

The Cape Community Farm Growing A *Sustainable* Garden

Community Farm Briefing Paper
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the
Cape

A SUSTAINABLE
WAY TO LIVE



Contents

Acknowledgement	c
Introduction	1
Purpose of this Paper	1
Aims & Vision	1
Benefits of Urban Community Farming.....	2
Community Connection.....	2
Physical & Mental Wellbeing.....	3
Food Security.....	4
Sustainability & Biodiversity.....	5
Property Values	6
Employment & education	7
Garden Spaces.....	8
Allotment Garden.....	8
Market Garden.....	8
Propagation Nursery.....	9
Composting	10
Beekeeping.....	10
Gathering Spaces	10
Garden Operations.....	11
Self-funding operations	11
Challenges	11
Membership Fees	12
Produce Sales.....	12
Nursery sales	14
Space Hire.....	15
Café & Co-op.....	16
Education.....	17
Community Fundraising	19
Sample Revenue Model.....	20
References	21

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Contributors

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Acknowledgement of Country

This project is being constructed upon the lands of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung people. We pay respects to the elder past, present and emerging, and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. The coastline and hinterland on which the Cape garden and community resides is rich in history and cultural significance. First Nations people have harvested food sustainably and successfully over many millennia from these lands, and The Cape garden hopes to continue this tradition in to the future.



Introduction

Purpose of this Paper

The purpose of this paper is to give insight & inspiration to residents of The Cape and future members of the community garden to take ownership of and develop a sustainable garden community. We have conducted a great deal of research with various community members and experts during the development of this project and this document provides an opportunity to share what we have learned so far. We will continue to evaluate what we learn from the development of The Cape community garden beyond the final construction and during operation of the farm.

The Cape's Community Garden is a unique project. It is a large garden offering a wide variety of amenities and opportunities for the garden's members as well as the broader community. It is essential to develop the economic sustainability of the project for handover to the community. This document seeks to pull together practical ideas for the community to be able to run a successful garden, that pays for itself, looks to the future, and provides benefits for all involved.

This paper can also serve as a blueprint for others to create a sustainable community garden of their own. Ideally, housing estates and developers will see this garden as inspiration to incorporate urban food growing into the norms of housing development in Australia.

Aims & Vision

The community at The Cape is united through a shared passion for sustainable living. While this is exemplified in the construction of homes and landscape infrastructure, the desire to embody a lifestyle of sustainability and connection cannot be separated from food production and consumption and interactions with nature. Food and farming are often the reasons that we come to community gardening, however, the connections that are developed between the individual, their community, and their environment are some of the most powerful benefits.

Community gardens create a gathering point and place of common ground for members of a certain community or interest group. The establishment of community gardens at housing estates in Melbourne was inspired by the influx of Vietnamese residents, who brought with them traditions of growing fresh greens on small plots near their homes (Lee 20087). This highlights the cultural legacy of community garden norms in Australia, and the importance of cultural diversity inspiring and embedded into the gardens.

The benefits of community gardening have been studied heavily in the context of public housing residents and senior living homes, showing a multitude of social, physical, and environmental gains for residents and members. However, this project is unique in its focus on a more conventional housing estate, albeit one that is uniquely committed to sustainable living.

We believe that a successful estate-wide community gardening project at The Cape can serve as a blueprint for incorporating urban food growing into the fabric of housing estate development. As The Cape has set new standards for sustainable housing through efficient design and renewable energy use; so we seek to improve resilience and food security in our communities.

Benefits of Urban Community Farming

Community Connection

Within a residential area, there are noted benefits of the proliferation of ‘third places’— that is, those outside of the home and daily necessities such as work or school. Third places are often associated with coffee shops and bars as spaces where community can connect, and where more agile forms of interaction, meeting, negotiation occur. Third places, such as community centres and gardens, are places of cultural and practical exchange.

Aside from being a third place of meeting for a community, a community garden is also a place centred on food. Across cultures, food production, preparation, and consumption is a core part of community-building, a site of familial sharing of both the common and unfamiliar. It makes sense that the heart of a community should centre around a shared gardening space.

The site for the Cape community garden is almost a hectare of prime land within the community, located in the geographical centre of the old and emerging township. This location was selected purposefully so that it could be geographically accessible to the entire township.

It is important to reach out to existing residents of the Cape Paterson area outside of The Cape, to ensure they feel like they can access and become members of the community garden. This is a common issue for community gardens established in gentrifying areas, and it is important to look at just which ‘community’ is being served.

Where many of the benefits of community garden projects are characterised by the access to green space for residents who otherwise might not have space to garden, this is not the primary motivator for member of The Cape community farm. Residents of The Cape are likely to have adequate space at their homes to have a small garden. Thus, the impetus for joining the community farm will be to participate in a more social and collaborative form of gardening, that builds a sense of community through participation in a common enterprise. Another benefit will be skill sharing and learning. A central well organised farm has the potential to strengthen the food growing and gardening efforts of individual households throughout Cape Paterson, as people have a place to visit, access resources, mentoring, horticultural skill sharing and learning and try new things.

Studies of community gardens in Denver, Colorado found that community gardens promote stronger neighbourhood leadership, outreach, and volunteerism; also working to strengthen relationships and bonds within the neighbourhood. The design, layout, facilities, resources and organisational structure of The Cape farm is intended to similarly inspire community connection, self-reliance and participation at The Cape.

Additionally, there is a huge opportunity to foster community connections with other community gardens and networks in the Gippsland area, Melbourne, and across Australia. This can facilitate the flexibility to trade surplus resources, produce and labour, providing opportunity for exchange of information and skills between sites.

Physical & Mental Wellbeing

Most significant and widely reported benefits of community gardens are related to individual and community health and well-being. Gardening brings you outside for purposeful exercise, requiring you to engage with the environment and all your senses. Interacting with a garden requires physical exertion and is shown to reduce stress, inspire creativity, and connection to the land. In surveys by Denver Urban Gardens of their members, 100% said that their main reasons for joining were to be outside in nature and get their hands dirty. There is a large amount of literature detailing the mental and physical benefits that come from engaging with plants and gardening outdoors.

Gardening also encourages mental and sensorial activity, requiring you to engage with the environment and all your senses. Interacting with a garden has been shown to reduce stress, inspire creativity, and connectivity to the land. In a study of community garden members in Denver, 100% said that their main reasons for joining was to be outside in nature and get their hands dirty. There is a large amount of literature detailing the mental wellbeing benefits of 'nature bathing', an understanding that has been amplified during Covid-19 lockdown.

In addition to the benefits conferred by spending time outside and with plants, there are many nutritional benefits to growing your own produce. Seasonality becomes much more important and tangible. Produce fresh from the ground provide the most nourishment and the most enjoyment, resulting in a higher regard for the food one consumes. More flavourful, fresh produce encourages the consumption of fresh fruit and veg over processed foods. An increasing body of science is pointing to the importance of people getting their hands into healthy soil. Over-processed foods and sterile living environments are contributing to modern health problems. Our health depends on the flourishing microbiome in our intestinal system, and this can be reinoculated by contact with the beneficial microbiome found in healthy soils. Loneliness and social isolation can be a contributor to poor health. Community gardens are an antidote to loneliness, and allow for relaxed, informal, incidental contact between people, contributing to better health.



Food Security

The current food landscape of urban Australia is dominated by big-box supermarkets and chain restaurants, with food travelling vast distances to reach the consumer. This system has been increasingly under the microscope as external pressures, such as bushfires and pandemics, have exposed the tenuous nature of our global and national supply chains. In the recent panic-buying prompted by the pandemic, vegetable shelves were emptied in some supermarkets, and prices of fresh produce soared—if only temporarily. However, research from the Columbia Earth Institute indicates that continuing weather extremes due to climate change will continue to increase food prices, as drought, fires, and floods make farming more difficult and increase the scarcity of food. This is particularly prescient in Australia, already the driest inhabited country in the world, where we are more vulnerable to heat and rain extremes. Shifting a larger percentage of your diet to locally produced foods, where you either are or know the farmer, can result in food chains that are more resilient and responsive to external forces.

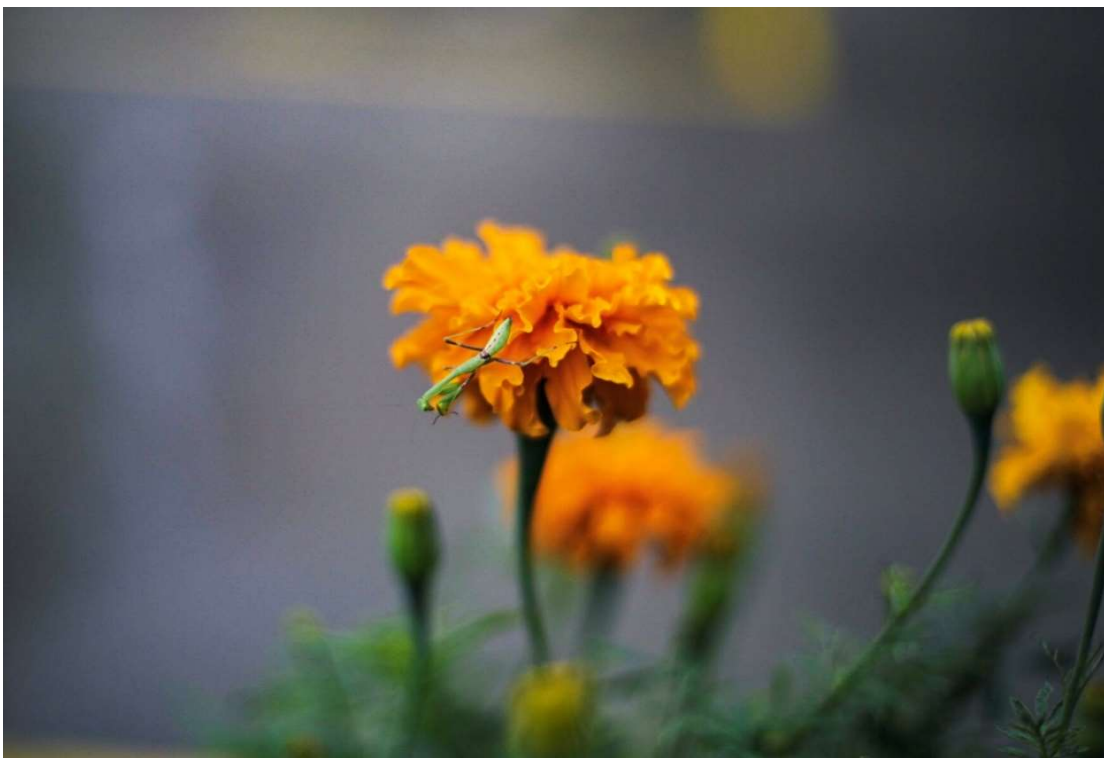
While urban farming and community gardens will never be a replacement for conventional large-scale agriculture, they can act as a buffer that increases the availability of fresh produce, and the resilience of a community. Studies indicate that community gardening may help address food shortages and supplement fresh produce consumption for households. This is particularly important to increase resilience against events such as the Covid-19 lockdowns, which has resulted in unprecedented job loss and income impacts. During this time, community gardens across the United States have documented their work in supplementing the diets of people affected by the pandemic, their work essential to feeding their community. This is again not exclusive to the pandemic moment, as community gardens often donate surplus produce to disadvantaged members of the community.

As food insecurity hits thousands more Australians than usual due to the Covid crisis, food charities are struggling to meet demand for food assistance. Setting up more community and urban gardens can help both garden members and the wider community to have access to fresh, local, and healthy produce. This also means that excess produce from the gardens do not go to waste, as gardeners can donate their surplus to people in need.



Sustainability Victoria posits that community gardens yield more produce per square acre than conventional farmland. The Cape garden gives the opportunity for reduced food bills for residents to add to the large energy savings being achieved through the energy efficient homes at The Cape.

One of the food-growing systems to be used in The Cape community farm is the Melbourne designed and manufactured Biofilta wicking bed. Trials undertaken at trial farms show that each Biofilta wicking bed can produce up to 25kg of fresh vegetables and herbs per year. If a nominal value of \$10 per kilogram for mixed herbs and vegetables is applied, this translates to a value of over \$250 of produce grown at supermarket value. If an average working member of the community farm has access to 6 x Biofilta wicking beds of 1m² each, that member has the potential to produce about 150 kg per year, and a nominal potential value of circa \$1500 from their individual plots. Add in other elements of the community farm such as fruit trees, bee keeping, herb beds, poultry, and access to vegetable seedlings for home farms, and the economic benefits become more compelling.



Sustainability & Biodiversity

Situated on a previously cleared former cattle station, The Cape has been planned with a large amount of open space compared to housing area. The landscape has been constructed with the principles of Biodiversity-Sensitive Urban Design prioritised, to rehabilitate the degraded cattle farmland that it has been for the past few decades. This land use change is now resulting in an influx of native plants and animals rehabilitating the space, which is great for local flora and fauna as well as the residents who can observe and interact with them. There have been over 98 species of birds recorded on site to date, and there are extensive infrastructure and walking tracks available for residents to observe the native flora, fauna, and landscape. Restored habitat areas, swales, creeklines and residential landscapes and The Cape community farm are already contributing to the ecological diversity of the site.

The Cape community farm will include a significant nursery facility including hothouses, propagation space and hard stand, which will allow for the production of vegetable seedlings for plot holders and home farmers, as well as biodiversity and landscape plants for restored habitat areas and residential landscapes. Residents will be able to purchase vegetable seedlings and landscape lines from the nursery section of the farm, which will generate income for the farm as well as reduce the need for residents to buy conventional seedlings from places like Bunnings, where seedlings are often produced with heavy use of chemicals and generate significant amounts of plastic waste.

Sustainability in the context of the community garden focuses on minimising waste and encouraging local cycling of resources within the system. By focusing on self-regulating operations through local composting, reuse of materials, minimised plastic and artificial inputs, The Cape can operate at the best standards for a community garden. Having a well designed composting area of reasonable scale at The Cape community farm provides a very good teaching aid for residents interested in learning about hot composting and efficient home composting, helping to reduce organic waste to landfill, closing the nutrient loop at precinct and household level to create circular economy/closed loop food systems.

Property Values

The value and importance of urban farming is increasingly being noticed by the urban planning industry. Increasingly, agricultural land is being subsumed by the push of in the peri-urban fringe of cities such as Melbourne. The Planning Schemes of Western Sydney councils now prioritise agricultural space and agribusiness being incorporated into the housing overlay, to mitigate the loss of farmland, and also to encourage a diverse local food community (NSW Government).

Similarly, there is a shift in the real estate industry to recognition of the material benefits of urban farming and community gardens. A study in New York City found that proximity to community gardens has a positive benefit to property values (Voicu & Been 2008). Higher quality gardens—those deemed as having quality fencing and security, nonseasonal decorations, and acceptable landscaping—had the most positive impact on property values.

According to members of the Dudley Neighbors Incorporated (DNI) in Massachusetts: *“The project certainly helps the marketability of our homes. People are not just getting a house, they are getting a community, and it’s based on fresh, locally grown food.”*

Residents of The Cape are often purchasing a home with the intention of being part of a community of similarly sustainability-minded peers. The development of a thriving community garden can help shift focus from the mechanics of the sustainable individual family home, to that of a sustainable, well designed community. The community garden thus acts as a fulcrum from which deeper community connection and collaborations can be built, based on the cultural mainstays of food and work toward a common goal.

In terms of land tenure, The Cape Community Garden is more secure than many other urban community gardens, which are usually situated on public land. This land is owned by the city or council, and are often the most vulnerable spaces in the city, as the longevity of the garden can be cut short due to the land being sold to developers or turned into public housing or other uses. The absence of this threat at The Cape, where the developer has backed the development of the community garden from the outset, ensures the longevity of the project as a permanent asset to the community.

Employment & education

For many people, community gardens are an introduction to the practice of growing food and caring for plants. This can be the jumping-off point for a lifelong interest in the natural world, and potentially even studies or employment in this area. Community gardens are a unique facilitator of this relationship, as for many young people they are their first exposure to the wonders of growing plants and producing food. Interest in local and sustainable food production is increasing steadily. This is particularly pronounced due to recent exacerbation of external pressures that are facing young people from climate change, youth unemployment and threats to the global supply chain.

Participating in the community garden as a member or volunteer also has positive benefits to the employability and work ethic of youth and others involved in the garden. Community garden projects worldwide have been shown to increase volunteerism in a community. Volunteering provides invaluable work experience, organisational and community-building skills for people of all ages. This is particularly useful in outer-urban areas, where access to community programs and other employment opportunities can be difficult.

Young people benefit greatly when they have access to a garden and can participate in nutrition and garden-based education. Many studies have shown that school garden programs have positive impacts for both the children and nearby community, with increases in academic achievement, physical and emotional wellbeing, and better school cultures. Food education in Australian schools is inconsistently delivered. Researchers posit that it is inadequate to equip students with life-long skills in both preparation of food, and an understanding of the associated environmental and social issues that intersect with food production and consumption.

Community gardens can also be used to host workshops and other lessons and are often used as open-air classrooms where students are able to interact with nature. This has been shown to be a powerful educational tool for subjects from gardening and nutrition to physical education and personal wellbeing (Siewell et al 2015). Partnering with local schools and educators can enrich the learning opportunities for students in the area. The physical space of the community garden can also provide a venue from which local practitioners and educators in specialities across the food, wellness and fitness, environmental education disciplines (and more) can host workshops and classes, expanding their audience and reach.

Many residents of The Cape also grow food in their own backyards, and there is a plethora of experienced gardeners within the community. As a meeting place for people of all levels of food growing experience, the community garden is an important resource for individual homeowners' food gardens as well. People who are having trouble with specific plants, pests, and other issues can engage with mentors who are more experienced in the area. This strengthens the community's knowledge base and allows for information and experience to be pooled within the community and passed through generations.



Garden Spaces

Allotment Garden

The allotment garden will consist of individual member plots of six Foodcubes or less for each gardener. These are elevated wicking beds in a row, allowing for easy watering and minimal maintenance by the gardener.

Many residents of The Cape will already have food-growing systems set up at their individual homes. However, this may only be a few square metres of growing space, which is enough for an herb garden and growing fresh greens. Having an allotment at the community farm will allow residents to engage in more experimental, seasonal, and longer-term growing. This could mean a home garden that consists of herbs and salad greens at arms length from the kitchen that can be easily plucked for meals, while the community farm plot allows them to grow large quantities of tomatoes and watermelons in Summer, and winter squash, potatoes, garlic etc. in Winter.

This area will be maintained by members, under the direction of a professional farmer/garden co-ordinator, ensuring the overall space is kept tidy and safe.

Market Garden

The Market Garden will be run by a professional farmer/farm co-ordinator with the assistance of volunteer members, and will grow produce specifically for the use of allotment members and to be supplied to general members via a general membership structure . It can also be where more long-term grows can be safely undertaken, and where indigenous food cultivars can be experimented with.

High-value specialty crops that can be grown for sale are expanded on in following sections and could also be complemented by flowers grown to encourage pollinators.

Propagation Nursery

Seed and seedling prices from wholesalers are increasing, and any purchase of seedlings generally come in a large amount of single use plastic that often ends in landfill. Mass grown seedlings from conventional nurseries are often heavily treated with pesticides and can harbour plant diseases. The nursery will be overseen by the Farm Co-ordinator, assisted by skilled members of the garden. Members of the garden as well as the wider community can volunteer and learn about plants and working in a nursery. The staff of The Sustainable Landscape Company, who service the landscaping throughout The Cape development, can also assist in growing plants for landscaping purposes and to integrate into the community.

Using reusable seedling trays that are circulated through the farm will cut back drastically on plastic waste from purchasing plants from big-box retailers. It also increases the biosecurity of the farm, while encouraging a local nutrient cycling through all life stages of plants on the farm. The practice of saving seeds is a conscious selection of crop plants based on how they thrive in the particular environment of the farm. This means that over time, specific varieties of food plants will be proliferated in the nursery and to The Cape's farm.

Members of the garden (and the broader community Cape community) will be able to place orders and purchase diverse, seasonal and affordable plant seedlings in sustainable bulk formats for their allotment garden and home farms. The nursery will also provide capacity to grow a wide range of biodiverse and attractive landscape lines for use in residential landscapes, as well as tubestock for environmental plantings in The Cape public landscape and habitat/wetland/creekline areas. This practice of growing plants for the Cape landscape has already commenced in the existing stage one of the community garden.



Composting

Composting is an integral part of this farm operation as it closes the loop in organic waste streams and helps to build healthy soils. When organic waste goes to landfill, it is trapped under other waste products and breaks down anaerobically, which is a major source of methane and other greenhouse gases. Composting a significant amount of community and garden wastes reduces amount of waste to landfill produced by The Cape. There are composting stations for residents' organic waste as well as larger composting facilities for receiving inputs from the broader landscaping works throughout The Cape development as well as annual deliveries of bulk nutrients such as composted manures to the farm.

While the Bass Coast Council does collect organic waste in Green Waste Bins, onsite composting facilities allow value to be captured and cycled through the community. Every plant that is pulled from the garden represents a depletion of nutrients from the soil, so cycling through composted garden and kitchen waste is crucial to replenishing garden soils. The larger composted areas in the farm will be situated on concreted pads, allowing for large piles of compost to be developed, creating the conditions for hot composting in which beneficial bacteria heat up the compost to over 60 degrees celcius, sterilising weed seed and diseased vegetative matter. This is an important plant hygiene circuit breaker in the garden design to stop the cycle of reintroducing weed seed and disease back into garden beds via underprocessed compost.

Beekeeping

Urban beekeeping increases the number of beneficial pollinators in the garden, resulting in increased production of food for residents. Members who are interested in beekeeping can be responsible for the hives. The bees are kept at the top of the farm, separate from the main gardening areas to reduce contact with the public and members. Honey that is harvested can be sold in the Farmhouse, at farmers' markets, or distributed among members.

Gathering Spaces

The variety of gathering spaces designed into the garden are a huge asset to the community, both for their potential to nurture community gathering and meetings, as well as the ability to rent them out to raise money for the garden. The flow of the garden is divided according to accessibility for members, non-member residents, the general public, and event guests.



Garden Operations

The Cape Community Farm is an Incorporated Association that is run by a Committee of members. It is a not-for profit organisation but will have significant running expenses which will need to be covered by member activities and other income streams. The day-to-day operation of the farm and associated programs will be run by a professional farmer/co-ordinator who reports to the Community Garden Committee. They will be a skilled horticulturalist/farmer/landscaper with experience good leadership/communication/negotiation skills, with an understanding of sustainable community development and food production. Their responsibilities will include:

- Maintenance of the farm spaces and infrastructure (including buildings, gardens, drainage, water and electrical)
- Operations of the nursery
- Booking spaces for events
- Coordinating volunteers
- OHS and administration
- Garden communications within and beyond the community

Other expenses that must be covered through self-funding operation include:

- Repairs
- Insurance
- Website fees
- Garden and project materials and consumables
- Employment costs
- Publicity, promotion & events

The estimated annual expenses of the farm are estimated to be circa \$150,000, \$20k of this set aside annually for the farm's longevity to insure against any unforeseen costs and assist with upgrades.

Self-funding operations

Challenges

This farm will require a significant amount of local community support from within The Cape to operate successfully. Full-time resident gardeners will carry the burden for most of this support, particularly in the early years. Currently only 32% of lots are occupied on a full-time basis, with the majority of homes occupied part-time or on a holiday basis. Future homes to be constructed in Stages 4-6 are quite a distance from the farm area, so attracting these residents to the farm may be problematic.

Long-term viability is entangled with financial viability, a concern for community gardens across Australia. Most councils will step in however, in exceptional circumstances where urgent repair is required to mitigate a safety risk that cannot wait for appropriate fundraising, as well as to help supply base requirements for signage, educational materials, and limited supplies of mulch, manure, soil and plants (Pires 2011). In fact, Sustainability Victoria contends that the cost of maintaining a community garden is less expensive than maintaining a similar size of parkland. Thus, the cost of operations of the garden should not discourage the investment in and development of this garden, considering the myriad benefits present in such a small space.

Membership Fees

Membership fees will be a backbone of this garden, with at least two tiers indicating membership status.

1. *Allotment Farm Member*

Full membership is priced at \$300 per for up to six dedicated Foodcubes and full garden access.

- Up to six individual Foodcubes for your own gardening
- Composting facilities with bulk-purchased manures/nutrients
- Individual locker for tools, gloves etc.
- Access to perennial herb beds
- Access to a proportional share of produce from the Market Garden
- Discount on seedlings and landscape plants
- Discount access to events, seminars, training programs, workshops

With 50 full-members, this will provide circa \$15,000 to the Garden per year which can be used for basic maintenance of the area. Take-up of membership and support is vital to the success of the farm, for the budget but also for operational viability.

2. *Friend of The Farm*

Partial memberships can also be offered to residents of The Cape and surrounding areas who want to be a part of the Farm community. This would cost \$200 per year, and give access to:

- Access to perennial herb beds
- Access to a proportional share of produce from the Market Garden
- Discount on seedlings and landscape plants
- Discount access to events, seminars, training programs, workshops

With 100 or more Friends of the Farm memberships, this could raise \$20,000 per annum for the farm

Produce Sales

Growing high-value specialty crops

A wall of raspberry plants lines the side of the Leongatha Community Garden, where they sell about \$2,500 in raspberries and jam a year to help fund the garden. Berries are usually expensive in stores, but can be easy to grow and reliable producers. Strawberries are becoming increasingly available in stores and getting more affordable, but others such as raspberries, loganberries, blackberries etc. are still a specialty food and have specific seasonality.

Other high-value crops that could be prioritised include asparagus, garlic, and mushrooms. Asparagus have a distinct, short season that can become an attraction to The Cape and bring in a lot of income (see Germany's 'Spargelzeit' to see how much passion in-season asparagus can attract!). Specialty varieties of mushrooms such as oyster and shiitakes can be grown easily indoors, such as in a small amount of space in the Nursery. They have fast harvest turnarounds, and require minimal maintenance, with most small gourmet mushroom growers having another job or being retired. Gourmet mushrooms can be hard to find in stores but are recognised and valued by customers. There is also the opportunity to form alliances with local cafes and restaurants, to supply them with specialty herbs and other products in season. This can generate income for the farm and help to establish the reputation of The Cape's community garden.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community-Supported Agriculture is an investment by a community in the enterprise growing their local produce. This could operate as a limited subscription to the food produced out of the Market Garden, which will vary each week. These boxes usually are offered in 'small' and 'large' sizes from \$30-70, and can either be pick-up or delivery to a wide area.

This CSA gives the operation a greater level of financial stability than just selling at markets, as it offers a more regular source of income and support. This allows for the farmers to plan ahead and invest in the future of the farm, sharing the rewards with the community.

Farmers and members become partners in production, distribution and consumption of local food. Farm shareholders are involved in the farm's operation and contribute volunteer hours in the growing season, assisting with weeding, planting, harvesting.

Sample Management Structure (from Grovedale Community Garden)

OPERATION

A coordinator plus packers who might be volunteers

2 box sizes: Full \$50 Half \$30

Customers pay for 4 weeks at a time, in advance is obviously best

Communication via text or email

PRODUCE

No choice of produce, just get what is available

If doing organic, it doesn't have to be certified as long as is chemical free

Do not mix organic & conventional as price will have to be lowered

Access products via FB, phone, community connections etc.

Build good relationships with suppliers for respect & reliability of supply

Provide staples every box e.g. spuds carrots etc

2 to 3 fruits if possible

Can be supplemented by other local farm enterprises

DISTRIBUTION

Pick up or delivery depending on what works for you

Could be pick up for TC residents but delivery to local towns

Local markets, school canteens, cafes, pubs

GENERAL INFO

Building good relationships with all those in the loop is essential

Recycling boxes is good for the environment

Grovedale have small lace bags made from lace curtains from op shops which are used for small items. Paper bags could be used if necessary but don't use plastic

Nursery sales

The Nursery and propagation space is being constructed at a professional scale and in consultation with Australian Ecosystems' large commercial nursery and with the input of other experienced professional plant growers. This can be a major source of income, as well as savings for the farm's operation. Growing seedlings for the farm onsite will create a closed-loop system of seed collecting, sowing, and saving. Plants grown will be utilised in the community garden, saving members lots of money on seeds and seedlings, as well as the Market Garden, which can buy the seedlings back at a low price. This ensures the flow of high-quality plants into the farm, creating an insurance against the panic-buying of seeds and seedlings that have become increasingly common in recent Covid restrictions.

This nursery also provides an input for landscaping works throughout The Cape. Local indigenous plant seedlings can be propagated at scale and sold back to The Cape developers for use in landscaping by The Sustainable Landscape Company. This will also provide a source of local plants for residential landscapes, enhancing the biodiversity and proliferating local provenance of plantings throughout The Cape, so that residents can purchase plants, and in doing so, invest directly back in to their community.

Indoor plants are also a huge part of the plant market at the moment. They can command high prices due to their trendiness and the particular conditions they require to grow, which can be replicated in this nursery. These may be very popular with urban visitors to The Cape who may not be familiar with growing food or native plants, but want to bring a plant home with them. Members can bring in cuttings from their own indoor plants to propagate and sell to raise money for the garden operations.



Vegetable, indoor, and native landscape plants can be sold at commercial quantities out of the Community Garden to consumers, whether at regular weekend nursery open days, more formalised 'Farmers' Markets' or even in contracts with local landscaping companies and farmers.

Space Hire

Event Space Hire

The many gathering spaces throughout the garden would be an inspiring spot to hold corporate events, training & strategy days, and meetings. The amenity of the garden, as well as the coastline and area in general, provide the guests with the opportunity to connect with food, nature, and themselves.

Hiring the space out for weddings and other celebrations are another potential source of revenue for the garden. The average spend on wedding venue in Victoria in 2019 was \$15k. While this space does not have all of the amenities required for the pre-pandemic large weddings, more intimate and rustic weddings could be held beautifully in this space.

The building spaces can be hired by local artists and artisans to showcase their works, either individually, or The Cape could curate these artists and take a commission on sales.

Regular Activity Hire

Yoga teachers, Sport Groups, Book Clubs, etc. can rent spaces within the Community Garden from which to conduct their practice/ teaching/ meetings on a regular basis. These could occur in one of the gathering spaces, activating the space and providing activities for residents and members of the community. There are many local freelance yoga teachers and PTs in the area who would be likely to appreciate the natural amenity of the gardens to conduct their practice.



Café & Co-op

Bulk Food Co-op

A small bulk food co-op could operate out of one of the community buildings. This would supplement the garden produce to increase food sovereignty and reduce trips to the supermarket for the local community. Bulk pantry good can be purchased without plastic, and members bring their own containers to fill up on essential with no waste. Aside from the obvious dry pantry goods such as beans, nuts, rice etc., products that are commonly packaged in plastic such as tofu can be bought in bulk directly from the manufacturer. This usually results in a massive saving on the bulk product, due to the power of the collective buyer, and is much cheaper than similar items from bulk food stores. A markup of 10 - 15% can be collected by the garden to cover staffing expenses and raise money for the garden. This will generally bring the product back up to supermarket/ health food store prices. Garden members can expect a discount due to their membership status, which will incentivise their participation. This can also be open to the broader community, and advertised throughout Cape Paterson and the local area.

Sample Co-Op Structure (from Wholefoods Unwrapped Collective)

Monthly order of unpackaged/low packaged foods including tofu, noodles Japanese grocery products, honey, yoghurt, tortillas, corn chips, dips and cheeses (both vegan and non vegan).

Orders are placed on online store. Volunteers drive to suppliers to pick up wholefoods from suppliers who understand our ethos: local, low or no packaging affordable and just as important delicious! Bulk containers are reused for each supplier

DISTRIBUTION

A team of volunteers packs orders with the Container Library and they are placed in boxes for contactless pickup

CONTAINER LIBRARY

- Pick up goodies in library containers/bags from front porch
- Return containers to the two tubs on the porch. This needs to happen at your next order or within two weeks. Whichever comes first. When returning, you must tick your name off the sheet stuck to one of the tubs so we can keep a track of everything.
- Containers must be washed thoroughly before returning. Produce bags, also need to be clean. Please use your discretion as to what bags need to be washed (either by hand or in machine)
- If you are unable to return items within above time frame, please contact ahead of time
- Non return of containers/non communication will prevent future orders. A draconian but necessary measure as we're intent on not replacing significant numbers of containers. We have accounted for small losses and damage.

Café & Bar The communal areas can also facilitate a small coffee shop and café, a hub for Cape residents and community garden members. This can employ a professional barista/café staff member and be assisted by volunteers on weekends/peak holiday seasons. For ease of operation the café and bar could operate from the farmhouse on a Saturday and Sunday, purchase in pre-made cakes and savoury items, and sell coffee in the mornings, and wood fired pizza and bar in the afternoon.

Education

Workshops

Food-making and cooking workshops are a great way to utilise produce to turn into foodstuff, as participants can collaboratively make their own jams/bread/cheese/sourdough/pasta and take it home with them without requiring the Garden to have a full commercial kitchen license that would be required to sell these products. So, instead of selling Cape Preserves for \$10 a jar, we can have regular workshops where they are made and residents can take home five jars after a \$70 class.

The design of the Community Gardens' facilities is amenable to any number of workshop topics. This flexibility will allow for residents of The Cape and the local community to showcase their specific skills across a variety of areas. These could include the more traditional garden-adjacent workshops; such as preserving, fermentation, sourdough bread making, beekeeping, composting etc.; as well as other educational topics such as sustainable house design, birdwatching, native plantings for biodiversity, etc. Some of the spaces could be transformed into artists' studios for classes such as painting, pottery, etc.

Cooking workshops are very popular, such as the pasta-making workshop run at the 10 Star Home with guest chef Julia Bussittil-Nishimura in the 2019 Passata Day Event at the Cape. These can be part of a larger event for a business group or party. Wine tasting workshops can be accompanied by a Community-led Pizza party. Other cooking workshops such as Sourdough Bread-Making can utilise the Pizza Oven within the Community Garden.



Education programs provide the necessary tools for individuals and communities to contribute to the garden and to learn to do it themselves. Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is the principle that every person has capabilities, knowledge, gifts, and abilities that can be utilised in the community. This is very true at The Cape where many residents are knowledgeable, skilled, and passionate about sustainable living.

Courses

As an early offering, The Cape can host weekend 'Intro to Permaculture' Courses feature local permaculture educators. One of the main draws with longer multi-week Permaculture Design Courses are the specific well-known educators. Once the reputation of The Cape's Community Garden has been built, we can attract these educators for more elaborate classes. However, in the meantime supporting local permaculture experts will be a great way to activate this reputation. Students of longer courses can stay in the visitor accommodation that have been planned for The Cape in the future, to enhance the experience of living and learning onsite.

The community farm also provides the perfect setting to run courses for Youth Educators, highlighting the bridge between gardening, nutrition, and science. Lessons are linked to local school districts, and provide facilitation for teachers as well, such as the 'Helping Kids Get Healthy' workshops for Youth Educators.

Apprenticeships/ Internships

There is also the potential to host apprentices who want to learn about farming and permaculture. A sister company to The Cape, Mossy Willow Farm runs a program hosting [Young Farmer Internships](#). These individuals would work alongside the main farmer, assisting with maintenance of the farm and preparing harvests for sale. This could be a great opportunity for local kids to gain experience running a small farm/large community garden.

East New York Farms Youth Internships <https://ucceny.org/youth-internship/> is a 9-month intensive program where young people engage in hands-on learning about environment, health, community development, leadership and social justice.

Consultancy

Many established community gardens offer consulting services, such as [Cultivating Community](#) and CERES in Melbourne, and Brooklyn Grange in NYC. Building on the success of The Cape's Community Garden, a consultancy service can be established to assist other aspiring community gardens and urban farmers. This service can also help local schools or other community groups to set up food growing programs.



Community Fundraising

Community Fundraising Events

During Farmers' markets, as well as other Events held at The Cape, the Community Garden can utilise the pizza oven to churn out high-quality woodfired pizzas. At Sustainable House Day 2019, over 300 pizzas were made by volunteers. If a similar operation was run, with pizzas sold for \$10 - \$15, the community could raise a lot of money during a night or day. Raffles and competitions could be run by the garden, featuring prizes from sponsors related to farming, such as passata and preserves, as well as other donated products from local producers. These could be tied in with seasonal community Fair/Festival activities, including local music and activities for children. The possibilities are endless!

'When a community comes together to and collectively works to raise funds for the garden, a by-product is an increased sense of ownership and commitment to the community garden' --Denver Urban Gardens

Farmers' Market

A periodic Farmer's Market would allow for plants, produce and products from The Cape Community Garden to be sold to the public. Additionally, revenue can be generated by renting out stall space to other local producers. Farmers and producers can rent stall space from the Garden in order to participate in the Market, the revenue for which can be funnelled into the operation of the farm. A Farmer's Market could be an important cornerstone of The Cape's public outreach and profitability, drawing visitors to the area who are then likely to be return customers and engage in other community events and fundraising opportunities.

Sample Revenue Model

This Cape Community Farm draft budget has been created using figures from other successful community garden associations, similar event space hire businesses and CSA organisations. The results confidently demonstrate that the farm association can produce a surplus, however these figures are indicative and should be refined over time.

Item	Description	Net income/expense
Membership fees	Full: 50 x \$300 = \$15,000 Part: 100 x \$200 = \$20,000	\$ 35,000
Produce sales (CSA)	Large box \$50 x 50 people x weekly = \$125,000 Small box \$30 x 50 x weekly = \$75,000 Total = \$200,000 @ 15% margin = \$30,000	\$ 30,000
Nursery sales	Vege seedlings: \$5,000 Market: \$30,000 Landscaping: \$20,000	\$ 55,000
Space hire	10 events per annum @ \$2000 per event	\$ 20,000
Monthly farmers market	\$1000 per event	\$ 12,000
Co-op retail sales	Bulk Co-op: 10% cut of 100 members @ \$100 / monthly	\$ 12,000
Café/wine bar	Average annual profit	\$ 12,000
Education	Workshops: 15 per annum 50% cut of \$100 x 20 people =	\$ 15,000
Community events	Pizza evenings/fundraisers/music events. 6 events per annum @\$1500 profit per event	\$ 9,000
Management staff	Annual salary of farmer/farm coordinator	\$ 70,000
Sinking fund	Funds set aside for future capital expense	\$ 20,000
Miscellaneous	Contingency for miscellaneous costs	\$ 50,000
TOTAL (surplus/loss)		\$ 60,000

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