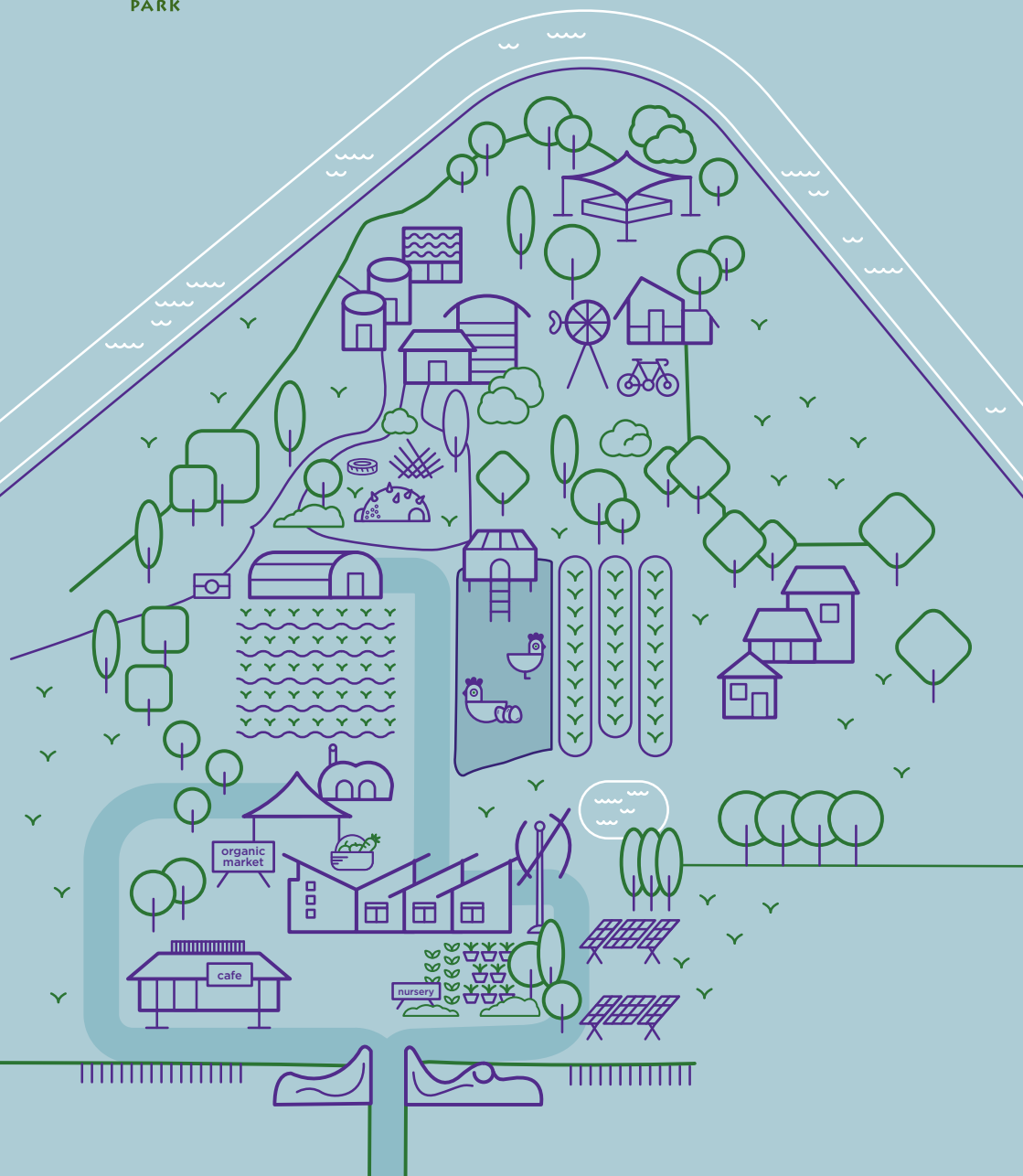




COMMUNITY  
ENVIRONMENT  
PARK

# Annual Report

2014-15





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# Chair's Report

In the park, in conversations around Melbourne and online, I am constantly reminded of CERES' value to the community. Our leadership in environmental and social innovation is well known and much admired; I have received enthusiastic comments about CERES' reputation from as far afield as Finland this year.



**Jo Barraket,**  
CERES Chairperson, 2015

2014-2015 has been another busy year for CERES, as detailed in our CEO's report, with improvements to our physical and online spaces, advances in water management onsite, and growth in our educational outreach. CERES was also recognised this year for its social enterprise leadership, with CERES Fair Food shortlisted for the National Social Enterprise Awards.

In our first ever members' survey undertaken by the board in 2015, members told us that being part of an organisation that stands for progressive environmental and social change was what made membership important to them. Yet, it is CERES' role as a space of community – of relationships, of opportunities for belonging and relaxed interaction – that most encourages members' day-to-day involvement. I thank CERES CEO, staff and volunteers, who every day nurture that spirit of community on site, in schools, in our international activities and our online forums.

Being engaged in community-led action sometimes requires responding to unanticipated problems and finding common ground on complicated issues. My thanks to all of the 2014-2015 CERES board and board committee members for their commitments to working together to meet the needs of the Association.

As well as being a site of community, CERES is a long-standing community-based association. In 2014-2015, we updated our Statement of Purposes (finalised in September 2015) to reflect both our founding commitments

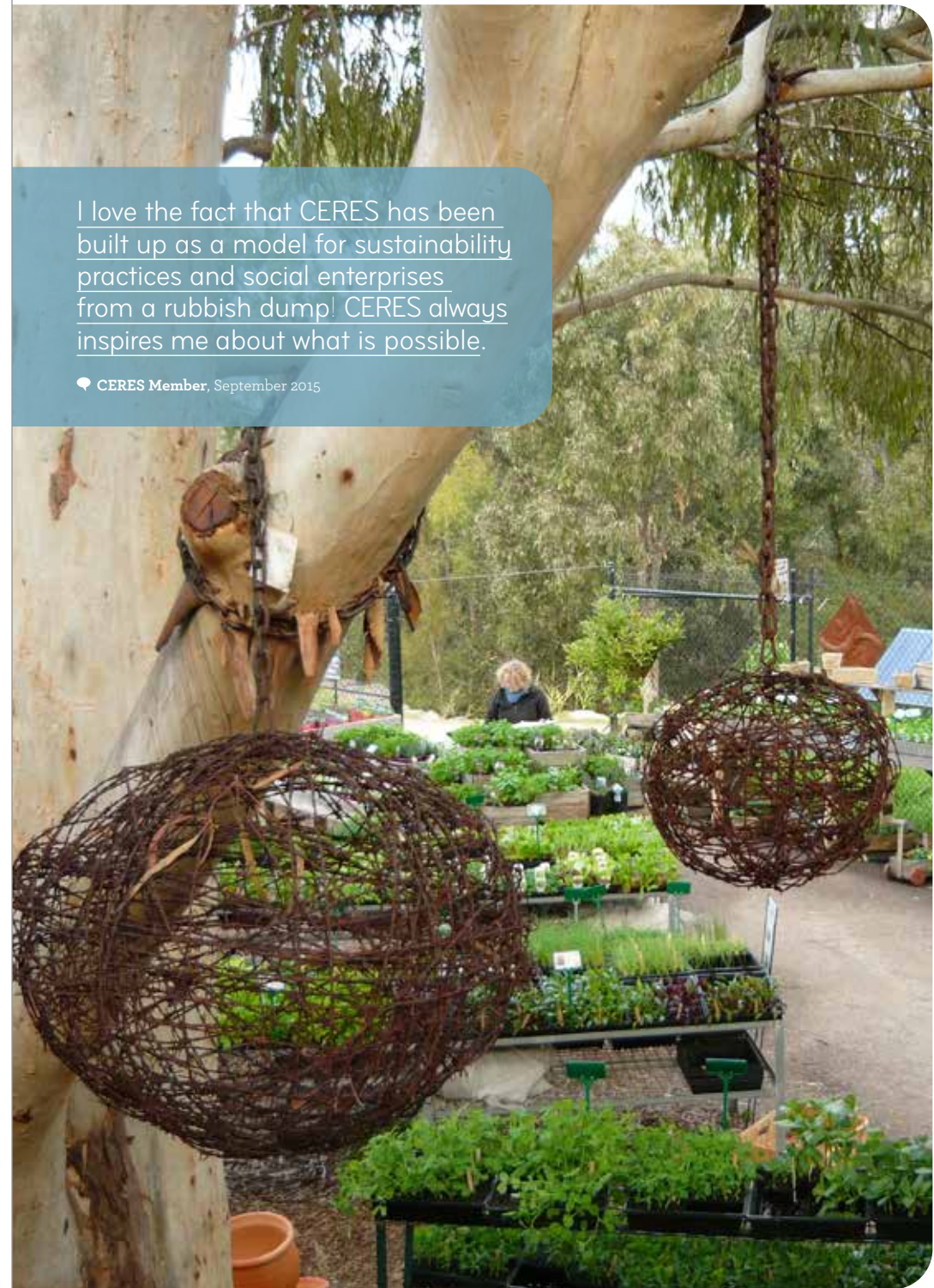
and the collective values of the current membership. We also report this financial year on our third consecutive year of modest surplus and reduction in our working capital deficit following a period of great financial challenge for the organisation. My thanks to all those who utilise the services of our social enterprises – the core of our financial sustainability as well as an expression of our environmental and social commitments – and who support the wider management and improvements of the park through gifts and donations to CERES each year. Thanks also to CERES' management team and Finance Committee for their continued commitments to effective budget management.

Our members' survey told us, not surprisingly, that long-term stewardship of the East Brunswick site is very important to CERES members. CERES has long enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with Moreland City Council, allowing the Association to make use of what was once discarded land for the benefit of around 400 000 local and non-local visitors each year. We acknowledge Moreland City Council for their continued support for CERES, and for their recognition of the important social, environmental, and economic value we add to the municipality and to the region.

**Jo Barraket**  
CERES Chairperson, 2015

I love the fact that CERES has been built up as a model for sustainability practices and social enterprises from a rubbish dump! CERES always inspires me about what is possible.

📍 CERES Member, September 2015



# CEO's Report

Over the last few months, many people have enthusiastically told me that CERES is looking really lovely, and I completely agree. Every day I notice something new and delightful ... thriving gardens, upgraded infrastructure, interesting programs, smiling faces. All this vibrant energy gives me a great sense of personal meaning, and makes me very proud of what we achieve together as an organisation.



Cinnamon Evans, CEO

This year the CERES community refreshed the statement of purpose that appears in our Rules and Purposes (constitution). Our (renewed) purpose is to protect and enhance the natural environment (including by providing information and education), by being **a place for community-based learning and action to create environmentally beneficial, socially just, economically satisfying, culturally enriching and spiritually nurturing ways of living together**. The five interwoven elements of this statement elegantly frame the many activities of CERES over the last year.

We strive to benefit our environment, both at CERES and beyond. This year, with assistance from the State government, CERES Habitat and Green Technology Team upgraded our water infrastructure to reduce leaks from ageing pipes, make more effective use of stormwater, and recycle grey water. We are now in a position to monitor and report on water usage in all areas of the park, which will help us reduce consumption of precious potable water. Our next aspiration is to upgrade all our energy infrastructure, and we are currently scoping this project and seeking partners to work with. In addition to green technologies, we also use our purchasing power and supply chains to minimise environmental impact.

CERES Fair Food, CERES Market & Grocery and the Merri Table all use Victorian organic produce, making a major contribution to the organics sector and supporting sustainable agriculture across the state. CERES Nursery stocks permaculture and food plants and promotes urban food production. In response to community demand, we have recently extended the Nursery area so we can offer more, including the beautiful organic seedlings grown in our Honey Lane Organic Farm by CERES Propagation. And of course, CERES Education's comprehensive sustainability programs for students and teachers and CERES Training's popular adult courses and workshops are all about living lightly on the earth.

We are committed to social justice. The CERES park continues to be free for anyone to visit and enjoy, and we welcome a wide cross-section of the community on a daily basis. Our Venue Hire spaces are well utilised by a wide variety of groups for all sorts of purposes, including social justice programs. This year we have encouraged women to take leadership roles, welcoming Prof. Josephine Barraket as our new Chairperson, and providing professional development in leadership for eight CERES women. CERES Training continued to provide a small but much-loved cluster of programs for people with disability and/or disadvantage, while CERES Fair Food continued to purchase directly from farmers and grocery producers, offering them fair prices for their produce, and employed asylum seekers and new arrivals to help them settle in Australia.

We seek to be economically satisfied, financially independent and secure, so that we can continue to provide an inspiring space and good facilities for our visitors and community. I am extremely pleased that this is the third financial year in a row that we have reported a modest surplus, which means we are slowly but steadily recovering our financial health. The CERES social enterprises are our economic engine, and are well supported by the Melbourne community. This year they provided 95% of our revenue. As we tell our social enterprise story more widely, CERES is increasingly recognised as a leader in the social enterprise sector. The remaining part of our revenue, plus a great deal of goodwill and in kind contribution, comes from our Partnerships, which are essential for us to achieve our desired outcomes in many areas, from green technology and infrastructure development, to education and training program development, and more. I would like to thank all our partners and donors for their generous support, in particular Moreland City Council who continue to enable our ongoing growth and development.

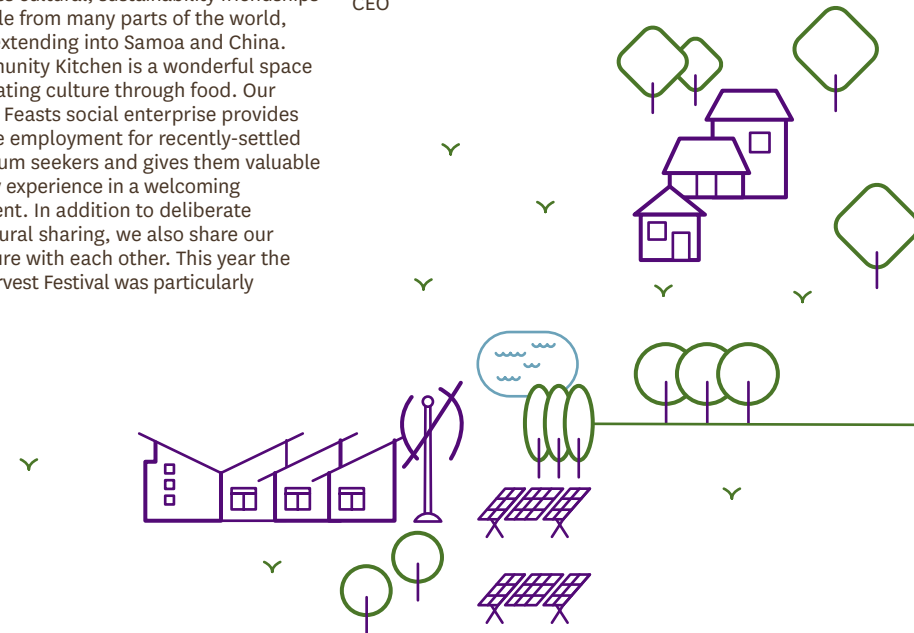
We aim to enrich our culture. CERES Global builds cross cultural, sustainability friendships with people from many parts of the world, this year extending into Samoa and China. Our Community Kitchen is a wonderful space for celebrating culture through food. Our new Tamil Feasts social enterprise provides immediate employment for recently-settled Tamil asylum seekers and gives them valuable hospitality experience in a welcoming environment. In addition to deliberate cross-cultural sharing, we also share our local culture with each other. This year the CERES Harvest Festival was particularly

gorgeous, and very well attended by our wider community. In addition to these special events, every day we share our organisational values and culture with our members, volunteers and visitors, and through their participation and contribution, they in turn enrich our collective culture. I would like to thank the whole CERES community for abundant love and support.

And finally, we aspire to nurture our spirits. For many, CERES is sacred ground, and simply visiting is a pilgrimage. Others congregate for shared rituals and practices that remind us of our true nature, beyond the material world. This remembering is an essential part of our human journey because it connects us with our hearts, each other and the earth.

With these five purposes firmly in mind, I am looking forward to CERES becoming even more beautiful and sustainable, offering more community engagement, innovating on many fronts, and having a stronger voice in relation to local economic development and climate change.

Cinnamon Evans  
CEO





# Reach & Impact

## VISITORS



**400,000**

estimated number of visitors per year. Our visitor centre staff respond to 1 query every 6 minutes\*

\*based on an internal survey in September 2015

## MEMBERS

**Top five reasons people love CERES\***

- 1 **Community**
- 2 **Nursery**
- 3 **Environment**
- 4 **Market**
- 5 **Food**

\*based on a Members survey in September 2015

## VOLUNTEERING



**1,050 corporate volunteers**

worked in the park and at Merri Creek Market Garden

**54 community volunteers**

per month worked with our Habitat Team

## EDUCATION



**Excursions 61,797**

**students & adults** came to CERES for excursions & tours

**Global 106**

**people** built cross-cultural friendships on CERES Global overseas trips

**Incursions 11,000**

**students** and staff had CERES attend their school for incursions

**Outreach 146,481**

**staff & students** worked with the education outreach team

**Training 1,201**

**people** participated in sustainable living workshops

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISES



**50,000 people**

ordered & received Fair Food organic grocery boxes

**55,731 people**

ate organic food with their friends in the Merri

**46,420 people**

visited the Market & Grocery to buy organic food

**56,500 people**

bought plants from the Nursery to grow at home

## EVENTS & FESTIVALS



**537 organisations**

used our meeting rooms

**27,566 people**

came to the park for events run by outside groups

**70 staff & volunteers**

attended our Winter Solstice Festival

**2000+ people**

attended Harvest & Kingfisher Festivals

**95% of CERES' income is from social enterprises & educational services.**

## IN THE CYBER WORLD











**177,138 people** visited our website

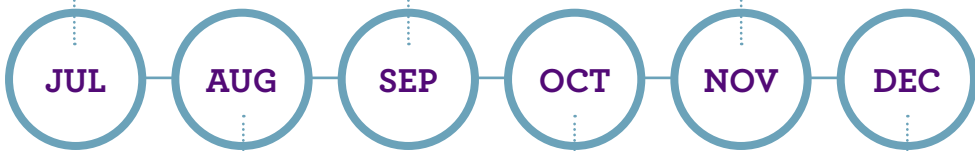
**83,109 people** follow us on social media










**8,511 people** receive our newsletter every month















# The Year at a Glance

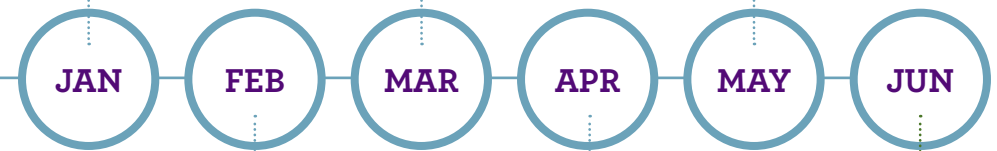
 Greentech Team undertake first focussing trials of the Scheffler Dish. It reaches 400°C at the focal point.	 A school working with Outreach Team wins ResourceSmart School of the Year at a high profile awards event in the Melbourne Convention Centre.	 Nursery has busiest spring on record.
 Propagation Team start sowing seeds ready for a bumper Spring.	 Greentech Team ensure rainwater rather than mains water is now used to flush all toilets across the park.	
 Habitat Team connects the 150,000 litres underground tank at Merri Creek Market Garden.	 The Visitor Centre carpark is asphalted with 60% recycled content & 1% recycled printer cartridges. This will enable us to capture up to 1,577 kL of stormwater annually.	 They also install 68,100 litres of stormwater catchment tanks.



 Community Kitchen concludes the 'Cooking for Change' program for young migrant adults with a 'pop-up' restaurant.	 Propagation has record month of seedling sales.	 Market & Grocery runs a food stall at Brunswick East Primary School's Twilight Market, connecting with our community & neighbours.
 Aquaponics Group becomes an official CERES Site Group, bringing our old aquaponics system back to life.	 Outreach starts working with early childhood centres in the Glen Eira City Council area.	 A benchmark bird species list identifies 45 species in the park.
 Global hosts the Samoa Matalasi Youth Dance Group.		

# 2014

 Work for the Dole Program starts in the Food Forest.	 Harvest Festival has perfect weather and is a huge success, with around 2000 people attending.	 100 new Isa Brown chooks join the flock, replacing the ones in November.
 Work is started on a new free smartphone app for visitors called the Chook.	 Education is included in a \$291 million state government tender to embed sustainability into 15 brand new schools in Victoria.	 Moreland Council funds Market & Grocery renovation to start in 2016.
 We host the Sustainable Living Festival weekend in 38°C heat.	 Jida Gulpilil starts work on the Bunjil mural to be displayed in the Namalata Willem.	 Global kicks off back-to-back trips to Timor Leste, Indonesia, & China.
 Habitat Team completes the mains water replacement.	 The Bee Group hives return.	 Free wifi is enabled across our entire park.
 Lighting plan is completed for the whole park.		 Tamil Feasts begin weekly dinners, employing recently settled Asylum Seekers.



# 2015

# Social Enterprise

Social enterprises deliver targeted social or community benefits using traditional business principles.

Social enterprises are organisations that:

1. Are led by an economic, social, cultural or environmental mission consistent with a public or community benefit;
2. Trade to fulfil their mission (goods or services);
3. Derive a substantial portion of their income from trade; and
4. Reinvest the majority of their profit/surplus in the fulfilment of their mission.

(definition by Jo Barraket and Social Traders)

CERES owns and operates an integrated portfolio of social enterprises that deliver sustainability outcomes, provide livelihoods for staff and suppliers and generate funds to support the park and its educational purposes.

CERES social enterprises also contribute to the 'new economy', a movement that seeks an economy that is increasingly green and socially responsible, and one that is based on rethinking the nature of ownership and the growth paradigm that guides conventional policies.

(definition by New Economy Coalition)  
<http://neweconomy.net/publications/new-economy-movement>

[I] just wanted to say thank you. I think what you guys do, what you are about is very inspiring and gives me hope and makes me feel like I am not alone and feel connected to like minded people. Thanks a million!

♥ Fair Food customer

[top] Sunny market day.  
 [middle] Market café.  
 [bottom] Market music.



## Market, Grocery & Coffee

CERES Market & Grocery offers a unique and engaging shopping experience in inner suburban Melbourne. The community can enjoy a biodynamic sausage and have a cuppa on a Saturday morning whilst the band belts out some tunes, meet the local craft producers who sell their wares come rain hail or shine, engage with fellow backyard producers at the urban farmer swap table, grab some eggs still warm from our Isa Brown chooks, and there is not a plastic bag in sight. It's a space unlike anything else on offer in Melbourne.

This was the first full financial year in which the Market, Grocery & Coffee stall has been open for trade 7 days a week, and it has proven to be very successful. As a consequence of this, we have been able to provide casual and part time work to 15 staff members (up from 12 last year), provide customers and CERES staff with a shopping experience that is more diverse and has greater accessibility, and provide a greater financial return to CERES. The renovation of the area, scheduled for Jan 2016, will improve amenity for customers, enable a more streamlined shopping experience and extend shopping hours.

## Fair Food

Fair Food has continued to grow from a simple veggie box scheme into a complete online organic supermarket. Fair Food also continues to support local farmers and grocery makers as well as give first jobs to asylum seekers. Posting a profit for the third year running, Fair Food has increased turnover from \$3 million in FY14 to \$3.4 million in FY15. Our Rewiring the Food System crowdfunding project raised \$36,000 to purchase a new webstore and The Ian Potter Foundation made a \$35,000 grant to develop better logistics. This year Fair Food was a finalist in the Small Social Enterprise of the year category of the Social Traders Social Enterprise Awards.



**10+ tonnes**  
 approximate weight of organic food Fair Food sold each week



**349**  
 craft stall holders sold their wares at the Treasure Exchange Saturday Market



**50,000**  
 customer orders fulfilled



**312**  
 new members signed up whilst shopping in the Market & Grocery



**70**  
 volunteer local Food Hosts across Melbourne





## Nursery

The Nursery continues to be CERES's most profitable social enterprise, consistently delivering the most significant financial contribution to the organisation. Planting a beautiful, healthy and productive garden filled with food is one of the most creative and peaceful ways to sustain individual and planetary health. The Nursery's success cements its place in the community as the go-to nursery for produce plants, natives and exceptional advice and customer service.

Spring 2014 saw the Nursery busier than ever with record sales and staff levels. We have greatly increased our purchasing from CERES propagation and are proud to be a destination nursery for those seeking organic seedlings. New steel benches and new apples crates replaced rotting wooden ones and we were able to display more organic seedlings in the same space.



**27,735**

punnets of seedlings sold that were propagated at CERES



**640,940**

individual worms sold



**\$1.5 million**

revenue



## Venue Hire & Events

Venue Hire has grown as an enterprise over the last few years to be now the third most profitable enterprise at CERES – and this has been achieved primarily through word-of-mouth and repeat bookings, as we have never undertaken formal marketing. Through the hire of meeting rooms and outdoor spaces, we have introduced hundreds of new people and organisations to CERES, expanding our reach and message. Whilst our focus as a social enterprise is to generate revenue for CERES as a whole, we also educate about the sustainable aspects of the different buildings, tell the story of CERES, and offer a place for like-minded organisations to present their own innovative and creative work. On top of that, we supported a large number of not-for-profit organisations and individuals with at least a 10% discount and even some free hire.

The spaces this year were used for such diverse events as carbon management training, first aid courses, planning days, urban farmer workshops, massage certificate training, chant and chai evenings, memorials and weddings.

**206**

community organisations received free or discounted room hire



**20,775**

people attended a workshop or event run by organisations utilising CERES spaces\*



\*people-days. I.E. people who came more than once are counted more than once

[beside]  
Spring in the Nursery.

[below]  
Merri Table & Van Raay meeting room



## The Merri Table

The Merri Table progressed through its first year of operation as the main cafe in the park, establishing itself as a place cherished by both long term CERES supporters and the cafe-loving general public. We focused on our strengths; offering a unique, all-organic menu, engaging service, and strong ethical stance as a business. The menu has featured food grown on our land such as lillipillies, plums, olives, quince, chickweed and nettles. We have progressively learnt more about what the business is capable of and what the customers want. We built a strong, supportive, friendly team, and established a solid base of regular customers, and have seen some real menu favourites emerge, such as the vegan pho, and the gingerbread bunnies with the kids. We have focused on increasing the level of organic produce used and offering a broader range of vegan and gluten free options, while keeping the cost of goods lower. After a lean first winter, we saw significant growth in trade this year – June takings increased by 57%. In April we had our new double glass doors installed that opened the space and flow, and meant that The Merri for the first time was visible to passing foot traffic. Overall, it has been a very rewarding year, and the future is looking encouraging.

The lecturer has taught at venues all around the world and said that she had never experienced a place as unique as CERES. Everyone commented that the peaceful surrounds and the relaxed energy at CERES allowed them to feel refreshed and relaxed each day... It really was the perfect venue for our workshops.

• Lesley Ens, Animal Communication Workshop Coordinator, May 2015



**598**

eggs cooked per week



**620+ kilograms**

of coffee drunk per year







### Community Kitchen

The Community Kitchen provides a space where people can come together to learn, teach, connect and inspire through the celebration of food and our community food system. Kitchen use has grown in the last year with many different user groups accessing the space. It has become a hive of activity for CERES-run programs – weekend workshops and accredited training as well as external users hiring the space for workshops, community dinners and team building days. Artisan food producers booked the kitchen to make food for sale, which is a realisation of the desire to provide a home for startup food businesses.

The Kitchen welcomed the Tamil Feast program to the space – a weekly community dinner, lovingly cooked by newly settled Tamil asylum seekers. It is a night to share their cultural food heritage, provide support for the wonderful cooks and to raise awareness for Melbourne’s asylum seeker community. The Tamil Feast program participants had originally connected to CERES through a hospitality training program.



**394** cooking sessions in the Community Kitchen over the year



[right] Tamil Feasts in the Community Kitchen

### Old CERES Cafe

In July 2013, the CERES Board took the decision to close the old café and redevelop the facility. A number of factors influenced this decision, and the aim of closing was to reinvigorate the previous café site in a way that was consistent with CERES’ mission, and would contribute a stable financial return to the Association. The 2013 Board resolved to partner with a like-minded tenant who would sublease the café and co-invest in the fit-out of the planned new building. However the project experienced a number of set-backs and for these reasons, the café development will no longer proceed as originally envisioned.

In 2015, the Board will: commit to a set of principles that will guide our decision-making about the development; gather information from members and the wider community about use of the space via surveys of members and park users; and involve CERES members and interested others in co-creating an inspiring new space for all to enjoy. Minor works to the existing structure will enable it to be used by the community during this time.

We continue to offer delicious, organic eating options seven days a week at the Merri Table and the Market.



# Education & Training

The strength of CERES Education and Training lies in its unique collection of programs, audiences, and integrity in delivering programs in sustainable actions and living.

This stems from:

- Having a rich history and identity in environmental education
  - Being an educational organisation that is open to innovation and evolution
  - People power with purpose, passion and expertise
  - Our park being a landscape for inspiration, application and immersion in sustainability
  - Having a diversity of programs that cover many themes: Cultural, conservation, efficiency, technology, horticulture, hospitality, permaculture, behaviour change, community leadership, craft, cooking and cultivating
- Creating learning experiences for a wide range of audiences: early childhood to seniors, marginalised groups to individual members of the community
  - Our integrity to uphold our commitment to sustainable principles

Our learning experiences are delivered by four areas:

- Excursions and Incursions**  
School students, both on and off site
- Training**  
Youth and Adult programs
- Outreach**  
Education for teachers in schools
- Global**  
Engaging global communities



[left] Edible weeds on the Merri Creek.  
[right] Learning about bees.

## Excursions & Incursions

The Excursions & Incursions Team had an excellent year, rolling out many fantastic new programmes and initiatives. We developed and improved many activities, worked closely with the Habitat Team to improve teaching facilities and continued great working relationships with the RACV and Catholic Education Melbourne, as well as starting a new three year funding agreement with the Department of Education.

### Some Key Achievements:

#### Do More With LESS Student Leadership sessions

There are two parts to the Do More With LESS programme. One involves CERES going to a specific school to work with students focussed on environmental leadership and advocacy. We are on target to deliver 50 of these in school workshops by the end of the school year. The other aspect is the regional conferences. We delivered 6 regional student conferences involving 46 schools. The conferences were held in Mildura, Wycheproof, Geelong, Kyneton, Bairnsdale and Warrnambool.

#### Mobile Energy Classroom (MEC)

With RACV funding we purchased and began the fit out of an ex-ambulance. What was once used to save people's lives is now used to save the planet!

The MEC is a pop-out, interactive mobile classroom that can be used anywhere from schools to festivals. In its first 6 months of operation we travelled over 10,000kms of Victoria's roads (carbon offset, of course), taking CERES' positive story of sustainability and community farther and wider than our team has ever been able to.

#### Other key achievements:

- Secured Department of Education funding to continue development of the MEC and build a new Human Powered Classroom.
- Worked closely with Jida Gulpilil on our Aboriginal education programmes. Jida helped us create learning materials, develop new activities and improve old ones, as well as running sessions on cultural awareness and protocols.



Really focused and well organised with a clear message to the students. Inspiring for both the students and myself.

DMWL Regional Conference participant

61,797

primary, secondary, university and TAFE students, and individuals on tours visited CERES Excursions.



### Most popular excursions: (number of students)

14,519

Merri Creek Walk

12,992

Worms & Minibeasts

10,118

Paper Making

7,648

Renewable Energy

## Training

Our adult and youth training programs are delivered by a group of passionate educators that use the CERES landscape and draw from years of experience in environmental education and sustainable living to mould unique learning experiences. Our programs cover gardening, permaculture & horticulture, art & craft and cooking & hospitality. Our learning experiences focus on getting back to basics ('nana skills') and building resilience for the future.

Our programs are accessible to all. We pride ourselves in providing and tailoring our training for marginalised groups such as people with a disability, asylum seekers, new migrants, youth at risk and the under and unemployed.

#### Highlights for the year have been:

- Expanded our Vocational Education and Training programs by 100%.
- Worked with asylum seekers and made a difference to their well-being through cooking, gardening and connecting with the CERES community. Watching this evolve into work opportunities for released detainees has been rewarding for our whole team and has established lasting relationships.



- Workshop & short courses on & off site
- Courses tailored for special groups
- Programs for people with intellectual and/or physical disabilities
- Accredited training in Horticulture & Hospitality
- Programs for people that are out of work

- Completed a rigorous government auditing process for our disability programs and received positive feedback on the quality of what we deliver as a provider.
- Expanded the number and variety of workshops
- Delivered three Permaculture Design Courses in the year with an aim of four for the upcoming year.

Thank you for teaching me about gardening plants, weeding, compost, making a hole for digging in plants, irrigation system to water the garden beds, safety in the garden and testing the soil... I enjoyed everything about gardening apart from getting my hands dirty.

VET Horticulture student



## Outreach

CERES Education's Outreach team takes CERES knowledge and skills directly to the school and wider community, primarily through ResourceSmart Schools – one of the longest running environmental education programs in Australia. We also lead a regional consortium of over 80 partners that support school sustainability programs across metropolitan Melbourne.

In May, the State Budget 2015-2016 was announced and it was an uncertain period for the ResourceSmart Schools program. Outreach launched the 'I love my Facilitator' campaign to positively influence the State Government about the success of ResourceSmart Schools and due to the significant support received from our schools, partners, friends and fellow environmental educators, the campaign was a huge success! The State Government committed funding to enable all 2,200 Victorian schools to have access to the ResourceSmart schools framework and help them become leaders in climate change through practical and achievable actions.

CERES Education's strong leadership in environmental education was further endorsed by Outreach's inclusion in a state government tender to embed sustainability into 15 new school sites in Victoria. Outreach will build sustainability into these schools from the beginning and run environmental education programs for the schools and communities over multiple years. If successful, this will take CERES Education to a whole new level.

**\$1.2 million** saved by schools on the program achieved by reducing their energy and water consumption, and waste going to landfill



## Global

It was another great year of CERES Global engagements, with fantastic groups and amazing partners in country. Each year that we return we have a greater insight, relationship, and opportunity to share and learn from one another, understanding social and environmental challenges – and working out where CERES fits in it all.

After introducing trips to Timor and Cuba the previous year, we also added Samoa, China and Greece to the list.

Our partners in Indonesia, Māpuru and India are as enthusiastic as ever about having us return each year. Relations with universities are also growing stronger, with more student groups on board, more academics working with CERES Global to tie activities to academic content, and more support from university administrators to ensure the longevity of partnerships.

[below] Māpuru in East Arnhem Land



**18** key partner organisations in 6 countries



**105** participants went on CERES Global trips, up from 96 the previous year



# Farm & Habitat

The CERES park is an oasis of difference in inner city Melbourne. It aims to demonstrate emerging ideas, innovative landscape design, ecological building practice and green technology.

It is always a work in progress. Our "Habitat" management staff utilise specialist skills to support a diverse collection of park uses, including gardens, paths, fences, buildings, services and green technology of all shapes and sizes.

## Organic Farm

From seed we propagate, plant, grow, harvest, produce, sell, cook and share a bounty of organic, locally grown produce. We aim to demonstrate how an urban city farm can anchor a community food system and contribute to the local economy; providing an ethical marketplace, employment and opportunities for farmers, producers, teachers and food workers in an environment where we can celebrate the harvest.



[top] Propagating seeds.  
[bottom] Spring time in Honey Lane.

**13,701** school students came through Honey Lane Farm to learn about organic farming



## Our community food system consists of:

- Honey Lane Market Garden
- Merri Creek Market Garden – 2kms north of CERES
- Food Forest
- Chooks
- Community Kitchen
- Enterprises: Propagation, Market & Grocery, Fair Food, Seven Stars Food Project and The Merri Table.
- Urban Orchard project (managed by Urban Orchard members)
- Aquaponics system (managed by Aquaponics Group)
- Bee Hives (managed by the Bee Group)

## During the year we have:

- Introduced 100 new 16-week old point-of-lay hens to the farm
- Recommended work on the Food Forest area to create a new entrance for school groups, revised fencing and a teaching area with seating.
- Planned for the expansion of our Propagation enterprise for Spring 2015
- Held a beautiful evening dinner in Merri Creek Market Garden in partnership with Food Studio (Oslo) and chef Matt Wilkinson (Pope Joan), as part of Melbourne Food and Wine Festival.
- Worked with over 150 volunteers in both our Propagation enterprise and Honey Lane Market Garden throughout the year
- Celebrated the community food system at the annual Autumn Harvest Festival with 2000+ attendees
- Continued to teach and work with school kids, workshop participants, recently arrived migrants and other groups.

**7,500** tomato plants of 30 different varieties were grown and sold





## Gardens

Our gardens are looking beautiful thanks to the hard work of our numerous and much-loved volunteers, under the guidance of knowledgeable staff. Volunteering with the Habitat and Farm teams also builds community connectedness, which is the foundation of CERES.

### Great access to high standard knowledge and resources.

📍 CERES PDC, February 2015



[top] Honey Lane Market Garden (mango not grown here)

### During the year we have:

- Been supported by up to 20 horticulture volunteers two days a week
- Planted over 3000 plants across the CERES park. Lee Street and the dam have been a major focus. With Lee Street road surface decreased in area and edged, much former road area has been transformed into garden beds.
- Expanded and planted garden beds around the main carpark due to surfacing and edging providing extra space.
- Strengthened the CERES entry with additional gardens beds and planting.
- Completed the dedicated area in the Resource Hub for propagating plants for around the park, supported by school children and volunteers
- Replanted the rooftop and vertical gardens which are now flourishing
- Rejuvenated the dam area and other areas including Namalata Willem
- Removed noxious weeds across the grounds on a large scale



## Maintenance & Capital Works

Our Maintenance Team aims to maintain the ‘ruggedness’ and uniqueness of the park while also ensuring the safety and comfort of our visitors. Capital works are major projects undertaken over the year, that are planned at the start of each year to ensure vital upgrades are completed in all departments of CERES.

### During the year we have:

- Completed the renovation of Dapur in the Cultural Village – it is now a useful and beautiful teaching space
- Given the multicultural classroom a facelift, including new storage and paint
- Weatherproofed the Honey Lane outdoor classroom
- Improved the Merri entry, and installed a new cool room and a bigger coffee machine
- Built a new truck loading bay for the Nursery
- Installed new cooktops in the Community Kitchen
- Purchased and utilised a petrol-powered mulcher
- Transformed the water wheel in the Energy Park
- Started the renovation of the Training Room

Ongoing maintenance tasks undertaken by Habitat Team and hard working teams of volunteers include:

- Managing waste
- Repairing and maintaining all infrastructure including oiling doors, windows and signs
- Adjusting hinges, locks, latches, taps, sinks etc
- Repairing bluestone walls and pavers
- Mowing and whipper-snipping
- Pruning and chipping
- Cleaning gutters and filters
- Rebuilding fences, gates and steps
- Topping up paths



[top] Asphaltting the carpark.  
[middle] Outside the Multicultural Classroom.  
[bottom] Lee Street stormwater catchment.

### Green Technology

All Green Technology projects at CERES are designed to be either working demonstrations or ongoing research projects and can be viewed on site, during tours and via our new app for smartphones. The projects focus on renewable energy, energy conservation and integrated water cycle management, and the Green Technology Committee works within the Habitat Team to achieve reductions in resource use across CERES.

In 2012, CERES lost a devastating amount of potable water in leaks (14,400kL). This will not happen again with the mains water system upgrade and our detailed metering system.

In the past year water conservation has been our major focus - we completed the implementation of a Whole of Water Cycle Management and Behaviour Change project funded by the Victorian State Government.

#### Major achievements of the water project:

##### Water Conservation

- Upgraded the mains water supply throughout the site, including approximately 1km of trenching, and metering of 12 areas to more accurately monitor our consumption.

##### Stormwater retention, filtration and reuse

- Sealed the visitor centre carpark and linked it along with a neighbour's carpark (total catchment of 3000m<sup>2</sup>) to a reed bed filter, depositing filtered stormwater into 68,100 litres of storage for use on plants.
- Sealed Lee St and added infrastructure including sediment check dams, litter trap, sedimentation pond and sand filter. Lee Street now delivers most of its water into the dam. Also demonstrated down Lee Street are rain gardens and an area of pervious pavement.

##### Grey Water Reuse

- Rehabilitated domestic scale greywater treatment in the Ecohouse.

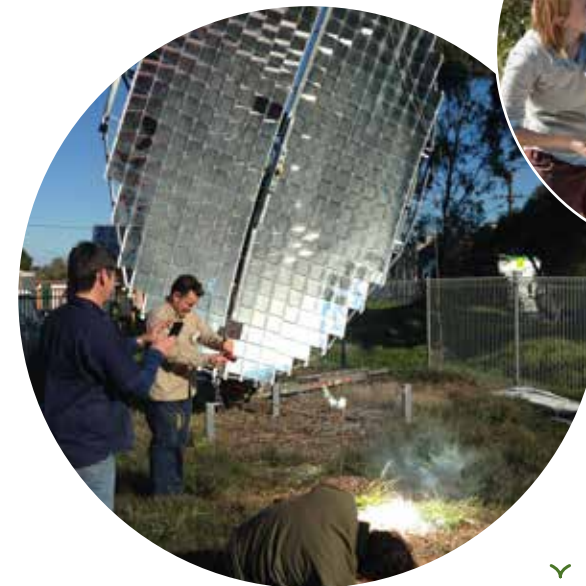


[top] New water tanks being installed.  
[bottom] Stormwater catchment in action.

### Behaviour Change

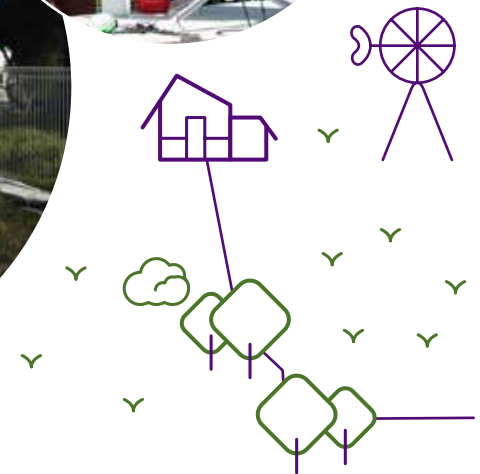
- Installed better water monitoring including sub-metering and monitoring software
- Enabled better community access to detailed information on water projects by including them in the new Chook smartphone app.

We were also busy in the Energy Park. The old Southern Cross windmill and waterwheel both received inspirational make-overs. A CERES-designed 10,000:1 ratio gearbox and sun tracking sensors were installed in the large parabolic solar thermal mirror (Scheffler Dish), which is now dancing its way through the day following the path of the sun. Initial heat tests indicated the focal point was more than 400 degrees Celsius.



We love your approach and what you're doing in the sustainability, health and wellbeing sphere.

● Sarah Cerveza, Facebook, April 2015



### 1000kL

estimated water per annum that will be saved via potable water saving strategies and stormwater retention



[top] Community partner - Engineers Without Borders - demonstrating solar technology at Harvest Festival.  
[bottom] Testing the Scheffler Dish.

Years	Electricity Use (kWh)	Gas Use (Mj)	Water Use (kL)	Biodiversity	Recycling leaving the park	Landfill
2013-14	183,609	426,433	7598	3000 new plants in the ground	394 x 240l bins	No data
2014-15	228,450	200,101	5381	3000 new plants in the ground	429 x 240l bins	417 x 240l bins

### Environmental Management Plan

We aim to improve our demonstration value and encourage community practice in sustainability. CERES is strengthening this demonstration through our new Environmental Management Plan (EMP) which provides a framework and reporting structure for reduction of environmental impacts of our activities. The EMP is concerned with waste reduction, energy conservation and efficiency, water usage efficiency and the enhancement of biodiversity at CERES.

**Electricity:** increased mainly due to increased activity in the Merri and Community Kitchen which both use only electricity (not gas). The Green Tech team is working actively on ideas to reduce the costs of electricity usage. We would like to greatly improve our generation capacity and are looking for in-kind assistance, donations and grant opportunities to allow this to happen.

**Gas:** decreased mainly as the old cafe has now closed, which used gas.

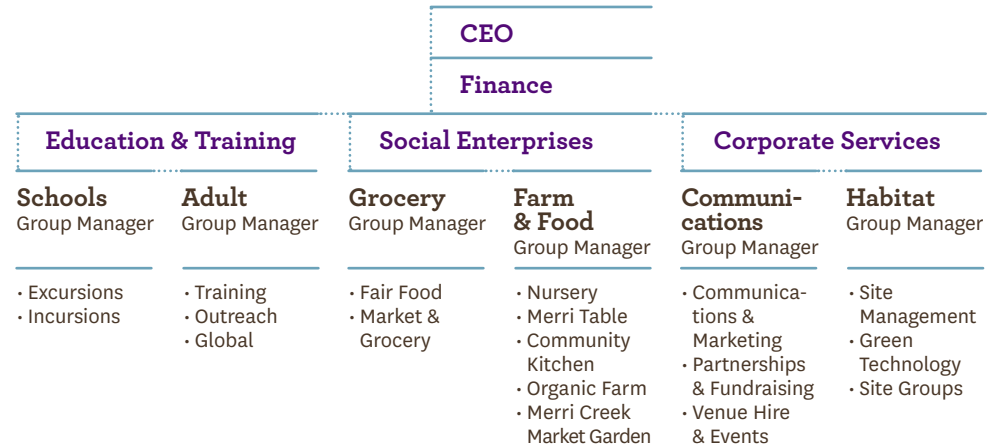
**Recycling:** With an increase in patronage, including Market & Grocery open more days and increased school visitors, there has been an increase material use overall. Additionally, commingled waste has gradually broadened its scope and now takes soft plastic and polystyrene - not only more material, but sometimes more bulky material.



[left] Adobe structure in the play area.  
 [middle] Solar panels in Energy Park.  
 [bottom right] Barry the rooster.

# Governance

CERES is a not-for-profit organisation and is managed by a voluntary Board with representatives elected from the membership. The Board appoints a CEO to oversee the activities of the organisation.



### Our People

#### CERES Board

- Jo Barraket, *Chairperson*
- Joshua Floyd, *Deputy Chair*
- Sue Lewis, *Secretary*
- Thomas Dobson, *Treasurer*
- Paul Adams, *General Member*
- Noel Blencowe, *General Member*
- Mark Riley, *General Member*
- Cr Meghan Hopper, *Council Representative*
- Greg Dickson, *Site Groups Representative*
- Ben Walta, *Staff Representative*
- Cinnamon Evans, *CEO*

#### Senior Managers

- Cinnamon Evans
- Sieta Beckwith
- Nick Curmi
- Chris Ennis
- Judy Glick
- Melissa Lawson
- Lorna Pettifer
- Nicolas Porter

#### Area Managers

- Luisa Brown
- John Burne
- Jane Burns
- Laurel Coad
- Shane French
- Sally Kennedy
- Beck Morley
- Adrian Richardson
- Meg Stewart
- Ben Walta

**80 equivalent full-time staff & hundreds of volunteers**



## Community Groups

CERES is home to ten different community groups (“site groups”) and several other groups that use spaces regularly throughout the year. These organisations and regular gatherings all add to the diversity and complexity of the park, offering classes, community connections, up-skilling and resource sharing.

Some of our official site groups have been with us for more than 30 years and they include:

- Aquaponics Group
- Bee Group
- Bike Shed
- Chook Group
- Community Garden Group
- Melbourne Zen Group
- Moreland LETS
- Sophia’s Spring
- SOTEMS
- Synergy Gallery

Other regular groups include:

- Anybody Yoga
- Insight Meditation
- My Yoga
- Rhythm Tree Family Music classes
- Shambhala Meditation



**750**  
bikes put back  
on the road



**18**  
Australorp chicks  
raised



**30 year**  
anniversary for  
Melbourne Zen Group  
(6 at CERES)



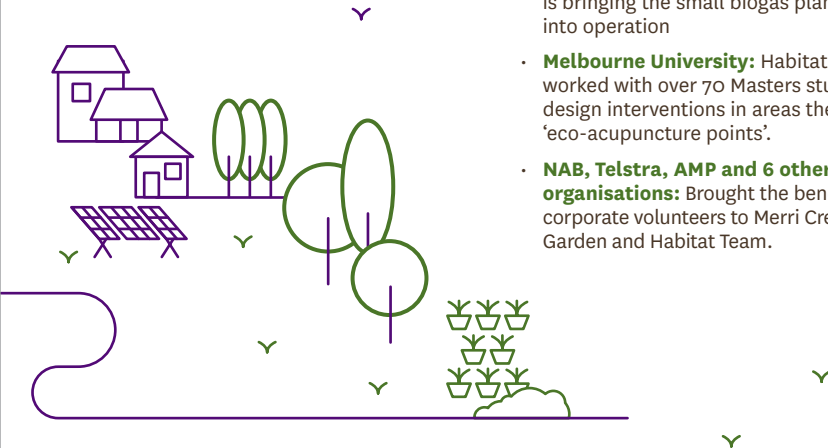
[above] Bees, bikes and aquaponics

## Partnerships

As always, CERES is the recipient of much goodwill and recognition from our community and corporate partners. Partners bring enthusiasm and respect for CERES and it is our pleasure to facilitate these connections for mutual benefit. External partners are connected with different areas of CERES to bring more capacity across the whole organisation.

Partnership highlights this year include:

- **Moreland City Council:** Continued to be our our most significant partner and supporter, providing our land and some funding for capital works.
- **Victorian Government Water Grant:** Working with Habitat Team in the delivery of 10 major water projects
- **RACV Community Environment Partnership:** continuing to deliver financial support for environmental education including the Mobile Energy Classroom, the Do More With Less conferences and the Chook App.
- **Catholic Education Office:** financial support for cultural programs
- **Engineers Without Borders:** in conjunction with a private donor, is bringing the small biogas plant into operation
- **Melbourne University:** Habitat Team worked with over 70 Masters students to design interventions in areas they termed ‘eco-acupuncture points’.
- **NAB, Telstra, AMP and 6 other organisations:** Brought the benefit of corporate volunteers to Merri Creek Market Garden and Habitat Team.



**Number  
of corporate  
volunteers:**



**\$18,000**  
Value of labour by  
corporate volunteers



## Assets and Liabilities Statement as at 30 June 2015

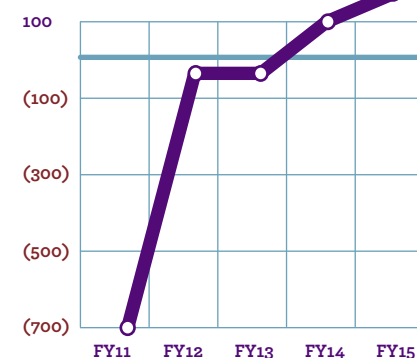
	2015 \$	2014 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	833,398	724,951
Accounts Receivable	67,134	79,398
Inventories	266,400	248,200
Prepayments	42,654	15,949
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>1,209,586</b>	<b>1,068,498</b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Buildings, Plant and Equipment	3,637,639	3,335,193
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>	<b>3,637,639</b>	<b>3,335,193</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,847,225</b>	<b>4,403,691</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable and other Payables	613,484	599,555
Employee Provisions	389,500	326,000
Hire Purchase Commitments	32,790	34,105
Income in Advance	614,361	759,479
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>1,650,135</b>	<b>1,719,139</b>
<b>NON CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Employee Provisions	37,700	48,000
Hire Purchase Commitments	81,603	31,105
<b>Total Non Current Liabilities</b>	<b>119,303</b>	<b>79,105</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,769,438</b>	<b>1,798,244</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>3,077,787</b>	<b>2,605,447</b>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		
Retained Surplus	3,077,787	2,605,447
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>	<b>3,077,787</b>	<b>2,605,447</b>

## Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 30 June 2015

	2015 \$	2014 \$
Revenue from Ordinary Activities	10,103,986	9,170,544
Expenses from Ordinary Activities before Depreciation	9,778,473	8,929,729
Surplus from Ordinary Activities before Depreciation	325,513	240,815
Depreciation	151,452	156,010
Surplus (Deficit) from Ordinary Activities after Depreciation	174,061	84,805
Grant Funding for Capital Improvements	298,278	47,121
<b>SURPLUS FOR YEAR</b>	<b>472,339</b>	<b>131,926</b>

### Surplus (Deficit) from Ordinary Activities after Depreciations

\$ thousands



### Treasurer's Report

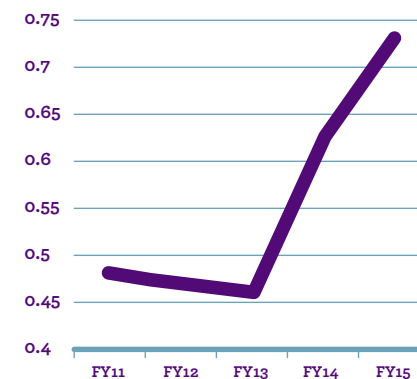
Our results continued to improve in FY15 thanks to solid contributions from our enterprises. We achieved a surplus from Operating Activities after depreciation of \$174k - the fourth consecutive improvement in this key result.

Revenue has grown across our enterprises and we successfully upgraded the entire water infrastructure of the site. FY15 saw the repayment of all short term loans (granted during our FY11 crisis) and we have met all of our taxation commitments. Our working capital position has also improved (i.e. the current ratio going from 0.62 in 2014 to 0.73 in 2015) but managing our short term financial obligations - and cashflow more broadly - still remains a key FY16 priority for us.

We look forward to building on this positive trend in our operating result and we aim to secure a more solid financial position for CERES so that the community can deliver the best social and environmental impact possible with our limited resources.

**Thomas Dobson**, Treasurer &  
**Nicolas Porter**, Finance Manager

### working Capital Ratio



# Acknowledgements

CERES thanks all partners who have provided financial and in kind support to CERES.

## Leading Partners

Moreland City Council  
Sustainability Victoria  
Victorian State Government

## Principal Partners

Catholic Education Office  
RACV  
Victorian Government Department of  
Education and Early Childhood Development  
Victorian Government Department of Health

## Key Partners

Adult Community and Further  
Education (ACFE)  
Ian Potter Foundation  
Inner North Community Foundation  
J Reid  
Trawalla Foundation

## Supporting Partners

3RRR  
Art Processors  
City of Whitehorse  
City of Yarra  
Frankston City Council  
Glen Eira City Council  
GreenSpring  
Holding Redlich  
Hume City Council  
Knox City Council  
Lord Mayor's Fund  
Manningham City Council  
Planet Saver



# About CERES

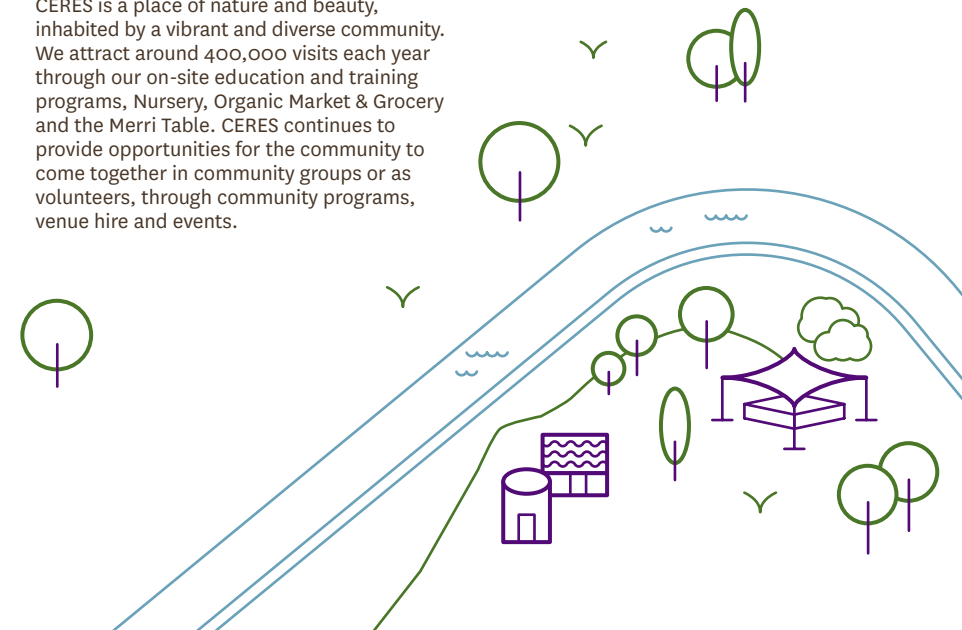
CERES – Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies, (pronounced ‘series’) is a place where people come together to share ideas about living well together, and directly participate in meeting their social and material needs in a sustainable way.

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, and join in the movement for economic, social and environmental sustainability.

For thousands of years the Wurundjeri people lived on the land where CERES now stands. The Merri Creek was a focus of their lifestyle, a place to swim and play and a vital source of food. Following the European invasion, the Victorian gold rush and the growth of Melbourne city, the site was quarried for bluestone then turned into a landfill site... As industry moved in the water became polluted and the trees and wildlife disappeared.

Since CERES was established in 1982, the efforts of many groups, staff, volunteers and labour market programs have transformed the site. Once a desolate wasteland, today CERES is a place of nature and beauty, inhabited by a vibrant and diverse community. We attract around 400,000 visits each year through our on-site education and training programs, Nursery, Organic Market & Grocery and the Merri Table. CERES continues to provide opportunities for the community to come together in community groups or as volunteers, through community programs, venue hire and events.

We reach out to over 200,000 people through our work in schools across metropolitan Melbourne, and regional and rural Victoria. We have a growing following on social media, which further widens our audience and reach. CERES Fair Food delivers organic food and the sustainable food message across metropolitan Melbourne. CERES also partners with a wide variety of organisations to bring about mutually beneficial outcomes, and reaches across the planet with CERES Global taking groups to India, Indonesia, Cuba, Timor, China, Samoa and Australian Aboriginal communities.





# Get Involved

Although we are very proud of the massive contribution our social enterprises make to the economic sustainability of CERES, we need your help! In order to continue our work in environmental education, building community, providing research and practical solutions for climate change and regenerating our land, we rely on the support of our community.

## There are three key ways you can support CERES:

### 1. Donate

[www.ceres.org.au/donate](http://www.ceres.org.au/donate)

### 2. Become a member

[www.ceres.org.au/membership](http://www.ceres.org.au/membership)

### 3. Volunteer

[www.ceres.org.au/volunteer](http://www.ceres.org.au/volunteer)

Thank you for your love and support!



Love this little gem in the heart of Melbourne... a place to explore, eat and dream.

Deborah Kaderah Miles,  
via Facebook





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## **CERES**

### **Community Environment Park**

Corner of Roberts & Stewart Streets,  
Brunswick East, VIC 3057

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phone **+61 3 9389 0100**  
email **ceres@ceres.org.au**  
web **www.ceres.org.au**