



COMMUNITY
ENVIRONMENT
PARK

Annual Report

2017-18



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Our Vision for Change

**For everyone to
fall in love with the
Earth again.**

CERES is a place for community-based learning and action. We create better ways of living together in five domains:

- Environmental
 - Social
 - Economic
 - Cultural
 - Spiritual
-

In all we do, we aim to reconnect people to each other and the earth.

We would like to acknowledge that CERES is on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people, and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country. We would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people as the custodians of this land and recognise that their culture and heritage is still important today.

Reach

VISITORS



470,000
visits to our park (estimated)

MEMBERS

1,018
bought or renewed their memberships

VOLUNTEERING



2,200+
volunteers
in Honey Lane,
Joe's Garden and
across the park

EDUCATION



Excursions **62,144**
visits by students and adults
for excursions and tours

Incursions **13,293**
students and staff had CERES
attend their school for incursions

Global **210**
participants on our cross-cultural,
educational and friendship building
trips overseas and at home

Outreach **249,046**
staff and students worked
with the Education Outreach team

Training **1,928**
participants in courses and programs

IN THE CYBER WORLD



223,266 visits to our primary website

123,034 follow us on social media channels



10,359 receive our newsletter every month

NOTE – “visits” and “participants” refer to numbers of contacts, not individual people.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES



50,659

ordered **Fair Food** organic grocery boxes

34,027

ate organic food with their friends
at the **Merri Table**

96,058

visited the **Grocery** to buy organic produce

49,535

bought plants from the **Nursery**
to grow at home

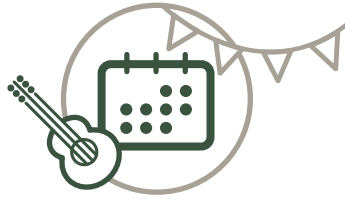
7,548

attended **Tamil Feasts** dinners

287

groups hired us as a **Venue**

EVENTS & FESTIVALS



23,110

came to the park for events run by outside groups

550

attended our extremely wet Harvest Festival

179

attended our Merri Merri Bush Dance
and Kingfisher celebration

150

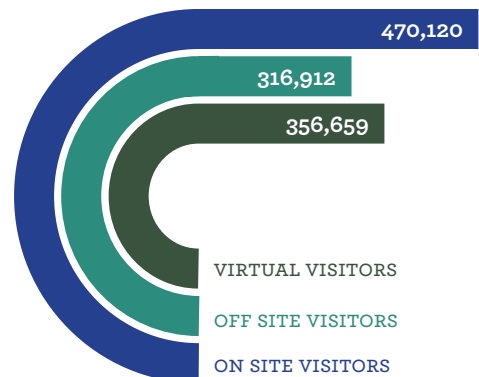
attended the inaugural Future Farmers forum

11,751

saw or interacted with us at conferences,
festivals and events outside CERES

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

Our reach across all
realms (including digital)
is approximately
1.1 million contacts.





Chairperson

CERES has been a much-loved part of the Melbourne landscape for nearly four decades. We have been reminded of that love, and how it converts to practical assistance, many times over in the last year.

From community support to resist inappropriate development on our front door, to philanthropic assistance to increase our solar energy capacity, state government investment in our business systems at Fair Food, and a win in the Victorian Pick My Project initiative to create a unique kinetic playground on site, CERES both benefits from and contributes to the power of community action on a daily basis. On behalf of the Board, my deepest gratitude to all – our members, staff, volunteers, funders, customers and supporters - who make CERES what it is every day.

CERES also has iconic value for many beyond Melbourne. This year, we have seen write-ups of our activities in Japan, the UK and beyond, and hosted many delegations to the site, including from the governments of Queensland and Singapore, seeking information about our work. On a recent overseas work trip, I was approached separately by two sustainability writers in Europe, each to let me know that they had profiled CERES in books about community-led approaches to sustainability.

While community support for and international interest in CERES is heartening, the world in which we operate continues to present us with new challenges to achieving more just and sustainable ways of living. The absence of comprehensive policy commitments to tackling climate change, growing social and economic

inequality in our communities, lack of recognition of the rights and contributions of Australia's first peoples, and continued harsh treatment of asylum seekers are matters that remind us of the need for CERES and organisations like it to demonstrate what is possible when communities collectively commit to getting things done. Despite our successes, we have much work to do. This includes getting our own house in order through our carbon emissions budget policy and our commitments to workplace equity and diversity. It also means continuing to fulfil our mission through education, demonstration, celebration, and activism.

I hope that this year's annual report provides you with some insights into CERES's many activities and achievements. May those insights galvanise you to continue to be part of our shared vision and the work needed to move us all towards a more sustainable present and future.



Jo Barraket,
CERES Chairperson,
2018

CEO

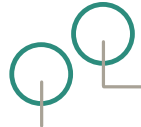
When I go out around town to share the CERES story, I meet so many wonderful people doing good work. Inevitably they ask me, 'Where are you from? What do you do?' When I respond by asking, 'Do you know CERES ...?' more often than not their eyes light up and they nod enthusiastically, 'Yes! I know CERES! I live near there/take my kids there/love the Nursery/order from Fair Food ... etc.', and the conversation flows easily from there.

Recently I travelled to Scotland for the Social Enterprise World Forum and met many inspiring social enterprise leaders from all over the world. After hearing about their excellent work, they asked me, 'Where are you from? What do you do?' The difference is that far fewer of them had heard of CERES, and so I needed to pull out my 'elevator pitch'. My pitch tends to be a bit different every time, depending on who is listening, but generally goes something like this:

"CERES is a sustainability education organisation in Melbourne, Australia that is 95% self-funded through our social enterprise. We deliver education and training programs in sustainable living, and we trade in organic food, permaculture plants and sustainable timber. All the proceeds fund a four-and-a-half hectare community visitor centre that demonstrates sustainable living."

I watch my international listeners process all this information. They often respond with, 'Wow' or, '95% self-funded, that's awesome' or, 'Where is it again?' I understand. It's a lot to take in, and it doesn't even scratch the surface of what CERES is, of what we do, and of what we mean to so many people.

We are working to improve our environmental performance (reducing our organisational carbon emissions, reducing waste to landfill, etc.) and improve our social justice performance (being an inclusive and diverse workforce and community). I know and firmly believe these changes are important and necessary and will make a significant impact.



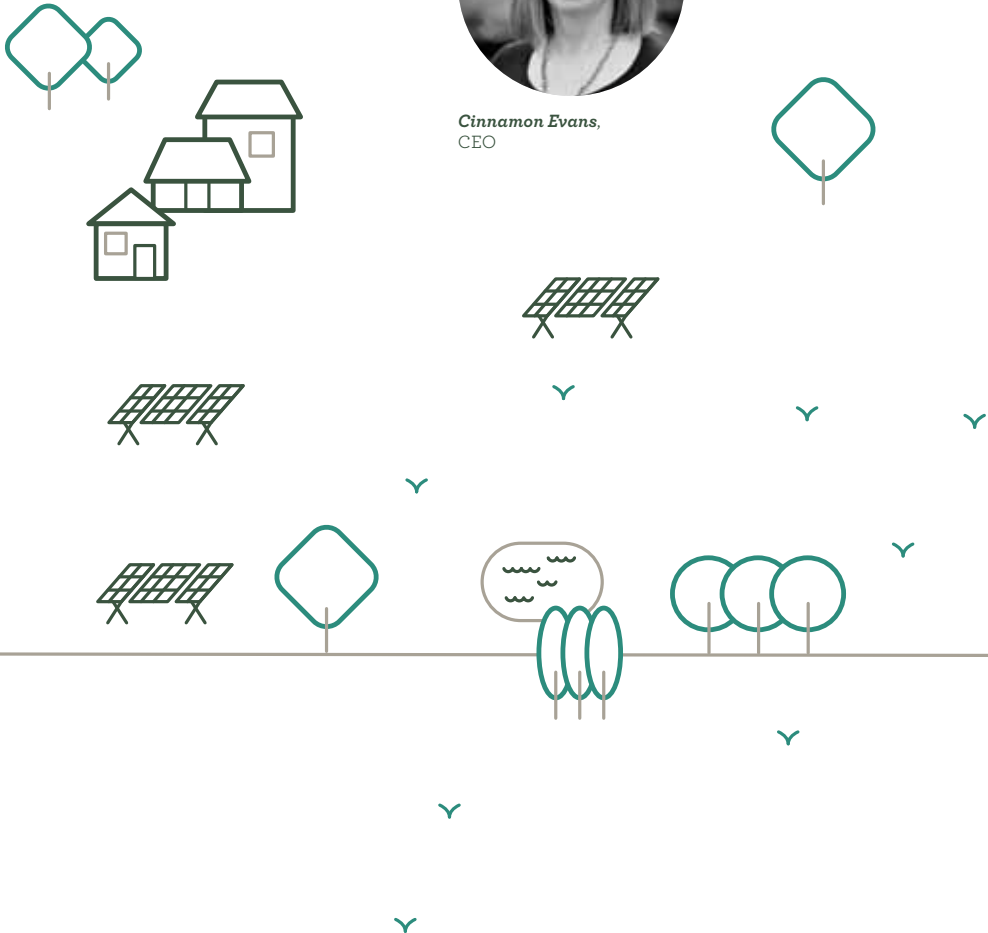
But I also quietly wonder if our even more significant impact is the space CERES inhabits in people's imaginations, a space that is environmentally beneficial, socially just, economically satisfying, culturally enriching and spiritually nurturing. Our individual imaginal space might be just a little seed, or it might be a fully-grown garden, but when we join them together into a collective imaginal space, then they can become whole ecosystems of change.

Which is why my favourite moments are when my listeners, inspired by my story of CERES, share their own stories. 'There's a social enterprise/garden/cafe/solar farm/community near where I live that ...'

The more we imagine, the more beauty we create in the world, one earth-loving place at a time.

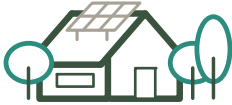


Cinnamon Evans,
CEO



Highlights

ENVIRONMENTALLY BENEFICIAL



Converted the **EcoHouse** to all-electric, including adding more PV, battery storage, heat pumps and energy monitoring systems.

Hosted editor of Drawdown, **Paul Hawken** at an event attended by 200 people, in partnership with Moreland City Council and MEFL.



Installed an **80kW solar system** at Fair Food.



Completed the new **Community Garden Project** design.



ResourceSmart Schools we work with won six categories at the annual awards ceremony, including **School of the Decade**



SOCIALLY JUST



Winner of the Premier's Sustainability Award 2017 in the Education category with our "**Alternative Pathways in Sustainability Education**" program.



Fair Food Manager travelled to Europe & Hong Kong on a **Social Change Fellowship**, bringing back stories and insights.



Partnered with key Victorian social enterprises to initiate **Social Enterprise Network Victoria**, a learning and development hub.

ECONOMICALLY SATISFYING



Launched **Fair Wood** to support sustainable forestry and timber. Then won the Darebin Pitch IT competition grand prize of \$20K.



CEO attended the **Social Enterprise World Forum** in Christchurch, sharing ideas about the new economy



Shared how CERES is "**empowering communities beyond capitalism**" with 100 young people at Australian Youth Climate Coalition's Powershift Conference

Celebrated the **rich history of giving** by our community during Community Philanthropy Partnerships Week.



[left] Paul Hawken.

[middle] Premier's Sustainability Awards.

[right] Launching Fair Wood.

CULTURALLY ENRICHING



Completed the **Northern Stories project** – capturing digital stories of community action from across Melbourne's inner north.



Shared food and stories of farming at Social Food Project dinners, Tamil Feasts and Future Farmers events.



Costa and Jane from **Gardening Australia** visited Joe's and Tamil Feasts and we featured on the show.

Travelled to **India** to work with our partners on social impact projects including IT and sustainable housing.

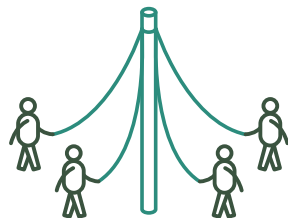
SPIRITUALLY NURTURING



Hosted our first **Spiritual Ecology workshop**, considering what a spiritual response to our current ecological crisis might look like.

Worked on the **Meditation Garden**, transforming the area into a space for private and group spiritual practice.

Harvest Festival, Merri Merri Bushdance, and Winter Solstice connected people to their place through **ritual and celebration**.



[top] The Social Food Project dinner.
[middle] Winter Solstice Festival.
[bottom] Jane and Costa from Gardening Australia.

2017—18



Education & Training

We are driven by our passion to educate for sustainability, and the need to act now for the planet. We focus on values-based education for sustainability and access for all; lifelong education.

CERES education programs build resilience, life skills and prepare people for green economy jobs of the future. We aim to empower individuals to make positive changes in their homes, schools and organisations - from the primary school student wanting to start a worm farm at home, to the organisation leader who wants to make sustainability a priority across a sector. We help reconnect people with natural spaces, lighten their footprint and encourage others to get on board.

Our park is a landscape for inspiration, application and immersion in sustainability. It allows learning experiences to be created for a wide range of audiences - from early childhood to seniors, from marginalised groups to individual members of the community. Our suite of skilled educators impart skills and actions in living sustainably, both within and beyond our demonstration site.

Our learning experiences are delivered by four areas:

Excursions & Incursions

School students, both on and off site

Training

Youth and adult programs

Outreach

Professional learning for teachers in schools and early learning centres

Global

Engaging global communities



[left] Waste education program.
[middle] The Energy Education Van.
[right] Global students in Samoa making organic coconut oil.



Excursions & Incursions

CERES Excursions and Incursions have strong environmental messages that link to the aims of the organisation as a whole. The wide range of programs and activities are designed to connect students to the natural world with an emphasis on finding do-able solutions to problems. The teaching is hands-on, varied and delivered in an approachable, non-didactic manner.

This year we have:

- Experienced strong uptake of our new school garden consultation and building program
- Established a new Kinder program
- Received a further three years of funding to roll out our new Student Environmental Leadership Program to regional and rural Victoria.
- Completed construction of the Human Powered Classroom
- Formalised and begun offering our Home Sustainability Advisory Service



[above] School group learning about farming.

Outreach

CERES Outreach Education provides professional learning to teachers in schools to embed sustainability in everything they do. We are a major provider of **ResourceSmart Schools** – one of the longest running environmental education and behaviour change programs in Australia. Our goal is for schools to have a culture of sustainability – where staff and students practice sustainable behaviours, the school's environmental footprint reduces, and the schools contribute to a sustainable future for all.

We also deliver a **ResourceSmart in Early Childhood** program – sustainable behaviours formed early in life require less behaviour change later on.

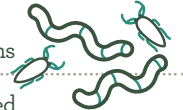
CERES has always been a place to inspire teachers and students. We incorporate CERES into our excursion plans every year.

📍 Teacher, Essex Heights Primary School 2017

8,124 students learnt & acted the Dreamtime story of Tiddalik The Frog Who Drank all the Water.



16,270 students interacted with our worms



6,515 students trapped water bugs in nets at the dam. Our mini-beast friends are among the hardest working animals at CERES.

7,091 students failed to make a kettle boil using a pushbike, it's incredibly hard!



In addition to professional learning for teachers at schools and early learning centres, we offer workshops to universities, councils and businesses. We lead a regional business consortium of over 80 partners that support school sustainability programs across metropolitan Melbourne.

This year, we:

- Were the Sustainability Partner for new schools that were opened as part of the Public Private Partnership
- Helped the 50th ResourceSmart School to achieve 5-star certification in the program: St Kilda Primary.
- Celebrated with CERES schools as they won six categories at the ResourceSmart Schools Awards, including St. Louis de Montfort's Primary School who was awarded "School of the Decade."



\$2.4 million was saved by schools working with CERES Outreach Education

6,562 TONNES
greenhouse gas emissions reduced

129,106 KILOLITRES of water saved

16,1227 CUBIC METRES
of waste diverted from landfill

14,937 trees and other plants
improved biodiversity

[top] Water education program.

[middle] Steps to Sustainability conference.

[bottom] Taking education programs into schools.

ResourceSmart and CERES have been fabulous to work with. They provide real life stories and real world connections to make the subject matter relevant and staff feel empowered to make changes at school level.

Teacher, Black Rock Primary School, 2017



Training

CERES Training provides alternative education pathways for adults and youth in sustainability. We stand out in the adult community education sector with our focus on applied sustainable living programs, horticulture, permaculture, cultural education, social justice and environmental education.

This year, we:

- Won the 2017 Premier's Sustainability Award in the education category
- Created new courses, workshops and opportunities for community members and marginalised groups.
- Connected community members to vocational and education pathways in the second year of our Alternative Pathways in Sustainability program. It included placements and enrolments in permaculture, horticulture and environmental education programs, volunteer positions and employment.
- Created and delivered a new course in Horticultural Therapy with an overwhelming response. Stephen Wells, ABC Gardening Australia supported the development and the delivery through a guest appearance on the course.

I gained skills of thinking different ways and inspiration for my future dreams to set up career in horticulture. From this course I have started a Diploma of Horticulture and got a job at a Nursery. The course has opened up a whole future for me and the course of my life. I'm very grateful.

📍 Complete Urban Farmer Participant 2018



1734 people participated in 117 workshops and 18 courses

194 students participated in our horticulture and kitchen operations programs

79 participants were supported to take their next steps towards environmental careers

88% of workshop participants said they would use the sustainable life skills and knowledge learnt in their daily life

77% of workshop participants said they were inspired by our courses to apply more sustainable practices in other areas of their life



[top] Environmental Education course down by the Merri Creek.
[bottom] Mobile energy classroom.

Global

CERES Global, the international outreach program of CERES, engages with issues of global equity and sustainability, linking our local community to friends and partner organisations around the world. Over the past 14 years CERES Global has established extensive, long-term friendships with urban and rural NGOs and communities in Arnhem Land, India, Cuba, China, Timor Leste, Indonesia and Samoa.

To date, we have worked with local partner organisations on environmental education, IT for social impact, sustainable and traditional housing design, environmental education, sustainable agriculture, community energy projects, women's empowerment and community advocacy. In recent years we have grown the program to incorporate university student groups, working closely with university partners to develop curriculum and draw key academic learnings from our international partners.

This year, we:

- Delivered another great season of weaving trips to remote Mapuru with our Yolngu mob friends
- Deepened a university partnership with tailored trips to Samoa and India
- Ran our fifth "IT for Social Impact" trip through the Mumbai red-light district, Dharavi Slums, and remote tribal Maharashtra
- Organised our first Chile engagement
- Explored new partnership models to deliver a high-end Tasmania nature immersion
- Ran an "Indonesia Living Oceans" marine plastics trip
- Worked with partners to deliver the Timor School gardens and Permaculture trip

[top] Indonesia ocean plastics trip.

[bottom] Learning earth building techniques at Agari Permaculture Farm.



Sustainable Housing Project in Jamnya (India):



5000+ compressed stabilised eco bricks pressed

1 new model sustainable dwelling built

2 teachers and families housed

350 kids supported with new teachers in remote tribal Maharashtra

Spending time with the Yolgnu women on country was a profoundly moving and life changing experience. It helped me to really understand first-hand how important it is to support indigenous communities to live remotely. This is a thriving community with so much to offer.

Mapuru trip participant 2018



Social Enterprises

Our social enterprises deliver targeted social and community benefits using traditional business principles.



CERES owns and operates an integrated portfolio of social enterprises that help customers meet their material needs in a sustainable way, deliver sustainability outcomes, provide livelihoods for staff and suppliers and generate funds to support the park and its educational purposes.

Our social enterprises 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.



[top] In the Merri Table.
[middle] Team Tamil Feasts.
[bottom] All the high vis at the Fair Food warehouse.



Fair Food

CERES Fair Food is Victoria's largest online organic retailer. We feed 1000 households each week, support over 100 organic farmers, makers and suppliers, deliver to 70 Food Hosts, employ more than 40 people (over a third of whom began as asylum seekers or new arrivals) and incubate new social enterprises such as CERES Microgreens and CERES Fair Wood.

This year, we:

- Secured \$180K funding to make our webshop mobile friendly, recycle a cool room and build an indoor vertical farm
- Through a sponsored fellowship, visited sustainable grocers in Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Holland, Hong Kong and UK
- Installed an 80 kWh solar system to make our warehouse carbon neutral
- Launched CERES Fair Wood after winning the Darebin Pitch-IT competition
- Replaced plastic bags for bulk wholefoods and salad mixes with home-compostable eco-cellophane
- Completed a move from our old warehouse to our new home in Preston

\$2.5 MILLION

of food purchased from organic farmers and producers



271,761 visits

to the Fair Food webshop



[left] Pedal power at the Grocery.

[middle] Mayor of Darebin Kim Le Cerf visiting us at the Fair Food warehouse.

Grocery

The CERES Grocery is not merely a place to shop; it is a place to meet your friends (and make new friends) whilst enjoying a coffee and watching the kids play in the sandpit. It is a place to catch some live and local music three mornings a week and support Melbourne's talented local musicians. It is a place to sample new and innovative products from local food producers and it is a place to learn about seasonality, food miles, recycling and organics.

And, it is a place to shop for delicious organic food.

This year, we:

- Continued to supply bulk goods, assisting in reducing our customers' plastic use. Our promotion and support of Plastic Free July which received a positive response from customers.
- Expanded the food offerings in our coffee stall
- Collaborated with all CERES food system areas to provide fresh, organic produce with low associated carbon emissions
- Continually reviewed our stock to meet customer demand - now at more than 1000 different stocklines.

2,600 KGS
of organic rolled oats
sold in bulk without the
use of any plastic



[right] Fresh organic produce in the Grocery.

The Merri Table

The Merri provides seasonal, organic and low mileage food to our customers, whilst also maintaining a selection of choices for people with various dietary requirements. Working closely with Organic Farm team, the Merri Table features weekly specials that include produce grown at Honey Lane Market Garden and Joe's Market Garden.

This year proved to be challenging for the Merri Table, with an unusually low trading spring season, change of key staff, and complex infrastructure repairs required, including the glycol chiller refrigeration system. This was reflected in a lower than anticipated financial return. These challenges have been reviewed, adjustments have been made to the operations and we are already seeing a positive shift in trade.

This year, we:

- Provided a plant based catering menu for the Paul Hawken “100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming” event at the Coburg Town Hall
- Hosted a series of “Farmer to Table” dinners, highlighting ethical and sustainable food producers and their role in the hospitality industry
- Introduced a new simplified room hire catering menu. The response has been positive and is reflected in an increase in bookings
- Helped Joe's Market Garden get out of a pickle! Our Head Chef used surplus produce to make 150 jars of pickles for sale.



64,800 free range,
cruelty free organic eggs
scrambled, poached or fried



[left] Dinner collaboration with the Social Food Project.
[middle] Spring greens on the menu.
[right] Tamil Feasts dinner in the Merri.



Tamil Feasts

The Tamil Feasts are lovingly cooked by four Tamil men currently seeking asylum in Australia and are supported by a coordinator and a team of dedicated volunteers. The project provides an opportunity for the men to share their cultural food heritage with the wider community, offers them ongoing employment, and raises awareness about Melbourne's asylum seeker community.

This year, we:

- Featured in Australia's most popular design blog, *The Design Files*
- Partnered with over ten different organisations such to host fundraisers and raise awareness of asylum seekers issues.
- Welcomed a new Tamil cook and a new Area Manager to the team
- As part of Refugee week, one of the Tamil cooks was recognised with a business achievement award for his work with Tamil Feasts and his newly established cleaning business.

Joy, delight and wonderful food with an amazing team. Yet touched with a moment of sadness knowing what these men have endured and how there are people in power who think freedom is a commodity that can be denied. Please go. Enjoy the food - you won't be disappointed. Support refugees.

David, via Facebook 2018

Nursery

The Nursery continued to thrive this year with our usual focus on giving great customer service combined with expert horticultural knowledge. We advocate for sustainable, nature-focused gardening and encourage people to produce food with the resources that they have available.

As the local area becomes more densely populated with apartments, we are focusing on the enrichment and connection with the natural world that balcony gardening and indoor plants can provide. Our product range has increased to include more pots, hanging baskets and indoor plants to reflect this. Since installing the bookshelf we are becoming highly regarded for the diverse and interesting range of books that we stock, and we take great pride in this.

This year, we:

- Greatly expanded our indoor plant range as a result of the additional indoor space and new bookshelf
- Installed new shelving and expanded our product range
- Continued to provide customers with a rich and rewarding experience, offering plant growing education whenever possible

Customers took home:

50,604 seedling punnets

2,645 books
(up from 1775 the previous year)

29,952
individual tubestock



Fantastic plants, seeds and seedlings and great advice given, you guys always give great gardening tips...
CERES Nursery is the bomb!

📍 Susan, via Facebook 2018



[top] Indoor plant range.

[middle] Nursery chickens with character.

[bottom] The extended bookshop.

Venue Hire

The Venue Hire team coordinates the internal and external hire of all venues at CERES and supports the planning and delivery of CERES festivals and events. With such a variety of hire spaces to manage and large number of users, from corporate to community, to our own workshops, and the spaces are a constant hive of activity.

This year, we:

- Assisted with the successful delivery of three major CERES events: Merri Merri Bush Dance, Harvest Festival and Winter Solstice, all of which encouraged a sense of connection with our community and our neighbours.
- Took on the management of corporate volunteer groups across CERES and Joe's Market Gardens which saw 517 corporate volunteers engage in volunteering activities, contributing to many urban regeneration projects.
- Saw an increase in children's birthday party bookings as well as an increased awareness of sustainable party planning, including the use of sustainable and environmentally friendly party supplies.
- Grew in the number of multi-day government department bookings in the CERES Van Raay meeting rooms.

17 unique hire spaces
managed cross the park

110 not-for-profit room
hire bookings

90% of our customers
valued 'outdoor areas & CERES nature connection' as one of the most important characteristics when choosing to hire spaces at CERES



CERES is a haven away from the big smoke, but only a short tram ride away. The people that work there are delightful and always willing to help, and the atmosphere built from a collective of earthy, kind-hearted and like-minded individuals is simply divine.

🗨 Matt McMahon, Venue Hirer



[top] Wedding photos on Honey Lane.

[bottom] Celebrating with glasses of bubbles in the Pavilion.



Farm & Habitat

The CERES park is an oasis of difference in inner city Melbourne. We aim to demonstrate food systems, innovative landscape design, emerging ideas, ecological building practice and green technology for community learning.

Our Farm team propagates, plants, grows, harvests and sells locally grown organic produce.

Our Habitat team utilises specialist skills in gardening, building, maintenance and green technology to support a diverse collection of park uses and demonstrations.

Organic Farm

Our community food system is one of the key features of the park. Covering around a quarter of the park's footprint, we aim to demonstrate how an urban city farm can anchor such a system and contribute to the local economy by providing an ethical marketplace, employment and opportunities for farmers, producers, teachers and food workers in an environment where we can celebrate the harvest.

Our community food system consists of:

- Honey Lane Market Garden
- Joe's Market Garden – 2kms north of CERES
- Seedling Propagation
- Food Forest
- Chooks
- Community Kitchen
- Urban Orchard project (managed by Urban Orchard members)
- Bee Hives (managed by the Bee Group)

It also supports all of our social enterprises.

This year, we:

- Introduced a new internship program, hosting three interns for a three-month period in spring. The program worked well and will run annually.
- Hosted a “Future Farmers” event to present the diverse pathways into sustainable farming. This event was initiated by our interns and supported by our Farm team.
- Welcomed an Urban Farmer and a Weekend Farmer to the team in newly created roles.



150 people attended our inaugural Future Farmers event.



[top] Entrance to Honey Lane Organic Farm.
[bottom] Touring the farm with the Goodsmiths as part of the Victorian Small Business Festival.

Joe's Market Garden

CERES Joe's Market Garden (Joe's) is a 2.5 acre market garden that has been continuously farmed for the past 150 years, and grows produce for CERES Fair Food, Tamil Feasts and the Merri Table. It operates a popular farm gate stall every Saturday and during the week, community and corporate volunteers come to connect to the land and help out.

Highlights this year included regular "weed dating" events, workshops and Murnong (Yam daisy) planting.



Gardens

The Garden team is responsible for the maintenance of all garden spaces in the park with the exception of the farm and the community garden plots. Permaculture principles are used in the design of the gardens, which consist of a combination of indigenous, native and culinary plants. The team is also responsible for the management and maintenance of composting, worm farms and irrigation systems.

With the focus on increasing native plantings and habitat areas this year, we have seen a rise in the number of native birds nesting within the grounds including magpies, tawny frogmouths, ravens and butcher birds.

This year, we:

- Gave a much-needed revamp to the Village Green. Protective measures were put in place to ease compaction, a new irrigation system was installed along with paved edging around the lawn, and a new grass blend of native varieties and fescue was sown.
- Began using a new Berkely Hot compost system
- Expanded the wildlife corridor between CERES and the Merri Creek, and around our dam area
- Started propagating our own plants for the gardens
- Established a tropical / subtropical food garden in the Resource Hub polytunnel
- Began ground works on the new Meditation Garden at the Learning Centre
- Created a herbaceous border on the Merri Hill

1,200 Indigenous
or native plantings



1,500
annuals planted



[top] Indigenous plants for the gardens.

[middle] Amaranth looking glorious.

[bottom] Hazel helping with compost distribution.

[left] Hard landscaping in preparation for the Mediation Garden.

[right] New solar panels on the Zero Emissions EcoHouse.



Maintenance & Capital Works

Our Maintenance team maintains the ‘ruggedness’ and uniqueness of the park while also ensuring the safety and inspiration of our visitors. We focus on designing and implementing sustainable technology demonstrations in energy, waste and water, repairing and maintaining buildings, gardens and paths, hard landscaping works and waste management.

Capital works projects are undertaken throughout the year to ensure vital upgrades are completed across the park.

This year, we:

- Renovated the DIG Office, including creating a purpose-built volunteer kitchen and seating area. The desks were crafted from the old office mezzanine floor and from many other salvaged materials around the park
- Upgraded the commercial refrigeration system in the Merri
- Created an access route to the Human Powered Classroom and connected it to the Fossil Fuels Classroom via a recycled plastic deck
- Installed cabinetry and sun shading in the CERES Van Raay Centre
- Installed heating and cooling in the Multicultural Classroom
- Purchased a ‘new’ second hand truck called ‘Lofty’

Green Technology

The main developments in green technology this year were achieved in the EcoHouse, which is in a constant state of renewal to keep up with innovation and technology. Over the past few years, partnerships with many companies and institutions have been formed, leading to upgrades throughout the house.

This year, we:

- Completed the all-electric EcoHouse upgrade, including removing gas appliances, installing 3.3kW of solar, an induction cooktop, heat pump hot water and air conditioning systems, a 6kW/hr solar storage battery and electric vehicle charging system.
- Upgraded the Merri commercial refrigeration system to pure propane – a “climate benign” refrigerant gas. The compressor consumes approximately 20% of all electricity at CERES and the upgrade is forecast to reduce our CO₂ emissions by 13.55 tonnes per year.
- Installed nine bicycles to power domestic electrical appliances, trialled “o concrete” foundations and reused redundant solar panels as the weatherproof cladding on the Human Powered Classroom.
- Undertook a site-wide energy audit, which has assisted in prioritising actions in our Environmental Management Plan.

The number one solution to reverse global warming is refrigerant management*. This strongly influenced our decision to upgrade the Merri commercial refrigeration system.

*According to *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan to Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, edited by Paul Hawken

Environment

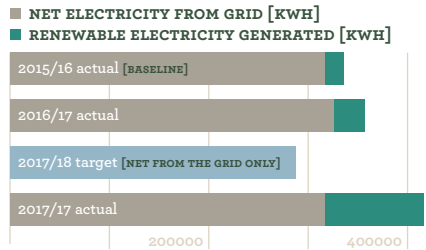
At this time of increasing climate crisis, it is important that we have a clear framework to rapidly improve our organisational impacts, and work with community on collective solutions. Inspired by solutions outlined in *Drawdown**, and guided by our own ambitious targets, this year we learnt a great deal.

In 2017, we developed our Environmental Management Plan (*EMP 2017-20*) to include targets in energy, waste, water and biodiversity. The primary and most ambitious goal of *EMP (2017-20)* is a **40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020**, in line with the CERES Carbon Budget Policy. Working from baseline measurements in *EMP (2014-16)*, we set targets to reduce our impacts over the next three years in an Action Plan.

This year, although we reduced our impact in most areas, we only met or exceeded our target in water use. Although not meeting our targets is disappointing, it is an achievement to have reduced our impacts from baseline recordings, especially considering how much CERES has grown as a whole. We have greatly increased renewable energy generation on site, and the benefits of that will flow into future years. We also have a better understanding of how we monitor and record our impacts, and developed steps to further reduce impacts in the coming year.

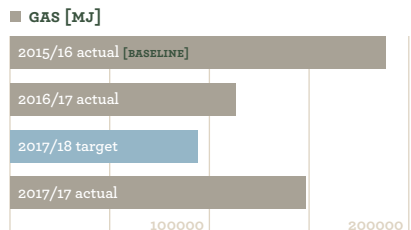
Electricity

Electricity use decreased from last year although did not quite make it to our target. Capacity for renewable energy was significantly boosted with the installation of an 80kW system at Fair Food in December 2017. Further installations of 40kW in solar PVs are planned for our main site to make a further big step towards reducing our reliance on mains power in the coming year. Consumption was reduced by 11,000 kWh per year by upgrading the large commercial refrigeration system at the Merri with pure propane, a “climate-benign” gas. Further reduction of our electricity consumption, especially due to refrigeration will be a focus in year 2 of the Action Plan. We have not yet developed a target for renewable energy generation in *EMP 2017-20*, as it relies on additional funding to develop our capacity in that area, and is speculative.



Gas

We are aiming to remove all natural gas from our energy supply. This has been an exciting area of change and progress with the all-electric EcoHouse upgrade, where gas hot water, heating and cooking have all been replaced with best practice energy efficient electric appliances. Unfortunately our gas consumption increased this year, mainly as a result of space heating the Van Raay meetingrooms and offices.



Carbon Emissions

The reduction in carbon emissions this year can be attributed to the substantial increase in renewable energy generation, however we need to further increase our generation and reduce our reliance on non-renewable energy in order to meet our targets. Note that 60% of the emissions in 2017/18 are attributable to electricity which is carbon-offset by our supplier. Discussion is ongoing about how we account for our carbon emissions to fit with both standard carbon accounting and our Carbon Budget Policy, which has chosen to favour insetting over offsetting.

Water

Metering and monitoring of water has improved and it's becoming clearer how much each area is consuming. Food growing is our biggest consumer of water. This year we have been testing stormwater captured from CERES, and neighbors, car parks for potential use on food gardens, however test results are inconclusive at this stage as care must be taken to ensure the water quality is of an adequate standard.

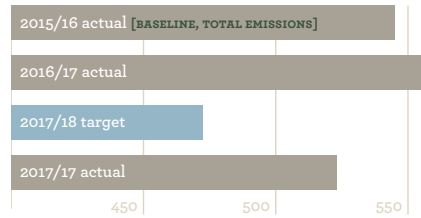
Waste Management

Waste to landfill reduced but additional construction refuse was a major challenge, with several building upgrades generating substantial waste we couldn't reuse. We do not have a target for recycling, though we do continue to monitor and improve recycling systems including collecting e-waste, and we are a community collection point for batteries, phones, rubber bands, printer cartridges and bicycles. Our compost system ensures no food waste leaves our park.

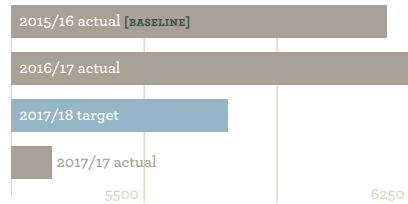
Biodiversity

Over 1200 indigenous or native plants and 1500 annuals were planted this year. Although the number of native plants going into the ground is only one measure of biodiversity, we have set a target to ensure we continuously improve habitat. A large proportion of the year was spent maintaining and strengthening the relatively new garden areas on site. With the expansion of the gardens we have seen a rise in the number of native birds nesting within the grounds, including magpies, tawny frogmouths, ravens and butcher birds. Noisy and Indian Mynah bird populations have decreased, several blue tongue, skink and tiger snake sightings have occurred, and possum populations are on the rise.

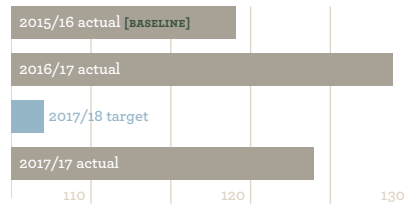
CARBON EMISSIONS FROM ELECTRICITY, GAS AND TRAVEL



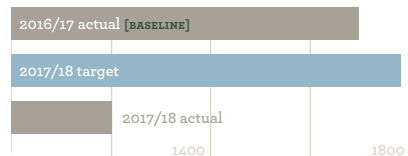
WATER USE [KL]



WASTE TO LANDFILL [M³]



BIODIVERSITY [#NATIVE PLANTS]





Community

Community connectedness forms the foundation of CERES, and we are committed to providing many different avenues for meaningful engagement with our community. Since 1982, generations of visionary and hard working people from all cultures have been joining together to transform and reclaim this well-loved piece of land.

Festivals and events

Our festivals are an opportunity for us to share our work with our community, to reflect on the seasons and our connection to the earth and to celebrate together with music, colour, food and heart.



[top] Winter Solstice celebration.

[middle] Japanese cultural dancers braving the rain at Harvest festival.

[bottom] Contestant in the giant vegetable competition.

Highlights:

- **Harvest Festival** celebrated Cultural Diversity Week and included a Welcome to Country, cultural workshops, dance performances and special guest, Ego Lemos
- **Paul Hawken** joined us at Coburg Town Hall to present the most comprehensive plan ever proposed to reduce global warming
- **Future Farmers** presented the diverse pathways into sustainable farming
- **Winter Solstice** celebrated the beautiful darkness by lighting it up with an enormous bonfire and ritual
- **Merri Merri** Bushdance connected us with spring and the return of the Sacred Kingfisher
- **Community Philanthropy Partnerships Week** event celebrated the rich philanthropic history of CERES and launched our new sub-fund for bequests.

In addition to our events, we also hosted a huge variety of other community events including Rainbow Urban Gathering, Sounds of Africa Festival, 3RRR BBQ Day, Stacks On Festival, Afterglow Festival, a new festival market, cultural events, weddings and birthday celebrations.

I grew up in rural Ethiopia and I can't believe there is a place like CERES so close to the city. I'd like to come back and teach weaving workshops.

📍 Muhubo, Harvest Festival participant

Volunteers

Our sustainability infrastructure, buildings, gardens and paths throughout our 4.5 hectare beautiful demonstration park could not be managed by our paid staff alone.

Volunteers are involved on a daily basis in practical work such as gardening and maintenance. They also significantly contribute to design development in architecture, landscape architecture and engineering, and offer specialist skills such as turf maintenance and metal fabrication.

This year, we:

- Formed a relationship with the Aboriginal Community Elders Service (ACES), 300m up the creek with CERES volunteer working bees in their gardens
- Celebrated National Volunteer week with our volunteers, including dinner, cakes and a long lunch
- Welcomed a new group of Green Technology volunteers
- Invited volunteers to participate in CERES Board sub-committee groups, making recommendations to support our strategic direction. Groups included the Site Planning and Infrastructure Committee and Carbon Budget Working Group
- Weekly volunteers at Tamil Feasts kept people fed, conversation flowing and asylum seekers supported

Community Groups

Our park is home to eight different community groups (“site groups”) and many 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:

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

Other regular groups include:

- Aozora Shokudo Japanese cultural classes
- Chant and Chai Collective
- Down to Earth Cooperative
- Kids First Aid
- Makers & Flea Market
- Melbourne Insight Meditation Group
- Mindful Yoga
- National Electrical and Communications Association
- Rhythm Tree Family Music classes
- Shambhala Meditation
- School of Philosophy
- Yoga Para Todos
- Young Shaman Foundation



[top] Volunteers in the food forest.

[bottom] Volunteers sharing lunch in Honey Lane Organic Farm.

Highlights

Community Gardens & Chook Group participated in a whole area redevelopment process which resulted in a concept design approved by all groups involved. This was the culmination of several years of consultation and design development. The groups are now working towards implementing the design.

Melbourne Zen Group, in addition to their regular group meditations, undertook social action against plastic waste, supported the construction of the Meditation Garden, and held a weekend program that included walking practice along the Merri Creek, acknowledging country and Wurundjeri heritage.

Moreland LETS have been at CERES since the very beginning and are still going. Their Bacs system is now digitised and continues to bring people together to trade favours without the use of money.

SOTEMS ran a total of 80 spiritual purification sweatlodge ceremonies which comprised of a total of 676 participants. Of which, 154 were participating for the first time or were new to CERES.

Communications

Our Communications Team continued to support the good work of all the different areas by ensuring the stories that demonstrate our impact are shared with staff, supporters and wider public.

This year we ran training in digital storytelling, values-based communication and marketing, developed the capacity of our website and continued to grow our social media presence and engagement. The IT department has become increasingly relied upon as much of our work now happens in the digital realm, or requires digital support.

We worked closely with teams to support fundraising and grant writing efforts, media, PR and graphic design.



[top] Chook merchandise.

[middle] Storytelling around the original fire with Meditation Garden volunteers.

[bottom] Sophia's Spring folks cooking up hearty soup.



Partnerships

Our 200+ different partners include individuals, community organisations, all levels of government, corporate organisations and industry. These relationships bring about mutual benefits and vary from in-kind supporters, program co-deliverers, grant givers and philanthropic trustees.

All of our partners are important and assist us in delivering our mission. In this Annual Report we would like to acknowledge our financial and in kind partners.

Moreland City Council: Continued to be our most significant partner and supporter, providing our land and funding for capital works.

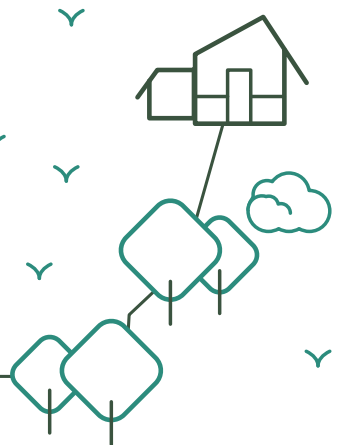
Partnership highlights include:

Catholic Education Melbourne: Continued as a strategic partner to provide teacher professional training in catholic schools in metropolitan Melbourne

Darebin Council & Melbourne Innovation Centre: Seed funded and supported enterprise incubation for Fair Wood through the Darebin Pitch IT competition.

[top] Launching the CERES sub-fund with the Inner North Community Foundation.

[bottom] A rich history of philanthropy at CERES.



Equity Trustees: Improved our capacity for storytelling to increase community vitality and prosperity, through the Northern Stories Project

Holding Redlich: Human Resources support.

Inner North Community Foundation: Funded our career and education pathways in sustainability program, and supported us through the CERES sub-fund

John Laing Charitable Trust: Funded new PV arrays for the chook house and Merri Table

LaTrobe University & Swinburne University: 100+ participants on CERES Global trips.

Moreland Energy Foundation: Significantly assisted the upgrade of the EcoHouse through financial contribution, advice and introductions to green technology companies.

Sustainability Victoria: Continued our nine year funding partnership to deliver the ResourceSmart Schools program to over 300 schools.

Sustainability Victoria & Foresters Group: Funded Fair Food with a combined grant/low interest loan to upgrade our ecommerce website, build a vertical microgreens farm and relocate an industrial cool room from our previous warehouse.

Victorian Government Department of Education and Training: funded a three year program to take the CERES Student Environmental Leadership Program to rural and regional Victoria. They also funded our ACEF program for subsidised places on our pre-accredited courses.

Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services: Funded our Youth and Adult Day Service program for people with a disability.

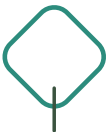
Victorian State Government: Provided funding towards the building of 15 Victorian schools, in which CERES is the Sustainability Partner.

Victorian Local Government: Continued partnerships with over 15 local government departments to provide teacher professional learning and sustainable facilities management to schools in each locality.

Other partners and supporters include:

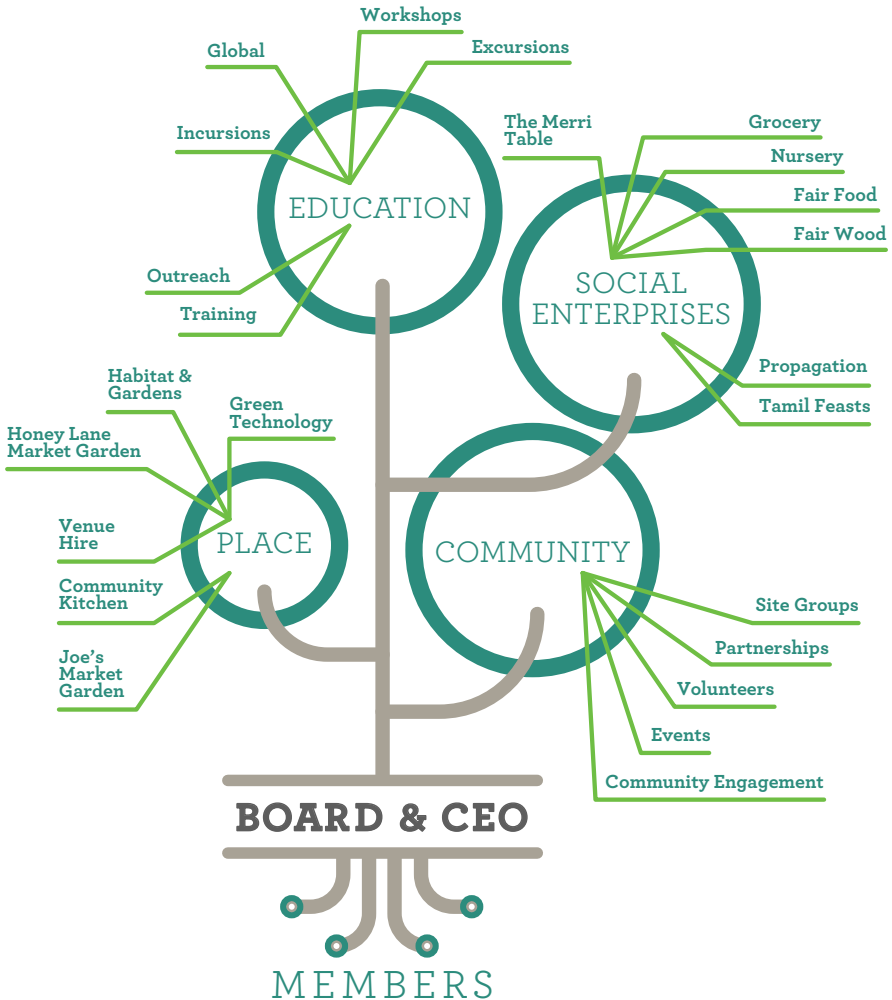
Aboriginal Community Elders Service • Apne Aap Education (India) • Arnhem Weavers • ATEC Biogas • BDC Group - Frank Cichello • Brunswick Bowls Club • Community Development Centre (Indonesia) • Croxton School • CORENA • Daikin Australia • Delta Energy Systems • Digital Storytellers • East Brunswick Kindergarten • ecoMaster • Elabor8 • Engineers Without Borders • Environment Education Victoria • Fairtrade Australia • Fifteen Trees • Geography Teachers Association Victoria • Holden Street Neighbourhood House • ICT International • Ileen Macpherson Trust • Laidlaw & Laidlaw Design Landscape Architects • LaTrobe Wildlife Sanctuary • Melbourne University – Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering • Monash University • Murgo Constructions • Paul Haar Architects • Permaculture Australia • Permatil (Timor) • Poutasi Development Trust (Samoa) • Powershop • Preston Market • RACV • Refugee Advocacy Council • Renault Australia • Rightwire Electrical • RMIT University • Salt and Fuessel • Sanden International • Satpuda Vikas Mandal (India) • Seesaw • The Social Food Project • Victorian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet • Westpac • Worcester Polytechnic Institute • Zoos Victoria

We would like to thank everyone who has shown their support to CERES this year, including our regular donors, all those who gave to our Annual Appeal, and those who contributed to our new bequest sub-fund. We couldn't do it without you.



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. CERES activities are divided into six groups, each with a senior Group Manager. Each portfolio includes a number of enterprises and projects, many of which are overseen by an Area Manager.





Chair

CEO

Group
ManagersBoard
Members

CERES Board

Committee Members (Board of Management) in office at any time during the financial year ended 30 June 2018:

| | Position held at 30/06/17 or Resignation | Appointed | Resigned | A | B |
|----------------|---|-----------|----------|----|----|
| Jo Barraket | Chairperson | | | 8 | 10 |
| Mark Riley | Deputy Chairperson | | Nov-17 | 4 | 5 |
| Sarah Houseman | Deputy Chairperson | | | 8 | 10 |
| Thomas Dobson | Treasurer | | | 8 | 10 |
| Noel Blencowe | Secretary | | | 7 | 10 |
| Cinnamon Evans | CEO | | | 10 | 10 |
| Greg Dickson | Site Group Representative | | | 7 | 10 |
| Natalie Abboud | Moreland City Council Council Representative | | Mar-18 | 4 | 6 |
| Jessica Dorney | Moreland City Council Council Representative | Mar-18 | | 3 | 4 |
| John Burne | Staff Representative | | | 8 | 10 |
| Rodney Duncan | Community Representative | | | 10 | 10 |
| Sophie Gaballa | Community Representative | | | 7 | 10 |
| Sophie Newing | Community Representative | Nov-17 | | 5 | 5 |

A - Number of meetings attended **B** - Number of meetings held during the time the director held office during the year

Senior Managers

Sieta Beckwith Melissa Lawson
Nick Curmi Lorna Pettifer
Chris Ennis Nicolas Porter
Judy Glick
(until Dec 17)

Area Managers

John Burne Cass Froese
Jane Burns Sally Kennedy
Luisa Cardamone Karen Kershaw
Laurel Coad Emma McCann
Shane French Beck Morley

Adrian Richardson

Meg Stewart

Ben Walta

**+85 equivalent
full-time staff
(261 people)**

**+Thousands
of volunteers**

Finance

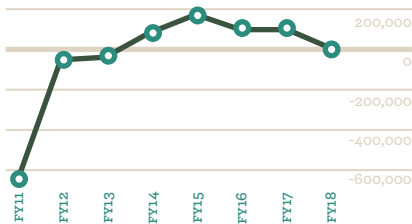
Assets and Liabilities Statement as at 30 June 2018

| | 2018 \$ | 2017 \$ |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| ASSETS | | |
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Cash and Cash Equivalents | 934,744 | 948,316 |
| Accounts Receivable | 291,104 | 342,435 |
| Inventories | 385,592 | 295,008 |
| Prepayments | 73,152 | 81,335 |
| Total Current Assets | 1,684,592 | 1,667,094 |
| NON CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Buildings, Plant and Equipment | 4,254,947 | 3,895,619 |
| Total Non Current Assets | 4,254,947 | 3,895,619 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 5,939,539 | 5,562,713 |
| LIABILITIES | | |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Accounts Payable and other Payables | 894,515 | 728,664 |
| Employee Provisions | 571,751 | 550,693 |
| Borrowings | 23,142 | 0 |
| Hire Purchase Commitments | 95,378 | 86,862 |
| Income in Advance | 484,399 | 579,499 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 2,069,185 | 1,945,718 |
| NON CURRENT LIABILITIES | | |
| Employee Provisions | 57,904 | 52,845 |
| Borrowings | 98,594 | 0 |
| Hire Purchase Commitments | 193,291 | 200,662 |
| Total Non Current Liabilities | 349,789 | 253,507 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 2,418,974 | 2,199,225 |
| NET ASSETS | 3,520,565 | 3,363,488 |
| MEMBERS' FUNDS | | |
| Retained Surplus | 3,520,565 | 3,363,488 |
| TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS | 3,520,565 | 3,363,488 |

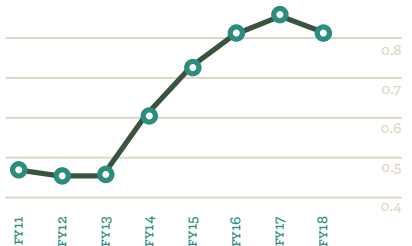
Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 30 June 2018

| | 2018 \$ | 2017 \$ |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Revenue from Ordinary Activities | 12,863,315 | 11,995,728 |
| Expenses from Ordinary Activities before Depreciation | 12,580,656 | 11,703,811 |
| Surplus from Ordinary Activities before Depreciation | 282,659 | 291,917 |
| Depreciation | 281,847 | 191,003 |
| Surplus (Deficit) from Ordinary Activities after Depreciation | 812 | 100,913 |
| Grant Funding for Capital Improvements | 156,265 | 11,100 |
| SURPLUS FOR YEAR | 157,076 | 112,013 |

Surplus (Deficit) from Ordinary Activities after Depreciation



Working Capital Ratio



Treasurer's Report

FY18 was a challenging year for CERES from a financial perspective with a dip in both our operating result and in our working capital position, even though we finished the year with a \$157K net surplus. Margins have tightened as our cost structure increased and we haven't directly passed on those increases to our more price sensitive customer groups. The Merri Table had a particularly tough year, and growth of Fair Food was slower than we had hoped.

We have robust processes in place and regularly review our financial position and performance while working closely with our managers who recognise the paramount importance of, and are unreservedly committed to, improving our financial resilience.

We have extended the Fair Work Commission's minimum wage increase of 3.5% to all of our staff in line with our commitment to improve pay and conditions over time and have also invested significantly in productive fixed assets this year including:

- **Solar Arrays** – more than trebled our power generation capacity to 119.3kW to support our goal of zero emissions by 2025, and reduce energy costs.
- **Human Powered Classroom** – to increase our teaching space capacity and provide students with a unique resource that helps demystify energy generation and consumption.
- **Fair Food online shopfront** – to provide a better experience for our customers, who comprise about 1% of the Australian organic market – an astonishing market share achievement.

We are well positioned to leverage our investments to deliver positive social and environmental impact for our community in FY19 and beyond, and thank everyone for their contribution to our financial sustainability.

Thomas Dobson, Treasurer &
Nicolas Porter, Finance Manager

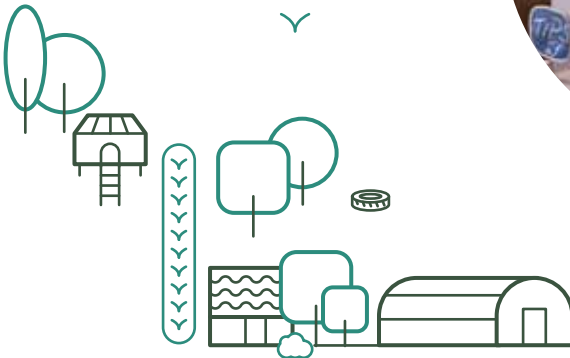
Get Involved

Although we are very proud of the 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.

CERES (The Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies), was established in 1982 on a former quarry and rubbish tip. Thanks to the efforts of many groups, staff, volunteers and labour market programs, the site has been transformed into a place of nature and beauty, inhabited by a vibrant and diverse community.

Through education and training, social enterprises, 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.

We attract around 470,000 visits each year and we reach out far beyond our park's borders through our work in schools across Victoria, our organic food delivery service and partnerships with national and international organisations.



There are three key ways you can support CERES:

1. Donate

www.ceres.org.au/donate

2. Become a member

www.ceres.org.au/membership

3. Volunteer

www.ceres.org.au/volunteer

Thank you for your love and support!

CERES is something I'd like to call 'a return to grace.' Everything here is love. I think it's the best place on earth - what blessings and amazing stuff that happens here returning us to humanity.

♥ Tania, CERES Member





CERES
Community Environment Park
Corner of Roberts & Stewart Streets,
Brunswick East, VIC 3057

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

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