent projects include supporting Elder-centred 'Walkabout Permaculture' workshops, designing with vulnerable communities, including in Detroit and here in rural Australia. Even spending a few vigorous hours pulling tropical grass and weeds with collaborators in a community food garden reveals chillies, asparagus, sorrel, berries and more - uncovering vitality and building trust. Redesigning our (inherently colonial) relationships with the more-than-human is central to designing and creating thriving perennial food systems and food forests. **It is urgently important that these projects be successful.**

We are Charlie Brennan PhD, Bridget O'Brien and collaborators – the Garden Juju Collective. We teamed up 4 years ago both as life partners and partners in exploration and practice of sustainability, regeneration and healing of people, communities and landscapes. We are designers, consultants and educators weaving together landscape design, food growing, farm regeneration, Permaculture, rewilding, conservation, ecopsychology, therapeutic horticulture, doing our best to center Indigenous Elders as well as holistic design and self-care.

For these last 4 years we have lived semi-nomadic lives visiting projects, implementing designs, developing and teaching a range of workshops, all while co-creating and publishing a permaculture-derived design game and toolkit 'Adapt'. (Learn more at playadapt.com). This game encapsulates our philosophies of **the redesignability of just about everything and the fundamental importance of exploration, creativity and cultivation in all aspects of our lives.**

As consultants and educators we are immersed in many landscapes, communities, cultures and approaches at any one time. The good news is that great movements and projects can be found all around the world. The challenging news is that the state of the world is way worse than most people realise. The merging and accumulating crises and disasters mean only one thing – that **our responses need to be adaptive, imaginative, courageous and committed. Nothing is more important.**

For consultations & more information go to:

www.gardenjujucollective.com

www.charliebrennan.info

www.playadapt.com





Kieran Christopherson

First Generation Farming and the Transformation of Urban Agriculture Education

Learning to grow food fundamentally alters you. My early career in social change and leadership development gave me a passion for understanding people's experience of undergoing processes of profound change. The first time I ate a tomato that I had grown, I felt the rumblings of deep change within myself.

My experience studying the Master of Urban Horticulture at University of Melbourne, Burnley facilitated that change as it permeated to all corners of my life. A number of my peers were going through a similar transition, so I began the preliminary research that would become my graduate thesis. Surprisingly, literature addressing first generation farming was scarce; almost non-existent.

I spent weeks interviewing first generation farmers across Victoria. I asked them a single question, 'could you tell me how you got into agriculture?', and I remain humbled and inspired by their stories. People travelled amazing roads to farming; they abandoned well-trodden paths through high-paying professions, and sacrificed time, money and relationships as their personal values drove them to transform their lives through agriculture.

Perhaps my most useful research finding in the context of urban agriculture is that there is a dire need for us to transform agricultural education in city environments, as farming has transformed the lives of those who have taken it up.

How people learn to farm is changing rapidly, through online portals, podcasts and digital technologies. These mediums are undoubtedly useful, though they lack a real-world, place-based expertise which comes with developing skills in dialogue with specific geographies. In-person learning opportunities exist, though these commonly take place in social-learning environments outside of institutions.

Despite their importance, these social settings are significantly flawed. Instructors are quick to use terms like 'educator' or 'masterclass' as promotional tools, despite having limited experience or qualification in education. New farmers risk labour exploitation in intern programs. Social learning programs are not benchmarked against national qualifications frameworks, causing uncertain career progression and wage growth.

Agriculture in the context of urban resilience requires a sophisticated blend of social-ecological ability. Currently, a critical lack of appropriate training programs stands as one of the key barriers to the transformation of our food system which many of us long to see. The future of farm education in urban contexts will require a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to learning and teaching. I am deeply committed to contributing my research and expertise to the advancement of such a project.

Conor Hickey

Collingwood Children's Farm

An iconic non-profit Community Farm, Collingwood Children's Farm is situated on Wurundjeri Land on the banks of the Birrarung, just 5km from Melbourne's CBD. With extensive pastureland, productive gardens and a range of livestock, the Farm is open to the public year round and offers visitors a taste of farm life in the inner city.

The Farm operates a range of inclusive programs and activities that support people of all ages experiencing adversity, providing education opportunities to children, young people and adults and bringing people closer to each other and to nature. The Farm also plays a key role in engaging the broader community, hosting a number of popular community events that celebrate Victorian farmers and producers.

The Farm's success relies heavily on word of mouth and community effort, with staff and volunteers working in collaboration to maintain the Farm, ensuring its sustainability and seeing that visitors to the Farm have a wonderful and unique experience.

Conor Hickey has been the General Manager at the Farm for the past three years and in that time, has guided the organisation through a period of enormous growth, change and challenges. She arrived at the Farm after several years in education, most recently working in Special Education with a focus in developing hands-on, alternative education programs for young people with trauma backgrounds, and it was this role that drew her to Collingwood Children's Farm. This amazing community space, coupled with her engagement with the Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy (AABAT) sparked her passion for increasing the Farm's reach and impact: developing new opportunities for people to engage with the space, connecting with community and nature.

Conor's presentation will provide an overview of the Farm's programs, community participation, the current focus of the Farm and the plans to broaden the scope for education and engagement.

For more information visit:

farm.org.au



Tracy Hardy

Wattleseed Nutrition, Health and Wellbeing

Tracy is a Gamilaroi woman, Dietitian/Nutritionist, Beauty Therapist and founder of Wattleseed Nutrition, Health and Wellbeing. Wattleseed Nutrition is a 100% Aboriginal owned business based on Queensland's Sunshine Coast. Tracy is also an accredited Wayapa® Wuurrk practitioner. Wayapa® is an earth connection practice that is based on ancient Indigenous wisdom that focuses on taking care of the Earth as the starting point for creating Earth Mind Body Spirit well-being.

Tracy takes a personalised, holistic and culturally centred approach to foods, food systems and environments, meal patterns, eating habits, health and wellbeing. Tracy believes that knowledge is power, and that part of her role is to place that power in clients' hands so that they feel confident in contributing to positive change and self-determining individual, family, community and Mother Earth's health and wellbeing. Tracy views health and wellbeing through a strengths-based, holistic and cultural lens, focussing on sustainable and healing connections, conversations and actions. She truly believes in the strength and healing power of understanding and sustaining our connections to traditional foods, food systems, foodways, lands and cultural practices.

Tracy actively participates in professional development courses, to ensure she continues to expand her knowledge and skills, so that she can continue to provide current and quality services and offerings for her clients, at her workshops and retreats. In 2020, Tracy completed a Certificate in Aboriginal Narrative Therapy; a Wayapa Wuurrk Practitioner Diploma; a two-day Gaa'na Healing Workshop; a two-day We-Ali Dadirri Workshop; Body Image Online Training for Clinicians; several online Mindfulness trainings for dietitians; Acceptance Commitment Therapy training for dietitians; online training in the Foundations of Trauma-Informed Dietetic Care; as well as personal courses in Creating Circle Immersions, Nature Reading and Creating your Own Oracle Cards. In April, Tracy will also commence studies in a Permaculture Design Course.

Tracy believes through two-way sharing of knowledge we foster understanding and grow stronger in self, mind, body and spirit wellbeing.



Some of the workshops she offers (online and in person) include:

Gathering, Cooking & Eating with Deep
Listening Workshop Series

6-week Wayapa Wuurrk Immersion Workshops

Retreat workshops: Wayapa Wuurrk,
Beauty therapies utilising bush botanicals,
health & nutrition

Bespoke nutrition workshops designed to meet
organisational and community needs

Community-based workshops

Youth-based workshops

Recipe Research and Development

Work-based lunch-time learnings

For more information visit:
www.wattleseednutrition.com



Jin deok, Kim

Urban Agriculture Movement in Korea

Korea began to experience rapid industrialisation in the 1960s after going through Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War. The transition from agriculture-centered society to industrial society accelerated the migration of people to cities, and rapid economic development was based on low-income workers. To maintain such a trend, agriculture has been sacrificed by implementing policies to lower the prices of agricultural products including food imports.

After such a process of industrialisation, economic income and population of rural communities rapidly declined, triggering the current crisis of agriculture and collapse of rural societies. In addition, the migration of people to overcrowded cities have created various problems such as degradation of the urban environment. Even since Korea became the 10th largest economy in the world, overcrowded cities and the agricultural crisis still remain social issues to be solved.

The urban agriculture movement in Korea started around 2005 as an alternative solution to resolve various problems arising in overcrowded cities from the pluralistic values of agriculture, and to achieve agricultural sustainability by increasing the awareness of the benefits of agriculture.

Grassroot civic groups interested in urban agriculture started activities, such as urban farmers' schools for citizens, projects to allot gardens for citizens, garden education for children, community garden movement, and so on. Thanks to these activities, several local governments passed relevant ordinances, and the Law on Fostering and Supporting Urban Agriculture was enacted in 2011.

As of 2019, the people involved in urban agriculture were about 2.42 million, and the garden area had been expanded to 1,323 ha, which had made a leap forward

over the last decade. Since 2012 when Seoul, as the capital of the Republic of Korea, declared the founding year of urban agriculture, the population involved in urban agriculture has increased 14 times to 640,000 and the urban agricultural lands has expanded 6.9 times to 202 ha for the last 10 years. The urban agriculture movement, initiated by civic groups, is achieving remarkable growth thanks to legal and institutional supports of governments.

The Korean Urban Agriculture Citizens Association, representing urban agriculture in Korea, was established in 2012 led by grassroot civic groups which engage in local community activities through urban agriculture. Currently, about 100 organisations related to urban agriculture join in KUACA across the country.

To realise the visions of urban agriculture with citizens, ecological life via resources circulation, and urban agriculture led by citizens, KUACA assists urban farming groups across the country to achieve their goals, supports to develop relevant policies, and conducts the campaign for co prosperity of rural and urban communities. The members not only produce healthy food, but also enhance civic education through urban farmers' school, implement community movement through gardens, promote eco-city where resource circulation and biodiversity coexist, realise food justice, and operate garden-based education for children.

Now, it's time to transform urban agriculture to an alternative solution to the era of the climate crisis.

Urban agriculture is required to be mainstream activities in transition cities where citizens don't rely on fossil energy, practice agriculture based on resource circulation, and secure biodiversity, so that they have climate sensitivity and shift the paradigm of urban food systems to rural-urban coexistence.



Bjorn Low

Edible Garden City Singapore

Edible Garden City has embarked on a holistic Therapeutic Horticulture and Care Farming initiative, to help alleviate social issues faced by Singapore's fast-ageing population. Gardening has incredible physical, mental and emotional benefits, and has been scientifically proven to improve the health and well-being of everyone from stressed-out office workers to the elderly. The initiative includes software and hardware elements, from garden builds to gardening programmes, and will also include research and training elements.

The Singapore Government announced the 30 by 30 plan – to grow 30% of our nutritional needs by 2030. We currently only grow 10% of what we eat, and import 90%. A study published by the Lien Foundation indicated that the number of people aged 65 years and older will reach 1 million by 2030. And based on the United Nations' projections, this number will rise, and almost half of Singapore's population will be aged 65 or older in 2050. According to the Well-being of the Singapore Elderly (WiSE), one in 10 people aged 60 and above may have dementia. The strain on elderly and dementia caretakers will be increased. Additionally, by 2030, the elder care spending in Singapore is set to skyrocket to \$49 billion per year, and Singapore will spend an estimated \$9 billion to care for dementia patients.

Over the past few years, Edible Garden City has worked with the National University of Singapore and the National Parks Board on a series of studies investigating the effects of habitual gardening on elderly with early-stage dementia. Results showed that gardening had positive emotional, mental and physiological impact on participants. The company has also observed anecdotal evidence of improved spirits and social wellbeing amongst socially employed adults with autism spectrum disorder and low-income seniors in other elderly gardening programmes.

This is through Edible Garden City's continued employment of adults with Autism, as well as our efforts working with Montfort Care Centre on the Ah Gong Farm, where at-risk elderly males were taught to garden as a means of building mental and physical wellness.

These results have spurred Edible Garden City to pursue therapeutic horticulture and care farming in a deeper and more structured way. The company is developing a holistic initiative that includes software and hardware elements - from garden builds to gardening programmes. It will also include further research into gardening as healing and the growing of nutrient-dense vegetable varieties. In addition, the company will focus on training practitioners and sharing of outcomes, with the eventual outcome to open source the initiative, so that others in Singapore and around the world might take similar steps for positive social change through agriculture.

We are deepening our current farming programme to include care farming and therapeutic horticulture. The goals of this programme are to better the quality of life of elderly in Singapore, as well as to alleviate reliance on social spending on elderly, particularly those with Dementia.

The benefits of gardening are universal, and people of all ages and walks of life would be able to enjoy them. Beyond the elderly, stressed-out office workers, at-risk youth, prison inmates and the differently-abled can all participate. The open sourced programme will be adaptable to any of these groups. Particularly, cities that are facing similar ageing population issues, or space constraints, could benefit in adapting the horticulture therapy recommendations by Edible Garden City. City farms can be activated into care farming spaces, that are not only productive but that can also be activated into community gardening spaces.

Gardening has long been employed in Singapore as a means of community bonding. The local parks authority, along with the Singapore Housing Board, has built more than 1,500 community gardens located in the housing estates, where Singaporeans can gather to garden with their neighbours.

The Government has also launched integrated developments like Kampung Admiralty, where elderly housing, medical facilities and community gardens are co-located within the same building. Hospitals like Khoo Teck Phuat Hospital and the Institute of Mental Health have also built their own farms. Hence, gardening closer to the living space is not uncommon in Singapore. However, the space is seldom specially designed to be safe for therapeutic horticulture, and the garden is seldom specially activated with programming that is meant to encourage more people to garden. Typically, the community gardens are left to the Resident's Committee or a group of gardeners to man, and the space is locked up and inaccessible to curious visitors.

While rooted in research, therapeutic horticulture programming and garden design is not yet commonly employed in Singapore. The programmes will be different from typical gardening programmes. They will be more holistic, targeted at stimulating both cognitive ability, as well as physical movement. This could be activating memory recall through scent of a plant, or enhancing motor skills by learning how to plant seeds. The actions and thoughts will be guided to be much more deliberate.

In terms of the productivity of care farming, an innovative practice Edible Garden City will be adopting is research and implementation in growing varieties of vegetables that are high in glucosinolates, which are found to be very beneficial to health. These care farms will not only grow fresh vegetables for the community, these vegetables will be ultra-nutritious as well. Right now, most farms are growing according to demand. We hope to shift mindsets through awareness building and education, to grow these ultra-nutritious varieties that would be even more beneficial.

Lastly, with Singapore moving towards 30 by 30 – the Government plan to grow 30% of our nutritional needs by 2030 – agritech is booming in our city state. Edible Garden City is going against the grain. Where farmers are going more high tech, we hope to preserve the traditions of natural farming. Where other farmers are looking at light and nutrient technology, we will be studying biodynamic farming, improving soil health and nourishing our earth as naturally and efficiently as possible.

For more information visit:

www.ediblegardencity.com



La Vergne Lehmann

The Dalki Garringa Nursery

As we come out of summer and into autumn in Wotjobaluk country, I am conscious of the enormous amount of work that our team at the Dalki Garringa Nursery has put in over the last few months to get seed collected and then germinated, tiny plants pricked out of the trays and into hikos or forestry tubes and then potting up those that need to go into larger pots. Over summer this work is relentless, along with the watering. But it is rewarding.

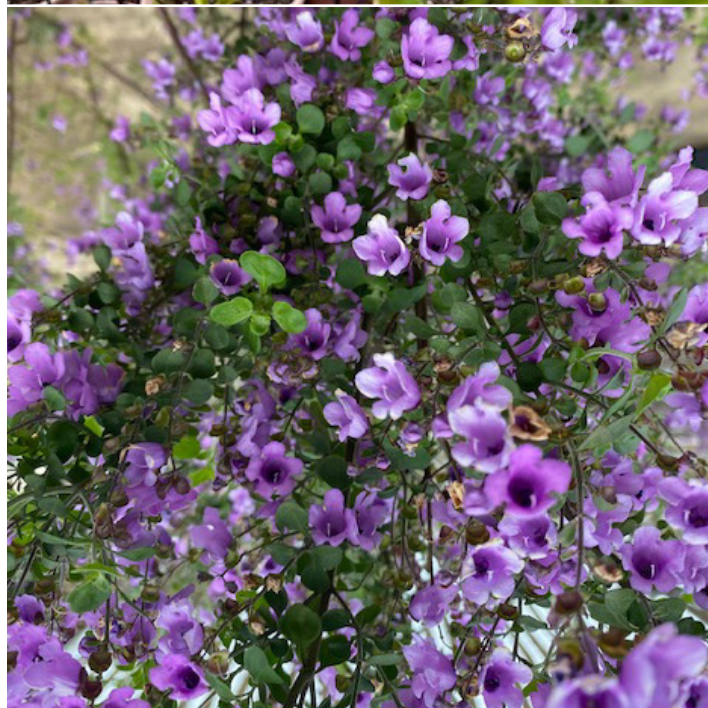
The Dalki Garringa Nursery – which means Good Growing in the Wergaia language – has a lot of history. Most of that history represents European settlement in the Wimmera – or Wotjobaluk country. The old Wail nursery – located about 20 kilometres north west of Horsham was started in 1946 as part of the State Forestry Commission plantation. While it served previous owners well for many years, the last 20 years have not been kind. The nursery is an old lady now, with good bones, but no longer at her best. Nonetheless, the Barengi Gadjin Land Council took over the management of the nursery about 3 years ago. It has not been smooth sailing, but we are working hard on restoring nursery so that it provides the Traditional Owner community with a return on investment, new business opportunities, employment and training.

We have been busy replacing fencing, the watering system, the refrigeration unit in the seed library and much more. But there is still so much more to go. We are also busy rebuilding the nursery's reputation for supplying quality stock for revegetation projects, building local relationships and ultimately re-open a retail nursery with a café along with a bush foods business. There is still a lot of work to do to get that done but we have made a good start on the foundations.

We are also developing a climate change and nursery engagement program for Traditional Owners, schools and the visiting public through further development of the arboretum, which is located next to the nursery. We have some funding to get started on that and will be developing a series of bushfood gardens that will feature many of the food species that are native to the area – including kangaroo grass, native thyme, cut leaf mint, old man saltbush, quandongs, muntries, just to name a few.

This is a place with a future for everyone and one that we think will be all about Good Growing.

For more information visit:
www.dalkigarringa.com.au





It has been a welcome relief to cultivate my personal Eden."

UK, 55yrs

Pauline Marsh (presenter), Lucy O Diekmann, Monika Egerer, Brenda Lin, Alessandro Ossola, and Jonathan Kingsley

Birds Felt Louder: Attunement and Gardening During Hard Times

Gardens have long been considered as refuges, into which we retreat to escape struggles and challenges. Using results from an online survey, distributed internationally to countries that were experiencing lockdown measures between June to August 2020, we examined the characteristics and functions of the garden refuge during the COVID-19 gardening boom.

We asked people why they decided to garden this year, how did this time change the way they valued the garden, and the impact of COVID-19 on gardening in general.

Analysis of answers to these questions, from over 3700 participants across the globe, revealed many interesting findings! One of these was the ways in which gardens became emotional and sensory refuges, and how non-material components of gardening helped people to manage life during this time.

Our three key findings about the COVID-19 garden refuge are:

- 01 People experienced multifarious and heightened experiences of the non-material aspects of gardening; such as, a sense of joy, beauty, freedom and reassurance.
- 02 People felt a greater attunement to the natural world and increased sense of nature connection, and the benefits for wellbeing were numerous.
- 03 Greater attunement to nature through gardening made people more aware of the need to care for nature and the planet.

We used non-representational and therapeutic landscape theories to understand the significance of this a little more. In the garden refuge, gardening activities, sensibilities, and attunement all intertwined.

We conclude that emotional and sensory aspects of gardening have an important function in assisting people to manage life during hard times, and an important role in enabling wellbeing post-COVID-19 also.

[The garden] is magnificent. I have a much greater love and respect for the beauty and power of it all."

USA, 48yrs

I didn't feel as trapped as some because I knew I could rely on our garden for food if things got worse."

Australia, 58yrs

Gardening is one thing, but the contemplation of doing is another. Everything happens much more attentively and intensively. Even the birds are (felt) louder."

Germany, 63yrs

It's made me value the green space I have and the time I get to spend in the garden brings me peace and joy and also a sense of connection with nature.

Australia, 42yrs

It encourages me to live even more in harmony with nature and to protect it even more...Enjoy nature even more consciously, enjoy the garden - which of course also means care."

Germany, 53yrs

Josephene Duffy

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program

As the world churns, much is revealed. What has become clear to us here at the Kitchen Garden Foundation, and among our large global community, is that the need for our work is more fundamental than ever.

Our response to Covid-19 sheds a shining light and what is most important to us, our families, our happiness and our survival. We need to be resilient and self-sufficient – individually, within families, in and across intersecting layers of social and physical circles.

We need to bring the best of ourselves to support the greater good. We need to prioritise frontline, essential services: health, education, food. We need to prioritise community.

The kitchen garden community focuses on educating and engaging children and families in **Growing, Harvesting, Preparing and Sharing**. This mantra underpins the food production cycle just as it underpins forming and sharing learning, personal growth, life and social skills, familial and intergenerational connections, how knowledge is born, evolves and sustains our lives and societies...the very nature of community.

In line with current health thinking, the program demonstrates the great ability of schools to become health platforms and influencers of change. In line with current education thinking, the program shows how hands-on, sensory learning engages students and enhances curriculum delivery. In line with what hundreds of thousands of us know and experience every day, school garden programs engage children, families and the wider community – they are catalysts for positive change not just in food culture but in deep, invested learning and sustained social cohesion.

A kitchen garden program isn't built for fly-in-fly out, one-off or extra-curricular

learning. It is integrated with education, homes and communities. It enhances all aspects of the school's curriculum and the health and wellbeing of students, staff, volunteers and families. It opens horizons for kids and their learning and work pathways. It provides joy. And above all it offers opportunity.

And it isn't easy. Like anything of value this program requires work, cooperation, partnerships and a shared vision. It requires us to dig deep, not just financially or metaphorically. We dig deep into our hearts, into our values, into our connections with our friends and family members and into the earth, which we hope is rich and fertile. The positive impact is infinite.

Kitchen garden kids are resourceful, resilient and adaptable. Kitchen garden kids know how not to waste, how to use every root, leaf and stem of a plant, how to make a delicious dish from whatever is at hand – which is of course the true essence of knowing how to cook. They know we rely on the natural world to provide sustenance, and that we need to look after it in return. They also know that sometimes you make mistakes (forgot the salt, burnt a finger, didn't get to those aphids in time), but that you simply learn and try again. Building resilience is at the heart of every kitchen garden program.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program is a long-term, proactive and cost-effective public health program, which will reap enormous dividends in the future. The challenges are real but worth every ounce of energy. The opportunities are limitless. We're looking forward to continued work towards a happy, healthy, resilient and global kitchen garden community.

For more information visit:

www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au





Urban Agriculture Month 2021

The year 2021 marks the inaugural Urban Agriculture Month (UAM), celebrating and raising awareness of Australia's urban agricultural movement. The intensive burst of activity UAM generates throws the spotlight on the innovative, diverse, and ever-evolving urban agriculture movement in Australia. Alongside #UrbanAgricultureForum, UAM will center around the theme: 'Care Farming and Gardening in the Climate Emergency'. This is all about urban agriculture as a tool for building resilience in the face of crisis, for people, the planet, and plants. Participating events not only contribute to this wider conversation, but gain media attention, local supporters, and new participants to your community. UAM aims to strengthen our existing networks and grow powerful connections, increasing support to those who need it through sharing and connecting.

Urban Agriculture Month Map:

uaf.org.au/urban-agriculture-month

Urban Agriculture Month aims to: - acknowledge and celebrate the people around the country growing the urban agriculture movement - raise awareness of why urban agriculture is important, locally and as a collective effort - increase support to those who need it through sharing and connecting - facilitate a concentrated burst of activity around urban agriculture - demonstrate the value of ongoing support to communities, organisation and local government in the area of urban agriculture.

“

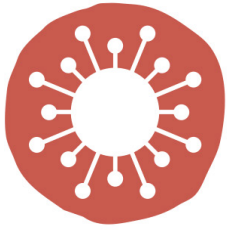
Gardening brings people together to share (seeds, plants, produce and knowledge) and there needs to be more support for community gardens to become a central part of a community.”

Pandemic Gardening Survey Respondent

“

Our modern life disconnects people from all that matters in the natural world, hence mental problems, sickness and stress, Gardening reconnects with the earth and in that reconnection, there will be feelings of taking care of the soil and so taking care of the body”

Pandemic Gardening Survey Respondent



MCLEOD FAMILY
FOUNDATION

Principal Sponsor

McLeod Family Foundation is the principal sponsor of the Urban Agriculture Forum 2021.

Established in 2004 it supports a diverse range of causes guided by Paula, John and their now 2 adult children. They are very aware of the potential role philanthropy can and should play in advocating for change. The McLeod Family Foundation supports a holistic approach, including funding research, to best guide that change to improve outcomes in whatever cause area is being supported.

In recent years they have observed and challenged the shortcomings due to the lack of a long term vision for the food system at both local and state government levels. In looking to help address these issues it was determined that an overall systems view was needed. The McLeod Family Foundation initially funded Sustain to undertake a comprehensive study of the barriers and enablers to sustainable agriculture in the Victorian peri-urban planning scheme. The foundation is continuing to support Sustain as they move forward with their collective advocacy and movement-building agenda.



City of
DAREBIN

Major Sponsor

www.darebin.vic.gov.au

The City of Darebin is proud to be a leader in local urban agriculture, supporting the community to grow healthy, sustainable and local food and to share local knowledge. Darebin's Urban Food Production Strategy recognises the role local urban food production plays in social, environmental, and economic change, and supports the community through a range of sustainable food initiatives. These include the Sustainable Food Leaders Forums, open to anyone in the broader Darebin community involved or interested in sustainable food initiatives and food security, Backyard Harvest Festival events each spring and autumn, seed sharing libraries across the municipality, community garden networks, the Darebin Food Harvest website and online forums and workshops to encourage skills sharing across the community to enable growing more food locally.



Supporting Sponsor

www.bankaustralia.com.au

Bank Australia is the bank for people who want to be part of a movement creating a fair and just world. They work with you to use your money as a force for good, so you can make a positive impact. As a customer owned, B Corp certified bank they empower you to be part of the clean money movement. Bank Australia don't invest in harmful industries, like fossil fuels, and instead prioritise positive impact investments like renewable energy and specialist disability accommodation. That's why we're proud to partner with them and believe they're the bank Australia needs.



Supporting Sponsor

www.yarracity.vic.gov.au

The City of Yarra is in inner metropolitan Melbourne and is home to a diverse community of approximately 100,000 people. The City of Yarra is an Australian leader in urban agriculture. We are building on the inspiring work of our community in advocating for healthy and sustainable food systems to be integrated into cities. Council's Urban Agriculture Strategy outlines the steps we are taking to achieve our vision of a sustainable city where the Yarra community can grow, produce and share food as part of a healthy and resilient food system.



Supporting Sponsor

www.citywestwater.com.au

City West Water is one of three Victorian Government owned retail water businesses in metropolitan Melbourne. We provide drinking water, sewerage, trade waste and recycled water services to over 375,000 customers in Melbourne's central business district, inner and western suburbs. We are also working with partners to provide alternative water supplies, including stormwater harvesting and aquifer storage and recovery. In addition to our everyday services, we also manage a range of innovative programs which support the achievement of our vision, mission and business goals.



Supporting Sponsor

www.waterups.com.au

WaterUps® wicking cells are a unique product designed to combat water waste and reduce the maintenance time and water needed for a wide range of growing environments, landscapes and gardens. Our product, the wicking cell, is Australian owned and manufactured in western Sydney from re-cycled plastic. In a similar way to placing a plant pot in a saucer of water to allow the soil to "soak" up the water to keep it alive – this action, called capillary action, is the basis of water-wicking.



In-Kind Sponsor

www.moreland.vic.gov.au

Moreland City Council strives for a sustainable environment to support its resilient, proudly diverse community. Council's Food System Strategy sets ambitious goals for creating a just and vibrant food system. The strategy outlines Council's commitment to working together with a passionate, skilled and dedicated community to achieve the goals of a healthy and diverse food culture, and make nutritious food socially and economically accessible to all.



In-Kind Sponsor

www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

The City of Sydney is working towards a more sustainable, liveable city. We support community and verge gardens, community composting and landcare groups. They have a vision for a socially just and resilient city in A City for All, our social sustainability policy and action plan. The City of Sydney supports urban agriculture projects through their 24 community gardens, footpath gardens, community composting and biodiversity volunteering groups.



In-Kind Sponsor

www.diggersfoundation.org

The Diggers Foundation was established in 2011 by Clive and Penny Blazey and their three children. The Blazey family gifted their family business 'The Diggers Club' and its priceless properties, Heronswood, The Garden of St Erth and the Diggers Preservation Garden to this charitable Foundation to ensure that their lifelong work in the preservation of heirloom seeds, garden-worthy plants and the best organic gardening traditions will continue for future generations.



In-Kind Sponsor

www.growitlocal.com

Grow It Local is your local grow community. A celebration of backyard, balcony, community and window-sill farmers across the country. Grow It Local is a grass roots, purpose-driven mission to get more people growing, sharing and eating locally grown foods. Put your patch on the map! Find other growers near you and connect to share, knowledge, skills & more.



In-Kind Sponsor

www.pipmagazine.com.au

Pip Magazine is your guide to living the good life. Pip Magazine is filled with ideas, information and inspiration to live in harmony with the planet. With articles on growing your own food, natural building, keeping bees, backyard chooks, fermenting, design, natural parenting and much more. Pip aims to inspire audiences to live more sustainably through informative and inspirational content.



In-Kind Sponsor

www.sydneyediblegardentrail.com

The Sydney Edible Garden Trail is an urban agricultural trail, celebrating the many ways that Sydney residents are creating food security and building self-reliance, saving money and the environment, while enjoying the health benefits of homegrown fruit and veg. Our aim is to encourage and inspire growing edible produce in street gardens, home gardens and public spaces across Sydney.



UAF Steering Committee

The planning of the Forum is supervised by a Steering Committee of experienced practitioners, researchers and policy makers; and will be supported by the Local Government Urban Agriculture Network, which is facilitated by Sustain. We are grateful to all members for volunteering their time and bringing their diverse experiences and knowledge to the table.

Collingwood Children's Farm



Sev Darwell
Conor Hickey

Sustain



Georgia Karavis Reanna Willis
Julia Pecoraro Arianna Lim
Nick Rose Carlotta Pischedda

Community Gardens Australia



Naomi Lacey

Sustainable Gardening Australia



Sharron Pfueller
Richard Rowe

Jiwah



Clarence Slockee

Pocket City Farms



Emma Bowen

Urban Agriculture Facilitator & Sustainability Educator

Carlos Semmens

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation



Josephene Duffy

3000acres



Daniel Tatton

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Events Presented by Sustain

Sustain has coordinated several major conferences, forums and summits. We are involved with events on a regular basis throughout the year. In this way we shape and lead the sustainable and healthy food systems conversation in Australia.

In addition to the Urban Agriculture Forums held in both 2016 and 2018, highlights in our events calendar include:

2016 | Australian Community Food Hubs Conference

Australia's first national community food hubs speaking tour. This tour encompassed 13 separate events in every state and territory bar SA and the NT. These events were the result of a wonderful collective national effort that involved no fewer than five universities, five local councils, four TAFEs, agencies of the state governments of NSW and WA, and numerous not-for-profits and community organisations.

2016 | 21st Symposium of Australian Gastronomy

The 21st Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, held over four days across Melbourne, featured dozens of artisanal agriculture and premium food producers, chefs and food businesses from around Australia and internationally.

2017 | Cardinia Food Forum

Cardinia Food Forum was both a celebration and a call to action: a celebration of the wonderful things happening in food and farming across Cardinia Shire, and an opportunity to together build a response to the challenges we face. This jam-packed day featured international and local speakers, workshops and round table discussions.



**2018 | New Economy Network
Australia Conference**

NENA's third annual conference "Strengthening the New Economy for the Common Good", held in Melbourne, invited people to come together to share stories of success, address challenges and join the broader movement, to appreciate our shared purpose and create transformative approaches to a fairer and ecologically sustainable economy and society.

**2020 | The Future of Food Systems:
Transition and Recovery Webinar Series**

In the face of extraordinary challenges and hardships, Australia's food systems organisations rallied in 2020. We have always said that so much of how we manage our landscapes and feed our communities is unjust and unsustainable. The major challenge we face going forward is how to keep the momentum up, grab the increased interest in sustainable and resilient food systems with both hands and transition in such an unstable context. The 'Transition & Recovery' Series brought together food systems experts to discuss how we can work collaboratively to achieve these goals.

**2020 | Vermont Farm to Plate Plan
Webinar Series**

In this three-part webinar series, Vermont Farm to Plate Plan Program Director Jake Claro and Network Manager Sarah Danly shared the stories of the decade-old program: How it has successfully increased employment, business creation and food security through collaborative, whole-of-system actions and networking, aligned to a shared agenda of a better food and farming system for Vermont.

[Find more events presented by Sustain or watch recorded events here](#)





Sustain: The Australian Food Network

Membership

Be a part of the transition to a food system that sustains healthy and flourishing communities and ecosystems.

Value of Sustain Membership:

Collaborate as part of a community of practice, sharing lessons and learning from research, policy and project work

Invitations and discounts to events and conferences organised by Sustain

Discounted access to research and consultancy and event services

Connect to emerging research collaborations in food security, and food law, policy and governance

Receive a highlighted listing on the online Australian Food Systems Directory

Work with students and interns as part of a community-engaged learning program

Be named and have a profile on the Sustain website, showcasing existing policies, strategies, programs, initiatives and achievements

Link to affiliated national and international alliances and coalitions, such as the Right to Food Coalition

Access to our social media and e-newsletter followers through featured content

Access to member-only Local Government Association networking events

Membership Pricing:

Individuals:
\$35–60 per year

Sustain x Melbourne Food Hub Membership:
\$35–60 per year

Not for Profit Membership:
\$150–\$600 per year

Business, Government and Academic Institutional Memberships:
\$750–1200 per year

Join Now:

sustain.org.au/join

SUSTAIN

the Australian food network

We work to enable a healthy, sustainable and fair food system that benefits all Australians.