



October 2008

Dear School Principals, Members of School Councils, Teachers & Parents

Establishing a Kitchen Garden Program in a school is an enormously exciting and rewarding undertaking. Over the seven years the Program has operated in Victorian schools, those of us who have worked closely with the children have seen their awareness and interest in the natural world increase. They consistently try new foods and new dishes with interest and curiosity. They handle tools in the garden and knives in the kitchen with respect and with confidence. They approach both garden and kitchen classes with enthusiasm and anticipation. The garden becomes a place of beauty and is visited constantly by the students even when they do not have classes. And they *love* to cook and take pride in presenting beautiful platters of food to be set out in the centre of the table for everyone to first admire before they tuck in!

But, as the famous saying goes, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. Gardens can be muddy and messy to build. Providing an appropriate cooking space will require creative solutions. The commitment necessary is considerable. Working bees definitely need to be encouraged by providing delicious morning and afternoon teas. All involved are participating in a genuine revolution and change is always challenging.

It will be worth the effort and the children will learn so much. I believe that some of what is learnt will continue to influence these students long after they have moved on from their years in the Kitchen Garden. The more entrenched the philosophy becomes in the school the richer the learnings can be.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation commits to support those schools that take up the challenge, and looks forward to receiving your applications and observing with you the exciting changes that will occur as your Kitchen Garden Programs take shape.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Alexander, OAM