

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation Theory of Change

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways on which we work, live and play. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and Elders past, present and future.

Because ►

We want Australian children and young people to be equipped with positive food habits for life and to live in healthy, sustainable communities. Yet, almost 95% of children do not meet the daily recommended intake of vegetables¹, with ultra- processed foods accounting for 42% of Australian diets². Obesity affects one in four Australian children.

These factors are increasing the risk of noncommunicable diseases³. Overlapping human and planetary health crises (e.g. disasters, climate change and pandemics) are further challenging children's physical and mental health, wellbeing, connection to nature, education and learning engagement, as well as compromising food systems and community resilience.

Schools and early childhood services are effective preventative health sites to build food literacy and activate resilient, healthy communities.

Investing early in children's health is paramount because behavioural change developed during childhood has a significant influence on health and wellbeing in later life⁴.

An investment in preventative public health returns \$14 to the wider health and social economy for every \$1 spent⁵.

Evidence shows that pleasurable food education delivered through the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program and our community place-based projects address preventable inequities⁶.

We influence children and young people in ►

Schools and early childhood services

Support more Australian schools and early childhood services to deliver the **Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program**.

Community settings

Work alongside communities, through **community place-based projects**, to address inequities affecting children and young people.

Home environments

Grow a national
kitchen garden movement.

By being ►

POSITIVE

Guided by our pleasurable food education philosophy, we encourage children and young people to experience the joys of fresh, seasonal and delicious produce. Alongside educators and communities, and through hands-on learning, we empower and enthuse – embedding skills, knowledge and joy.

PREVENTATIVE

By working with children and young people, – and their communities – we address preventable health challenges, – early. Using age-appropriate and scalable activities, we lay the groundwork for positive food habits, wellbeing and sustainability skills – for life.

IMPACTFUL

We are evidence-based and draw on 20+ years of on-the-ground experience. We work alongside educators, partners and the community, taking a strengths-based approach and sharing our learnings to maximise impact.

COMMUNITY-MINDED

We work collaboratively and inclusively, meeting educators and communities where they're at and focusing our efforts where they have the most impact. We work to develop authentic, meaningful and sustainable relationships.

Shifting systems to improve ►

Health and wellbeing

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

- developing improved food literacy and practical cooking and gardening skills – teaching children to grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh delicious food
- influencing child willingness to try new foods, improving dietary behaviours and transferring knowledge and practice to the home environment
- improving access to fresh, nutritious food
- increasing opportunities for physical activity
- increasing access to the sensory and therapeutic benefits of spending time in nature to support resilience and mental health

Learning

Learning outcomes for children and young people are improved.

- providing hands-on, contextual learning linked to the Australian curriculum, including STEM/STEAM
- supporting inclusive, adaptable learning and inspiring participation of disengaged students
- nurturing vocational skills and pathways, e.g. agriculture and horticulture
- increasing opportunities to develop and practice employability skills, such as communication, leadership, critical thinking, planning, teamwork, inclusivity and reciprocity

Environmental sustainability

Environmental awareness and behaviour change is nurtured.

- empowering children and young people to form connections to the natural environment and gain the knowledge and skills to become active participants in local food systems
- empowering children and young people to become advocates for climate action and make positive and sustainable choices for the environment
- supporting the greening of underutilised spaces, creating nature corridors, improving air quality and enhancing biodiversity and reducing urban heatwaves
- teaching low impact, regenerative practices and circular systems for responsible resource use and waste management

Community resilience

Local community resilience priorities are supported and inequities are addressed.

- building social cohesion, community pride and connections through sharing food, reinforcing a sense of place, acceptance/inclusivity and belonging
- supporting community capacity building to strengthen resilience before, and recovery after, disasters
- partnering with communities experiencing social and economic disadvantage to address inequities
- fostering opportunities to build intercultural understanding and celebrate diversity
- strengthening regenerative and resilient community food systems

Working towards our purpose of ►

Enabling children and young people to form positive food habits for life

And our vision of ►

Healthy children and young people living in sustainable communities across Australia

Underpinned by ►

Our Pleasurable Food Education approach

Pleasurable food education inspires children and young people to understand and connect with fresh, delicious food through fun, hands-on learning.

This approach empowers children and young people to develop practical skills, an appreciation of seasonal produce, and a positive, confident and healthy relationship with food – for life.

