



Think.Do.Network.

Annual Report 2023



Image Source: Nattoora Melbourne

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Acknowledgement of Country



Image Source: Ninna Mar

The Board and staff of Sustain acknowledge that we work on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin nation.

We respectfully acknowledge the custodianship of the Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Bunurong elders, recognising that they and their ancestors stewarded these lands and their diverse creatures sustainably for tens of thousands of years.

We respectfully acknowledge that sovereignty over these lands was never ceded, and that the processes of historical truth-telling and a duly negotiated treaty are essential for justice for First Nations peoples.

The path to a better food system for all Australians must begin with the principles of care, respect, justice, healing, and regeneration.



In solidarity with the Aboriginal struggle for sovereignty and in acknowledgement that we live, eat and work on unceded lands, Sustain directs 10% of its membership fees to Pay the Rent, a Victorian Aboriginal-led initiative that supports the self-determination of First Nations people.

Outgoing Chairperson's Message



Dr Kelly Donati

Image Source: Sustain

Reflecting on Sustain's journey in 2023 fills me with immense gratitude.

Our work with local government and community has identified strategies for improving food relief coordination, building social cohesion, and nurturing the networks and connections for strengthening local food systems. Our annual Urban Agriculture Month and biannual Urban Agriculture Forum, held in Sydney this year, were resounding successes, showcasing the vibrant community of people committed to cultivating food in our cities and towns. Sustain's Oakhill Food Justice Farm in Preston continues to flourish as an abundant place for community healing and connection.

However, 2023 also presented significant challenges. Through Sustain's research and policy work, we heard heartbreaking stories from council staff, food relief agencies and social support services about their day-to-day experiences supporting growing demand from the most vulnerable members of their communities. A food relief sector designed to provide "emergency" relief during short-term crisis is at the coalface of ongoing hardship and entrenched poverty.

The food system as we know it in 2023 – inequitable, unhealthy and controlled by the interests of a powerful few – is no accident. It is a policy failure. The supermarket duopoly is enjoying record profits, while people go hungry and farmers struggle to earn a basic livelihood. Our research highlights the importance of municipal markets, greengrocers and cultural grocers for food affordability, particularly in lower-income

neighbourhoods. Yet our economic development and planning frameworks fail to recognise them as vital public health infrastructure for supporting healthy communities.

Over the past year, Sustain has been encouraged by the many local councils recognising food as a fundamental human right. If we, as a society, value food as a human right, then we urgently need government investment in food as a public good – alongside education, healthcare, open space and libraries. This is essential for ensuring that local government can realise its legislative obligations to support the health and wellbeing of its communities. As we look ahead to 2024, the Sustain team will continue working with our valued government and community partners in advocating for and building a future in which food justice sits at the heart of public policy and investment.

Finally, the Sustain board had the privilege of welcoming five talented new directors in 2023 including Sustain's new Chair, Michelle Riepsamen. After seven gratifying years as Chair of Sustain, I was delighted to pass the baton to Michelle in late 2023. In her short time as Chair, she has already brought fresh energy and a wealth of experience to Sustain, with the support of a rejuvenated board. I look forward to supporting Michelle in my new role as Vice-Chair. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the entire Sustain team led by Executive Director Nick Rose, along with our donors, collaborators, members and volunteers, for their unwavering dedication over the years.

Together, we are creating strong foundations for a more flourishing food system.

Incoming Chairperson's Welcome



Michelle
Riepsamen

In November 2023 I had the privilege of taking over the chairing role for the Sustain Board.

In the ultimate scenario of having big shoes to fill, I am thrilled that Kelly Donati is staying on as vice-chair, mentor and guide. Sustain's achievements would not be what they are today were it not for Kelly's passion and hard work. Thank you, Kelly, for all that you have done, and all that you continue to do for Sustain.

With a background in urban and regional planning, I was drawn to follow the work of, and then join the Board of Sustain to act on my concerns around food security. I firmly believe that how we nurture and live on land is key to having sustainable, equitable, and accessible communities, cities and lives. Our food systems cut across all that we depend on, how we live, and even how we connect socially so I am very honoured to chair the Board as Sustain continues to focus on how Australia's food systems can thrive.

I look forward to reporting back next Annual Report about how we have continued the journey.

Image Source: Sustain

Executive Director's Reflections



Dr Nick Rose

Image Source: Dr. Sarah Mansfield

2023 was Sustain's most successful year since our founding in 2015.

We can say with confidence that our reputation as a thought and practice leader in sustainable and healthy food systems is confirmed, as demonstrated by growth in opportunities to partner with government and community stakeholders in addressing the challenges we collectively face. With global uncertainty and accelerating climate change, the relevance and significance of the work we do will only increase.

2023 Highlights include:

- Collaborating with staff, community leaders and more than 600 community members in the City of Banyule to design and deliver their first Urban Food Strategy and Action Plan
- Engaging with over 90 stakeholders in a refresh of the City of Melbourne's Food Policy
- Co-creating a Food Security Framework for Action with the City of Casey
- Facilitating a Local Food Coalition for the City of Ballarat
- Performing a comprehensive Holistic Food Assessment for the wider Goulburn region
- Undertaking out a major food security and social cohesion mapping and needs assessment study for the Inner Metropolitan Partnership (Cities of Port Phillip, Melbourne and Yarra)

November 2023 saw us coordinate the 4th national Urban Agriculture Forum and 3rd national Urban Agriculture Month. We hosted two international guests from the US and they headlined the flagship national event in Sydney as well as local forums in Melbourne and (for the first time) Brisbane and Ballina. We are proud to continue our commitment to champion the urban agriculture movement in Australia and thrilled to see the enthusiastic support for these events.

Several major projects concluded in 2023, including food systems capacity building with the City of Wyndham. Others commenced, notably the Victoria Unboxed project, the Oakhill Compost Hub project and the Urban Farm Network project. We continued to develop the Oakhill Food Justice Farm and Alphington Urban Farm and are progressing our third urban farm at Bundoora Park which will be established in 2024.

Advocacy was a major focus of our work in 2023. We engaged with several Victorian MPs and were delighted to see the establishment of two parliamentary inquiries announced at the end of the year: one examining the impacts of urban sprawl and population growth on food security and arable land; and the other examining the impacts and drivers of, and solutions for, food security in Victoria. We look forward to the progress of these inquiries in 2024.

None of this would have been possible without our passionate, talented and committed staff and Board, and our growing community of members, funders and supporters. I am deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to Sustain's journey in 2023 and look forward to working with you in the challenging and exciting years ahead.

Who We Are



Sustain is Australia's leading healthy and sustainable food systems organisation.

We champion the transition to healthy, socially just, sustainable food systems. We bring diverse actors together around a shared agenda for change, align mutually reinforcing activities and harness energy and enthusiasm for food systems transformation.

Meet the people who help us make this happen.



Image Source: Just Food Collective Workshops

Board of Directors

Our Board collectively brings together over fifty years of practice in farming, food business, research and teaching, law, finance and sustainability leadership. This includes the development and coordination of Australia's first and only Bachelor of Food Studies and Master of Food Systems and Gastronomy at William Angliss Institute, which has been running since 2016.

Their direction and guidance continues to support Sustain in realising our vision.



Dr Kelly Donati
Co-founder and outgoing Chairperson – now Vice-Chair



Michelle Riepsamen
Incoming Chairperson (from November 2023)
– now Vice-Chair



Linda Glucina
Treasurer



Lynn Richardson
Director (retiring Treasurer)



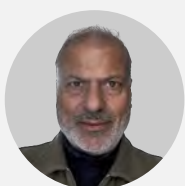
Ruth Kharis
Secretary



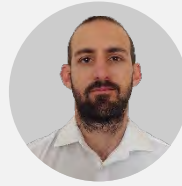
Tom Gyorffy QC
Director



Katherine Utry
Director



Harminder Singh
Director



Izo Lourival
Director (retired June 2023)



Tom Sorrell
Director (retired February 2023)

The team in 2023

As connectors, we facilitate events, grow networks and nurture communities to enable knowledge-sharing, and we encourage collaboration at all levels.

As researchers, we translate and share our food systems knowledge to demonstrate evidence of effective food policy and action, and support change.

As policy experts, we understand the critical issues facing all levels of government as well as our communities.

As practitioners, we design and deliver community food projects (including our two urban farms) that experiment with new approaches to food system transformation and model the change we want to see.



Image Source: Marcelo Paternoster

Our volunteers

We are grateful for the commitment and generosity of our many volunteers and interns during 2023. We thank them and acknowledge the valued contribution they make to advancing our mission.

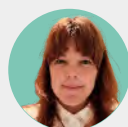
The team



Dr Nick Rose
Executive Director



Beth Ciesielski
Operations and
Projects Manager



Kylie Fisk
Research and Projects Manager



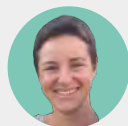
Lizzie Mettam
Partnerships and
Fundraising Manager



Molly Fairweather
Research and Projects
Coordinator



Carol Perdigao
Research and
Projects Assistant



Leila Alexandra
Projects and Events Officer



Angus Howlett
Project Officer
(SV Crates)



Hugh Simpson
Advocacy and Campaigns
Officer



Lou Ridsdale
Communications and
Events Coordinator



Lindsay Miles
Digital Events
Communications Coordinator



Jemma Stefanou
Oakhill Food Justice Farm,
Urban Farmer



Lisa Reid
Oakhill Food Justice Farm,
Urban Farmer



Shani Shafir
Oakhill Food Justice Farm,
Schools Coordinator



Lee Belle
Oakhill Food Justice Farm,
Urban Farm Assistant



Elliot Alder
Oakhill Food Justice Farm,
Urban Farm Assistant

Our Vision and Goals



Our Vision

Food systems that nourish all people in Australia and the life systems on which we depend.



Image Source: Marcelo Paternoster



Image Source: Marcelo Paternoster

Our Mission

Championing the transition to healthy, socially just, sustainable food systems.

Our Ambition



Cultural Change

Norms, values and stories that centre good food



Structural Change

Policies, institutions and investment for food systems that put people and ecosystems first



Shifts in Power

A food system shaped by First Nations self-determination, empowered communities and engaged food citizens



Changes in Thinking

Food policies and initiatives informed by systems thinking, a strong evidence base and shared learning

Our Pillars and Approach

Think Influencing

- Building the evidence base and momentum for change
- Shaping the conversation
- Dismantling policy and practice silos
- Providing clarity and direction for action
- Building momentum for new food system paradigms

Do Leading and inspiring

- Showing what is possible
- Experimenting in new practices and places
- Upskilling and capacity building
- Collaborating to reinforce and strengthen impact

Network Connecting and amplifying

- Building the movement and fostering connections
- Amplifying and sharing the stories that inspire change
- Identifying and mobilising pathways to success
- Mentoring and supporting initiatives and organisations to grow

Advocacy

Build stronger political and stakeholder connections across portfolios and nationally so that we are sought out as a trusted and credible voice in healthy and sustainable food systems.

Policy development

Develop innovative, evidence-based and community-informed policies and strategies that result in tangible food systems change.

Translational research

Design, conduct and make widely accessible food systems research that is meaningful and useful for practitioners and policy-makers to facilitate new projects, partnerships and initiatives on the ground.

Urban farming

Champion the sustainable urban agriculture sector and maintain exemplar urban food justice farms as proof of practice.

Education, training and development

Develop and deliver education, training and professional development opportunities for more practitioners to be involved in food systems policy, projects and practice.

Community capacity building and engagement

Work with communities to develop food systems projects and programs and build capacity and momentum for food systems change.

Events and forums

Identify and amplify leading organisations and practitioners in food systems, food security and urban agriculture through opportunities to connect and share knowledge and experience.

Membership and communities of practice

Increase our member network and build mutually-supportive communities of practice.

Community food initiatives

Mentor and support organisations and projects to experiment and grow.

2023 Snapshot

Inner Metropolitan Partnership Food Forum



IMP Food Forum



Think

43 public speaking engagements.

10 consultancy projects with local and state government.

Advocacy:

Two Victorian Parliamentary Inquiries

Marcelo Paternoster



Sustain



Do

Oakhill Food Justice Farm

Alphington Food Hub

In progress:

Bundoora Park Farm

Sustain



Miles Away Media



Network

26 online/in-person forums.

3rd national Urban Agriculture Month hosted.

Positive growth across all social media platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) & Sustain newsletter subscribers.

Media engagement: (radio, tv, print, digital); industry e-News. Syndicated AAP national news story, ABC Gardening Australia Magazine & ABC Organic Gardener Magazine, 5 x Costa's Live Streams.

Our impact and projects in 2023



Think



Image Source: Sustain

Key Consultancies in Food System Transformation

Food strategies, policies and action plans

Central Goldfields Shire Council

2023-2024

We're supporting the Central Goldfields Shire Council to develop their first food system strategy. This work will reach across our seven core services, resulting in a plan for long-term positive impact for the people of the Central Goldfields region.

City of Melbourne

2022-2023

This redraft of the City of Melbourne's food policy included international best-practice benchmarking, a review of the impact of current policies and consultation across the City's government, academic and community stakeholder groups. The Food Policy report we developed was then sense-checked by an independently run community engagement process, ahead of a review by Councillors and an expected launch in mid-2024.

City of Casey

2023

Employing a bespoke mix of our food environment mapping, best-practice benchmarking and consultation core services, we supported the City of Casey to measure food insecurity rates amongst its citizens and map their barriers to healthy eating. We then developed a comprehensive next-step framework for action on food security in the city.

Banyule City Council

2022-2023

Sustain supported Banyule City Council to deliver its first ever Urban Food Strategy. Working across all seven of our core services, we delivered two stand-out pieces of work to serve as the foundation for the city's food system transformation:

- Our largest community and stakeholder consultation to date – reaching 600 people across council staff and through community surveys, pop-up consultation markets, kitchen table talks and focus groups.
- Forming and facilitating the Banyule Urban Food Strategy Working Group – a tight-knit leadership team drawn from council staff and community leaders to guide the strategy's development and subsequent implementation.

Capacity building

City of Ballarat

2023

The driving force behind the City of Ballarat's three-year local food systems action plan is the Ballarat Local Food Coalition.

We supported the formation of this committed group of over 18 diverse organisations– reaching across council, community groups and local producers.

The Coalition led the initial mapping and needs assessment of their local food system, which then informed a three-year Action Plan designed with our support. Going forward, the Coalition is well-placed to be the driving force for positive food system change in Ballarat, with ongoing support from Council.

Think



Image Source: City of Port Philip Food Forum

Capacity building - continued

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council 2023

We supported the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council's Food Economy Taskforce with a stakeholder co-design workshop and action planning process, leading to the development of the Taskforce's Action Plan for agroecological transformation over the next three years.

Food Security Framework for Action

City of Port Philip, City of Melbourne & City of Yarra 2023-2024

This comprehensive research project for the Inner Metropolitan Partnership produced a set of recommendations to transform food security, food relief and the capacity for social support services to integrate into food system strengthening across the Inner Metropolitan region.

The study employed a range of methods drawing from our seven core services, including surveys, focus groups and interviews, site visits, geospatial mapping, socio-economic data analysis, participatory workshops and benchmarked case studies.

Food system assessment

Goulburn Valley Public Health Unit 2023

This comprehensive, holistic food system assessment mapped the current state of the Goulburn Valley food system (encompassing seven local government areas) and provided a framework for future regional food system strategy development and implementation.

Research

Give Where You Live Foundation Food for Thought Research 2023

This report assessed the state of food security in the Geelong (G21) region. Through a mix of surveys, focus groups and interviews with food relief providers, we explored the increasing demand and challenges facing communities and delivered actionable evidence-based recommendations for Give Where You Live to work with partners to address food insecurity in the region.



This process highlighted Sustain's exemplary dedication and skill in understanding clients' needs and translating them into actionable strategies. Their team, characterized by their friendliness, approachability, intelligence, and awareness, not only impressed us but also ensured that every aspect of our Food for Thought Research, was executed with precision and foresight. We now have a strategic blueprint that will undoubtedly steer the course of the food relief network in Geelong.

- SALLY EDGERTON, COMMUNITY GRANTS & SOCIAL IMPACT, GIVE WHERE YOU LIVE FOUNDATION.

Think



Image Source: Marcelo Paternoster

Research - continued

Federal Food Security Inquiry Research 2023-2024

Sustain is working with colleagues at Monash University and research interns from the University of Melbourne to undertake an analysis of the 187 stakeholder submissions made to the Federal Inquiry into food security. We want to understand perspectives on both the causes and proposed solutions to address food insecurity in Australia, as well as the degree of alignment between our findings and the Committee's report and recommendations. The research findings were presented at the Food Governance Conference in Sydney in February 2024 and will be developed into a public-facing report to advocate for the Federal Government to make strong policy commitments to meaningfully address food insecurity for all Australians.

Advocacy

Soil to Sky Project 2023

The Soil to Sky project, funded by the McLeod Family Foundation, set out an ambitious agenda to create positive ecological and health outcomes through positive food system change at the policy level. Advocacy in this space has been lacking over the last decade. This meant that we started at baseline, having to educate many decision-makers and organisations on the linkages between agriculture, climate, and health. Over the course of the year, we have laid the foundations for these discussions, priming policy makers, building a coalition of stakeholders and facilitating common objectives and priorities. This has culminated in two Victorian parliamentary inquiries investigating experiences of, and solutions to, the food system crisis.

Image Source: Inner Metropolitan Partnership Food Forum



Think



Image Source: Natoora Melbourne

Victoria Unboxed Project 2023-2024

To address the hidden issue of packaging waste in fresh produce supply chains, Sustain partnered with Natoora Melbourne, a produce distributor connecting Victorian growers and local businesses, restaurants and markets as well as several small Victorian producers to understand the packaging waste problem. Victoria Unboxed, funded by Sustainability Victoria, piloted a reusable crate scheme to explore and expand practices to reduce waste in this invisible stage of the food supply chain.

In 2023 Sustain worked closely with Natoora to find the best way to reduce the average of 14.4 tons of cardboard waste currently generated in their supply chain every year. After consulting with stakeholders, the project introduced 960 reusable crates into Natoora's supply chain, with a projected annual savings of approximately 7 tonnes of packaging waste. In 2024 we will publish a report based on the findings from the project to support actors in short fresh produce supply chains to reduce packaging waste.



The SV Unboxed project has allowed us to strengthen relationships with some customers to develop new systems around waste reduction through exchanging our reusable tubs each week. The roll out of this or similar systems to larger organisations would be incredible. Standardised crates and tubs seem uncontroversially beneficial, both environmentally and economically.

- EVE FRASER, CO-MANAGER FARM RAISER URBAN FARM



Do



Image Source: Oakhill Food Justice

Oakhill Food Justice Farm at Preston

Oakhill Food Justice Farm celebrated our second birthday in 2023 and achieved new milestones in harvests, community composting and education programs, showcasing what is possible to grow and share on a suburban block. We increased our production weight by 28 per cent from 2022 with an additional 25 per cent volunteer hours. This tells the story of refining systems and processes and producing healthy and productive soils which have rewarded us with an abundance of produce, particularly from our perennial plants grown since we began in 2021.

We would not have been able to organise and share such abundant harvests and hot composting without the community leadership and support from Farmers Lisa, Lee, Shani, Lynette and Jemma, along with many other new, existing and committed volunteers.

We loved hosting Community Soup Nights where we met Oakhill's new resident bees and beekeepers, Open Table spoke about biodigesters, and our Food Justice Interns ran a Microscope Party whilst enjoying soup made from the farm.

We're looking forward to improving our hot composting systems, sharing plastic-free community seedlings and growing and sharing more food and knowledge with the Oakhill Community.

Oakhill impact at a glance in 2023



80

Volunteers



837

General volunteering hours

+ 2800 Preston Primary School student hours

+ 176 Epping Secondary College, Plenty River College, Reservoir High School



4

Schools involved



413kg

Produce grown and donated to food relief



64

Plant varieties harvested



6.4t / 6397kg

Material diverted from landfill to make compost



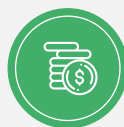
19

Workshops



191

Participants



7

Paid internships

Do



Image Source: Marcelo Paternoster



Oakhill Food Justice Farm Resource and Composting Hub

Oakhill Food Justice Farm became a Resource and Composting Hub in 2023. This project, funded by Sustainability Victoria's Circular Economy Communities Fund, supports growers by redistributing local waste products, including cardboard from local businesses, spent straw from mushroom growers, coffee grounds and food waste processed into compost. Processed cardboard has been used to create new garden beds at Oakhill, Fawkner Food Bowls, local schools and in the gardens of local residents.

The project also funded a plastic-free seedling nursery. We purchased a second-hand glasshouse, and volunteers, interns, and a local carpenter levelled an underutilised area in the food forest, reconstructed the glasshouse, and repaired broken panels. The seedling nursery currently repurposes plastic pots.

In 2023, Preston Primary School assisted with growing our first seedlings which were distributed to the community during our annual open-day event in October. We developed a self-guided seedling station for volunteers and farmers to wash pots and grow seedlings without direct supervision.

Do



Image Source: Melbourne Food Hub at Alphington

Melbourne Food Hub at Alphington

Sustain’s Melbourne Food Hub project in Alphington, which began in 2018, offers the opportunity for an urban farmer to learn farming skills, build connections and run a small business with land leased by Sustain from the City of Darebin. Clare Harvey ran the Melbourne Food Hub Farm from March 2020 after a successful tenure and finished up in May 2023 to allow us to invite a new emerging farmer to the fold.

Sustain welcomed young farmer B McFarland to establish a new farm enterprise called ‘True Leaf’ in Alphington in July 2023. B hit the ground running establishing their new micro-farm enterprise with vegetables, herbs and flowers and is experimenting with how their project will support their own learning journey as well as provide a positive impact for the community through healing with plants. They have begun selling veggie bags and flower bunches and hope to reach wholesale customers and expand their flower production in 2024.

Planning and consultation began in 2023 for our third farm site at Bundoora Park Farm, which will be a market garden focusing on key concepts of food justice. Bundoora will form part of Sustain’s urban farm network, together with our Preston and Alphington sites.

Corporate Volunteering

Sustain invested in its Corporate Volunteer program in 2023 with plans to scale operations in 2024. The team collaborated on program design, internal administration systems and communications. Corporate Volunteering offers a significant opportunity to improve the economic sustainability of our farms. Through the program, businesses are encouraged to volunteer their resources, time, and energy to support the growing of food for the local community. The program is a unique opportunity for participants to learn about food justice, regenerative urban farming practices, and the social benefits of urban agriculture, as well as connect with their co-workers and living systems that sustain life.



It was such a beautiful day working with Jemma and Claire at the urban farm. You have created such a visually stunning and emotionally calming concept. From the work we did, it inspired me to pitch it to a client team this week.

- PHOEBE CARRE, DENTSU AUSTRALIA



Really enjoyed it. Jemma clearly shared their experiences and the intricacies involved in setting up a farm in an urban environment. Would love to volunteer again!

- CORPORATE VOLUNTEER



Image Source: Melbourne Food Hub at Alphington

Network



Image Source: Miles Away Media

Online Networking Forums

Sustain has hosted quarterly forums for its local government member organisations since early 2021. Members have an opportunity to present and share their work, hear from expert guest speakers, discuss ideas, problem-solve and learn from one another. Our goal is to provide more value to our membership base, encourage and strengthen connections and enable more conversations in this space.



[This Forum has] provided inspiration and encouragement in the different approaches and innovative solutions discussed.

- STAFF PARTICIPANT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT NETWORK FORUM



Highlighting the food system policy and advocacy work happening across Victoria and Australia internally has helped justify the continued focus and investment in the food system program in our LGA.

- CORPORATE VOLUNTEER

Urban Agriculture Month

Launched in 2021, Urban Agriculture Month is Sustain’s annual celebration of Australia’s growing urban agriculture movement. We define urban agriculture as the growing and producing of food in towns, cities and suburbs, in backyards, in laneways and balconies, on verges and in schools; to empower local action, create community gardens and urban farms, invite volunteering opportunities; and foster meaningful community connections.

Throughout November, we bring together a range of diverse and exciting events right around Australia from open gardens, guided tours, forums and seminars to other hands-on learning workshops, crop swaps, communal feasts and much more! All this activity is to celebrate the bounty of backyards, community gardens and other edible spaces around our nation.

Our third Urban Agriculture Month in November 2023 was a truly national event, with Sustain hosting Forums in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Ballina.

Image Source: Ninna Mar



Network



Image Source: Sustain

Urban Agriculture Month

A snapshot



286
Events

- 278 in person events
- 8 online events
- 151 unique event hosts



23
Event types

- 54 workshops
- 24 tours
- 30 working bees
- 19 crop swaps/ shares
- 26 open days
- 15 farmers markets



37%
of hosts held special events
for Urban Agriculture Month

- | | | |
|--------|--------|---------|
| 6 ACT | 48 QLD | 139 VIC |
| 43 NSW | 12 SA | 14 WA |
| 4 NT | 20 TAS | |



20,000
Attendees (in-person and online)

- 4 Sustain Urban Agriculture Forums (Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Ballina)
- 32% of events welcomed more than 50 attendees
- 37% of hosts organised more than 1 event
- 52% of hosts organised special events for Urban Agriculture Month



155%
Growth in event
numbers since 2021



7/8
States saw an increase in
events since 2022

- ↑ 30% in event numbers
- ↑ 300% in QLD
- ↑ 92% in NSW
- ↑ 15% in event hosts

Network



Image Source: Marcelo Paternoster

Sydney Urban Agriculture Forum impact at a glance in 2023



2 day
Sydney Forum



30
sessions



72
speakers



239
attendees



60
Sunday tour
attendees



76%
of attendees had never been
to a Sustain UAF before

Sydney Urban Agriculture Forum

The highlight of Urban Agriculture Month, Sustain's two-day Urban Agriculture Forum returned to an in-person event in 2023 after the pandemic restrictions limited our 2021 event to online attendance. Hosted every two years, the event has previously been held in Melbourne. Following the enormous success of Sustain's first Forum in Sydney in 2022, we decided to host 2023's signature event in Sydney, at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Redfern.

We also teamed up with Community Gardens Australia to co-host this event for the first time. This gave us a great opportunity to develop relationships and connections as well as reach an entirely new audience with our work.

We welcomed a diverse audience with officers from local government, the non-profit sector, business start-ups, researchers and academics, students, funders and emerging farmers all joining us to learn, network and collaborate.

First Nations leaders Brenden Moore from Sydney Botanic Gardens and Sharon Windsor from Indigearth delivered inspiring and well received keynotes on Friday morning. We had speakers from all walks of the food system space, with a strong focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food sovereignty. International visitors Linda Appel Lipsius from Denver Urban Gardens and Rabekha Siebert from the City of Dallas came to Australia to share their knowledge and experiences.

Network



Image Source: Miles Away Media

Brisbane Urban Agriculture Forum

Sustain's inaugural Brisbane Urban Agriculture Forum was our first held in Queensland. With a fabulous organising committee representing multiple local and national organisations working together for a common goal, the event focused on the themes of harvest insights, honouring culture, celebrating diversity, and cultivating connections.

A major highlight was the keynote presentation by Dominique Chen, a Gamilaroi/Gomeroi woman, and interdisciplinary researcher, living on Jinibara Country, who presented to more than 70 attendees at the sold-out event.

Melbourne Urban Agriculture Forum

Food as a Public Good: Innovations in Food Systems Policy and Practice

As part of Urban Agriculture Month, Sustain also hosted and facilitated a forum at the Melbourne Multicultural Hub exploring food as a tool for ecological and social wellbeing in our communities. The purpose of the event was to showcase inspiring local initiatives in which food is treated as a public good to which everyone should have access, rather than a private commodity for those who can afford it.

The forum invited participants from a diverse range of sectors to collectively envision pathways to a more flourishing food system. Sessions covered food planning and urbanisation, inspiring international urban agriculture case studies, food relief partnerships between local government and community, food hubs and community farms. Using scenario visioning and Socratic circles to facilitate dialogue and reflection, the day finished with plenty of lively, passionate discussion and opportunities to connect with others.

Northern Rivers NSW Urban Agriculture and Sustainable Food Futures Roundtable

In an event that brought the 4th national Urban Agriculture Month to a close, community leaders and stakeholders gathered in Ballina for an important discussion on the future of sustainable food systems in the Northern Rivers. Sustain invited government, community, and not-for-profit organisations to participate in a "Northern Rivers urban agriculture and food futures Roundtable". The event was co-hosted by Northern NSW Local Health District,

In particular, we explored the intersection of food security and housing, particularly in the context of rising living costs and urban development. The discussion around reorienting our food system emphasised the need to prioritise food production and security alongside housing and infrastructure.

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The 2023 Urban Agriculture Forum held in the historical Redfern on Gadigal Lands was a most grounding, hopeful and connecting experience! Thank you Sustain and Community Gardens Australia for hosting this event and bringing us all together.

- UAF ATTENDEE

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Just fantastic to see so much optimism and action happening all over the world. Great motivation!

- UAF ATTENDEE

Financial Statements

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Income & Expenditure Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2023

		2023	2022
		\$	\$
Income			
Philanthropic & Government Grants	Note 3	369,176	365,808
Sponsorship		-	3,234
Events		19,697	8,369
Consultancy Services		255,704	186,082
Product Sales		2,819	19,443
Donations		135,423	93,786
Memberships		21,987	16,568
Interest Received		4,077	550
Total Income		\$808,883	\$693,840
Expenditure			
Advertising & Promotion		508	773
Bank Charges & Merchant Fees		475	1,381
Bookkeeping Fees		4,950	4,950
Computer, IT & Website Expenses		13,001	15,477
Consultancy & Speaker Fees		122,414	120,601
Contractors		25,928	8,412
Employee Costs		429,820	322,775
Event Costs		8,710	10,328
Grants & Donations		1,000	58,082
Insurances		5,557	1,586
Printing & Stationery		2,985	1,001
Produce – Production Costs & Purchases		12,813	20,644
Project Expenses including Infrastructure		31,524	13,456
Occupancy Expenses		11,360	8,496
Stipends to Support Workers		5,060	15,360
Travel, Transport & Conferences		5,011	4,470
Workshops & Training		80	1,799
Sundry Expenses Incl. Meeting & Communication		3,015	2,769
Total Expenditure		\$684,211	\$612,360
NET SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		\$124,672	\$81,480

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022
Current Assets	\$	\$
Cash at Bank	830,100	608,267
Petty Cash	50	-
Accounts Receivable	48,105	15,492
Total Current Assets	\$878,255	\$623,759
Non-Current Assets	\$	\$
	Nil	Nil
Total Assets	\$878,255	\$623,759
Current Liabilities	\$	\$
Accounts Payable & Other Creditors	68,066	29,051
Provision for Employee Leave	21,546	10,000
Unearned Income Received	Note 3 62,451	213,934
Auspiced Grants Received	Note 4 229,266	-
GST Payable	1,858	377
Total Current Liabilities	\$383,187	\$253,362
Non-Current Liabilities	\$	\$
	Nil	Nil
Net Assets	\$495,068	\$370,397
Retained Earnings	\$	\$
Retained Earnings 1 st July 2022	370,396	288,916
Surplus for the Year	124,672	81,480
TOTAL RETAINED EARNINGS AT 30th JUNE 2023	\$495,068	\$370,396

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Notes to the Financial Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2023

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial statements cover Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd as an individual entity, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. The company is an Australian Public company limited by guarantee.

Basis of Preparation

The Directors have prepared the financial statements on the basis that the company is a non-reporting entity because there are no users who are dependent on its general purpose financial statements. These financial statements are therefore special purpose financial statements that have been prepared in order to meet the requirements of the Corporations Act 2001. The company is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the mandatory Australian Accounting Standards applicable to entities reporting under the Corporations Act 2001 and the significant accounting policies disclosed below, which the directors have determined are appropriate to meet the needs of members.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis. Other material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless otherwise stated. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

Accounting Policies

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the company in the preparation of the financial report.

(a) Cash on Hand

Cash includes cash held at call with the entity's banker & Petty Cash on hand.

(b) Plant & Equipment

The company has expensed monies on infrastructure, equipment for projects & events, computer & other minor electronic items which provide ongoing benefits. No other property, plant or equipment is held.

(c) Investments

The company has no investments.

(d) Revenue

Interest income is recognised when received.

Donations and memberships are recognised as income when received.

Philanthropic funding & grants for specific purposes are recognised as revenue only when expensed. (see Note 3)

Income from sales or the rendering of services, is recognised when earned.

2. Goods & Services Tax

The company is registered for Goods & Services Tax.

3. Unearned Income Received

Philanthropic funding & grants received for specific projects and purposes and not expended, are carried forward as Unearned Income to meet future expenditure.

Consulting fees received but not earned are carried forward as Unearned Income until performance obligations are satisfied.

4. Auspice Grants

Amounts shown as liabilities represent amounts received for other parties and not yet allocated as expenses.

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Directors' Declaration


For the year ended 30 June 2023

In accordance with a resolution of the directors of the company, the directors hereby declare that:

The accompanying financial statements set are in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001 and:

- a) present a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30th June 2023 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
- b) comply with Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.
- c) there is reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to meet its debts as and when they become payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors:



Kelly Donati - Chair



Linda Glucina- Treasurer

Signed 20 October 2023

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Independent Auditor's Report

To the members of Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

Report on the Financial Statements for Year Ended 30th June 2023

I have audited the accompanying financial statements, being special purposes financial statements, of Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd ("the company"), which comprises Income & Expenditure Statement, Statement of Financial Position, Notes to the Accounts and the Directors' Declaration.

Directors Responsibility for the Financial Report

The directors of the company are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial statements is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Corporations Act 2001 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The directors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal controls. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of the Corporations Act 2001.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of Sustain: The Australian Food Network are in accordance with the Corporations Act 2001, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30th June 2023, its financial performance for the year ended on that date; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and the Corporations Regulations 2001.

Basis of Accounting

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statements have been prepared for the purposes of fulfilling the directors' financial reporting responsibilities under the Corporations Act 2001. As a result, the financial statements may not be suitable for another purpose.



Lindsay Charles Coster FCA

Chartered Accountant

Registered Company Auditor No: 7815

1/45 Campbell Street, Glen Waverly

Dated this 20 day of October 2023

SUSTAIN
the Australian food network