

**Northey Street City Farm**  
*Jagera and Turrbal Land, Meanjin*

# ANNUAL REPORT

- 2022 / 2023 -



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## WE ACKNOWLEDGE

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The Traditional Custodians of the Country on which Northey Street City Farm is located: the Jagera and Turrbal peoples. We respect the continuing connection to land, waters, cultures, and family that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples uphold. We pay respect to Elders past, present, and future.

## OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to be an inspirational working model of a community-based urban permaculture farm which promotes and educates for sustainability.

Northey Street City Farm provides a site for people from all walks of life to volunteer and learn about permaculture principles.

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**Albert Lebbink (left) - Management Committee Coordinator**

## FROM OUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The last year has been full of introspection and change.

The Farm went through a considerable review process of our staff structure and how best to prepare and respond to the next climate induced emergency

Consequently, the Farm has changed its staff management structure to a two-manager system with a reconfiguration of areas of responsibility.

One manager would be responsible for the site, gardens, composting, and all levels of education. The other manager to take charge of our various enterprises including our markets, nursery, and various annual and recurring events as well as the support structures that keep the Farm operational.

After casting a wide net for the most suitable people to fill these positions we found the right people were already long-term staff members. Emma Brindal was appointed as Education and Farming Manager and Simon Calcinai our Enterprise and Support Manager. Both have now been in their respective positions for a number of months, and both have confirmed our trust and faith in them to move the Farm forward after a challenging few years.

Several other staff changes have contributed to a fresher, younger, talented team. Jake O'Reilly has taken over from Simon as the Market Coordinator and Cristyan Leal has taken over from Emma as our Youth Education Coordinator.

Other changes occurred because of the staff changes and as people went on to other endeavours. Kate Fardell took over from Karen Lavin as our Promotions and Administration Coordinator.

Long term staff member Adnan Al-Abdulla left to a more challenging position and we welcomed Andrew Nielsen as our new Finance Coordinator. Michael Wardle, our Adult Education Coordinator, also moved on to new challenges and we welcomed back long-term supporter of the Farm, Gavin Hardy.

Our longest serving staff member, Veronica Martin, affectionately known as Ronni, has moved into retirement and can still be regularly see at the Farm contributing in a volunteer capacity.

After eight years and many different roles at the Farm, Desi Achilleos has moved to Melbourne to pursue new challenges and be closer to family.

As well as the considerable staff changes, we were still dealing with the impacts of the floods and the difficulty getting trades people to complete repairs and new projects to make the Farm more resilient.

Amongst all these challenges we were still able to offer several educational opportunities to our members and broader community. The Nursery has steadily been improving its image and range of products. A successful Winter Solstice Festival program was enjoyed by many thanks to many staff but particularly the efforts of Kai Kamada-Laws.

Bob has continued to engage the youngest members in our community with his Earth Arts program.

Neale McAlpine, along with his trusted volunteers has been maintaining and improving the site, providing lunches for staff, volunteers, and guests, as well as coordinating the various projects that are currently being progressed including improvements to the toilet block and kitchen area.



With so many changes, it's been a big challenging year, but we are slowly coming together as a team with commitment and shared values and are looking forward to a more stable, productive, and enjoyable year ahead.

I wish to record my sincere thanks and appreciation to all our staff, Management Committee members, volunteers and supporters for their perseverance and commitment through what has been a challenging time.

-Albert



Participants reconnected with nature and self and developed skills and understanding about topics such as biomes and food security, permaculture practices, Indigenous culture, school gardening, and the links between outdoor education and the Australian curriculum.

Thank you to our wonderful team of casual education staff, guest presenters, volunteers, schoolteachers, educators, and families who said Yes to nature's call and helped us spread the seeds of transformation in 2022-23. Let's keep the good energy flowing... Woooooosh!

## EDUCATING CHANGE-MAKERS

NSCF gardens and orchards have been a welcoming place for people of different ages and abilities to learn, play, build stronger and healthier communities, and get inspired to be change-makers.

Our outdoor lessons and hands-on activities supported over a thousand children, educators, and families in the last financial year, led by Emma Brindal until early March, and is now led by Cristyan Leal.



"I liked building the shelter and doing games. I also liked gardening and I learned a lot about trees" – Erica, age 8, Earth Kids Homeschool participant

# EARTH ARTS

NSCF Earth Arts is only possible because of the commitment to nature by the whole Farm team. My commitment is to coming early and staying late Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Being present makes things work. Leslie maintains a Facebook link. Kerrie is a great help particularly in site management. Kate does a great job in promotion as did Karen. Richard and Barbara provide heart-felt base support.



Simon and Emma inspire by dedication. Earth Arts is maintained by active parental support. Melissa and Michael are long term regulars. Erica too. Ollie's free tea helps a lot on Sundays. Earth Arts promotes spontaneous play as a primal part of education.

- Bob





## ADULT EDUCATION

We ran two Permaculture Design Courses, four short courses, and 21 Sustainable Living Workshops over 2022-23. The workshop topics were hugely diverse, ranging from no-dig gardening and worm farming to medicinal herbs, making rocket stoves and "The Work that Reconnects". We had 324 people attend our educational program throughout the year.

The end of 2022-23 marked a significant change for adult education as we farewelled Michael Wardle who was Adult Education Coordinator for six years. Michael led the program through the COVID-19 period, created some excellent new offerings such as the Serious Backyard Abundance short course and, alongside Ronni Martin, managed NSCF's hosting of the Australasian Permaculture Convergence in April 2021.

We welcomed to the role Gavin Hardy, who has had various positions at the Farm since 1996 including MC Coordinator, PDC teacher, youth education mentor, and Design Group leader. Gav is a Churchill Fellow, engineer, and landscape architect with skills, knowledge and passion for community agroforestry.



"Excellent workshop! So grateful for the opportunity to be involved... guided with care and love" - Ecological Despair and Empowerment workshop attendee

# SITE MAINTENANCE & DEVELOPMENT

Managing a 2.5 hectare site involves a lot of work, and under the guidance of Neale, our Site Coordinator, our Site Team has done a great job keeping the farm well-maintained and supporting all the activities we do here. The first few months of 2022-23 involved getting the site back on track after the flood.



We have a wonderful team of site volunteers and want to give a big thanks in particular to Duncombe, Matt, Michael, and Frank for their efforts.



**"Butchie"**

In early 2023, we received some support through Brisbane City Council's Flood Resilience program, with help to develop a draft plan for preparing us for future floods. Following this, we were selected to join the Building Phase of the Rebuild and Recover Flood Resilient Communities Program.

Our design group has also started making plans for upgrading flood resilience at the farm as well as plans for new site projects to be implemented in the next financial year.



Our community compost hub reopened in May and has been contributing to reducing food waste going to landfill, as well as producing lots of great compost for the farm. In the latter part of the financial year, we started preparing our allotment beds to reopen.

Throughout the year we had dozens of volunteers join us. A big shout out to Frank for all his amazing energy that has helped both Farming and Site teams and also to our kitchen crew including James, Tristan, and Ian, who have done a wonderful job of feeding us using produce from our gardens as well as from donations from Oz Harvest.

## FARMING

After experiencing contamination from the floods in February 2022, we did some soil bioremediation using plants to draw out the toxins. In early 2023 we had our soil re-tested and were delighted to find that the contamination was resolved, and the garden beds were ready to be replanted.





## CITY FARM NURSERY

City Farm Nursery specialises in permaculture plants which include a range of edibles, medicinal herbs, natives and perennials that improve soil health and support biodiversity. Over the past year, the Nursery team enjoyed helping our community grow their food, and cultivate their gardens, throughout the seasons, wherever they were in their sustainable journey. Staff delighted in providing advice to those who had just started out and celebrated with experienced home growers on their harvesting success.

The heart of our achievements lies in the outstanding dedication of our volunteers who nurtured a diverse array of over 400 species. Their hard work extended to propagating our organic range, constructing display gardens, and contributing to major events including the Summer and Winter Solstice celebrations.

The Site Team was instrumental in the realisation of major projects, such as the renovation of the volunteer area. This transformation now also serves as an educational hub for weekend workshops and a tranquil café on Sundays.

As we reflect on the year that has passed, our gratitude extends to every individual who made it possible. Belinda Kau, Mia Weir, Roberta Romalho, Lizzie Gallagher, Alexander Jamieson, and the entire team of volunteers who have shared their expertise and time selflessly. Looking forward, we remain committed to nurturing growth, sustainability, and community in the year to come.



We continue to participate in Brisbane City Council's Free Native Plant program and have supplied thousands of native plants for local residents.

# ORGANIC FARMERS MARKET

In May, Jake O'Reilly took over the role of Market Coordinator from Simon Calcinai who had been running the Market for the past five years. Jake is thoroughly enjoying his work at the farm, and has been successful in collaborating with stallholders in order to keep the Market thriving.



At 30 June 2023, we had a total of 121 stalls, and the Market has returned to pre-COVID levels of busyness. The NSCF Pie Stall regularly sells out, and our Coffee Stall sales are slowly improving.





## FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT

We thank our First Nations Advisory Group: Dominique Chen, Michael Williams, Derek Sandy and Jacob Birch for their involvement during the year. In October we took down our worn-out Aboriginal flag and replaced it with a new one in a special ceremony with Dom and Derek. We developed and approved a Farm First Nations Engagement Policy, to ensure that NSCF respects First Nations people, their rights, and their knowledge in all our activities.

Now that NSCF has integrated First Nations engagement across all activities, the Decolonisation Action Group has shifted its purpose to be a space for us to explore personal and organisational approaches to decolonisation.

Two Grow Share Yarn Sessions 'for mob, by mob', led by Dom were held in September and December 2022 to build connections around urban-based bush foods and medicines. Earth Kids programs featured sessions from Dom and Arlo Chen and a Tools of Survival session from Derek Sandy. Early-stage planning has begun to have Batjala man, Bruce Phillips, founder of Murri Tukka, deliver native foods workshops at the farm after many years of Dick Copeman running workshops in this space. Dom has done the bulk of the work on the Growing on Country resource enabled by a grant we received from Bank Australia. This will be launched later in 2023.

Our Winter Solstice Festival featured a Bush Tukka workshop by Bruce Phillips a DJ set by Dameeeela - Yuggera DJ, artist, and NSCF youth educator - and a very special Welcome to Country by Derek Sandy.

We continued to raise funds through our Pay it Forward program for the Nursery to provide plants to First Nations organisations. This year we donated plants to the Murri School and to the Deebing Creek Protection Camp. Very sadly, the Protection Camp was bulldozed by land developers earlier this year.

# EVENTS

After several challenging years, the NSCF events programme is back in full swing. This wouldn't have been possible without our team of committed volunteers led by Kai Kamada-Laws. We held three film nights, three “veg-table”s, an intimate Summer Solstice Festival, and a vibrant Winter Solstice Festival - the most community-driven and inclusive Farm event in recent history.





# THANK YOU

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Northey Street City Farm is a self-funded organisation, and we couldn't deliver on our purpose without the support of countless individuals and organisations. We would especially like to acknowledge the following:

- Our members
  - Our volunteers
  - Our donors
  - Our stallholders
  - Market and Nursery customers
  - The NSCF First Nations Advisory Group
  - Brisbane City Council
  - The Queensland Government
  - Bank Australia
  - OzHarvest
  - Plantfulness
  - The Watershed Association
  - Carnival Republic
  - Brereton Street
  - The microbes
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