

SUSTAIN  
the Australian food network

# Annual Report

2020







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# SUSTAIN

February 2021

Front cover photo credit: Clare Harvey

# Acknowledgement of Country

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, that colonisation and dispossession were acts of genocidal violence, and that the process of historical truth-telling that will and must lead to justice for First Nations peoples on the basis of a duly negotiated Treaty is barely in its infancy. The path to a better food system for all Australians must begin with the acknowledgement and recovery of this history, based on the principles of care, respect, healing, justice and regeneration.

In solidarity with the Aboriginal struggle for sovereignty and in acknowledgement that we live, eat and work on stolen lands, Sustain made the decision this year to direct 10% of its membership fees to Pay the Rent, a Victorian Aboriginal-led initiative that supports the self-determination of First Nations people. We encourage Sustain's followers, members and partners to get behind Pay the Rent as a tangible way to support grassroots action against past and present effects of colonisation in Australia.



DANJOO KOORLINY  
 WALKING TOWARDS 2025  
 VOICE, TREASURES

A SPIRAL of INCLUSIVE  
 ENHANCEMENT and ACTION



ANCESTORS





# ORLINY GETHER 29 and BEYOND ATY, TRUTH SUMMIT

NESS,  
VANCEMENT

WITH a VOICE THAT  
TRULY REPRESENTS  
the SPIRIT

FIND  
ALL SIDES  
of the  
STORY

UNLEARNING to

OPEN to the UNKNOWN and  
the OLD WAYS of KNOWING



UNDER the FULL MOON

CLARITY & VISION

for COHESION,  
TALK to THOSE  
WHO KNOW

60,000

IN 10 YRS TIME...

WHAT DO WE  
WANT LIFE to  
BE LIKE?

for NYONGAR COUNTRY, WA, AUSTRALIA, WORLD

as CARERS of  
EVERYTHING  
→ GIVE BACK

WE HAVE to  
LIVE as HUMAN BEINGS  
CONNECTED to the CURRENT  
of ENERGY THAT RUNS through  
ALL THINGS

BASED  
on the  
COLLECTIVE

the SPIRIT

of THIS  
PLACE

WELCOMES US  
SINGING a NEW SONG





## Foreword



**NAOMI LACEY**

President,  
Community Gardens Australia

If ever there has been a year for Sustain and its partner organisations to bring their mission to the forefront of public thinking, 2020 has been it!

We first noticed it when Bunnings ran out of seed, then the online seed suppliers did the same and when you couldn't buy a 3 day old chick to raise anymore we became aware that the pandemic had invoked a deeper level of panic. There was a sudden realisation by the populace that building resilience and growing their own food was key.

Not long after the start of the initial nationwide lockdown on the first of many, many Zoom meetings for the year, Nick Rose said to me "Now is our time!" And he was right. 2020 has been the year that Sustain and Community Gardens Australia (CGA), as well as our many partners, have seen a massive rise in people seeking our advice and services and we have been challenged to step up to the mark.

The decision to try and garner more detail regarding how the pandemic was directly impacting on people's gardening habits and other food security issues by conducting the Pandemic Gardening Survey resulted in far more work than the Sustain team had predicted. Thanks to Costa Georgiadis and his incredible followers, the assistance of all our partners in getting it out through their networks and sheer hard work, we received 9,140 responses which was a far cry from

the predicted 500! The level of detail and heartfelt thought expressed in the 25,000+ comments showed how deeply people connect with their gardens and the positive impact this has on their lives. It has also helped CGA to collate much needed data to progress our own mandate and seek funding support.

The sessions of Costa's Live Edible Garden Odyssey on Facebook with Costa Georgiadis have been a fabulous look at a myriad of gardens and community gardens around Australia and have been seen by tens of thousands of Australians. They have helped us to highlight many of the topics that will be covered at the third Urban Agriculture Forum which we look forward to with keen anticipation and hopefully has also inspired many people to get involved with Urban Agriculture Month.

So 2021 is looking bright for all things urban agriculture. CGA looks forward to maintaining a strong relationship with Sustain as we continue to support each other's work, in particular delivering a world class forum in April. We would like to thank Nick and his fabulous team for all of their dedication and hard work throughout the year and know that the work we continue to do collectively will have a huge positive impact for many generations to come.

Happy gardening folks!



**COSTA GEORGIADIS**

Gardening Australia

We only need to turn to nature to see the impact that disturbance has. Shifts and changes occur when the status quo is shaken up, and light reaches places that it may never have been able to in the past: Agitating, aggravating, encouraging and inspiring people to new outlooks and adjusted perspectives.

The COVID-19 pandemic was that tree that fell in the forest. It cleared new paths and opportunities around the very reactions that initially bubbled to the surface: a fear about the food supply chain and its ability to cope in such uncertain times.

Sustain's work, in particular the Pandemic Gardening Survey, served as an invitation. It put out the welcome mat and asked the community where gardening fit into their world, using 2020 as the catalyst. Read just a handful of the responses submitted and you realise how deeply people engaged with tasks otherwise taken for granted, such as buying food that was expected

to be convenient and available 24/7. People have walked more, observed their local landscapes more, and appreciated their importance on a daily basis. Layer onto this the hope and focus that growing your own food and plants can bring during times of adversity, and the survey became a very concise barometer from which the therapeutic importance of gardening and horticulture could be expressed.

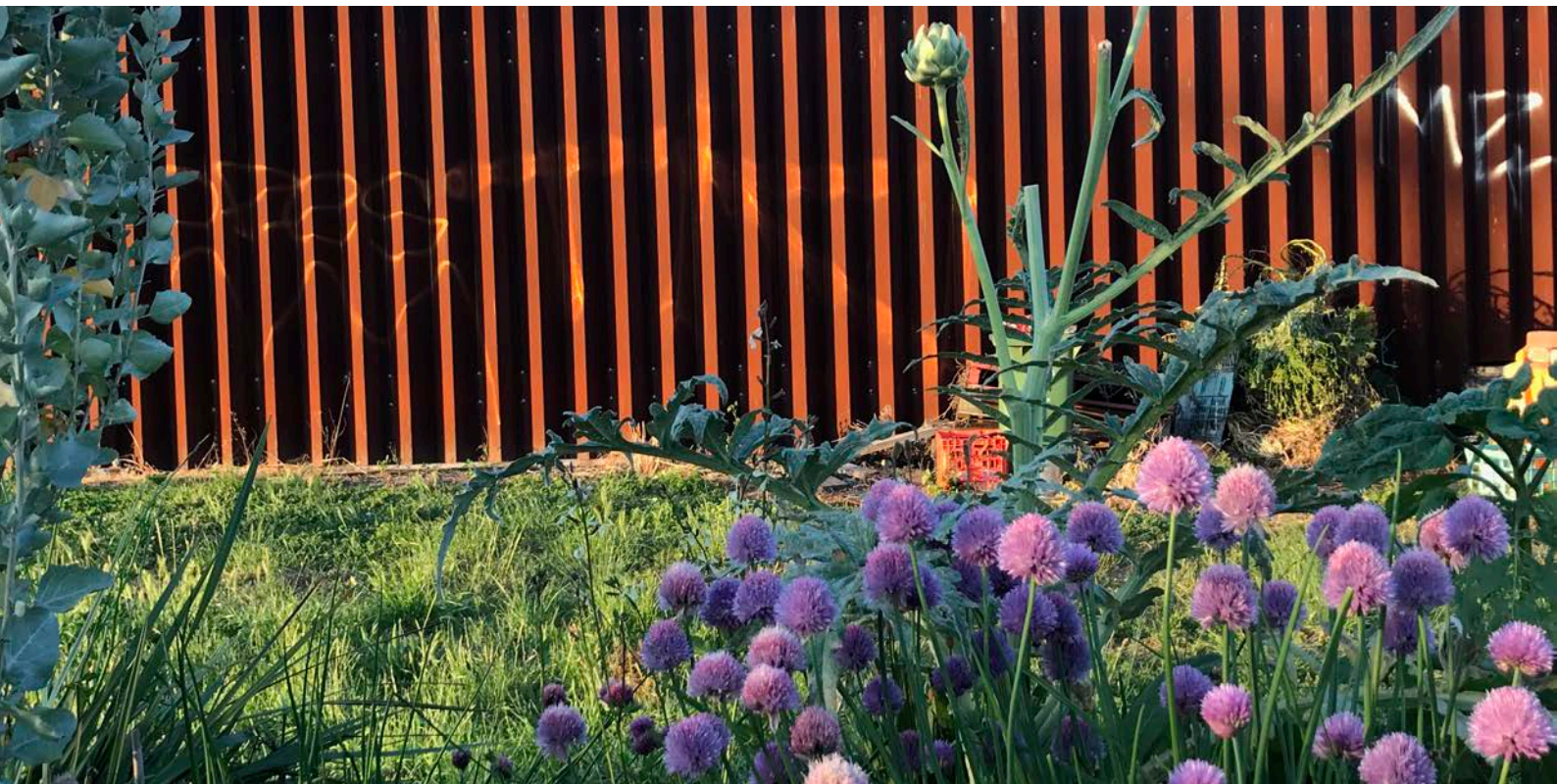


# Chairwoman's Welcome

Dr Kelly Donati

**Think. Do. Network.** As a think-and-do network, these three words comprise Sustain's very DNA. Never has this manifested itself more powerfully than in 2020, a year of disruptions, challenges and uncertainties experienced at a planetary scale. A year not to be forgotten—and one that cannot be forgotten for all the tragedy that it presented for so many.

What does it mean to be a think-and-do food network in the midst of a global pandemic and based in a city that lived through 112 days of lockdown? Working from home, the team liaised with local producers and worked out COVID-safe plans from the dining room table. We analysed survey data with the dog snoring quietly on the floor. We presented webinars from the lounge room with fingers crossed that the internet connection didn't cut out (it did). Despite working apart, our networks deepened in 2020. Our reach expanded rather than contracted. Our team grew stronger, more focused and more diverse, as did the Board (which welcomed another new member). As our scope of projects increased, so did our capacity for impact.





*"I think the pandemic has exposed the many inadequacies of the socio-political status quo. The emphasis on infinite growth at the expense of the wellbeing of people and nature [has been] made clear. The massive decrease in air pollutants when traffic and industrial processes suddenly reduced was a clear image of what climate action could potentially achieve. I hope that humanity, in general, uses this opportunity to reflect on how positive action can cause immense change. Whether it actually happens is another question."*

**Female gardener, Anglo-Australian,  
35-44, Melbourne**



## Think

One early public response to the country's first lockdown in March saw gardening nurseries sell out of seeds and seedlings. With the postponement of the third national Urban Agriculture Forum, our minds turned to the questions the surge in home gardening raised, creating an opportunity to take the pulse of food gardeners around Australia. How were people experiencing the pandemic? What did their food gardens mean to them in this context? How important was edible gardening for their physical and mental health? And so the national Pandemic Gardening Survey was born. An overwhelming 9,140 gardeners shared their moving stories about the power of edible gardening to sustain them physically, emotionally, gastronomically and spiritually. This research significantly deepened our understanding of edible gardening as a practice with enormous therapeutic, nutritional, social and ecological benefit for our cities and towns. This kind of evidence base is critical to effective advocacy for new or better urban agriculture policies. But real transformation requires action as well as research.

## Do

While some of us were crunching data and writing up the survey findings, the Sustain team at the Melbourne Food Hub was busier than ever. Under lockdown, demand for Grow/Source/Eat fruit and veggie parcels grew exponentially, supporting small-scale producers who lost their markets when the hospitality sector shut down. The team distributed thousands of kilos of delicious food grown at our beautiful and bountiful urban farm in Alphington, along with fresh produce from farms around Victoria, to people experiencing food insecurity. We celebrated winning a grant from Australian Ethical by popular vote to support the development of a network of urban food justice farms (watch this space in 2021!). Food Business Boost, coordinated by Georgia Karavis, received a shout-out in the Parliament of Victoria for its support of talented women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to realise their entrepreneurial food dreams. As the joint backbone organisation of the Food Circles project in the Shire of Cardinia, Sustain secured funding from VicHealth to develop the Cardinia Youth Food Security Network which will support schools in 2021 to grow fresh, healthy produce and make it available to front-line food security agencies.

These are only just the highlights of what was achieved by our small but incredibly dedicated team of staff this year.





Photo credit: Two Way Media

## Network

From the organisation's establishment in 2015, events have been central to Sustain, as an opportunity to bring people together around the sharing of knowledge and practices. With the pandemic necessitating a fundamental rethink of how we connect and share, our well-attended monthly webinar series emerged in June. As we explored a wide range of topics from innovations in institutional procurement to our action agenda for more edible cities and towns, we learned more about our regular attendees: state and local government staff, academics and students, community and health practitioners, and members of the community. Sustain is a think-and-do network, but through our members and supporters, we become a network of thinkers and doers, amplifying each other's work through a shared passion for meaningful food system transformation. Together we are a powerful force for change, even while socially distanced. The catastrophic bushfires which marked the beginning of 2020 and profound social and economic inequities, made all the more visible by the pandemic, serve as stark reminders of just how urgent the need for change is.

If 2020 has taught us anything, it's that it's difficult to predict the future. What is certain is my deep gratitude and profound admiration for the Sustain board and team which stepped up at every opportunity. Nick Rose has worked tirelessly, alongside Georgia Karavis, to keep the organisation afloat in the face of uncertainty. Max Godber continued to foster a sense of connection within the Cardinia community, even through months of hard lockdown. Nichole Foster steered the Grow/Source/Eat program with a cool head and warm heart through constantly changing circumstances. From carefully nurtured soil, our urban farmers Audrey Beard and Clare Harvey grew delicious vegetables that were enjoyed by many across Melbourne. Julia Pecoraro took the reins of the Urban Agriculture Forum, guiding what is sure to be an extraordinary event in 2021. Last but not least, Arianna Lim joined the team to support the Transition and Recovery webinar series, also bringing fresh expertise and a sharp eye to our communications.

Looking ahead, we hope to create more justice in the food system, to see more food grown in cities and towns and to support and advocate for policies and practices that create a food system that is good for people and the planet... no matter what 2021 throws at us.









# Executive Director's Reflections

Dr Nick Rose

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*"This is a pivotal time in our history.  
We MUST seize the day."*

— PANDEMIC GARDENING SURVEY RESPONDENT

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2020 was a year of rupture. The second decade of the 21st century could not have started in more dramatic fashion. The major changes to daily lives brought about by lockdowns and restrictions forced us to slow down. In doing so, many reflected on what really matters. Food matters fundamentally, and the pandemic has made that clear.

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*"It's good to hear from friends and family who have added growing vegetables to their weekly routine. Then when you hear of their enjoyment in what they have produced... Wow, it's great!!"*

— PANDEMIC GARDENING SURVEY RESPONDENT

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COVID-19 was indeed a wake-up call for humanity. So is the climate emergency, the collapse of ecosystems and mass species extinctions. The planet, and the life systems it makes possible, are speaking to us, very clearly, if we choose to listen.

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*"We are no longer able to go about our routine lives robotically. We have paused and can see the need for change. It is a wake-up call and an opportunity to create a better society."*

— PANDEMIC GARDENING SURVEY RESPONDENT

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2020 was a year of profound crisis, which has far from passed. There will be no swift or easy return to 'business as usual.' In any case, as this graffiti from a residential Melbourne street suggests, 'business as usual' is the problem rather than the solution. This decade--indeed, this very moment--demands of us something much more profound than 'normality'.

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*"If we can only get our fossil fuel focused politicians to accept and act on the science of climate disruption, there are many system changes that could be introduced that would find people enjoying productive lives but consuming less. A reset of the economy is only a strong political leadership decision away and which can bring on greater equity and a future through a renewables-and-greening-the-planet revolution."*

— PANDEMIC GARDENING SURVEY RESPONDENT

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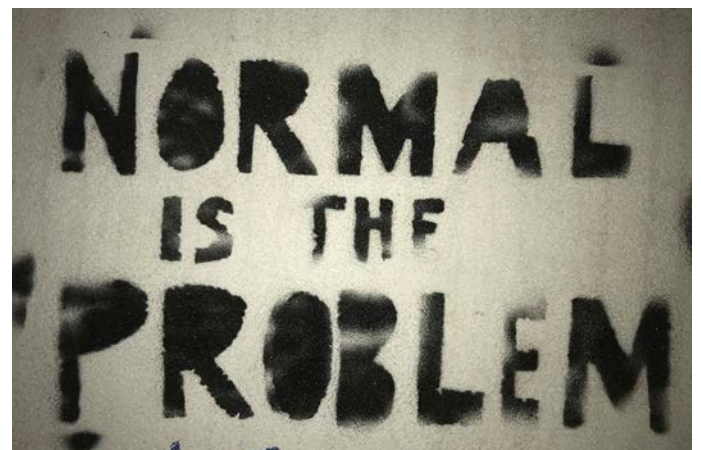


Photo credit: Nick Rose



People the world over are yearning for just and sustainable societies, as well as meaningful and enjoyable lives. We have the knowledge, the resources and the technology to realise that goal. We can end the poverty that leads to food insecurity and homelessness. We can restore damaged ecosystems that we rely upon to sustain us. But we can't do it if our overriding priority is endless economic growth for short-term profit. For me, that's the message of both the pandemic and the climate emergency: we need to abandon GDP as our principal arbiter of societal progress, and replace it with metrics based on supporting flourishing people, communities and ecosystems. Finding more nourishing ways that we feed ourselves and others need to be at the centre of this new agenda.



Photo credit: RS and Oliver Holmgren





# Introduction

## Who we are

Sustain sows the seeds of change through events, policy work, research and practice, food system capacity building and collective action. We give people, councils, and organisations the tools they need to help them become empowered food citizens, supporting healthy communities, people and ecosystems.



## Board of Directors



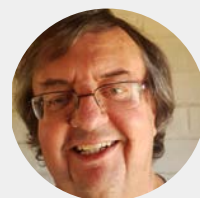
**Kelly Donati**  
Chair



**Lynn Richardson**  
Treasurer



**Annemaree Docking**  
Director



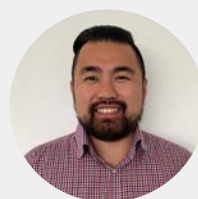
**Tom Gyorffy QC**  
Director



**Jono Leschinski**  
Director



**Izo Lourival**  
Director



**Tom Sorrell**  
Director



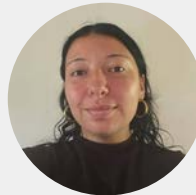
## The team that got us through 2020



**Dr. Nick Rose**  
Executive Director



**Georgia Karavis**  
Communications,  
Events, and Projects  
Coordinator



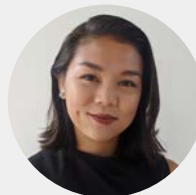
**Julia Pecoraro**  
Urban Agriculture  
Forum, Event  
Coordinator



**Nichole Foster**  
Melbourne Food Hub,  
Distribution Coordinator



**Max Godber**  
Cardinia Food  
Circles, Community  
Engagement  
Coordinator



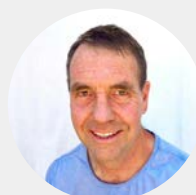
**Arianna Lim**  
Sustain,  
Communications and  
Strategy Support Officer



**Jess Harrison**  
Melbourne Food Hub,  
Packer



**Niro Vithyasekar**  
Melbourne Food Hub,  
Packer and Driver



**Rohan Wastell**  
Melbourne Food Hub,  
Packer and Driver



Photo credit: Clare Harvey

## A big thank you

To all of the volunteers who've been crucial to the success of our work in 2020, we say thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Your support has not only enabled us to keep doing what we do during the most challenging times, but also fostered new friendships, nurtured the plants in our urban farm and strengthened our community of sustainable food supporters.



# Our Theory of Change



## The problem

The Australian food system is mired by inequity and is making an increasingly negative contribution to public and planetary health. This nexus of issues constitutes a wicked problem with serious implications for current and future generations. There are no simple answers or silver bullet solutions.

## Our approach to change

We do not believe that individual action will be enough to tackle the systemic and entrenched challenges and crises of the food system in its current form.

Meaningful food system transformation can only be tackled through sustained and collaborative action by a growing network of organisations, institutions and community practitioners, united by a shared agenda for change. As such, our work is underpinned by a collective impact methodology to bring about our desired outcomes and long-term goal.

Any agenda for change requires a multi-pronged, multi-stakeholder approach across government and community. Experimentation—including a willingness to take risks but also to fail—is essential to re-imagining the food system.



## Our assumptions

- The drivers of change - declining public health, a warming planet, rising poverty and therefore food insecurity - will continue their current trajectory and likely intensify without significant intervention across multiple levels of government and community.
- Institutional and policy action from local, state and federal governments must increase for significant and meaningful change to be enacted at a national level and for communities to be supported in creating change at a local level.
- An increased appetite for change must be accompanied by greater allocation of resources to support organisations and networks sharing a vision for a food system that is equitable (good food for all) and sustainable (by supporting the planetary systems that allow all living beings to eat well), now and for future generations.

## Our vision

A food system that nourishes all Australians and the life systems on which they depend:

1. All people in Australia enjoy secure and dignified access to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced in ecologically and ethically sound ways.
2. Governments at all levels have integrated food system thinking and practice across a range of policy levers.
3. Communities are empowered to develop localised food systems that support their flourishing.
4. The Australian food system enhances rather than depletes global planetary health.

## Our short-to medium-term goals

Build food system literacy and capacity across communities and government.

- Partner with local and state governments to integrate food system understanding into policy and practice and break down compartmentalised approaches to food, health, environment, community, economy and waste.

## Our long-term goals

- Partner with states and territories to articulate and champion an ambitious agenda for a transformed food system.





# Core strategic focus and how we work



## Thought leadership

- Shape the conversation about healthy and sustainable food systems in Australia.
- Research and develop policy to enable communities and government to understand food system issues and design approaches to address these issues.



## Practice leadership

- Design, trial and model placed-based, community-level food system projects.
- Apply a collective impact approach to align mutually reinforcing activities and harness energy across stakeholder communities for food system transformation.



## Networking

- Build and share knowledge and practices through engaging events and forums that support budding local and national networks and communities.
- Build communities of practice to support governments to create meaningful change.



# Our Change Matrix

	Desired Outcomes	Action Agenda	Projects/Activity Priorities	Indicators of Change
<b>Think:</b> Articulate and champion an ambitious agenda for a transformed food system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong evidence base for change</li> <li>Increased interest in and engagement with food systems research</li> <li>Improved food system literacy in communities and with government</li> <li>Food systems thinking embedded across local/state government policies and programs</li> <li>Improved capacity to advocate on key issues</li> <li>Sustainable and healthy food systems accepted as a vital area of government and community action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake innovative research on critical food systems issues</li> <li>Collaborate with academic/industry/community partners on food systems research</li> <li>Disseminate food systems research findings to diverse audiences</li> <li>Inform and support the development of local &amp; state government food system policies</li> <li>Share and amplify innovative, feasible food systems knowledge and practice through events</li> <li>Build an action agenda for food system transformation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australian Research Council project: Strengthening Food Governance at the Local Level</li> <li>Farm to Plate Planning Audit</li> <li>Pandemic Gardening Survey dissemination</li> <li>Local Government Networking Forum</li> <li>Cardinia Food Circles project</li> <li>Urban Agriculture Forum and Month</li> <li>Monthly webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of local councils with food system policies and strategies</li> <li>Publication and dissemination of food system research on website and other public fora</li> <li># of local council members</li> <li>Media mentions of Sustain</li> <li>Engagement with food system actors (# of people)</li> <li>Participation in events (public speaking, facilitation etc)</li> </ul>
<b>Do:</b> Coordinate, enliven and model long-term, innovative food systems social enterprises and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved capacity for diverse communities to participate in and shape the food system</li> <li>Good food access for more people, especially those experiencing disadvantage or marginalisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate existing projects</li> <li>Trial new food system social enterprises</li> <li>Reduce barriers to economic opportunities for migrant and refugee women through food business incubation</li> <li>Experiment with new models and approaches to food system transformation</li> <li>Improve food literacy and security</li> <li>Create opportunities for cultural connection and celebration through food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cardinia Community Food Hub</li> <li>Melbourne Food Hub</li> <li>Grow/Source/Eat</li> <li>Food Business Boost</li> <li>Urban Food Justice Farm Network</li> <li>Food in Common</li> <li>United African Farm</li> <li>Cardinia Youth Food Security Network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sales of fresh fruit and veg</li> <li>Kilos of fruit/veg purchased</li> <li>Kilos of fruit/veg donated</li> <li># of community participants per project</li> <li># of new food businesses supported</li> <li># of new products marketed</li> <li># of new urban food production sites supported</li> <li>Volume of food produced and distributed</li> </ul>
<b>Network:</b> Build strong and collaborative partnerships and networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong collaboration across organisations and individuals working towards food system change</li> <li>Members shape and directly support our work</li> <li>Active local council engagement in food system dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and partner with existing networks and organisations engaged in food system work</li> <li>Build a diverse and growing membership base</li> <li>Support a local government food systems community of practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SA Urban Food Network</li> <li>Community Gardens Australia</li> <li>Webinars and direct engagement</li> <li>Quarterly Local Government Networking Forum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of organisations and institutions supported</li> <li># of project partners</li> <li># of individual and organisational memberships</li> <li># of participants and council represented in quarterly forums</li> <li>Social media reach and engagement</li> <li>Newsletter reach</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational capacity:</b> Build a strong and robust organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong organisational policies/systems</li> <li>Capable and diversified skill set</li> <li>Strong organisational longevity and function</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve internal policies and systems</li> <li>Develop staff capabilities</li> <li>Strengthen resourcing of organisation's core function</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy audit and development</li> <li>Review &amp; update position descriptions</li> <li>Funder, partner &amp; membership engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy audit conducted</li> <li>Staff skill set diversified</li> <li># of grants, partnerships and members</li> </ul>



## Our Impact in 2020

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*"We're having a bit of an engagement explosion here [in the municipality] relating to urban agriculture so the survey results are great evidence to back up what we are experiencing."*

— WEBINAR PARTICIPANT AND COUNCIL OFFICER IN VICTORIA

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## Think

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### Research

Pandemic Gardening Survey report:

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Viewed **968** times across  
**15** different countries

Australian Research Council “Strengthening Food  
Governance at the Local Level”:

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Completion of **Audit of food governance**  
across all councils in Victoria and NSW

Farm to Plate Planning Audit:

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**Presentation of preliminary results** in  
Melbourne CBD and Pakenham

### Shaping the conversation

**23 public speaking engagements**  
(interviews, podcasts, webinars,  
conferences)

**26 blog posts covering a wide range of  
topics** including the bushfire catastrophe,  
COVID-19 and its impact on food systems,  
indigenous food sovereignty, peri-urban  
planning and local food procurement

Costa’s Live Edible Gardening Odyssey:

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Supported **6 sessions, 100 attendees** on  
average and **13,000 views**

### Policy and capacity

Sustain organisational member **City  
of Greater Bendigo** launched its Food  
System Strategy





## Do

### Good food access

Food relief:

**2,931kg** local food distributed food relief  
**\$7,500** on local produce

**Closing the loop of GSE produce**  
that would otherwise be wasted from  
farms / our own packing operations

Grow / Source / Eat:

**\$91,745** distributed to local producers  
**2,590+** boxes distributed  
**11,706kg** fresh food distributed  
**15+** Victorian small-scale suppliers and  
makers supported

Urban farm:

**900kg** of produce grown in our urban  
farm in Alphington

### Collective impact: Cardinia Food Circles

Two international visitors to Cardinia Shire:

Sandor Katz | Fermentation guru  
Lenore Newman | Canada Research Chair  
in Food Security and Environment

VicHealth Reimagining Health grant:

Grant secured to establish a  
Cardinia Youth Food Security Network

Cardinia Community Food Hub:

Secured resources to establish a Cardinia  
Community Food Hub, in partnership with  
youth training organisation HopeWorks

### Community capacity building

Food in Common:

**12 seniors** connected through cooking

Food Business Boost:

**13 women** food entrepreneurs supported  
with small business training



Photo credit: SA Urban Food Network

## Network

### Food systems dialogue

#### Webinars:

**9** webinars with an average of **85** attendees per event, reaching **700** people nationally

### Strong collaborations

**75** partnerships with funders, community organisations and government

Participation in **VicHealth's COVID-19 Food Security and Food Systems Working Group**

### Growing membership base

**107** individual members, **18** organisational and institutional members with a **500%** increase over 12 months

### Social media reach

#### Instagram:

**123%** increase in followers, **2,927** total Sustain followers. **+2,693** followers for the Melbourne Food Hub, **+853** followers of the Urban Agriculture Forum

#### Facebook:

**37%** increase in followers, **6,197** total Sustain followers. **+2,032** followers for the Melbourne Food Hub, **+660** followers of the Urban Agriculture Forum

#### Twitter:

**24%** increase in followers, **1,629** total Sustain followers

#### Newsletter:

**23%** increase in subscribers, **1,907** total Sustain subscribers. **+460** subscribers to the Melbourne Food Hub



# 2020: A Year of Disruption, Tragedy and Adaptation

## The world around us:

- Bushfires rage across the country
- First COVID-19 case reported in Australia on 25 January

- Global pandemic declared by WHO on 11 March

- 100,000 cases worldwide
- International borders close in Australia on 19 March
- Social distancing rules imposed 21 March
- First lockdown: the world changes.
- JobKeeper and JobSeeker support announced by the federal government

- IPES-Food Communique warns about vulnerability in food systems
- Mass disruptions across the US food system. Reports of increased food waste in Australia as restaurants close and farmers lose access to a key market.
- Gardening suppliers selling out of seeds and seedlings across Australia

- Lockdown restrictions lifting across Australia
- Food system supply chain disruptions worsen
- World Food Program warns of 265 million people in extreme hunger by the end of 2020



## Sustain's world:

- First Sustain blogpost for 2020 reflects on the impacts of the bushfires
- A busy month of planning for the Jake Claro national speaking tour and Food for Thought Festival

- Master fermenter Sandor Katz presents at the Cardinia Cultural Centre in Pakenham in collaboration with The Fermentary team and hosted by the Cardinia Food Movement
- Food Business Boost kicks off in person

- Lenore Newman presents "The Future of Food: Sustainable Food Systems" in Melbourne and Pakenham
- Melbourne Food Hub tour on 10 March, Sustain's last face-to-face event
- Food for Thought Festival cancelled and Jake Claro national speaking tour postponed
- Launch of Grow / Source / Eat veggie parcels

- MFH team develops and implements COVID-Safe Plans
- Grow / Source / Eat takes off - huge demand for locally sourced food!

- Urban Agriculture Forum postponed
- "Community Gardens are Essential" campaign launched
- JobKeeper commences for Sustain
- Sustain launches food justice membership drive
- Moving Feast grant received. Planting starts at Alphington Urban Farm for Bridge Darebin
- Evaluation of Pakenham School Farm project (Pick my Project)
- "What We Do" video launched
- Sustain joins VicHealth's Food Security and Food Systems Working Group





Black Lives Matter global uprising

Growing Victorian COVID cluster linked to meatworks industry  
North Melbourne and Flemington Housing Estates locked down

State of disaster is declared for Victoria. Schools and businesses close. Melbourne masks up and begins its 112-day lockdown

Daily COVID cases drop in Victoria

FoodBank Australia reports surging demand for food relief across the country  
Double donut day! Victoria records the first day of no new COVID cases or deaths since the second lockdown

Lockdown ends in Melbourne, but the third wave in Europe and North America gains momentum

Over 80 million cases and over 1.8 million deaths worldwide

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

Analysis commences on Pandemic Gardening Survey  
Third webinar: "Growing Resilience: Diversity in Community Agriculture"

Pandemic Gardening survey, supported by Costa and Diggers Club, concludes with 9,140 responses  
First Costa Edible Garden Odyssey  
Food Business Boost participants are locked down and share their experiences with us and the media  
Second webinar: "Young Farmers: Food System Changemakers"  
Sustain introduces 10% contribution to Pay the Rent from all membership fees

First webinar: "Peri-urban agriculture and the future of the fringe"  
Pandemic Gardening Survey launched  
First Food Cubes installed at the Melbourne Food Hub to grow fresh, local food for those experiencing food insecurity in Darebin

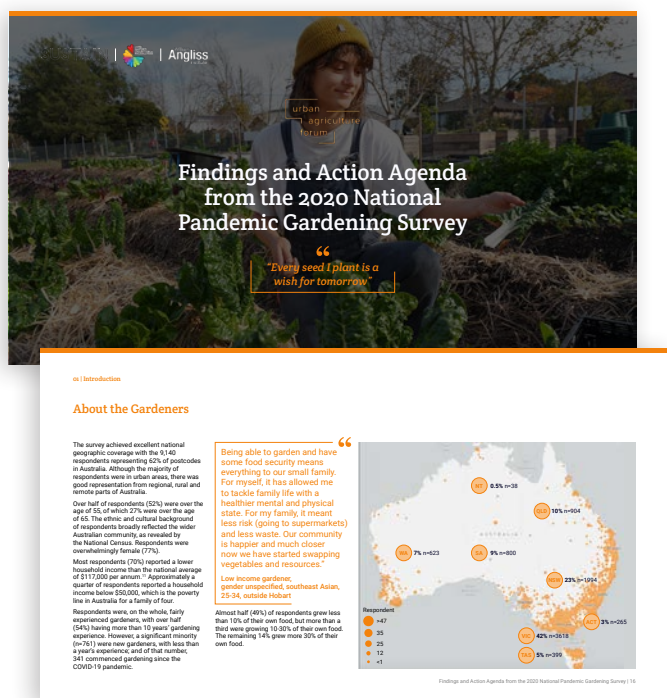
Sixth webinar: "Urban Agriculture Lab"  
Pandemic Gardening Survey report published: "Every Seed I Plant is a Wish for Tomorrow: Findings and Action Agenda from the 2020 Pandemic Gardening Survey"

Fifth webinar: "Cultivating Health and Wellbeing: An Action Agenda for Edible Gardening in Australia"  
Food in Common kicks off with 12 senior citizens

Sustain's urban farm announced as a winner of the Australian Ethical grant round  
Fourth webinar: "A Wish for Tomorrow: Findings from the National Pandemic Gardening Survey"

Vermont Farm to Plate webinar series with Jake Claro  
Food Business Boost incubator project and East African Sisters mentioned by Member for Essendon, Danny Pearson in the Parliament of Victoria and written up in SBS Food





*"Congratulations on such a great webinar. It was very useful in my role and provides such strong evidence for advocating internally to both senior management and elected members in an organisation that has so many competing priorities."*

— WEBINAR PARTICIPANT AND COUNCIL OFFICER IN VICTORIA

In 2020 a major highlight and achievement for Sustain was the design, implementation, analysis and reporting on **the Pandemic Gardening Survey**. The response to the survey was overwhelming; to embark on the analysis of such an immense dataset with only volunteer research support was a daunting task and monumental effort. Special mention goes to Ana Spataru and Pooja Mallya who spent many hours undertaking the careful and painstaking work of analysing data to support Kelly Donati and Nick Rose in synthesising the results for the two webinars and final report.

The Pandemic Gardening Survey is an incredibly rich and significant dataset and will be a source of further analysis, writing and discussion in 2021 and beyond. The webinars and report laid the foundation for collaboration with a research team from Melbourne University to delve deeper into some key themes emerging from the qualitative data. In practical terms, the survey findings have already served as a source of inspiration and strong evidence basis for local government staff advocating for the benefits of edible gardening and urban agriculture in their community.





Sustain's involvement in the **Australian Research Council Discovery Project "Strengthening Food Systems Governance at the Local Level"** continued with the first phase of the research project, involving the mapping of all food systems policies and related initiatives across all local governments in Victoria and NSW. We look forward to reporting on the results of this mapping in 2021. The next phases of the project involve a complementary mapping of community food initiatives regarding food systems governance, which will be a whole of country exercise; case studies of three local governments in Victoria and NSW; and case studies of three community food initiatives in both states. This research collaboration is also working in partnership with an allied civil society food systems research project involving several universities in Canada.

We continued to reflect on our achievements and progress on long-standing projects, in particular on the **Cardinia Food Circles** project. In June 2020, Nick Rose co-authored an article with Sustain Director Izo Lourival, published in the Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition: ["From Nar Nar Goon to Koo Wee Rup: Can Participatory Food Policy Making Processes contribute to healthier and fairer food systems in the Australian Municipal Context."](#) Supported by William Angliss Institute, this article undertook in-depth interviews with community members and key actors in the development of the Cardinia Community Food Strategy and generated important findings and recommendations for other local governments engaged in future participatory food policy making processes in Australia.



Photo credit: Tanya Massy

Another Sustain research project nearing conclusion is the **Farm to Plate Planning Audit**, carried out by PlanitRural with support from the McLeod Family Foundation. This research involves a comprehensive audit of 26 local planning schemes in peri-urban Melbourne to identify barriers and enablers to small-scale agriculture as well as to provide recommendations for planning scheme reform. The results will be published in early 2021 and presented at the 3rd Urban Agriculture Forum.



## Our Projects for 2020

## Do



## Cardinia Food Circles

The **Cardinia Food Circles** project got off to a flying start with visits to Cardinia Shire from high-profile international speakers. In late February, fermentation guru Sandor Katz (courtesy of our collaboration with Sharon Flynn and The Fermentary team) made sauerkraut on stage at the Cardinia Cultural Centre to a highly enthused audience of over 100. A week later our workshop for local government planners featured leading Canadian food systems expert Dr Lenore Newman (University of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia), together with our colleagues Annemaree Docking and Linda Martin-Chew of PlanItRural who shared preliminary findings of their peri-urban farm-to-plate planning audit. We were geared up to continue the momentum with a major southeast food systems forum featuring Jake Claro, Director of the Vermont Farm to Plate Plan, when COVID-19 hit. With the first of two lockdowns in Melbourne underway, all in-person events were off the table instantly and indefinitely.

Shifting rapidly to an online environment, the first zoom meeting of the Cardinia Food Network took place in May, resulting in increased attendance at monthly meetings for the rest of the year as well as increased participation, once members accustomed themselves to the format. The work of the Food Circles project team featured in other forums, most notably in June as part of the [VicHealth Life and Health Re-Imagined series - Good Food for All](#). Sustain and Cardinia Shire Council joined VicHealth's COVID-19 Food Security and Food Systems Working Group, including the preparation of a consensus statement for food systems reform in Victoria, to be delivered to the state government in 2021.

Early in the year, we delivered the final report for the Pick My Project Pakenham Community School Farm project. With the support of parliamentary intern for Jordan Crugnale MP, Anet McClintock, this work was extended with a report documenting the benefits and opportunities of integrating Garden-Based Learning programs more fully into Victorian schools and curriculum.



Photo credit: Nick Rose

The second part of the year saw sustained focus on grant writing for Cardinia-based projects. Our successes included grants from Ripe for Change for part-time communications support; from Working for Victoria to partner with HopeWorks in establishing a Cardinia Community Food Hub; and from VicHealth to partner with staff and students from local secondary schools to establish a Cardinia Youth Food Security Network. 2021 promises to be another huge year for the Cardinia Food Circles team!



Photo credit: Phoebe Powell



Food Business Boost x East African Sisters

## Food Business Boost

The Food Business Boost (FBB) program was undertaken from February to December 2020 as a collaboration between Sustain and Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC). FBB is a small food business incubator program which engages women from migrant and refugee backgrounds (in this instance, living on Flemington Housing Estate) and experiencing disadvantages and/or challenges in accessing mainstream employment and small business development opportunities. The program provides workshops and mentoring specific to starting food businesses with the objectives of:

- creating new employment opportunities for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds living in social housing (both directly and indirectly engaged in the program),
- providing support for these women to empower themselves and become role models for their communities through business,
- teaching participants how to start and register a business according to legislative requirements; plan, manage, assess and respond to risk according to their business models; and market and sell their products to a broader audience, and
- creating opportunities for cross-cultural exchanges with customers through food products.

Specifically, the program walked participants step-by-step through the process of starting a business from product development and registration to testing and labelling so that, upon completion, they are able to begin trading confidently. These skills and the completion of associated registration / regulatory requirements are especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on employment opportunities which are likely to disproportionately affect those already facing barriers to entering the jobs market.

This iteration of FBB has provided the above opportunities to thirteen women representing four businesses:

- **Islands of the Moon** - a collaboration between two generations of women interested in sharing the food and culture from the Comoros Islands through catering and a line of food products, including a traditional raw vegetable pickle, Katchoumbari.
- **East African Sisters** - two women from Somalia and Ethiopia with experience in catering as well as developing small-batch chilli sauces (Basbaas Cagaar and Guduud) for wholesale and retail markets, including through Grow/Source/Eat.
- **Multicultural Cuisine** - a group of culturally and linguistically diverse women working together to bring their diverse food offerings to events catering.
- **Mickey's Sweet Table** - a handmade chocolate and dessert catering company that aims to bring a sense of joy and imagination to customers.





The workshop program was developed in collaboration with Jane Del Rosso, founder of [The Business of Food](#). Based on Sustain's learnings from [previous iterations of FBB](#), specifically regarding the need for increased mentoring sessions, [Mariam Issa](#), leading author, speaker and mentor, as well as migrant business woman herself, joined the team to guide the women through the process of starting a food business and developing skills to manage associated stressors. Project coordinators Georgia Karavis (Sustain) and Lauren Kerr (MVCC) also provided informal, one-on-one mentoring and homework sessions to assist the women to complete tasks.

East African Sisters have emerged as a great success story. We could not be prouder of what they achieved during a year of incredible challenges, and their basbaas could not be more delicious. They are now selling on the Melbourne Food Hub online store and being stocked in local Flemington outlet, Macca Halaal. They also received significant media attention including a feature article on SBS Food, as well as being presented to the Parliament of Victoria through MP Danny Pearson's member statement.

As Safiya Rom East African Sister explains, "We'd been thinking a long time about starting a business, but we didn't know which way... That's how Sustain and the food program with Lauren [Kerr, from the Food Boost program] and Georgia, helped us. We didn't know how much work we'd have to do, or the way to do it. We didn't know how to tick all the boxes for our basbaas."



City of Moonee Valley



SUSTAIN



scanlon foundation

In 2021, Sustain is continuing its partnership with Moonee Valley City Council to further develop wholesale skills and markets for current graduates. A grant from the Scanlon Foundation will support an independent course to incubate two businesses in the Darebin area.

## Grow / Source / Eat

As part of Melbourne Food Hub, the **Grow / Source / Eat** project focuses on building a community of people who want to make local food the norm and see their neighbourhoods thrive with urban farms, healthy bodies, opportunities for young people and, importantly, tasty and nutritious food! We do this by sticking to our guns on five core principles: local, sustainable, fair, fresh, delicious.

Our commitment is to support producers in being price-setters and not price-takers. We source all of our produce from small-scale, Victorian farmers and makers who share our values, including our pride and joy: the Urban Farm at the Melbourne Food Hub. We've built relationships with over 15 producers, whose stories we celebrate with our community of subscribers through social media and blogs.

Our subscribers share the love right back by showcasing their locally sourced feasts with us and their farmers. Since commencing, Grow / Source / Eat has built a loyal



**arcare**  
★★★★★ aged care

Food in Common was made possible with the generous support of the Arcare Family Foundation.

following across Melbourne, collaborating with local businesses along the way such as Moon Rabbit in Preston where we pack our parcels.

Working with farmers and makers throughout COVID has been a hugely rewarding experience and has only highlighted the need for stronger local food distribution networks that can adapt quickly, keeping people well fed and small, local farms viable during periods of disruption. The role of the Melbourne Food Hub and others engaged in an increasingly collaborative network within Melbourne's foodbowl will become extremely important as the climate crisis deepens, not to mention the customer shift towards sustainable food and challenges faced by small producers particularly regarding logistics and marketing.

## Food in Common

Staying healthy, connected and keeping busy during COVID hasn't been easy - so this year we trialled a new way to bring fresh food and recipes, socialising and skill-building opportunities to seniors in Melbourne in partnership with the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House.

The Food in Common project commenced in October 2020 with fortnightly recipe packs, instructional cooking videos and regular online catch-ups. We were fortunate to be able to source some of our food from the Melbourne Food Hub's sustainable and local suppliers through Grow / Source / Eat.

From 2021, the program will be supplemented with gardening workshops and digital literacy training to assist those over 60 to keep in touch, stay healthy and learn new skills. We'll then create a guide for other community

organisations wanting to combine their food, gardening and tech projects with resources to help make it easier for older people everywhere to stay connected.



### PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK:

*"Thank you for the opportunity to be part of Food in Common and for enhancing our knowledge and enjoyment of healthy foods. And thank you for the food packs, full of lovely ingredients. I was an uninspired cook before Food in Common. You have encouraged me to try new recipes, experiment with new ingredients (like saltbush!) and try new cooking techniques. Thank you for the zoom groups and videos, which gave me more access to Food in Common, and the videos were a great way to learn."*

## Key activities undertaken in 2020

- Completed 6 remote cooking packs and online instructional videos
- Distributed 76 packs (210 serves of food) with fresh, seasonal produce sourced through the Melbourne Food Hub from local producers including the urban farm at Alphington
- Completed 6 online meetings to catch up, watch and help people cook and connect
- Food in Common facebook group established to support and connect participants





The CSFC was awarded a grant from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy program to build a small Indigenous Food Garden, which is currently in the planning stage.

## ClimateSmart Food Classroom (CSFC)

Situated on our Urban Farm at the Melbourne Food Hub Alphington site, the ClimateSmart Food Classroom is a visual and hands-on learning experience. Designed to educate the community on climate-sensitive food growing techniques, it includes information about regenerative production and soil health, water harvesting and conservation methods, heat and drought tolerant crops and indigenous plantings.

Due to COVID-19, the intended program of events and workshops was put on hold, though the CSFC has become a crucial meeting place for staff and volunteers working on the Urban Farm and hosted the ABC's television coverage of the National Pandemic Gardening Survey with Nick Rose as well as featuring in the first of Costa's Edible Gardening Odysseys. Furthermore, as learning home food production remotely became increasingly important during Melbourne's lockdowns, the resources contained online were an important part of the Melbourne Food Hub's socially distanced community engagement.



Food Justice Food Cube First  
Instagram 2020

## Food Justice

A strong focus 2020 has been building food justice into every Melbourne Food Hub (MFH) project. This momentum has built not only as a result of surging food insecurity during the pandemic but through Sustain's existing partnerships with community organisations already working to support people experiencing significant disadvantage.

From March 2020, food relief organisations were experiencing far greater demand, while supply through larger hunger relief organisations was disrupted by the closure of restaurants with some organisations previously coordinating fresh, local produce donations being forced to close due to safety concerns. Our commitment to equitable food access through Grow / Source / Eat evolved into a dedicated food relief program incorporating the purchase and distribution of fresh local food to be donated to food relief agencies as well as building an Urban Food Justice Farm to engage the community in growing produce expressly for the purpose of food relief.

Sustain quickly mobilised by increasing its crop plantings at the MFH Urban Farm. An initial small grant received by the [Inner North Community Foundation](#) and a food justice membership allowed us to purchase a total of seven [Biofilta Foodcubes](#), further expanding the farm's production capacity.

Moving Feast ×  CITY OF DAREBIN ×  AUSTRALIAN ETHICAL

Our food justice project is supported by grants through [Moving Feast](#), the [City of Darebin](#) and Australian Ethical, with a greater program of urban farming for food relief in the works for 2021.





Our Projects for 2020

# Network



It became clear early on that face-to-face events would be impossible for the remainder of 2020. In response, Sustain held a series of online events that, in many ways, broadened rather than limited our reach. Nine webinars over six months brought together over 1,100 participants and 39 food system experts and community practitioners from across Australia and beyond.

## Transition & Recovery Webinar Series

Beginning in June, we hosted monthly webinars that mobilised increased interest in the food system and amplified the great work already taking place locally and nationally. Together our invited speakers and guests engaged in a series of exciting conversations as they explored ideas for co-creating and transitioning to a more resilient and sustainable food future in the face of great uncertainty. See our timeline for links to individual webinars.

## Vermont Farm to Plate Webinar Series

As a decade-old program that is by many accounts one of the most comprehensive and long-term food and farming system programs of its kind, the team from the Vermont Farm to Plate program has been on the Sustain team's radar for some time.

The Vermont Farm to Plate Plan serves as an exemplary case study for how the collective impact approach can bring together diverse stakeholders in creating transformative change across the food system. In acknowledgement that no one organisation can relocalise the food system on its own, the cross-cutting Network encompasses farmers, food production



businesses and speciality food producers, government, educational institutions, non-for-profit organisations, and capital providers.

With the cancellation of the cross-country tour with Program Director Jake Claro originally scheduled for March 2020, our three-part webinar series with the Vermont Farm to Plate Network took place across December:

- Vermont Farm to Plate Plan: From 2009 to 2020 and Beyond (December 2)
- Planning for Sustainable Farming and Healthy Food Access (December 9)
- How the Public Purse Can Drive Food Systems Change: the Role of Institutional Procurement (December 16)

Jake was joined by Network Manager Sarah Danly, as well as practitioners and policy makers from across Australia who shared state and local initiatives, discussing how the Vermont approach could best be applied in the Australian context.



Photo Credit: South Australian Urban Food Network



### PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK:

*"The speakers demonstrated that food systems approaches work, and their examples provided learning, convincing and hope."*

*"The events were extremely useful and relevant to the implementation of the local council food system strategies."*



The webinar series was supported by VicHealth, the Tasmanian Government, Commonland, University of Wollongong, SA Urban Food Network, Eat Well Tasmania, Gateway Health, RegenWA, Food for Thought, Community Food Events, Charles Sturt University, Cardinia Shire Council, Community Food for All, Plan-It Rural, Albury Wodonga Local Food Network, Gateway Health, City of Casey, Benalla Health, Peninsula Health, Wangaratta Community Food for All, the City of Greater Dandenong, Kooweerup Regional Health Service, The Community Plate, and Leah Galvin Consulting.



Costa with City of Sydney Councillor Jess Miller in the session on local government support for urban agriculture

## Costa's Live Edible Garden Odyssey

In 2020, we could not have asked for a more enthusiastic and persistent supporter of edible gardening than Costa Georgiadis, ambassador of Sustain's 2021 Urban Agriculture Forum and Urban Agriculture Month. Not even a global pandemic or national lockdown could keep Costa away from a great garden. Sustain was delighted to support Costa's monthly virtual "road trips", hosted from his home in Sydney, which visited some of Australia's most interesting and innovative edible gardens. Thousands of gardening enthusiasts from across Australia tuned in on Sunday mornings to hear Costa explore everything from bees and biosecurity to local government support of urban agriculture and community strategies for facilitating access to land.

Costa's Odyssey will continue into early 2021 to drum up support for the Urban Agriculture Forum and Urban Agriculture Month. The program will close on a hopeful note, covering the topics of urban agriculture as a response to the climate emergency, an approach to horticulture therapy, and a means of empowering Indigenous communities.





## The Work Of Our Members

A constant theme of the feedback of our Transition and Recovery webinar series is how valuable and motivating it was for participants to see what others are doing in the food systems space across the country, particularly for local governments. In this section, we feature some of the work of our member organisations that help make Sustain a network of thinkers and doers.

### City of Greater Bendigo

It's been a big year for food system work in Bendigo! One of the highlights was the endorsement of Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy by Council in June. The Strategy provides a shared vision for over thirty organisations and community groups across the region to create a food system that is healthy, equitable and sustainable and supports the local economy, culture and health and wellbeing of our communities. The Strategy will guide the City and our partners' work in the Greater Bendigo food system for the next 10 years. Some key achievements are:

- **Bendigo Foodshare** has been supported through development and printing of healthy recipe cards, recruitment of volunteers and staff for support during the COVID-19 pandemic, setting up a community pantry and regularly updating emergency food relief information for residents across the region.
- **The Bendigo Community Farmers Market** was supported to commence their monthly Saturday market at the Golden Square Pony Club.

- **Healthy Heart of Victoria** began a Schools Kitchen Garden Project in mid-2020. This project supports seven schools and early learning centres in Long Gully and Kangaroo Flat areas to increase edible gardening and healthy eating activities.

A business case and prospectus for the **Greater Bendigo Community Food Hub** has also been developed and concept plans for a preferred site have been completed.

The City was also designated as a **UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy** in late 2019. Since designation we have focused efforts on bringing groups and networks together and sharing information about what this prestigious recognition can mean for our city and region. In our first 12 months the City has focused on setting up advisory committees and developing an implementation framework and action plan, to ensure we meet our obligations as a UNESCO Creative City. Objectives and projects in the framework are based around four pillars: recognising and celebrating our First Nations' culture, food and knowledge, supporting creativity and innovation, championing healthy food and developing a more sustainable food system in an era of climate change.

Some key City of Gastronomy projects in the last 12 months include working with the Dja Dja Wurrung to further develop the concept of the Six Seasons (in the hope of embedding a more sustainable relationship to our environment and food in the broader culture), working with local producers and the tourism team to develop a 'Gastronomy Guide' to the region, highlighting local producers and innovative, creative food businesses through our blog and newsletter, and sharing knowledge and initiatives with the 35 other Cities of Gastronomy around the world.



#### MEMBER FEEDBACK:

*"Being a member of Sustain has helped us to connect and share with others across Victoria and Australia and learn from others via the great schedule of webinars."*

### City of Onkaparinga

The City of Onkaparinga is home to more than 173,000 people living in urban and rural communities, making it the largest South Australian council by population. We acknowledge the Kurna people, the traditional owners of the land, who are actively engaged in community life and bring their rich cultural heritage to the strong, vibrant communities we strive to create and sustain.

The City of Onkaparinga is involved in a wide range of food initiatives that contribute to the sharing of skills and knowledge while building a sense of community and connection to the environment.

Our recently adopted Community Capacity Strategic Plan 2021-24 has a strong focus on food. Our decision to become a Sustain member aligns well with this future direction.

Edible gardening in Onkaparinga is recognised as an emerging opportunity for our region to improve health and wellbeing. The work of Sustain in the Pandemic Gardening Survey, provided us with good evidence to advocate for and invest in this work.



Willunga Magic Harvest hub coordinator. Magic Harvest is a community program created to inspire home gardening and cooking fresh produce. Photo credit: City of Onkaparinga.

Our focus in the past year has expanded to explore the local food system and how it can strengthen food security for our residents. Sustain's work at both the state and local level supports us to do this. We're also learning so much from inspiring interstate examples.

As we continue to co-design and partner with our community, we look forward to the leadership, expert knowledge and community connection that Sustain provides.

**Erin Thompson**  
Mayor, City of Onkaparinga





Photo Credit: South Australian  
Urban Food Network

## South Australian Urban Food Network

The SA Urban Food Network (SAUFN) grew from a shared community vision for a regenerative local food system. We play our part by exchanging connections and knowledge through events and resources so together we can all build skills and initiatives for the health of our land and communities. SAUFN exchanges connections and knowledge; educates individuals, communities and governments; and enables opportunities to strengthen the system.

The network is currently run by a volunteer coordinating group with staff support and funding provided by Green Adelaide. In 2020, through ongoing connections and support from Sustain SAUFN has:

- **Strengthened its governance model** to enable grant funding submissions and coordination
- **Built the communications foundation** to foster connections, knowledge and opportunities through an identity, website, regular e-news, social media strategy and promotional assets
- **Partnered with** Sustain, Adelaide Food Fringe, Hawke Centre, Youth Food Movement, Food Embassy, University of Adelaide to plan key public events
- **Collaborated with local governments** to submit an LGA research grant with 19 supporting organisations that was successful in October

- **Enabled a Food Systems Network.** Co-facilitating with the City of Onkaparinga's Healthy Lifestyles Officer sparked from the June 2019 event with 8 local governments, Wellbeing SA, Heart Foundation, and two community collectives.
- **Supported an Urban Food Practitioners Network,** sparked from the June 2019 event by City of Marion's Community Garden Coordinator. They plan to host gatherings four times a year in different Council locations. This group is aimed at community garden coordinators as well as strategic practitioners.

SAUFN also contributed to the Vermont Farm to Plate workshop series, including a special break-out discussion room for South Australian participants. Working with Sustain enables the SAUFN to keep connected with international, national and interstate events, case studies and innovative initiatives. Through its collaboration with Sustain, the SAUFN is able to access expertise, advice, events and speakers while offering local links to a national network that values local food economies and environments. The value of collaborating across Australia is critical to helping to guide the SAUFN in how to work smarter locally.



Photo Credit: South Australian Urban Food Network

“

*“These types of networks help you to critically think through the approaches to your work and be motivated by what others are doing around the city [state and country].”*

— JANET WILLOUGHBY,  
CITY OF CHARLES STURT



SA gardener Rachel Eckermann in her thriving backyard.  
Credit: SA Urban Food Network.  
Photographer: Baxter Wiles.



# Financial Report

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

## Income & Expenditure Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2020

		2020	2019
Income		\$	\$
Philanthropic Funding & Grants	Note 3	462,967	290,589
Sponsorship		20,445	19,562
Events		16,698	63,137
Consultancy Services		59,998	117,233
Fruit & Vegetable Sales		47,845	-
Donations		1,252	16,161
Memberships		3,729	870
Government Support Covid-19		36,201	-
Other Income		4,727	3,500
Interest Received		2,450	4,452
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$656,312</b>	<b>\$515,504</b>
Expenditure		\$	\$
Advertising & Promotion		4,806	16,389
Bank Charges		110	84
Bad Debts		2,070	-
Bookkeeping Fees		5,323	3,609
Computer, IT & Website Expenses		12,601	3,205
Consultancy Expenses		129,619	96,857
Contractors		5,311	6,923
Employee Remuneration & Benefits		206,178	241,357
Event Costs		15,218	62,419
Grants & Donations		6,569	10,000
Insurances		2,017	1,919
Printing & Stationary		8,929	2,590
Produce/Food Purchases		30,062	-
Project Expenses including Infrastructure		106,953	61,030
Travel & Conferences		6,392	19,460
Workshops & Training		6,718	1,520
Sundry Expenses		1,064	373
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>\$549,940</b>	<b>\$527,735</b>
<b>NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b>\$106,373</b>	<b>\$(12,231)</b>

## Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

## Statement of Financial Position

As at 30th June 2020

	2020	2019
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Cash at Bank & On Hand	330,578	394,190
Accounts Receivable	37,875	4,554
Other Debtors	396	845
GST Refundable	-	4,433
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>368,849</b>	<b>404,022</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
	Nil	Nil
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>368,849</b>	<b>404,022</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable & Other Creditors	25,179	13,519
Unearned Income	Note 3 148,721	306,373
GST Payable	4,446	Nil
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>178,346</b>	<b>319,892</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
	Nil	Nil
<b>NET Assets</b>	<b>\$190,503</b>	<b>\$84,130</b>
<b>Retained Earnings</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Retained Earnings 1st July 2019	84,130	96,361
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	106,373	(12,231)
<b>TOTAL RETAINED EARNINGS AT 30th JUNE 2020</b>	<b>\$190,503</b>	<b>\$84,130</b>



## Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

### Notes to the Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 30th June 2020

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#### 1. Summary Of Significant Accounting Policies

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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) Property, 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.

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#### 2. Goods & Services Tax

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The company is registered for Goods & Services Tax.

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#### 3. Philanthropic Funding & Grants - Unearned Income

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Philanthropic funding & grants received for specific projects and purposes and not expended, are carried forward as a provision for future expenditure.

## Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

**ABN: 54 272 644 917**

### Directors' Declaration

**for the Year Ended 30th June 2020**

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 2020 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 meets 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**



**Lynn Richardson - Treasurer**

Dated this 20th day of November 2020



## 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 2020

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 2011 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 2020,  
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

39 Clunies Ross Crescent, Mulgrave

Dated this 16th day of November 2020





