

CERES Strategic Direction

Approved by CERES Board

20th December 2016



Our global context

Human and natural evolution is generating a lot of problems, as well as opportunities for creative transformation. Climate change is a pervasive and immediate threat to which societies are inadequately responding. Yet, the natural ingenuity and adaptability of people is a resource continually available to us. A collective willingness to entertain different visions of human success can very rapidly shift our circumstances.

The mobility of people across and between countries presents unprecedented opportunities for intercultural learning and development. This mobility also creates pressures to design our worlds for demographic change and diversity, for new configurations of people in places. Late stage capitalism continues to accumulate great financial wealth; meanwhile, human inequality persists and this measure of wealth is increasingly disconnected from what people require for healthy, fulfilling lives. New and newly revived economic forms – including social enterprises, cooperativist platforms and other peer-based local economic development – are creating people-centred responses to these problems.

In an increasingly globalised world, our need for meaningful connections and belonging in community is strong. Real places in which people form and sustain relationships are sorely needed; online social networking also provides opportunities for people to connect and take action together, regardless of distance. The future we realise depends on action from us all.

Our purpose and local context

CERES pursues its primary environmental purpose 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.

In 2016, CERES' operating environment is informed by:

- A long term and mutually beneficial relationship with the City of Moreland, on whose land CERES is located;
- A substantial increase in projected population and housing density and type in East Brunswick over the next 20 years;
- Changing cultural composition, needs and capabilities of our local population;
- Escalating tensions between dominant economic aspirations, resource use and environmental impacts, and the potential for emerging technologies to fulfil popular hopes for simple substitution;
- Rapid developments in lower emission and 'green' technologies (e.g. for electricity supply) entailing an increasingly complex environment for capital investment decision making;
- Increased local competition in industries in which our social enterprises operate, particularly organic food and hospitality; and
- Excellent goodwill and community energy for CERES and its work.

Forward priorities in 2016

Over the last four years, CERES has been improving its financial sustainability and governance, while maintaining its activities in: 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. While financial

sustainability and good governance are continuing priorities, it is time for CERES to look beyond maintenance, to our next steps.

Recognising both our need to operate within our available resources, and the increasing connectedness and interdependence of efforts to achieve positive environmental and social change, CERES adopts the metaphor of the 'ripple effect' in characterising its strategic orientation. A ripple effect occurs when an action leads to linked actions and the spreading of effects arising from these. Our focus is thus on taking meaningful action that is linked to and enables others, in pursuit of greater good. We are concerned with the multiplier effects of our activities, locally, nationally and internationally.

Our forward priorities are to:

1. Inform and inspire through our stories and actions by:
 - a. Documenting and sharing our learnings about our local environment, green technology, social enterprise, and community-driven strengthening of local society, culture and spirit
 - b. Integrating our stories of change in our education programs, events programming, social enterprise marketing communications, international and on-site activities
 - c. Communicating about key learnings arising from our work with CERES members, staff, site users and social enterprise customers
 - d. Participating in relevant community, industry and government events in order to communicate our knowledge and experience
2. Contribute to leadership in our areas of purpose and experience, through increased partnerships with our communities, complementary groups and across sectors, including:
 - a. Extending our partnerships with bodies, including other community organisations, governments and private businesses where we see shared purpose and mutual benefit in doing so
 - b. Lending our voice to collective concerns consistent with our strategic and charitable purpose
 - c. Initiating and participating in cross-organisational initiatives that address both social and ecological problems and embody community-driven solutions
 - d. Developing joint projects and seeking joint funding for initiatives where collective solutions are likely to have a strong positive effect
3. Incubate and enable environmentally beneficial social innovation through:
 - a. Testing, demonstrating and supporting community-driven solutions to environmental, social, and economic problems
 - b. Supporting opportunities for education and research related to our demonstration activities
 - c. Celebrating and showcasing diversity and ingenuity of local groups and peoples
 - d. Supporting co-location of makers, social innovators and community groups on or near our site
4. Contribute to activism for environmentally progressive social change by:
 - a. 'Walking the talk', and contributing to public debate and local action about climate change, democratic participation, and economic alternatives
 - b. Being a place for community to come together to examine, discuss and respond to interconnected social and ecological challenges
 - c. Being a place that celebrates diversity, and environmentally beneficial social innovations
 - d. Participating in collective actions consistent with our strategic and charitable purpose
 - e. Supporting civil society organisations that share our purpose through endorsements, site use and promotion where appropriate.
5. Maintain financial sustainability and effective governance of our organisation