

CERES

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT PARK

ANNUAL REPORT

2008



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About CERES

CERES - the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies, (pronounced 'series') is an internationally recognised model of a sustainable society.

CERES is a place that exists to initiate and support environmental sustainability and social equity with an emphasis on cultural richness and community participation. This is pursued through positive, solution-oriented programs and activities.

Over 470,000 people actively engage in CERES programs and activities each year, living more lightly and equitably on the planet. It is the most visited community environmental centre in Australia, known for being a pioneer of community arts, experiential education, sustainable urban agriculture and for demonstrating innovative and achievable solutions to pressing environmental and social issues.

CERES is a 55 tonne carbon sink run on renewable energy some of which is generated on-site, conserves and recycles its water and waste, grows organic food, and teaches diverse audiences about more just and environmentally friendly ways of living. What makes CERES compelling is the way in which the many sustainability initiatives operate in a participatory social setting involving many diverse groups of people.

The CERES Café, Nursery, Organic Farm and Market are exciting models of sustainable social enterprises. Along with festivals, education and training programs, CERES creates initiatives that aim to teach and inspire as well as provide services to the community and income to support CERES' many projects.

CERES is committed to redefining purpose and happiness in terms of the wellbeing of our relationships with one another and the environment, thus creating a new way of being for the future. Over the last 26 years, the CERES community has been demonstrating these principles with determination and passion, and yet is aware that the local and global situation is now more critical than ever.

CERES embraces the challenges that this brings and is committed to its continued role in developing and creating solutions - and to instilling hope, optimism and change for a safer, healthier and more just future.

Four key areas have been identified as crucial issues, they form the basis of the CERES Strategic Plan for 2008 to 2011.

In the next four years CERES will:

Address the causes of climate change

CERES recognises that if we do not quickly address the causes of climate change, the future for all life will be filled with significantly greater hardship and trauma, including loss of biodiversity and ecosystem collapse, water shortages, degradation of agriculture and an increasing number of environmental refugees. Current projections indicate that massive reductions in fossil fuel consumption are required in the very short term (10-15years). CERES response is to deliver pragmatic programs and projects that significantly reduce fossil fuel consumption at the individual and household, community and global level.

Promote social wellbeing & connectedness

Many of the world's people are directly affected by both local and global issues such as wars and conflict, mass dislocation, lack of food and water security, health epidemics, extreme weather occurrences, underemployment, materialism, isolation and loneliness, fear and depression. For many this results in suffering and a deep questioning of meaning. CERES will promote the discovery of social wellbeing and connectedness, sense of place and community, and work to re-enchant the world.

Build local and global equity

Global development that favors the very few while neglecting the needs of the vast majority leaves many people living in hardship while few live in luxury. This will inevitably result in major global conflict, resentment, insecurity, and mass migrations. A more enlightened, peace-promoting and empowering development pathway is needed to ensure comfortable and sustainable living standards for all the world's people. CERES will work to build local and global equity, to empower people and for sustainable use and distribution of resources.

Embrace and facilitate rapid change

The coming period will be a time of significant change. While there is no doubt that life on Earth is currently under threat, there is also great potential to reorganise our culture, society and institutions for survival, sustainability and to thrive! CERES will embrace and facilitate rapid change through environmental, social and economic education and innovation. This change will be put in place with care, consideration and in ways that people can understand and apply in their lives.

CERES Organisational Structure

CERES operates as a not for profit organisation and is managed by a voluntary Committee of Management with 16 representatives elected from the community. CERES activities are divided into four teams - Community and Governance, Enterprise, Habitat and Education and Training. Four Team Leaders oversee the activities and projects of the teams with 13 Area Managers.



CERES Snapshot

People

Connecting with 470 000+ people annually
 140 staff, equivalent of 60 full time staff
 350+ current members
 220 volunteers on regular placement
 500+ registered volunteers
 9 community site groups

Programs

Education programs on-site and in schools
 Training for disability & disadvantaged groups, workshops & accredited Programs
 Volunteer Program
 Events & Festivals
 Green Technology

Enterprises

Organic Cafe
 Organic Market & Shoppe
 Permaculture & Bushfood Nursery
 CERES Horticulture Services
 Propagation
 Function in Celebration
 Social Enterprises - Seven Stars and OM
 Organic Mushrooms

470 000+ Visitors



350+ Current Members



120+ Education Activities



4 major Events & Festivals

Chairperson's Report

This has been one of the more momentous years in CERES history as marked by the completion of the CERES Centre Stage 1 and commencement of the main building.

At the same time we have seen substantial growth in the size of CERES, more visitors, more new ideas, more people at the market, nursery and café. This growth has also been one of the key challenges for the Committee of Management over the last 12 months as we put in place a range of new processes to ensure effective decision-making, oversight and actions to help us pursue the organisation's goals.

One of our most critical actions, the environmental education of tens of thousands of school students continues at CERES and out in the schools. We currently deliver to over 400 schools off site and thousands of students on site. This education makes a lasting impact on the kids and their families.

Coinciding with the opening of stage 1 of the CERES Centre the popular CERES Permaculture & Bushfood Nursery was relocated into wonderful new premises, making it even easier for people to visit and enjoy the great plants and excellent advice.

Another highlight for the year was the electric car. Typical of CERES we took a different road to the automobile companies - rather than start from scratch the team of volunteers retrofitted a car, by doing so they created a model which is now being looked at for mass delivery. This saves a large amount of waste and if it is successful will help our community make the necessary transition to zero emission personal transport. Well done to everyone who was involved.

A final thanks to all the staff and volunteers at CERES for your dedication and hard work.



Robert Larocca
Chairperson

Education and Training Team

CERES Education and Training programs equip individuals with information, skills and strategies to support an enriched and environmentally responsible way of living. This is achieved through hands on activities whereby practical skills are gained through experiential activities.

The focus is on positive actions that individuals can take in caring for our environment. When multiplied by many, these positive actions have a significant effect. The dedicated staff of the Education and Training team bring a wealth of skills and knowledge to the programs, sharing understanding for students of all ages and abilities from diverse backgrounds.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sustainable Schools receives funding for 3 years

Research into Kulin Sign Communication

First Camp for disability & at risk youth

First graduates from social enterprise program

“A Visit to CERES” education publication

Extend Food Miles research to cover rail transport



Education and Training Team

On-site Education Programs

CERES Education programs are at the forefront of sustainability education where complex environmental and social issues of sustainability are interpreted and explored. The programs illustrate key issues we must address and understand in order to cultivate a better way of being in the world.

The key issues are:

- Water conservation and management
- Land management and agriculture systems
- Energy generation and conservation
- Waste management
- Intercultural respect and understanding

The relevance of these issues are further demonstrated through important working displays at CERES, creating practical educative experiences that build a deeper understanding of the challenges of our time.

The past year has seen a significant increase in the demand for sustainability programs. CERES Multi-strand Sustainability program examines the key Australian and Worldwide sustainability issues. The program examines the issues associated with water, waste, food security, fair trade and the importance of environmentally sustainable design for our urban environments.

With 74,000 half-day visits of schoolchildren from across Victoria, the outreach and impact of CERES education programs is very significant. Collaboration is another important aspect for our programs and community. Each year the Education Team Co-ordinators supervise around 6 trainee teachers and Masters students eager for deeper understanding of sustainability education and developing their skills as educators. We are continuing and further developing links with tertiary institutions such as RMIT, Latrobe University and Melbourne University. We have also established a relationship with Holmsglen Tafe to deliver adult community education programs.

Extending the outreach of CERES' message is the publication of a new book called "A Visit to CERES". The book was created in partnership with author Jo Horsburgh and Harcourt Education. Aimed at the middle primary years "A Visit to CERES" reveals how CERES is demonstrating the role people play in the web of life and how we can live without damaging the environment.

Program Development & Research

The education team undertake a continual process of program improvement and development. The principle drivers are the growing global sustainability issues and the key issues identified by the CERES community and stated in the Strategic Plan.

The new programs allow for greater exploration of the pathways toward sustainability and enable a deeper understanding of cultural customs.

Three new activities for the Sustainability Program have been developed. They are 'Fair Trade' and 'Future Shopping' which focus on the environmental and social impacts of our consumer behaviours and 'Sustainable Building Design' which tests the comfort and performance of the CERES Centre - a multiuse space at CERES built on environmentally sustainable design principles.

CERES Cultural Education undertook an important project translating early descriptions of an indigenous sign language that enabled disparate communities to communicate and trade. The hand gestures, body language and facial expressions of the Kulin Sign Communication were recorded and will be incorporated into the Aboriginal education program. This important 'rediscovery' of the Kulin Sign Communication is also forming part of an exciting community arts event being directed by CERES Events.

Two further activities have been introduced. They are, African Dance - Atsiagbekor (atchia-be-kor) from Ghana and Kenya and Cultural Marriage Celebrations.

In other program developments, the Water Program at CERES has been updated to reflect the new displays and technology on site in response



to new water conservation technologies and to the aquaponics system in the CERES farm.

After much demand for further research into “Food Miles in Australia” authors Sophie Gaballa and Liam Cranley, CERES Education Co-ordinators, compared the carbon emissions of transporting food by rail compared to road. The report is available on the CERES website and will be incorporated and used in programs relating to sustainability and food production.

Facilities Development

The facilities and infrastructure of CERES are crucial in demonstrating alternative technologies and cultural education programs. There is no other education centre in Australia with the range of alternative energy infrastructure. CERES has 200 Photovoltaic panels, a methane digester, a mini wind turbine, energy efficient buildings and a futures trail, as well as award winning urban water conservation systems.

CERES is always seeking partners to keep these important working displays of sustainability in prime condition in order to effectively deliver our outstanding education programs.

A substantial upgrade of teaching spaces and facilities commenced at the beginning of 2008 and will go into the next financial year as the Education Centre will undergo a major renovation and provide better facilities for education programs and community groups.

The Friends of CERES Cultural Villages rallied to fundraise and provide support to revitalise the Cultural Village precinct. The result is an open and accessible village area with renovated buildings and new landscaping that maintains the authenticity of the spaces. The Cultural Villages play a vital role in promoting greater intercultural understanding as well as providing the perfect backdrop for exploring global sustainability issues.

New teaching spaces will be developed in the former nursery site, providing better facilities for Land focused environmental education programs.



Sustainable Schools

CERES Sustainable Schools delivers the ResourceSmart Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI Vic), a nationally inspired program in Victoria.

The program is aimed at dramatically reducing water use, greenhouse gas emissions and solid waste output in schools. Through various grants, sponsorships and fees for service, over 400 Victorian schools have already participated in the program, which is available to all schools across the state.

A tender process was undertaken after a review of the program and CERES was successful with a further three years to deliver the core and waste modules of the program to Victorian schools. The program is small with limited funding but at least we are now headed in the right direction. AuSSI Vic supports about 400 existing schools and deliver the program to about 100 new ones each year.

The schools are taking many of the actions encouraged by CERES and some have surpassed us. One school is already an 80 tonne carbon sink and some have no mains water use at all. The schools are an inspiration to us to continue the work of CERES in contributing to the new well-being society with enhanced humanity and a lower throughput of energy and materials.

We are indebted to all our partners and mentors in government departments for the progress made in 2008.

Sustainability Outreach Programs

These programs consist of incursions to schools, other sustainability programs in schools and supporting other community sustainability centres.

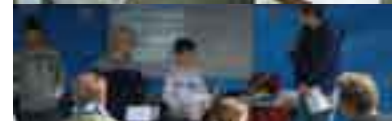
About half the work undertaken by the Sustainable Schools team lies outside the AuSSI Vic program. We have set up a new Incursions program which takes CERES education experiences out to schools and we hope to grow this program so it reaches 25,000 students.

We have provided consultancies for Nambour and Mildura in their efforts to create CERES type centres and we are hoping a national network emerges as a voice to government on sustainable development

at the community level. Similarly much of our work in schools involves influencing school communities, encouraging sustainability curricula, student action, plus operational improvements with water tanks, PV panel and waste reductions. Imagine hundreds of schools like mini CERES across the State!

The Sustainable Schools team have been creating planet saver schools, carbon sink schools, zero waste schools and more, all of which are forerunners of the new AuSSI Vic program. Some schools are amazing conservationists with 90% reductions in water and 25% reductions in fossil fuel energy use. These are highly significant achievements toward a sustainable future and great role models for all.

We have provided a vital framework for cost effective sustainability initiatives as part of the real "Revolution in Education" but convincing politicians is an ongoing challenge task we undertake.



Training Programs

This year the Training Team realised a long held ambition to take disability and at-risk students on a three day camp. The vision was to enable the students to put into action many of the skills they had been learning for their Certificate II courses in Horticulture and Hospitality. Twenty four students from Kensington Community High School, the Victorian College of the Deaf and Sydney Road Community School attended the first CERES camp at Camp Bambara.

The students were required to undertake a number of tasks at the camp that would contribute to their assessment. The Horticulture students were divided into four teams, led by a CERES trainer and student team leader. The teams rotated through four working and professional development sessions. Some of those tasks included planting of indigenous plants, fire protecting the area, tree felling and chopping firewood.

The Hospitality students organised and planned the catering with guidance from their trainer for the three days of the camp. It wasn't all hard work though, there was time for further confidence and trust building as students learnt to abseil and took part in other recreational activities. The camp was a resounding success. Staff and students would like to thank the Newsboys Foundation for their support of the camp. With further funding the Training Team would like to include the camp as part of the training program.

Six students from the CERES Food Project, successfully gained a Certificate II in Hospitality. The Project trains Kurdish and Turkish migrants in hospitality, fosters new skills, builds confidence and provides opportunities for economic participation in the community. The graduates of the CERES Food project have formed a social catering enterprise, the Seven Stars which specialising in Turkish and Kurdish cuisine.

Similarly four students graduated with a Certificate II in Horticulture from the training and social enterprise OM Organic Mushrooms. The students have gone on to undertake further training and employment.

The skills and experience of CERES trainers is a vital aspect of our unique program. A number of staff have undertaken professional development programs to enhance their skills. Understanding the key issues of

localisation and food security are also essential for our farm based Training Team. Staff embraced the opportunity to learn from David Holmgren, one of the co-creators of permaculture, about future scenarios and planning for peak oil and climate change. A one day workshop was held by David Holmgren at CERES with more inspirational speakers will be scheduled for the coming year.

New sheds and training shelters were built in the CERES Honey Lane Market Garden providing more facilities for the growing numbers of students taking part in CERES Training programs. This financial year saw two new schools join the Hospitality program and an additional twenty students undertaking the Horticulture program.

The strength of the CERES Training programs is that it is delivered in a real working environment. Students are out in the garden and in the kitchen actively working in a real workplace, getting hands on experience in the many tasks that keep CERES Farm and Market ticking. For many of the students CERES is the first place where they experience positive working environments and discover a sense of community.

Workshops

CERES commitment to harnessing change to create a sustainable future is reflected in the many weekend workshops provided to the community. The workshops provide practical skills and solutions to living more sustainably. You can learn how to grow food organically, conserve water, learn all about chook care, cheese making as well as gain a whole host of cultural cooking skills. There are also workshops for creative communities such as mosaic making and sculpting in ferro cement. The growing demand for CERES workshops reflects a broad commitment by the community in embracing sustainable ways of living. Special guests have also featured in the workshop program and most prominently David Holmgren held a sell out one-day workshop on permaculture principles and future scenario planning at CERES. In the July 2007 to June 2008 period a total of 247 people attended workshops, with Cheese making our most popular workshop.



Enterprise Team

The Enterprise Team is a dynamic group of CERES business ventures with social and environmental wellbeing at the heart of each endeavour.

The Café, Function in Celebration, Permaculture and Bushfood Nursery, Horticulture Services, Organic Market, Shoppe and Propagation are crucial points of contact with visitors and important income generators supporting operating costs and broader social programs at CERES.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Nursery moves to the CERES Centre

Café, Nursery and Market are 3 of the 4 top reasons people visit CERES

Propagation increases seedling production

Market Gardens increase food production



Enterprise Team

Organic Cafe

The Café implemented a new management structure commencing in early 2008 and is now co-managed between two dynamic staff focused on creating better efficiency, reducing labour and food costs. The atmosphere and ambience at CERES Café and seeing sustainability in action are important aspects for visitors to CERES. Over half of all respondents from a Visitor Survey conducted in Spring 2007 came to CERES specifically to visit the Café. Respondents remarked that CERES is a place to relax and recharge, to connect with friends and family.

The Café continues to develop its food policy and provide the best possible environmental choice whilst educating customers on these sustainable practices.

The Café is closing the loop in a number of key areas including nutrient and water saving. Around 60% of fresh produce served in the Café has been grown on-site in Honey Lane and Harding Street gardens. All organic produce is recycled on-site returning valuable nutrients to our garden for the next harvest of organic fruit and vegetables. Add to that, innovative water saving systems that harvest rainwater and manage all grey water through a bio-filter system, it's not rocket science but the savings on resources and benefit to the environment are out of this world!

Function in Celebration

Sustainable Functions changed its name in early 2008 to Function in Celebration, to reflect the celebratory focus of the activities the Events Team manages. Function in Celebration is firmly focused on creating positive impacts for guests, the environment and community. By utilising sustainably managed resources at CERES, Function in Celebration provides climate positive events with a minimal eco-footprint. Income generated through this enterprise also contributes to sustaining many social programs at CERES.

Permaculture and Bushfood Nursery

The Nursery relocated in early 2008 to the prominent location at the top of the site, occupying part of the CERES Centre. The new Nursery site has enabled a greater variety of stock and gardening resources, with a more welcoming layout, designed and constructed by the CHS Team.

Nursery staff have noticed significant growth in demand for food plants as people take positive actions to grow their own food, support biodiversity and make climate positive actions part of their lifestyle. Each week the Nursery sells hundreds of organic seedlings that have been propagated at CERES with the help of a team of eager volunteers. The Nursery intends to stock and sell more locally grown and adapted plants and products, another initiative focused on positive environmental and community benefits.

CERES Horticulture Services - CHS

For the past 3 years CHS has essentially been a part time service. A review of the demand for CHS services resulted in taking the bold move to appoint a full time manager to drive and direct CHS. The development is in line with CERES key commitments in addressing the causes of climate change and providing practical support for sustainable lifestyles. In the past year CHS has undertaken 48 consultancies and 2 projects, the projections for the coming year are already significantly higher as the benefits to a quick response time is evident. The CHS team designed and constructed the new CERES Permaculture and Bushfood Nursery.

Organic Farm & Market

The CERES Organic Farm demonstrates how an urban city farm can contribute to the local community by providing locally grown organic food, education regarding community food systems, a vibrant & ethical market place and employment for farmers, teachers and market workers. The farm is the hub of CERES community food network which



includes CERES Propagation, market gardens, OM Organic Mushrooms, the Market and Shoppe, catering and training programs.

Each of the training, farm and enterprise programs intersect and share staff and activities, providing a wide range of experiences for an incredibly diverse group of people. CERES Organic Farm and Market employs 4 full time and 22 part time staff with all profits supporting programs at CERES.

The growing community interest in urban agriculture and community food systems has propelled the profile of CERES Organic Farm. Visiting the Market is the second main reason why people visit CERES according to the Spring 2007 survey with 46.1% of respondents noting that the organic food coupled with the atmosphere and ambience make it so appealing. The Organic Farm has further outreach, by selling produce on the inner-city Farmers' Market circuit, an effective means to promote CERES products and programs off-site.

CERES Propagation is the exclusive supplier of organic vegetable seedlings to CERES Market Gardens and supplies a large proportion of seedlings to CERES Nursery and several external nurseries.

The ponds in the Honey Lane Market Gardens were renovated for the establishment of an innovative aquaponics system, which now includes fish and water plants and will soon provide produce for sale at the Market.

Volunteers from several corporate partner organisations have been making a valuable contribution to CERES and the Organic Farm. Teams of executives have been rolling up their sleeves and making a difference by stepping out from behind their desks and into the garden. Not only does this program promote healthy living and personal wellbeing, it enables timely achievement of projects at CERES that are dependent upon community volunteer support.

The Organic Farm embodies all of the CERES ideals in creating change towards sustainability via a new way of being in the world.

Infrastructure Development

Merri Creek Market Garden at Harding Street underwent a major soil rebuild which increased food production in the second half of the year. In an initiative to embrace more sustainable management systems, a 100,000L underground rainwater tank was installed to collect rain water for use in vegetable production.

New sheds and training shelters were installed in CERES Honey Lane Market Garden to provide larger storage and training areas as demand for programs grows.

Two new poly tunnels were built along with a larger hardening off area for the Propagation team as production has more than doubled.



Community and Governance Team

Working together to support CERES staff and the wider community, the Community & Governance Team aims to strengthen social wellbeing and connectedness, by enhancing communication of the CERES vision, strategic objectives and underlying philosophies.

Promoting opportunities for community collaboration through a range of events and projects, the Team strives to enhance the way we operate as a community and as an organisation.

This Team connects with community through Festivals and Events, the Climate Change Action Group at home and abroad through CERES Global.

HIGHLIGHTS

CERES Centre Stage 1 Opens

Electric Vehicle launch

Harvest Festival attracts 2000+ attendees

Communications Team conducts Visitor Survey

Review of Leadership at CERES

Flamin' Kitchens Cookbook DVD produced

CERES Global in India and Indonesia

Community and Governance Team

It has been a deeply significant year in communities across Australia with the acknowledgement of the inhumane policies that have been imposed on our Indigenous community. Sorry Day marked a pathway to healing and reconciliation. CERES acknowledged this important event with a traditional Smoking Ceremony held at the Namalata Willam, the Aboriginal gathering place at CERES. Staff gathered together with cultural educators and members of the community where eucalyptus leaves were smoked on the fire to cleanse negative spirits and renew the area for people entering the Willam. A Banksia tree was planted with hope that it grows with strength to the roots of this healing journey.

"You look after the spirit of the land and the spirit of the land will look after you." Shiralee Hood

Communications

The Communications Team undertook a visitor survey to better understand the demographics of CERES visitors, the reasons why and when they visit, as well as perceptions of CERES, and suggestions for improvement. Data collected from the survey has been used to inform campaigns and communication strategies and the Team intends to make it an annual (rotating through the seasons) activity. The Survey was completed as part of a RMIT Social Science student placement with the help of volunteer researchers. A total of 189 surveys were conducted through face to face interviews and an online survey.

The survey (conducted in September 2007) found that the average visitor (apart from visiting school students) lives locally, is a woman in her 30's who is interested in environmental issues and wants to learn more about living sustainably. She likes visiting so she can catch up with friends while her children play safely in a natural environment.

An awareness campaign concerning CERES' core values and key messages was conducted after the survey period. Improving the Café service and facilities and signage systems were key areas identified as needing improvement. CERES Café has implemented a number

of positive strategies to address the issues identified, and the Communications Team is seeking funding to improve both directional and interpretive signage for the whole site. The Communications team intends to conduct the next survey in March 2009.

It has been a busy year for launches at CERES, with the Communications Team facilitating a number of these events. The Building Commission came to CERES in May 2008 to announce new 5 Star energy efficiency laws for home renovations and relocations as well as an online sustainability resource 'Make Your Home Green'. On the same day the first ever International Compost Awareness Week was launched at CERES by Compost Victoria and Vasili from Channel 31 show 'Vasili's Garden', with 3AW broadcasting live from CERES all morning. In June 2008 Minister Tim Holding came to CERES to announce the release of funding for Round 9 of the Smart Water Fund.

The IT capabilities of the Team have been strengthened now with 3 staff working on improving our systems and online presence.

Membership and Fundraising

CERES attracts many visitors and is highly regarded and valued by the community. An official fundraising appeal takes place each year to highlight CERES' achievements and the need for financial support. Contributions through the appeal are allocated to emerging projects at CERES that demonstrate leadership in sustainability. This area is developing as a cornerstone of funding support for CERES and is a source we depend upon as a not for profit community based organisation. Still in its early days (while CERES connects with over 470,000 people, the number of generous donors at appeal time was 37), we hope to rally support in the coming years particularly in light of today's sustainability challenges.

Members are the life blood of CERES, a valuable source of community involvement and funding. Of the 352 current members 17 have made the ultimate commitment in taking out life membership.



Climate Change Action Group

Two philanthropic organisations, Donkey Wheel and The Lord Mayor's Fund, funded programs to spearhead initiatives on climate change solutions during the past year. Considerable initial work, in partnership with Moreland Council, MEFL and Village Well went into gathering the community to develop strategies and form action groups. There were three groups identified, Community and Household Action, Alternative Transport and Electric Vehicle Group and Youth Action. The most active has been Alternative Transport, more specifically the Electric Vehicle Group.

Electric Vehicle Group

The Electric Vehicle group has attracted a very impressive collection of highly skilled people who have been inspired by the project and are passionate about bringing into being 'zero-emissions' transport options. They see their work paving the way for a new Electric Vehicle industry. One group has met regularly throughout the year converting a standard petrol engine car to an electric engine. This is seen to be a major contribution towards finding a 'zero carbon emitting' solution to personal transport. The car was launched by the State Minister for Environment, Innovation and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings, on Environment Day, June 2008. The group continues exploring ways of incorporating the latest technologies into 'zero emitting' transport and is working with Swinburne TAFE to develop training courses in conversions.

Governance

The Governance area of CERES oversee the organisational systems and processes that underpin the flow of projects, programs, enterprises and activities that make up CERES. Our financial reporting and monitoring processes provide a clear, accessible framework to ensure our financial viability. Our budget forming processes also continue to improve, preceded by staff and area reviews which feed new directions and priorities into a collective financial vision.

CERES' Governance work towards strengthening CERES' systems and processes, to deliver strategic objectives.

The past year has seen the CERES Management Committee taking an increasingly active role in the issues associated with running CERES - particularly with economic and governance matters. During the year a review was produced by an independent consultant on 'Leadership and Governance' within CERES - most its recommendations have been accepted for implementation.

The Team Leader's group continues to evolve the unique leadership model of CERES - adapting to CERES' growth and the demands of a rapidly changing world. It has played a central role in forging new relationships and programs - particularly with organisations



keen to engage more with sustainability, climate change, and local/global equity issues.

Area Managers are also stepping up to higher level analysis, planning, and decision making for all CERES matters. This is an important development for CERES in broadening our internal skill base for dealing with the expanding and changing demands.

Events

The CERES Harvest Festival embodies all the great features of CERES, a celebration of multiculturalism, food, sustainability and community. The Harvest Festival 2008 introduced the first free entry admission to the festival which was highly successful with numbers swelling to over 2,000. A cookbook DVD, Flamin' Kitchens, was created for the festival featuring people passionate about sharing their culture and food by cooking a typical dish in their own kitchen. The cooks shared their cultural recipes and stories with song and dance to create a unique community culinary experience. Flamin' Kitchens featured eleven dishes from diverse cultural groups including Aboriginal, Greek Cypriot, Italian, Lebanese, Kenyan, Turkish and Kurdish, Sri Lankan, Chinese and Indonesian. The cooks also participated in the festival, sharing their stories and recipes.

The Flamin' Kitchen DVD has proved to be a great success, selling through the Visitors Centre and also broadcast on two indigenous television stations. It will also feature on Channel 31 at the end of 2008.

The Events team hosted an inspiring workshop by internationally acknowledged community arts director Neil Cameron. Neil took time from his study, a doctorate concerning celebration and festivals at Flinders University, to present a rewarding workshop for the first time in Melbourne.

“Humans have held celebrations since the beginning of time because they are essential for a healthy community, without them we are lost in the ordinary.”

Neil Cameron



Volunteer Program

Each day teams of volunteers support the day to day operations at CERES as well as enterprises, events and festivals, making a valuable contribution and connection to community. Providing positive social connections and engagement are core priorities of the Volunteer program. In 2007/08 the CERES Volunteer Program successfully recruited, trained and supported three volunteers to take roles in the leadership and co-ordination of other volunteers at CERES Events. These volunteers were typically foreign nationals living 1-3 years in Melbourne. The volunteers were empowered to develop deep connections with the CERES community and make a productive community contribution during their time in Melbourne. These three volunteers were part of the estimated \$115,000 worth of volunteer time contributed to CERES in 2007/2008.

Slow Day was a successful co-creation by a group of volunteers, supporters and CERES. The Slow Day at CERES was held on 20th April 2008 to encourage people to 'slow down', connect with self, community and the environment. It was an inspiring community event that generated a peaceful vibe that was well attended and supported.

There is significant interest from the Corporate sector in developing volunteering opportunities at CERES. The Community and Governance and Education and Training Teams are working closely together to develop a fulfilling and empowering program.

CERES Global

CERES Global aims to support sustainable development in poorer countries by creating an international network of sustainable communities. This is achieved by fostering community to community connections, working with international groups towards greater equity and sustainability, sharing skills and knowledge. CERES entered the financial year riding high after a second fantastic trip to India in January 2007 with three groups travelling from the tropical forests along the south coast, to the tribal villages in remote hills in central India, to mountain villages in the foothills of the Himalayas, and on to the desert camels of Rajasthan. Travellers shared their skills, became absorbed in village life and Indian culture, and learned an enormous amount about development and environmental issues facing India.

In July 2008 CERES Global had its first trip to Indonesia - visiting 3 environmental organisations. CERES Global has formed strong relationships with grassroots organisations doing impressive work on environmental and equity issues. With each new trip CERES builds knowledge and skills in supporting groups on climate change, renewable energy, water, organic farming, waste recycling, job creation, women's projects, community development, and much more.



Habitat Team

The Habitat Team works on a range of projects to do with water, waste and energy systems as well as general maintenance and management of the site. The Teams' activities support the ongoing development of CERES' site infrastructure and are always striving to make CERES a truly sustainable organisation that walks its talk.

The infrastructure at CERES has a crucial role in demonstrating key environmental concepts and practical solutions. Some projects are essential tools of research that test new ideas and fresh approaches to sustainability issues. The Habitat Team works closely with many volunteers who make an invaluable contribution to the care of the CERES site.



HIGHLIGHTS

Composting toilet upgrade

100,000L water tank installed at Harding St Market Garden,

Completed the two aquaponics systems - 150 native Australian Silver Perch moved into their new home.

Ran water walk-and-talks for a total of around 100 people

Major landscaping works

Habitat Team

CERES Centre

The CERES Centre will be the most exciting and dynamic purpose built sustainable building created for community use in Australia. The Centre will be a national hub for positive change towards the equitable future we want to create. Funding to date has been secured for Stage 2 buildings which includes; a community kitchen, staff offices, multipurpose community spaces, and organic restaurant, all designed and built on ecological principles.

Funding is still being sought for Stage 3, a two story building on the north side of the site which will include multipurpose community spaces, a performing arts and conference centre.

We are striving towards a 'zero emissions' building and every aspect of the Centre, from design through to delivery, will minimise waste, water and energy use to achieve a truly 'carbon neutral' building.

CERES Centre will enable the furthering of its work on sustainability and equity, creating spaces for learning, doing and being inspired. The project is well under way and the past year has involved enormous planning, fundraising and development. The site has particular challenges as a former landfill area, being addressed through compaction, ground preparation and the inclusion of a methane layer.

Green Technology

In the 2007 calendar year water use at CERES rose slightly, but remained low. In 2008 Green Technology has largely focused on completing the wide range of innovative water projects started in the last few years, several under the aegis of the Storm water and Urban Water Conservation Fund. These will provide increasing water savings and water efficiencies to the whole of CERES, with the aim of continuing to reduce mains water use while letting us still do imaginative and beautiful things.

The aquaponics system is now in place, recycling a small quantity of rainwater to intensively grow vegetables for the market. The pervious paving carpark research was finalised by RMIT, who found that the amount of water the carpark would catch was greatly reduced, but that the filters were between 80 and 95% effective at reducing



various pollutants in storm water and that the paving worked far better than expected at flood remediation.

The storm water filter and irrigation connections for the Farm were replanted and repaired with funding from the Community Water Fund. The Harding St Market Garden had a 100 kL water tank installed underneath its western rows, with the capability to provide between 25 and 35% of the garden's water use depending on the quantity of summer rain. This will potentially save thousands of dollars in mains water costs each year. The composting toilets were finally redesigned and redeveloped, to the great relief of all. While the old system was working remarkably well under stress, CERES has too many visitors now for it to function correctly. The new system has a greater capacity, is easier to maintain and extend to further capacity as our numbers of visitors on site continue to grow. Smell tests continue to show that the bins themselves are providing no odour. These new facilities will be far more effective at encouraging the concept of waterless toilets in the community. Promotion of CERES' demonstrations has been ongoing all year, including training staff to external programs in water options so that they can spread their results into the community as well as own efforts.

Site Developments

The site is an ever changing landscape, which the Habitat Team makes possible by providing the daily maintenance and upgrading of facilities, as well as co-ordinating site management of major construction projects. With the building of the CERES Centre Stage 2, the Habitat Team have played a significant role in managing excess soil around the site, with inspired solutions that have resulted in new landscaping for the Energy Park and the area around the Cultural Villages called Africa Hill. The Team now have a dedicated Landscaper who will further develop the physical site.

The redevelopment of the old Nursery site is taking shape with an improved and dedicated zone for education programs. The Team have also developed home base sites for visiting schools and created the amphitheatre in the Cultural Villages.



The Year Ahead

In the year ahead CERES will continue to deliver education, practical solutions to major issues, inspiration and celebration in a myriad of ways to the community.

The 4 key focal areas from the Strategic Plan will guide activities and the way in which projects are undertaken.

CERES will provide leadership on climate change, create understanding and issues surrounding equity, both locally and globally, create new ways of being in our everyday actions and work with the forces of change to produce a more sustainable world.

Building Infrastructure

The CERES Centre Stage 2 will be completed and will include two new community buildings, landscaped gardens, pathways and lawns.

The Education Centre will be extended to accommodate school and community activities. This space will be shared with Fitzroy Uniting Church and Melbourne Zen Buddhist Group.

The Ecohouse will be renovated to provide up-to-date demonstrations of retro-fitting for sustainability. The upgraded Ecohouse will host a new suite of sustainable living workshops for the community. Some of these workshops will be delivered in partnership with MEFL and Moreland Council through the Zero Carbon Moreland program.

The CERES Shoppe will be renovated and expanded to provide greater accessibility and extended opening hours.

Improving the CERES visitors experience will be prioritised with a focus on upgrading facilities and site orientation. The Communication Team will seek funding support for signage across the site. The signage project *Pathways to Action* will focus on the important role interpretive trails can play in providing accessible information and CERES will conduct positive pathways to embracing sustainable practices and cultural awareness for visitors.

Practical Climate Solutions

Action on climate change needs to be a critical driving force, therefore CERES will explore new carbon reducing opportunities. A feasibility study of installing a biogas plant producing electricity and heat from local waste vegetable matter and a gasification plant utilising local waste wood. With the CERES Electric Vehicle out on the road, we expect to catalyse interest in new forms of zero carbon private transport. The aquaponics project will demonstrate options for intensive food production.

Education

Schools visiting CERES will have a new variety of activities on sustainability issues and the global context to choose from.

New schools around Victoria will begin the transformation towards being 'beacons of sustainability' as the Sustainable Schools program engages them in energy, water, waste, habitat and community building activities.

CERES will also be overseas in India and Indonesia supporting organizations which explore zero emissions development opportunities.

Partnerships

With the imperative for the community to find sustainable ways of operating CERES has established relationships with a number of Corporate organisations, which will bring opportunities to engage with a new audience meaningfully. We will be trialing food co-ops for corporates in the city and encouraging a proliferation of vegetable gardens in people's backyards and schools through refugee enterprise development.

Localisation

The Organic Farm will continue to localise food production and grow more produce in the Honey Lane and Harding Street market gardens, supported by the Propagation Team. Providing climate and community positive action and employment. The OM - Organic Mushrooms and Seven Stars projects will be in full swing in the coming year offering a new diversity of local foods and products to the community.

Volunteers

Key priorities for the volunteer program surround the development of systems to manage data and administer programs more effectively. This will include increasing the administrative capacity of the volunteer program and create 'off-site' volunteering opportunities for administrative support for the program. A fulfilling Corporate Volunteering program will be developed that will foster support for CERES and provide engagement in real environmental and climate positive initiatives.

Models of Sustainable Enterprises

The Nursery, Café, Organic Market and Shoppe will continue to provide leadership by example to small to medium businesses in how enterprises can move towards zero carbon emissions and sustainability.

Connectedness

The Return of the Sacred Kingfisher Festival will carry the artistic theme Original Signs over two years incorporating Kulin sign communication and Auslan sign language into a contemporary arts event with a sustainability message.

SoundLab youth music project will promote artistic development opportunities for 18-25 year olds.

Harvest Festival will focus on cultural celebration and community connectedness through food.

Communications

An exciting and vibrant exhibition of the CERES Story will be displayed in the CERES Visitor Centre, presenting the story and ideas behind the innovative community environment park as well an invitation to greater involvement.

Financials

Registration No A0007663M



CERES Inc. Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2008

2007		2008
	Current Assets	
1,192,708	Cash and Cash Equivalents	667,255
192,390	Receivables	276,958
72,016	Inventories	85,800
316	Prepayments	7,684
<u>1,457,430</u>	Total Current Assets	<u>1,037,697</u>
	Non Current Assets	
1,609,795	Plant and Equipment	2,079,235
<u>1,609,795</u>	Total Non Current Assets	<u>2,079,235</u>
<u>3,067,225</u>	Total Assets	<u>3,116,932</u>
	Current Liabilities	
369,476	Payables	663,363
158,200	Provisions	219,200
1,386,890	Other	679,752
<u>1,914,566</u>	Total Current Liabilities	<u>1,562,315</u>
	Non Current Liabilities	
65,100	Provisions	79,000
<u>65,100</u>	Total Non Current Liabilities	<u>79,000</u>
<u>1,979,666</u>	Total Liabilities	<u>1,641,315</u>
<u>\$ 1,087,559</u>	Net Assets	<u>\$ 1,475,617</u>
	Members' Funds	
1,087,559	Retained Surplus	1,475,617
<u>\$ 1,087,559</u>	Total Members' Funds	<u>\$ 1,475,617</u>

AUDITOR'S OPINION

Included in the Independent Auditor's Report is the following Audit Opinion.

In our opinion, the financial report of CERES Inc. is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act (Vic), 1981, including:

- i. Giving a true and fair view of the Association's Balance Sheet as at 30 June, 2008, and of its performance for the year ended on that date: and
- ii. Complying with Australian Accounting Standards and the Associations Incorporation Act (Vic), 1981.

McBain McCartin & Co

Chartered Accountants

Leo McCartin

Partner

These financial statements should be considered in conjunction with the Notes which accompany, and are part of, the full set of financial statements for CERES Inc. for the year.

A full set of financial statements are included in the Financial Report for CERES Inc. for the year ended 30th June, 2008, a copy of which can be obtained from Reception at the CERES office.

Income Statement for the year ended 30 June 2008

2007		2008
4,903,177	Revenue from Ordinary Activities	6,456,557
<u>4,901,224</u>	Expences from Ordinary Activities before Depreciation	<u>6,534,937</u>
1,953	Surplus (Deficit) from Ordinary Activities before Depreciation	(78,380)
<u>101,474</u>	Less Depreciation	<u>121,562</u>
<u>(99,521)</u>	Surplus (Deficit) from Ordinary Activities after Depreciation	<u>(199,942)</u>
317,720	Grant Funded Capital Improvements (included in Expenses above) transferred to Non Current Assets	588,000
<u>\$ 218,199</u>	Surplus (Deficit) for year	<u>\$ 388,058</u>



Invitation to Support

CERES is a not-for-profit charitable organisation.

Around 75% of the organisations income is generated through our enterprises. The rest is sourced from grants and sponsorship. For this, and so much more, CERES depends on its community membership base, donations and partnerships with a range of organisations.

CERES is currently experiencing a phase of rapid growth as society gravitates towards sustainability. This presents plenty of opportunities which CERES is ideally placed to work with, along with your support, to create positive social and environmental outcomes.

There are many ways to contribute to CERES future, by making a donation financial and in-kind, workplace giving, becoming a member or providing practical help by volunteering.

We welcome support and sponsorship of programs, projects and materials.



Our People

Team Leaders

Noel Blencowe
Eric Bottomley
Cinnamon Evans
Cathy Nixon

Management Committee

Robert Larocca - Chairperson
Mathew Bretherton - Secretary
Cr Jo Connellan - Treasurer
Elisabeth Jackson - Public Officer
Rod Williams
Sue Lewis
Cr Mark Higginbotham
Leonie Van Raay
Lorna Pitt
Noel Blencowe
Eric Bottomley
Cinnamon Evans
Cathy Nixon

Staff

Area Managers

Kate Baker	Cara Horner	140 Staff
Antoinette Celotti	Greg Jordan	500+ registered volunteers
Geoff Cook	Melissa Lawson	
Nick Curmi	Christos Linou	
Dori Ellington	David Major	
Milton Embling	Narelle Schmidt	
Chris Ennis	Tiki Swain	
Judy Glick		

CERES Annual Report 2007/2008



Acknowledgements

CERES thanks all of its partners who have provided financial support to many of the projects mentioned in this report. With their help and generosity we are able to further our vital work.

Principal Partners

John and Leonie Van Raay

Victorian Government-Community Support Fund

John and Pauline Gandel Charitable Trust

The William Buckland Foundation

The Ian Potter Foundation

Moreland City Council

Adult Multicultural Education Services

Victorian Government Sustainability Fund

Sustainability Victoria

Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Commonwealth Department of Environment Water, Arts & Heritage

Urban Storm Water and Water Conservation Fund, Victoria

Smart Water Fund

Department of Human Services

Donkey Wheel

Key Partners

The Jack Brockhoff Foundation

Besen Family Foundation

The Australian Government Community WaterFund

Yarra Valley Water

nabCapital

Finkel Foundation

Newsboys Foundation

Supporting Partners

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

City of Yarra

City of Casey

Cardinia Shire

Bass Coast Shire

City of Frankston

City of Manningham

Westernport Greenhouse Alliance

Interact Foundation

3RRR Radio

Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund

Fouress Foundation

Catholic Education Office

University of New South Wales

Moreland Energy Foundation Limited

Freehills

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