

## Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program: Independent academic evaluation summary



University of Melbourne/Deakin University evaluation 2009<sup>1</sup>

An evaluation of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program was undertaken between 2007 and 2009, by a joint research team from the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing & Behavioural Sciences, Deakin University and the McCaughey Centre: VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing, University of Melbourne. The findings were extremely positive and demonstrated that the Kitchen Garden Program is encouraging positive health behaviour change in participating children. The evaluation also showcased the transfer of benefits to the home and the broader community.

The key findings of the evaluation are as follows:

- 🍷 There was strong evidence of increased child willingness to try new foods including a significant difference between program and comparison schools.
- 🍷 There was evidence of statistically significant increases in child knowledge, confidence and skills in cooking and gardening.
- 🍷 The kitchen classes were greatly enjoyed by children, and the children at program schools were significantly more likely than children from comparison schools to report that they liked cooking 'a lot'.
- 🍷 Children's competent use of knives in the kitchen appeared to be particularly valued by all stakeholders as evidence of skill but also as a symbol of trust.

<sup>1</sup> Block K, Johnson B, Gibbs L, Staiger P, Townsend M, Macfarlane S, Gold L, Long C, Kulas J, Okoumunne OC, Waters E, (2009) Evaluation of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program: Final Report. Melbourne: McCaughey Centre. Full report available: <https://mspgh.unimelb.edu.au/centres-institutes/centre-for-health-equity/research-group/jack-brockhoff-child-health-wellbeing-program/research/physical-health-and-wellbeing/evaluation-of-the-stephanie-alexander-kitchen-garden-program>



- The program was considered particularly effective at engaging ‘non-academic learners’ and children with challenging behaviours.
- The program helped to create links between schools and the community. This was often noted as one of the program’s most important outcomes.
- Transfer of program benefits to the home environment was not one of the goals of the program but is emerging as a flow-on benefit.
- The program is associated with substantial financial cost and even greater community investment in terms of the resources of time and materials used.
- Program schools on average generated \$1.93 of additional resources for every \$1 of government funding invested in the Program.

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#### University of Wollongong evaluation 2012<sup>2</sup>

A Department of Health and Ageing funded evaluation of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program was undertaken between 2011 and 2012 by the Centre for Health Service Development at the Australian Health Services Research Institute, University of Wollongong.

The evaluation confirmed the positive impacts of the program, with key findings as below.

- 97% of teachers responded positively to how the program supported classroom learning. They reported that students found the hands-on activities engaging and it aided learning across other subject areas, commenting that the program ‘forms an intrinsic part of our students’ learning’.
- Students in program schools were more likely to report that they would always try new foods as compared to students in comparison schools. The proportion was higher if the students had grown or cooked the foods themselves.
- More children are taking up cooking at home and starting backyard veggie gardens after participating in the program.
- Participating students, staff and school communities all reported that the program had made positive impacts on the school and students.
- Students found the activities of the program to be a positive context for learning across multiple subject areas.
- Teachers and parents reported improvements in students’ social behaviours, with 86% of teachers reporting improvements in students’ teamwork skills and 50% of parents reporting improvements across a range of student behaviours, including modifying previous bullying behaviour, managing difficult behaviour, interacting with people of many ages, leadership skill development and sense of pride in the school.

In particular, teachers commented that the program’s hands-on approach to learning gave students from a range of socio-cultural groups and with differing levels of ability the chance to participate equally and to improve. Teachers reported the following changes in students at risk of social exclusion:

- healthier eating habits

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<sup>2</sup> Yeatman H, Quinsey K, Dawber J, Nielsen W, Condon-Paoloni D, Eckermann S, Morris D, Grootemaat P and Fildes D (2013) Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program Evaluation: Final Report. Centre for Health Service Development, Australian Health Services Research Institute, University of Wollongong. Full report available: <http://ahsri.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@chsd/documents/doc/uow145163.pdf>



- 🍅 more likely to try new and healthy foods
- 🍅 increased participation, engagement and attendance
- 🍅 improved self-esteem and confidence
- 🍅 increased opportunities to learn differently
- 🍅 advancement in different areas
- 🍅 further developed life skills
- 🍅 improved social skills and communication.

Parents shared that as a result of the program:

- 🍅 children always tried new foods if they'd grown or cooked them
- 🍅 children liked cooking more and helped with cooking more often at home
- 🍅 children asked parents to cook the foods from the program
- 🍅 parents prepared more meals at home
- 🍅 children exhibited greater confidence with garden activities
- 🍅 students reported that they learnt new things in the garden
- 🍅 parents reported they worked more in their home garden with their children.

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### University of Melbourne: Evaluation 2019<sup>3</sup>

From 2018-2019 the University of Melbourne: Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health conducted a study into the long-term impact of the Kitchen Garden Program on young adults who participated in the program at primary school.

The research found that the program positively influenced participant lives through:

- 🍅 Cooking skills (75%)
- 🍅 Cooking behaviours (64%)
- 🍅 Enjoyment of school (58%)
- 🍅 Health (45%)
- 🍅 Wellbeing (32%)
- 🍅 Study choices (13%)
- 🍅 Career aspirations (11%)

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### Policy ask

That the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation be resourced adequately to continue disseminating the Kitchen Garden Program, and produce further research and evaluation that demonstrates Australia as the leader in pleasurable food education.

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## The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program: Contributing to mental health and wellbeing



The impact of Covid-19 on child and family mental health and wellbeing has been well-documented.

Results of the recent 'Covid-19 Unmasked' survey showed that 15–20% of young children had mild to moderate emotional or behavioural difficulties including anxiety, irritability, depression and sleep disturbance as an indirect impact of the pandemic due to disruptions and loss, resulting in a strong negative effect on wellbeing.<sup>1</sup>

In 'Tracking Wellbeing Outcomes During the Covid-19 Pandemic', one in five parents or carers (20.8%) reported that they needed mental health and wellbeing support for their children during the pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

Children and young people have struggled to adapt to interruptions to their regular routines, cancellation of sports and pleasurable activities, extended periods of social isolation and increased familial stress.<sup>3</sup>

Compared with older age groups, they have experienced high rates of psychological distress, loneliness and educational disruption.<sup>4</sup>

According to the Murdoch Children's Research Institute report on COVID-19 on Child and Adolescent Health:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/victorian-kids-mental-health-hit-hardest-during-2020>

<sup>2</sup> <https://csmr.cass.anu.edu.au/research/publications/tracking-wellbeing-outcomes-during-covid-19-pandemic-october-2021-putting>

<sup>3</sup> [https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/ahrc\\_khl\\_covid-19\\_2020.pdf](https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/ahrc_khl_covid-19_2020.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/covid-19-and-young-people>



‘The main risks to children and adolescents’ health in this pandemic continues to be due to indirect effects on mental health, wellbeing and education, which are worsened by continued lockdowns and school closures.’<sup>5</sup>

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### **Gardening, cooking and sharing food creates social connection and engagement**

An important predictor of mental health is social connectedness. An evaluation of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program shows strong evidence of positive social outcomes for children, schools and communities involved in the Kitchen Garden Program.<sup>6</sup>

Working in the kitchen and garden in groups creates opportunities for children and young people to work with others beyond their usual friendship groups, teaching them valuable skills in teamwork and offering a means for widening social networks.

Further connections are built through an inclusive and immersive program that links family and community engagement for social cohesion and community pride.

Reflections from school educators and a principal involved in the evaluation highlight that:

‘The program was providing a way for parents from a non-English speaking background to be more involved in their children’s education. At this school several parents volunteered in the kitchen who would have been uncomfortable doing so in the classroom because of their lack of English language proficiency. (Kitchen garden school teacher)’<sup>7</sup>

The kitchen garden program is invaluable for strengthening connections within the school community:

‘My children started at our school in 2020 and covid disruptions were difficult for making connections. I volunteered in the garden program and it helped me meet teachers, my kids classmates and other parents.’ (Parent of child participating in the program)<sup>8</sup>

And can help at risk students stay engaged with school:

‘It is wonderful seeing the children excited to be out in the garden during recess and lunch because they want to be. I have had students that were struggling in their academic subjects and have reengaged with school because of the opportunities the garden. They are enjoying coming to school once again and feel a great sense of purpose.’ (Kitchen garden school teacher)<sup>7</sup>

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### **Good food improves mood**

Research demonstrates the links between consuming fresh foods (particularly vegetables and fruits) and improvements in mental health. Low mood states can be lifted by avoiding discretionary foods such as processed foods. Replacing those foods with core foods like vegetables and fruits leads to improvements in emotional regulation, cognitive function and sleep quality. Not surprisingly, also leading to better learning outcomes.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [covid-19-and-child-and-adolescent-health-140921.pdf \(mcri.edu.au\)](https://www.mcri.edu.au/covid-19-and-child-and-adolescent-health-140921.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>  [\(PDF\) Growing community : the impact of the Stephanie Alexander kitchen garden program on the social and learning environment in primary schools \(researchgate.net\)](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354111111_Growing_community_the_impact_of_the_Stephanie_Alexander_kitchen_garden_program_on_the_social_and_learning_environment_in_primary_schools)

<sup>7</sup> Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation Community Survey, 2021

<sup>8</sup> Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation Community Survey, 2021

<sup>9</sup> [Food, Mood and the Classroom – National Education Summit](https://www.nationaleducationsummit.gov.au/food-mood-and-the-classroom)





Through participating in the Kitchen Garden Program, children and young people are empowered with the confidence, knowledge, skills and inspiration to grow and cook fresh, seasonal *delicious* food. Their willingness to try new fruits, vegetables and herbs is increased and their access to fresh, seasonal, affordable and nourishing food at school and at home is improved.

‘Both my kids love this program and I have found my daughter who is a fussy eater has been more willing to try things and even asking for some of those things at home. We have our own vegetable garden at home and the kids have been requesting to grow new things.’ (Parent of child participating in the program)

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### **Being outdoors enhances feelings of calm and positivity**

Gardening has helped many people through the pandemic connect with nature, release stress and increase physical activity.

The recent study, ‘Gardening can relieve human stress and boost nature connection during the COVID-19 pandemic’, concludes that:

‘Gardening can offer an array of positive biophilic interactions to treat acute stress, while also being an important food system resilience strategy by incorporating agricultural spaces to diversify production sources. In conclusion, gardening should be readily accessible and available to all people for current and future societal health.’<sup>10</sup>

School gardens offer children, young people and their communities increased access to the sensory and therapeutic benefits of green spaces.

‘They have somewhere to go at lunch times where they can do something other than sit around or play sport. They like the gardening and chickens, it helps them feel good when they have a hard time with friends.’ (Educator at a program school)<sup>7</sup>

Added to the sensory and emotional benefits, outdoor learning environments are an invaluable resource which have assisted member schools with more covid-safe options for face-to-face learning.

More examples of how the program contributes to wellbeing are available at be seen at [www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/content/kitchen-garden-program-wellbeing](http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/content/kitchen-garden-program-wellbeing), and examples of how the kitchen garden program is used to celebrate diversity can be viewed at [www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/content/students-celebrating-diversity-through-food](http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/content/students-celebrating-diversity-through-food).

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### **Policy ask**

Ensure all schools and services are supported to provide children and young people with access to gardening and cooking programs that support good nutrition, mental health and social connectedness, thereby improving health and wellbeing outcomes.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1618866722000267?dgcid=coauthor>

## The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program: Enhancing sustainability, food security and the environment



A survey of 10,000 children and young people aged 16-25 years, across 10 countries including Australia, revealed that 59% were very or extremely worried and 84% were at least moderately worried about climate change.<sup>1</sup>

With the 2019-20 bushfires still a vivid memory, Australian children and young people have a growing awareness of climate issues.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted cracks in the current food system. Long and complex food supply chains have proven unable to respond to surges in demand, and interruptions to supply chain logistics have resulted in some food shortages.<sup>2</sup>

The Foodbank Hunger Report 2021 found that in addition to the one in six adults who are severely food insecure in Australia, 1.2 million children are living in food-insecure households.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/Consumer-Business/gx-cb-a-shock-to-the-food-system.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://reports.foodbank.org.au/wp-content/uploads/documents/2021-Foodbank-Hunger-Report-PDF.pdf>



Teaching children and young people to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh, seasonal produce, embeds the passion, knowledge and curiosity to be part of local, sustainable and regenerative food production and consumption practices.

With eco-anxiety contributing to distress, kitchen and garden classes empower children and young people with practical skills to approach the climate emergency and improve food security.

Australia's quality standards on early childhood education and care call for childcare services to support children to become environmentally responsible.

The Kitchen Garden Program is an effective, low-cost and adaptable model for teaching sustainability in schools and services. Children are provided with regular and meaningful opportunities to experience the natural environment through kitchen garden classes.

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Aldavilla Public School, a Kitchen Garden Program school, was the recipient of the 2021 Sustainable Schools NSW School of the Year Award.

The school's journey toward sustainability started with the introduction of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program and grew from there.

'Our students alternate between a gardening class one week and cooking class the next. Part of their learning includes seed saving, planting, making compost and worm farm management, all of which contribute to growing plants that they will eventually turn into food as part of our paddock to plate concept.' (School Principal)<sup>4</sup>

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An education in sustainability is very important to Australian families, as evidenced by the following quotes, just a few of hundreds collected from the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation Community Survey 2021.

'A good school community and educational program should keep these key areas of health in mind: healthy mind, healthy body, healthy life. Eating healthy, growing food, learning about the earth and its seasons is all taught in school, but all this teaching is intricately linked to the flourishing and healthy existence of our soil, and our land. Climate change is also real. Composting and managing our organic waste, and choosing healthy foods and how to cook with them, is all part of looking after our planet, mitigating climate change in our own backyard, and teaching our next generation of leaders. A garden is an open science lesson. A kitchen is an opportunity to teach biology, nutrition, science even!'

'I want my children connected to nature and food production. If young people are not connected to nature and quality food production why would they value these things in their lives?'

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<sup>4</sup> <https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/latest-news/being-a-green-school-is-the-new-black>



‘It’s important that kids are taught about the interconnectedness of where food comes from, how food waste is handled, and how to cook good food. The school has a strong focus on sustainability in general, and the program is a really important part of that.’

‘It is important that our children learn to cook and grow their own food. It is also important to learn sustainable practices that are integrated into their education through DOING, not just learning about it on paper.’

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Implementing the Kitchen Garden Program also positively influences the physical school environment. School gardens act to green underutilised spaces, improve biodiversity, sequester carbon and reduce the heat island effect. This makes the schoolyard more comfortable, more usable and more sustainable.

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**Policy ask**

All schools have a responsibility to teach sustainability. Every school should be supported to give children and young people the opportunity to learn real skills and sustainability concepts in a hands-on way through a kitchen garden program.

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## The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program: Creating vocational pathways



The hospitality sector has long suffered shortages of skilled staff, relying heavily on an international workforce to fill openings and keep the industry running. With changes to boarder restrictions as a result of the pandemic, chefs, managers and sommeliers are in short supply. Currently, more than 46,000 jobs remain unfilled in the hospitality industry nationwide.<sup>1</sup>

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The gross value for Australian agriculture in 2019-2020 was \$61 billion<sup>2</sup>, yet there are only 2300 students in Australia who study agriculture in Year 12, with about five jobs per graduate, according to Scott Graham, Head of Agriculture at Barker College and recent Prime Minister's Prize winner.

Mr Graham highlights the power of agriculture to address food security, sustainability and climate change, recognising that agriculture is a powerful STEM subject, involving science, technology, engineering, maths and business. He is currently working on a PhD at Charles Sturt University investigating how to improve student uptake in agricultural studies.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/restaurant-industry-facing-critical-shortage-of-chefs-managers-and-sommeliers-20210513-p57rn1.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/value-agricultural-commodities-produced-australia/latest-release>



For over 20 years, the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program has introduced children and young people to the wonder of gardening and cooking. As well as teaching valuable life skills, the program has exposed thousands of students to vocational opportunities in hospitality, agriculture and horticulture.

One past kitchen garden program student reflects on how their experience at school influenced their journey into horticulture:

‘It makes real differences in young people’s lives ... I’m living proof! I was a participant in the State Schools Gardening Competition 1981-86 and have gone on to study Horticulture at Burnley, attain a B.App Sci in Environmental Management, the first full-time ongoing School Sustainability Educator, teach Horticulture in a men’s prison and at TAFE. I was infected with the garden bug at school and it’s become a lifelong passion.’<sup>3</sup>

.....

Another graduate relates the power of the program to teach real skills that helped in their apprenticeship:

‘My knife skills definitely, because before I even got to my apprenticeship I already had knife skills from being in the program. So, knife skills, the knowledge of how food grows and all that sort of stuff. The program gives you basically your first six or seven months of your apprenticeship in like 2 years. That’s how big it is. I don’t think we actually realised the first six months of your apprenticeship you’re literally learning what you could be learning at seven or eight even.’<sup>4</sup>

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‘Our school having the program was the main reason I chose the school. I work in agriculture and have such a passion for our food and fibre production in Australia, I really wanted a city school to foster the children with a passion for understanding where their food comes from.’ (Parent of child participating in the program)

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More examples of how the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program is utilised in developing employability skills are available at [www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/content/adapting-kitchen-garden-program-secondary-years](http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/content/adapting-kitchen-garden-program-secondary-years)

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### Policy ask

Ensure all children have the opportunity to learn to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh, seasonal, delicious produce from school gardens and kitchens, equipping them with valuable life skills and introducing them to and equipping them for potential careers in agriculture, horticulture and hospitality.

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<sup>3</sup> The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation Community Survey 2021

<sup>4</sup> [www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/sites/default/files/Files/UoM\\_SAKG\\_Eval\\_Report\\_Final%20AUG%202019.pdf](http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au/sites/default/files/Files/UoM_SAKG_Eval_Report_Final%20AUG%202019.pdf)

## THEORY OF CHANGE

### WHY?

Increasing incidence of obesity in Australian children and young people, with 1 in 4 experiencing overweight or obesity.

Schools and early childhood services are a logical setting for building the food literacy and behavioural change required to turn this health crisis around, yet state-wide curriculums are falling short on delivering effective food education.

Food security and climate change continue unabated, impacting the health and wellbeing of current and future generations.

Evidence suggests that providing hands-on, contextual learning opportunities, delivered through kitchen and garden settings, improves educational outcomes across diverse curriculum areas, while also supporting student retention, school enjoyment and parent engagement.

### IMPACT SETTINGS

### WHAT HAPPENS

### OUTCOMES

### IMPACT

### VISION



Early Childhood Services

Primary and Secondary Schools



Home environments



Broader community\*

Pleasurable food education is a fun, hands-on approach to teaching children and young people about fresh, seasonal, *delicious* food, delivered through the KGP.



Children and young people learn how to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh, seasonal and environmentally sustainable food in their school or early childhood service.



Pleasurable food education influences the home food environment and engages local communities.



The kitchen garden program is used as a contextual learning environment for curriculum integration.



\*Communities experiencing social and economic disadvantage where the health and wellbeing needs are greatest require additional support.

#### HEALTH & WELLBEING

Children and young people have the confidence, knowledge, skills and inspiration to grow and cook fresh, seasonal food. Willingness to try new fruits, vegetables and herbs is increased.

Children and young people have increased access to fresh, seasonal, affordable and nourishing food at school and at home with their family, friends and community.

Fewer children and young people experience the long-term impacts of overweight and obesity.

Food cultures are positively influenced, community awareness of the role that fresh, seasonal food plays in health and wellbeing increases. Opportunities are created to build cultural and social understanding through sharing cooking and gardening knowledge.

Children, young people and their communities have increased access to the sensory and therapeutic benefits of green spaces. More time is spent being physically active outdoors.

Volunteering and pleasurable food events create opportunities for local community engagement. Social cohesion, community pride and connections are built.

#### LEARNING

Learning and development outcomes including STEM, literacy, cultural studies, health, physical education and the arts are enhanced through hands-on, contextual learning in the kitchen and garden. Vocational skills and pathways are created.

Children and young people from a range of socio-cultural groups and with differing levels of ability can participate equally, build resilience and achieve. Those at risk of disengaging from school are more inspired to participate.

Soft skills such as communication, leadership, critical thinking, planning, teamwork, inclusivity, giving back and reciprocity are enhanced.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Children and young people understand where their food comes from and the environmental impacts of food choices. They learn to grow their food locally, seasonally and sustainably, while reducing food waste.

Children and young people are more connected to the natural environment, and through knowledge and skills attainment feel empowered to make positive and sustainable choices for the environment.

Green space is increased, improving air quality, biodiversity, helping to cool the local environment, and reducing CO2 emissions.

Children and young people and their communities have improved health and wellbeing for life.



Children and young people form positive food habits for life.

Learning outcomes for children and young people are improved.



Environmental impacts of food choices are improved. Environmental awareness and behaviour change is nurtured.



### STEPHANIE ALEXANDER KITCHEN GARDEN FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES:

We provide the inspiration, information, professional development and support for any interested educational setting or health body to access and deliver pleasurable food education.

- Support schools and services to implement a sustainable KGP, taking a whole-school or whole-service approach
- Provide kitchen garden program expertise, guidance and support

- Deliver professional development
- Develop educational and curriculum-aligned resources
- Offer a staged program framework to achieve best practice over time

- Evaluate, research and share knowledge
- Advocate for pleasurable food education in the Australian Curriculum

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program is regarded as a global leader in pleasurable food education, aligned with both internationally and nationally recognised social and environmental initiatives, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs are a universal set of 17 goals acting as an urgent call to action for countries to help end global poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all by the end of 2030. The Foundation focuses on the six goals that most strongly align with our mission.

## OFFICIAL UN SDG SAKGF CONTRIBUTIONS and IMPACT

<p><b>2</b> ZERO HUNGER</p> 	<p>Children and young people learn to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh, seasonal produce, improving nutrition and access to food.</p>	<p>Through hands-on experience and skills development, children, young people and their communities are empowered to grow and prepare their own food, sustainably.</p>	<p>Curriculum links encourage social understanding, allowing children and young people to be active participants in local food systems, enabling them to affect change.</p>
<p><b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p> 	<p>A continuum of pleasurable food education from early childhood to secondary years creates a passion for fresh produce, practical skills, and a focus on a sustainable world.</p>	<p>The Kitchen Garden Program improves food literacy, increases physical activity, allows access and connection to nature, and provides associated sensory and therapeutic benefits.</p>	<p>The Program connects with members of the broader community, and works in other settings, facilitating intergenerational knowledge sharing and a wellbeing focus for all.</p>
<p><b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION</p> 	<p>Adaptable learning materials and membership options allow participants from a range of socio-cultural groups and with differing levels of ability to participate equally.</p>	<p>The Program's hands-on contextual learning allows for cross-curricula integration; inspires those at risk of disengaging; and creates vocational skills and pathways.</p>	<p>In a kitchen garden program, families, educators and students work together, with their broader community, supporting the aim of learning for life.</p>
<p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> 	<p>The Program invites engagement and meaningful connections in the broader community. Social cohesion, community pride and connections are built.</p>	<p>Investigations into sustainability and food security are encouraged, teaching students about caring for nature and the planet, helping to shape citizens of the world.</p>	<p>Opportunities are created to build cultural and social understanding through sharing cooking and gardening knowledge.</p>
<p><b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p> 	<p>Teaching children to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh, seasonal produce embeds the passion, skills and curiosity to be part of sustainable food and consumption practices.</p>	<p>Kitchen garden produce is used in kitchen classes, sold or given away to the community. Sustainable practices are emphasised. Waste is negligible.</p>	<p>Garden produce is grown on-site with zero emissions from transport, and garden produce is 100% free of packaging.</p>
<p><b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION</p> 	<p>Children and young people are more connected to the natural environment, empowering them to be advocates for climate change action.</p>	<p>School gardens act to green underutilised spaces, improving air quality and biodiversity, helping to cool the local environment and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.</p>	<p>The environmental impacts of food choices are improved and awareness is embedded to integrate sustainable and environmental practices, supporting the holistic wellbeing of people and planet alike.</p>