



Think.Do.Network.

Annual Report 2024



Image Source: Liam Neal

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Acknowledgement of Country



Image Source: Ninna Mar

The Board and staff of Sustain acknowledge that we work on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nations.

We respectfully acknowledge the custodianship of the Wurundjeri, Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Elders, recognising that they and their Ancestors stewarded these lands and their diverse creatures sustainably for tens of thousands of years.

We respectfully acknowledge that sovereignty over these lands was never ceded, and that the processes of historical truth-telling and a duly negotiated treaty are essential for justice for First Nations peoples.

The path to a better food system for all must begin with the principles of care, respect, justice, healing, and regeneration.



In unity with the ongoing journey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples journey toward self-determination and sovereignty, Sustain directs 10% of its membership fees to Pay the Rent, a Victorian Aboriginal-led initiative that supports the self-determination of First Nations people.

Chairperson's Welcome



Dr Kelly Donati

Image Source: Liam Neal

Food systems transformation is messy, complex work. It's an ever-present challenge to run a viable social enterprise and charity when government investment in food systems work is so patchy and inherently uncertain.

The food system as it looks today – unhealthy, inequitable and unsustainable – did not emerge by chance. The many people and organisations mobilising to create food systems change in Australia are up against powerful corporations that invest millions of dollars each year in lobbyists to shape our food policies and economic structures for corporate interest. For this reason, food systems advocacy was a major focus for Sustain in 2024.

Yet, advocacy work is a long game and resource-intensive. The impacts are not easily predicted, and progress is rarely linear. It may explain why the philanthropic sector in Australia appears so reluctant to fund advocacy work when, too often, it's a case of one step forward and two steps back.

Despite these challenges, significant gains were made in 2024, following two parliamentary inquiries in Victoria on food security and the food supply established in late 2023. Being invited to give evidence at these parliamentary inquiries in 2024 was important recognition that Sustain has emerged as a trusted voice on food systems issues.

The inquiry reports set out a raft of recommendations for food systems transformation that Sustain – and many others – have long been calling for. Amongst many potentially transformative recommendations include the following:

- The development of a whole-of-government Victorian Food System Strategy and enshrining the right to adequate food in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- The establishment of a Minister of Food and formation of a Victorian Food System Council
- Empowering and resourcing of local governments to lead the participatory development of food security strategies to support community food systems
- Stronger protection for peri-urban agricultural land and farming more broadly in the State Planning Policy Framework and at the local government level
- The creation of an agricultural covenant program to strengthen and diversify the farming sector and recognise the powerful role farmers can play in biodiversity preservation
- Greater support for and investment in urban agriculture, food co-ops, school farms, local abattoirs, community markets and other localisation initiatives to benefit communities and provide alternatives to the stranglehold of the supermarket duopoly
- Most importantly, support First Nations communities with policies and resources to advance their goals and aspirations for food sovereignty

Chairperson's Welcome (cont'd)



Dr Kelly Donati

These recommendations are a promising step towards reaching a political inflection point in which the transition to an equitable, regenerative and healthy food system is no longer a policy afterthought but, rather, is embedded across government planning, investment and coordination. They energise us as we move into 2025.

The wins of 2024 were a lesson in the power of the collective. We also know that progress made in 2024 cannot be taken for granted. Shifting entrenched narratives and systems requires us all to keep the pressure on, to build the movement and to pull at whatever levers afford us influence. We must hold our governments and elected representatives to account.

As I look back on 2024, I do so with enormous pride in Sustain's hard-working and diverse team of staff who each bring their whole self to the work they do – whether breaking ground at a new urban farm; wrangling people, finances, new websites or digital maps; establishing local food coalitions; and writing reports, action plans or social media content. They inspire me every day.

As Chairperson, I am also honoured to work with Sustain's Board Directors and grateful for their support, steadfastness and wisdom. Sustain's work would not be possible without our community of donors, grant-makers and clients, particularly the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, McLeod Family Foundation and VicHealth whose longstanding support has been invaluable.

Lastly, Sustain could not call itself a food system network without paying tribute to our members, volunteers and collaborators who are building the movement of food systems change-makers. I look forward to seeing what we achieve together in 2025.

Executive Director's Reflections



Dr Nick Rose

Image Source: Sustain

It's clear to us that to achieve food system transformation the levers of government must be properly engaged in major and constructive ways.

It's clear to us that leaving the food system in the hands of the most powerful market actors, with charity picking up the pieces via emergency food relief, is not just an abject failure. It's a recipe for disaster – and the signs of that disaster are all around us. We need to move from viewing and treating food as a commodity, as merely an item to be bought and sold in markets, to viewing and treating food as a public good. To viewing and treating food as sacred; as fundamental to the recovery of First Nations sovereignty; as the foundation of healthy people, communities and ecosystems.

When we embarked on this journey nine years ago, we were under no illusions that big changes would come quickly. We knew we had to be patient.

But, looking back, I'm surprised just how fast the changes have come. When Sustain started life in October 2015, only three Victorian Councils had food system strategies. There were no local or regional food networks or coalitions.

At the end of 2024, a dozen Victorian Councils have food system strategies and plans and several more are in the pipeline. Local food networks are meeting in Ballarat, Central Goldfields, La Trobe Valley, Golden Plains, Central Victoria, Goulburn Valley, Swan Hill, and North-East Victoria, and new networks are planned for 2025.

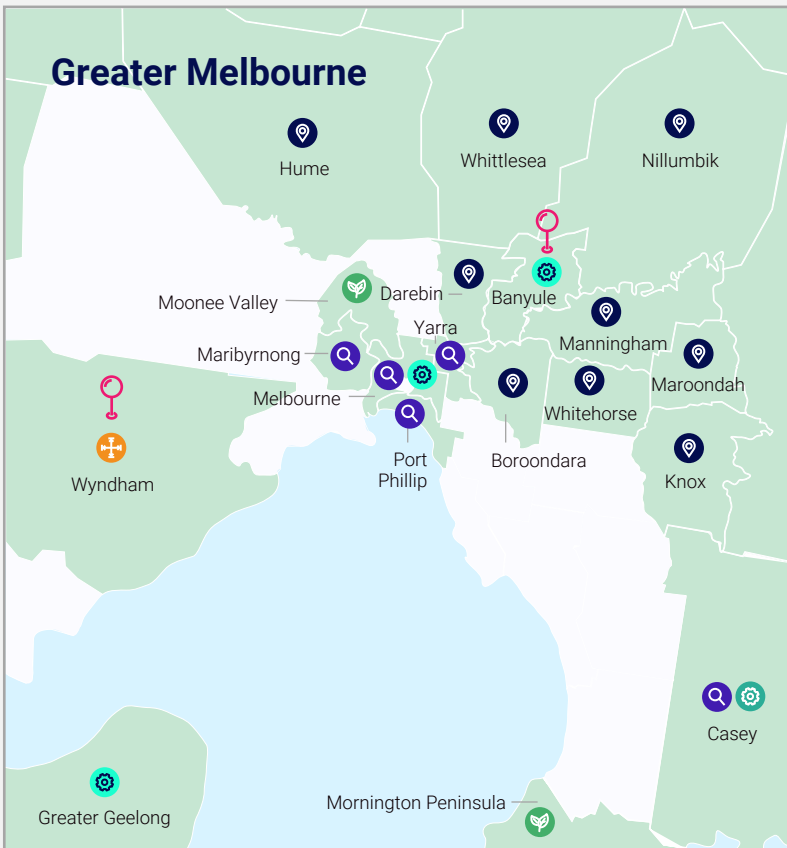
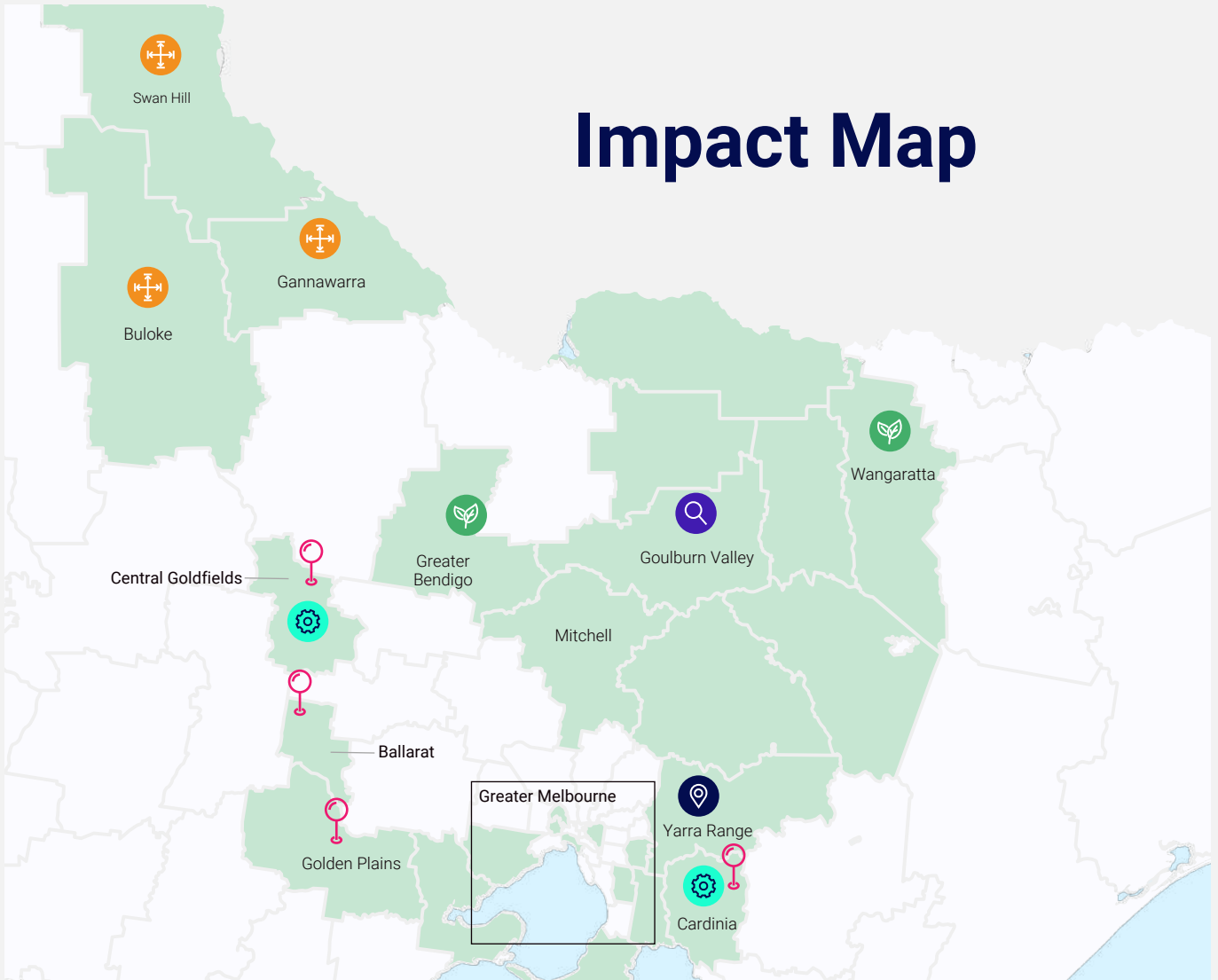
And, as Kelly noted, we may be on the cusp of major changes. When the parliamentary inquiries into food security were launched at the start of 2024, I did not expect to see Victorian Committee members embracing our call for legislating the human right to food, much less to urge the Government to support First Nations food sovereignty.

These are significant gains. We're seeing MPs from across the political spectrum begin to grasp the systemic and interconnected nature of food and farming systems.


I'm proud that Sustain has played a part in bringing us to this point. I'm also enormously proud of all the tremendous work that our staff have accomplished in 2024, from the establishment of the First Nations garden at Bundoora Park, to the comprehensive local food environment mapping for northeast Melbourne, to the fourth consecutive Urban Agriculture Month and to the very exciting development of the Australian Food Network platform. All of this and more is captured in these pages.

We have worked hard and achieved much. I thank everyone who has supported us along the way, both in 2024 and previously. This has truly been a team effort and it humbles me to witness the passion and commitment of the Sustain staff, Board, volunteers and members. We would not be here were it not for you – thank you!

Impact Map



Legend

-  Local Food Economy
-  Food Systems & Food Security Research
-  Food Strategy Development
-  Food Systems Capacity Building
-  Food Environment Map
-  Local Food Networks / Coalitions

Who We Are



Sustain is Australia's leading healthy and sustainable food systems organisation.

We champion the transition to healthy, socially just, sustainable food systems. We bring diverse actors together around a shared agenda for change, align mutually reinforcing activities and harness energy and enthusiasm for food systems transformation.

Meet the people who help us make this happen.



Image Source: Sustain

Sustain's Ambassador



Costa Georgiadis

Costa Georgiadis isn't just a landscape architect and environmental educator; he's the heart and soul of Australia's gardening community and a proud ambassador for Sustain. As the beloved co-host of ABC's iconic Gardening Australia, Costa's boundless passion for plants and people is nothing short of contagious.

As Sustain's ambassador, Costa's infectious enthusiasm for all things urban agriculture has been a gamechanger for Sustain, propelling our impact to new heights. When the world stood still in 2020, Costa leaped into action, donning a beesuit for a two-hour Instagram live session that skyrocketed our pandemic gardening survey to over 9,000 responses.

But he didn't stop there—using his social media reach, Costa launched his live Edible Gardening Odyssey Facebook feeds, where he promoted the survey findings and celebrated urban agriculture champions and leading initiatives every Sunday for several months. Costa also helped present our research in a buzzing public webinar and took the conversation to The Drum, ABC and beyond.

Since taking the stage as MC at our very first Urban Agriculture Forum in 2016, Costa's unwavering support has been invaluable to growing Sustain.

Sustain could have no better advocate for our vision of a flourishing food future than Costa!

Board of Directors

Our Board collectively brings together over fifty years of practice in farming, food business, research and teaching, law, finance and sustainability leadership.

Their direction and guidance continues to support Sustain in realising our vision.



Dr Kelly Donati

Co-founder and Chairperson
(from November 2024)

Having developed Australia's only Bachelor of Food Studies at William Angliss Institute in 2016, Kelly has significantly advanced food systems education in Victoria. Kelly's contributions to Sustain's research and policy work help us build the evidence base for meaningful change in food system policy and practice.



Michelle Riepsamen

Chairperson
(to October 2024)

Michelle Riepsamen brought strong strategic, financial and governance expertise to Sustain, with nearly two decades of experience in the not-for-profit sector. A passionate food grower and dedicated volunteer at her local food bank, Michelle's commitment to food justice underscores her leadership in driving impactful change.



Linda Glucina

Treasurer

Linda drives innovative solutions and is a seasoned finance, IT and governance expert with an MBA, FCPA, GAICD, and Chartered Secretary designations. She boasts a strong record on non-profit boards and is passionate about Sustain's vision for systemic change.



Lynn Richardson

Director (to April 2024)

Lynn brings a wealth of food industry experience, academic research and business acumen to help realise the Sustain mission. A graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Lynn holds an MBA from the Australian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship along with qualifications in professional accounting and educational research.



Ruth Kharis

Secretary

Ruth is a food policy expert and Accredited Practising Dietitian working with a passion for working with First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities in public health nutrition and health promotion. With a Master of Environmental Planning, she also brings over three decades' experience in health and environment policy in federal and state government.



Tom Gyorffy

Director

Tom has been a barrister at the Victorian Bar for nearly 30 years and became a Crown Prosecutor in 1989. His interests include regenerative agriculture, human rights, winemaking and community arts.



Katherine Utry

Director

Katherine is an experienced public health professional who has worked across government and industry in health and community settings. She has built a strong reputation for influencing systems change through thought leadership and capacity building.



Harminder Singh

Director

Harminder is an Assistant Professor in Strategy and International Business at Warwick Business School specialising in negotiation and employee relations. He also works as a management consultant in the arts, not-for-profit and trade union sectors and has a strong track record in anti-racism advocacy in national and international government institutions.

The team in 2024

As connectors, we facilitate events, grow networks and nurture communities to enable knowledge-sharing, and we encourage collaboration at all levels.

As researchers, we translate and share our food systems knowledge to demonstrate evidence of effective food policy and action, and support change.

As policy experts, we understand the critical issues facing all levels of government as well as our communities.

As practitioners, we design and deliver community food projects (including our three urban farms) that experiment with new approaches to food system transformation and model the change we want to see.



Image Source: Liam Neal

Our volunteers

We are grateful for the commitment and generosity of our many volunteers and interns during 2024 and would like to publicly thank them and acknowledge the valued contribution they make to advancing our mission.

The team



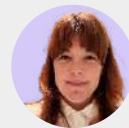
Dr Nick Rose

Executive Director



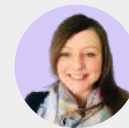
Sibilla Foxtan

General Manager,
People & Projects
from August 2024



Kylie Fisk

Research and
Projects Manager
until June 2024



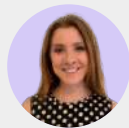
Beth Ciesielski

Operations and
Projects Manager



Daniel Eb

Strategic
Communications Manager
from February 2024



Molly Fairweather

Senior Projects Officer



Dr Rachael Walshe

Project Officer
from August 2024



Hugh Simpson

Advocacy Officer



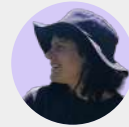
Lou Ridsdale

Communications
Coordinator



Jemma Stefanou

Community
Urban Farmer
on parental leave from September 2024



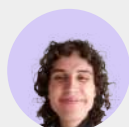
Jesse Redlich

Community Urban
Farm Coordinator
from March 2024



Allara Briggs Pattison

Community Urban
Farm Coordinator
from October 2024



Mikey Gould

Casual Urban Farmer



Faerlie Burton

Casual Urban Farmer

Meet our newest Sustain team member



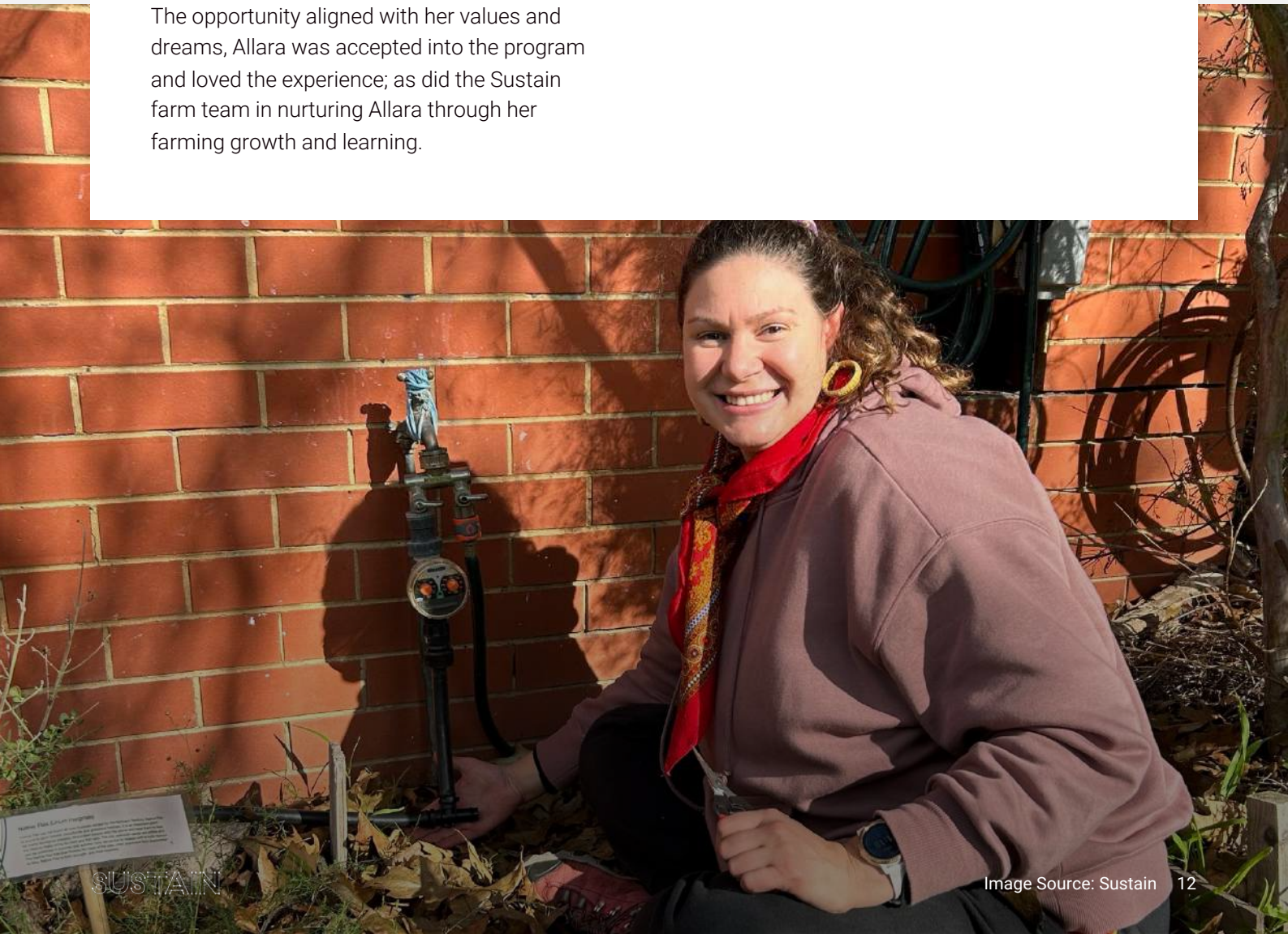
Meet Allara.

Seen on stages all around so-called Australia with a double, or electric bass in hand, Allara is an established Yorta Yorta musician and emerging song-woman whose passion for cultural reclamation, revival, and commitment to decolonising and social justice are core pillars of her work.

In January 2024 Allara was looking for a hands-in-the-dirt, practical and connected form of healing with Country. She fortuitously came across Sustain's inaugural First Nations Food Justice Internship, delivered in partnership with our good friends Dardi Munwurro. The opportunity aligned with her values and dreams, Allara was accepted into the program and loved the experience; as did the Sustain farm team in nurturing Allara through her farming growth and learning.

Following the internship, Allara's curation of city of Darebin's Ganbu Gulin: Gugung Murrup (One Mob: Grandmother Spirit) was a deeply connected collaboration with Sustain and Wurundjeri Council and saw the first planting at Sustain's Bundoora Farm.

An opportunity as a part time Urban Farmer at Sustain became available in September, and we are thrilled to have Allara on board facilitating the upcoming 2025 First Nations Food Justice Internships and working on our First Nations food garden at Bundoora Park Farm.



Our Vision and Goals



Our Strategy

In 2024 we devoted considerable time to reflecting on our core values and strengths, as well as the systems-transformation agenda we have set for ourselves. We reaffirmed our commitment to this bold ambition for change and took the time necessary to step it out in detail in the form of a 5-year strategic workplan. Below we're sharing some of the key elements of this plan with our readers and supporters – feel free to reach out to us if you would like to see the whole document.



Image Source: Liam Neal

Our Values



Systems transformation

We drive systemic interventions for food systems equity, sustainability and health through research, policy development and stakeholder engagement.



First Nations collaboration

We prioritise partnerships with First Nations communities, guided by their own needs and aspirations, because the land that nourishes us is always Country.



The power of place

Working for systems change must happen alongside local action. Our urban farms inspire and connect people to healthy, regenerative and community-led food systems.

What We Do



Systems change

Consulting & Capacity Building

Supporting governments to develop proven, community-informed policies that drive change.

Advocacy

Bringing together stakeholders and citizens to press for food system action in the halls of power.

Research

Building the evidence-base for transformation through accessible research.



Placemaking

Community Farm Collective

A farm network practising food justice, First Nations allyship and forging farming pathways.

Supporting Community Food Initiatives

Mentoring community organisations to develop food initiatives that lead to local health, equity and sustainability outcomes.



Building the movement

Community of Practice

A network connecting disparate food system champions to share, learn & act together.

Events

Amplifying food system champions and action at in-person events.



Image Source: Liam Neal

Sustain's Manifesto for a flourishing food future

When we look past the current crises and envision the food systems we're helping grow today, we see flourishing places.

We see places where First Nations communities connect to Country - where First Nations food, culture and belonging give meaning to the cities, towns and rural landscapes that we call home.

We see greengrocers, bustling markets and lively community kitchens that celebrate the seasons and are alive with chatter.

We see pockets of edible greenery that cool our cityscapes, catch floodwater and create liveable spaces for plants and animals.

We see rooftop gardens, edible median strips, urban farms and schools that nourish our neighbourhoods and cities with fresh, healthy and delicious food. These are the places we learn, laugh and create new stories for future generations.

We see food, turned to compost, turned to food again.

We see a generation of purpose-driven farmers, fairly rewarded for their work and supported to grow community connection.

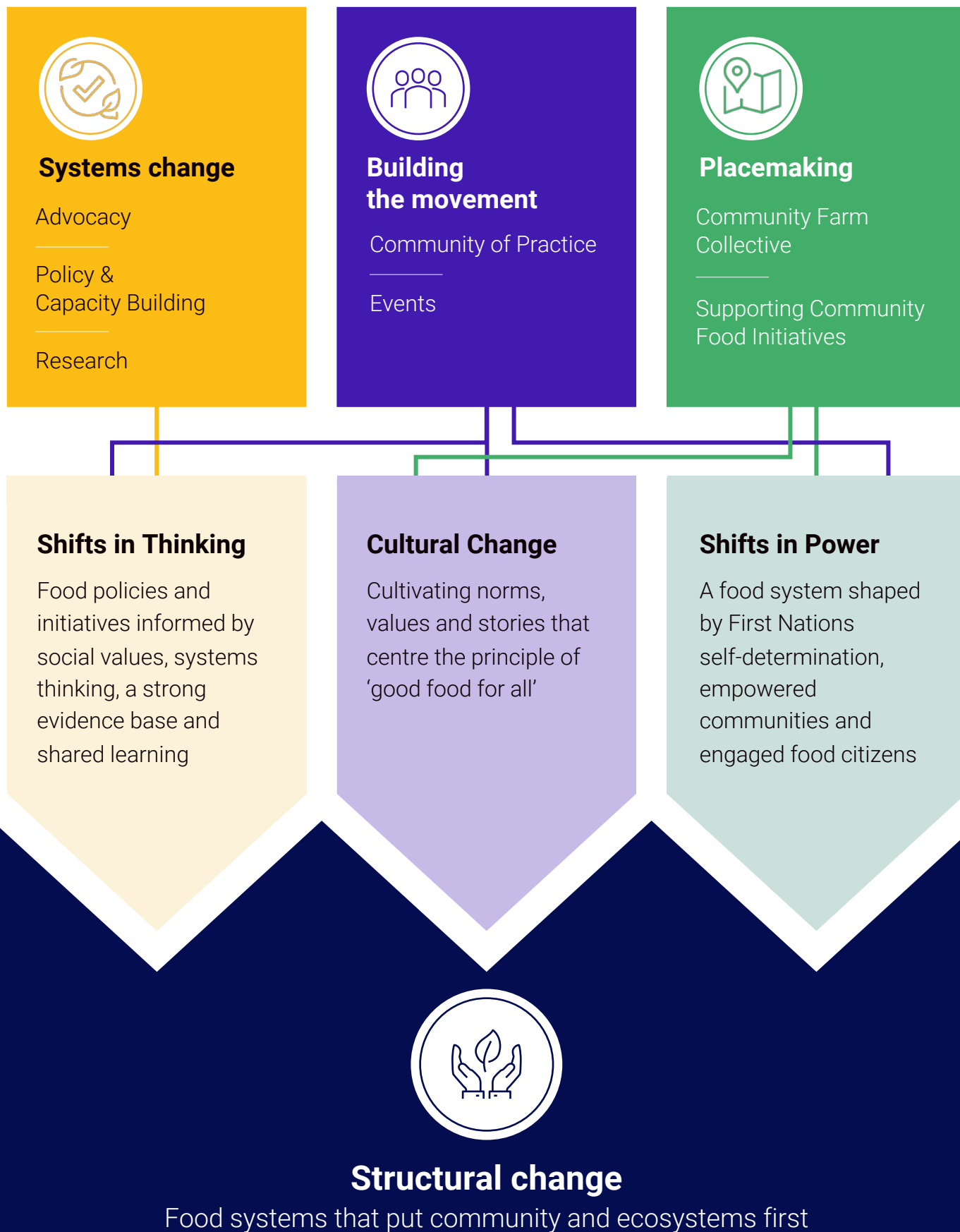
We see doctors and farmers nurturing human health together.

We see policymakers that design political priorities based on the principle of 'good food for all,' enabling communities to be vibrant, convivial and inclusive. Food systems are no longer a policy afterthought but integrated into all levels of government policy and action.

From where we stand, we can already see the food system of the future growing.

Come and stand with us.

Our theory of change



Our impact and projects in 2024



2024 Snapshot



Image Source: Sustain



Image Source: Sustain



Image Source: Liam Neal

Think

30 public speaking and media engagements.

7 consultancy projects with local and state governments.

2x submissions to Victorian Parliamentary Inquiries

Do

Launched **Growing Food Justice**, consolidating our network of three urban farms:



Alphington (currently True Leaf Farm), since 2018

Oakhill Food Justice Farm, since 2021

Bundoora Park Farm, since March 2024

Network

Launched **The Australian Food Network** (Sustain's Community of Practice for food system change-makers)



3 online forums held for Sustain and Community Gardens Australia members with **100 attendees**

4th national Urban Agriculture Month hosted with **290 events** and over **20,000 participants**

9th Birthday Party with 70 attendees

20% increase in Sustain newsletter subscribers

Positive growth across all social media platforms (LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook)

Think



Image Source: Sustain

Key Consultancies in Food System Transformation

Building Food Security & Enhancing Social Cohesion

City of Port Philip, City of Melbourne & City of Yarra
2023-2024

This comprehensive research project for the Inner Metropolitan Partnership produced a set of recommendations to transform the coordination of food security and social support services across the inner-metropolitan region, in consultation with front-line council staff, food relief providers, community organisations and social services. The study employed a range of methods drawing from our seven core services, including surveys, focus groups and interviews, site visits, geospatial mapping, participatory stakeholder workshops and best-practice case studies.

Food System Roadmap

Central Goldfields Shire Council
2023-2024

We supported Central Goldfields Shire Council to develop their first food system roadmap, resulting in a plan for long-term positive impact for the people of the Central Goldfields region.



Thank you again for all your help in pulling this together- it's been a great process, and we're starting to see some real momentum building up in the community as a result, which is fantastic.



GEMMA SIMPSON, YOUTH WORKER & CYPFP OFFICER, CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE COUNCIL

Food Environment Mapping

North Eastern Public Health Unit
NEPHU

In 2024, we worked with NEPHU to visualise the local food retail environment across ten local government areas within the catchment via interactive maps. An exciting aspect of this project was exploring the influence of the supermarket duopoly in the food retail environment, highlighting the need to support healthy food retailing alternatives. Early feedback from participating councils has highlighted the value of this work in providing robust localised data that can support decision-making and inform strategic planning.

Loddon Mallee PHU

Together with the Murray sub-region team of the Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit, Sustain designed and delivered a capacity building project for organisations and community members. We facilitated two food system capacity building workshops for council staff and community members, conducted a community food and farming survey that received over 200 responses, and produced a report with recommendations for actions to strengthen the food system in this significant agricultural region of Victoria. The project aims were to:

- Increase local food systems knowledge
- Understand food systems issues
- Understand community and producer needs
- Build knowledge on how to enact food system change



Sincere thanks to Nick Rose and the Sustain team, whose credibility and subject matter expertise have provided us with renewed energy and direction setting.



EMMA BRENTNALL, MANAGER | MURRAY PREVENTION AND POPULATION HEALTH, LODDON MALLEE PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT, BENDIGO HEALTH

Think



Image Source: Sustain

Research

Federal Food Security Inquiry Research 2023-2025

In 2024, Sustain continued to work with colleagues at Monash University and research interns from the University of Melbourne to undertake an analysis of the 187 stakeholder submissions made to the Federal Inquiry into Food Security. We want to understand perspectives on both the causes and proposed solutions to address food insecurity in Australia, as well as the degree of alignment between our findings and the Committee's report and recommendations. We're excited that the public-facing report will be finalised and launched in 2025 to advocate for the Federal Government to make strong policy commitments to meaningfully address food insecurity for all Australians.

Capacity Building

Global Challenges Honours Project *Monash University*

Sustain hosted two Honours students from Monash University as the Industry Partner for their research project on local food governance. In the first half of 2024, their individual research component explored themes focused on different levels of food system governance:

1. Political engagement and representation of food producers at a federal level
2. Local government participation in peri-urban planning reforms in Victoria.

In Semester 2, the students worked together to investigate the emergence of local food policy networks, learning from international examples and interviews conducted with local food coalitions in Australia to understand the enablers and barriers to their work. The students' research generated important insights for Sustain into the potential value of a 'network of networks' to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing across geographic areas, laying the groundwork for future projects in 2025.

Community and Population Health Nutrition Placement Students

Monash University

Sustain was delighted to host four students over 10-weeks during a Community and Population Health Placement as part of the Master of Dietetic Practice. Supported by Molly Fairweather, Sustain's Senior Project Officer, the students conducted research to explore monitoring and evaluation of local government food policies within Victoria. Students developed several new skills ranging from policy analysis to hosting interviews with eight local governments, enriched by the opportunity to get their hands in the soil at our Oakhill and Bundoora urban farm sites. The Sustain team enjoyed hosting the group while raising the profile of new career pathways for dietitians in food systems work. We look forward to sharing their learnings, summarised in a poster and report, in 2025.

Think



Image Source: Andrew Wurster



Image Source: Sustain



Image Source: Sustain

Food Security Inquiry Research Internships

In 2024, three postgraduate students from the University of Melbourne completed research internships with Sustain, developing qualitative research skills to support the analysis of submissions to the National Food Security Inquiry. Leveraging their research experience at Sustain, all three students have since secured paid research positions in their fields – a fantastic outcome for Sustain and the students alike.

Urban Farm Climate Resilient Toolkit

Two Master of Environment students from the University of Melbourne worked over a semester with Sustain’s lead urban farmer Jemma Stefanou to design and develop an Urban Community Farms Climate Resiliency Measurement Tool that can provide baseline data and track different data sources such as periodic soil testing. The objective is to empower farmers with an accessible, easy-to-use tool that does not require access to expensive labs and/or experts. The team was supported by Jacqueline Evans (PhD student from La Trobe University) to produce key elements of the tool, which the Sustain urban farming team looks forward to further refining over time.

Think



Image Source: Sustain

Advocacy

Parliamentary Inquiries into Food Security in Victoria & Securing Victoria's Food Supply Inquiry



The recent release of the Inquiry into securing the Victorian Food Supply highlights the significant voice that Sustain has in the food systems space. The number of references to Sustain in this report are testament to the years of continued efforts in these and other areas.



JOHN MCLEOD

Advocacy was a major focus for Sustain in 2024 and an area where we can point to significant impact. In 2023, the Sustain team met with politicians from across the political spectrum to make the case for a parliamentary food systems inquiry in Victoria. By late 2023, two inquiries were announced: one into Securing Victoria's Food Supply (Environment and Planning Committee, Legislative Assembly) and the other into Food Security in Victoria (Legal and Social Issues Committee, Legislative Council).

In April 2024, Sustain convened Shaping Victoria's Food Future: Symposium for Collective Action at William Angliss Institute. 75 people from across Victoria's food system learnt how to engage in the parliamentary inquiries and participated in workshops to collectively identify key messages and priority actions to include in submissions.

Following the Symposium, the Sustain advocacy team prepared and circulated a detailed submission guidance note and template to participants and others to support their engagement in the parliamentary inquiry process.

The guidance note was used extensively in many of the 200+ submissions made to both Inquiries. The outcome was significant coherence across a range of food systems issues and key recommendations, including the call for a Victorian Food System and Food Security Strategy and legislating the human right to food, demonstrating the power of a collective and coordinated advocacy agenda.

Sustain also engaged extensively in both Inquiries through detailed submissions, giving oral evidence and providing detailed responses to Questions on Notice. These submissions and evidence were cited extensively throughout both inquiry reports.

While the inquiry reports had some significant omissions, particularly on the matter of supermarket power in the food system and concrete measures to properly resource the key recommendations, they nonetheless represent a significant advancement in mapping out an achievable agenda for food systems transformation in Victoria. We acknowledge the vital role played by everyone who engaged with the Inquiry process. Every submission counted and made a difference to the outcome achieved. We look forward to working with stakeholders and the Victorian government to bring this agenda to life in 2025 and beyond.



I just wanted to acknowledge you and the Sustain team for your incredible work in this space and for taking such a lead in the Food Security Inquiry. It is such important work and we are lucky to have an organisation leading the way. Let's hope the Inquiry has a positive impact."



KATE QUIN, RRH FOODBANK AND PARTNERSHIPS COORDINATOR
COMMUNITY FOOD SERVICE, ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE

Do



Image Source: Sustain

Launching Growing Food Justice



In November 2024, Sustain launched **Growing Food Justice** - a community farm collective working to make food justice the lived reality for everyone. This new platform enables Sustain’s three urban farms (Oakhill, True Leaf Alphington and Bundoora Park) to engage with diverse audiences through corporate volunteering, food justice internships, workshops, community volunteering opportunities, events and communication across social media, newsletters and the new website.

Corporate Volunteering

We hosted sixteen corporate volunteer sessions across our three farms, with over 180 attendees from organisations as diverse as Telstra, Bupa and Xero.



To spend a few hours as a group to help the farmers to get a task started or done is time well spent. It benefits not only the farmers but also the volunteers’ mind and soul.

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



We had an amazing experience at Alphington learning about urban farming with Jesse and the team. I would definitely recommend this as a team bonding activity. It was a ‘two birds, one stone’ experience.

INTERFACE RAIL ENGINEERING



We had a welcoming and knowledgeable team who are clearly passionate and practical about what they're doing. I felt helpful and it was clear my teammates enjoyed it too. I'd recommend this to others!

BANK AUSTRALIA

Internships and courses



1x trans and gender diverse farm Carpentry Basics Course to build rodent-proof compost bays



1x therapeutic horticulture workshop for local youth



2x six-week internship programs; for one youth cohort and one First Nations cohort

Outcomes from our farm programs included:

- **100%** of participants reported feeling safe, welcome, able to ask questions and able to communicate needs
- Participants reported a **25%** average increase in confidence
- Participants reported a **33%** average increase in their mental health



The internship was super beautiful, an encouraging and supportive place to learn and express yourself. I especially felt heard and valued for my cultural background.



It made me feel really purposeful. I was having a bit of a hard time when I signed up as I was lacking a lot of community and internal direction. The internship didn't magically fix these things, but it helped me realise my own capacity to contribute and work with others. It really helped me out.



My experience during the internship was above and beyond what I had anticipated. In addition to the practical skills of farm design, food production, soil building, and farm operations, I also developed a deeper understanding of the value of food production within society. This included how just food production can significantly benefit local communities and promote equality.

Do



Oakhill Food Justice Farm

-  **64**
Volunteers
-  **573**
Volunteering hours
-  **545kg**
Produce grown and donated to food relief
-  **8**
Workshops/ events
-  **25**
Participants in our programs
-  **16**
Paid internships
-  **150**
Buckets of mushroom mulch repurposed

Celebrating its third birthday in November, Oakhill Food Justice Farm achieved new milestones in harvests, community composting and education programs, demonstrating the power of urban agriculture for engaging local communities in practices of social and ecological care, whether nurturing soil through community composting, connecting First Nations interns to Country, growing delicious produce for people in need or just coming together to celebrate the abundant joys of the garden.

Highlights for 2024 included our community soup nights, our new volunteers and weekly garden groups, our new hot compost rodent proof bays and the corn night. We're looking forward to growing more food on the site and sharing more knowledge with the Oakhill community.

Do

Bundoora Park Farm



15

Volunteers



200

Volunteering hours



136kg

Produce harvested (in one month!)

Starting in May as a grassy half acre blank canvas, Bundoora Park Farm has seen huge transformation to a functioning market garden and First Nations food garden in a short space of time.

In cultural consultation with Traditional Owners, Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Darebin Aboriginal Advisory Council and First Nations communities, in 2025 and beyond Sustain will run First Nations and Youth internships on the site to explore food justice pathways around healing, agriculture education and on-farm employment pathways.

The expansion of our urban farms to this site has also seen us employ Allara Briggs Pattison, a First Nations urban farmer, as well as recording over 200 hours of support from community volunteers which culminated in 136kg of produce harvested in December alone.

Generous grant support from the Bank of Melbourne Foundation, VicHealth (Growing Healthy Communities Grant), Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Lord Mayors Charitable Foundation will see us expand and continue our work on this site in 2025.



Image Source: Liam Neal



Image Source: Sustain 25

Do



Food Hub at Alphington

**8**

Volunteers

**1145**

Volunteering hours

**1624kg**

Produce harvested

**120**

Flower bunches

**33**

Different crops grown

Sustain's Melbourne Food Hub project in Alphington, which began in 2018, offers the opportunity for young urban farmers to hone their farming skills, build connections and run a small business with land licensed by Sustain from the City of Darebin.

In 2024 Sustain welcomed young farmers Faerlie and Mello to collaborate with incumbent farmer B and further establish their farm enterprise called 'True Leaf' in Alphington. The farmers harvested over 1620kg of vegetables and herbs and sold 120 bunches of flowers, with the help of five committed volunteers who put in over 95 hours of their time. The farmers themselves committed 1050 volunteer hours at True Leaf, actively experimenting with how their project will support their own learning journey as well as provide a positive impact for the community through healing with plants. The team have begun selling vegetable boxes and flower bunches to community as well as a local restaurant and hope to further expand their production in 2025.

Network

SUSTAIN
the Australian Food Network

Image Source: Andrew Wurster

The Australian Food Network – where food system change-makers meet!



At Sustain's ninth birthday party in November, Sustain soft-launched [the Australian Food Network](#), a digital gathering place for Australia's food system change-makers and a new model for Sustain's membership offering.

Hosted on the Mighty Networks community building platform, the [Australian Food Network](#) features:

- Real-time, movement building conversations through learning forums, report recaps, book reviews and news analysis
- An ever-growing resource library curated by and for food system builders
- A collective, monthly learning experience
- Capacity to create new spaces of exchange for food system change-makers as needed, based on geography, food system sectors or other network needs

As a living community, the evolution of the Australian Food Network will be a collective effort. While Sustain staff will play a key role in delivering content (such as the 'Skill of the Month' collective learning programme) and developing the platform to accommodate new Communities of Action (such as a dedicated space for food system changemakers working in policy), the ultimate form of the community will take shape based on the contributions and ideas of members.

National Food Systems Working Group

Last year we continued convening the National Food Systems Working group, with membership now including all six states. Over 50 individuals from 30 separate organisations receive regular updates from us about meetings of the Working Group, which are held bi-monthly. Last year a major focus was the parliamentary inquiries into food security in Victoria as well as updates from members around the country, such as progress on statewide coordination on food security issues in Tasmania, aligned to the Tasmania Food Security Plan (2021-2025).



Through the leadership of the team at Sustain, Eat Well Tasmania have been fortunate to be included in the National Food Systems and Food Security Working Group. This group has provided a valuable opportunity to liaise with other Food System leaders and share current trends, challenges and opportunities to connect and collaborate with like-minded stakeholders. Through Sustain's leadership we've established a world-class network which meets regularly to support, guide and drive our work. Through our combined expertise, knowledge and passion we are building momentum and supporting each other to drive and promote a thriving food system and addressing the crisis of food insecurity currently impacting communities throughout Australia. This national leadership is providing valuable insights and expertise to help guide local solutions in Tasmania.



CARL SAUNDER, STATE MANAGER,
EAT WELL TASMANIA/CHAIR FOOD
SECURE TASMANIA



Image Source: Andrew Wurster

Network

Online Networking Forums – Community of Practice for local government staff

Since March 2021, Sustain has hosted quarterly forums for its local government member organisations, providing them the opportunity to share their successes, learn from experts, discuss ideas, troubleshoot challenges and learn from one another.

2024 was an exciting year for this network, welcoming 16 new local councils as well as VicHealth to bring membership to 30 councils. A significant focus was supporting advocacy activities to inform Victoria’s two Victorian parliamentary inquiries. We also hosted a workshop for staff of Northern Rivers NSW Councils to strengthen collaboration and action around local food systems issues which will continue into 2025.

In 2024, Sustain conducted a survey of participating council staff to better understand the network’s impact. Staff felt strongly that the forums have broadened and / or deepened their food systems knowledge, increased awareness of new initiatives, supported their work and facilitated meaningful connections with professional peers from other Councils.



Highlighting the food system policy and advocacy work happening across Victoria and Australia internally has helped justify the continued focus and investment in the food system program in our LGA.



We have a more holistic and expanded view of food systems work. Therefore our food policy and plans reflect this. Local government connections improve the knowledge bank for all.



I gain motivation and feel positive about pushing for the food system changes needed to improve the health and resilience of our communities.

What impact has this forum had for staff?



Network



Urban Agriculture Month

Launched in 2021, Urban Agriculture Month is Sustain’s annual celebration of Australia’s growing urban agriculture movement. We run this annual event because we believe that urban agriculture is a powerful tool for empowering communities to engage in food system transformation at a local level, feeding local communities, creating healthier and more ecologically diverse urban environments and fostering meaningful community connections.

Throughout the month of November, our Urban Agriculture Month platform showcases hundreds of exciting events across Australia – from open gardens, guided tours, community forums and public seminars to hands-on workshops, crop swaps, communal feasts and many other opportunities to celebrate the bounty of backyards, community gardens and other edible spaces and the inspiring people and organisations that make it all happen.



Network



Image Source: Andrew Wurster

Urban Agriculture Month

A snapshot

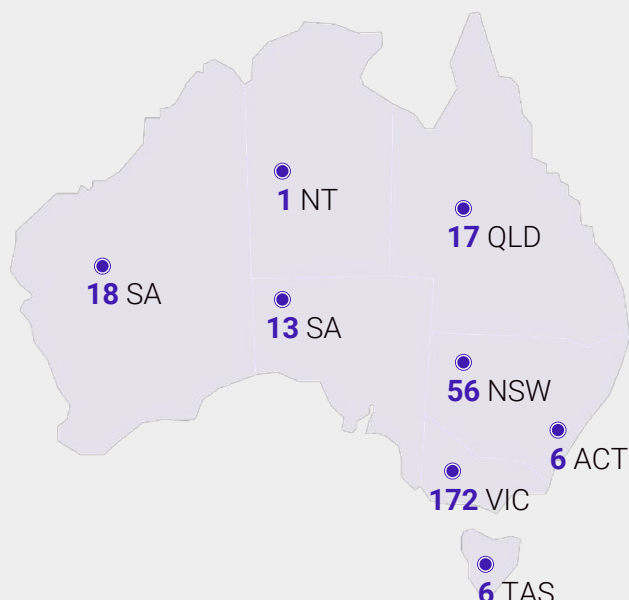
290
Events

- 287 in person events
- 3 online events
- 171 unique event hosts

23
Event types

- 119 talks and workshops
- 42 open days
- 46 working bees, lunches, festivals or launches
- 24 tours
- 16 crop swaps/ shares
- 40 farmers markets

35%
of hosts held special events for Urban Agriculture Month



255%
Growth in event numbers since 2021

6%
Growth in event numbers since 2023

20,000
Attendees (in-person and online)

- 26% of events welcomed more than 50 attendees
- 34% of hosts returned from 2023 to host another event
- 35% of hosts organised special events for Urban Agriculture Month

Network



\$500 raised will help an existing enterprise expand their reach.

\$1000 will help to repair a damaged one back into operation.

100% of the funds raised will go to local UWAF-supported food micro-enterprises to acquire or purchase basic equipment, seed stock and production needs as each operation requires.

Donate here





Solidarity crowdfunding – Urban Women Agripreneurs Forum / Gazan Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture Platform

2024 was a tragic and catastrophic year for the civilian population of the Gaza Strip, Palestine. Following the events of October 7, 2023, the military response by the Israeli Defence Forces caused tens of thousands of deaths, the majority being women and children, as well as the destruction of a large majority of the basic infrastructure needed for survival. In addition to massive aerial bombardment, Israel also subjected Gaza to a blockade of food, water and other essential supplies, aggravating the catastrophe and causing the International Court of Justice to rule in January 2024 that Israel was committing a ‘plausible genocide’.

In light of the severe humanitarian crisis, Sustain, Global Gardens of Peace, EcoCARE Pacific Trust, Borderlands Cooperative and Just Food Collective in collaboration with GUPAP, and UWAF launched a solidarity crowdfunding campaign. All funds raised were to be directed to UWAF-supported food micro-enterprises to acquire essential equipment, seed stock, and other production necessities, thereby enhancing local food security and resilience. The campaign ran for several months from May – September 2024 and raised over \$30,000 from hundreds of supporters. We thank everyone who contributed to this solidarity campaign, and we maintain fortnightly meetings with GUPAP to maintain the relationship that dates back several years. We hope with all our heart for a lasting and just peace for the people of Gaza as soon as possible.

Major Partners

Thank you to the following partners without whose help none of our work would be possible:



MCLEOD FAMILY FOUNDATION



LORD MAYOR'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



VicHealth™

ELLIS RICHARDSON



TRANS GENDER VICTORIA



Bank Australia
RESPONSIBLE BANKING



City of DAREBIN



INNER NORTH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Urban Agriculture Month Sponsors



VicHealth™



MCLEOD FAMILY FOUNDATION

airgarden®



Financial Statements

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Income & Expenditure Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2024

		2024	2023
		\$	\$
Income			
Philanthropic, Corporate & Government Grants and Donations	Note 2	552,170	369,176
Sponsorship		10,800	-
Events		85,166	19,697
Consultancy Services		321,482	255,704
Farm Hire		525	-
Product Sales		1,605	2,819
Donations from fundraising	Note 2	144,583	135,423
Memberships		24,210	21,987
Interest Received		26,558	4,077
Total Income		\$1,167,099	\$808,883
Expenditure			
Advertising & Promotion		2,956	508
Auditor Remuneration		2,500	-
Bank Charges & Merchant Fees		922	475
Bookkeeping Fees		5,520	4,950
Computer, IT & Website Expenses		17,518	13,001
Consultancy		23,600	122,414
Contractors		58,764	25,928
Employee Costs		762,267	429,820
Event Costs		61,773	9,418
Grants & Donations		20,367	1,000
Insurances		2,985	5,557
Printing & Stationery		4,285	2,985
Produce – Production Costs & Purchases		4,720	12,813
Project Expenses including Infrastructure		88,981	31,524
Occupancy Expenses		7,567	10,652
Stipends to Support Workers		11,700	5,060
Travel, Transport & Conferences		5,270	5,011
Workshops & Training		2,494	80
Sundry Expenses Incl. Meeting & Communication		5,863	3,015
Total Expenditure		\$1,090,052	\$684,211
Net Surplus for the year		\$77,047	\$124,672

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2024

		2024	2023
Current Assets		\$	\$
Cash and Cash Equivalents	Note 3	988,955	830,151
Accounts Receivables		18,145	48,105
Other Receivables		11,403	-
Total Current Assets		\$1,018,503	\$878,256
Total Assets		\$1,018,503	\$878,256
Current Liabilities		\$	\$
Accounts Payable		2,232	10,015
Accrued Expenses		26,147	3,612
Credit Card		1,999	1,203
GST & PAYGW Payable		33,076	37,002
Auspice Grants Received in Advance		256,908	229,265
Income Received in Advance		98,750	62,451
Superannuation Payable		-	18,094
Provision for Annual Leave		27,276	21,546
Total Current Liabilities		\$446,388	\$383,188
Total Liabilities		\$446,388	\$383,188
Net Assets		\$572,115	\$495,068
Equity		\$	\$
Accumulated Funds		572,115	495,068
Total Equity		\$572,115	\$495,068

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Notes to the Financial Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd is a company limited by guarantee and domiciled in Australia.

Basis of Preparation

The directors have prepared the financial statements on the basis that the company is a non reporting entity because there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements. The financial statements are therefore special purpose financial statements that have been prepared in order to meet with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012. The company is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the mandatory Australian Accounting Standards applicable to entities reporting under the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012, and the significant accounting policies disclosed below which the directors have determined are appropriate to meet the needs of members. Such accounting policies are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise.

The financial statements, except for the cash flow information, have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of these statements are as follows.

The financial statements were authorised for issue by the directors of the company.

Accounting Policies

(a) Intangible Assets

Intangible assets consist of formation costs and trademark costs.

(b) Impairment of Assets

At each reporting date, the company reviews the carrying values of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an Indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value-in-use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the company estimates the recoverable amount of the cash generating unit to which the asset belongs.

(c) Financial Instruments

Initial Recognition and Measurement

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions to the instrument. For financial assets, this is equivalent to the date that the Company commits itself to either purchase or sale of the asset (i.e. trade date accounting is adopted).

Financial instruments are initially measured at fair value plus transactions costs, except where the instrument is classified 'at fair value through profit or loss' in which case transaction costs are expensed to profit or loss immediately.

Classification and Subsequent Measurement

Finance instruments are subsequently measured at either of fair value, amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, or cost. Fair value represents the amount for which an asset could be exchanged or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties. Where available, quoted prices in an active market are used to determine fair value. In other circumstances, valuation techniques are adopted.

Amortised cost is calculated as (i) the amount at which the financial asset or financial liability is measured at initial recognition (ii) less principal repayments (iii) plus or minus the cumulative amortisation of the difference, if any, between the amount initially recognised and the maturity amount calculated using the effective interest method; and (iv) less any reduction for impairment.

The effective interest method is used to allocate interest income or interest expense over the relevant period and is equivalent to the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments or receipts (including fees, transaction costs and other premiums or discounts) through the expected life (or when this cannot be reliably predicted, the contractual term) of the financial instrument to the net carrying amount of the financial asset or financial liability. Revisions to expected future net cash flows will necessitate an adjustment to the carrying value with a consequential recognition of an income or expense in profit or loss.

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Notes to the Financial Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

(c) Financial Instruments (continued)

Loans and receivables

Loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market and are subsequently measured at amortised cost.

Loans and receivables are included in current assets, except for those which are not expected to mature within 12 months after the end of the reporting period, which will be classified as non-current assets.

Held-to-maturity investments

Held-to-maturity investments are non-derivative financial assets that have fixed maturities and fixed or determinable payments, and it is the entity's intention to hold these investments to maturity. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost.

Held-to-maturity investments are included in non-current assets, except for those which are expected to mature within 12 months after the end of reporting period. If during the period the Company sold or reclassified more than an insignificant amount of the held-to-maturity investments before maturity, the entire held-to-maturity investments would be tainted and reclassified as available-for-sale.

Financial liabilities

Non-derivative financial liabilities are recognised at amortised cost, comprising original debt less principal payments and amortisation.

Fair value

Fair value is determined based on current bid prices for all quoted investments. Valuation techniques are applied to determine the fair value for all unlisted securities, including recent arm's length transactions, reference or similar instruments and option pricing models.

Impairment

At the end of each reporting period, the entity assesses whether there is objective evidence that a financial instrument has been impaired. In the case of available-for-sale financial instruments, a prolonged decline in the value of the instrument is considered to determine whether an impairment has arisen. Impairment losses are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income.

Derecognition

Financial assets are derecognised where the contractual rights to receipt of cash flows expires or the asset is transferred to another party whereby the entity no longer has any significant continuing involvement in the risks and benefits associated with the asset. Financial liabilities are derecognised where the related obligations are either discharged, cancelled or expired. The difference between the carrying value of the financial liability, which is extinguished or transferred to another party and the fair value of consideration paid, including the transfer of non cash assets or liabilities assumed, is recognised in profit or loss.

(d) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within short term borrowings in current liabilities in the statement of financial position.

(e) Revenue

Grants

Philanthropic funding & grants for specific purposes are recognised as revenue only when expensed.

Fee for Service & Sale of Goods

Income from sales or the rendering of services, is recognised when earned.

Donations

Donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds which is generally at the time of receipt.

Membership Fees

Revenue from membership fees is recognised upon the receipt from the member.

Interest Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds which is generally at the time of receipt.

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Notes to the Financial Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

(g) Goods and Services Tax

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of expense. Receivables and payables in the Balance Sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

(h) Income Tax

By virtue of its aims as set out in the constitution, the Company qualifies as an organisation specifically exempt from income tax under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

(i) Comparative Figures

Where required by Accounting Standards, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform with changes in presentation for the current financial year.

When an entity applies an accounting policy retrospectively, makes a retrospective restatement or reclassifies items in its financial statements, a statement of financial position as at the beginning of the earliest comparative period must be disclosed.

(j) Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgements

The direction evaluate estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial statements based on historical knowledge and best available current information.

Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the Company.

Key Estimates – Impairment (General)

The Company assesses impairment at each reporting date by evaluating conditions specific to the Company that may lead to impairment of assets.

Where an impairment trigger exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is determined.

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Notes to the Financial Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2. Income from Philanthropic, Corporate & Government Grants and Donations

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Government Grants	398,258	238,501
Grants from Philanthropic Funders	133,912	130,675
Grants from Corporate Organisations	20,000	-
Total Philanthropic, Corporate & Government Grants	\$552,170	\$369,176
Donations from Fundraising	144,583	135,423
Total Philanthropic, Corporate & Government Grants and Donations	\$696,753	\$504,599

Note 3. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Cash at Bank	588,955	426,593
Cash on Hand	-	50
Term Deposits	400,000	403,508
	\$988,955	\$830,151

Reconciliation of Cash

Cash at the end of the financial year as shown in the cash flow statement is reconciled to items in the balance sheet as follows:

Cash End Cash Equivalents	988,955	830,151
	\$988,955	\$830,151

Note 4. Cash Flow Information

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
(a) Reconciliation of Cash Flow from Operations with Profit		
Operating Surplus/(deficit)	77,047	124,672
Changes in Assets and Liabilities:		
(Increase)/Decrease in Trade and Other Receivables	18,557	(32,613)
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade and Other Payables	(6,472)	40,496
Increase/(Decrease) in Auspiced Grants Received in Advance	27,643	229,266
Increase/(Decrease) in Income Received in Advance	36,299	(151,483)
Increase/(Decrease) in Employee Entitlements	5,730	11,546
Cash Flow from Operations	\$158,804	\$221,884

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Notes to the Financial Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 5. Related Party Transactions

The Directors act in an honorary capacity and are not paid for their services as Directors. There were no transactions with related parties during the 2024 year.

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Directors' Declaration

For the year ended 30 June 2024

The Directors of the Company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 4 to 13, are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 and:
 - a) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of the performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements; and
 - b) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Regulation 2013.
2. In the Directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.



Kelly Donati - Chair



Linda Glucina- Treasurer

Signed 28 October 2024

Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

ABN: 54 272 644 917

Independent Auditor's Report

To the members of Sustain: The Australian Food Network Ltd

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Sustain The Australian Food Network Ltd (the company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information and the statement by the Board of Directors.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial report of Sustain The Australian Food Network Ltd is in accordance with the ACNC Act 2012, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the company's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its performance and cash flows for the year ended on 30 June 2024; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards and the ACNC Act 2012.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of my report. I am independent of the Company in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ACNC Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I confirm that the independence declaration required by the ACNC Act 2012, which has been given to the directors of the Company would be on the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Sustain The Australian Food Network Ltd to meet the requirements of the ACNC Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the company's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of Internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible entities use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal controls that I identify during my audit.



Frederik Ryk Ludolf Eksteen CA

ASIC Auditor Registration Number 421448

Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd

127 Paisley Street, FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011

Dated this 28th day of October 2024

SUSTAIN
the Australian food network