

Growing Together Baw Baw Community Garden Partnership

Planting the Seeds for Health



Why is a community garden important in Baw Baw?

Employment skills:

- Critical shortages of people trained in horticulture skills have been identified by Primary Skills Victoria (2).
- These shortages include landscape gardeners and agricultural advisors.
- GTBB provides skill development and encouragement for a future career in horticulture.

Community health:

- 49% Baw Baw locals do not meet their recommended fruit and vegetable intake.
- 29.7% do not meet physical activity guidelines.
- Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than Victorian averages (1).
- Community gardens address both these issues.

Community gardens help:

- Improve nutritional education of families and individuals
- Reduce the cost of purchasing healthy produce
- Increase levels of exercise
- Social inclusion

Environmental sustainability:

- GTBB addresses
- Food security & food miles
- Waste reduction through composting and use of worm farms
- Promoting local and in-season food.

Social Inclusion:

- GTBB has partnered with Scope, Vision Australia, Mental Illness Fellowship and local residents in assisted living.
- Provision of garden infrastructure and signage suitable for all abilities.

What does GTBB do?

- Developed a community garden to:
- Provide an opportunity for locals to grow healthy seasonal food, share the work and resulting harvest.
- Provide a hub for community members and schools to access knowledge and training opportunities.

Where is it?

Eastern Park is a site bordering public and assisted-living housing, council playgrounds and a sports oval.

Our neighbours include:

- Warragul Community House
- Child and Maternal Health
- Toy Library

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How was it funded?

A professional plan for the garden was developed from 'Healthy Communities' funding. Funding from the Baw Baw Shire was leveraged with a 3:1 grant from the Victorian Government.

Community Ownership:

The garden was built by:

- Many, many community volunteers & businesses
- Local Rotary and Lions
- Corrections Services
- VCAL students from two local schools

Skill Base:

GTBB partners provided:

- Steering committee membership
- Technical advice, equipment, plants, soil
- Building, electrical work, plumbing, catering
- Administration support
- Crucial to success

How did it start?

GTBB grew from the Oz Child program in 2006. The steering committee managed an existing small community garden and ran workshops whilst planning for the new garden.

How does it work?

- GTBB is a volunteer group made up of:
 - community organisations
 - schools
 - Individuals
- GTBB works under the auspice of the Warragul Community House.

Why was partnership vital to this project?

Local Resident ownership:

- developed by:
 - Seeing a slow build by locals
 - Welcoming attitude
 - Good advertising
- Bonus: helps prevent vandalism

Value for money:

- Budget was maximised by using:
- Volunteers to complete tasks at materials cost
- Recycled materials
- Donated materials
- Community goodwill - many services were provided at cost

Slow is better:

- Essential tasks were undertaken by paid professionals
- Wherever possible work was done by volunteers
- A 12 month development timeframe allowed locals to join the journey and get involved

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Where to from here?

This new garden enables GTBB to:

- Host community workshops
- Host other community activities
- Showcase innovative and sustainable technologies such as aquaculture.

GTBB seeks to employ a part-time garden programs educator to further embed the community garden into local schools and community groups and realise its full potential.



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Reference 1: Department of Health Victoria, *Modelling, GIS and Planning products*, <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/modelling/planning/gis.htm>, 2014 (accessed 14 October 2014).
Reference 2: Primary Skills Victoria *Occupations in Demand - Spotlight on Landscape* <http://www.psv.com.au/node/66> 2010 (accessed 14 Oct 2014).