

# CERES Strategic Direction

November 2011

Humanity is currently responding to environmental, social and economic challenges of major consequence. In the midst of times of transition, CERES is a place where people can come together to share ideas about living well together and directly participate in meeting their social and material needs in a sustainable way. Through social enterprises, education and training, employment and community engagement, CERES provides the means by which people can build awareness of current local and global issues, meet some of their own economic needs, build resilience, and create new ways of being.

CERES offers a place of nature and beauty, holds a vision for a better world, encourages people to examine and renew the values and meanings by which they live, and inspires a movement for change. CERES initiates and supports innovation and experimentation in order to find positive practical solutions for the challenges we face. CERES believes that local and global equity is important for living well together, and makes special efforts to create opportunities for people from disadvantaged situations. CERES collaborates with a wide variety of organisations to bring about mutually beneficial outcomes.

CERES is a nexus for ...

- Sustainability education and training programs
- Social enterprises
- Community food systems and urban organic food production
- Sustainable design and green technology
- Community celebration and environmental art
- Community building, collaborative process and spiritual reflection.

CERES **sustainability education and training programs** provide a variety of learning opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Program participants learn how to live well together with less impact on the earth. The many working demonstrations at CERES provide an inspirational setting for this experiential learning. Our skilled educators and trainers also travel to other locations, both near and far, to share ideas with other communities.

CERES **social enterprises** provide authentic opportunities for people to choose more environmentally responsible and socially beneficial goods and services. All CERES enterprises operate in accordance with environmental and social principles, so that every community dollar spent at a CERES enterprise has a far-reaching positive impact, with benefits shared more equitably with growers and suppliers. Through supporting CERES enterprises, the CERES community directly participates in significant environmental and social action which enables us to bring day-to-day economic transactions into alignment with the values we believe are important.

CERES **community food system** demonstrates and celebrates the 'seed to feed cycle' by integrating CERES propagation enterprise and retail nursery, market gardens, chooks and aquaponics systems, organic food retail enterprises, organic food delivery enterprise, organic food service enterprises and community kitchen. CERES urban farm showcases **urban organic food production** and is used extensively for education and training programs. CERES has an ethical food purchasing policy that ensures that all enterprises within CERES community food system align with our values and directly support Victorian organic growers and suppliers.



CERES **sustainable design and green technology** has been substantially enhanced through recent facility improvement. Our new and renovated buildings all feature sustainable design and technologies. Our meeting rooms and organic catering enterprise are ideal for group activities and functions. Working demonstrations of green technology installed across the CERES site improve CERES sustainability performance and provide opportunities for green technology innovation, education and training.

CERES **community celebrations and environmental arts** bring us together to share stories, music and goodwill. CERES provides a place for personal and community-based **spiritual reflection**. CERES wisdom and experience are shared and embellished by interactions throughout Australia and overseas. Using **collaborative process**, CERES builds a diverse and engaged organisation that supports and **builds a community**. CERES inspires and supports other communities around Australia and overseas.

## Forward Priorities in November 2011

During the last three years CERES has undertaken a period of intensive facility improvement and enterprise development, which has temporarily drained the organisations' resources. In the coming years more efforts will be directed towards consolidating and realising the potential of the new resources recently created, in order to strengthen the whole of CERES.

CERES management regards strategy as an ongoing process, rather than something conducted episodically, for instance for a three- or five-year planning period. With this in mind, the priorities highlighted here are those that extend beyond our month-to-month operational focus and annual budget cycle. They relate to our thinking for the mid-term time horizon of around three years, but should not be read simply as 'a list of things to be done in the next three years'. Our priorities are subject to continuous review in response to the shifting environment in which we operate, with a view to ensuring that our decision-making and action aligns with and serves CERES' 'reasons for being'.

In the coming three years CERES intends to ...

- Extend the reach of our existing education and training programs, develop new programs, and become the most comprehensive sustainability education and training provider in Victoria
- Strengthen our social enterprises to increase financial security and independence
- Integrate our organic food service enterprises and food education programs to enhance public understanding of the role of food production, distribution and consumption and demonstrate sustainable local models
- Grow our metropolitan-wide organic food delivery enterprise to increase food security for our suppliers and customers
- Explore the potential and evaluate the effectiveness of our new green technologies
- Establish sustainability monitoring and reporting to make the impacts of our activities transparent and providing a basis for improvement
- Review our governance structure and improve our human resource management
- Clearly communicate our organisation-wide strategic identity and explain how our many parts create a whole
- Encourage greater community participation in creating new approaches to living well together.

In 2012 we look forward to inviting our community to celebrate CERES' 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.

