



Cultivating  
Community  
Growing a better food future

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019/20

July 2019 - June 2020





# Cultivating Community

Growing a better food future

## Growing a better food future

Cultivating Community is a Melbourne based not-for-profit and accredited social enterprise, determined to provide opportunities for low income and migrant communities to access healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food. Learn more about Cultivating Community at **[cultivatingcommunity.org.au](http://cultivatingcommunity.org.au)**

### Our Vision

Our vision is for joyful, connected communities who care for each other and our earth.

### Our Mission

Our mission is to work with diverse and low-income communities to create fair, secure and resilient food systems.

### Our Purpose

To inspire a healthy and just world

We create nourishing & educational food & gardening experiences.

We nurture wellbeing & a sense of belonging.

We embrace people, place & culture through food & gardening.



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# President & CEO Report

We wish to start by thanking our former CEO Daniyela Rob for her hard work until December 2019 and wish her the very best in her new role. We are most grateful to Peta Christensen for assuming the acting CEO position whilst the board recruited our now current CEO Rob Rees MBE DL who joined us in March 2020.

**There has never been a year like this last one, and if not for the tenacity and willingness of our staff team, led by our new CEO, Rob to respond actively to all the changes we have faced we would be in a very different place.**

As we entered the Summer of 19/20 we watched with concern and empathy the devastating bushfires that gripped our country and our state. We witnessed here in the City of Melbourne the dense and rancid smoke. Without pause we entered the last trading quarter of the year under the cloud of a global pandemic and the challenges faced by lockdown and restrictions to protect our public health.

These two events will change the political, social and economic lives of our organisation, our people and those we engage with forever. We are well placed to reset and be part of the rejuvenation of our urban food systems and beyond. Our good Governance coming into the pandemic has placed us well to survive the rollercoaster that follows in the economy. We have established stronger collaborations with other social enterprise and non-profit organisations. We know that our work is required more than ever and our agility during the lockdown periods in our community garden, schools and food systems team is a credit to each and every individual.

Our team has consolidated during this challenging time and have been able to embrace online and digital tools to connect with each other and our community. In addition to managing the Public Housing Community Gardens for the Victorian Government, delivering our impressive School Garden Program, after school cooking clubs, kitchen library, High Rise Baking and much more Cultivating Community led the GROW element of Moving Feast - planting over 750,000 seeds in the Autumn to restock fresh food larder and supported many thousands of individuals across the City with its food relief and cooking packs. We want to thank individuals, councils, collaborations and philanthropic bodies who have supported us financially in this time of critical need.

We have mapped back three years of our projects against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and now can measure our impact stronger and better than before. We have clear aspirations and goals for the coming years and a relationship between board and exec that is robust, open and value adding.



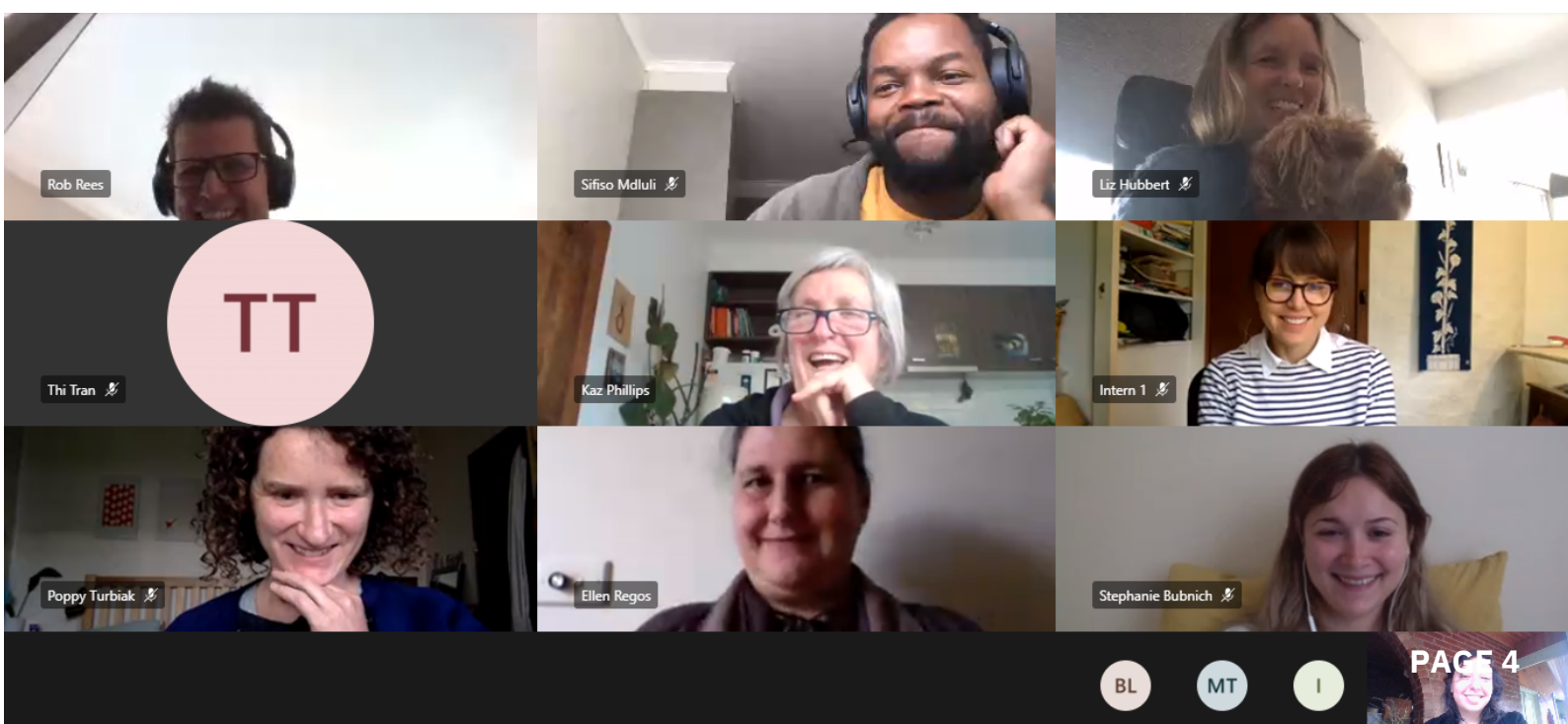
We can't sign off this year without reference to the amazing community who reside in the public housing apartments in Melbourne. Your resilience during this pandemic inspires us. It is our connection with you in so many of our projects that defines our purpose. For many of our team you are the reason they come to work each day. We have missed the connectivity we so often have with you over food, bread or whilst sowing the garden.

Additionally, on behalf of the board, I especially wish to pay tribute to the commitment, enthusiasm of Rob in his new role of CEO. His careful navigation of the landscape, strong relationship building and openness to new initiatives has allowed Cultivating Community to flourish and develop at a time when many NFP organisations have suffered significantly. In response, our staff team have felt listened to, respected and included and have continued to fully embrace the new situations as they have arisen. Thank you so much for all your hard work and flexibility.

From the board perspective, we said farewell to our long-standing and active board member, Lee Tozzi at our 2019 AGM and wish to acknowledge the contribution Lee has made to our organisation over many years. We are also delighted to welcome Dr Chris Williams to join the board from January, and have already experienced his knowledge as a subject matter expert in urban agriculture amongst other things. Thanks must go to all our Board members who have continued to participate actively in our meetings and take on many additional tasks as we work towards consolidating and strengthening the sound governance of Cultivating Community.

We do hope that you enjoy our report and the achievements listed within it. As we wrote we remain in lockdown part two and wish each and every one of you to be safe. Nothing could have been achieved without the resilience of every individual member of our team, board, volunteers and the participants in all our projects.

**Karen White PhD GAICD (President) and Rob Rees MBE DL (CEO)**





# A year of Joyful Food

## **4,000 gardeners**

Across all of our programs growing their own food and accessing urban green space.

## **2,100 volunteer hours**

Engaged 50 passionate volunteers supporting our cooking and gardening programs, and board work.

## **Our team**

We said goodbye to a few CC legends: Carol Henderson (SFG), Daniyela Rob (CEO), Lee Tozzi (Board) and Lucy Derum (PHCG). We welcomed Rob Rees (CEO) and Chris Williams (Board).

## **576 workshop attendees**

Came along to our 18 workshops, learning and building on their composting and food growing skills.

## **Our services grew**

Including Emerald Hill Court Garden & Orchard, STREAT horticulture services, and Project Respect Kitchen Garden.

## **8,520 supporters**

We engaged with our stories of food, gardening and community through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube and our Seasonal Newsletter.





## Living Food Boxes

Cultivating Community partnered with Planted Places and Fruit2Work to grow, plant and distribute 50 'living' food boxes to vulnerable families in the City of Melbourne. These living food boxes will provide people with fresh, healthy food, enabling ongoing food supply and empowering individuals to remain in control of their food.



**SUSTAIN** the Australian food network



**GOOD FOOD ORGANIZATION**



In alliance with Community Food Centres Canada 2020

## Carlton Kitchen Library

Launched in November 2019, the library burst into action gaining 50 members, stocking over 300 items (most second hand!) and saving over 1,500 single use items from landfill through its zero waste event packs. The library offered a delivery service during COVID-19, supporting lockdown cooking adventures around Melbourne.

## Working together

Our team was part of community networks around Melbourne including: Richmond Rising, Carlton Food Group, Yarra Volunteer Leaders Networks, Connecting Fitzroy, Carlton Local Agencies Network, Onwards Collingwood, Working Together Prahran and Darebin Food Harvest Network.







# School Food Gardens

Within our School Food Garden program we teach students to grow food, foster a sense of community, and enrich school curriculum. In 2020 our learning went online, together we mimicked nature's ability to navigate change and grow in the most unlikely circumstances.

## 1,690 students

Learning to grow food, act sustainably and connect with nature

## Seven schools

Engaging our School Food Garden Program as part of their curriculum

## 26,000 hours

Approx time spent joyfully together in the garden, learning and growing

## Grants recieved

5 of our schools received Victorian School Garden Grants.

## Children's Week 2019

We hosted a Children's Week Event in 2019 - Nature Play in Fitzroy for 58 attendees

## Little Seeds Food Playgroup

Began in 2020, engaging 25 families in Footscray to learn more about food gardening with children

## School Food Gardens

Aberfeldie Primary, Mother of God, Our Lady of Fatima, Parkhill Primary, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Anthony's Primary, Waratah SDS





# Public Housing Community Gardens

For 22 years, Public Housing Community Gardens provide tenants a space to grow healthy, culturally appropriate food while feeling connected to each other and nature.

## **20 Community Gardens**

On Public Housing Estates across 13 suburbs in Melbourne.

## **720 tenant gardeners**

Growing fresh food for their families and cultivating community around their garden

## **32 language groups**

Represented across our gardens, bringing a diversity of food growing knowledge.

## **Over half a hectare**

Combined food growing space across our community gardens.

## **Garden Improvements**

Underway at Flemington, Fitzroy, Milarri and 27 King St Gardens

## **Community Gardens**

Ascot Vale, Carlton, Collingwood, Fitzroy, Flemington, Northcote, North Melbourne, Prahran, Richmond, St. Kilda, South Melbourne, South Yarra, Windsor





# Food Systems

Community Food Centres and Food System activities provide people with opportunities to improve their food literacy and connect with others in their local community.

## **1,620 community meals**

On Public Housing Estates across 5 suburbs in Melbourne, feeding and teaching 120 participants to cook

## **300 loaves baked**

through High Rise baking group, with 10 participant learning to bake

## **2,014 food relief packs**

with 619kgs of food donated to groups and 940kgs of rescued food that would otherwise be wasted.

## **Major grants received**

City of Melbourne Social Innovation grant and Perpetual Grant.

## **64 members**

of Carlton Kitchen Library borrowing not buying 397 items.

## **2,538 plastic items saved**

through Zero Waste Event kits at Carlton Kitchen Library

## **136 kids cooking packs**

delivered to keep kids cooking through COVID-19 lockdown

## **Community Programs**

Fitzroy Urban Harvest Food Swap, After School Cooking, Meet & Eat, Carlton Kitchen Library, Our Shared Table, High Rise: Fitzroy Baking Group, Food Relief Packs.





# Cohealth community gardens partnership

Through our consultative services, we love sharing our knowledge of safe, welcoming & well managed community gardens. Cohealth engaged CC in 2019 to revitalise their Floyd and Gordon community gardens in Western Melbourne. Garden Support Worker Janice Miller took on the role supporting these gardens.

Bringing a long-lived passion and connection to growing food, Janice collaborated with the garden members, tenants and staff to assess and improve the garden site, the governance framework and provide horticultural support. This holistic and collaborative approach empowered public housing tenants to fully engage in the community garden - growing their food, connecting with others, enjoying the space, and participating in decision making.

This garden space has contributed to tenants wellbeing through connecting to earth, to people, to community, growing wholesome food to not only eat but share, tell stories about, breaking down social barriers and more.

"Janice introduced a fair, well-structured and balanced management framework at both sites. Consequently, residents and staff have felt empowered to participate and take pride in a much-valued program that they wish to see prosper."

**- Graham Wilson & Josefa Puche Cano, Cohealth**

## Garden Consultation

Cultivating Community provide consultation and assist with community gardens, advising on governance, administration and management structures, supplying ongoing support and cultivating a sense of place with garden members and wider community.



# Waratah Special Developmental School

School Food Gardens provide opportunity for kids to shine in settings outside the normal classroom. This holds true at Waratah Special Developmental School, where Cultivating Community have been running the School Food Garden Program since 2009, with horticulturalist-come-artist-come-teacher Margaret Sulikowski the Garden Educator since 2010.

This year, the students took part in the Government House Scarecrow Program, with scarecrows to be displayed in the Peace and Prosperity Garden at Government House. This creative project involved learning how to work as a team, with a fantastic sense of achievement at the end. The scarecrows were transported to Government House, with virtual 'planting' of the Scarecrow and virtual meeting with the Governor and Mr. Howard to talk about their scarecrow, how they made it and what 2020 has been like for them.

In 2020, as COVID-19 changed the way we interacted, Margaret and the kids onsite focused on the "2020 veggie patch maker over". This tremendous effort enables guided and self learning experiences. Included is a 'herb way zone' with lounging mats for kids to have some time alone when needed. All herbs here engage the senses - students can pull, taste and sit on them!! Favourites include the oregano smell barrel, spring onion, chives and chili.

This project provided opportunities for the children to be involved in outdoor garden adventures that teach values such as teamwork and respect. The children felt 'ownership' over the project, building confidence and feelings of belonging - Margaret Sulikowski, Garden Educator

## School Food Gardens

Cultivating Community support schools to set up and maintain a productive food garden. We provide teaching staff with concrete ways to utilise green spaces for students to learn outdoors.







# High Rise: Fitzroy Baking Group

High Rise (Fitzroy Baking Group) is a celebration of bread, fire and community. Based at the Fitzroy Community Food Centre and Garden, a group of locals meet once a month to share their bread making knowledge, traditions and stories. This group ranges from people who are baking for the first time, to those well seasoned in the art of dough.



The group aims to provide affordable and nutritious bread for the community addressing issues of food security as well as celebrating the many different cultural bread traditions represented in the Fitzroy Estate and broader Community.

The bread we make is then sold at The Community Grocer, a fresh food market set up on the Housing Estate to bring affordable healthy food to tenants and the local community. This sourdough bread is full of nutrients and positive health benefits – this is usually a high price item, being able to sell it at a low cost creates a fair system and brings these benefits to all.

This project definitely brings joy, not only to those who participate directly, but to every single person who walks past the oven – whether the sight sparks a memory, story or appreciation, the joy is present.

This project has the capacity to increase it's production and frequency lending itself to a perfect employment and training local social enterprise.

## Food Systems

The projects offered through the FCFC help people to access fresh food, learn about growing and preparing food and provide opportunities to share food in a spirit of conviviality.





# Moving Feast GROW

Moving Feast GROW addresses the rising inequality in our food system, responding to the global pandemic by ensuring that anyone struggling financially had access to fresh culturally appropriate food. We are working with communities that are unfortunately in the position of identifying as not having enough food. Since the beginning of the pandemic Cultivating Community worker Poppy lead the coordination of GROW Moving Feast.

Poppy Turbiak, a Garden Support Worker for over 8 years, brought collaborative, supportive strategy to this coordination effort. This effort activated existing growing spaces to grow fresh produce to distribute through food relief.

Between the 14 partners contributing to GROW, a total of 5,470m<sup>2</sup> of growing space provided fresh, healthy food to 8 different food relief distributors providing food relief to Victorian in need of food support.

A long lasting outcome is strengthening of relationships with other organisations working in the sector. Meaningful partnerships are being developed, trust and friendship is growing and a deeper understanding of the sector and our role in it is being garnered.

By using our collective organisational strengths and capabilities we have been able to support food relief in a just and respectful manner. - Poppy

## Moving Feast

Moving Feast is a collaboration of Social Enterprises and Non-profits working on three areas of relief, recovery and rejuvenation as a response to COVID19. For more info visit: **[movingfeast.net](https://movingfeast.net)**.





# Managing a SLA during COVID-19

Public Housing Community Gardens are a service-level agreement (SLA) between the Victorian Government and Cultivating Community, supporting opportunities for low income and migrant communities to access healthy,

In these gardens we celebrate fresh food grown by the hands of people with incredibly rich stories. Today we support over 700 gardeners to keep their food culture and traditions alive, making these community gardens a place of cultural sharing and harmony.

Ben Liney is the Team Leader for the Public Housing Community Gardens team, who together support community connection to place, the land, food and each.

Through the COVID pandemic, the gardens have been an important place for tenants to access secure outdoors settings that they know and trust. They have been able to access safely grown food and support each other through their shared work. During the 2nd lockdown our gardeners did not have access to their gardens.

This has been so hard for many and for us as an organisation has impact upon our purpose. We continued to lease with our contract managers to secure safe opening of the gardens with COVID 19 Safety plans in place and as we write hope this can happen soon.

In addition many of our team have supported the collaborative work of Moving Feast sowing seeds for the future and harvesting for food relief projects as required. We enjoy our relationship with our gardeners and with our contract team at the DHHS and we look forward to amplifying our communication in the next year and embarking on some exciting maintenance work of the gardens.



# Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) are a call to action for the world to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity. **In May 2020, Cultivating Community commenced its SDG journey.**

As we develop ways to measure our impact at Cultivating Community from well-being to social connection, we will look hard internally and externally to how we perform against the global goals. This will help us to innovate, reshape and refresh our work within communities.

## Our contributions to the SDGs



The top five SDGs our programs matched to.



32  
different activities  
were mapped to the  
SDG targets



13/17  
SDGs align to CC's  
strategies and  
programs.

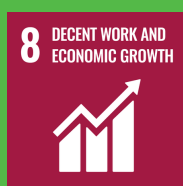


57/169  
targets that were  
mapped to one or  
more of our activities



26/32  
of our programs  
aligned with Goal 2.  
Zero Hunger

## Enhancing our impact



We have identified seven SDGs that CC has capacity to have a greater impact in. These include: Reduced Inequalities, No Poverty, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Climate Action, Gender Equality, Life on Land and Partnerships for the Goals.

As we move forward and build upon the work we currently do, linking in the above seven goals will help bring meaningful impact to our work by acknowledging the interconnection of issues our program participants face.



# Our supporters and partners

Australian Catholic University

Brimbank City Council

City of Melbourne

City of Whitehorse

City of Yarra

Coop

Department of Education and Training

Department of Health and Human Services

EnviroCom Australia

Fruit2Work

Geoff Maddock

St. John's Primary School

Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund

Lumineer Academy

MaiTri

Maribyrnong City Council

Moving Feast

Open Table

Perpetual

Planted Places

PwC

The Diggers Club

Yarra libraries

## Our Team 2019/20

### Staff

#### Community Gardens Team

Ben Liney (Team Leader),  
Abdelaziz Osman, Janice Miller,  
Kaz Phillips, Lucy Derum (2020),  
Max Barlow, Poppy Turbiak,  
Sifiso Mdluli, Thomas Douglas.

#### School Food Gardens Team

Ellen Regos, (Team Leader),  
Carol Henderson (2019),  
Joanna Temme, Liz Hubbert,  
Margaret Suilkowski, Maria  
Tsorakidis, Stephanie Bubnich.

#### Food Systems Team

Peta Christensen, (Team Leader),  
Eloise Easton, Georgia Karavis.

#### Finance & Admin Team

Rob Rees (CEO), Daniyela Rob  
(CEO 2019), Julia Pecoraro,  
Thi Tran

### Board

Karen White (Chair), Chris Newey  
(Treasurer), Robbie Kershaw, (Secretary),  
Chris Williams, Lee Tozzi (2019), Louise  
Doyle, Jane Hadjion, Dayo Sowunmi

### Volunteers

Alexandra Babington, Thanisa Nariythaphan,  
Molly Davis, Alda Balthrop-Lewis, Chiena  
Ozougwu, Jessica Francis, Paul Eikelboom,  
Mo Borghetto, Mai Kieu Pham, May Jones,  
Elena Ryan, Brittany Wollermann, Arianna  
Lim, Meigan Lefebure, Jack Blain-Allen,  
Vanessa Macaulay, Tanya Trapanai, Lawson  
Chan, Lara Laverty, Oliver Tandler, Anashe  
Munene, Shayal Naidu, Dai Cac Ma, Jenny  
Douglas, Sophie Matthews, Alexandra Morin,  
Elizabeth Valerie, Charlene Chen, Cassandra  
Hogan, William de Souza, Daniela Pecoraro,  
Sufie Lemaire, Casey Burke, Grace Arnold,  
Victorian Sheppard, Alana Goldberg, Alice  
McKegg, Cindy Nguyen, Callum Rogers,  
Elizabeth Twomey, Shreya Howladar, Suprina  
Shakya, Ruby Power & Melissa Buckley.



# Looking to the future

A key goal is to empower people from our community to develop improved pathways to meaningful employment across the system we operate in – from plough to plate. We will do this whilst nurturing our skill in community development as well as therapeutic and occupational programs. We guide our community towards their full potential by listening and remaining relevant to them.

## **Some of our key goals for the next 3 years include:**

- We will celebrate together with the people in schools, councils and communities by creating three more food hubs, and communal spaces to gather, learn and promote wellbeing.
- We will develop self-sustaining employment and enterprise pathway programs for our participants from plough to plate, gardener to farmer.
- Increase capacity to employ 3 people from the public housing estates to sell the culturally appropriate breads based on a 'buy one, give one' model.
- Lead Victoria with a Cultivating Community. Let's Keep Cooking program across Melbourne.



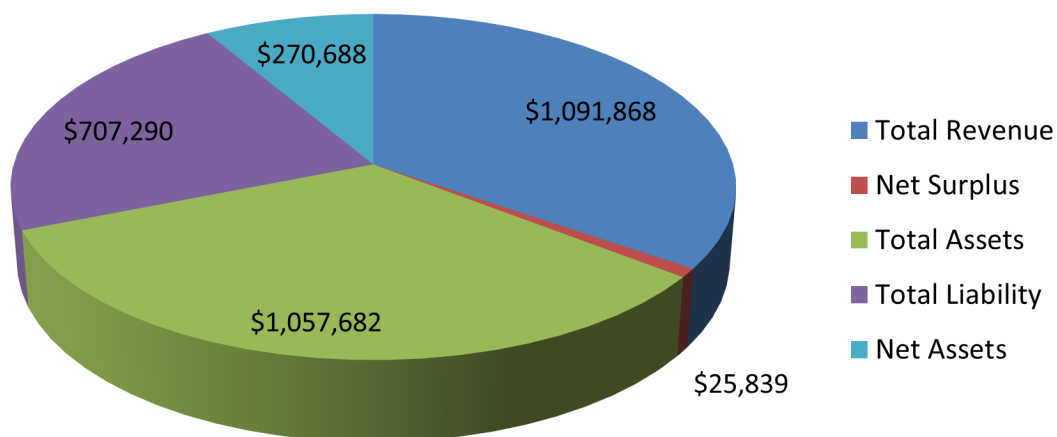


# Financial Summary

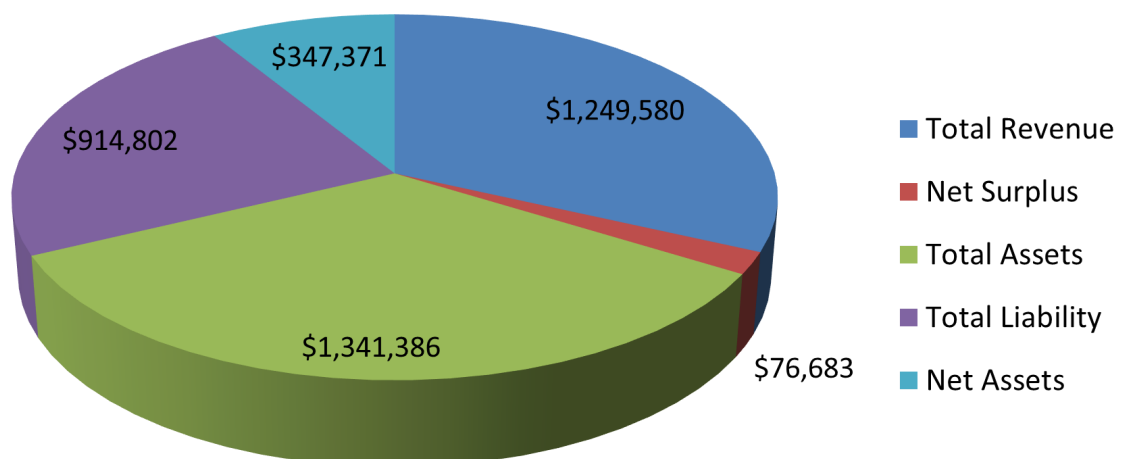
2019/2020 has seen an increase in revenue and surplus. This surplus is in the context of a challenging year financially for the global economy. Cultivating Community has been robust in our management of job keeper and cash boost payments from the Government.

The next year will see the establishment of an Audit and Risk Committee to offer extra scrutiny to our financial systems and guide us towards the opportunities that are ahead. Further information can be made available via the Financial Statements for the organisation.

## Year 2019



## Year 2020







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**[cultivatingcommunity.org.au/](http://cultivatingcommunity.org.au/)**