

Annual Report

Acknowledgement and Commitment

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands and waterways on which we work, live and play. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and Elders past, present and future.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples across Australia have cared for Country for millennia and Australian children and young people have so much to learn from their ways of knowing, being and doing, with respect to growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing. We commit to a continued cultural learning journey and partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations where it supports self-determined outcomes.

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References in this report to 'the year' and 'this year' relate to the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

Message from the Chair and the CEO

About the Foundation

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation founded by Stephanie Alexander AO at Collingwood College in 2004.

The Foundation inspires and equips educators to run a Kitchen Garden Program that fits their individual school or service needs. The Kitchen Garden Program is recognised worldwide as a proven, impactful, curriculum-linked framework that delivers learning, wellbeing and sustainability benefits for children and young people and the families and communities that surround them.

Over 1,000 early childhood services, primary schools and secondary schools across Australia run the Kitchen Garden Program. The program centres on pleasurable food education, encouraging children and young people to understand and connect with fresh, delicious food through fun, hands-on learning.

Pleasurable food education empowers children and young people to develop practical skills, an appreciation of seasonal produce, and a positive, confident and healthy relationship with food – for life.

In addition to the Kitchen Garden Program, we lead **community place-based projects**, working alongside community partners to address local health and learning priorities for children and young people. We draw on our deep experience working with school communities to support our partners in achieving the changes they want most in the places where children and young people learn and play.

We partner with philanthropic organisations, government, corporations and individuals to make positive changes in the food habits of all Australians.

Our vision and approach

Our vision

Healthy children and young people living in sustainable communities across Australia.

Our purpose

We enable children and young people to form positive food habits for life.

Our role

We support communities and educators across Australia to deliver pleasurable food education and Kitchen Garden Programs for children and young people by providing inspiration, information, extensive resources, capability and professional development, a national community of practice, and ongoing support.

Our approach

POSITIVE

Guided by our pleasurable food education philosophy, we encourage children and young people to experience the joys of fresh, seasonal and delicious produce. Alongside educators and communities, and through hands-on learning, we empower and enthuse - embedding skills, knowledge and joy.

PREVENTATIVE

We address preventable health challenges early by working with children and young people - and their communities. Using age-appropriate and scaleable activities, we lay the groundwork for positive food habits, wellbeing and sustainability skills - for life.

IMPACTFUL

We are evidence-based and draw on 20 + years of on-the-ground experience. We work alongside educators, partners and the community, taking a strengths-based approach and sharing our learnings to maximise impact.

COMMUNITY-MINDED

We work collaboratively and inclusively, meeting educators and communities where they are focusing our efforts where they have the most impact. We work to develop authentic, meaningful and sustainable relationships.



"Pleasurable food education is easy, simple and joyful. It's preparing a child for a happier and healthier life."

STEPHANIE ALEXANDER AO

Photo Armelle Habib



Stephanie Alexander AO

MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

This year has been a time of renewal with a clear focus on stretching our strengths and impact into communities across Australia. Educators around the country are getting back on track after a few years of setbacks. So too, our Foundation rallied together to action change and continue our progress.

As always, I drew much inspiration from the wonderful school communities I visited right around the country. Seeing my original vision flourish in gardens and kitchens of all shapes and sizes reinforces to me that pleasurable food education links students to positive health, wellbeing and sustainability practices that are even more essential now than they were 20 years ago.

In August, I joined Kirsty McBain MP at Cobargo in NSW to witness the community resilience after the Black Summer fires. I visited the incredible Mount Molloy Primary School in Far North Queensland to celebrate 20 years of their Kitchen Garden Program and share the delights from their tropical harvest. A trip to Tasmania later in the year saw me celebrate another successful fundraising campaign with Curtis Stone and our long-standing partner Coles, where we both admired the personalised scarecrows and impressive program run at Princes Street Primary School. This year, we welcomed a new CEO, Cathy Wilkinson, who has championed the Foundation's vision and impact at public events, industry and academic forums and with strategic partners to build collaborations that support more children to form positive food habits for life. She has led the development of the Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 which includes an increased focus on community place-based projects in areas of highest need.

Our expertise is being requested increasingly more as communities turn to holistic, grassroots solutions to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of their people. Our community place-based projects, such as the Healthy Kids Advisors initiative and the Playford showcase with Wellbeing SA, are fantastic examples of our ability to foster and guide community-led solutions to change.

Thank you to the schools, early childhood services, educators and children across Australia for enthusiastically rolling up their sleeves and putting our ideas into action. As I look ahead to 2024, and the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the Foundation, there has never been a more important time for our work to continue to excite children and young people about a healthy, fresh, delicious future.

Stephanie

Message from the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer

IAN SANDERS AND DR CATHY WILKINSON

This year, the Foundation developed a new organisational strategy to align our efforts over the coming years. Our purpose is to enable children and young people to form positive food habits for life so that Australians and their communities can live healthy and sustainable lives. We identified four priorities:

- 1. Support more Australian schools and early childhood services to deliver pleasurable food education and the Kitchen Garden Program.
- 2. Work alongside communities to support children and young people through community place-based projects that address inequities.
- 3. Grow a national kitchen garden movement.
- 4. Build long-term sustainability of the Foundation.

We crystalised our Foundation's values of being supportive, inclusive, passionate, collaborative and resourceful. Across the Foundation, we are sharply focused on impact. There remains a strong interest and commitment to the Kitchen Garden Program from schools and early childhood services with over 1,000 settings across Australia involved. Over 3 million pleasurable food education experiences were enjoyed by children across the year. Evaluation of our delivery of the Healthy Kids Advisors initiative in Victoria is demonstrating up to five times more impact than traditional health promotion approaches.

We are very proud of this impact and the incredible commitment of all our staff and extend our deep gratitude for their efforts.

This impact is only possible with the support of our generous corporate, philanthropic and pro-bono partners as well as community donors. Thank you to our community partner, Coles, and all contributors, including those who have made donations to the Foundation across the year.

We look forward to celebrating our Foundation's 20th anniversary, together in 2024.





Governance

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation's corporate governance arrangements are guided by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) governance standards for charities and the Australian Institute of Company Directors not-for-profit governance principles.

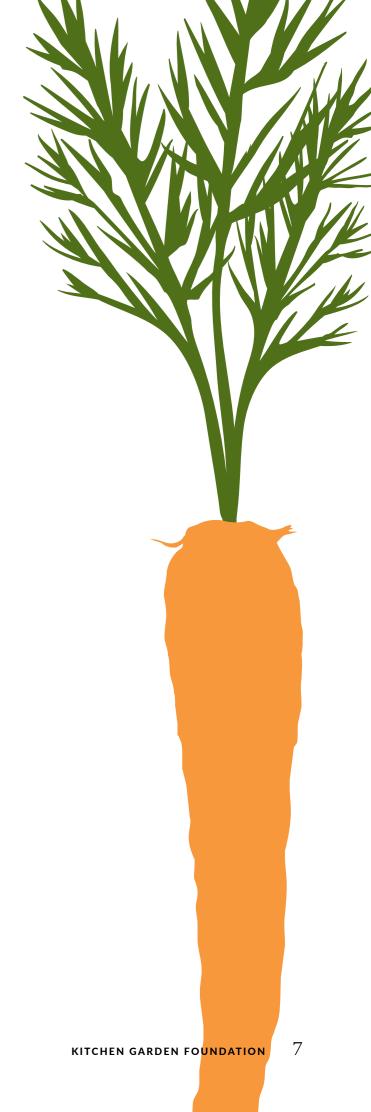
Our Constitution establishes a governance structure for the Foundation. The members and Board Directors are responsible for the overall performance and compliance of the Foundation. The Board provides strategic direction, governance and leadership in pursuing our vision and delivering against our strategic priorities.

BOARD DIRECTORS

Ian Sanders (Chair) Marianne Margin Rob Csoti Simon Bell (Treasurer) Simone Falvey-Behr Tracey Sisson

FINANCIALS

Audited financials are available from the ACNC at www.acnc.gov.au/charity/





The Kitchen Garden Program

HIGHLIGHTS

Our digital resource library and community hub, the Shared Table, fostered a surge of community engagement from educators — more than double the previous financial year and the highest total level since 2018. To celebrate this community of practice, we hosted the first **Shared Table Awards** to recognise the ingenuity of shared information across the platform and the resonance of our recipes and resources.

We continued to host our popular **Program Enrichment Workshops** throughout the year, listening to the themes and trends our educators wanted to learn more about. The most popular workshops were *Cook Along with Nornie Bero* and *Stephanie's Winter Harvest Basket*, proving that content linked to the seasons and Australian ingredients are in peak demand. The workshops inviting educators to follow along to live 'cook-alongs' were the most attended.

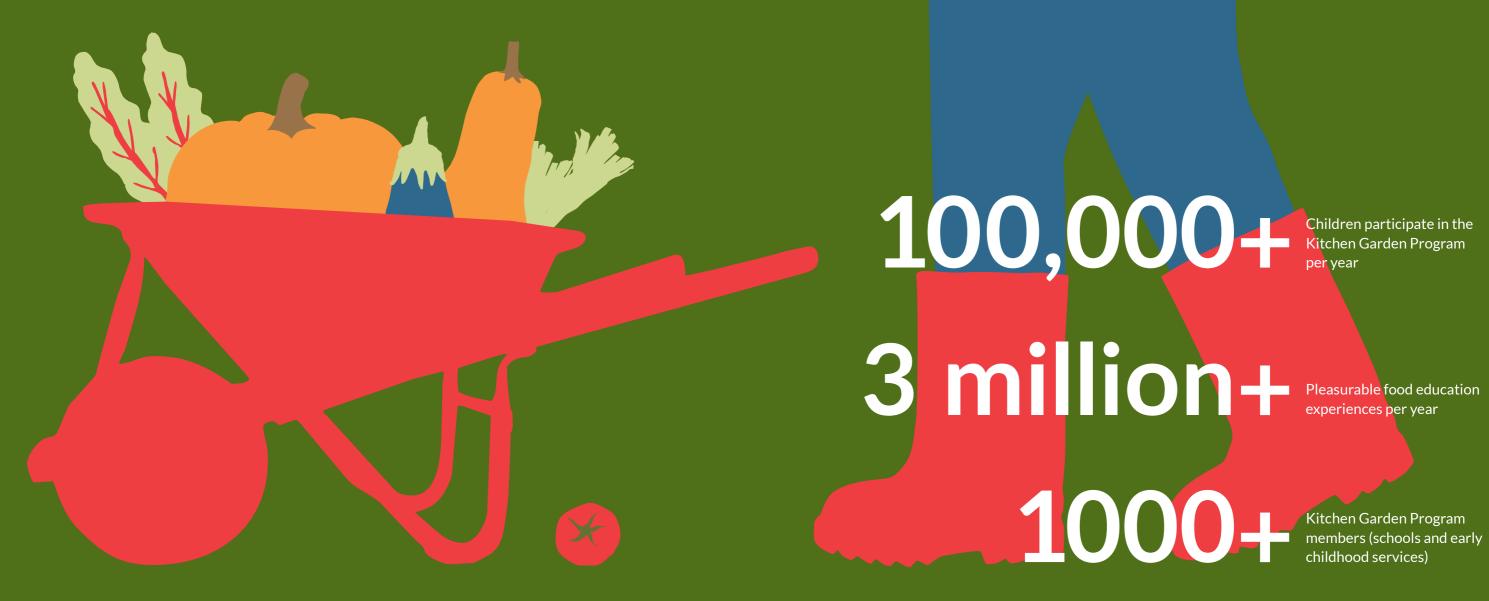
"The presenters were so inspiring and so real. I felt they supported whatever people were doing and offered so many ideas. The day was well paced, and doing the actual activities and cooking has been the ultimate motivation."

EDUCATOR, DELIVERING KITCHEN GARDEN SESSIONS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MELBOURNE

We returned to **face-to-face professional development** after three years of delivering sessions online due to Covid and travel restrictions. It has been wonderful reconnecting with the community across the country. Our support team always benefit from seeing a diverse range of programs in action and learning first-hand how to assist state-specific learning objectives. *Delivering Kitchen Garden Sessions* were held in Adelaide, Sydney, Perth and Melbourne, with Adelaide registering the highest attendance

Another innovation was the addition of **Virtual Tours** to our support offering. We recognised that schools and services enjoy seeing what others are doing, giving them new inspiration and the chance to ask questions to other educators. An especially inspiring tour happened at Wiluna Remote Community School in Western Australia.

Impact in numbers



MEMBER RESOURCES

"I love the online webinars, especially the Virtual Tours. They bring inspiration and a chance to look at other programs."

TRICIA FRENCH, EDUCATOR AT JACANA SCHOOL FOR AUTISM

New Shared Table resources and recipes Resource views

Updated Shared Table resources

38,233 23.35 Resource

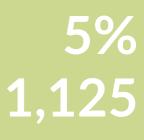






New members across Australia

77 Early childhood services 74 Primary schools (incl. combined and special schools) Secondary schools 7



Membership growth

Member support



Community place-based projects

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation works alongside community partners to address local health priorities for children and young people. We develop and implement customised, place-based projects driven by fresh, seasonal, delicious food to achieve the changes communities want to see.

The Healthy Kids Advisors initiative continues to be our flagship community-based project. This initiative leans on the Foundation's pleasurable food education philosophy to support the unique healthy eating goals of 13 local government areas in Victoria. Along the way, they encourage participation in the state-wide Vic Kids Eat Well movement.

Healthy Kids Advisors are providing a significant boost in the implementation of Vic Kids Eat Well across 13 priority communities. Evaluation demonstrates that Local Government Areas with support from Healthy Kids Advisors have been up to **5 times more effective in their** implementation of healthier food and drink environments for children and young people than areas without our support.

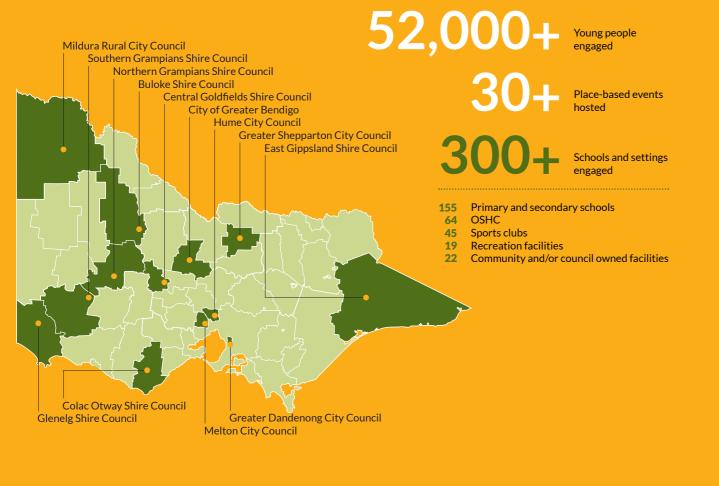
Our team of place-based Advisors have achieved tailor-made plans with schools, sports clubs, recreation centres, outside school hours care (OSHC) and council-owned facilities. They have connected with communities, sparked student excitement and eased the pressure on educators to embed healthy, delicious, hands-on change in the places where children learn and play.

This year, we shared these highlights in four video case studies and a well-attended public webinar called Nourishing communities (261 registered attendees).

Our Healthy Kids Advisors initiative has proudly worked alongside the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) to align our work with culturally safe practices and explore ways to meaningfully connect with 10 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and Aboriginal children and families.

The Healthy Kids Advisors initiative is supported by the Victorian Government and the Australian Government. It is funded until June 2024.

Impact in numbers



5 x more effective Local Government Areas with Healthy Kids Advisors have been up to 5 times more effective in their implementation of healthier food and dripk environments for children up to 5 times more effective in their implementation of

healthier food and drink environments for children and young people than areas without our support.

"Our school is in a geographically remote and culturally diverse area, often with limited access to fresh food. Jane [Healthy Kids Advisor for Glenelg Shire] has worked with students and staff to improve food literacy and take a fresh look at the food environment both in schools and throughout the wider community. Six months ago, here in Glenelg, healthy eating wasn't even on the agenda. We're excited to see rural communities being supported in this work. Jane's tailored approach for each setting is making a big impact."

TIANA RICHARDSON, WELLBEING COORDINATOR AT HEYWOOD & DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOL



COMMUNITY PLACE-BASED PROJECTS 15

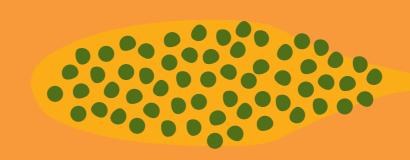
"We see schools as a pivotal part of helping young people become conscious food citizens. The skills they learn through the Kitchen Garden Program really help them to do that. They're able to look at fresh produce and say, 'I know how to make that into a meal,' as well as growing their own food. It also makes them much more conscious of how food gets from a seed to their plate. For us, that's a big part of how school kitchen gardens fit into the broader food system in our community."

CHANEL RELF, FOOD SYSTEMS OFFICER AT CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO



In South Australia, we put our place-based strategy in action with the support of **Wellbeing SA**, a state government agency that supports the physical, mental and social wellbeing of all South Australians. Wellbeing SA prioritises preventive health, early childhood, food resilience, climate change and educational outcomes through place-based, systemic approaches. Our project worked alongside the community to identify priority actions for enabling local children and young people to develop positive food, health, wellbeing and sustainability habits for life.

The City of Playford was the project focus area. The City's 2034 vision is to embrace a whole community approach to health, increasing food security and enabling a healthy lifestyle. We hosted a *Grow, Cook, Connect* showcase to raise awareness and interest in Playford, connect threads of activity within the community and connect passionate people across Playford to share experiences of the Kitchen Garden Program's value, local impact and future adaptations.



6 COMMUNITY PLACE-BASED PROJECTS

Another place-based highlight is our collaboration with the City of Greater Bendigo, Bendigo Health, Bendigo Community Health Services, and Healthy Greater Bendigo in the **Schools Kitchen Garden Project**, which aimed to improve students' health and wellbeing through growing and cooking healthy food. Seeking a new approach to health and wellbeing promotion in the community, the project prioritised school kitchen gardens in the development of the Greater Bendigo Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (2021–2025) and the Greater Bendigo Food Systems Strategy 2020.

Over the duration of six years, the Foundation has worked with community health organisation **Gippsland Lakes Complete Health (GLCH)** to deliver professional development and training for a cluster of 16 local schools and early childhood services, as well as GLCH staff and partner organisation staff. The Kitchen Garden Program has been a tool for healing and building resilience in this environmentally besieged region to better the wellbeing of students and their community.

Partners

For the work of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation to be most effective, we partner with corporate and philanthropic organisations to expand our program reach and impact. We are thankful for the ongoing relationships of key partners and pro-bono support from all our partnerships.

Since 2020, Coles and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation have developed a collaborative partnership to make the Kitchen Garden Program accessible to more schools and services around the country.



Coles activations

FRESH PRODUCE CAMPAIGNS

Coles and their fresh produce suppliers supported the Foundation through five in-store Fresh Produce campaigns: Eureka Blueberries, Perino Tomatoes, Broccolini, Mushrooms and Carisma Potatoes. \$475,000 was raised through these campaigns.

We enhanced the Fresh Produce campaigns with educational assets, such as grower factsheets, farmer videos, and Coles Ambassador recipe videos. We increased digital content and social media coverage, including recipe videos from Stephanie Alexander to showcase each Fresh Produce campaign.

To celebrate the Perino Tomato campaign launch, Sunrise, Channel Seven's morning show (which reaches more than 4.2 million Australians), hosted live crosses to the Perino Tomato farm. Viewers were taken on a Perino Tomato farm tour, watched live cooking demos from Coles Ambassador Courtney Roulston and learnt about the Foundation during an interview with Natasha Grogan, our Kitchen Garden Program Manager.

SCHOOL AND STORE PARTNERSHIPS

Coles and the Foundation continue to encourage the growth and establishment of Kitchen Garden Programs nationwide. We connect Coles supermarkets with local school communities to fund the establishment or further development of their Kitchen Garden Program. This year, over \$45,000 has been granted from local Coles stores to support 20 neighbouring schools.

TASMANIA FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN, SEPTEMBER 2022

Coles stores across Tasmania encouraged the purchase of \$2 donation cards. Over \$97.000 was raised to help 18 Tasmanian schools join the Kitchen Garden Program or bolster their existing program with kitchen and garden equipment or infrastructure.

"Our Year 4 students proudly cooked lunch for Stephanie and Curtis. It was just as delicious as what you could order at a restaurant. The Kitchen Garden Program has such a positive impact on our students and the Foundation's partnership with Coles enables that impact to spread to thousands of students and schools across Australia.'

MARCUS WICHER, PRINCIPAL, AUBURN SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

TEAM MEMBER WORKSHOPS

The Foundation delivered six workshops to over 70 Coles team members. We introduced a family-focused school holiday workshop for Coles staff and their children this year, with classes on making fresh pasta and pumpkin salad. This trial session was a huge success, with future school holiday sessions in the works.

Other highlights

Along with our ongoing campaigns, we introduced two new projects with Coles to further engage Australian children and households.

LAUNCH OF GROW IT, COOK IT, **MARCH 2023**

A free, interactive activity booklet called Grow it, Cook it was launched by Curtis Stone and Stephanie Alexander at a Kitchen Garden Program class at Auburn South Primary School. Students and guests, including representatives from fresh produce suppliers Costa Group and Fresh Select, participated in several activities from the booklet. including eggshell planters, mini greenhouses and waste-conscious recipes. All were invited to sit down for a shared meal with the students and sample the delicious food prepared by students.

EXPLORE A FARM PILOT VISIT, MARCH 2023

Thomas Chirnside Primary School students participated in a pilot farm visit to Fresh Select in Werribee to learn about the 'salad bowl of Victoria'. The students were welcomed by Farmer John before being guided through the nursery and fields to learn about planting and harvesting brassica and lettuces.

coles

Partners

Our partnership with **Saputo** helps us to deepen and grow our program to benefit children and young people, their families and communities. The Saptuo team in Tasmania rolled up their sleeves and engaged in the Kitchen Garden Program at Montello Primary School. They showed children how delicious dairy can be, using butter and smoked cheese to create rich brownies and delicious cheesy pasta. The team painted a cow sculpture in the garden, built bird boxes, and worked on the composting system.





Mirvac partnered with the Foundation to deliver The Cook's Patch, a residents-only community garden for their master-planned Altona North community, The Fabric. The garden will open in late 2023. To strengthen our partnership, Mirvac employees visited Altona North Primary School to help rejuvenate their kitchen garden.

General Mills continues to partner with the Foundation to offer annual Kickstart Grants to assist 12 schools in low socio-economic areas to establish kitchen and garden infrastructure to launch a Kitchen Garden Program. They enable 3,500 students across Australia to benefit from pleasurable food education.

The lan Potter Foundation supports the Foundation to respond to demand from early childhood educators for customised professional development and resources.

Generously providing pro-bono legal support to the Foundation is Arnold Bloch Leibler.

"Since receiving the General Mills Kickstart Grant, we have begun an incredible journey implementing the Kitchen Garden Program at Eastside Lutheran College, with the funds allowing us to invest in a large greenhouse to extend our growing capabilities and enhance our teaching and learning programs. Funds were also used for purchasing seeds, tools, and composting equipment, allowing for a wonderfully diverse range of hands-on learning experiences."

MICHAEL VOSS, PROGRAM COORDINATOR AT EASTSIDE LUTHERAN COLLEGE

The Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation

supports the Foundation to provide community engagement support for our kitchen garden community across Victoria, which is particularly needed following the Covid pandemic and after the recent fires and floods.

MSP Photography/Compass provides the Foundation with pro-bono printing of resources and materials for our educators.

Andrew Hollo of Workwell Consulting provided pro-bono strategic advice.

Donors

We deeply appreciate the individual donations and bequests that help us continue to reach more schools and early childhood services across the country. Thank you for helping us inspire educators to deliver pleasurable food education across the nation.

Collaboration and knowledge sharing

The Foundation actively participates in national and place-based advocacy networks, initiatives and conferences, contributing our world-recognised expertise on pleasurable food education and 20 years of experience in Australian food education systems.

Advocacy

The Foundation proactively advocates for improved outcomes for the health and wellbeing of Australia's children and young people.

In April 2023, we made a **School Refusal Submission** to the Senate Education and Employment References Committee Inquiry about school refusal. Although the challenge of school refusal is not new, in the wake of natural disasters and the Covid health crisis, supporting the wellbeing of children, their educators, families and communities has never been more important.

Collaboration

Thrive by Five is an initiative of Minderoo Foundation that is campaigning to make our early learning childcare system high-quality and universally accessible.

Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP) aims to contribute to the health, development, safety, and wellbeing of all Queensland children and young people. TQKP disrupts disadvantage, adversity and insecurity and builds capabilities, connections, and resilience.

The Foundation is a member of the **Federation** of **Canteens in Schools (FOCiS)**, a not-for-profit charity representing school canteens and food services across Australia. FOCiS aims to support school communities, canteen associations, the food industry and government to make decisions that result in healthy food services.

Victorian Healthy Eating Enterprise (VHEE), an initiative of the Victorian Government, is a network of agencies and individuals invested in fostering a vibrant, healthy eating culture; through sharing news and resources. We contributed to VHEE and two offshoots – the Fruit and Vegetable Consortium and the Victorian Healthy Eating Education Group. Our Healthy Kids Advisors team attended all VHEE forums.

The Foundation participated in the ACT's development of a new **Capital Food and Fibre Strategy** for the region and is a formal member of the reference group, advising on food education and pathways for young people into the agriculture industry.



Western Sydney Diabetes Network and Primary

Prevention Partnership addresses the hotspot of higher-than-average risk of disease in Western Sydney via a multi-sector, multidisciplinary approach of over 120 agencies across health promotion and treatment: local, state and federal government and corporations, associations and NGOs. The Partnership has identified expanding Kitchen Garden Programs in Western Sydney schools and early childhood settings as a priority primary health prevention initiative.



Presentations and conferences

In September 2022, our CEO presented at the **Public Health Association of Australia** - **Population Health Congress 2022** on

Sustainability in schools: teaching the skills for a sustainable future.

In November 2022, our CEO presented at the **Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)** on the topic *It takes a community – forming positive food, health, wellbeing and sustainability habits for life through pleasurable food education and the Kitchen Garden Program.*

In May 2023, our CEO presented at the **Public Health Association of Australia – Preventative Health Conference 2023** on *Schools as settings for protecting health and the environment.*

The Foundation exhibited at the **Early Childhood Australia Conference** in October 2022 and the **Early Childhood Australia Reconciliation Symposium** in June 2023.

Research and evaluation

The Foundation gathers knowledge and translates findings to strengthen work in the sector.

The **Gippsland Region Public Health Unit** (**GRPHU**) of Latrobe Regional Hospital has initiated a mapping and evaluation of school kitchen gardens as a key priority that the Healthy Kids Advisors and the Foundation are supporting, drawing on methodologies developed for the Wellbeing SA Project.

The Foundation participated in the **Local Eats pilot** in Margaret River, WA. The project aimed to provide a whole-service approach to increase children's access, exposure, and consumption of vegetables alongside awareness of the importance of vegetables in children's diets for ECEC staff and families.

The **Edith Cowan Uni Food Community project** aims to understand which initiatives in WA support physical, economic, and social access to healthy food. It also aims to identify effective ways of working to improve food security action in the region.

Activations

The Foundation enjoys opportunities to meet with communities and hear their voices on the changes they want to see for their children and young people.

The Little Food Festival combines education. exploration, creativity and fun to help kids reimagine what the future will look like for them, their families and communities, and the planet. The Foundation held a hands-on activation tent over the two-day festival and presented on sustainable gardening practices alongside landscape architect and TV presenter Costa Georgiadis on the Federation Square main stage.

Our Healthy Kids Advisors were proud to work alongside the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) at this year's **Deadly Day Out Health & Wellbeing Expo**, hosted by Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative (BDAC). Close to 2,000 festival goers heard from health and wellbeing experts, participated in workshops, enjoyed live music and activities, tucked into a free lunch and collected a show bag along the way.



Thank you

JACK BROCKHOFF -

FOUNDATION

Our work is only made possible with the continued support of our partners, and we sincerely thank them for their commitment and generosity.

coles



mirvac

Lawyers and Advisers







Dairy Australia



Support our work

We are a for-purpose, not-for-profit organisation. Your support will enable better health, wellbeing, educational and sustainability outcomes for children and young people from all backgrounds across Australia – giving them the tools to build positive, lifelong skills.

Reach out to us today to discuss partnership and collaboration opportunities.

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation PO Box 104, Abbotsford VIC 3067 Phone (03) 8415 1993 Email partnership@kitchengardenfoundation.org.au www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au



Growing Harvesting Preparing Sharing