



# Annual Report

2024–2025



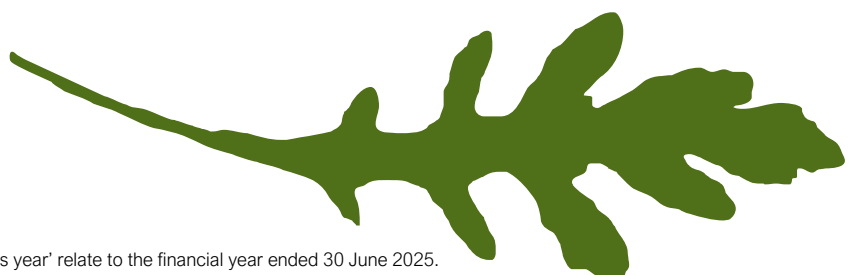
## Acknowledgement of Country

At the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the unceded lands and waterways where we live, learn, and grow. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Elders past and present and recognise their enduring connection to Country.

First Nations peoples have been caring for Country for tens of thousands of years. Their deep knowledge of growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing food continues to inspire our work and offers powerful lessons for children and young people across Australia.

We are committed to ongoing cultural learning and to walking alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, learning with humility, and supporting self-determined outcomes through meaningful partnerships.

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# 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 the needs of their individual school or early childhood service. The Kitchen Garden Program is recognised worldwide as a proven, impactful framework that delivers benefits to learning, health, wellbeing and sustainability 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 with school communities to help partners create meaningful change where children and young people learn and play.

## 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 the Kitchen Garden Program for children and young people. We do this by providing inspiration, information, extensive resources, capability and professional development, a national community of practice, and ongoing support.

### Strategic priorities

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

Our Theory of Change is available from [our website](#).

# Message from the Founder

## Stephanie Alexander AO

Twenty-one years ago, when I developed the concept now known as “pleasurable food education”, I already knew that a hands-on, inclusive approach to growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing food fosters confidence, connection, and wellbeing, as well as, perhaps most importantly, delivering pleasurable experiences.

This is how I was raised, and now 80-plus years later, I am still excited and motivated to seek out a new flavour or a new way of working with a familiar plant, and I always want to share this knowledge.

Our approach to food education is rooted in fun and flavour. It encourages young Australians to interact with people of many ages, develop leadership skills, and gain a sense of pride in themselves and their culture.

The Kitchen Garden Program has been recognised on the wellbeing panels of state education departments and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth's (ARACY) Wellbeing in Education panel. It also aligns with the World Health Organisation's Health Promoting Schools, the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the National Preventive Health Strategy.

In August 2024, we further demonstrated our wellbeing impact by being recognised on Beyond Blue's Be You programs directory, recommended to educators supporting a whole learning community approach to mental health and wellbeing.

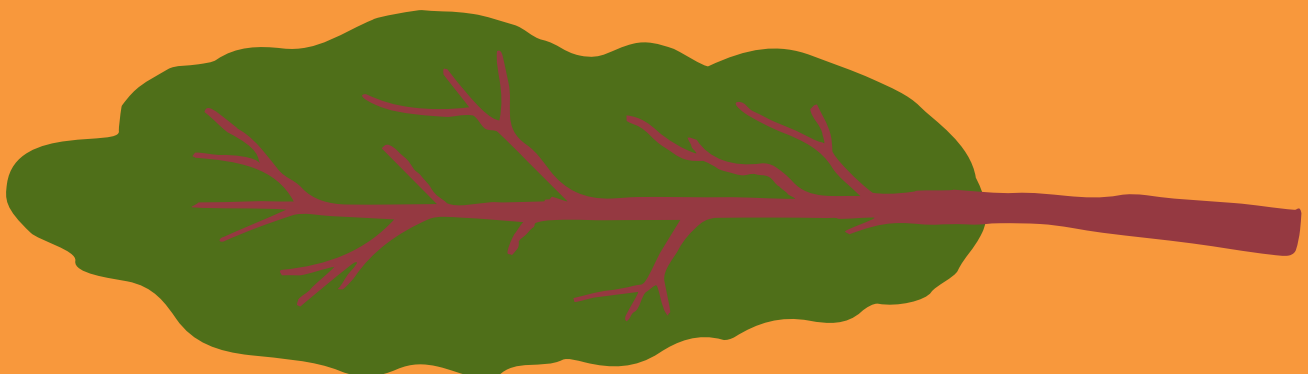
Our program was recognised as having beneficial impact on:

- **culturally and linguistically diverse populations**
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people**
- **low socioeconomic groups**
- **developmental-based adaptations, and**
- **children and young people with disability and/or learning differences.**

I saw this impact firsthand at Kilkenny Primary School in Adelaide in June 2025, when I was invited to award them with a prestigious World Environment Day recognition from the United Nations Association of South Australia.

With more than 200 students from diverse cultural backgrounds, the school provides intensive English language support for newly arrived children and uses the garden and kitchen as welcoming spaces where all students can learn, connect, and grow.

In the kitchen, students are taught essential traits in cooperation, conversation and teamwork, alongside practical maths, literacy and knife handling skills. The children whipped up an impressive lunch of rosemary focaccia, pumpkin and purple sweet potato soup, vegetable herb quiche — prepared with eggs from their chickens and pastry made from scratch — and stunning lemon curd tarts topped with pumpkin seeds and dried lime.



The garden was a sprawling green space facilitating relaxation and social belonging. Garden Educator Emma Robertson inspires the students with a wide range of activities that direct their attention to the changing seasons through sensory experiences. Students are invited to enjoy the fallen leaves in autumn, to notice the change in soil temperature in winter, to rejoice at the new shoots in spring, and to enjoy the full bounty of summer. By harvesting and cooking with this harvest, each student comes to appreciate the possibilities of a productive garden and the importance of caring for the earth.

Of course, Kilkenny Primary School is just one of many (over one thousand!) schools and early childhood services adapting our Kitchen Garden Program, or participating in our Community Projects, to achieve their preventative health, wellbeing and learning goals.

Our momentum is real and we urgently need more robust government support and corporate philanthropy — like the multi-year commitments from VicHealth, Costa Group and Annie Cannon-Brookes — to truly embed food literacy into the curriculum and into the heart of every young Australian. I can only imagine the result if every school had access to an annual budget for food and wellbeing education.

**STEPHANIE ALEXANDER**  
**FOUNDER**

*Stephanie*



Photo by Simon Griffiths

# Message from the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer

The twenty-first year of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation was a year of transition for our leadership.

We express our deepest thanks to Ian Sanders who served as Chair of the Board for an incredible eight years. A steadfast leader, he helped guide the Foundation through significant challenges and successes, while always keeping our mission and vision at the forefront.

We also acknowledge the incredible leadership of Dr Cathy Wilkinson, who resigned as CEO in April 2025, tempted by a role that was very aligned with her academic interest in global leadership. Cathy made a significant contribution to the organisation's sustainability, and importantly, helped secure funding for at least the next three years.

In August 2025, we selected Rob Rees MBE DL from a very strong field of candidates, and we are looking forward to seeing him make his mark on the Foundation as our new CEO.

Before Rob's appointment, we were ably led by Natasha Grogan as Acting CEO. Her effective leadership demonstrated the depth of talent in our organisation. The resilience and creativity of our team have enabled us to maintain core programs and expand our reach in meaningful ways.

This year's achievements reflect impact and thoughtful engagement across communities, despite ongoing challenges around sustainable funding. A key focus has been deepening our connection and impact with First Nations communities and schools and early childhood services in low socio-economic areas. We remain committed to listening, learning, and growing alongside the communities we serve.

To all the educators and volunteers, your generous gifts of time, intellect and effort are what make this organisation benefit so many Australian children.

To our funders and collaborators, thank you for your vision, belief and support. We also thank the Board for their dedication, wisdom, collegiality and expertise.

We are all here to deliver the visionary goal of our incredible Founder, Stephanie Alexander AO, whose commitment and enthusiasm is a constant inspiration to all of us.

**MARYJANE CRABTREE**  
BOARD CHAIR



**ROB REES MBE DL**  
CEO





# Governance framework and the Board of Directors

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)\*

Maryjane Crabtree (Chair\*\*)

Simon Bell (Chair, AF&R Committee\*\*\*)

Svetlana Johnson (Chair, AF&R Committee\*\*\*\*)

Brenton Conradi

Dr. Catherine Keating

Marianne Margin

Tracey Sisson

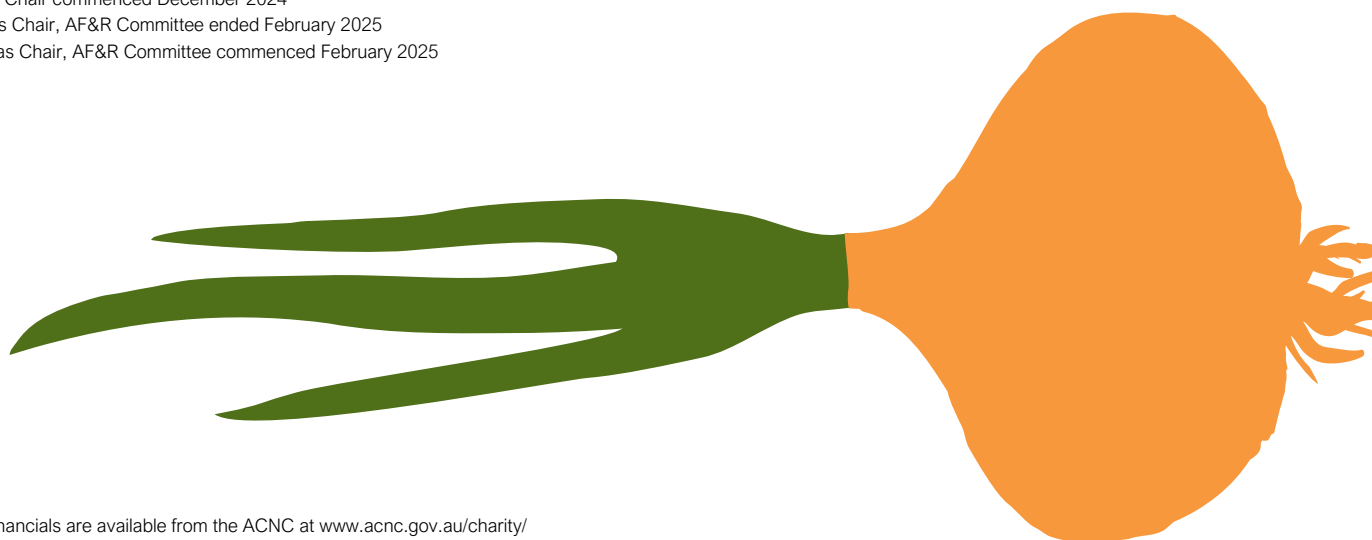
We thank our long-standing Patron, Janet Whiting AM, for her continued commitment and service.

\*Term ended December 2024

\*\*Term as Chair commenced December 2024

\*\*\*Term as Chair, AF&R Committee ended February 2025

\*\*\*\*Term as Chair, AF&R Committee commenced February 2025



# The Kitchen Garden Program Highlights

Our **Shared Table Awards** in November 2024 had Foundation staff select their favourite posts from our online resource library and community hub, the Shared Table. Cooking and gardening are rarely without a few hiccups, which is why we created the 'Wonderful Wobble' award to celebrate Kitchen Garden Program members who experienced a misstep in their kitchen garden journey but still persevered. Plumpton House School in New South Wales took out the honour for their persistence in growing Brussels sprouts.

In February 2025, we launched unlimited and **free Program Enrichment Webinars** for members. These webinars deepen educators' knowledge about topics related to running the Kitchen Garden Program. Responding to educator feedback for more First Nations content, we developed two **First Nations-led Program Enrichment Webinars**. Led by Warndu, a 100% Indigenous-owned Australian company, First Nations Food Swaps provided valuable insights into the flavour profiles of 10 native Australian ingredients. With Torres Strait Islander chef Nornie Bero, we hosted a popular cook-a-long demonstration for her ravioli with Australian native foods.

Educators who completed our annual **Membership Survey** reported 75 wide-ranging benefits to children experiencing the Kitchen Garden Program, including the development of life skills, exposure to hands-on cooking and gardening, the joy of discovering new foods and flavours, increased student engagement and caring for the environment.

While the program brings many rewards, schools and services also navigated challenges, including lack of volunteers, not enough time to plan or run their classes, low staff engagement, lack of funding and difficulties staffing the program.

The survey revealed that the Shared Table was the most useful feature of membership with 98.5% saying it was 'useful' or 'very useful'. When asked to rate the likelihood of recommending the Kitchen Garden Program, responses showed a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 80 — which shows exceptional membership satisfaction.

In March 2025, we released a **new look for the Shared Table**, our online resource library and community hub. Improvements included simplified posting and the much-requested ability to add multiple photos to a post.

In May 2025, we **welcomed 52 Story House early childhood services** from VIC, NSW and QLD — the beginning of a partnership that will see all future Story House services join as members.

Thanks to funding from The Phillips Foundation and the Pierce Armstrong Foundation, in June 2025, we released **seven new resources with a focus on inclusivity and accessibility** for students with diverse learning needs. These resources were developed in consultation with an Inclusivity Advisory Group. The project also enabled educators to attend a Virtual Tour at Bundaberg Special School in Queensland.

This year, more than 1,400 schools and services submitted grant applications to join the Kitchen Garden Program. That's roughly 274,000 students who are standing by to receive food education!

“Children are now more engaged and responsible, showing pride in planting seeds, caring for the garden, and harvesting produce they have nurtured themselves. They delight in preparing and tasting meals made from their own harvest, which has encouraged many to try new foods and adopt healthier eating habits.”







# The Kitchen Garden Program

## Impact in numbers



### MEMBERSHIP RESULTS

**197**

New Kitchen Garden Program members (including rejoining)

- 101 Early childhood services
- 89 Primary schools (including combined, special, independent)
- 7 Secondary schools

**481**

Registrants to Info Sessions

### THE SHARED TABLE

**78**

New Shared Table resources and recipes

**198**

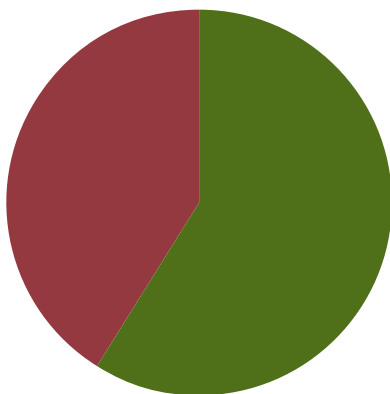
Updated Shared Table resources

**46,891**

Resource views

**26,695**

Resource downloads



- 116 (59%) self-funded new members
- 81 (41%) sponsored new members

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**805**

Total attendance (online 679, in-person 126)

**22**

Total events (online 17, in-person 5)

### SUPPORT TEAM

**1,872**

Enquiries received

# 3 million

Pleasurable food education experiences per year

# 100,000+

Children participating in the Kitchen Garden Program per year

# 1400+

Unmet demand from schools and services who have applied for a grant

# 1000+

Kitchen Garden Program members (schools and early childhood services)

# 481+

Registered attendees for Kitchen Garden Program Information Sessions





# Community place-based projects

We address inequities affecting children, young people and their communities through on-the-ground place-based support. Our Project Leads are based in the community to harness collective momentum into impact and ensure community members, leaders and children are proactively engaged and inspired with pleasurable food education activities. Our goal is to secure funding for a place-based Project Lead in highest need areas across all states and territories.





# Our Food Connections Project

## Strengthening First Nations health

In gardens across Victoria, communities are digging deep into First Nations culture and collective wellbeing thanks to our powerful partnership with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and funding from the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation.

# 500+

children, young people  
& community members

- 9 ACCOs
- 9 impact yarns
- 4 community events
- 9 gardening workshops
- 8 cooking workshops



Our Food Connections brings together place-based food education and VACCHO's Culture+Kinship model to restore and nurture connections to Culture, Kinship, Community and Country.

Over the last year our Project Lead, Belinda Nowakowski, has walked alongside nine Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to achieve their self-determined goals to build kitchen gardens, deliver culturally relevant food literacy programs, and create spaces for learning, sharing and healing.

“Our Youth have gained essential cooking skills through the healthy cooking activities, allowing them to go home and prepare nutritious meals for their families. The implementation of the community garden has connected community members through positive and meaningful experiences, a sense of pride growing local produce that can be shared throughout the community. It also has become a therapeutic space through maintenance and watering of the garden.”

**JESSICA LOVETT-MURRAY & JENNA BAMBLETT,**  
**WINDA-MARA ABORIGINAL CORPORATION**



# Blacktown Kitchen Garden Project

## Community connection in Western Sydney

COMMUNITY  
PLACE-BASED  
PROJECT

The Blacktown Kitchen Garden Project, on Dharug Country in NSW, has nurtured over 2,000 children and young people to experience fun, hands-on food education through the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program.

**2059** children

**70%**

schools with low socioeconomic status

**36%**

students with a language background other than English

**10%**

Indigenous students

**7** schools  
**6** community events  
**343** community participants at events

Our place-based Project Lead, Rose Tilbury, lives locally and has facilitated seven schools and early learning services to join the local kitchen garden movement.

→ **Over the next four years, 16 schools will be given a Kitchen Garden Program membership, infrastructure grant and place-based support thanks to generous philanthropic funding from TLE Electrical.**

These new schools will join our vibrant community of practice to learn from the experiences of educators in their local area, connecting with over 50 schools already delivering an impactful Kitchen Garden Program in the region of Western Sydney.

Blackett Public School has been selected as the region's Learning Hub, to provide a tangible example of how the Kitchen Garden Program can be established and embedded in a Western Sydney community. The Learning Hub will grow into a central place of education and experiential learning for students, educators and the wider school community.



# Western District Kitchen Garden Project

## Regional impact across Victoria

COMMUNITY  
PLACE-BASED  
PROJECT

Since July 2024, our Western District Kitchen Garden Project, on the traditional lands of the Gunditjmarra, Djab Wurrung, Jardwadjali, and Buandig peoples, has been actioning community-led preventative health goals to increase the health and wellbeing of regional children, young people and their families.

**3555** children

**60%**

schools with low socioeconomic status

**3%**

students with a language background other than English

**4%**

Indigenous students

- 25** schools
- 1** early childhood service
- 1** ACCO
- 1** community garden
- 12** community events

Our place-based Project Lead, Monique Sobey, is based in Hamilton and works alongside local leaders, community groups and organisations, including the Western District Health Service, Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation, GenR8 Change, Port Fairy Community House, the Australian Breastfeeding Association and Youth HQ.

25 schools, 1 early childhood service and 3 community organisations across Southern Grampians Shire, Glenelg Shire, Moyne Shire, Edenhope, Willaura and Lake Bolac are being supported. The schools — 17 members of the Kitchen Garden Program — are all supported with in-person, practical solutions to embed food resilience for students, staff and families.

“Monique has become a wonderful part of our school community, and her passion for healthy food alternatives shines through with her friendly and engaging manner. The Kitchen Garden Program provides our students with the opportunity to experience a wide range of healthy foods. Students have developed a love of gardening, and a few have begun vegetable gardens at home.”

**NICOLE FORBES, TEACHER, ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, PENSHURST**





# Government partnerships

## VicHealth

In December 2024, we welcomed a transformative multi-year partnership with VicHealth, aimed at giving children at more than 500 Victorian schools a positive relationship with fresh, healthy food. The partnership came at a critical crossroads for the Foundation, helping us chart a path to sustainable funding from 2027 onwards.

The VicHealth partnership will support our continued efforts to reach all Victorian primary, combined, and special schools equipping educators with open access to our food education expertise and resources, and enabling more children and communities to join food systems learning.

**In the first year of the partnership, we have:**

- Hosted a free virtual tour of Casterton Primary School in regional Victoria to spotlight how a small, rural community's Kitchen Garden Program is impacting students and their families with food skills and access to fresh, seasonal produce. 27 non-Kitchen Garden Program educators attended, including 15 health promoters.
- Produced content for the Victorian Government's Prep Bag booklet reaching over 75,000 prep students and their families, to engage them in cooking and gardening ideas.
- Produced a free food education resource (41 pages) titled *How to Grow Healthy Students*.
- Provided open access to culturally inclusive Kitchen Garden Program recipes with lesson prompts, free to all Victorian educators.

**156,271** children

**41,151**

located in rural and regional communities

**47%**

schools with low socioeconomic status

**2.6%**

Indigenous students

**40%**

students with a language background other than English



“Educating children about fresh, healthy food in an engaging, hands-on way is one of the best things we can do to set them up for a lifetime of good health. Through this new partnership, VicHealth and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation will help build healthier, happier futures for children across Victoria — one garden and kitchen at a time.”

**MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MARY-ANNE THOMAS**





# Government advocacy

The Foundation actively participates in Federal and State Government advocacy and dialogue, contributing our globally-recognised voice on Australian food education systems.

## July 2024

**Submission to the Inquiry into Food Security in Victoria** highlighted the importance of food literacy, practical skills, appreciation of seasonal produce, and a confident, healthy relationship with food as pillars of an effective food system.

## August 2024

**NSW Department of Health, Department of Education and Blacktown Council representatives** visited Hebersham Primary School, part of our Blacktown Kitchen Garden Project.

## September 2024

**Inaugural National Kitchen Garden Awards**, held at Parliament House in Canberra, hosted by the Parliamentary Friends of Public & Preventative Health Co-Chair **Dr Mike Freeland MP**.

**Published our Impact Report on the Healthy Kids Advisors initiative**, which was supported by the Victorian and Australian Governments. From July 2021 to June 2024, we engaged over 62,000 young people in over 450 youth settings. An independent evaluation showed we achieved between seven and 13 times the expected boost to increasing healthier food environments across 13 priority communities in Victoria.

## October 2024

**Josh Burns MP, Federal Member for Macnamara**, visited Elwood Primary School's Kitchen Garden Program.

## December 2024

**Nick Staikos MP and the Embassy of Finland's Ambassador, Arto Haapea**, visited Southmoor Primary School in Victoria.

## March 2025

**Pre-budget submission to the Federal Government** called on priority investment in the health and wellbeing of Australia's children and young people through pleasurable food education.

**Ambassador Arto Haapea and colleagues from the Embassy of Finland** met with the Foundation's Dr Cathy Wilkinson and Hayley McKee to explore our shared commitment to children learning food-related skills, from food cultures to the environmental impact of food systems.

## June 2025

**Submission to the South Australian Parliament Social Development Committee's Inquiry into school meal programs** asked for a holistic approach to shifting systems to address student hunger.

“Imagine if every child left school with these skills. This program teaches students not only about healthy eating, but also about the importance of sustainable practices and waste reduction ... this immersive process connects students with the entire food journey from seed to plate.”

**JOSH BURNS MP, FEDERAL MEMBER FOR MACNAMARA**



“I was very excited to see the comprehensive approach developed by the Kitchen Garden Program. In Finland, there is a strong focus on school meals that also serve as a pedagogical tool to teach good nutrition and eating habits as well as to increase consumption of vegetables, fruits and berries, full corn bread and healthy dairy. I took careful note of the impressive approach in Victoria, and I would like to advance collaboration between Finland and Australia in this critical area of childhood education.”

**AMBASSADOR ARTO HAAPEA, EMBASSY OF FINLAND**





# Corporate philanthropy

The impactful work of the Kitchen Garden Foundation is only made possible with the continued support of our partners. We sincerely thank the following organisations for their vision, commitment and generosity.





# Costa Group

Following an award sponsorship at our inaugural National Kitchen Garden Awards in September 2024, we commenced a values-aligned partnership with Costa Group — Australia’s leading grower of fresh fruit and vegetables, including avocados, bananas, berries, citrus, table grapes, mushrooms and tomatoes — to ensure more young Australians access and enjoy healthy and nutritious food, affordably.

673 existing Kitchen Garden Program schools received a membership renewal, as part of this significant partnership. Rural and regional communities surrounding Costa Group's farm locations have also been supported, through the sponsorship of 10 schools in each year of the partnership. Each benefitted from a two-year Kitchen Garden Program membership and an infrastructure grant to foster connections between school food education and agriculture.

The first cohort of sponsored schools wasted no time jumping into their funded opportunity, with Nairne Primary School in South Australia putting the grant funds towards a compost shelter, rainwater catchment system and an outdoor cooking station. Nairne’s vegetable garden has been nothing short of full this year, with lemons, herbs, Asian cabbages, spring onions, leeks, and radishes used in the program and available for sale at their community Winter Market.

We coordinated a visit to Nairne Primary School for local Costa Group representatives to join educators and students in a garden class, bringing along a delicious donation of locally grown mushrooms for students to explore and enjoy.

→ **Through our values-aligned partnership, Costa Group have endorsed pleasurable food education, funding us to equip and inspire educators across the country.**

This has included storytelling and resource sharing, such as our joint celebration of Fresh Veggies Day in June, as well as generously donating produce to community place-based initiatives, such as ‘It’s a Mob Thing’ Music and Health Festival and the Koorie Youth Council Summit.



“For over 20 years the Kitchen Garden Foundation has been at the forefront of successfully giving children and young people across Australia practical and hands-on experience in both growing and eating fresh and healthy food. We are delighted to be teaming up with the Foundation in this new partnership.”

**MARC WERNER, COSTA GROUP CEO**



## General Mills

For the fifth consecutive year, the Kitchen Garden Kickstart Grants were awarded to 12 under-resourced schools across Australia, thanks to our long-term collaboration with General Mills. Over the lifetime of this partnership, General Mills has supported 60 schools and 18,225 students.

This partnership provides vital funds for schools to invest in new or retrofitted kitchen garden infrastructure, helping them to 'kickstart' their membership with the right resources to grow a sustainable Kitchen Garden Program.

The General Mills team's dedication to our purpose is also seen in their staff's commitment to working bees. In May 2025, eight General Mills team members dedicated their time to reviving the garden space at Gladesville Primary School in Victoria, a 2022 grant recipient.

“It is wonderful to watch children with autism trying new foods; students with ADHD staying on task and pursuing a goal; and students with anxiety stepping out of their comfort zone.”

**SUSANNE JACOBS, PRINCIPAL, TRINITY BAY HIGH SCHOOL, QLD (Kickstart Grant recipient)**





# Novo Nordisk: Cities for Better Health

The Logan Kitchen Garden Project, launched in November 2024 on Yugambeh Country in Queensland, is part of a significant initiative aimed at addressing health inequities and supporting positive food education in the local area. This project was made possible by the Novo Nordisk Cities for Better Health network, which fosters impactful prevention partnerships around the globe.

**2700** children

**100%**

schools with low socioeconomic status

**32%**

students with a language background other than English

**19%**

Indigenous students

**11** schools

**2** community events



Close to 2,700 children across four schools and seven early childhood services have been directly impacted by the partnership, with the ripple effects into the home and community reaching even more residents.

Two in-person professional development days were held for educators in the region. The Foundation's passionate team walked the group through practical, easy-to-implement kitchen and garden activities and offered personal advice on how to run their own kitchen or garden activities.

“Nothing quite like this has ever occurred in our community before. In schools, we educate students to live and thrive in the world. We also worry about health and isolation due to local disadvantage. There was a sense last Thursday that the greater world is also somehow with us, immanently. This experience was, of course, due to the careful attention and commitment, and the underlying purpose and vision of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation.”

**ANDREW BARNES, PRINCIPAL,  
EAGLEBY SOUTH STATE SCHOOL**



## Saputo Dairy Australia

Since 2019, Saputo Dairy Australia have provided ongoing support to the Foundation. Together, we create opportunities for children to learn about the health benefits of dairy through engaging and educational kitchen garden activities, videos, recipes and stories.

This year, we marked our partnership with a fresh design of co-branded tea towels featuring dairy drinks from around the world. All new Kitchen Garden Program members receive this as part of their Welcome Box, alongside a branded cheese grater microplane.

World Milk Day, in June 2025, shone a light on the life of a Gippsland dairy farming family. The Foundation gathered questions from Kitchen Garden Program students and the farmers provided important insights into the process of transforming milk from paddock to glass.

## Seasol

A new partnership with Seasol — an organisation rooted in sustainability and well-aligned with our interests in organic garden solutions — strengthened our expert gardening insights to members and followers of the Foundation.

We shared our pleasurable food education philosophy with Seasol staff during an in-person gardening workshop at their head office.

Seasol proudly supported the National Kitchen Garden Awards with prize pack donations of organic garden solutions for the nine winning schools and services.

“A child’s early years are key in forming healthy habits, and by giving them the chance to grow, enjoy and recycle nutritious food, we can make a positive impact on long-term health and environmental outcomes. This is a subject that is close to my heart, and I am pleased we can bring it to life in regional NSW with the support of an inspiring and uniquely Australian organisation.”

**ANNIE CANNON-BROOKES**

## Trusts and Foundations

Thank you to the following Family Trusts and Foundations for funding us to support schools and early childhood services in communities of need.

**The Corella Fund**

**Handbury Foundation**

**Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation**

**James N. Kirby Foundation**

**Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation**

**Macdoch Foundation**

**TLE Electrical**

**Origin Foundation**

**The Phillips Foundation**

**Pierce Armstrong Trust**

## Donors

We deeply appreciate the individual donations, monthly donations and bequests that help us continue to reach more children across Australia.

The Foundation was honoured to receive a transformative donation from **SMART Collective**, the family office founded by **Annie Cannon-Brookes**, to establish, develop and run an immersive food education project for primary school-aged children. The donation will include a flagship project set in a purpose-built kitchen garden in NSW’s Southern Highlands.

## Pro-Bono partners

Our Foundation's operational capabilities are made possible through the work of our generous pro bono partners.

We extend a huge thank you to our legal advisors **Arnold Bloch Leibler**, **Norton Rose Fulbright** and **McCullough Robertson**.

Thank you to **The Diggers Club** for their complimentary seed membership to all Kitchen Garden Program members and a reciprocal role in providing professional development events and webinars to each other's national network of garden enthusiasts.

**MSP Photography and Compass Education** have provided vital support as our official printing partner, producing our high-quality educational workbooks, reports and much more.

Since 2008, **Ryset** has allowed our members to access their wholesale prices for quality garden products and equipment, which we are very grateful for.

**Tiger Corp. Sign Solutions** made us look the part, with beautifully executed pull-up banners, award plaques for the National Kitchen Garden Awards and visual signage for our new office space.

Thanks to the **Queen Victoria Market** for providing the ideal home for our mural, celebrating our VicHealth partnership and 20 years of the Foundation. Thank you to **Resene** who provided in-kind paint supplies and to **David Booth** (AKA Ghostpatrol) for the wonderful mural design and production.



## PARTNERS



## PRO-BONO PARTNERS

Arnold Bloch Leibler

Lawyers and Advisers

**NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT**





# Growing a kitchen garden movement

Key to our strategic priorities is growing a national kitchen garden movement through impactful collaboration, advocacy, communications, community engagement and strengthening our evidence of impact.

CELEBRATING 20+ YEARS OF THE STEPHANIE A



## Digital and media reach (at June 2025)

**419,368**

website views

**149**

media mentions

**76,069**

total social media followers

**40,604**

e-newsletter subscribers

# Community activations, campaigns and media

## July 2024

### NATIONAL KITCHEN GARDEN AWARDS

The inaugural National Kitchen Garden Awards were introduced this year, with huge success. Aimed at celebrating the inventive, community-driven ways educators and young Australians integrate the kitchen garden to learning about health, wellbeing and sustainability, nine winners took home a prize pack worth over \$5000 in value. The nine award categories covered a diverse range of sustainability, wellbeing and cooking themes central to the experiences of kitchen garden learning.

Close to 350 applications were received from schools and early childhood services across the nation. Primary schools led the way with 241 entries, followed by early childhood (58), secondary (19) and special schools (8).

Cookbook author and ABC broadcaster **Alice Zaslavsky** joined **Stephanie Alexander** and social media influencer **Thanh Truong** (aka The Fruit Nerd), to enthusiastically judge the 27 finalists across nine award categories.

The nine incredible award winners included entries from schools with low socioeconomic status (SES), as well as rural and remote locations. All states and territories, and education sectors were represented.

The winners were celebrated at Parliament House in Canberra, with live class demonstrations by students from ACT's Namadgi School, winners of the Showcasing STEM award category. Students guided politicians and guests through soil testing and a no-cook recipe of fresh broad bean dip, made from beans they grew and harvested themselves. Educators from two other winning schools also joined us, Sunbury Primary School from Victoria and Ashgrove State School from Queensland.

Thank you to Dr Mike Freeland MP from the **Parliamentary Friends of Preventative & Public Health** for their generosity in hosting us.

## September 2024

### KITCHEN GARDEN MONTH

Kicking off Spring, was our annual Kitchen Garden Month. This national campaign amplified our mission, encouraging more passionate people into our community and advocating for improved health outcomes for all Australian children and young people — through the power of food education.

A cornerstone of this year's Kitchen Garden Month was a collaboration with lifestyle brand **Kip&Co**. Designed by the Foundation's Saskia Ericson, 'Stephanie's Harvest' was a homewares and apparel collection for garden enthusiasts, home cooks, children and kitchen garden educators. All purchases received a free recipe booklet filled with some of our most loved recipes and activities.

Stephanie Alexander was interviewed about her food philosophy and the Foundation's work in an episode from Australia's most loved food podcast **Ingredipedia**.

## December 2024

### FOOD EDUCATION DRIVE

We launched our fundraiser campaign, the Food Education Drive, to generate national awareness about the critical need to educate all Australian children about where their food comes from and how to live healthy, resilient and happy lives. We amplified key messages about the reach of our impact, highlighting that over half of our work supports children in remote or regional locations, and most of our schools are in communities experiencing socio-educational barriers.

### VICHEALTH PARTNERSHIP LAUNCH

Channel Seven and Channel Nine attended our media launch for the VicHealth partnership at Hallam Primary School, broadcasting across syndicated news bulletins in multiple states and territories. Channel Seven and Channel Nine consistently rank as Australia's most-watched nightly news programs with a combined 4.6 million viewers per night.





# February 2025

## GHOSTPATROL MURAL

A veggie-packed mural by artist David Booth (AKA **Ghostpatrol**) was unveiled at **Queen Victoria Market** to bring our mission to glorious life and mark our new partnership with VicHealth. Co-designed with students from Debney Meadows Primary School, the mural showcases the journey of fruit and veggies from garden to table. The students later returned to film the mural and interview Stephanie Alexander and David.

# March 2025

## BETTER HOMES & GARDENS TV SHOW

**Kylie Kwong**, renowned chef and long-time Kitchen Garden Program supporter, joined Stephanie Alexander and **Johanna Griggs** at St Clair Public School in NSW to film a **Better Homes & Gardens** episode highlighting our Blacktown Kitchen Garden Project, which reached around 2.8 million viewers.

# June 2025

## GOURMET TRAVELLER INTERVIEW

**Gourmet Traveller** interviewed our Project Lead, Rose Tilbury, about the impact of the Blacktown Kitchen Garden Project. The article reached a print readership of over 244,000.

## Evaluation

# February 2025

Inclusion in the **Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Wellbeing Programs Guide for Schools**.

# May 2025

Inclusion in the **South Australian Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) Preschool Boost Menu of Services**.

# June 2025

Shortlisted for **HundrED's Global Collection 2026** as one of the world's most impactful and scalable innovations in education.



# Networking, presentations and conferences

## September 2024

CEO Dr Cathy Wilkinson joined Victorian food systems leaders, coordinated by **Regen Melbourne**, to discuss a collaborative approach towards a resilient, sustainable and equitable food system.

The Foundation's Naomi Orsillo took part in the **National School Food Network** meeting, joining stakeholders from government, academic and non-government organisations with a shared goal of ensuring the best school food outcomes for Australian children and young people.

## January 2025

The VACCHO Healthy Communities team and the Foundation's Belinda Nowakowski ran an interactive stall at the **Rumbalara Health Festival** in Shepparton. Children and families learned how to nourish their bodies in ways that connect to Culture to create strong and thriving Communities.

## February 2025

The Foundation's Naomi Orsillo attended The **Phillips Foundation** community of practice alongside other impactful organisations for a day of information sharing and discovery focused on collaboration as an ecosystem for change.

CEO Dr Cathy Wilkinson joined the **Reimagining Australia's Food System Workshop**, coordinated by Macdoch Foundation, to explore solutions for a healthier, more equitable, climate-friendly, and nature-positive food system.

## March 2025

The Foundation's Hayley McKee presented at the **Common Cause Australia** health messaging community of practice on healthy eating messages.

The Kitchen Garden Program team delivered an in-person training day at Eaglehawk Primary School in Bendigo, as part of **Healthy Loddon Campaspe's local government area initiative** and the **Mount Alexander Shire Council's Healthy Schools Project**.

## March 2025

**It's a Mob Thing** are a set of community-led events that enable First Nations communities to take health promotion and messaging into their own hands, whilst also supporting local First Nations musicians, artists, businesses and health organisations. We supported our partners VACCHO to deliver seed planting education and a cooking experience for families at the event.

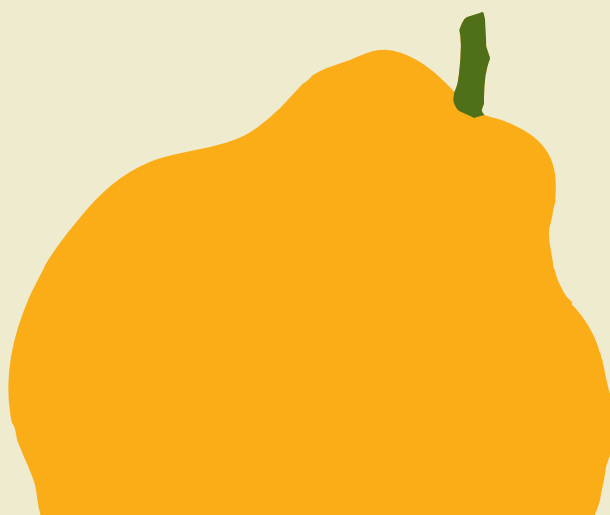
## May 2025

The **Koorie Youth Council Summit** in Shepparton, is the largest gathering in Victoria created for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The Foundation ran a hands-on food education station with the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) about growing and eating seasonal food.

The Foundation's Kate Beckwith hosted a kitchen garden learning webinar for **Little Scientists**, an organisation providing early childhood educators with inquiry-based STEM professional development.

## June 2025

Stephanie Alexander AO attended Kilkenny Primary School in South Australia, awarding them the World Environment Day prize from the **United Nations Association of South Australia**.







# Growing Harvesting Preparing Sharing

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

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