

CCF Community Gardens Redevelopment (CCFCGR) Consultation Project

Final Report

Presented to

Collingwood Children's Farm Committee of Management & Executives

By

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Table of Contents

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY3**

- PURPOSE 9**

- 1. External Context - Relevant Policy and Trends in Urban Community Gardens..... 9**
 - 1.1 Government policy9
 - 1.2 First Nations Cultural Heritage9
 - 1.3 Trends in Urban Community Gardens 10

- 2. About the Consultation..... 11**
 - 2.1 Context - Rules of the CCF Incorporated Association 11
 - 2.3 Consultation Participants..... 12
 - 2.4 Consultation Description and Methods 13
 - 2.5 Consultation Stages 14

- 3. Consultation Findings..... 18**
 - 3.1 Definition of a CCF garden for the community..... 18
 - 3.3 Three Themes and 45 Ideas..... 20
 - 3.4 Level of Support for 45 Ideas 21
 - 3.5 Top 20 / Lowest 10 Supported Ideas..... 23

- 4. Participant Feedback on Consultation Process25**

- 5. Concluding Insights25**
 - 5.1 Summary insights for consideration in CCF’s decision making 25
 - 5.2 Responding to Victorian Government’s Open Space for Everyone framework 28

- APPENDIX 1 - CCFCGRC PROJECT PLAN29**

- APPENDIX 2 - EXCERPTS FROM CCF RULES32**

- APPENDIX 3 - BIOGRAPHIES.....33**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In May 2022, Michelson Alexander were engaged by CCF to undertake the community and stakeholder consultation and supporting communications for the Collingwood Children's Farm Community Gardens Redevelopment Consultation project (CCFCGRC) [Note the area that was the subject of this consultation is located on the left-hand side as you approach the entrance to the Farm].
- Fiona Sharkie is an experienced leader in social impact and in consulting and co-designing programs with community members in a range of sectors including family violence, public health and disability. (See Appendix 3 - Biographies). Fiona was brought into the MA team as a Special Advisor, to specifically conduct the CCF community consultation for this project.
- A CCFCGRC community consultation Project Plan was developed in 2 stages:
 - 1) Background & information gathering,
 - 2) Consultation design, delivery and reporting.
- The Project commenced in May 2022 and was completed in mid-August 2022.

EXTERNAL CONTEXT

- The Victorian government's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and City of Yarra policies and plans broadly set the operating environment for the CCF and for this project. Specifically, the *Open Space for Everyone strategy (2022)*, the *Open Space Strategy (2020)* and additionally the *Yarra River Protection Act 2017* and the *Melbourne Water Yarra Strategic Plan 2022-2032* provide relevant context for any redevelopment of the CCF and the active role First Nations people must play.
- Consultation with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation determined that the CCF should undertake a Cultural Heritage & Planning process for the whole Farm, including the community gardens area.
- Community gardens are evolving and changing as urban residents seek opportunities to grow food in public green spaces. A key driver is higher density housing which sees a decrease in traditional suburban homes with backyards and an increase in apartment dwellings with limited access to private open space. The challenge for state and local governments is to create multi-functional public open space that can incorporate food production for diverse users but allocate space fairly and inclusively for this purpose. Increasingly, local councils are using a model for community gardens that preferences shared 'communal' gardening as opposed to the individual allotment model where individual people and/or families are allocated plots on an exclusive and indefinite basis (often encumbered with waiting lists).
- Under the communal model, residents grow food, flowers, and medicinal plants together and output is shared with fellow gardeners, local residents visiting the gardens or with people experiencing food insecurity. The communal model encourages visitation and education in the food production space, that is, the garden has a wider public space function and is not used exclusively by individual garden members.

ABOUT THE CONSULTATION

- The Consultation was informed by the Aims and Objectives set out in the Rules of the CCF Incorporated Association - particularly in supporting children and disadvantaged people in training programs and to learn new skills, participate in a working farm and embrace diversity.
- The **consultation purpose** was to engage a wide range of the CCF community members (children, volunteers, community organisations, collaborating partner organisations, disability services, previous CCF community gardeners) to *"gather ideas to understand the needs of the community to contribute to the design of a rejuvenated, productive community garden to benefit all"*.
- The **consultation outcomes** will provide input to the CCF's brief to appoint landscape designers/architects as well as ensure participants found the consultation experience to be robust, meaningful, and accessible.
- **Consultation participants:** Considerable effort was made to ensure the community members engaged in the consultation have long standing and/or regular contact with the Farm. The resulting participants were diverse in age, role, abilities, connection to the Farm and included staff, volunteers, students, people with disability, community groups, partner organisations, members, visitors and previous CCF Community Gardeners (individual plot holders). Members of the CCF community consulted for this project are represented diagrammatically below:



- The **Consultation Description** chosen was INVOLVE (IAP2 level of participation) working directly with the community.
- The **Consultation Method** employed was an adapted “Charette” style where participants contribute ideas through written words, drawings, photographs, within their own segment/group (between 4-12 participants) with the sessions adapted to ensure the accessibility and safety needs of participants were met. For example, miniature farm/garden props were created for use with children and young people with disability to improve accessibility.
- **Consultation Stages:**
 1. **Preliminary Meetings** (May to mid-June) with **25** participants to understand the needs of individuals to encourage participation and ensure the format was appropriate for each group.
 2. **Round 1** (June to mid-July). Twelve separate consultation sessions were held for different community segments/groups. **75** people participated and provided their ideas during a 90 minute session.

The participants were asked 3 questions:

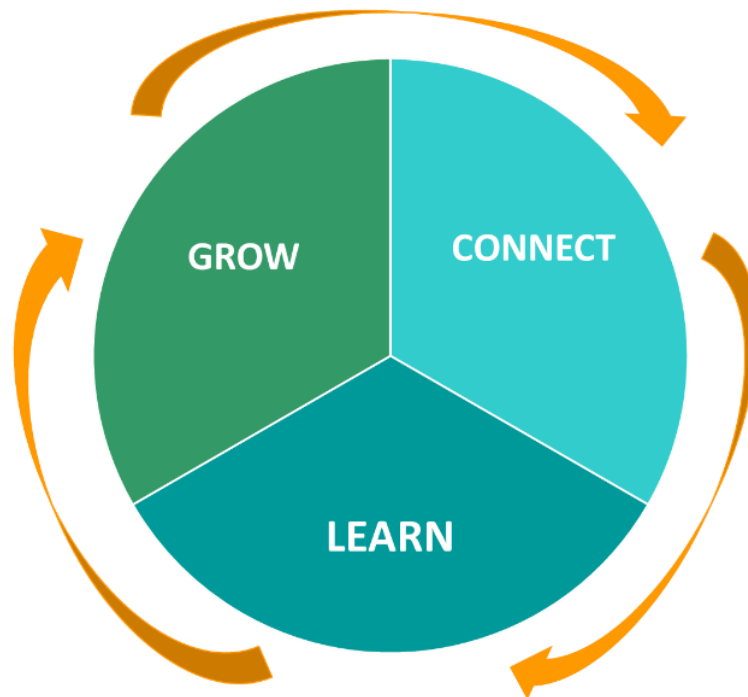
- 1) *What would a productive garden at the CCF look like, in which all the Farm’s community could enjoy? (features, fixtures, amenities).*
 - 2) *What opportunities and experiences could the Farm’s community enjoy there? (learning, social connection, activities)*
 - 3) *How would it work? (management, sharing of space/produce).*
3. **Round 2** (mid-July to beginning of August). Participants revisited their ideas and those of others in a Gallery of original work created in Round 1 (50+ pieces of original work). Participants then completed a questionnaire to show their support for more than 45 ideas generated. **47** people from Round 1 participated in Round 2.

To manage participants’ expectation the following statement was made: *“Every idea is a good idea, and all ideas will be considered, but some may not be possible due to physical, geographical, environmental, cultural, accessibility and cost factors”.*

CONSULTATION RESULTS

- The ideas produced by consultation participants in **Round 1** were consolidated and synthesised into:
 - Six Principles
 - Three Themes
 - 45 Ideas (within the three themes)
- The **Six Principles** emerged as guidance to any plans for the community gardens area as follows:
 - 1) Recognise History (First Nations, Abbotsford Convent Heritage, migrant plot gardeners from the 1970s)
 - 2) Protect the land for future generations (biodiverse, regenerative, climate resilient).
 - 3) Create a sanctuary (a place of beauty to rest, awaken the 8 senses)
 - 4) Reflect the Farm’s aesthetic (rustic, natural materials wood/stone)
 - 5) Accessible for all (for people with disabilities, in all areas of the Community Garden)
 - 6) Prioritise sharing (of space, land, produce, learning).

- The **Three Themes - GROW, CONNECT, LEARN** - each related and reinforcing of each other.



- There were **45 ideas** summarised from all the participant input, categorised under each Theme (GROW, LEARN, CONNECT) plus an additional view of some participants to keep the area for individual or shared plots only.
- All **45 ideas** were presented to participants in **Round 2** who were asked to complete a questionnaire to show which ideas they supported and/or were most excited about.

SUMMARY OF SUPPORT FOR PRINCIPLES, THEMES, AND IDEAS

- Overall, there is a very high level of interest and enthusiasm by the broad community in actively participating in the new community gardens area, just as many of them do in the broader Farm. Their involvement across the Farm has served to help them develop their own ideas for new opportunities and interests in a new community gardens area in which they can be involved.
- The **six principles** were all strongly supported, by the majority of participants, with some lower results for principles of accessibility (#5) and sharing (#6).

Table: Support for Proposed Principles expressed in Round 2

- In relation to support for the **45 Ideas**, there was an equally high level of enthusiastic support by participants in the range of ideas under the **three Themes** of the garden area being a place to **GROW, LEARN and CONNECT**. This presents significant opportunities for the CCF to further achieve its Mission in building social connection and capability of its community members, and access to green space in an area of increasing urban density.
- In relation to **LEARNING**, there was a very strong interest in immersive learning, (i.e. "learning by doing", "getting my hands dirty") via formal and informal learning including school science lessons on site, Horticulture TAFE courses, work experience and job readiness and Learning Labs, which the majority of respondents supported.

- Many participants perceived **GROWING and LEARNING** in the new garden area as being different to the growing activity in the market garden area of the Farm that has the purpose of producing food in high yields support the Farm's food relief commitments via the Moving Feast partnership and its financial sustainability through produce sales to the general public. Rather they saw the garden area as a place for innovation and experimentation and where they could learn about urban food production and how it relates to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies ie. to ensure food can continue to grow in urban areas when food produced in rural areas may be adversely impacted by fire, flood and drought.
- There was a very high level of support amongst all participants that the garden area should produce food to support people in need in both allowing them opportunity to participate in hands-on gardening to grow their own food or be the beneficiaries of the food grown by others in the area (partially or fully donated).
- Ideas around **CONNECTING** with others, were similarly highly supported by all groups, with the majority seeing the garden area as a place to share and connect with people from diverse backgrounds (cultures, abilities and identities) as well as the importance of connecting with nature and the Yarra River.
- There were some stark differences in support for some ideas that received a lower level of support by some of the participants from different community segments. For those who have had a closer involvement and history with the previous community garden of individual allotments (previous CCF community gardeners, some members and visitors, and a small number of volunteers and staff), there was a preference or appreciation of the desire by some, to restore and continue this model.

However, this view was outweighed by a higher level of support by the broader community for a model of communal gardening in which schools, disability services, community organisations with social purpose and social enterprises supporting disadvantaged people could participate.

- Another area of divergent views was in the Management of the community gardens area. The highest level of support was for the garden area to be managed by the CCF with a Manager/Co-ordinator to provide support to people to **GROW, LEARN and CONNECT** in the area. Others supported the idea that the area continue as in the past (individual allotments) and that the garden be managed autonomously by individual community gardeners or jointly managed with the CCF (some volunteers, members/visitors, staff).

Further detail on the levels of support by all participants for different ideas appears in Section 3 of the report and ranking of Top 20 and Lowest 10 ideas (Section 3.4).

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK ON THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

There was overwhelming enthusiasm to take part in this consultation. The participants are highly engaged and invested in the CCF and the support and opportunities it offers them today, and in future.

Very few people who were approached to be involved refused. Individual participants and their teachers, program managers of disability schools and services, went to great lengths to make arrangements for their students/clients to be involved.

Feedback voiced and written on questionnaires expressed gratitude for the opportunity and that the process allowed the voices of many different groups of the Farm's community to share their ideas.

CONCLUDING INSIGHTS

- The CCF's community's input through this consultation has generated a vast array of ideas and directions for the CCF to consider in how the community gardens area is used. The ideas align strongly with the CCF's aims and objectives, government policies and strategies for access to green space and protecting public land for future generations.
- The CCF's task is to determine the purpose and function of the new community gardens area, taking into account government policies, adhering to its Mission and considering the needs and ideas of its wider community articulated in this consultation.
- From that point, it will brief landscape architects on the practical and aesthetic requirements of the new community gardens area within the context of the broader Farm's operations.
- CCF should continue to consult with this highly engaged community to meet its interest in being engaged as the project progresses, by seeking the community's input at each stage of design and implementation.

CCF Community Gardens Redevelopment Consultation – Final Report

Purpose

This report provides results of the Community Consultation for the CCF Community Gardens ('the Project') to help generate ideas to inform the landscape architect brief for the establishment of a new community garden.

1. External Context - Relevant Policy and Trends in Urban Community Gardens

1.1 Government policy

The CCF is operating within the framework set down by Victorian government and City of Yarra policies and plans that aim to:

- 1) create public places that offer equitable access to green space for all Victorians
- 2) be managed to optimise environmental sustainability (land and water management)
- 3) accommodate anticipated urban population growth and increasing numbers of tourists to Victoria.

Within DELWP's *Open Space for Everyone* strategy, public land has been categorised as Accessible, Restricted or Encumbered/Restricted (p9). "Restricted" includes 'community farms' and suggests they may have 'limited accessibility' which may be interpreted as those places that require a fee to enter.

The City of Yarra *Open Space Strategy 2020* similarly outlines the anticipated growth in urban density and the benefits of open space on health and wellbeing, as well as recognition of climate change impacts.

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. Crown land is public land, providing public open space and green space, particularly in built-up metropolitan areas, that is essential to community life and wellbeing.

The CCF sits on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. It is a Crown Land Reserve that comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). The land is managed by volunteers on a Committee of Management (COM); its role is to manage, maintain and enhance public assets.

1.2 First Nations Cultural Heritage

The *Yarra River Protection Act 2017* *Wilip-gin Birrarung murrn*, and the Melbourne Water *Yarra Strategic Plan 2022-2032 - Burndap Birrarun Burndap Umarkoo* outline obligations to recognise the traditional custodians of the Yarra waterways and lands along the river.

This includes supporting the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to '*play an active and ongoing role in protecting and improving the Yarra River and its parklands*'. The CCF sits within the 'Inner city reach - Dights Falls to Webb Bridge'.

1.3 Trends in Urban Community Gardens

Health and wellbeing benefits of gardening and access to green space are well documented including exercise and nutritional benefits as well as social connectedness and community wellbeing.

Traditional definitions of 'community gardens' centre around concepts of bringing people together in a public space including individual plot gardens to grow food, garden, interact, learn from each other, under a co-operative, shared management style/governance.

Definitions of 'community gardens' have evolved recently and reflect a more 'communal garden' approach; the previously widely used model of community gardening was "allotment" or plot based and where an individual or family was assigned an allotment for their personal and exclusive gardening use, often indefinitely. The more contemporary 'communal' model of community gardening refers to a larger number of people and groups sharing space for food gardening and the resulting output (harvest).

Within the City of Yarra, the trend in recently developed urban community gardens is a shift towards shared/communal models, rather than an area of single plots held by individual gardeners for their own use/benefit. This new urban design methodology is emerging in response to growing urban density and increasing interest by the broader community in food gardening. Over the last ten years, the City of Yarra has prioritised a "communal model" for new community gardens such as Railway Gardens North Carlton and Condell growers and sharers in Fitzroy, with no individual plots. Railway Gardens is unfenced, communally gardened, and gardeners are supported by a part time horticultural facilitator. (*Discussions with Urban Agriculture Facilitator, City of Yarra*).

CERES is a well-established inner city environmental centre selling organic food, nursery products and running environmental education programs. The site also includes approx. 50 individual food growing plots (with no fixed tenure) for rent by local residents. This area was redeveloped and opened at the end of 2021, and to date, has a waiting list of approx. 120 people who would like their own plot. Many of the previous CCF community gardeners (individual plot holders) also waited several years (6-12) to be allocated a plot.

The recently opened Willsmere Station Community Garden combines communal and plot-based approaches to urban food production on public green space. This garden has individual plots with term limits of five years, a communal growing area, and a "public" herb bed where non-members can visit and pick some produce. Critically, this community garden, funded by the City of Boroondara, is open 24/7 to the general public who can visit the community garden and wander through, enjoying the garden as a unique form of open space with food production. Willsmere Station Community Garden also has a section of wheelchair friendly paths and several raised beds for people in wheelchairs.

Some Melbourne inner city food gardens (Fare Share, Melbourne Farmers Markets) have a sole purpose of growing food for people in need which is distributed through social service agencies. These gardens are supported by volunteer workforces who provide their labour altruistically to support others, rather than growing food for themselves while benefiting from the social, educational and physical benefits of communal gardening.

2. About the Consultation

At the commencement of the project, a Project Team was created, comprising CCF Committee of Management (COM) members, CCF senior management and MA Special Advisor and Senior Associate. The Project Team met regularly to guide the Project, achieve Milestones of the Project Plan, make decisions and keep the COM and CCF staff informed. [The Project Plan appears at [Appendix 1](#)].

2.1 Context - Rules of the CCF Incorporated Association

The Project was also guided by the Purpose Aims and Objectives outlined in the Rules of the Collingwood Children's Farm Incorporated Association.

The Objectives emphasise the CCF's role in supporting children and disadvantaged people in training programs (including apprenticeships and job search and volunteering opportunities for unemployed marginalised people) to learn new skills, participate in a rustic community working farm that encourages and supports diversity (see [Appendix 2](#)).

2.2 Consultation Purpose, Aims and Outcomes

The following statements were devised and agreed by the Project Team to ensure clarity and shared understanding of the Project objectives and the relationship of the community gardens area to the Farm.

The purpose statement, aims and outcomes were presented (in both full and summarised forms) throughout the consultation.

Regular updates on the consultations were posted on the CCF website and social media channels. Prior to consultations commencing, an update detailing the consultation process was posted on the CCF website. During the consultations, an update was posted that included a visual representation of the broadness of the consultations. As consultations progressed, CCF members and visitors were also invited to a dedicated consultation session via email.

2.2.1 Consultation purpose statement

The CCF's purpose is to ensure that children and disadvantaged people can access a rustic community working farm that provides diverse training and learning experiences and opportunities to enjoy horticulture and green space in the inner city.

We are committed to do this today and long into the future. We must carefully manage the land and consider the varying needs, interests, and ideas from our broad range of people who visit the Farm.

Our new community gardens will be a place for the whole community.

The design brief for the revitalised community gardens will reflect this commitment: To create a beautiful, productive growing space that maximises safe and inclusive access and participation for children and vulnerable communities.

2.2.2 Consultation outcomes statement

- 1) *The community will deem the consultation process as robust, encompassing a wide range of views of the CCF community (broad); people who participated were engaged meaningfully and were able to find and share their voices and were heard (authentic); people were able to participate with their Individual needs for physical and non-physical adjustments made (accessible). Participants were kept informed and updated on progress through the process and beyond until the project is completed.*

- 2) Information obtained provides direction for the redevelopment purpose and design:
- Ideas and aspirations - experience sought, feelings gained, physical aspects and features
 - Themes are explored - learning/capacity building, social connectedness, garden productivity, individual vs shared gardening.
 - Financial sustainability of the gardens that also allows for access and participation for those on low incomes.
 - Ideas on how the community gardens will be managed

2.2.3 CCF and the Community Gardens and their Communities are one

The CCF comprises various zones dedicated to a range of activities (the manège, the orchard, the stables, the cafe etc). While each of these areas may engage different stakeholders, they are all part of the Farm. The CCF Community is vast and diverse and comprises more than 50 different community groups, CCF partners, CCF Volunteers and Members and First Nations custodians of the land. The CCF Community encompasses the CCF Community Gardens Community.

2.3 Consultation Participants

The CCF Community is broad reaching and includes many different community groups, schools, partner organisations as well as around 11,000 visitors each month.

This consultation specifically engaged members of the community that have a long standing and/or regular contact with the Farm as volunteers, students, groups, and partner organisations who use or are actively engaged with the Farm. These people have a deep understanding of the Farm and how it operates and are well placed to contribute to this stage of the redevelopment by generating ideas for consideration by the CCF and contribute to the design brief to the landscape architects.

Participants were drawn from segments of the CCF Community with each group/segment's contribution being of equal weight. A number of participants were able to identify themselves in more than one segment e.g., they are students and also volunteer at the Farm.



Table 1: Community Groups/Segments for Consultation

2.3.1 Previous CCF Community Gardeners (individual plot holders)

Previous CCF Community Gardeners are people who held plots within the community garden area at the time it closed (mid 2021). Those who participated in this stakeholder engagement project were members of the Collingwood Community Gardens Association (CCGA) established by some of the gardeners after the Community Garden was closed for safety reasons in June 2021. Several meetings were held with its President, Andrea Witcomb in preparation for the consultation session with this group.

The consultation session was attended by 15 CCGA members. It followed the same process as for other groups, with the addition of discussion of a draft "Management Plan" produced by the CCGA in December 2021, which proposed the area be retained as a 'Community Garden' of individual, shared and communal plots to be managed by the CCGA, separately from the CCF. The "Management Plan" proposal remains the preferred model for the CCGA member Community Gardeners.

In summary, the proposal outlined a vision of Community Garden for safe and healthy food growing, social connection and well-being for residents of City of Yarra only. The CCGA envisaged a future model of a mix of new, mid and long term gardeners, annual fees paid by plot holders, a process of mentoring, training, inducting new gardeners and communicating with those on the waiting list.

The CCGA have expressed criticism of the CCF in respect of how it has managed the community gardens (plots left unused, poor maintenance, unproductive Working Bees) and propose they take on this management task for the CCF.

2.3.2 Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation ('the Corporation')

The CCF enjoys a respectful and productive relationship with the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Corporation with Elders regularly attending events and conducting Welcome to Country. In addition, the CCF regularly works with Narrap Rangers on the CCF and has developed a First Nations Garden and a separate First Nations food garden on site.

The Corporation was informed of the proposed redevelopment of the community gardens area and the consultation process at a meeting with two Elders held on 25 July 2022. The CCF's need to apply for a Cultural Heritage & Protection study to be undertaken as part of the community garden redevelopment was discussed along with the Corporation continuing to be informed of the progress of the Consultation and redevelopment work that follows. The CCF undertook to continue to do this.

2.3.3 Limitations

Some participants invited to participate were unable to do so, due largely to the impact of COVID on people's availability/staff shortages (early childhood and aged care).

Individuals from First Nations and CALD communities were not represented due to the current low level of interaction between the CCF and visitors of Aboriginal and CALD cultural backgrounds.

2.4 Consultation Description and Methods

2.4.1 Consultation Description: IAP2 Level of Public Participation - INVOLVE

The International Association of Public Participation International Spectrum (IAP2) is a tool that has established different levels of community engagement: INFORM, CONSULT, INVOLVE, COLLABORATE, EMPOWER.

Based on the outcomes sought from this consultation, to thoroughly explore a range of ideas to feed into the design of the redeveloped community gardens area, the level will be INVOLVE, defined with the following goal and promise:

- Public participation goal: work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that community concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.

- Promise to the community: The CCF is intent on consulting with its broad community representatives, so that all ideas, needs and aspirations are identified, examined, evaluated and applied to the design of the final community garden. Where some ideas cannot be adopted, the CCF undertakes to explain why and how alternatives might address the needs behind those ideas and how they influenced the final design.

2.4.2 Consultation Method: Adapted “Charette” method

The approach to community engagement used to inform and develop this report was an adapted “Charette” method. Highly visual, creative and participatory, it allows participants to contribute their individual ideas via discussion, written words, drawings, photograph selection, etc within their own segment/groups (4-12 participants).

The method was an ‘adapted’ Charette as no technical experts participated, which is usually done for Charette consultations. This project was conducted in the conceptual stage of the project, where no formal plans or drawings by designers/architects had been created. Once designers/architects have been appointed and design concepts appear, the community should be consulted again.

The method was adapted to improve accessibility for various ages and abilities of the groups/segments of the CCF Community. Dr Elena Jenkin, a specialist in designing and running consultations with children with disabilities, was also engaged for the project and created miniature garden/farming materials for children with mild/moderate intellectual disabilities and young adults with higher needs, some of whom were non-speaking.

(A brief bio for Dr Jenkin appears at [Appendix 3](#)).

2.5 Consultation Stages

2.5.1 Preliminary Meetings with Community Members (May to June)

Upon the commencement of the project, 25 meetings took place with individuals and organisations within each segment of the CCF Community. The purpose was to invite, inform and encourage engagement and participation and ensure the consultation methods employed were appropriate to the needs of participants (particularly for people with disability and mental health conditions). Many of the participants experience vulnerability so it was critical to ensure a safe and comfortable consultation environment.

The Consultation was conducted in two rounds and held at the Farm. Twelve separate consultation sessions were held: ten in person and two groups were held online due to changes to recommended government COVID protocols during the period.

2.5.2 Round 1 - IDEA GENERATION (June to mid-July)

75 people participated in Round 1 from the following groups/segments:

Children	Adults	Organisations
Steiner School students (yrs 6-12)	Members / Visitors	Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
Community School students (secondary years) - Kensington Community School - Collingwood Alternative School	CCF Volunteers CCF Staff	Partner organisations (STREAT, CERES, Cultivating Communities, Melbourne Farmers Market, Open Food Market, Common Ground)
Hume Valley Special School (yrs 6-12)	Bayley House Disability day service clients (young adults/school leavers)	Community groups - CWA Collingwood, Vic Apiarist Society, Spinners & Weavers.
	Previous CCF Community Gardeners	City of Yarra & DELWP
	Teachers	Kids Teaching Kids (Earthwatch)

Participants first viewed the area by walking alongside the garden area before gathering in a room that overlooked the area. They were asked to answer three questions and able to respond using words, photos, drawings, models from props provided:

- 1) What would a **productive garden** at the CCF look like, in which all the Farm's community could enjoy? (What would it look like? - features, fixtures, amenities).
Note this question did not specifically ask their views of a Community Garden, to allow for a broader concept of a 'productive' area for the whole Farm community.
- 2) What **opportunities and experiences** could the Farm's community enjoy there? (What would people do there - learning, social connection, activities).
- 3) How would it **work**? (Management, sharing of space/produce).

To manage expectations, all participants were told "all ideas will be considered, but some ideas will be restricted due to geographic, environmental, cultural and/or cost factors".

Various groups are pictured below attending Round 1 of the Consultation including young adults with disability, teachers and support workers, volunteers, students, staff, community organisations.



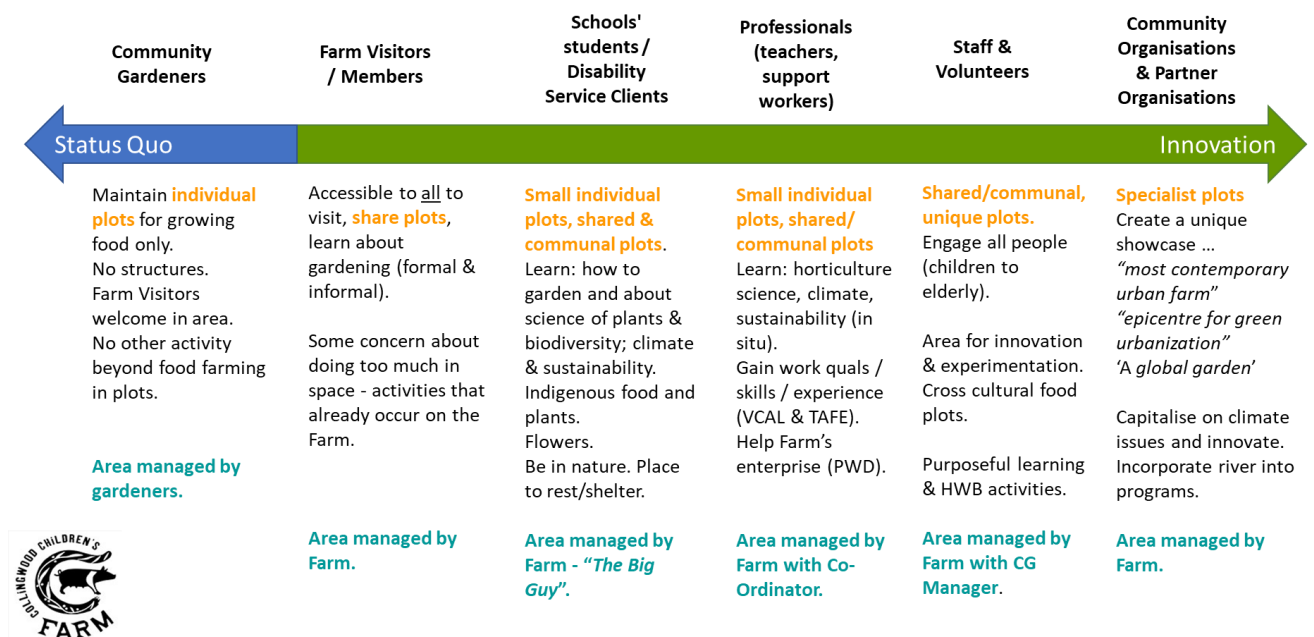


More than **50 pieces of original work** were generated by participants in Round 1 and provided the 'raw data' on which all participants could reflect and review and express their support.

Members/participants of community and partner organisations envisioned entrepreneurial and bolder opportunities for the CCF to seize a unique position in urban farming consistent with the mission of the CCF to support children and disadvantaged people.

The previous CCF Community Gardeners (individual plot holders) expressed their strong view to retain a traditional community garden of individual plots with some shared and communal plots.

Definition “Productive Garden” by segment



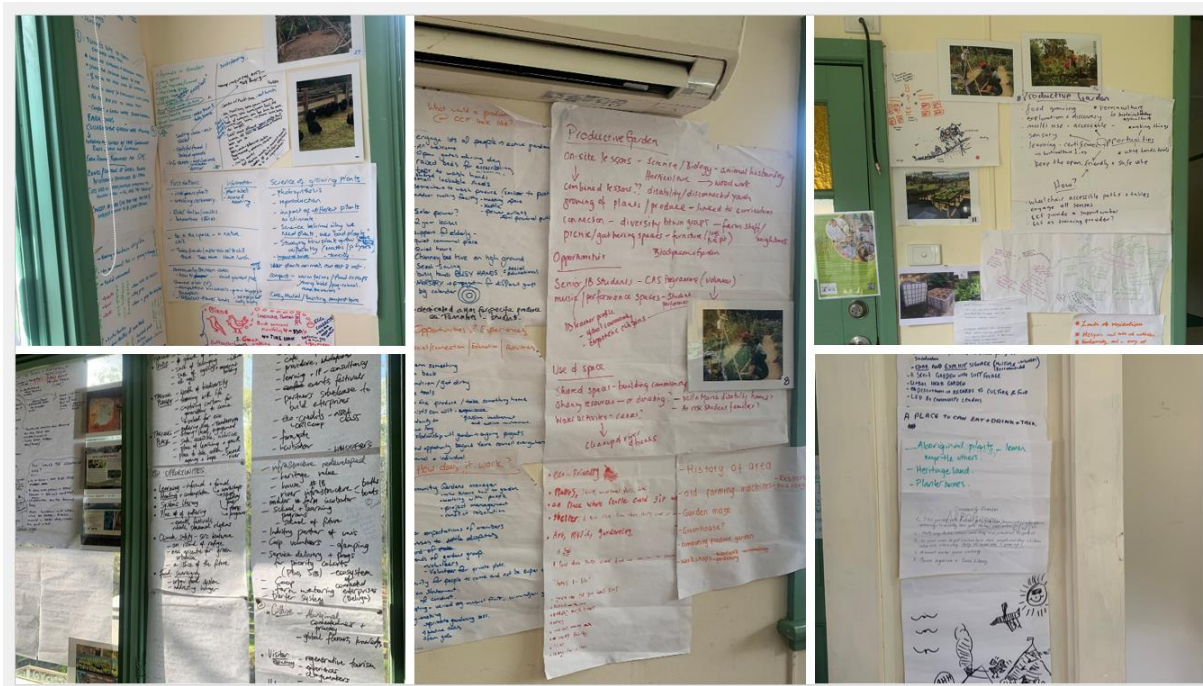
"Has there been any discussion about whether a "community garden" is even needed? 'Community Garden' makes it sound like a council program, not an exciting, vibrant and what could be the most contemporary urban farm in Australia'. CEO Community Partner

"It's an underutilised gift". City of Yarra

All of the work created in Round 1 (posters, drawings, photographs, chat discussion and follow up emails) were consolidated and synthesised into 6 PRINCIPLES, 3 THEMES and 45 separate IDEAS.

2.5.3 Round 2 - REVISIT, REVIEW AND SUPPORT (mid-July to August)

All participants who took part in Round 1, were invited to review the findings by visiting the original consultation site at the Farm to view a "Gallery" of all the material generated. (Pictures of the "Gallery" at the CCF House appear below).



The purpose was to ensure participant ideas were accurately represented and ask them to indicate their support for the PRINCIPLES, THEMES and IDEAS. For those unable to revisit (due to time, working from home rules or other reasons), a video was provided with the questionnaire.

46 people participated in Round 2, the majority of whom did so by attending the Gallery in person. Some people were unable to participate for reasons that included leaving that place of work, being unwell, unable to attend due to time pressures. However, representation from each of the segments was achieved.

3. Consultation Findings

3.1 Definition of a CCF garden for the community

Overall, there is huge support and interest by CCF community members to be involved in a **productive garden** and many ideas generated of what would be seen and what could be done in this garden.

However, for those with a long(er) standing connection with the CCF's allotment style **Community Garden** (i.e., views of previous CCF community gardeners, some members/visitors, some staff and some volunteers), they are less willing/open to conceive of a model different to a traditional, allotment style garden of individual/shared plots. They raised concerns that the area would be 'burdened' with too many activities and take away the core purpose of the garden which they see is for individuals to grow food for themselves and share it with others of their choice (such as neighbours and family members).

The consultation revealed that the meaning of a **productive garden** located at the CCF has a broader meaning for people who use and visit the Farm regularly. They want to experience and learn from diverse food production space that is beautiful in its own right, but also innovative and educational. This was expressed in the idea that people could learn gardening from experienced gardeners in the community, professional horticulturists (e.g., Farm staff) and from demonstration plots that show best practice horticultural/farming techniques.

There was strong interest in how to grow food sustainably related to climate change adaptation and strategies i.e.. How does growing food locally and in a productive, sustainable way contribute to lowering people's carbon footprint? The view was that demonstration of, and training in food production, in the new garden space could help people start growing food at home or in their own families and communities.

There is also a high interest in learning about First Nations food plants and indigenous methods of farming and caring for the land. The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation would be well placed to develop and deliver any such programs for and with the CCF.

3.2 Six Principles

Many common ideas emerged for 'ground rules' or principles which should be adhered to in any design of the area. There was unanimous support for recognition and participation of First Nations history and people and taking climate control action at the CCF.

Many participants emphasised the land being Crown Land of Victoria and that any benefits derived from the community gardens area should be universally shared with the highest number of community members as possible, and particularly with those with higher need for food and lower access to green space.

Recognise History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First Nations custodians. ▪ Convent & CCF National Heritage Listed (1863-1974). ▪ Plot Farmers and migrant stories (1970's-2020). 	Protect for future generations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Innovate ▪ Climate resilient ▪ Biodiverse ▪ Sustainable ▪ Regenerative ▪ Flexible and adaptive 	Create a Sanctuary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beautiful, eye catching. ▪ Healing, therapeutic, restful. ▪ Enhance the 8 senses. ▪ A place for contemplation.
Reflect the Farm's aesthetic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rustic, natural – wood, stone (no plastic). ▪ Unstructured, non uniform. ▪ Non homogenous. 	Accessible for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safe & traversable. ▪ Inclusive shared space for diverse ages, cultures, abilities, identities. ▪ No internal fences. ▪ Welcoming, instil place of belonging 	Prioritise Sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public space, public value ▪ Equally sharing space, work and output with the Farm community. ▪ A place to “give and receive”

Table: Support for Proposed Principles expressed in Round 2

Principle	% Support N=47
1. Recognise History	91.5
2. Protect for future generations	93.6
3. Create a sanctuary	89.4
4. Reflect the farm's aesthetic	85.1
5. Accessible for all	85.1
6. Prioritise sharing	80.9

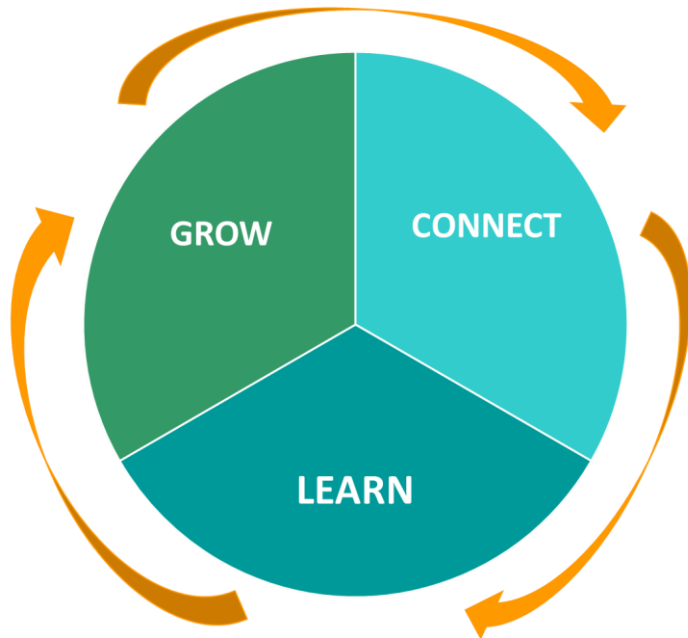
Overall, Round 2 participants were supportive of the Six Principles headings, although there was some indecision/neutral feeling about 'prioritising sharing' and some of the stated examples within 'farm aesthetic' and 'no internal fences' (concern about theft).

For the Principles with slightly lower levels of support, comments were made that some 'natural' materials like wood are less durable and recycled plastic can be a more practical solution and is successfully used for building structures and for storage. (Principle 4). On whether this garden area could be fully accessible to everyone, comments were raised about the sloping ground in the area and the need for it to be 'child safe' (Principle 5).

In relation to "Sharing", those who favoured the individual plot allotments model, want to grow vegetables for themselves and for/with those close to them/people of their choosing. But the broader community participants envisaged sharing the produce with those who grow it and with those in the community in need of food relief (even if they don't grow it themselves).

3.3 Three Themes and 45 Ideas

The data collected from the three questions asked in Round one was distilled into three main themes as to how they and others would “GROW, CONNECT & LEARN” in the garden area.



Each of the Themes were considered to be intertwined and reinforcing of each other. When participating in one theme, that provided the opportunity to participate in the others.
e.g. A person learned to grow food, which gave them a connection to nature and other people.

GROW

- Thriving environment of growth and biodiversity:
 - food,
 - flowers
 - insects
 - birds (chickens)
 - animals
- Hands on horticulture – from seed to harvest.
- Peaceful activity.
- Organic.



LEARN

- Curiosity, wonder, discovery, 'safe danger' for all ages.
- Immersive / by doing, 'get hands dirty'.
- Informal – from other gardeners; ask for advice – CCF staff.
- Formal - Science classes on site – plants, propagation, ecology, species.
- Formal - Work skills, VCAL & TAFE quals (auspiced by RTO), NDIS provider (revenue)
- Formal - Workshops & Classes (revenue)
- First Nations plants, growing food, protecting the land (revenue).
- 'Learning Labs' on climate – carbon capture, using wind and water resources in farming/gardening.
- Centre of Excellence in climate conscious farming, using technology (with Uni partners)

CONNECT

- With nature.
- With others to grow food.
- With others to prepare and eat food together.
- With the River.
- With different ages, cultures, abilities (broad ranging).
- With seasons - western & First Nations calendars. (revenue).
- With CCF staff / volunteers.
- Share food on site / with needy.
- Support less advantaged others (mental health, aged, isolated, refugees).
- Events & Festivals
- Participate in / enjoy art (sculpture, mural), performance, music, photography, painting.

A PLACE TO GROW

Participants broadly recognised that as a “Farm”, at its core it was a place for growing – food, plants, animals – giving children and people of all ages the opportunity to learn where food comes from and to participate in growing, harvesting and sharing it.

A PLACE TO LEARN

The CCF and its staff are recognised and admired as a place where children and people learn in a highly supportive, empathic, patient and expert environment. This capability of staff and the Farm environs are significant assets of the CCF.

In addition, there is admiration for the CCF's ability to conduct learning and development in a way that allows children/people to learn by doing and by making mistakes and lead their own projects (such as building chicken coops) to build their confidence and agency.

"Education and learning - that's the CCF's knitting". Partner organisation

"CCF make it real. There's a fine line to balance learning activities and an authentic experience and NOT creating 'Farm World' or 'Sovereign Hill'. Partner organisation

"Our students coming here each week keeps them connected with coming to school". Teacher, Community School

A PLACE TO CONNECT

With nature, with the river, with people, in a place of quiet activity to improve people's health and well-being. Also, to connect with the whole Farm and its staff and volunteers.

"[The garden] can be productive and beautiful, eye catching with a 'wow' factor, where everyone feels safe and welcome". Volunteer

"[The gardens will] feed the community's body and soul". CCF Staff

3.4 Level of Support for 45 Ideas

Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire by placing a tick/asterisk against ideas they liked and/or were 'most excited about'. They were also able to make additional free text comments.

The ideas nominated by the previous CCF Community Gardeners strongly advocated their view that the area be retained as a traditional Community Garden of (mostly) individual and some shared/communal plots. These ideas are grouped under a heading "Maintain Plots" in the tables below.

Results have been aggregated for all responses (n=44) to show level of support for each of the 43 ideas and presented below.

Note the results below are a simple analysis of aggregated responses to indicate level of support for each idea.

		TOTAL	
		47	%
A PLACE TO GROW			
1	A peaceful and thriving environment of growth and biodiversity with Food Flowers Insects Birds Native and Farm creatures	37	78.7%
2	Food from different cultures is grown (First Nations and other nationalities. Create a "Global Garden".	33	70.2%
3	Different varieties of fruit and vegetables are grown.	29	61.7%
4	Hands on horticulture from seed to harvest, including seed saving and seedling growing and sharing seeds/seedlings.	31	66.0%
5	Organic farming practice - regenerative, natural pest/weed control, organic fertilizers, compost.	32	68.1%

6	Innovation in farming and gardening: Learning Labs on climate and farming for sustainability. Carbon capture and storage. Use of natural elements (wind, sun, water) to farm food. Use of technology to monitor and reduce environmental impact. Create a Centre of Excellence with university partners on inner urban sustainable farming.	21	44.7%
A PLACE TO LEARN			
1	Self-discovery, curiosity, wandering and exploring. "Safe danger" for all ages.	28	59.6%
2	Signage - plane names and uses, history and descriptions of the farming activity. In multiple languages.	26	55.3%
3	Immersive, getting my hands dirty, being able to make mistakes.	33	70.2%
4	Talking to Farm staff / gardeners for quick advice.	30	63.8%
5	Learning from other people gardening.	23	48.9%
6	School science lessons on site - plants, propagation, ecology, species. VCAL.	25	53.2%
7	Citizen science for the environment.	15	31.9%
8	First Nations food plants and farming practices.	24	51.1%
9	Therapeutic horticulture, introduction to food growing, pruning, grafting, composting, pest and weed control, seed raising.	22	46.8%
10	Work experience and job skill building (also part of school curriculum)	27	57.4%
11	TAFE horticulture courses	26	55.3%
12	Disability work - work alongside Farm staff; assist with Farm's produce to be sold.	31	66.0%
A PLACE TO CONNECT			
1	With nature and the river.	27	57.4%
2	With others to grow food.	25	53.2%
3	With others to prepare and eat food together.	19	40.4%
4	Share food grown with people who need food.	27	57.4%
5	Support people in need (mental health, aged, isolated, refugees).	34	72.3%
6	With the seasons - using western and First Nations calendars.	17	36.2%
7	With Farm staff and volunteers	22	46.8%
8	With people of different ages, cultures, abilities, identities.	30	63.8%
9	Attend Events and Seasonal Growing Festivals (including First Nations Calendar).	22	46.8%
10	Participate in / enjoy art (sculpture/mural), performance, music, photography, painting.	21	44.7%
MAINTAIN PLOTS			
1	The whole area should only be used to grow food in plots (Individual/shared).	9	19.1%
2	Migrants should have plots to grow food from their countries there.	22	46.8%
3	The area should be separate from the rest of the Farm and part of a Master Plan for the whole Farm.	8	17.0%
4	A non-public area- Farm visitors can attend special open days and talk to plot gardeners.	10	21.3%
5	Only people who live in the City of Yarra should have use of a plot and keep it for as long as they use it productively.	10	21.3%
6	The area and individual plots should be managed by the group of plot gardeners autonomously, without the Farm.	9	19.1%
7	Build a memorial for Greek, Turkish & Italian migrant plot gardeners (1970's).	21	44.7%
8	Facilities - water fountains, taps/irrigation/tool sheds, seating	21	44.7%
HOW WILL IT WORK?			
1	The area should have different zones for different purposes.	29	61.7%
2	Garden plots should be shared with different members of the community (including schools and community groups).	23	48.9%

3	There should be places to gather, seek shade, to learn and quiet places to rest (in groups and in solitude)	25	53.2%
4	The area should be managed by the Farm with a person to co-ordinate what's grown and the activities.	21	44.7%
5	Paths should be accessible/uncluttered with no slope or reduced slope, tidy; twisty/winding for curiosity and surprise.	23	48.9%
6	Garden beds should be a uniform structure, some raised, wicking beds, no safety hazards.	18	38.3%
7	Signage to describe plants and how they're used (but avoid 'information pollution'.	19	40.4%
8	Facilitate biodiversity - bee hotels, bird houses, insect ponds, attract native animals (e.g. blue tongue lizards).	33	70.2%
9	Technology should be used in various ways: signage, in gardening, climate and environmental impact.	21	44.7%

3.5 Top 20 / Lowest 10 Supported Ideas

The **Top 20 Ideas** rated by all participants via questionnaire reflect the 3 main Themes (GROW, LEARN, CONNECT) equally:

			TOTAL		
			47	%	
TOP 20 IDEAS	Grow	1	A peaceful and thriving environment of growth and biodiversity with Food Flowers Insects Birds Native and Farm creatures	37	78.7%
	Connect	5	Support people in need (mental health, aged, isolated, refugees).	34	72.3%
	Grow	2	Food from different cultures are grown (First Nations and other nationalities. Create a "Global Garden".	33	70.2%
	Learn	3	Immersive, getting my hands dirty, being able to make mistakes.	33	70.2%
	How	8	Facilitate biodiversity - bee hotels, bird houses, insect ponds, attract native animals (eg blue tongue lizards).	33	70.2%
	Grow	5	Organic farming practice - regenerative, natural pest/weed control, organic fertilizers, compost.	32	68.1%
	Grow	4	Hands on horticulture from seed to harvest, including seed saving and seedling growing and sharing seeds/seedlings.	31	66.0%
	Learn	12	Disability work - work alongside Farm staff; assist with Farm's produce to be sold.	31	66.0%
	Learn	4	Talking to Farm staff / gardeners for quick advice.	30	63.8%
	Connect	8	With people of different ages, cultures, abilities, identities.	30	63.8%
	Grow	3	Different varieties of fruit and vegetables are grown.	29	61.7%
	How	1	The area should have different zones for different purposes.	29	61.7%
	Learn	1	Self-discovery, curiosity, wandering and exploring. "Safe danger" for all ages.	28	59.6%
	Learn	10	Work experience and job skill building (also part of school curriculum)	27	57.4%
	Connect	1	With nature and the river.	27	57.4%
	Connect	4	Share food grown with people who need food.	27	57.4%
	Learn	2	Signage - plant names and uses, history and descriptions of the farming activity. In multiple languages.	26	55.3%
	Learn	11	TAFE horticulture courses	26	55.3%
	Learn	6	School science lessons on site - plants, propagation, ecology, species. VCAL.	25	53.2%
	Connect	2	With others to grow food.	25	53.2%
How	3	There should be places to gather, seek shade, to learn and quiet places to rest (in groups and in solitude)	25	53.2%	

The ideas receiving the lowest level of support are listed below. The ideas relating to the community garden area being used to restore the previous model of individual plots, for the use of people residing in the City of Yarra, managed autonomously by community gardeners, received the lowest support of all ideas.

			TOTAL		
			47	%	
LOWEST 10 IDEAS	Connect	3	With others to prepare and eat food together.	19	40.4%
	How	7	Signage to describe plants and how they're used (but avoid 'information pollution'.	19	40.4%
	How	6	Garden beds should be a uniform structure, some raised, wicking beds, no safety hazards.	18	38.3%
	Connect	6	With the seasons - using western and First Nations calendars.	17	36.2%
	Learn	7	Citizen science for the environment.	15	31.9%
	Plots	4	A non-public area- Farm visitors can attend special open days and talk to plot gardeners.	10	21.3%
	Plots	5	Only people who live in the City of Yarra should have use of a plot and keep it for as long as they use it productively.	10	21.3%
	Plots	1	The whole area should only be used to grow food in plots (Individual/shared).	9	19.1%
	Plots	6	The area and individual plots should be managed by the group of plot gardeners autonomously, without the Farm.	9	19.1%
	Plots	3	The area should be separate from the rest of the Farm and part of a Master Plan for the whole Farm.	8	17.0%

Community Gardener's views:

"The community gardens are designated by DELWP to be used as a community garden. So within the context of the overall Farm, it is a zone for a particular type of activity. As such it should not be changed to perform other vital Farm functions". Community Gardener

"The garden area should be dedicated to community gardening only - not a tourist or training facility" Community Gardener

"These are all good ideas. But it is important to acknowledge the role of a community garden is for community members to grow food. This is an informal activity whether in communal groups, informal groups, or individuals. Programs such as research etc should be part of the Farm's activities and accessible to Community Gardeners through a positive relationship with the farm. However, many people just want a space to do their own thing, spend time outdoors and reflect on nature while growing vegetables and not to be involved in formal programs or overseen by others." Community Gardener

Whilst previous CCF Community Gardeners strongly supported these ideas, there was a high degree of criticism and very low levels of support for them by the broader community.

Other community member's views:

"I don't support this at all - to me this is about allotments not a community garden!" Member/Visitor

"As funds come from Vic govt, does not seem fair to restrict access to City of Yarra. This land is part of the Farm by definition - I would have assumed that meant it would be shared". Member/Visitor

"Model is outdated and can be contested on many counts. This area is part of CCF [which] has legal responsibility over the site and is obliged to operate in a way that maximises public access and fulfils OH&S governance." Volunteer

"It's about to be 2023 - this is not progressive, inclusive or sustainable". CCF Partner organisation

4. Participant Feedback on Consultation Process

In addition to idea generation, the Project outcomes of the Consultation also included that the community be meaningfully engaged, able to find and share their voices, be heard, and had their accessibility needs met.

Almost every person and group approached to participate in the Consultation took part and gave a full 90-120 minutes of their time to convey their ideas. High levels of enthusiasm and energy were demonstrated in both Rounds one and two.

People with disability and their support workers appreciated the props and easy English materials developed by Dr Jenkin to support their participation and provided further suggestions for tools for future engagement with them.

Many questionnaires included "Thank you" and several comments were made in relation to the openness and inclusivity of the community engagement process.

"I am very impressed with the extensive consultation process you are undertaking" Partner organisation

"It's good to be able to be part of a consultation that isn't dominated by a few loud voices." Member/Visitor

"I've really enjoyed it" Volunteer (mixed ability)

"Thank you for all the great work you've done for this". Community school student

5. Concluding Insights

5.1 Summary insights for consideration in CCF's decision making

The following points are listed for consideration by the CCF in its decision making about the future of the community gardens area:

- The broader Farm community, except for previous CCF Community Gardeners (individual plot holders) who participated in this consultation, generally recognises that the CCF is 'in charge' of the whole Farm. They expect the new garden area to be overseen by a CCF manager/co-

ordinator to connect with, who will support members of the community to participate in the garden's activity. This will require resourcing to meet community expectations in this regard.

- There is a high level of interest in the area becoming a productive place to grow, learn and connect. The expectation is that the garden will be a safe, beautiful, rustic but tidy, productive place for people to enjoy both learning and restful experiences. The CCF may come under criticism if the area is not maintained or the space maximised in line with this vision.
- There is low level of interest for groups (schools, disability services) to be allocated and self-manage their own plot, but they would willingly share a plot with another school/group as a communal plot and enjoy the benefits of working with others. They will expect support from the CCF via a co-ordinator or member of the Horticulture team, to assist them to grow food and maintain a plot.

However, partner organisations such as Cultivating Communities and STREAT would embrace the opportunity to self-manage their own plot so as to help support CALD participants to grow food and train young people in Horticulture. *"I'd be very excited about bringing young people on site to do training - I can't think of a better place for this"* CEO STREAT.

- There is some perceived tension between the CCF's mission to support people who are marginalised and disadvantaged, and whether there will be a charge to visit the new community garden area. Whilst paying an entry fee to the CCF would likely allow access to ALL areas of the Farm including the new community garden area, some participants stated people should be able to access the new community garden area at no cost (ie just access the garden rather than the whole Farm).
- All participants expressed the importance of First Nations and CALD communities (particularly more newly arrived from African, Asian and refugee backgrounds) to be engaged in the garden area, to grow, learn (and teach) and connect with the Farm's community. There is an opportunity for the CCF to focus on attracting more First Nations or CALD visitors/groups.
- People with disability should be able to access ALL areas of the garden, rather than be allocated a section of the garden as the latter would represent segregation rather than a fully inclusive environment. Both the needs of people with physical and/or neurodiverse disabilities should be considered when designing the new community garden area. By focusing on universal access, all of the community will benefit.
- People with disabilities are keenly interested in supporting the CCF's enterprise activities (e.g., by harvesting and packaging farm produce for sale), becoming Guides for the public/visitors around the Farm and undertaking formal and informal learning in how to grow food for themselves at home.

A project run by Disability (NSW) in 2020-21 supported people with disability living in supported independent living (SIL) to grow food in their group homes. The outcomes were significant for individuals (sense of purpose, creating a home, learning new skills, healthier eating) and community (passers-by and neighbours become more engaged with the residents). <https://digability.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Aruma-final-report-JULY-web.pdf>

This project could be replicated by the CCF to support people with disability to grow food at their place of residence - either in supported or private accommodation.

- The definition of a 'CCF community garden' varies between different members of the community. For previous CCF community gardeners (individual plot holders), it means individual or shared plots for gardening by people allocated plots indefinitely to grow food, to be shared at their own discretion, with no oversight or management by Farm staff. For others it means a facilitated productive garden where food, flowers and biodiversity are integrated into the design and a range of programs help CCF's broader community of people learning and connect with the area and the people in it. The gardens and the gardening practice meets community development, urban green space and food production goals.

- The name “Community Garden” had very specific meaning to the previous CCF community gardeners (individual plot holders), and for some CCF staff, volunteers and visitors. If the CCF decides not to retain a traditional allotment community garden model for this area it should consider creating a new name for the area that reflects innovation in urban food production within a communal gardening model.
- The benefits of the Learning and Growing opportunities could extend beyond the Farm by helping community members create food gardens at home – even in smaller backyards or balconies. The CCF could teach people about seed propagation and growing seedlings at the Farm and then provide seeds/seedlings to take home to grow food. There is an opportunity for the Farm to act as a hub, where people who have taken their growing skills home, and return to swap seeds and continue to **LEARN and GROW** beyond the grounds of the CCF.
- There is a high level of interest in the garden area providing support for people who are disadvantaged and marginalised and/or need food either by participating and sharing in the growing of food in the area, or else the food grown there is donated to them (part or all of the harvest). If the traditional allotment model is retained, there is an expectation that disadvantaged people (including refugees, public housing residents, Neighbourhood Houses) be prioritised to be allocated communal plots. It is likely that these people would need support from the CCF to use their plot
- There are mixed views about signage with caution that it should not create ‘information pollution’ and providing information that meets the various needs of the broader community.
- Universally there was a high level of support for CCF’s role as an urban farm that shows city residents how biodiversity and agriculture can be integrated through regenerative farming practices. This was connected to the importance of demonstrating how urban food production relates to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. The view was that a new community garden could help train people in sustainable food production and gain an appreciation of the importance of the role of urban food production in the event of a climate emergency when rural food production and supply chains are interrupted by fire, flood and drought.
- Whilst the more innovative ideas of Learning Labs, creating a Centre of Excellence and forming partnerships with universities may not have received a high level of support, this may be due to a lack of understanding and appeal more to a narrower group within the community. However, if pursued, these opportunities could position CCF to become a showcase as leaders in climate conscious, community urban food production.

5.2 Responding to Victorian Government’s Open Space for Everyone framework

The findings of this consultation align strongly with the *Open Space for Everyone* framework:

Open Space Framework	CCF community gardens opportunities
<p>Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improved community health and well-being Healthier biodiversity Enhanced climate change resilience Maximised economic and social benefits 	<p>Principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sanctuary of healing, therapeutic benefits and belonging. Facilitate biodiversity through plants, insects, native animals. Leaders in climate change farming techniques. Prioritise support for people in need and those who are disadvantaged. Make the space open to a greater number of people
<p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Connected Immersive Shared Protect Optimise Grow 	<p>Themes/Principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Connect with nature and people Learn by doing, build skills Share space and output/produce Protect the land for future generations Use space wisely and productively Grow food and grow people’s capabilities
<p>Principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation and creativity Fairness & Equity Community at the centre of what we do. Resilience & Sustainability Working together to deliver best public value 	<p>Ideas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Learning labs, Centre of Excellence Share the space with the broad community; prioritise those in need. Continued dialogue with community. Work in partnership with community organisations, social services, social enterprises. Deliver meaningful outcomes to the greatest number of people in Victoria.

The *Open Space for Everyone Strategy (2021)* sets out the aspirations to maximise the use of metropolitan Melbourne’s public spaces within a growing population trend and increased density of suburban Melbourne.

As one participant stated, the CCF is an “*underutilised gift*” in providing all the benefits of community health and wellbeing, green space in an idyllic environment on the banks of the city’s main waterway (Yarra River) and adjacent land providing a working farm in the inner city. It is unique.

The opportunities for greater opportunities for community participation in the community gardens area have been well articulated by the CCF’s broader community as a place where they can “Grow, Learn and Connect” and be a place that can support people into work through training and hands-on experience in growing food that could be extended to their home environments.

The CCF has the opportunity to seize ambitious ideas to become a leader in climate conscious, community urban food production working with academics to contribute to an evidence base and build a showcase for Victoria to attract urban farming professionals, academics, the general public and tourists alike.

Appendix 1 - CCFCGRC PROJECT PLAN

COLLINGWOOD CHILDREN'S FARM COMMUNITY GARDENS REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT PLAN

Work Plan of Tasks to Develop, Conduct / Implement / Report on Community Engagement by MICHELSON ALEXANDER. 28 March 2022

Major Task	Sub Tasks
<p>Briefing / information gathering by and with CCF</p>	<p>Prepare for and conduct briefing session/workshop with CCF COM/CEO to develop clear PURPOSE, GOALS, OUTCOMES and TIMELINES for the Community Consultation. This will include discussion about what level community engagement is most appropriate for this project (ref IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation) as well as preliminary thoughts on Negotiables and Non Negotiables of the project.</p> <p>Meet with CCF CEO & technical specialists to understand the concept plan, initial parameters/limitations and preliminary ideas for the new community gardens redevelopment (may include any preliminary concepts, illustrations/sketches, photographs/ pictures, examples of community gardens from other jurisdictions that may be used in the consultations to stimulate views, opinions, feedback if appropriate). <i>MA will provide set of questions in advance to be answered by CCF.</i></p> <p>Confirm CCF project team members for duration of Community Consultation project. Roles and responsibilities and frequency of meetings for CCF COM, CEO and project team and MA will be determined.</p> <p>Review summary of relevant policy, legislative and governance context (legislation/regulations, CCF Constitution & Strategic Plan and correspondence/contracts between CCF and the government/City of Yarra) as background to the project that can be used in communications to the community as part of inviting their participation.</p> <p>Initial meet and greet with key CCF Staff, Volunteers, Young Farmers, prior to 'blue sky' engagement session.</p>
<p>Communications for new Consultation Process</p>	<p>Creation of Key Messages and how continuous release of information regarding the Consultation Process will be communicated to ensure transparency and the sharing of information and inviting feedback. This will include creation of Easy English and translated materials.</p> <p>[Ensure consistency between Community engagement and broader strategic communications work currently led by Michelson Alexander.]</p>

<p>"Blue Sky" consultation with CCF Staff, Volunteers & Young Farmers</p>	<p>Half day consultation - method to be determined depending on numbers involved.</p>
<p>Scoping and Pre-Consultation with External Community Members / Groups (total identified by CCF = 51)</p>	<p>Following 'warm introductions' by CCF, conduct preliminary interviews (approx. 30 mins plus write up*), with selected CCF identified community group/s to best determine interest and readiness to engage.</p> <p>This will be the basis for a co-designed engagement process to ensure engagement methods are appropriate for each group.</p> <p><i>*Note interview notes/reports must adhere to Privacy Policy of CCF/MA.</i></p> <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local schools & ELC's x 5 - Community Schools x 3** - Special Development Schools x 4 <p>Adult Disability Services x 9 Local government x 5 (programs & councillors) Government x 4 (Dept + 3 x MP's - D'Ambrosio, Wynne, Bandt, Dept)</p> <p><i>"Friends of the Farm"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moving Feast x 7 - Local community x 10 - Yarra City Council - Dept of Education & Training <p>First Nations x 2</p> <p>Identification of other constituencies in the local community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CALD (predominance of Vietnamese, Chinese in Abbotsford/Collingwood LGAs). - Residents Richmond / Collingwood / Abbotsford public housing estates. - LGBTIQA+ <p>Make connections and seek engagement.</p>
<p>Engagement with previous plot holders / Community Gardeners (Collingwoodcommunitygardens.org)</p>	<p>Introduction of new Consultation Process and MA Team.</p> <p>Work through 1-2 key representatives of this group to listen, acknowledge, validate past and present role of Community Gardeners. Clarify purpose of consultation and role of CG's in the process and determine potential for further productive engagement in new process.</p>

Part 1: MID POINT REPORT BACK & PRESENTATION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN	Summary of findings to date and how they influence the design of the Community Engagement Plan. The Plan will state Purpose, Goals of the Consultation, IAP2 Level of Engagement, Proposed Engagement Methods (including accessibility), Negotiables and Non-Negotiables, Risk Management, Evaluation, Timeframes. The Plan will also assume that adaptability and agility will/may be required as the Consultation process evolves and new/unexpected information arises.
Commence Formal Consultation	<p>Consultation will involve CONTENT experts (professionals, technical experts) and CONTEXT experts (lived experience).</p> <p>Dedicated specialized consultations with children and adults with disability to be conducted by Amaze to elicit input directly from people with lived experience.</p> <p>Hold consultations face to face (one on one, group by type), virtual, on-line sessions, via intermediaries* depending on most appropriate / practical method determined for each group.</p> <p>*Intermediaries may be community leaders/networks whom the community trusts and will elicit genuine response. MA will brief/train/equip community members for this task.</p>
Initial Findings	Present initial findings to CCF and confirm all consultation goals have been met (evaluation). Undertake further consultation / clarification if required.
Draft Report (1 & 2)	Draft report/s for CCF feedback.
Final Report	Written report for CCF and PowerPoint presentation (latter if required). Summary report for public release for transparency and public accountability.
Part 2: CONSULTATION RESULTS & REPORTING	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ENGAGEMENT COMMUNICATIONS/REPORTING

Appendix 2 - EXCERPTS FROM CCF RULES

RELEVANT EXCERPTS FROM THE RULES OF THE COLLINGWOOD CHILDREN'S FARM INCORPORATE ASSOCIATION

Purposes

The purposes and objects of the Farm are:

Primary Aim

To improve the lives of children, the disadvantaged, disabled, unemployed and marginalised persons within the Victorian community (**Children and Disadvantaged Persons**) by providing inclusive services and support to build independence and quality of life for Children and Disadvantaged Persons.

Objectives

The Farm will provide assistance to Children and Disadvantaged Persons through operating a rustic community working farm which provides diverse training programs encouraging:

- (a) the building of self-esteem and self-worth of Children and Disadvantaged Persons, by working with animals, learning new skills and extending physical abilities;
- (b) the participation of Children and Disadvantaged Persons, in particular disadvantaged children and their families, in broader community life; and
- (c) further opportunities for training through apprenticeships and job search assistance to break the unemployment cycle and marginalisation from the community whilst volunteering with the Farm.

The Farm recognises the importance of the following in making any decision according to its Purposes:

- (a) managing its resources responsibly, now and for the future;
- (b) operating effectively with a welcoming and skilled team of staff and volunteers;
- (c) encouraging diversity of participation; and
- (d) the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Appendix 3 - BIOGRAPHIES

FIONA SHARKIE

Experience in:

- Stakeholder & community engagement lead
- Strategic consultation in complex, multi sector and community settings
- Strategic community messaging and communications advice
- Designing governance for effective collaboration, consultation, and co-design

Fiona has 20 years senior leadership experience in private, government and non-profit sectors.

Commencing her career in marketing in the private sector with major Australian and international brands, she made the decision in 2004 to use her skills for good and successfully transitioned into leadership roles in government and non-profit organisations in major social policy areas. These include violence against women, public health, and disability.

Fiona has extensive experience leading change and achieving social impact by working collaboratively with multiple sector players, who often hold opposing positions and views from each other. This includes Co-Chairing State-wide Steering Committees in family violence and sexual assault with Victoria Police, which comprised a multitude of organisations including government departments, courts, police, women's, and men's services working together to create system reform. Other sector collaborations include tobacco control entities and working alongside government at state and federal levels, to introduce legislative reforms including smoke free areas and the 'world first' plain packaging of cigarettes to reduce smoking rates and the devastating toll of tobacco.

Through this work, together with post graduate qualifications in social impact (Swinburne university) Fiona realised the value of genuine community consultation, especially with those with lived experience to develop policy and program development and implementation. Her approach to consultation always begins with two basic questions: *'why are we doing this?'* and *'what will success look like?'* She has developed a 'kit bag' of consultation and engagement methods to suit the needs of sector and community members. Under her lead, the awarded TV campaign *'Change Your Reactions'*, was developed in consultation with more than 200 autistic people and their families.

Relevant Publications:

Jones, S.C., Akram, M., Gordon, C.S. Murphy, N, Sharkie, F. Autism in Australia: Community Knowledge and Autistic People's Experiences. *J Autism Dev Disord* **51**, 3677-3689 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04819-3>

DR ELENA JENKIN

Dr Elena Jenkin is a disability inclusion specialist who has worked alongside children and adults with disabilities, their families, and communities globally.

Elena has developed and published a participatory method to enable children and adults with disabilities to safely share their views and priorities (see selection of published work below). This method has been successfully used in multiple countries (including Iraq, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu) and has been recently adapted and rolled out across the Department of Education (Victoria) to support student voice.

Elena works as a consultant, research fellow and lecturer (with a long history at Deakin University) and is an Invited member of the UNICEF Network for Ethics in Evidence and Data in Development Organisations.

Relevant Publications:

Jenkin, E., Wilson, E., Campain, R. & Clarke, M. (2020). The principles and ethics of including children with disability in child research, *Children and society*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 1-16, doi: 10.1111/chso.12356.

Jenkin, E., Wilson, E., Murfitt, K., Campain, R. & Clarke, M. (2017). Listening to the Voices of Children: Understanding the human rights' experiences of children with disability in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, *Disability and Society*, vol 32.3, pp. 358-380.

Jenkin, E., Wilson, E., Campain, R. & Clarke, M. (2019) Bridging the local - universal divide of human rights research: Voices of children with disability in developing countries., in C. Forlin & K. Scorgi, (Eds.), *Promoting Social Inclusion (International Perspectives on Inclusive Education)* vol. 13, Emerald Publishing Limited, pp. 121-137