



Down's Estate Community Project Business Case

September 2020



Our community activation plan for Down's Estate



Mission and Purpose

of our Incorporated Association

Our purpose is to foster community connection to and care for the environment and each other by establishing a community gathering and learning place at Downs Estate, Seaford.

At all times we respect:

- the Traditional Owners of Down's Estate, the Boon Wurrung and Bunurong, their elders, past and present and their ongoing connection to the land;
- the natural environment surrounding and within parts of Downs Estate;
- the challenge of rapid climate change, balancing human needs with those of the land and its flora and fauna.
- the past, present and future value of the site for the local community and visitors to Frankston City.

Community Consultation for the Business Case

This community consultation survey is your chance to participate in our plans.

It will greatly help us understand the values, needs and interests of our community and the potential opportunities for collaboration to strengthen our project as we grow.



Down's Estate is a 20 hectare site at the northern end of the Seaford Wetlands.

Our group DECP is located on the Old Wells Rd side of the shared user path running through the eastern part of the site.

Frankston City Council purchased Down's Estate in 2006.



Land of the Bunurong and Boon Wurrung people

How can we best respect, acknowledge and learn from Bunurong and Boon Wurrung culture, past and present?

This painting by James W. Curtis is *Lagoon in the Carrum Carrum Swamp - Evening*. It shows the landscape with red gums as it was in this area about 1872 .



The Redgums - a living connection to earlier times, 300+yrs

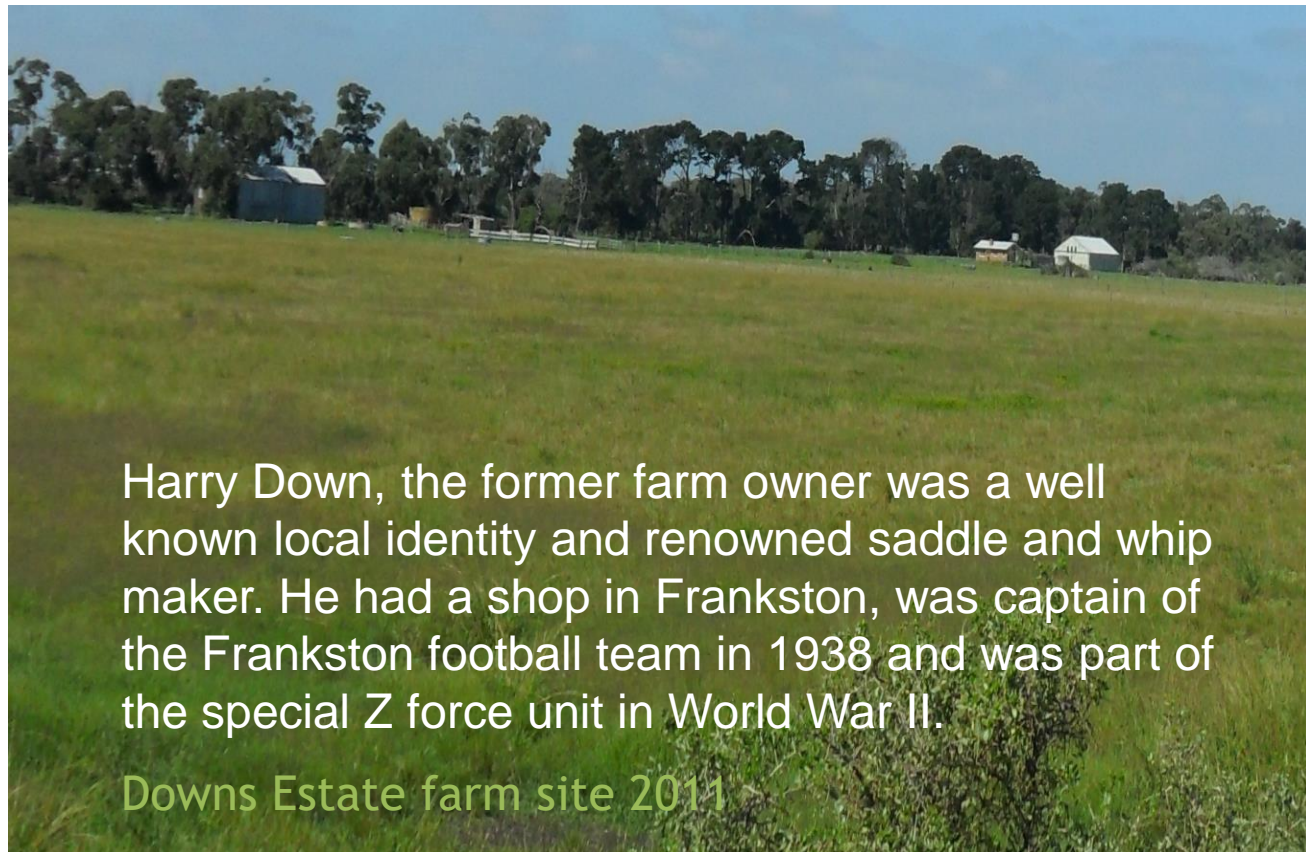
Placemaking at Down's Estate highly values our historic and ecological heritage.

We are designing the natural and built environments to prioritise community and environmental benefit.



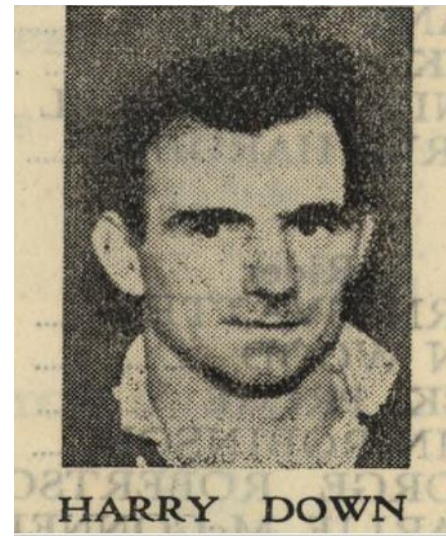
Last farm in Seaford

Down's Estate is recognised as the last farm site in Seaford. DECP is continuing this farming legacy with community driven agriculture and local history projects.



Harry Down, the former farm owner was a well known local identity and renowned saddle and whip maker. He had a shop in Frankston, was captain of the Frankston football team in 1938 and was part of the special Z force unit in World War II.

Downs Estate farm site 2011



Climate Change - finding responses

Mitigating Intensity, Adapting to Impacts

- Creating local food systems: low food miles, low packaging, local resilience
- Rebuilding biodiverse and carbon-rich soil
- Trialling food crops to suit changed conditions
- Increasing vegetation, restoring ecosystems and habitat
- Promoting sustainable lifestyles



Nov 2019
Frankston
Council declared
a climate
emergency
calling for urgent
action.

At least 50%
of the carbon in the
earth's soils has
been released into
the atmosphere over
the past centuries.

Converting food production from a cause of climate change to a solution

Connecting people to their food source and local environment

Community Based

We are a not-for-profit community group with a volunteer Committee of Management.



Interacting in our local community: Gathering at Down's Estate, meetings at Belvedere Community Centre and sharing a community stall at monthly Seaford Farmers Market. We welcome new members to join us.

In our Business Case we have
5 Core Activity Areas

**Urban
Agriculture**

**Ecosystem
Regeneration**

**Farm House
Restoration**

**Community
Gathering**

**Food Sharing
and Healthy
Eating**

Our urban agricultural activities cover a wide range of interests and provide fresh produce for our community.

Urban Agriculture

Indigenous Agriculture

African garden

Market garden

Community garden

Market Garden Youth Training

Plant and seed sale, swap and share

5.1%

of people aged 55 or more were unemployed in 2016

HIGHER THAN VICTORIAN AVERAGE 4.4%



7.7%

of people eat the recommended serves of vegetables

HIGHER THAN VICTORIAN AVERAGE 5.4%



10.4%

of young people are not engaged in full-time education, training or employment

HIGHER THAN VICTORIAN AVERAGE 8.2%



The whole of site plan will be a collaborative undertaking to create a thriving ecosystem for wildlife habitat and for people to enjoy. It will be sensitive to the adjacent Seaford Wetlands environment.



Ecosystem Regeneration

Whole of site plan;

- Food and habitat for wildlife
- Regenerative planting
- Adapting to climate change

90% natural
vegetation lost since
European settlement

534 Indigenous
plant species in
Frankston City

17% tree canopy
coverage across
Frankston City

40 species
(plant and animal)
listed as threatened

All statistics are from Frankston Vision 2040.

The restoration of the Harry Down Farm House will preserve local history, and give a venue for a new community museum. The house will support all the other projects onsite but restoration will depend on obtaining sufficient funding.

Farm House

Restoration of historical house
Community Museum

- Indigenous history
- Local settlement
- Ecology

Weatherproof space for
community and site activities

Food shop/share space

Resources and information
library



Community gathering is at the heart of our community farm. Coming together to learn, create and connect with nature and each other in this iconic place helps build a more resilient community.

21%

of Frankston residents reported high rates of psychological distress
HIGHER THAN VICTORIAN AVERAGE 15.4%



Community Gathering

Workshops, training, collaborations

Learn and work together

Lifeskills and employment

Events and functions

Informal recreation

Contemplative space

Nature play space

Wellbeing connection



The highest rate of family violence police call-outs in Metropolitan Melbourne

Sharing food knowledge, cooking skills and eating meals together are valuable ways we can make and maintain a healthy, strong and connected community. Our plan is to increase these opportunities.

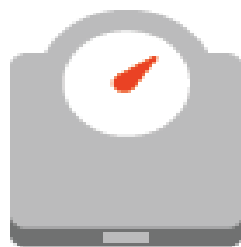
Food Sharing and Healthy Eating

Camp kitchen

Food preparation

Multicultural food

Food sale, swap and share



57%
of people are
overweight or obese
HIGHER THAN VICTORIAN
AVERAGE 51%



Timeline - what we are doing now



Projects in progress

- Site infrastructure
- Community garden
- Orchard
- Sustainable Indigenous Agriculture (UoM research)
- African gardening
- Climate change adaptation
- Share, swap and sell produce
- Community workshops, events and recreation

Timeline - what we are planning to do



Planned 2021-2023

- Continue site infrastructure
- Expand gardening projects
- Urban market garden
- Farm House restoration
- Community Museum
- Revegetation and wildlife habitat planting
- Research, training and science
- Workshops and training
- Community gathering activities

Timeline - looking ahead and dreaming



Future plans 2024 – 2030

- Expand ongoing projects
- Heritage orchard
- Food forest
- Quiet Contemplation Space
- Children's Natural Play Space
- Develop new projects, partnerships and collaborations

SUPPORTERS + STAKEHOLDERS

We appreciate and enjoy engaging with our stakeholders and supporters and look forward to making new and productive relationships.

Frankston & surrounding community
Frankston City Council
University of Melbourne
State + Federal Governments
Belvedere Community Centre
Frankston Environment Friends Network
Friends of Edithvale & Seaford Wetlands
Patterson River Secondary College
Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment
Management Authority
Edithvale Green Grocer
New Harvest Seaford
Permatil - East Timor
Scotsburn Nursery
Afri Aus Care





How can we work together?

- Share our venue
- Collaborate
- Joint events
- In-kind support
- Cross-promotion
- Network
- Link to other groups

How can you help us?



- Bring your skills to share – gardening, cooking, creative, revegetation, science...
- Join in our activities – all welcome!
- Become a member
- Join our committee or a subcommittee
- Like and share our social media posts

Thanks for visiting us at Downs Community Farm



Your input into our community project is invaluable.

Please stay in touch via Facebook, Instagram or sign up for our newsletter on the footer of our website pages.

We hope to restart our working bees onsite in the near future.