

# Down's Estate Community Project Business Case

Down's Estate  
Old Wells Road, Seaford  
October 2020



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## Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the sovereign land of the peoples of the Kulin nations on which we gather. We give thanks to the Bunurong people for their generosity in allowing us to gather in this place, and we respectfully acknowledge all Indigenous elders walking this land through the past, present and future.

Our ongoing gratitude to Pat Bentley, a founding member of Down's Estate Community Working Group (2014-2016) and Down's Estate Community Project (2016 -2020) who passed away July 15, 2020 at age 90. A great local historian, environmental activist and creative spirit, Pat was committed to seeing the stories of Harry Down and the Indigenous connections to Downs Estate brought to life for the community. She is sadly missed across Frankston for her many significant contributions and her integrity and passion is an inspiration to all at DECP.

The current Committee of Management wishes to acknowledge the important contributions of previous Committee members and past and current members and volunteers whose hard work and dedication to our vision for Down's Estate has kept our project growing since 2014.

The University of Melbourne have been our partners in the funding and creation of this business case. Since 2018 we have developed an active relationship with University staff, participating in a substantial agricultural project together on site and benefitting from their expertise and support. Sincere thanks to our colleagues in this undertaking: Dr Nicholas Thomson, Colette Day, Evan Bittner and Dr Dorin Gupta. We wish to acknowledge the passing of Hollis Ashman (FVAS) whose innovative thinking and enthusiasm was greatly appreciated and continues to motivate us.

Special thanks also to our Business Case team members, Henri Muniz (writer) and Regina Orchard and Ashleigh Marlow (communications and social media) for their expertise, dedication and collaborative spirit in creating this business case document.

DECP greatly values the collaboration, support, and investment that Frankston City Councillors and Council Officers have made to this project since 2016 and for part funding this business case. In the next phase, we hope to continue this productive relationship with both Council and our other stakeholders, as we see community collaboration as a key driver of realising the potential of the Down's Estate Community Project.

Finally, we thank the people of Frankston who participated in consultations with us from across the local community, businesses, organisations and local Government, and look forward to having many of them join us in this Project going forward.

## 1) Executive Summary

This business case has been prepared by Down's Estate Community Project (DECP) to outline the proposed ongoing use for the licensed area of Down's Estate site in Seaford, Victoria. It outlines the overall mission of DECP, a vision of the specific projects to be implemented, their benefit to the community and the environment, and a detailed Business Action Plan outlining the process and resources required to achieve these projects.

This business case reflects the ongoing work of a small, dedicated and passionate community group. The work undertaken by DECP on the site since 2017 has been voluntary, and remains a community endeavour whose work presents a vision for the Frankston region in benefit to the wider community.

DECP's mission is to engage the local community through activities that connect people to their food and food sources, the natural environment, and each other. This mission is based around three key focus areas: Placemaking, Community Engagement and Wellbeing, and Urban Agriculture and Science.

Placemaking involves developing the site's capability to host the activities proposed in this business case, through creating spaces and facilities for hosting workshops and events. A sense of place is also created by acknowledging and activating the historical, natural and cultural identity of the site.

Community Engagement and Wellbeing describes the proposed activities on site, encompassing the workshops, events, and educational classes designed to support DECP's overall mission. In addition to this, the site will also seek and engage in proposals from organisations with a community engagement and urban agriculture focus, providing a place to conduct activities in support of the broader mission and the community.

Urban Agriculture and Science relates to the property's use in food production, education, and research. It addresses and responds to core issues of food security, public health, social disconnection and isolation, and secure employment. The business case proposes the development of the property as a small commercial-scale market garden to support this mission area, in addition to the continued use of the established community garden on site. Partnerships with tertiary institutions such as the University of Melbourne will further support this by providing a space in which to conduct education and research in a range of areas including Indigenous agriculture, soil health, sustainable technologies, population health, and natural ecosystems.

The overall vision of DECP is to realise the unique and valuable potential of the site, while honouring its Indigenous and agricultural heritage. DECP recognises that connection to each other and to the environment builds a physically and mentally healthier, more connected and resilient community.

Down's Estate is a historic 20.8-hectare agricultural site located in Seaford and owned by the City of Frankston. Adjacent to the Seaford Wetlands, its location falls within the traditional lands of the Bunurong people of the Kulin nations.

Frankston City Council purchased the site in 2006 to ensure protection of the adjacent RAMSAR-listed Seaford Wetlands, due to the ecological significance of the area having formed part of Carrum Carrum Swamp, and its role in providing habitat to a large array of local and international bird species.

Through the development of a master site plan in 2011, a part of the site was identified by Council as having potential for community use. This potential for community use was further identified by local individuals and groups in 2012 and at that time, they began meeting to gather ideas and develop a plan to turn a part of the site into a community-use area. As a result, Down's Estate Community Project Inc. was formed in 2016 to support this plan, and in 2017 was granted a license by the City of Frankston to use 3 hectares of the site for community activities.

Until such time as COVID-19 restrictions prohibited it, a growing number of people gathered regularly to use the space in this manner – comprising of approximately 30 regular and occasional volunteers, members and visitors, in excess of 50 people attending specific workshops, and up to 200 present at larger community events.

The project responds to a range of significant issues affecting the local community, and by extension, society as a whole. These closely interrelated issues are outlined as a lack of community connection, safety and wellbeing, increasing social inequality, the effects of climate change on local ecosystems and biodiversity, and food security. Most recently these issues have been compounded by the COVID-19 global pandemic, further supporting the vital importance of the project to the local community.

Research currently underway within the Frankston City Council and Mornington Peninsula Shire<sup>1</sup> has highlighted various health and nutrition issues across these municipalities. The research outlines the following key findings:

- A need for more affordable healthy fresh produce that is grown locally.
- A lack of food literacy across the catchment limits people's potential to eat a healthy diet.
- Barriers to healthy eating include both insufficient information and being located in isolated regions.
- Time-saving healthy food options are highly valued when making food choices.

The proposed projects at Down's Estate directly respond to these key findings through their focus on demonstrating how to build an integrated local food system through a community-centred approach.

The multiple benefits that will be achieved through the realisation of this project are broadly categorised into 2 main areas – community and environmental.

Community benefits will be achieved through several means, notably:

- Fostering individual connections within the local community by providing a space to learn and socialise, improving physical and mental health.
- Increasing access and availability of fresh, local food including indigenous and culturally diverse crops.
- Improving food security and community resilience by providing a space for people to grow their own food and through teaching people how to replicate local food production initiatives across other locales.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our\\_Community/Strategic\\_Community\\_Planning/Community\\_Vision\\_2040](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our_Community/Strategic_Community_Planning/Community_Vision_2040) (accessed 13/09/2020)

- Improving community health outcomes through access to healthy foods and physical exercise.
- Providing opportunities to build employment skills and develop hands-on experience among disengaged youth particularly in a range of areas including those related to peri-urban agriculture.

Environmental benefits outlined in this business case cover the following areas:

- Increasing community knowledge in sustainable food production, and environmental regeneration and protection.
- Responding to climate change by reducing the greenhouse gas emissions attributed to commercial food supply chains as a result of transport, processing and packaging.
- Enhancing biodiversity by improving the local ecosystem for Indigenous flora and fauna.
- Demonstrating sustainable agricultural technology and food preparation methods.
- Inspiring the community to care for the environment.

This business case details 5 core activity areas to be implemented at Down's Estate between 2021 and 2024, each of which encompass a range of projects:

- Restoration of the existing farm house on the property and development of a community museum that recognises the deep history and significance of the site.
- Development of urban agriculture projects, including the University of Melbourne's ongoing Sustainable Indigenous Agriculture project, urban market garden, and projects engaging with youth and a range of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
- Food sharing and healthy eating through the development of a Camp Kitchen.
- Ecosystem regeneration both directly through regenerative plantings, and indirectly through education.
- Providing an indoor and outdoor community gathering space for activities, workshops, education and recreation.

Outlines of some proposed future projects between 2025 and 2030 are also included in this business case. Many of these future projects will be co-designed through the large and diverse range of stakeholders wanting to work with this project, covering all levels of Government, not-for-profits, businesses, individuals and community groups.

Of special note is the collaborative relationship established between DECP and the University of Melbourne since 2018. This has resulted in a partnership for the Sustainable Indigenous Agriculture project and for the creation of this business case. This ongoing collaboration brings together the expertise of the University staff and the experience and connections of a well-established community group to explore new sustainability options through research, on-the-ground initiatives and community activities.

Stakeholder engagement remains a core factor in the planning and success of projects, with a series of consultations that are continuing online given the restrictions on face-to-face meetings. The results of these consultations and an associated community survey further support the direction of projects by helping to outline clear financial and social return-on-investment opportunities from the site.

The Business Action Plan (BAP) outlines DECP’s specific goals, actions and resources for implementing each major project from 2021 to 2024. Project success is measured by comparing those goals with the associated timeframes and budget allocated to them.

In 2021, DECP will embark on the creation of a detailed strategic plan, building on the vision for the site outlined in this business case in more detail, focussing on SWOT analyses (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and financial modelling for each project.

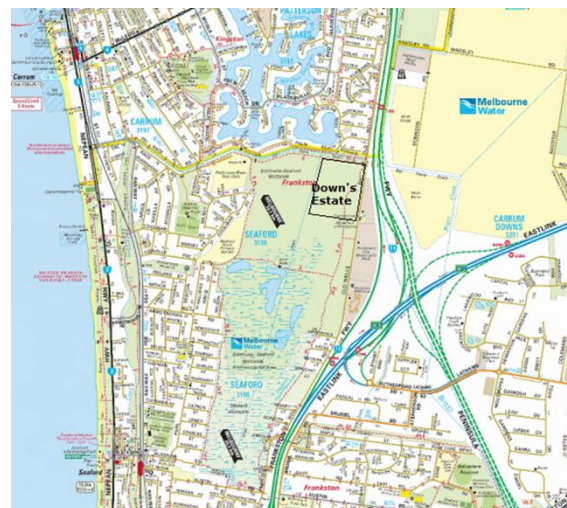
There is a clear need for community driven solutions to the serious and wide-ranging issues facing the Frankston City community, both currently and into the future. By marrying the concepts of community identity and engagement, food security, nutrition, ecosystem regeneration, Indigenous foods, and education, this project concept from DECP continues to play a vital role in the community: by providing a place whereby people can come together to learn about the history and importance of the area to country and people, what is possible and desirable in its future, and build sense of belonging, self-awareness, local identity and community resilience.

## 2) Introduction

This business case for the Down’s Estate Community Project (DECP) licensed area at Down’s Estate in Seaford has been written to clearly outline the current and ongoing value of the site to the local community: in improved health and nutrition, greater community connection and identity, and environmental regeneration and education as a response to climate change. Simply put, the site provides a place for people to come together and become involved in activities that present a net-positive benefit to Frankston City and act as a demonstration to the global community more generally.

The importance of the site has been made all the clearer during the current COVID-19 global pandemic resulting in severe community, business and food supply chain disruptions as widespread lock downs continue to affect Victoria. These issues are compounded by widespread job losses leading to reduced household incomes and food budgets.

Despite the difficulties COVID-19 has imposed on DECP’s capacity to collaborate with stakeholders and each other, we have continued to plan future projects on the site from 2021 to 2023 and beyond, with a major current focus on preserving the existing farmhouse infrastructure and heritage building as part of the wider DECP vision and plan.



Adding to the existing challenges as underlined in the climate emergency declared by Frankston City Council in 2019<sup>2</sup>, the current pandemic has brought into sharp focus the structural weaknesses in our current food and health systems, disproportionately affecting those most vulnerable in the local

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Your\\_Council/Media\\_and\\_Publications/Latest\\_News/Council\\_stands\\_united\\_on\\_climate\\_emergency](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Your_Council/Media_and_Publications/Latest_News/Council_stands_united_on_climate_emergency) (accessed 03/09/2020)



community. Similar to the impacts of the current COVID-19 pandemic, threats from climate change will remain severe, widespread, and long lasting.



DECP's purpose in strengthening community connections and resilience, mitigating the effects of climate change, being innovative in local food security and social enterprise, and contributing to a sense of local identity and belonging through placemaking has never been more relevant as it is today and into the future.

The site presents a unique opportunity for the community by acting as a catalyst for widespread change in finding and implementing sustainable and climate-adapted food supply systems and innovations, enabled and improved by partnerships with the University of Melbourne and other

groups, including South East Water and Peninsula Health.

While recognising the challenge of bringing both funding, collaboration and practical elements together to produce the community benefit outcomes detailed in this business case, DECP strongly believes the investment of time and effort required is worthwhile due to the broad and ongoing community benefit created by the project and will work with partners across local, state and federal levels to mobilise the resources required to realise the project's vision.

### 3) Mission and Purpose

From its inception as Down's Estate Community Working Group in 2014, the mission of DECP has been to realise the immense potential of this former agricultural site in creating a community gathering and learning space while honouring its cultural heritage.

The purpose of DECP is to create and sustain a community gathering place at the iconic Down's Estate site, that engages the wider community in:

- Valuing, connecting with and protecting our environment; and
- meeting human needs in ways that are balanced with the needs of the land and its non-human life.

This is achieved by:

- Respecting the traditional indigenous owners of Down's Estate past current and future connections to and relationship with the land.
- building resilience and capacity in the local community to meet the significant challenges emerging from climate and environmental change.
- enhancing the wellbeing of and community appreciation of the adjacent Seaford Wetlands including by revegetation and creation of wildlife corridors on site.

- providing places for contemplation and engagement with natural spaces; and
- demonstrating, teaching, and practising sustainable agriculture.



DECP recognises that connection to each other and to nature builds a healthier and more resilient community, environment and city, and its values are underpinned by eco-sensitive development and sustainability.

## 4) Down's Estate Site

### 4.1) Site Detail and History

According to the earliest available records, the original inhabitants of the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula area, the Bunurong people, gathered together and collected food in the Seaford Wetland/Down's Estate area which formed part of the Carrum Carrum Swamp.



The 50-acre (20.8 hectare) Down's Estate property is located on Old Wells Road, Seaford, and adjacent to the internationally significant Ramsar-listed Seaford Wetlands. Locally referred to as Down's Farm, it is the last public farmscape in Seaford and designated as a Green Wedge planning zone and Urban Floodway. Previously owned by renowned whip and saddle maker, Harry Down, it retains only a few structures from its farming history and holds an important

place in Seaford's settler history. Both the large storage shed, and the farmhouse built around the 1950's, as well as the concrete water tanks are all well-known local landmarks.

The buildings and land are part of the cultural heritage of the area, forming the backdrop to a part of Seaford/Frankston's history after the subdivision of the land in 1919.

Frankston City Council (FCC) moved to purchase the land in the early 1990s after significant encouragement from the local community. The acquisition was finalised in 2006 at a cost of \$1.25 million.

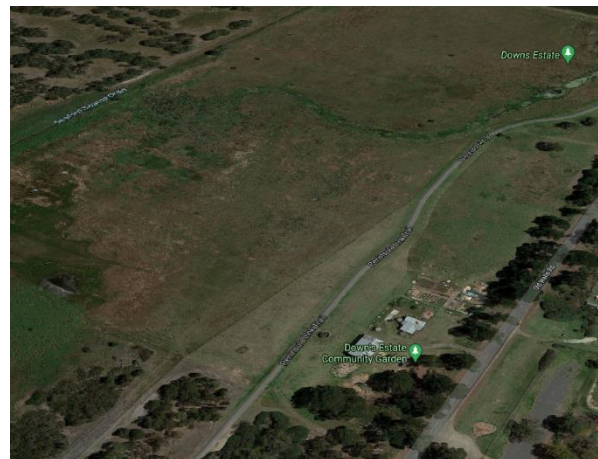
In 2011, a tender from FCC was called to establish a vision and recommendations for use of the site, leading to a series of community consultations being held in 2011 and 2012. The community response suggested that the site could accommodate the following considerations in any proposed site activation:

- The site needs to act as a buffer zone for the wetlands and any activities on the site must not compromise the wetlands in any way.
- the site would contribute to food security for the local communities of Frankston and neighbouring communities through food growing, distribution and community education relating to food production, including the production of Indigenous foods.
- the site would be activated in genuine collaboration with the community, with activities to evolve over time and eventually become a thriving community based social enterprise with a range of options including education and job opportunities.
- the management of Down's Estate would be considered in relation to the wetlands as a "whole of site" package (both wetlands and Down's Estate) that could align in ecological management, community education and ecotourism.

In January 2014, a group of passionate local residents formed Down's Estate Community Working Group to create an exciting and sustainable community project for Down's Estate. After working with Council Officers during 2016, DECP incorporated as Down's Estate Community Project (DECP).

Shortly after incorporation, DECP won second place in *Think Big Frankston*, a community voting initiative run by the FCC to inform its 2017-2021 Council Plan with the *ten ideas to shape the themes and priorities for long term "Community Outcomes, a Planned City and Liveable City"*.<sup>3</sup>

DECP was granted a licence from FCC in 2017 for approximately 3 hectares of the original farm site on the east side of the shared user path, whereby they commenced producing food on site for the community, re-establishing it as an active gathering place and community farm, both recognising and respecting its role in Frankston's living heritage as a place of cultural history for both Indigenous peoples and colonial settlers.



To date, the DECP Committee and membership have undertaken significant agricultural planting, revegetation works, commenced indigenous food growing trials for research and local sale, developed a strong partnership with the University of Melbourne, and facilitated workshops, seminars and community events on the site.

## 4.2) Site Plan

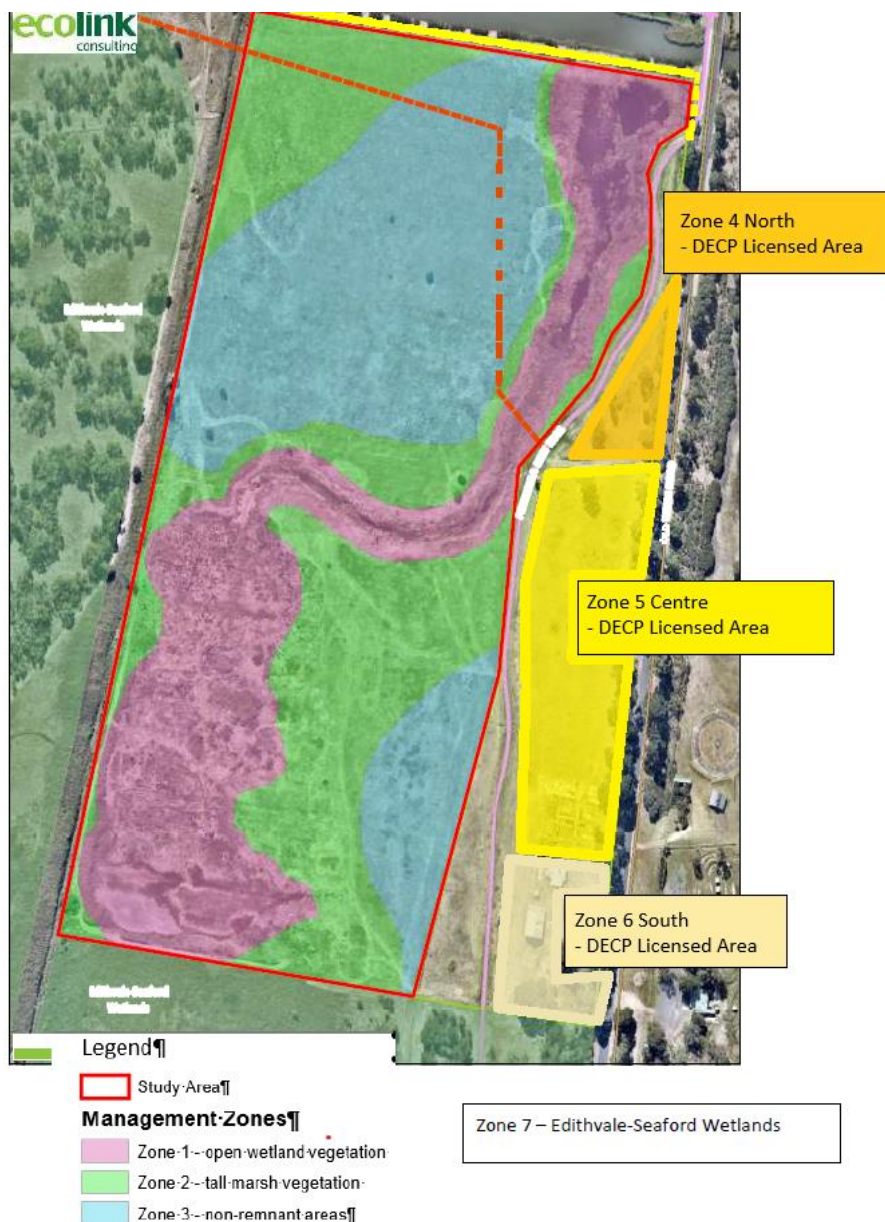
With regards to DECP's use of the licensed area of the Down's Estate site, the following considerations remain at the core of all current and proposed activities and projects outlined within this business case:

- DECP at all times place the wellbeing of the ecology of this area at the forefront of all decisions, including the licensed area, conservation zones and wetlands.

<sup>3</sup> Frankston City Council Plan 2017-2021, p. 12

- DECP has no desire or intention to initiate or conduct:
  - any form of commercial or non-commercial agricultural activity outside the licensed area.
  - any ecology regeneration activities outside the licensed area, other than those invited by Council as part of their management plan
  - any ecology regeneration activities in the licensed area without the prior consultation and support of Council and other stakeholders.
- Our work in the licensed area over some years now has enabled us to begin learning this land and how it is responding to our changing climate. Both DECP and its individual members will from time to time offer our experience, ideas and suggestions to all stakeholders sharing our desire to care for the landscape.

The Down’s Estate site is divided into several management zones, as outlined in the below map<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>4</sup> Adapted from: Ecolink Consulting Pty Ltd, Down’s Estate Management Plan, Seaford, Victoria, p. 31

Management Zone	DECP Potential Activities
Zone 1 – Wetland vegetation where Common Reed should not increase in cover	Facilitating occasional visits by educational bodies (primary or secondary schools, University of Melbourne, other tertiary institutions) or community groups including for education, Indigenous, environmental or citizen science activities, or small research projects. Permission from Frankston City Council will be requested for each visit and the associated activities to be undertaken.
Zone 2 – Common Reed-dominated tall marsh	
Zone 3 – Non-remnant areas to be slashed and/or revegetated	
Zone 7 (adjacent) – Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands	

The use of each zone within the DECP licensed area is based on its proximity to established infrastructure, Council-managed zones, and the adjacent Seaford-Edithvale Wetlands. At all times DECP will use the site in accordance with the 2019 Down’s Estate Management Plan prepared by Ecolink Consulting<sup>5</sup>.

Other Zones on Site	DECP Existing/Potential Activities
Zone 4 North – DECP Licensed Area	Revegetation, food for wildlife plantings, contemplation space
Zone 5 Centre – DECP Licensed Area	Community garden, market garden, orchard, revegetation
Zone 6 South – DECP Licensed Area	Community activities and events, community museum, food sharing, children’s natural play space, public open space

DECP is confident that the licensed zones above have adequate facilities for step-by-step development of projects outlined in this document. Frankston City Council’s significant investment in infrastructure improvement at Down’s Estate is facilitating community engagement thus far, however the provision of potable water remains a requirement for the site.

As detailed in 8.4) *Ecosystem Regeneration*, a detailed site plan for zones 4, 5 and 6 will be developed in 2021 with key stakeholders.

<sup>5</sup> Ecolink Consulting Pty Ltd, Down’s Estate Management Plan, Seaford, Victoria

### 4.3) Project Achievements

Funding received to date includes grants to establish DECP, as well as infrastructure funding to increase the value of the site as a Council asset for long-term community use.

\$456,450	FCC contribution (major infrastructure, business case, community grants)
\$100,000	FCC funds allocated for Infrastructure (subject to review process)
\$66,545	Federal and State Government, private donors and other organisations (start up, establishment, equipment, materials, education and revegetation)
\$90,000	Helen McPherson Trust grant to University of Melbourne for a collaborative project with DECP
<hr/>	
\$712,995	<b>Total</b>

Project highlights from 2017 to 2020 include:

- Three picnic tables with benches for site, sourced from the Pines Men’s Shed.
- Replanting of native species at several locations in licenced area, including a large community revegetation planting day (parallel to Eel Race Drain) in collaboration with FCC in 2017.
- Establishment of a large (approximately 600sqm) communal garden with weekly working bees and successful seasonal harvests since October 2017.
- The beginning of an orchard of over 15 fruit trees.
- Two large community events run in 2018.
- Three substantial community education workshops on environmental monitoring in 2019.
- A community Soil Health Day workshop with Dr Mary Cole from Agpath in 2019.
- Research on Harry Down and colonial settler history, as well as the historical ecology of the site.
- Initial discussions and in invitation to ongoing engagement with the Bunurong Land Council.
- Engagement with Nairm Marr Djambana on a local food security project in 2018-19.
- Donation received from a private fund to purchase materials and equipment to support project rollout for 2016-19.
- Significant ongoing DECP engagement with a variety of community groups.
- Community participation in a range of skill-building workshops from 2017 onwards.
- Collaboration with University of Melbourne (UoM) and Sustainable Indigenous Agriculture (SIA) project from 2019-21.
- First 4 farmer incubator trainees growing a total of 2000 head of garlic on site in 2019.
- Accessible compostable toilet installed in 2019.

- FCC budget allocated for major infrastructure, including verandah on the shed and a large water tank in 2019, with implementation phase in 2020.
- 35 current DECP members, with a presence in many other community groups' regular meetings and connections to a large community network.
- Joint funding approval for a comprehensive business case from FCC and UoM in 2018, with funds available and delivered in 2020.

While this business case is designed to set a framework to achieve specific community outcomes into the future, there have been several foundational achievements in this space that fall within 4 key areas:

- DECP has worked consistently and diligently with Council to build the foundations of a community-activated urban agriculture, gathering and learning place at Down's Estate since 2016.
- The preservation of the farm shed and water tanks (as well as the Farm House in the near future) is providing an important historic reference for the community where living legacy activities can be engaged in, and education activities provided.
- The raising of community awareness to sustainability issues and climate change mitigation is being achieved through our onsite activities, our connections to and membership in numerous other local groups, and monthly conversations at the Seaford Farmers Market since 2015
- DECP is taking a leading role in connecting with peri-urban agriculture groups and initiatives which are gaining momentum in the community, particularly in response to COVID-19.



## 5) Down's Estate Community Project Association

### 5.1) Governance

The Down's Estate Community Project (DECP) is an incorporated association founded in 2017 and managed by a Committee of Management. It operates at Down's Estate under an annual licence with Frankston City Council (FCC). The current committee consists of:

John McKenzie	President
Robyn Erwin	Vice-President
Maureen Griffin	Secretary
Andrew Nelsson	Treasurer
Rod Fedley	Ordinary Member

DECP makes use of subcommittees to ensure activities and project areas are well implemented. At the present, a Gardens subcommittee exists to manage ongoing garden activities.

In the past subcommittees have been assigned to Events and Historic Research. A Farm House and Community Museum subcommittee will be formed if farmhouse renovations are approved and undertaken.

### 5.2) Constitution

DECP will develop a high-level constitution document for the association to support the proposed projects outlined in this business case, based on its mission statement to:

*Encourage sustainability through the care of the natural environment and strengthen community connection and skills, undertaking activities to acknowledge heritage, foster connection between people and their environment and develop organic food production.*

This constitution will be based around DECP's established Statement of Purpose:

- To create and sustain a community gathering place at the iconic Down's Estate that engages the wider community.
- Valuing, connecting with and protecting our environment.
- Meeting human needs in ways that are balanced with the needs of the land and its non-human life.
- To respect the past, present and future value of the site for the local community and visitors to Frankston city.

### 5.3) Communications

In the process of writing this business case DECP's online communications and social media platforms have been extensively upgraded to meet the requirements for community consultations and promoting community interest in DECP and its future activities. These improvements, including a new website, will be developed further going forward.



## 6) Responding to Community Issues

At its core, DECP exists to support community responses to tackle some of the serious issues present in both the local community, as well as globally. A community-based approach to social change issues is recommended to ensure the needs of the local community are met, in ways that are empowering, accessible and effective.

The project proposes to be engaged on a number of key issues.:

### 6.1) Health and Wellbeing

The Frankston City community has a higher rate of obesity than the State average, with 57% of residents being overweight or obese compared with the Victorian average of 51%.<sup>6</sup> This results in higher rates of preventable disease and early death in the community, which along with the current global COVID-19 pandemic, puts further strain on an already strained healthcare system.



As the current global COVID-19 pandemic has shown, those with pre-existing medical conditions are also more likely to experience severe disease symptoms and death than those in good health<sup>7</sup>, making education and availability of nutritious foods more important than ever.

The decrease in outdoor physical activity during this pandemic - and more generally due to the increase in modern technology - is another contributing factor to obesity and its associated health risks.

A large number of the community are experiencing mental health challenges and require appropriate support. Loneliness has increasingly been recognised as a significant problem across all age groups<sup>8</sup>, which has been further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

### 6.2) Food Security and Nutrition

Natural disasters, such as annual bushfires and cyclones, and pandemics like COVID-19 have brought to light the disadvantages of being reliant on importing large amounts of food as a means to feed a community – both in terms of availability and affordability.

With fresh supermarket produce often travelling large distances to reach end consumers – including from overseas – even minor supply chain disruptions in other countries can have a significant impact on the local community: leading to shortages of fresh food, panic buying of essential items,

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our\\_Community/Strategic\\_Community\\_Planning/Community\\_Vision\\_2040](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our_Community/Strategic_Community_Planning/Community_Vision_2040) (accessed 13/09/2020)

<sup>7</sup> <https://hmri.org.au/news-article/impact-covid-19-people-cardiovascular-disease-and-other-chronic-illnesses> (accessed 10/09/2020)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/letter/articles/vh-letter-47-loneliness> (accessed 13/09/2020)

and encouraging people to purchase foods higher in chemical preservatives that can be stored for longer.



The effects on food availability are made worse by a reduction in affordability during natural disasters, either directly due to reduced supply of certain foods driving their cost higher, and indirectly due to job losses as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Less-nutritious fast foods being so readily available in modern society have contributed to higher rates of obesity and disease in the community<sup>9</sup>, as well as a growing disconnect from how food is grown in nature.

### 6.3) Ecosystem Protection and Climate Change

Since European settlement, 90% of Frankston's natural vegetation has been lost to land clearing and development. This has put the 534 Indigenous plant species present in Frankston City at immense risk, with 40 species of flora and fauna now listed as threatened<sup>10</sup>.

Tree canopy cover in Frankston City has dropped to 17% since European settlement<sup>11</sup>, increasing ground temperatures, accelerating soil erosion and salination, reducing native species habitat, and contributing to climate change by reducing tree carbon capture.

Left unchecked, climate change in this century will also result in sea levels rising<sup>12</sup>, further affecting the local community due to its position on the coast. In addition, climate change brings increased frequency of natural disasters, extreme weather events, and the spread and evolution of diseases - all impacting wellbeing and food security.

Aside from environmental issues, climate change impacts community wellbeing by negatively affecting the use of outdoor areas for connection, enjoyment, physical health, and food production.

### 6.4) Community Connection and Youth Engagement

Frankston City has the highest rate of family violence police callouts in the entire Melbourne metropolitan area, contributing to a significantly higher rate of reported psychological distress than the Victorian average (21% compared with 15.4%)<sup>13</sup>.

Youth engagement is another area of great concern in Frankston City, with 10.4% of youth not being in either full-time employment, education or training compared with the Victorian average of 8.2%<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> <http://obesityoverview.vichealth.vic.gov.au> (accessed 11/09/2020)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our\\_Community/Strategic\\_Community\\_Planning/Community\\_Vision\\_2040](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our_Community/Strategic_Community_Planning/Community_Vision_2040) (accessed 13/09/2020)

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our\\_Community/Strategic\\_Community\\_Planning/Community\\_Vision\\_2040](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our_Community/Strategic_Community_Planning/Community_Vision_2040) (accessed 13/09/2020)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.science.org.au/learning/general-audience/science-climate-change/6-how-are-sea-levels-changing> (accessed 12/09/2020)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our\\_Community/Strategic\\_Community\\_Planning/Community\\_Vision\\_2040](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our_Community/Strategic_Community_Planning/Community_Vision_2040) (accessed 13/09/2020)

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our\\_Community/Strategic\\_Community\\_Planning/Community\\_Vision\\_2040](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our_Community/Strategic_Community_Planning/Community_Vision_2040) (accessed 13/09/2020)

The lockdowns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have compounded these serious issues, with family violence and unemployment rising to unforeseen levels Australia-wide<sup>15</sup>. The above-average rates of these issues in Frankston City make them of particular importance to DECP and the role it can play in reducing both rates within the community.



## 7) Community Benefits

DECP's overarching goals of Placemaking, Community Engagement and Wellbeing, and Urban Agriculture and Science are closely aligned with Frankston City Council's environment strategy *Greening Our Future*, the Open Spaces Strategy, Community Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan and Community Strengthening objectives. These goals, realised through the major and future projects in the following sections (8 and 9) below are designed to specifically tackle the community issues of Health and Wellbeing, Food Security and Nutrition, Ecosystem Protection and Climate Change, and Community Connection and Youth Engagement affecting the Frankston City community.

Education is a key factor across all project areas, with the site having great potential as a field study destination for students of agriculture, food, engineering, landscape architecture and medicine, with workshops, seminars and other hands-on learning opportunities open to students, local and Indigenous community members.

Students would be able to study peri-urban agriculture, the adjacent Ramsar wetlands, Indigenous food crop trials, innovative ways of sustainable water management, soil health, public health, and novel Indigenous medicines.

There are also opportunities for designing collaborative research and connection with other similar projects around the country and globally: where education, community and government have been successful in transforming areas saved from development into viable destinations for community gathering and ecotourism.

### 7.1) Placemaking

- Saving a unique part of Seaford's cultural history for future generations.
- Enhancing the safety, amenity, and crime-prevention elements of the site.
- Creating a safe, accessible, and welcoming public space.



<sup>15</sup> [https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our\\_Community/Strategic\\_Community\\_Planning/Community\\_Vision\\_2040](https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Our_Community/Strategic_Community_Planning/Community_Vision_2040) (accessed 13/09/2020)

- Providing a community gathering, workshop and meeting space.
- Collaborating with FCC to restore, revegetate and regenerate the site.
- Developing eco-sensitive horticultural and infrastructure projects.
- Cultivating community interest in the stories which form our local identity.
- Facilitating eco and cultural tourism capacity on site and the surrounding area.

## 7.2) Community Engagement and Wellbeing

- Increasing local and diverse community participation at Down's Estate and the adjacent wetlands.
- Inspiring community members to connect with nature and each other.
- Encouraging increased membership and participation of the project.
- Contributing to local food security and improved community health.
- Expanding programs to include arts, crafts, music and other related activities.
- Strengthening and enriching local and regional community networking.

## 7.3) Urban Agriculture and Science

- Supporting partnerships and collaborations for projects, including with the University of Melbourne.
- Producing high-quality organic food for member use, sale, and donation.
- Researching, producing, promoting, and selling Indigenous food crops.
- Extending food growing into market gardens.
- Supporting local food distribution chains
- Conducting scientific research in agriculture and environmental management.
- Providing opportunities for citizen science.
- Providing education and work experience to disadvantaged or disengaged youth, and the community as a whole.
- Using and promoting sustainable agricultural technologies and practices.
- Becoming part of Melbourne's wider food bowl.
- Supporting and enabling healthy soil life as the basis of all agricultural activities, leading to stronger plants, more nutritious foods, and improved wellbeing for the community as a result.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Dr Mary Cole (Agpath, and University of Melbourne FVAS)*

## 8) Major Projects Overview (commencing 2021 – 2024)

Ahead of all major and future projects outlined below, DECP will provide Frankston City Council with a comprehensive project outline and strategic plan, and seek any necessary approvals for additional activities in-line with the license activities currently permitted.

### 8.1) The Farm House

#### 8.1.1) Restoration of The Farm House

A major component of DECP's vision for Down's Estate, and a vital pivot point for other projects into the future is the restoration, renovation and re-purposing of the existing farmhouse located on the site. This is to both protect its cultural heritage value and for its use as a sheltered indoor base for future activities and projects.

The specific details and required resources of this project are outlined in-depth in the Farm House Business Case<sup>17</sup> prepared by DECP in June 2020. New tenders will be required based on the amended plan for use outlined in this document, and will be done in collaboration with the University of Melbourne with regards to design work.



The large storage shed and farmhouse are the vista greeting visitors at the gate – they are authentic landmarks, marking the strong farming history of this site and the surrounding area, and forming part of collective community memory. These two buildings are the last significant built structures on the estate. Activities on the site have to date been significantly limited by the lack of appropriate indoor space. The current option for holding meetings or workshops is a circle of chairs outdoors; having the negative impact of ceasing activities when rain, cold,

heat or wind become a factor.

The ability to offer a sheltered and welcoming space for members and visitors to gather on site is a critical step in advancing the reach of DECP and all current and proposed future projects.

This also presents an economic benefit through the lower cost of restoring the existing structure compared with building a new space, as outlined in the June 2020 Farm House Business Case.

Community benefits:

- Saving a unique part of Seaford's history for future generations.
- Enhancing the safety, amenity, and crime-prevention elements of the site.
- Creating a safe, accessible, and welcoming public community space.

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<sup>17</sup> [www.downscommunityfarm.org](http://www.downscommunityfarm.org)

- Providing a sheltered indoor community gathering, workshop and meeting space, increasing the volume and scope of planned and potential DECP projects.

Environmental benefits:

- Facilitating ecotourism capacity of site and the surrounding area, including adjacent wetlands.
- Increasing local community participation in ecological and sustainability projects at Down's Estate and the adjacent wetlands.
- Providing a suitable year-round area for regenerative practices workshops and training on site.
- Compared with constructing a new building, saving and restoring the Farm House largely reduces the use of materials – and therefore energy – required to achieve the same goal of having an appropriate sheltered space.

### 8.1.2) Community Museum

As evidenced by the growing *community museum* movement<sup>18</sup>, there is clear recognition of the value of cultural heritage in building community cohesion, resilience and wellbeing, particularly through the preservation of a sense of place, including both landscape and built structures<sup>19</sup>. This value is realised most strongly when it reflects a living heritage.

The Farm House offers a vital opportunity for continuation of this living cultural heritage through DECP, and therefore retaining and preserving the original structures is far preferable to demolishing or replacing them. Community museum activities extend beyond the traditional practice of collecting and exhibiting, to incorporate both the place and activities conducted there throughout history, such as festivals, storytelling, art music.

In Seaford, the only museum type facility that currently exists is the memorabilia display at the local RSL. A display and education space at the Farm House for posters and information resources as provided by DECP and the local community will transfer knowledge between generations by presenting local culture, Indigenous and colonial settler history, and current and past site ecology and activities.

As an extension to the already proposed uses for the Farm House, a community museum would expand the reach of community gathering and learning outcomes, without requiring a separate or exclusive area of the building. Instead, the shared area designated for activities, events and the sale of fresh produce would simultaneously incorporate the community museum aspect through wall-mounted displays and hangings.

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<sup>18</sup> Australian Museums and Galleries Association Inc., <https://www.amaga.org.au/events/article-clubtowards-more-communitycentred-museum> (accessed 29/06/2020)

<sup>19</sup> Thomas, 2016

Community benefits:

- Cultivate community interest and engagement in the stories which form local history and identity.
- Facilitate eco and cultural tourism capacity on site and the surrounding area.
- Encourages increased membership of DECP; further increasing community scope and impact of projects.

Environmental benefits:

- Increased capacity to teach the community and visitors about ecologically positive Indigenous land use, and sustainable native crops.
- Provide a venue for environmental groups to further educate the community on the natural environment, leading to increased involvement in the groups forming the Frankston Environmental Friends Network.

## 8.2) Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture is an idea receiving a lot of attention for health, food security and economic development reasons. A variety of project activities are proposed:

### 8.2.1) Sustainable Indigenous Agriculture

The University of Melbourne has received a grant to develop a Sustainable Indigenous Agriculture (SIA) project from the Helen McPherson-Smith Trust, supporting the development of an Indigenous market garden and food hub at Down's Estate in partnership with DECP, and in collaboration with the local Bunurong peoples and community.

The project is trialling the production of a number of Indigenous crops and will lead to the development of a comprehensive model for the inclusion of Indigenous plants in peri-urban agriculture for sale to the community, local retailers and restaurants.

Workshops are planned for community members to learn how to grow and prepare these foods in their own gardens. Future workshops will be targeted to commercial growers and chefs to expand the reach of this project.



Community benefits:

- Understanding of Indigenous foods, their nutritional value and their potential for inclusion in our everyday diet.
- Understanding of how to grow foods better suited and evolved to grow in local soils and conditions.
- Increased access and consumption of nutritious foods.

- Potential to create further connection and collaboration with local Indigenous community members.

Environmental benefits:

- Increased growing of crops suited to the local area, potentially causing less environmental degradation and higher crop yields.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from the reduced food supply chain.
- Enhanced ecosystem and restoration of Indigenous crops traditionally found in the area.

### 8.2.2) Urban Market Garden

An urban market garden of approximately 1 acre (0.4 hectares) will produce fruit and vegetables at a small commercial scale (including the sale of seeds and seedlings) increasing availability of fresh food for the local community whilst showcasing techniques that produce positive outcomes for eco and climate systems, such as regenerative farming and permaculture. This will include a focus on stimulating strong soil life.

Workshops, tours and events (for example a seasonal market day) will be held regularly to share techniques and practices and encourage use by other market gardeners and the general community. Food will be distributed primarily to the local community via local supply chains that minimise steps between producer and consumer.

The urban market garden will be used for hands-on training for local disengaged youth (refer to *8.2.3 Youth on the Market Garden Path*) and students of horticulture or urban agriculture courses at secondary and tertiary levels in partnership with local schools, such as Chisholm TAFE, University of Melbourne or Monash University.

The urban market garden also provides opportunities for research and trials of crop production methods, sustainable water systems, and natural pest and weed control.



Community benefits:

- Increased access and availability of fresh, local vegetables.
- Education and employment provided to disengaged youth.
- Hands on experience in the fields of agriculture and horticulture.
- Education and skill sharing opportunities for the local community and commercial food growers, including permaculture courses resulting in Permaculture Design Certificates.



#### Environmental Benefits:

- Increased skills and knowledge in growing food sustainably and caring for the natural environment.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from the food supply chain.
- Enhanced ecosystems due to the climate change mitigation from reduced food supply chains and focus on sustainable crop production over traditional factory farming and its resulting damage to soil health.

### 8.2.3) Youth on the Garden Path

Frankston has a higher population of youth not in full-time employment, education or training than the Victorian average. Up to 10 young people each year will be engaged to work in the urban market garden and be given on-the-job training to learn the skills needed to find employment in a small food growing enterprise, or even operate one of their own. They will also be engaged in maintaining and restoring the surrounding natural ecosystems. This project can expand to engage youth in other areas such as food distribution, preparation and service. The youth will be overseen and trained by an experienced market gardener, natural environment manager or other experts in relevant fields.

This program will be open to marginalised, socially isolated or disadvantaged youth aged 16 to 24 who need a supportive learning and work experience environment to prepare for further work or study.

Connections with youth service providers, neighbouring schools and VCAL programs remain a core aspect of this project's success moving into 2021 and beyond. The project will also work closely with Chisolm to inform the design of relevant certificate training programs to support peri-urban agriculture skill acquisition as well as related areas to support local food production and distribution.

With youth-focused activity areas already present in the area, such as the adjacent BMX track, as well as a bus stop within a 15-minute walk of the site, the site's location does not represent a significant barrier to youth access. It is noted that increased use of the site as a result of the projects in this business case could in future create enough demand for an addition public transport connection closer to the area.

#### Community benefits:

- Skills and employment provided to disengaged community youth.
- Participants discover and improve their ability to achieve new skills.
- Hands on work experience.
- Increased availability and consumption of fresh, local vegetables by participants and their families.
- Greater community knowledge of food growing for following generations.
- Educational offerings at associated institutions in the area.

Environmental benefits:

- Increased knowledge of sustainable farming techniques that can benefit surrounding ecosystems.
- Potential increased use of sustainable farming techniques in surrounding areas.
- Increased knowledge of sustainable and regenerative farming techniques that can benefit surrounding ecosystems.

#### 8.2.4) African Garden

This cross-generational project in partnership with Afri-Aus Care will see the growing of traditional South Sudanese crops by two generations of community members working together and so building relationships and mutual respect, whilst addressing ongoing issues of food security and youth disengagement.

Groups of primarily women and youth will establish and care for crops that are used within traditional Sudanese cooking, with the potential to engage in other activities and work within the site.



Careful consideration will be taken with crop selection to ensure the species grown do not have the potential to become weeds, in particular due to the adjacent wetlands and the serious ecological effects this could have on that site.

Community benefits:

- Strengthened relationships, particularly between generations within the local South Sudanese community.
- Increased skills and engagement of youth, potentially leading to increased cultural pride, self-respect, and future employment prospects.
- Increased food security and access to traditional food crops.
- Building connections between the local South Sudanese population and wider community.

Environmental benefits:

- Increased growing of food using sustainable methods, and further understanding of these techniques.
- Increased skills in caring for and protecting the natural environment.
- Decreased food kilometres, building a more resilient local food supply chain.

#### 8.2.5) Community Garden

DECP has established a community garden that has been operating for almost 3 years, consisting of approximately 300sqm of communal-use garden beds of various sizes and functions. Some are suited to mixed cropping, whilst others suit the growing of crops on a larger commercial scale.

Produce is shared amongst current members, with any excess sold to local distributors and donated to local charities.

The plan moving into 2021 is to provide more individual plots, allowing community members without access to their own garden a dedicated space in which to grow food. This would remain free as with the currently existing beds to ensure equal access for all.



Our model also allows for individual entrepreneurship. Members have the opportunity to take responsibility for a large bed to produce commercial-scale crops, allowing them to learn, experiment and develop skills that can be shared amongst the wider membership and community.

Community benefits:

- Increased access to fresh and nutritious local food.
- Increased community connection through working and socialising together, leading to improved mental health.
- Increased physical health through eating healthier foods and physical exercise.
- Community connection to the natural environment and local food sources.
- Food production knowledge and skills.

Environmental benefits:

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions, processing and packaging from sustainable food growing and reduces food kilometres.
- Enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem.

## 8.3) Food Sharing and Healthy Eating

### 8.3.1) Camp Kitchen

A camp kitchen will allow members of the community to prepare and eat food together. At Down's Community Garden, volunteers will harvest vegetables and prepare them for a shared meal. Other people who use the site for classes will be able to prepare morning or afternoon tea for attendees.

It will provide the opportunity for workshops demonstrating the use of particular crops (including the Indigenous crops grown on site) and demonstrate foods from different cultures, such as with the Afri-Aus Care project.

This camp kitchen will initially consist of a portable sink and barbecue, and expand to include electrical appliances powered by renewable solar electricity, via solar panels on the roof of the verandah. The entire kitchen will be mobile; constructed on wheels so that it may be stored in the shed when not in use.

Community benefits:

- Increased access to fresh and nutritious local food.
- Increased community connection through cooking and socialising together, leading to improved mental health.
- Community connection to the natural environment and local food sources.
- Food production knowledge and skills.

Environmental benefits:

- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions, processing and packaging from sustainable food growing and reduces food kilometres.
- Transfer of learned skills to home environments, reducing unnecessary food waste in the community.
- Demonstration of sustainable cooking methods and technology.

## 8.4) Ecosystem Regeneration

In addition to the other proposed projects in this plan, DECP will create of a site plan for the licensed area (Zones 4, 5 and 6 as per *4.2 Site Plan*) to guide the creation of an ecology fit for the site and its specific characteristics, as well as considering the adjacent RAMSAR listed Seaford Wetlands.

The creation of a working group to advise on plan will include DECP members, Gardens for Wildlife, PPWCMA, Council Officers, FESWI, WPB and any other appropriate bodies.

This will be a regenerative, functional, attractive and innovative plan which over time will be able to demonstrate a thriving ecology on the site, and can be managed cooperatively with Council with natural methods and will positively contribute to placemaking and ecosystem protection on the wider site.



Community benefits:

- Community connection to the natural environment.
- Education opportunities for the community to learn about climate change and the ecosystem.

Environmental benefits:

- Enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem.
- Increased skills in caring for and protecting the natural environment.

## 8.5) Community Gathering

### 8.5.1) Community Activities, Workshops and Events

DECP will host a range of indoor and outdoor activities, workshops and events, initially conducted under the verandah to be constructed in coming months, until restoration of the Farm House provides a more adequate venue.

Workshops relating to sustainable food growing, citizen science, caring for natural environments, weed removal, soil health, and indigenous foods will be continued and expanded.

The outdoor space provides an opportunity for activities such as yoga, gentle exercise, walking groups, cooking, art or wellbeing activities and classes. DECP will seek partnership with other organisations to jointly host or lead these activities. A community market will be developed and held once a season, including food-swaps, community, food and artisanal stalls, music and workshops.



Later a market garden produce stall will be included. Other events will be held on an ad-hoc basis, at times in partnership with other community organisations as has been achieved successfully in the past.

Community benefits:

- Connecting people to each other and their environment.
- Increased community skills and knowledge.
- Enhanced health and wellbeing.

Environmental benefits:

- Increased skills and knowledge in sustainable food growing and caring for the natural environment.

### 8.5.2) Passive Recreation

DECP will encourage use of its open spaces for community members to enjoy passive recreation activities such as picnics, outdoor games, or wander around the restored eco-systems and food gardens.

DECP will work in partnership with Frankston City Council to ensure maintenance of grassed areas and community facilities.

Community benefits:

- Connects people to each other and their environment.
- Enhanced health and wellbeing.

Environmental Benefits

- Increased connection with the natural environment.

## 9) Future Projects Overview (2025 – 2030)

Besides expanding the scope of current projects to increase their effectiveness, DECP has outlined a series of future projects to take place beyond 2025. A future business case will be made to detail their specific requirements.

### 9.1) Heritage Orchard

Development of a diverse orchard supplying a range of fruits, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage varieties to create a living genetic bank. DECP will plant and manage heritage fruit trees, conduct grafting workshops, host fruit tasting events, and become a source of education about the growing of heritage fruit trees across the local community. This project may begin sooner than anticipated due to recent successful consultations with the Heritage Fruit Society.

In partnership with the University of Melbourne, DECP will trial the growing of a range of Indigenous fruit trees and subsequently run workshops in growing and cooking with these foods.

### 9.2) Food Forest

An option being researched for the area north of the food gardens is a permaculture food forest. This idea would consist of mixed perennial food plants, intentionally planted with the aim of establishing productive vegetation that mimics the ecological structures and features of a forest ecology.

Similar to a mixed orchard, this would be less structured system with a wide variety of crops, and inter-planted with nitrogen fixers and crop sheltering species. The local permaculture community would be involved in support of this project.

### 9.3) Quiet Contemplation Space

The creation of a designated Quiet Contemplation Space will provide an opportunity for the community to engage with DECP, as well as a significant environmental improvement to this area of the site.

The primary aim is to create a sensory, contemplative garden area with a large central circle and surrounding seating for community wellness activities. Using Indigenous, native and sensory plants, the garden will be accessible to people of all ages and abilities and attract beneficial birds, insects and other wildlife to the site. The space will be bordered by trees and have access from both an entrance gate (providing access for people with diverse physical abilities) and general access from the shared user path.

## 9.4) Children's Nature Play Space

In compliance with all relevant Australian Standards, a children's natural play space will use the natural assets of a particular area for developing play opportunities and interactive experiences for children.

Being in nature is formative in helping children to understand the natural world and how to engage with it. Playing and being creative with the materials, textures, scents and shapes of nature will stimulate children's imaginations and development.

Creating of pockets of interest like a mud kitchen, a frog bog or a hut building space will all contribute to a different experience from a traditional playground. These activities will support children to experiment using different skills and ways of moving their bodies, helping them build confidence in their judgement, risk assessment and physical ability. A further benefit arising from playing in nature is children's increased capacity for observation and enjoyment of the natural world.

## 10) Market Analysis

### 10.1) Demographics

The City of Frankston is a diverse and vibrant community, with people across all socio-economic groups, ages, cultures and professions.

In 2016, the total population of Frankston City was approximately 139,496 people and is expected to increase by over 16,606 people to 156,102 by 2026. The way in which people live is also expected to change, with the average number of persons per household stated to fall from 2.51 to 2.45 by 2026. This is evidenced up by the following estimations<sup>20</sup>:

- Lone person households account for 26.9% of households - stated to increase to 27.6% by 2026.
- Single parent households account for 13.3% of households - stated to decrease slightly to 13% by 2026.

Overall, a large percentage of the Frankston City population comprised of single adults, which exacerbates the serious community issues outlined in section *6.1) Health and Wellbeing* and *6.4) Community Connection and Youth Engagement*.

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<sup>20</sup> Frankston City: Population and Dwellings, <https://profile.id.com.au/frankston/population> (accessed 04/09/2020)

## 10.2) Need

As outlined in 7) *Community Benefits*, there is a clear need for a range of projects at DECP to counter the issues present in the Frankston City community.

There is clear evidence of the “resilience that comes from regenerating land, growing food, making friends and sharing space”<sup>21</sup>, and a study in Norway found “therapeutic horticulture” to be twice as effective as clinical antidepressants.<sup>22</sup>

In an age of readily available and inexpensive processed foods, community health and wellbeing has become increasingly affected as seen in increased obesity rates, particularly in Frankston City. Outdoor areas in the community that provide for physical activity, connection, education, and skill building are a cost effective and proven way to mitigate these effects, reducing strain on healthcare providers. This has been made clearer during the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Food security has become an important issue due to climate change and disruptions to the food supply chain as a result of pandemics and natural disasters. Having smaller and more diverse local producers throughout the community aids in building a more resilient food system, by ensuring disruptions interstate and overseas do not affect people’s ability to access fresh and nutritional produce. Reducing food kilometres also ensures this fresh produce remains cost effective to the consumer, and in the process reduces climate change and other negative environmental effects by eliminating unnecessary transportation and packaging required to import perishables.

Climate change is perhaps the most pressing issue affecting the human race this century. Having a place such as Down’s Estate whereby the community can learn about the climate and ecosystem provides an opportunity to set a strong example for future generations about the effects their food choices make to the environment. It also allows a space for collaborators such as the University of Melbourne to research Indigenous crops that are better suited to the local climate and ecosystem, innovative water management techniques, and protection of native plant and animal species.

With youth full time work and training rates being lower in Frankston City than the Victorian average, and rates of family violence and psychological distress higher than the rest of the state, there is a clear need for community-focussed solutions built on connection, education and practical work experience.

## 10.3) Similar Concepts and Projects

While not being direct matches to the vision of DECP, the 3 examples below demonstrate the potential for success of Down’s Estate’s place-based and ecologically minded approach to building community and improving food security and health outcomes for the Frankston City area.

DECP firmly believes that the Down’s Estate site can deliver similar community and environmental benefits as these organisations for a significantly lower budget, by keeping infrastructure and overhead costs to a minimum. The focus on outdoor garden spaces and revegetation, partnerships

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<sup>21</sup> Beckwith, Sieta (2020, p. 68)

<sup>22</sup> Gonzalez et al. (2019)



with other organisations, and remaining a volunteer-run association is an effective and appropriate approach to tackling the issues identified in this business case.

Importantly, the following examples remain a source of information and inspiration for potential future DECP projects and collaborations, being adapted to suit the specific needs of the Frankston City community. These examples are significantly more developed than Down's Estate due to their age and infrastructure, so a core piece of work in 2021 will be to carefully analyse their growth over the years to aid in future planning and funding decisions at Down's.

### 10.3.1) The Briars

The Briars was one of the first farms established on the peninsula. It offers outdoor recreation, a visitor centre, free community events, a café and restaurant, retail nursery, tours, Eco-Living Display Centre, Wildlife Sanctuary, Homestead, Astronomy Centre and spaces for hire for events, functions, festivals and markets. It runs on a combination of Council, grant, sponsorship, and partnership funding as well as sale of goods, venue hire and entry fees.

### 10.3.2) CERES

CERES is an environmental education centre, urban farm and social enterprise hub located on Wurundjeri land alongside the Merri Creek in Brunswick East. Established in 1982, almost 500,000 people come each year to share ideas about living well together, and directly participate in meeting their social and material needs in a sustainable way. They offer social enterprises, education and training, employment, and community engagement. Their vision is for people to fall in love with the Earth again.

### 10.3.3) Collingwood Children's Farm

Collingwood Children's farm was established in 1979 as a not-for-profit, inner city farm situated beside the Yarra River. Its founding purpose was to assist children living in an urban environment, to learn to care for animals and nature and also have fun outdoors. It runs on grants, local Government support, donations, and local support. The farm practices sustainable, organic farming, producing vegetable and fruit crops that are sold or used in food prepared for family days. It also practices sustainable land care, growing trees to provide habitat for insects, birds and other wildlife. It runs community events such as family days, food swaps, farmers markets, school holiday programs, community events and farm animal interaction.

## 10.4) Risks

### 10.4.1) Farm House Restoration

#### Lack of Funding

The financial cost of the proposed Farm House restoration project could exceed what is anticipated, or achieving sufficient grants and in-kind contributions for house renovation project costs in proposed timeframe may not succeed, thereby making the project unviable. This risk will be mitigated by:

- Creating a collaborative partnership with FCC, DECP and potential business contractors to maximise competitive quotes for the required scope of works.
- Work with FCC to ensure the application of building and infrastructure standards meet and do not exceed the needs of the project.
- Enlisting support from Government agencies to access appropriate grants.
- Use of community networks to gain contributions and sponsorships to lower the overall cost of the project and reliance on FCC funding.
- Further promoting the project as a community benefit initiative to widen the reach of potential assistance.
- Work with FCC to find cost savings and possible in-kind contributions to assist with funding of the project.

#### Restoration Quality and Timeframe

The company undertaking restoration works could fail to deliver the project elements to the standard required or the agreed timeframe. This risk will be mitigated by:

- Ensuring a project manager is selected and tasked with quality assurance and scheduling of service providers.
- DECP and FCC collaborate to find suitable and approved providers for the works.
- Site works and progress are monitored ongoing by both DECP members and FCC officers, as was successfully implemented during the installation of the permanent toilet on site.
- Any obstacles to planned progress are promptly resolved and accounted for.

#### Restoration Works Safety

A safety risk on site exists during works, particularly to community members using the site for normal activities. This risk will be mitigated by:

- Ongoing supervision of Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) by the selected project manager.
- Storage of materials and tools in the shed at the end of each work day.
- Maintaining safety barriers around the work site for the duration of works.
- Appropriate signage being installed warning the public of works in progress.
- Use of monitored CCTV after hours.

## 10.4.2) Whole of Licensed Site

### Vandalism

Due to the location and access to the site, vandalism (including theft of plants and/or materials) presents a risk to Farm House works, the finished project, and the site ongoing. This risk will be mitigated by:

- Activate utilisation of the renovated house by programming ongoing activities and sharing use and access with other local community groups.
- Design the site as a minimal vandalism target by avoiding expensive infrastructure.
- Monitored CCTV and motion-activated lighting to be installed for the shed and verandah.
- Taking further crime prevention measures on site to improve the overall appearance of the overall Farm House area, such as obtaining a grant for local street art on the tanks alongside a graffiti education program for local schools.
- Putting up appropriate signage to explain the works being done in relation to community use and benefit of the Farm House and site, with a contact number for DECP.
- Having regular and frequent attendance on site by DECP, local volunteers and FCC officers, and report any damage immediately.
- Installation of fencing around the community garden area.

### Potable Water

A lack of potable water on site constrains the full activation of the Farm House and other projects. This risk will be mitigated by:

- Ensuring potable water supply is included in the infrastructure plan.

### Water Availability

The event that potable water cannot be provided to site, then full activation of the Farm House and projects may exceed the currently available water on the site, and water availability is dependent on seasonal rainfall. There also exists a risk of contamination of the water source. This will be mitigated by:

- Advocating for the including of potable water within the infrastructure plan.
- Calculating the potential water demands of future projects and include the cost of buying water in times of shortages over summer.
- Ensure current water tank holding capabilities are in line with full capacity based on the shed catchment and local rainfall.
- Regularly monitor water levels and undertake water quality tests.

### Climate Change

Climate change and the associated sea level rising over the next 50 years presents a real and ongoing risk to the site, given the low-lying aspect of the land. This risk will be mitigated by:

- Ensuring Down's Estate is included in the Frankston and Kingston Councils' Climate Emergency Preparation Plans.

- Site is developed and managed with climate change consideration in mind, particularly the risk of almost total inundation by 2100<sup>23</sup>.
- Practicing and encouraging mitigation actions.
- Adapting range of crops to new climate conditions.

### DECP Committee Size

The DECP committee has identified that the size of the association leadership is currently too small to serve the needs of the site and projects into the future. While it is currently still fit-for-purpose, it is important to continue growing and developing the committee to safeguard the future of DECP.

This risk will be mitigated by:

- Finalising the association constitution document, detailing the future needs and direction of the committee.
- Increased community and stakeholder engagement, leading to opportunities for larger and more diversified DECP committee.

## 10.5) Regulation

Down's Estate is located in a Victorian Green Wedge planning zone, and Council regulations do not permit an *Education Centre* on site. DECP is confident that the proposed use of the Down's Estate site will not contravene Green Wedge regulations for the following reasons:

- The Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) defines an *Education Centre* as a "child care centre, employment training centre, primary school, secondary school, or tertiary institution"<sup>24</sup>. While DECP will run seminars, workshops and hands-on courses, this will not be equivalent to a TAFE or university as DECP is not a Registered Training Organisation nor has any plan to register as one in the future.
- The DELWP regulation's purpose statement includes to "recognise, protect and conserve green wedge land for its agricultural, environmental, historic, landscape, recreational and tourism opportunities", among others. In accordance with these requirements<sup>25</sup>, FCC enacted their Green Wedge Management Plan in 2019.
- As quoted in the FCC plan<sup>26</sup>, Plan Melbourne states its intention to:
  - Protect agricultural land from incompatible uses, maintain farm size, promote the continuation of farming, and provide a secure long-term future for productive and sustainable agriculture.
  - Provide for the protection and management of sites of Aboriginal and post-European settlement cultural heritage to ensure that links with the past are preserved for present and future generations to appreciate. A wide range of cultural-heritage assets are found in buildings, structures, scattered relics, trees and

<sup>23</sup> Ecolink Consulting Pty Ltd, Down's Estate Management Plan, Seaford, Victoria, p. 26

<sup>24</sup> Victorian Planning Provisions 73.03, 24/01/2020, VC160

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/green-wedges> (accessed 24/6/20)

<sup>26</sup> Frankston Green Wedge Management Plan, p. 18

gardens, landscapes and geological formations, archaeological and fossil sites and areas associated with historical events.

- Create socially sustainable communities and support an active community working towards reducing greenhouse gases and responding to climate change.
- Frankston City Council’s Open Space Strategy indicates that the site can be used for “environmental education purposes”.<sup>27</sup>

## 11) Stakeholders and Supporters

Since its inception, DECP has worked with a sizable and diverse group of stakeholders, further enhancing the breadth of the project and its deep roots in the local community. Ongoing consultations with stakeholders have allowed for better project planning to ensure community needs and views are at the forefront of all planned projects and initiatives.

Letters of support from stakeholders are included in section 15) *Appendix*.



### 11.1) Current and Past Stakeholders and Supporters

#### *The City of Frankston community*

Strong ongoing community connections and networking with individuals and groups through DECP’s newsletter mailing list, Facebook followers, site visitors, volunteers, and members.

#### *Frankston City Council*

Including Community Strengthening, Commercial Services, Planning and Environment, Parks and Reserves, Facilities, and Sustainable Assets). Owner of Down’s Estate site, holder of DECP licence, major funder and auspice.

#### *University of Melbourne*

Major funder and partner in on site projects.

#### *Melbourne Water*

Joint management with FCC of the adjacent Ramsar wetlands.

#### *Peta Murphy (Federal) and Sonya Kilkenny (State),*

Members of Parliament representing the local community.

<sup>27</sup> Frankston City Council (2019, Legal/Policy/Council Plan Impact section, unpagged)

*Western Port Biosphere*

*Belvedere Community Centre*

*Frankston Food Access Network  
(FFAN)*

*Seaford Farmers Market (Rotary)*

*Seaford Community Committee*

*State and Federal Government  
departments*

*Peninsula Health*

*Dr Mary Cole (Agpath, and University of  
Melbourne FVAS)*

*Collective Impact and Community Plate  
projects*

*Permaculture Carrum Carrum*

*Farmer Incubator*

*Frankston Community Garden Network*

*Frankston Environmental Friends Network  
(FEFN)*

*Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Inc.  
(FESWI)*

*The Pines Men's Shed*



*Nairn Marr Djambana*

*Frankston North Community Centre (FNCC)*

*Peninsula Field Naturalists*

*Birdlife Australia*

*Patterson River Secondary College*

*Reality Bites Network*

*Permaculture Vic*

*Port Philip and Westernport Catchment  
Management Authority (PPWCMA)*

*Edigrocer*

*Seaford's New Harvest grocery*

*Sunrise to Sunset Gardening*

*Scotsburn Nursery*

*Richards Family Trust*

## **11.2) Potential Future Collaborations, Participation and Support**

Connections has been made with several diverse interest groups, individuals and businesses in the local area and wider Melbourne metropolitan area, including:

*Chisholm TAFE*

*Monash University*

*Heritage Fruit Society*

*Kingston Council*

*Natured Kids*

*Yimba Yumba*

*Rotary Frankston Sunrise*

*Bunnings Carrum Downs*

*Sustainable Building Concepts Seaford*  
*Ash Martin Realty*  
*Bendigo Community Bank Carrum Downs*  
*Sustainability Victoria*  
*Melbourne Water,*  
*SE Water*  
*Scott Seymour's Aquatic Systems*  
*Management*  
*Defenders of SE Green Wedge*  
*Environment Vic*  
*Frankston Historical Society*  
*RAD-FMP*

*Bunurong Land Council*  
*CERES*  
*Eeny Meeny Cafe*  
*Gardens for Wildlife*  
*Sustain*  
*Ripe For Change*  
*Green Connect*  
*Salvation Army*  
*Various mental health support and community*  
*wellness groups*  
*Various arts, crafts, music and movement*  
*groups*

### 11.3) Consultations

Despite the current COVID-19 pandemic limiting DECP's ability to conduct consultations with ease, a total of 10 consultations were completed with 8 targeted groups (current and potential stakeholders) and 2 events open to the public.

The following targeted groups were consulted:

*Belvedere Community Centre*  
*Frankston North Community Centre*  
*Frankston History Facebook page*  
*Joy of the Earth Community Garden*  
*Garden for Life Community Garden*  
*Action Sweetwater Creek*  
*Living with Wildlife*  
*Gardens 4 Wildlife*  
*Natured Kids/Farm to School Program*  
*PPWCMA*  
*Seaford Community Committee*  
*Nairn Marr Djambana*



*Eeny Meeny Cafe*

*Edigrocer*  
*Ripe for Change*  
*Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands Inc.*  
*(FESWI)*  
*Sonya Kilkeny MP's office*

*Frankston City Council (in relation to the business case)*

*Peninsula Health*

*Community Plate*

*Farms2Schools*

*Bunurong Land Council*

*Dr Mary Cole (Agpath, and University of Melbourne FVAS)*

The results of these consultations will serve to guide current and future projects, and covered the questions:

- Do you think this project adds value to the Frankston community?
- Would you participate in any of the activities?
- Can you help us to make them happen?
- Do you have an idea you would like to bring to DECP?

Overwhelmingly, responses from businesses, organisations and community members were positive and show a strong interest participating in or assisting with the projects outlined in this business case. Key quotes from these consultations that reflect the majority sentiment include:

*“Getting in new Australians and local Indigenous people is fantastic”.*

*“My concern is 21% of people [in Frankston City] with psychological disorders is a serious issue and if Down’s can help people find traction in their lives, I think it’s a brilliant idea.”*

*“It’s audacious and huge and all-encompassing of many visceral issues for the community. You’ve tapped into key issues such as self-sufficiency, connecting, etc., it ties in global issues which can be overwhelming, and you’ve offered something people can make a contribution to. Your collective presentation is very helpful and hopeful to think that people can come together and have an impact in a variety of ways. Thank you for all that you do.”*

*“Definitely valuable and wonderful. I love that you’re involving so many people and demographics in the community. It’s a wonderful thing and I wish you success. The added value I see is engaging the community and learn through just being there. To have your hands in the dirt and see things growing and living is a great opportunity”.*

*“I think it’s fantastic that you’re taking steps to connect children with their food source and offering life skills. Nature provides us with so much more than just food. It’s a beautiful space to be and it is tranquil and healing. For young people to meet and hang out and belong”.*



“Engaging communities who have been disengaged with our community in other ways” (regarding the Sudanese community) “It’s really hard for them. It’s good that you are bringing them”.

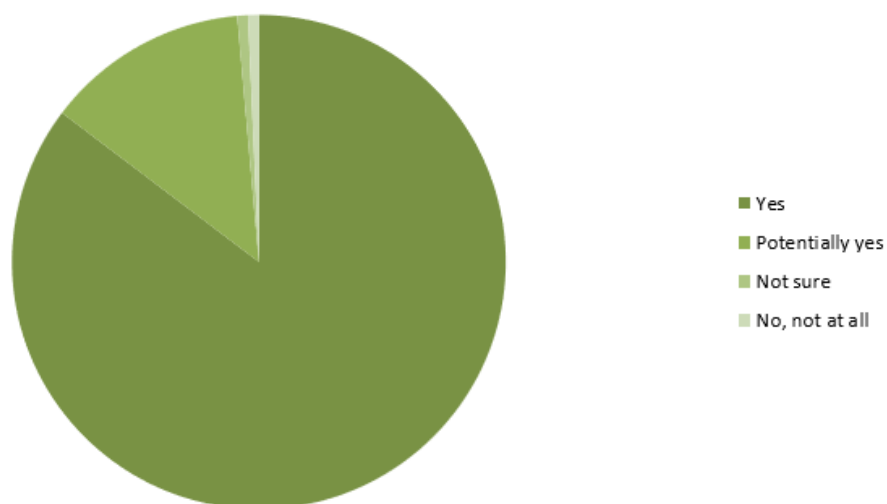
“It ticks many boxes on environmental, economic, individual and community level. A lot of aspects come into it, spiritual, health, etc. My answer is yes!”

“It’s imperative. I think it’s really, really important. Community engagement, possibilities, it’s imperative.”

In addition to these consultations, an online survey was released to increase the number of responses to these questions. A total of 143 community members completed the survey, with their responses being overwhelmingly positive and closely mirroring the results seen through consultations – showing continued community and stakeholder engagement in relation to the projects outlined in this business case.

A clear majority of respondents (141/143) believed that DECP brought, or potentially brought value to the Frankston community.

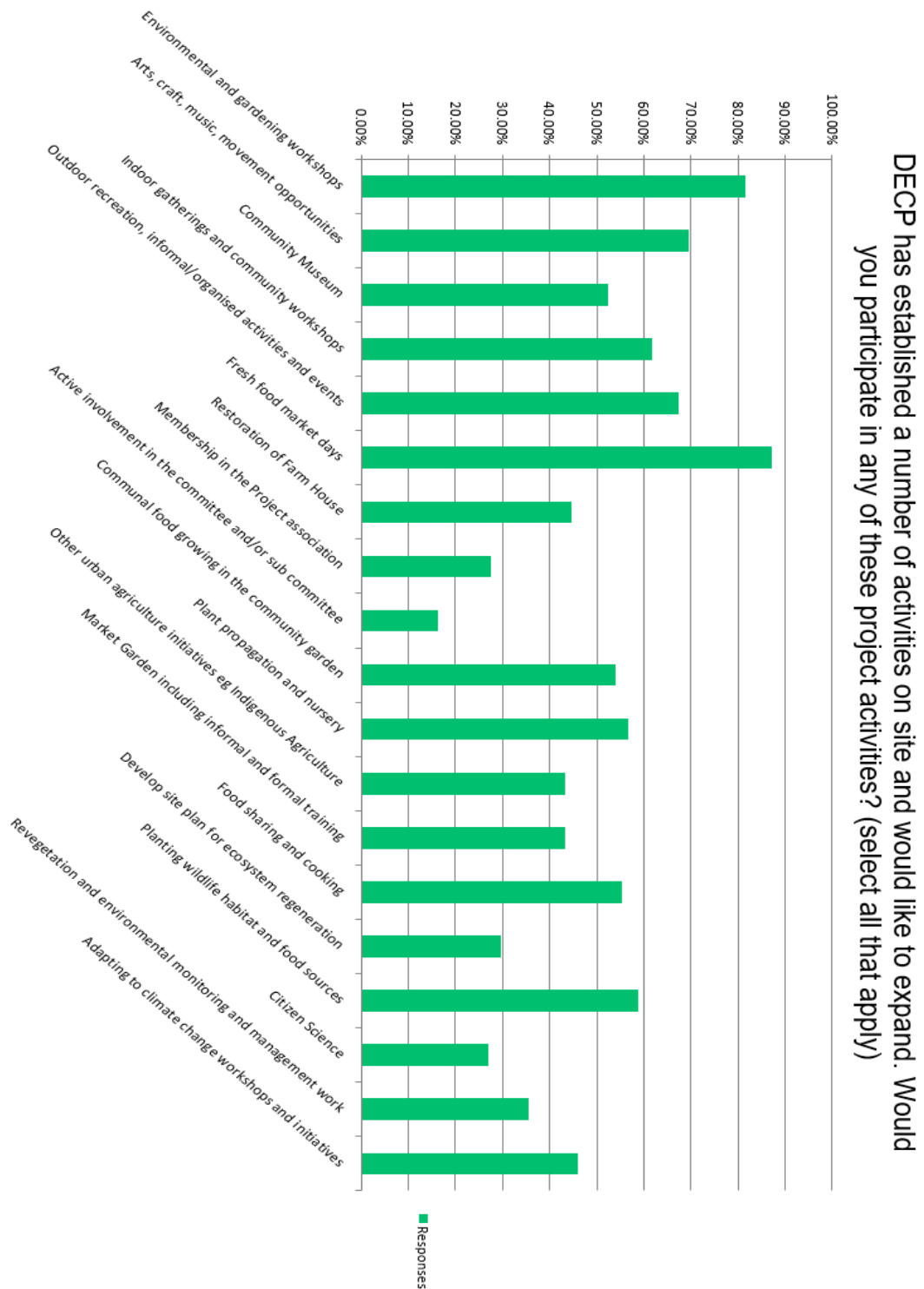
Do you think these project activities add value to the Frankston community, now and going into the future?



Approximately half of respondents to the question “Can you help us make any of these activities happen?” expressed that they would. This accounted for 62 people in total.

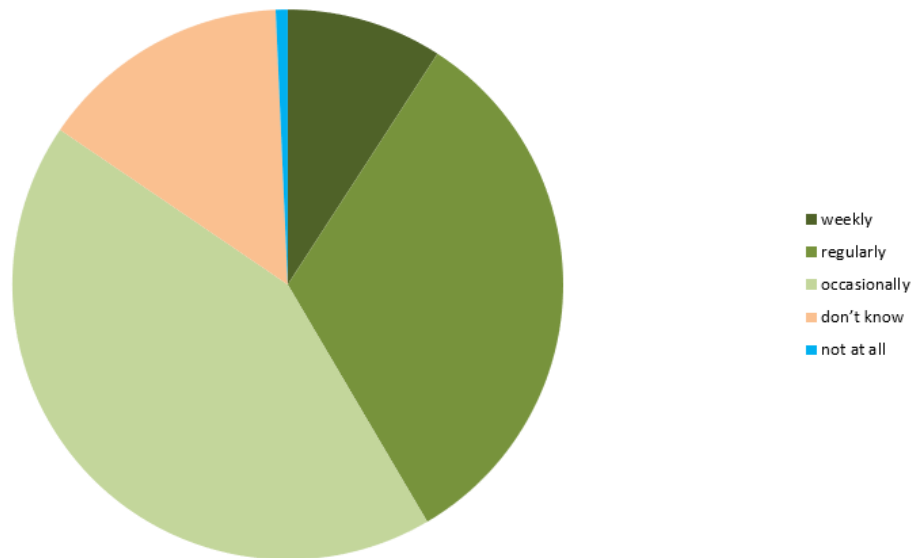
In addition to this, 26 groups and businesses expressed interest in being involved in projects, with 89 respondents requesting to be added to the DECP email list for future contact.

With regards to the types of activities community members would be interested in participating in, there was generally a high amount of interest in most activities presented in the business case, with all projects and sub-projects having some amount of support shown.

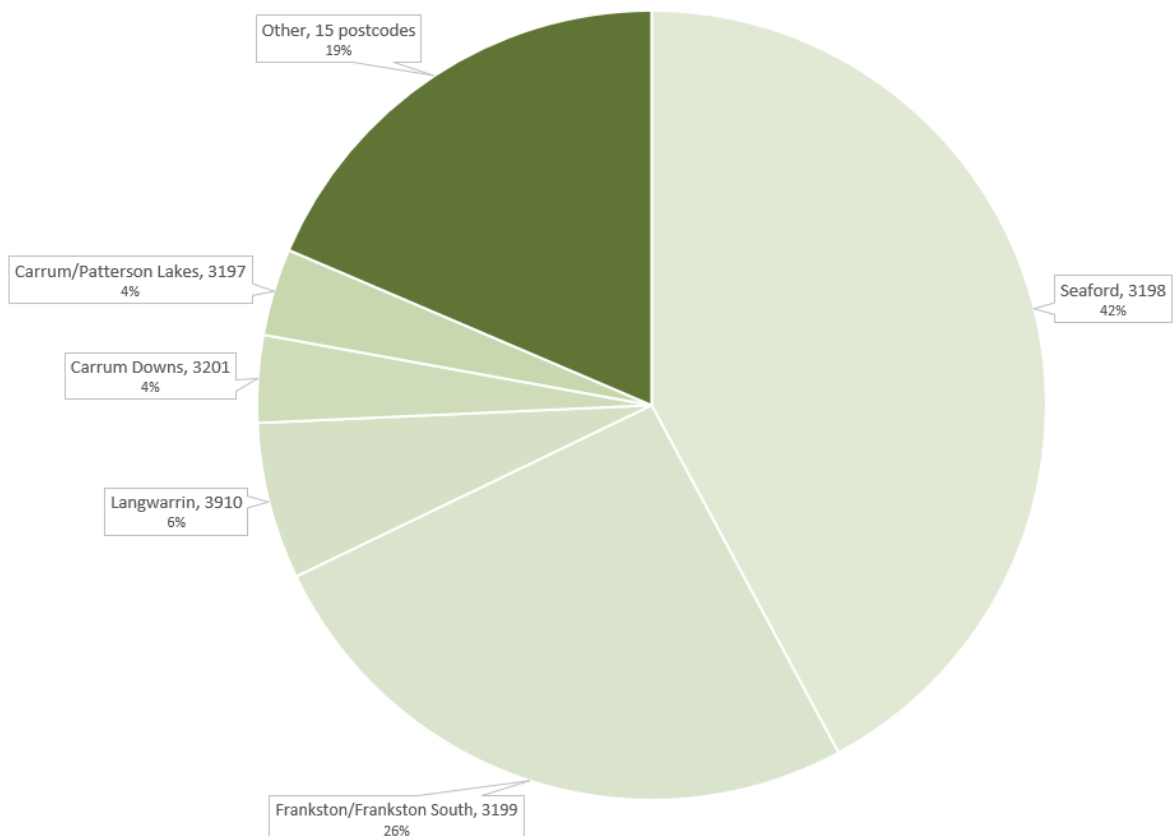


The majority of respondents (120/142) to the question of activity participation confirmed that they would attend the site at least occasionally, with only 1 respondent saying they would not attend at all.

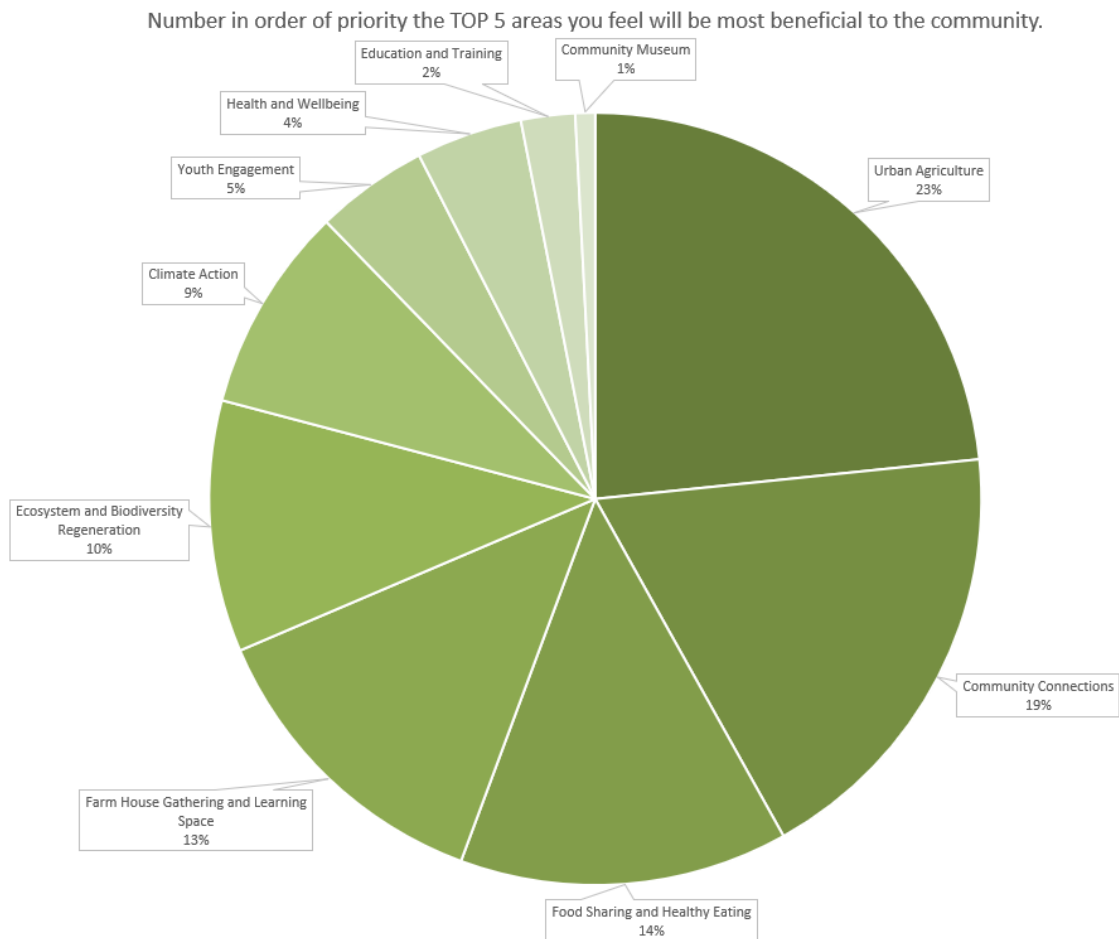
How often might you participate?



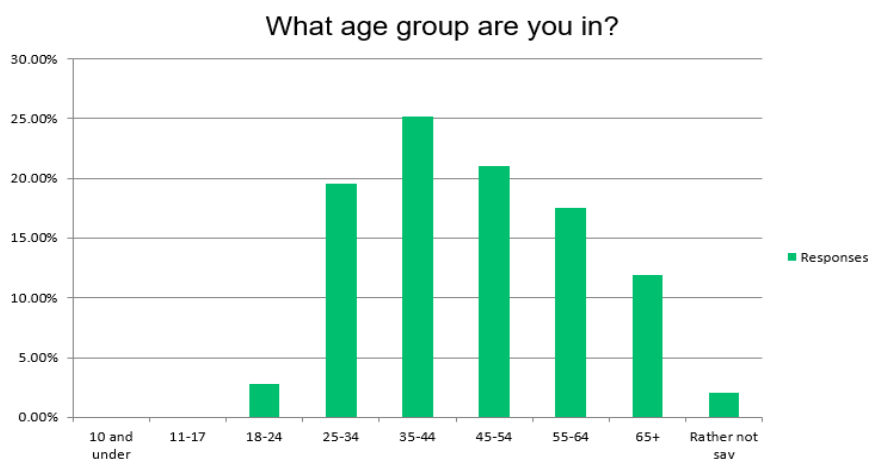
The location of respondents varied substantially, however the majority of respondents were local community (or adjacent community) members.



Respondents were also asked to rank the top 5 areas they believed would bring the most benefit to the community, from a total list of 10. While all suggestions were considered of importance to the community, 5 options were represented in respondent's top 5 choices over 75% of the time.



The survey respondents covered all adult (18+) age groups, with the largest contingent being the 35-44 age group, closely followed by the 45-54 and 25-34 groups. This represented a large majority of respondents being either young adults, or those potentially having young or millennial-aged children, showing that the project has the ability to positively engage youth and families in the community. Most importantly, results across age groups did not vary to a significant degree, showing overall positive results and engagement from all age groups.



## 11.4) Social Return on Investment

### An Expanding Social Return on Investment: Meeting the needs of Frankston City Council, the community and stakeholders and partners engaged in the project

As provided by the University of Melbourne, the following Social Return on Investment (SROI) outline shows that any investment that progresses the vision set out in this business case will see significant benefits to the community of Frankston.

Consultation of a broad range of stakeholders and potential beneficiaries have collected resounding goodwill for the proposal and the five developed major project areas. As stated in the Business case these core activity areas are Urban Agriculture, Ecosystem Regeneration, Farm House Restoration, Community Gathering, and Food Sharing and Healthy Eating.

As described in the Council Plan, the Frankston City Council seeks to strengthen its community by undertaking research and implementing policies and programs to enhance community wellbeing, social inclusion, participation, empowerment and resilience – the DECP business case aligns strongly with this framework.

#### How we can impact change

This visionary business case has both a broad appeal to many of the community social groups consulted while providing practical training and hands on experiences for a range of people across the community including the community's young people. The Business Case also directly speaks to its commitment to engaging and developing a deeper understanding across the community of the Indigenous history, cultural relevance and future aspirations of the Bunurong People. The Business Case foregrounds the central use of the project in acting as a platform for a host of opportunities for communities to gather, communicate and find common understandings in pursuit of sustainability and the health and wellbeing of people and organisations who wish to gather at the site.

The project provides opportunities for government organisations such as South East Water, Peninsula Health, as well as education institutions from tertiary to pre-primary. These organisations have all endorsed the project vision and are keen to partner with the project.

Tangible commercial opportunities have already been developed with farm training in garlic crops, selling of indigenous crops via local grocers. There have also been workshops on permaculture.

The business case outlines further potential economic benefits in development of an Urban Market Garden and small enterprise for food growing and sharing.

Economic benefits include:

- Potentially seeing an increase in employment in agriculture, and environmental areas.
- Training in growing and preparation of nutritious foods and research and education opportunities for climate change adaption and opportunities for citizen science in agriculture and ecology.

- A gathering place for multicultural groups where culturally specific food can be grown and shared.
- Increased participation in volunteerism and arts and cultural activities.

Social benefits include:

- Community engagement for people of all ages thereby reducing isolation coupled with opportunities for physical and social activities.
- Participation, for disengaged youth to increase independence and self confidence.
- Better nutrition and health outcomes leading to reduced obesity, diabetes.
- Improved community connections for those managing through periods of compromised mental health through interaction with contemplation and natural play spaces.
- Increased safety at location due to increased attendance and activation at the site.
- Community museum and story telling.

Environmental benefits include:

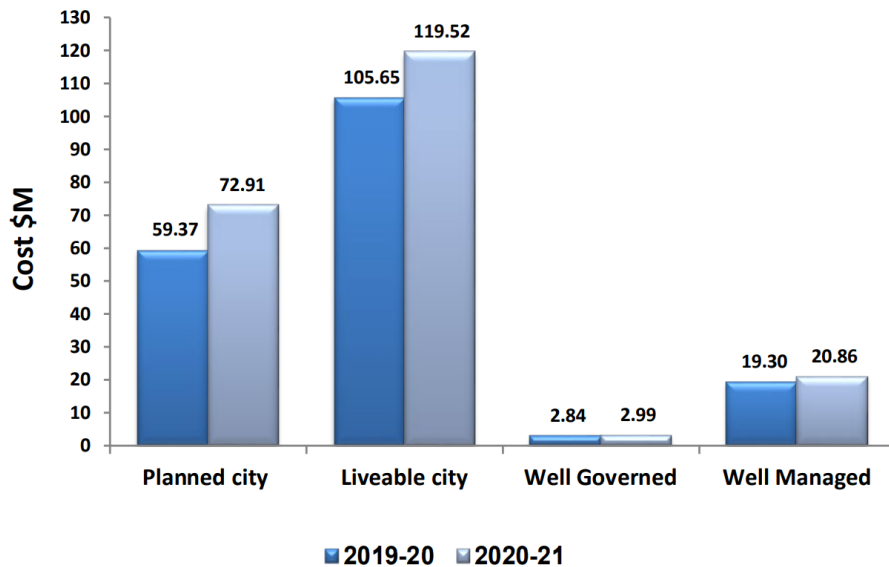
- Associated with reduction of household waste as communities are trained in growing food and recycling for compost.
- Increased Vegetation cover with the establishment of orchards and food forest.
- Better usage of ground water, capturing rainwater and training on water usage.
- Growing awareness and education of the broader environmental challenges facing communities and practical opportunities to study and understand the unique biosphere of the area.

### Meeting Frankston's Needs

The Frankston City Council Plan details the long term community outcomes (these are known as strategic objectives in the Local Government Act 1989) that will drive Council's role in partnership with the community to achieve the vision and aspirations outlined in the Community Plan. The Council Plan identifies 4 long-term community outcomes under which Council's activity for the next 4 years will be delivered.

Frankston City Council	Long Term Community Outcomes
1. A Planned City	A vibrant city providing housing, stunning beaches, a beautiful natural environment and arts and cultural experiences. Everything you want at your doorstep – shopping, education, employment, recreation and a lifestyle the envy of others.
2. A Liveable City	Welcoming neighbourhoods, green streets and thoroughfares, parks and natural reserves, an active foreshore and vibrant town centres delivering a living environment that is second to none. An active and healthy community that is connected through participation in activities at our local and regional sporting facilities, events and festivals.

3. A Well Governed City	An elected Council that is driven by the privilege of serving its community and providing leadership and vision to ensure Frankston is recognised as the lifestyle capital of Victoria.
4. A Well Managed City	Proudly delivering services to improve our community's lifestyle. An organisation that is recognised amongst its peers as a leader in the sector, and one that is founded upon its engagement and connection to its community.



The Annual Budget 2020-2021 includes a range of services and initiatives to be funded that will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives specified in the Council Plan. The above graph shows the level of funding allocated in the budget to achieve the strategic objectives as set out in the Council Plan for 2020-2021.

Outcome strategies developed and expenditure relevant to the benefits of Down's Estate DECP business case:

**A Planned City:**

*Services for **Community Relations** provides the first point of contact for Frankston communities, including residents, visitors, businesses, investors, media and internal departments. The strategy manages Frankston City's and the organisation's reputation and Disseminates key messages to communities and positions the municipality as the preferred place to live, learn, work, visit and invest. The expenditure for this strategy [ 3,828 (141) is \$3,687,000*

*Initiatives to deliver this strategy includes Council Plan Theme 1.3: **Natural and sustainable environment**, which drives to reduce the amount of waste to landfill with a focus to increase composting of food waste*

DECP can deliver opportunities for the community on recycling and composting. Local restaurants are able to provide food waste for use in composting on to the garden with the result of decreasing food waste. This initiative has already been used at the Down's Estate and with development of the site this can be expanded.

*Under this initiative there is also a drive to prepare Planning Scheme Amendment to enable implementation of the Green Wedge Management Plan.*

*43% of Council's total water usage is sourced from recycled wastewater*

The DECP business case provides benefits in providing a demonstration in unlocking the Green Wedge potential for peri-urban agriculture, by providing education to farmers and those wishing to engage in peri-urban agriculture to improve crop choices, productivity and viability of Green Wedge areas in the City of Frankston. Frankston's green wedge covers 4,500 ha or 34.5% of the municipality and Frankston's green wedge includes the RAMSAR listed Seaford Wetlands.

Connections with the University of Melbourne (School of Food and Agriculture), South East Water and permaculture specialists with spaces where agricultural methods can be trialled and learnt are integral to building capability to green wedge property managers. Improving land use with the extended use of recycled water with Down's Estate operating as a demonstration site is a potential development with water utilities.

#### ***A Liveable City:***

*Services delivered for this strategy in Arts and Culture Stimulates activity in the municipality through events, festivals, performing arts, public art, visual arts, libraries, library services and lifelong learning initiatives and community development programs.*

DECP provides an opportunity to add facilities and services for events and functions. Events with Indigenous groups and multicultural groups deepen the connection into the community, reaching families and individuals to seek learning experiences and opportunities to express their culture at a grass roots level, and encourage participation and community strengthening. Benefits here are also for community mental health and safety.

*Community Safety Ensures the safety of the community by managing school crossing supervision, animal registration, parking services, building services, planning enforcement, crime prevention and foreshore patrols. Undertakes local law prosecutions, emergency management and illegal dumping responses. Community Safety Strategy estimated expenditure: [9,420 (6,744)] is \$2,676,000*

*Currently Frankston Community safety statistics record:*

- 87% of people feel safe walking in their street during the day*
- 46% of people feel safe at night*
- 2.2% decrease in crime rates during 2018-19*
- Frankston records the highest rate of family violence police callouts in Metropolitan Melbourne*

Building community gathering and participation develops safer more connected neighbourhoods, develops a sense of belonging and creates value in community activities that related to the food growing activities and events offered at the Down's. DECP offers opportunities to develop small



scale food growing enterprise and opportunities to participate in ecology regeneration. These activities are identified by youth as of interest and through the potential to develop vocational skills.

***Community Strengthening** services undertakes research and implements policies and programs to enhance community wellbeing, social inclusion, participation, empowerment and resilience. Community planning and engagement of local areas. Develops and implements the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan. Manages grants to support charities and community groups. To address this 3 strategies: Health and Wellbeing Plan, Community Plan and Local Community Plans estimate expenditure [7,738 (924)] is \$6,814 000*

DECP activities create opportunities to strengthen community in all these areas and there are current and planned activities described in this business case which can enact positive change in the strength of the Frankston community:

- Fostering individual connections within the local community by providing a space to learn and socialise, improving physical and mental health.
- Increasing access and availability of fresh, local food including indigenous and culturally diverse crops.
- Improving food security and community resilience by providing a space for people to grow their own food.
- Improving community health outcomes through access to healthy foods and physical exercise.
- Providing opportunities to build employment skills and develop hands-on experience among disengaged youth.

***Waste and Recycling.** Waste Minimisation Strategy 21,440 (4,029) 17,411*

DECP provides opportunities for training on recycling and composting with tangible hands on experience for creating compost and inspiring waste minimisation. Local restaurants are already donating food waste to the community garden for composting. South East Water are very interested in partnering with the project to pursue further developments and innovation in the use of recycled water.

***Building and Facilities** Delivers, maintains and retires facility buildings in Frankston City. Constructs new or develops old building facilities in the municipality to provide, accommodate and/or house a range of community groups. Provides cleaning, security and maintenance to about 300 Frankston City Council buildings including the Civic Centre, Library, Art Centre, public toilets, sporting pavilions, preschools and other community buildings. [ 7,234 (8)] \$ 7,226 200.*

The Down's Farm House offers a vital opportunity for continuation of the living cultural heritage through DECP, and therefore retaining and preserving the original structures is far preferable to demolishing or replacing them. Community museum activities extend beyond the traditional practice of collecting and exhibiting, to incorporate both the place and activities conducted there throughout history, such as festivals, storytelling, art and music.

The business case for the restoration of the farmhouse is a separate document before the council but is integral to Placemaking.

**Family Health Support** Supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of families, children and young people through maternal and child health and immunisation services, kindergarten infrastructure and central registration scheme for 3 and 4-year-old kindergarten, childcare, youth services and advocacy. Supports other local providers of children's, family and youth services. Provides home and community-based services and support to maintain dignity and independence of older people, people with disability and their carers, including supporting positive ageing, volunteering opportunities, meals on wheels, personal and home care, senior citizens, U3A, respite care and activity groups. Plans and Strategies to address are Municipal Early Years Plan, and Strategic framework for young people in Frankston City [15,833 (9,089)] at \$6,744 000.

Opportunities for youth and senior citizens in participation at community garden and for community and educational events at Down's Estate will contribute to the delivery of this strategy. There is an increased opportunity for volunteering in agriculture, food growing activities, ecological restoration and citizen science.

Partnerships with education institutions (University of Melbourne, Chisholm TAFE, secondary colleges) and community and commercial enterprises will create employment opportunities, education and economy benefits.

#### **Council Plan Theme Health and well being**

*Work with other the South East Melbourne Councils to negotiate agreement with the State and Federal governments to deliver long term investment benefits for the local community and region*

*Advocate for a minimum of 10 clinical 'withdrawal' beds in the expansion of Frankston Hospital*

*Co-design and deliver a culture change program for sporting clubs to achieve greater gender equity in participation and board structures*

*Deliver aged services in accordance with contractual agreement/s*

*Continue the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021, focusing on: • Reducing homelessness and increasing affordable housing • Deliver Healthy Choices program at Council-owned Sport and Leisure facilities*

*Implement the Family Violence Prevention Action Plan*

*Review and update the Youth Framework to better support young people to transition to adulthood*

*Review and revise the Municipal Early Years Action Plan to identify priorities and optimise services*

*Commence implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan*

*Currently Frankston Community Health statistics record:*

- **49.3%** of adults engage in sufficient physical activity
- **57%** of people are overweight or obese
- **21.6%** self-report as smokers
- **22.7%** reported prevalence of asthma
- **7%** reported type 2 diabetes
- **7%** reported heart disease

- **92.3%** of children are fully immunised by the time they start school
- **47.5%** of Frankston 3.5-year-olds attended a maternal and child health service in 2017
- **21%** of Frankston residents reported high rates of psychological distress
- **35%** of adults ever diagnosed with anxiety or depression

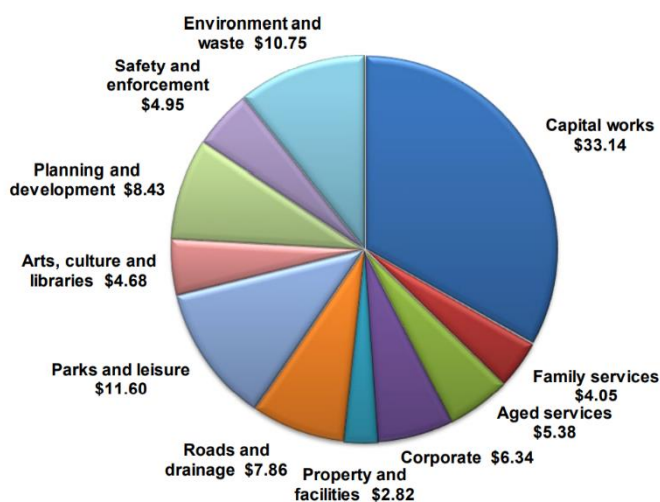
Frankston residents who are involved in the DECP can benefit in increased physical activity, in gardening, in ecological restoration, in play and general outdoor activities. Play areas and contemplative garden planned seek to benefit all age groups providing companionship and relief from psychological disorders.

- **7.7%** of people eat recommended serve of vegetables
- **41.5%** of people eat recommended serve of fruit
- **14.4%** of people drink sweetened/soft drink daily
- Average distance to supermarket from household: 1465.3m
- For every **1** healthy food outlet (supermarket/grocer) there are **6** unhealthy options (fast food)

There are opportunities to grow food and learn about nutrition, and new foods by sharing and participation with multi-ethnic events and general community connections to be made. Stakeholders like Peninsula Health report the need for training of Frankston residents during their consultation and see value for them in showing people how to grow and cook nutritious food. The DECP camp kitchen already serves the group activities and the business case plans to expand this activity.

Community Health and Wellbeing is perhaps the strongest social return on any investment into the Down’s Estate Community Project.

### 5.9 Council expenditure allocations



The above chart provides an indication of how Council allocates its expenditure across the main services that it delivers. It shows how much is allocated to each service area for every \$100 that Council spends.

## 12) Conclusion

There are serious and wide-ranging issues facing both the Frankston City community and the world, currently and into the future. DECP's projects present a holistic yet specifically targeted solution to these problems, through community engagement, education and skill building.

Strengthening community connections, building local resilience and food security, mitigating the devastating effects of climate change, and fostering a sense of local identity is more important than ever today and into the future.



DECP and its project collaborators such as the University of Melbourne play a vital role in the community by providing a place whereby people can come together to learn about the history of the area, what is possible and desirable in the future with regards to sustainable local and Indigenous agriculture, and build sense of belonging, self-awareness, local identity and community resilience.

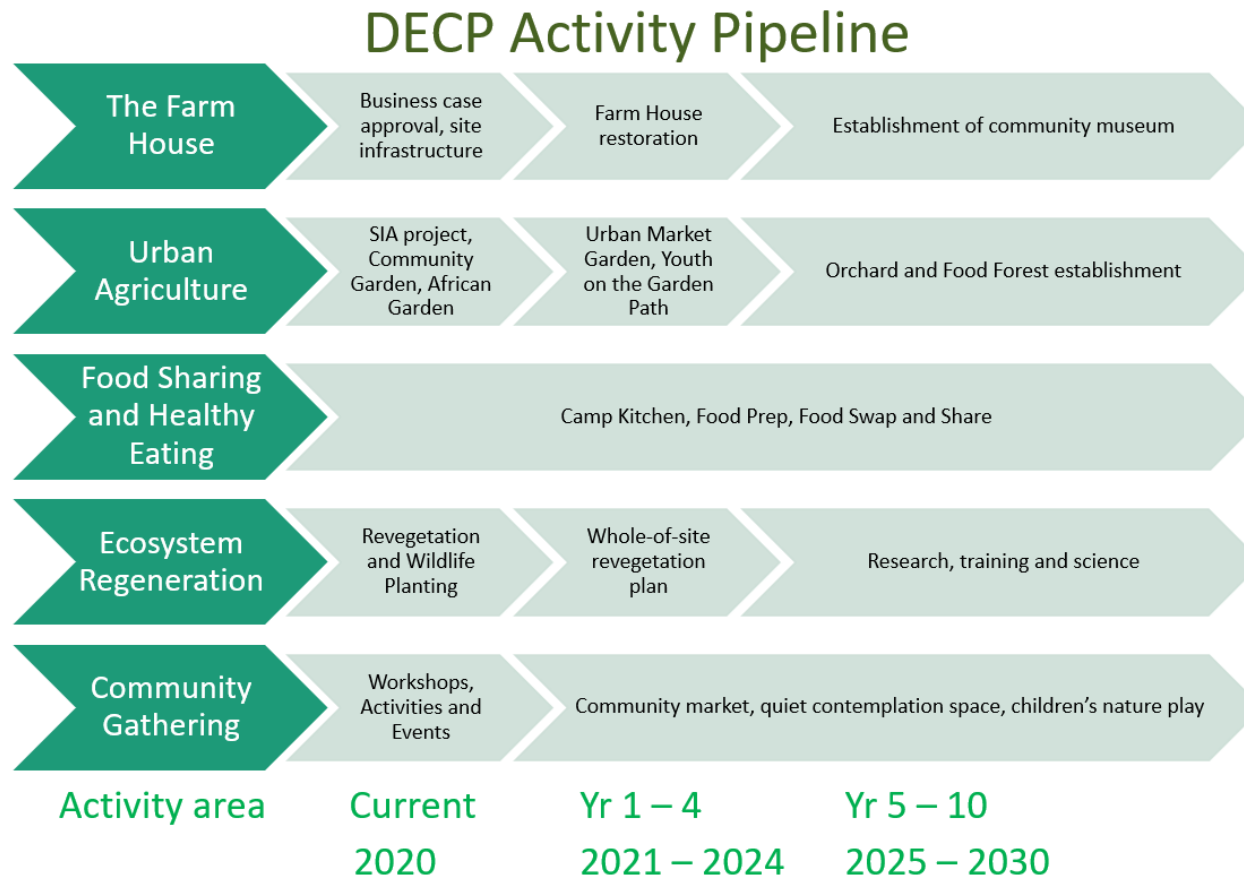
The lessons and skills learned at Down's Estate can be implemented at home, shared with other communities, and passed onto future generations – of particular benefit when taking into account the effects of climate change, natural disasters and pandemics as we have seen throughout 2020.

2021 will be an important year for DECP, where the projects outlined in this business case will be expanded on with strategic plans, in-depth financial modelling, and key performance indicators based on social return on investment.

Most importantly, the consultations and survey presented to the community show the continuing value of, and engagement with, DECP and the projects they have outlined for the future. This support spans age groups and supports the Frankston City Council and Community Plans to improve the wellbeing of the wider Frankston community and its natural environment.

### 13) Business Action Plan

The Business Action Plan table serves as a clear outline of all current and proposed major projects on site, the goals and actions assigned to each of those projects, and the resources and finances required to ensure they can be carried out effectively. Broadly speaking, the general timeframe for projects is summarised in the following diagram:



Activity Area	Project	Goals	Actions	Timeframe	Resources	Budget
<b>The Farm House</b>	Farm House Restoration	<p>Preserve a valuable part of local history</p> <p>Weatherproof space for community and site activities</p> <p>Food swap/share space</p>	<p>Sourcing of funds for restoration</p> <p>Commission design of house renovations - exterior and interior spaces</p> <p>Obtain approvals from FCC to proceed with works.</p> <p>Work collaboratively with FCC on project until completion</p> <p>Furnish and caretake restored House and landscape surrounds</p>	2020 - 2024	<p>Subcommittee to lead House Restoration project in collaboration with FCC.</p> <p>Sufficient funds for the restoration project</p> <p>Architects and Tradespeople to design and build House</p> <p>Possible in-kind contributions from local business and service groups on building and surrounds</p>	\$474,500.00 - \$490,000.00
	Community Museum	<p>Showcasing the stories of: Indigenous history, local settlement history, ecology</p> <p>Providing community resources and info library</p> <p>Activating local cultural identity initiatives and events</p>	<p>Establish a Community Museum subcommittee of DECP to act as leaders of this project in DECP</p> <p>Create active networks of local groups to provide materials for museum displays and collaborative activities</p>	After House restoration is completed, DECP can install fittings and commence museum activities	<p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p> <p>Appropriate shelving/display fittings and small furniture to</p>	<p>\$10,000.00 Establishment</p> <p>\$1,000.00 - \$2,000.00 Community Launch event</p>

					<p>accommodate resources and displays</p> <p>Materials for hanging wall exhibits</p> <p>Laptop and monitor for digital displays</p> <p>Membership of Australian Museum &amp; Galleries Association</p>	
<b>Urban Agriculture</b>	Sustainable Indigenous Agriculture	<p>Understanding of Indigenous foods, their nutritional value, and their potential for inclusion in our diets</p> <p>Understanding of how to grow foods suited and evolved to grow in local soils and conditions</p> <p>Increased access and consumption of nutritious foods</p> <p>Potential to create collaborations with local Indigenous community members</p> <p>Increased growing of crops suited to the land, potentially</p>	<p>Maintain current plantings until COVID-19 restrictions ease</p> <p>Post-COVID, continue building the project with UoM, students, businesses, and the local community</p> <p>Monitor and maintain 4 Indigenous crops</p> <p>Assess growth habits and crop potential</p> <p>Promote crop opportunities in community education events</p> <p>Harvesting, cooking, and tasting trials</p>	Ongoing	<p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p> <p>Ongoing funding and continued partnerships</p> <p>Further engagement with Indigenous groups or individuals welcomed</p>	Currently funded by UoM-managed grant

		<p>causing less environmental degradation and greater success</p> <p>Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from the food growing and distribution chain</p> <p>Enhanced ecosystems and restoration of indigenous crops</p>	<p>Continue to explore and trial other Indigenous crops</p> <p>Welcome opportunities for further collaboration with Indigenous community members and organisations</p> <p>Continue to engage with educational institutions in the hospitality education space</p>			
	Urban Market Garden	<p>Increased access and availability of fresh, local vegetables</p> <p>Skills and employment provided to the community</p> <p>Hands on experience</p> <p>Increased skills and knowledge in growing food sustainably and caring for the natural environment</p> <p>Reduced greenhouse gas emissions from the food growing and distribution chain</p> <p>Enhanced ecosystem</p>	<p>Create sub-committee</p> <p>Develop plan and timeline for the project, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what foods will be the focus,</li> <li>• need for adaptation to changing environment,</li> <li>• water use,</li> <li>• target customer base,</li> <li>• supply chain/s to be used (farm gate, farmers market, delivery to local businesses, etc), and</li> </ul>	2021 onwards	<p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p> <p>Initial sponsorship or grant</p> <p>Potentially a partnership with like-minded organisation</p> <p>Tools, equipment, compost infrastructure?</p> <p>Qualified / experienced market gardener to oversee operations</p>	TBC



		<p>Create a working example of sustainable food growing, incorporating regenerative, permaculture and sustainable water use techniques</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leadership, workforce training methods and partnerships</li> </ul> <p>Develop partnership with South East Water into the use of recycled water and other innovative and sustainable water use methods</p>		<p>Facilities for outdoor cooking and meals preparation (refer Camp Kitchen project).</p>	
	Community Garden	<p>Increased access to fresh, healthy, local food</p> <p>Increased community connections through working and socialising together, leading to improved mental health</p> <p>Increased physical health through eating healthier foods and physical exercise</p> <p>Community connection to natural environment and their food source</p> <p>Food growing skills</p> <p>Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from sustainable food growing</p> <p>Reduced food miles, processing and packaging and</p>	<p>Maintain planting and maintenance during COVID-19 period</p> <p>Post-COVID, continue to develop garden, expand participant numbers, host swap/sell events for produce and seeds</p>	Ongoing	<p>This project has already commenced and is progressing well. New members, ideas, and support welcome. This project will continue to be central to the project and an easy entry point to participation in the overall site</p> <p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p>	\$2000.00/annum

		<p>therefore reduced greenhouse gases</p> <p>Enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem</p>				
	Youth on the Garden Path	<p>Skills and employment provided to disengaged youth</p> <p>Participants will have the opportunity to discover their ability to achieve</p> <p>Hands on experience</p> <p>Increased availability and consumption of fresh, local vegetables by participants and potentially families</p> <p>greater community knowledge of food growing in the next generation</p> <p>Increased knowledge on sustainable farming techniques that can benefit surrounding eco and climate systems</p> <p>Potentially increased use of sustainable farming</p>	<p>Establish reference group/sub-committee</p> <p>Develop partnerships with local youth support, training, and education providers</p> <p>Seek sponsorship and funding</p> <p>Engage qualified leader for project on contract basis</p> <p>Design project programme and write content for training</p> <p>Promote project and conduct application process for participants</p> <p>Provide field work component on-site</p>	2022 onwards	<p>Partnerships with organisations working to address disengaged youth</p> <p>Formation of an on-going reference group to oversee project</p> <p>Sponsorship</p> <p>Tools, equipment, compost infrastructure, storage space</p> <p>Qualified / experienced market gardener, bushland manager, chef...</p> <p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p>	TBC

		<p>techniques in surrounding areas</p> <p>Increased knowledge on sustainable farming techniques that can benefit surrounding ecosystem</p> <p>Potentially increased use of sustainable farming techniques in surrounding areas</p>				
	African Garden (with Afri-Aus Care)	<p>Strengthening of relationships particularly between generations within the South Sudanese community</p> <p>Increased skills and engagement of youth potentially leading to increased self-respect and employment prospects</p> <p>Increased food security and access to preferred / traditional food crops</p> <p>Building connections between the South Sudanese and wider community</p> <p>Increased growing of food using sustainable methods</p>	<p>Continue to build partnership parameters</p> <p>Establish reference group/sub-committee</p> <p>Develop plan for specific activities and location/s on site</p> <p>Seek funding</p> <p>Host joint events to build relationship between the Sudanese and wider communities, and encourage further engagement</p> <p>Develop garden beds and planting</p>	2020 onwards	<p>Start-up funding for tools and equipment</p> <p>On-going funding for transport and coordination(?)</p> <p>Continued partnerships</p> <p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p>	TBC

		<p>and understanding of these techniques</p> <p>Increased skills in caring for and protecting natural environments</p> <p>Decrease in food kilometres</p>	Provide any excess produce for sale/swap/share			
<b>Food Sharing and Healthy Eating</b>	Camp Kitchen	<p>Increased access to fresh and nutritious local food.</p> <p>Increased community connection through cooking and socialising together, leading to improved mental health.</p> <p>Community connection to the natural environment and local food sources.</p> <p>Food production knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Reduced greenhouse gas emissions, processing and packaging from sustainable food growing and reduces food kilometres.</p>	<p>Building of mobile kitchen facility (lightweight metal trolley, sink and cooking equipment)</p> <p>Regular gatherings (informal, cooking skills and meal sharing)</p> <p>Crossover activities with community garden</p> <p>Special events highlighting cultural cuisines, horticultural and nutritional themes</p>	Ongoing	<p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p> <p>Mobile trolley and cooking equipment, stored when not in use</p>	<p>\$1,500.00 Establishment</p> <p>\$500.00 Annual cost</p> <p>\$1,000.00 Community launch event of Camp Kitchen program</p>
	Food Sale/Swap/Share	Sale/swap/share seeds and produce grown on site	Continue to host events and expand once weatherproof	Ongoing	Camp Kitchen	Covered under Camp Kitchen budget

		<p>Cook and share produce grown on site</p> <p>Informal gatherings to cook and share multicultural foods</p> <p>Informal education on health foods and nutrition through food cooking and sharing</p>	<p>facilities and camp kitchen are available</p> <p>Continue to develop partnerships with like-minded organisations such as Peninsula Health, other Community gardens, community centres, and the multicultural community</p>		<p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p> <p>Tables and seating</p>	
<b>Ecosystem Regeneration</b>	Zones 4 and 5 Site Plan	<p>Food and habitat for wildlife</p> <p>Regenerative planting</p> <p>Adapting to climate change</p>	<p>Some ad-hoc activities have already been undertaken.</p> <p>Establish sub-committee and reference group with interested individuals and organisations such as Melbourne Water, FESWA, Dr Mary Cole (Agpath), and Council</p> <p>Develop plan for whole of site including context of the larger Down's area and adjoining wetlands, exploring current health and future needs of the soil, vegetation, water, adaptation to climate change</p> <p>Explore opportunities for collaborations and education</p>	<p>2021 – 2022 to develop 2022 ongoing to activate</p>	<p>Partnerships and dialogue for plan</p> <p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p>	<p>Not required for planning stage</p>

			using this site as a model of action			
<b>Community Gathering</b>	Activities, Workshops and Events	<p>Increased informal and organised use of site for community recreation, learning and celebration</p> <p>Encouraging community connection at Down's Estate with the provision of appropriate facilities and skill building activities.</p> <p>Collaboration and partnership with other local organisations to establish a program of activities and host community events on site</p> <p>Contribute to building a healthy and resilient community and supportive local networks</p> <p>Site remains open to the public</p> <p>Establish a regular community market</p>	<p>Seek funding for specific events as required</p> <p>Create a program of activities for community members of different ages and varied interests. Provide all access activities where possible.</p> <p>Liaise with other local orgs and FCC to initiate some special Seaford events</p> <p>Strengthen DECP links with other local community groups, organisations and service providers.</p> <p>Maintain open access for informal visitors to look around and use the space for activities such as picnics and walks</p> <p>Form a subcommittee to plan and establish community market with staged implementation</p>	Ongoing	<p>A subcommittee to facilitate and promote community gatherings</p> <p>Weatherproof space in planned Farm House</p> <p>Sheltered space under planned verandah</p> <p>Grants and other funding sources/donations to support specific activities</p> <p>Some fee-paying events for special workshops</p> <p>Collaborations with other groups/organisations and local business to share resources</p> <p>Frankston City Council maintains mowing of the site</p>	According to specific events (funding through grants and/or cost of admission)

## 14) Appendix

### 14.1) Letters of Support

as described in 11) Stakeholders and Supporters



**Peta Murphy MP**  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR DUNKLEY



25 June 2020

#### **Retention of the Farmhouse at Down's Estate**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to write in support of the retention of the farmhouse at the Down's Estate in my electorate of Dunkley.

The Estate and its buildings, particularly the former home of world-renowned saddler Harry Down, have an important role to play in maintaining connection with the farming history and cultural heritage of the Seaford area and of Victoria.

As well, a refurbished farmhouse could become the hub for a range of much-needed community activities. Most importantly, it would become the base the Down's Estate Community Project which has already been able to achieve significant improvements on the estate, and are committed to continuing this work.

I have seen first-hand the great work that has been achieved on the Estate and I wholeheartedly support the Project's efforts to retain this significant building.

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9781 2333.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peta Murphy".

**Peta Murphy MP**  
Federal Member for Dunkley

# Sonya Kilkenny MP

LABOR MEMBER FOR CARRUM DISTRICT

Bangholme • Bonbeach • Carrum • Carrum Downs • Patterson Lakes • Sandhurst • Seaford • Skye



John McKenzie & Maureen Griffin  
Down's Estate Community Project  
190 Old Wells Road  
SEAFORD VIC 3198

29 June 2020

Dear John and Maureen

## Downs Estate Community Project

I would like to commend the Down's Estate Community Project for all of the work you have done to bring life to the historic Down's Estate in Seaford.

I recall meeting with you just a few short years ago to hear about your plans for the Estate. Since then, you and your incredible team of volunteers, together with the local community, have worked tirelessly to reactivate the area creating an accessible community garden and holding workshops, picnics and other community get-togethers to discuss and promote this community-led project centred on food security, environmental education and community buildings.

I understand the Down's Estate Community Project is seeking funding to help restore and refurbish the original farmhouse to not only preserve a piece of Seaford's unique history but to create an exciting all-weather facility for holding events, such as horticulture and wildlife workshops, as well as a space for the local community.

I am not currently aware of any Victorian Government grants that are available for this purpose. However, I will update you as soon as I hear of any. In the meantime, you may wish to contact the Victorian Government Grants Information Hotline on 1300 366 356 or online via <https://www.vic.gov.au/grants> for more information and to subscribe for the latest funding grant updates.

I wish you every success with your plans to restore the old farmhouse and to further develop this community space. I am delighted to support and promote projects that seek to foster greater community engagement, as well as local jobs.

If I can provide any additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

**Sonya Kilkenny MP**  
State Member for Carrum District



622 Nepean Highway, Carrum VIC 3197

P: 9773 2727 E: [sonya.kilkenny@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:sonya.kilkenny@parliament.vic.gov.au) [SonyaKilkennyMP](#)





## Seaford Community Committee (SCC)

[seafordcc@gmail.com](mailto:seafordcc@gmail.com) - [www.seafordcc.org](http://www.seafordcc.org)

 <https://www.facebook.com/SeafordCommunityCommittee>

Friday, 26 June 2020

To whom it may concern

### **RE: Retention of Down's Estate farmhouse**

We write to offer our full support for the retention, repurposing and future use of Harry Down's house as described in the Down's Estate Community Project (DECP) farmhouse business case.

The Seaford Community Committee's (SCC) prime role is to liaise with residents and local community groups to protect and enhance Seaford.

The SCC and the DECP have had an extremely close relationship for many years now. They have shared our stall at Frankston Rotary's Farmers Market each month since 2014.

The DECP members have demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing community values in Seaford. Their business case for Harry Down's house is in keeping with this sentiment and in line with SCC goals.

Far too often, historical sites fall victim to the old adage "act in haste, repent at leisure". Please don't let this be another example of opportunity lost.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss the proposal further.

---

Noel Tudball  
Chairman,

Please feel free to contact us if you have an event or issue you would like added to our Forum and/or sent to the more than 500 groups and individuals currently on our mailing lists

0412 111 251  
[seafordcc@gmail.com](mailto:seafordcc@gmail.com)

The Seaford Community Committee aims to improve communication and create a stronger community in Seaford  
[www.seafordcc.org](http://www.seafordcc.org) - Page 1 of 1



Belvedere Community Centre  
36 Belvedere Road, Seaford 3198  
Ph: 9776 8922  
E: centre\_manager@belvedere.org.au

To whom it concerns,

25/6/2020

Belvedere Community Centre (BCC) Committee of Management would like to offer our support to the Downs Estate Community Project (DECP) in retaining the use of the Farmhouse at the Down's Estate, for the benefits it will provide the community.

Our two organisations have forged a strong association over the past 5 years, BCC providing a space for their meetings throughout the years, attending each other's AGM's and engaging our community in each other's projects and programs.

BCC receives funding through Dept of Education to run pre-accredited vocational courses including language, literacy, computers and programs designed to support learners to return to work or further study.

We have had initial discussions with DECP about the Down's Estate area providing a unique opportunity to deliver pre-accredited courses such as Introduction to Horticulture. The horticulture industry in the surrounding regions provides many employment opportunities and by having access to practical work experience and learnings at this venue it would add value to the wider community. We are also conscious that our community has become more receptive to sustainable living objectives and practices throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and again this would provide both BCC and DECP an opportunity to further inform and educate people.

Having access to a dry and safe indoor space for the community members to retreat to for shelter, workshops or learning opportunities is important to ensure the viability of such potential programs. We also feel it is important to retain the Farmhouse as part of Seaford's history.

If you would like more information regarding our support of DECP, please call our manager, Meredith MacKenzie on 0423 909 950.

*Meredith MacKenzie*

On behalf of Belvedere Community Centre Committee of Management.



16 October 2020

**RE: FFAN letter of support for Downs Estate  
Community Project business case.**

To Whom It May Concern:

The Frankston Food Access Network (FFAN) is proud to offer this letter of support for the Downs Estate Community Project (DECP).

The Network is a collaboration between Frankston City Council, Peninsula Health and other stakeholders representing the interests of community-based groups and local residents with a view to addressing the issue of food insecurity: the inability to access safe, nutritious and affordable food.

As key FFAN partners, the DECP have been involved with awareness raising and community capacity building activities for the last 10 years. Their proven dedication to improving local food security outcomes is a true asset to the City of Frankston and one that can be maximised with further utilisation of the available space at Downs Estate.

The business case activities as set out by DECP will add value to the Frankston community through raising community awareness and skills in relation to local food growing, healthy eating and community food sharing. They will provide training and work opportunities for disengaged youth in urban agriculture while supporting connection through nature that will ultimately benefit community health and wellbeing.

Covid-19 has highlighted the crucial importance of local food supply and distribution chains as well as the immense need for people to feel connected for their general and mental health. The DECP Business case outlines a path for action that will address our existing community and environmental needs while contributing to the future sustainability goals and outcomes sought by all levels of government.

The Network believes that this is a valuable opportunity for the community and will proudly support the initiative as best it can.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sally Taylor".

**Sally Taylor**

On behalf of the Frankston Food Access Network

# **F** RANKSTON ENVIRONMENTAL R IENDS NETWORK

*Linking groups working for Frankston's natural environment*

16 October 2020

To whom it may concern,

## **Down's Estate Community Project**

The Frankston Environmental Friends Network (FEFN) is an umbrella organisation comprising 23 environmental groups in Frankston. The FEFN wishes to add our support to the Down's Estate Community Project (DECP) business case.

As members of FEFN since December 2015, DECP have been regular participants at monthly meetings and contributed to FEFN actions and events during this time.

We believe the current and future plans presented will provide not only community, but also environmental benefit in numerous ways, including the following:

- Providing community members the opportunity to learn and participate in local food growing which is sustainable and contributes to mitigation against climate change.
- Restoring the Farm House to provide a venue for sharing environment groups' resources, holding workshops and raising community awareness about the environment through pictorial and information displays and activities.
- Facilitating informal and formal gathering spaces and events to encourage the community members of all ages to connect with and appreciate nature.
- Creating a plan for ecosystem regeneration on the DECP site in collaboration with FCC and other environmental groups to create wildlife habitat and revegetation areas to enhance this ecology, adjacent to the Seaford Wetlands.
- Expanding Healthy Food and Food Sharing activities so that more people can benefit from community connection and learn food preparation skills which will contribute to their health and understanding of sustainability and food waste reduction at home.

As a collaborative group, DECP is helping to raise awareness about our local environment and the impact of climate change in the community.

We see DECP and this business case as providing a valuable contribution to the Frankston community and its environment, now and in the future.

Yours sincerely,



David Cross  
Chair, Frankston Environmental Friends Network  
Mobile: 0427 545 490  
Email: [fowr@atmanuals.com.au](mailto:fowr@atmanuals.com.au)  
Home: 8 Meribah Court, Frankston, 3199.

16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Mr Phil Cantillon  
Chief Executive Officer  
Frankston City Council  
P O Box 490  
Frankston Vic 3199

Dear Mr Cantillon,

**Re: Downs Estate Community Project**

---

I understand that the Down's Estate Community Project has now completed the development of the final Business Case for a community gathering and learning place at Downs Estate, Seaford. This is a project in which the Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve Foundation (the Biosphere) has a keen interest. The Biosphere is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit, incorporated group that is pleased to have Frankston City Council as a partner

The Western Port Biosphere Foundation is one of 701 reserves in the UNESCO Biosphere program across the globe. The Biosphere seeks balance in protection of the natural world and productive enterprise that meets human needs without damaging that natural world on which we and all species depend. The Down's Estate Community Project has a number of attributes that show how this balance can be achieved.

Model centres that demonstrate Urban Agriculture, that educate about Ecosystem Regeneration, that foster a sense of community by promoting Community Gathering and then celebrating that which is in common in all humanity, Food Sharing and Healthy Eating, are particularly welcome. If we are to find smarter ways of living, the Down's Estate Community Project holds great promise for the Frankston and, indeed, wider community. It will be a centre of which Frankston can be proud.

That it is sited adjacent to the Seafood Wetlands, a place of great regional importance, enables links between the natural world and the urban world to be made obvious.

The Biosphere wishes to congratulate all in the community who have developed the concept into the Business Case that now stands ready for support. The Biosphere looks forward to engagement with the centre as appropriate. This could include access to our regional and wider networks, our experience in conducting broad-based community events and involvement in our communications activities, including those in social media and web-based formats.

The Biosphere looks forward to the implementation of the Down's Estate Community Project.

Yours sincerely



Greg Hunt  
Executive Officer  
Western Port Biosphere Foundation  
61 400 948 546  
[eo@biosphere.org.au](mailto:eo@biosphere.org.au)  
[biosphere.org.au](http://biosphere.org.au)

28 October 2019

Attention Dr Gillian Kay  
Director, Community Development  
Frankston City Council

Dear Dr Kay,

**Re: Development of the Downs Estate Business Case for a Community Food and Science Hub**

The University of Melbourne writes this letter in response to Frankston City Council (FCC) decision moved by Councillor Bolam considering a FCC investment of 25K to support the development of a business case for the Downs Estate. The FCC investment was subject to the University of Melbourne and its partners from the Downs Estate Community Project matching the 25K contribution. We are pleased to confirm that the University of Melbourne has raised a matching 25K cash resource through contributions from relevant faculties and from the University's central research engagement fund.

The University of Melbourne has spent the last twelve months working closely with the Downs Estate Community Project and in addition has already raised 100K from the Helen MacPherson Smith Trust to support the development of a Sustainable Indigenous Bush Food enterprise in partnership with the Downs Estate Community Project. In addition, the University of Melbourne has already contributed significant in-kind resources through the work of its researchers and staff. The University of Melbourne is fully committed to ensuring Indigenous engagement across multiple streams of the Downs Estate business case development and has been delighted to already supporting important preliminary work around Indigenous bush food production.

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the significant potential of the Downs Estate and its abutting wetlands as a community cultural, social, economic and educational asset through its ability to span environmental management, food production, social engagement, cultural awareness and exchange. It also offers wide ranging research, learning and teaching opportunities for all of our collective faculties from Agriculture, Engineering, Science, Medicine, Building/Architecture and the Arts.

Through the existing collaborations between our research teams, the Downs Estate Community Project and the FCC we have developed both trust and commitment and are very pleased to now develop the business case that will provide the context, identification of the multiple connecting opportunities and the social and economic return on investment for the consideration of private, state and federal agencies who we have already begun engaging with.

We understand through previous communication with the FCC that the University of Melbourne will receive the 25K from the FCC and together with our 25K investment will be held within the Faculty of Vet and Agricultural and used to develop the business case. The budget for the business case will be developed in partnership with the Downs Estate Community Project and we will work closely and inform the FCC of progress at regular intervals throughout the process of development which we estimate will take three to five months.

We look forward to working with the FCC in this exciting initiative and to developing a business case that brings together FCC, the Downs Estate Community Project and the University of Melbourne in pursuit of a significant community food and science hub that supports and advances future social, cultural, educational, environmental and economic opportunities for the communities of the South East of Victoria.

Sincerely



**Professor James McCluskey AO FAA FAHMS**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and  
Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor  
The University of Melbourne

Morning Robyn,

Hope this letter finds you well and safe.

I am writing on behalf of the Salvation Army's Youth Services for the Frankston/Peninsula Regions based in Frankston, to add our support to the business case for the Downs Estate Community Project.

The Salvation Army conducts a youth program in Frankston called Tools For the Trade (TFTT) that introduces youth on the margins of being high risk to a range of trade orientated activities and courses, whilst supporting them to build employability and personal-social skills. The program runs for 9 weeks providing 10 students in each term with exposure to trade tasters including both visits to TAFE's to gain a basic understanding of what each trade involves and participation in related hands-on activities at various sites.

We are looking forward to working with Downs Estate Community Project to provide our youth with experience relating to horticulture and the outdoors. This would involve bringing each group to the site to undertake horticulture activities for half a day at least twice during each of the 4 programs in 2021 with the hope that this relationship continues to the future. There is also potential to use the site on a weekly basis to undertake a range of activities with the youth.

The site will provide the added benefit of including exposure to healthy eating. Garden produce will be harvested for a shared meal, helping to build relationships and food preparation skills.

We believe that DECP and the proposals outlined in their business case will provide a valuable contribution to the Frankston community and improved opportunities for the future of its youth.

We look forward to working with you in 2021.

Regards,



**Mike Tauai**

Project Officer - Tools For The Trade Program  
Outreach Worker - Streets Ahead Program

Youth Services

The Salvation Army Australia Territory

[salvationarmyaust.com.au](http://salvationarmyaust.com.au)

Email: [michael.tauai@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:michael.tauai@salvationarmy.org.au)

Address: 62 Playne Street, Frankston VIC 3199

Phone: (03) 8765 2669

Mobile: 0447 808 210

Want to know more about our local activities?  
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Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight, alongside others, to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Through our commitment to reconciliation, The Salvation Army acknowledges the First Nations peoples of Australia as the traditional custodians of this land. We further acknowledge and pay our respects to past and present Elders, giving thanks for their wisdom that has sustained their people since the beginning of time, and we pledge to support emerging and future generations.

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“South East Water looks forward to working with the partner organisations to support the productivity and sustainability of existing and future agricultural activities within Melbourne’s green wedge and peri urban areas, to secure Melbourne’s food production and protect agricultural hubs. We will stand by to work with the group to establish how SE Water can support research and innovation in use of and access to fit for purpose water in this space at the Down’s”.

- Jon Theobald, Community and Stakeholder Manager, SE Water

“The RAD-FMP is delighted to see this project continue to develop a vision for the Downs Estate that would make a great contribution to supporting the engagement of young people in issues of food nutrition, health and the environment. Through our steering group we have received updates about this opportunity and we support it wholeheartedly especially as it will provide great opportunities for the young people of Frankston and thus continue to offer our young people a diverse range of pro-social activities and prevent harmful journeys into substance use”.

- Karin Hann, Chair, RAD-FMP (Responding to Alcohol and other Drugs across the Frankston Mornington Peninsula)



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