Yarra Valley

ecoss

ECOLOGICAL & SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

ABOUT YARRA VALLEY ECOSS

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT IS—an environmental and educational not-for-profit organisation committed to showcasing best sustainable solutions.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL GOAL IS—aimed at restoring natural capital in our environment:

—A rural recreational and training facility that demonstrates innovation and best practice in regenerative land-use, renewable energies and resources, and the local production of food.

OUR LEARNING GOAL IS—aimed at developing human capital in our people is:

—A program of activities that inspires and enables the acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to develop sustainable lifestyles.

OUR SOCIAL CAPITAL IS—aimed at improving social capital in our community is:

—A cooperative enterprise that is owned by the community, managed by the community, for the community and expresses the community's spirit.

OUR FINANCIAL GOAL IS—aimed at building financial capital and financial security in our community:

—A range of integrated enterprises that provides local employment, stimulates the growth of the regional economy and provides income to support our operations.

—Care for the Earth, its life forms and ecological processes, as stewards for future generations

—Care for People, through respect and the provision of opportunity for everyone to reach their potential.

—A Fair Share of the Earth's renewable and non-renewable resources for all members of current and future populations.

OUR VALUES ARE—

—We foster a culture of respect for the environment and community

—We work with honesty and integrity in our interactions

—We are committed to modelling best environmental practices

—We approach every challenge with enthusiasm and humour

—We are innovative and relevant in our thinking and practices

—We work together, everyone gets heard and we do what we say we'll do

—We strive for cultural and social inclusiveness

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Front Cover Photo: Ecotopia Multicultural Photo Shoot
Above Photo: ECOSS Hen and Chickens

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Well this year has been outstanding in the history of ECOSS.

Hands on Learning:

We have hosted Cire Community School on Tuesdays and Thursdays undertaking a variety of Hands On Learning Projects. We officially joined forces with Hands On Learning—run by Save the Children, and undertook official training, and special training for our wonderful Artisan Teachers : Andrew Olive and Rod Neason.

This enabled us access to all the Hands On Learning data systems, and we were able to implement the strong structures held by this particular project.

We are looking forward to expanding this project in 2019, opening up to new schools and building a purpose built Hands On Learning Homeroom.

Cire Hands on Learning students have built a playground, Earthship style seats in the Frog Bog, and near the Earth Goddess. They have built bottle walls in our music room, planted the Frog Bog and built a beautiful Tea Tree Fence.

Wesley United:

Wesley United have attended ECOSS on Mondays and Fridays, facilitated by the wonderful and qualified Melanie Daymond. The clients at Wesley United have contributed to the ECOSS site undertaking accessible artisan and earth based projects including building the Gondwanic Rainforest Gallery, the Succulent Wall, Painting, Gardening, Harvesting and cooking from the Community Garden and more.

Interchange Outer East:

Interchange opted for unfacilitated sessions at ECOSS enabling them to work in the Community Garden on various week days. 3 Interchange Outer East groups per week have been attending ECOSS, and enjoying their time maintaining and planting in the garden. We are very grateful for their input. They have made a massive effort.

ECOSS Volunteers:

Most of the volunteers at ECOSS this year have been in the Over 55's group. We love these volunteers as they are very self reliant and capable. We have found the over 55's volunteer group to have established skills and would like to make a couple of special mentions. We would really like to thank:

Derry Talvainn—for exceptional contribution with Graphic Design this year.

Big Dave—for emptying 'the slops' as he calls it, we call it compost!

Dan Board—for bringing us Vipassana compost almost every week.

Lisa Marksby—for loving the chooks.

Leanne Arvanitakis—for helping with Events.

Lisa Stubsie—for helping with the vegie boxes in Yarra Junction and her husband for rebuilding the boxes.

Peter Lorback—for pruning the fruit trees and always helping with whatever is asked.

And Ric and Joe Butler—for being above and beyond volunteers.

We extend our thanks to all our other wonderful volunteers.

Events:

As our Annual Calendar of Events continues to expand, we have been able to support many other Not for Profits and individual artists this year, including more cultural events. The following events were held at ECOSS this year:

ECOSS Spring Fest 2017

Ecotopia-
was seriously blown away and had to be cancelled on the morning of the event.

Open Mic Sundays-
one Sunday per month facilitated by Peter Lorback.

Tipi and Cacao Ceremonies-
facilitated by Tonantzin Chocolate

Lantern making workshops-
for the Rivers of Light Festival.

United Natures Movie Night-
Independent Permaculture Films

Bushdance

Upper Yarra Wildlife Rescue Art Auction

Recycled Fashion Parade-
Run at ECOSS instead of Ecotopia.

Kids In Nature Network –
Earth Kids activity

National Childrens Week Event- Earth Kids Play Day

Reconciliation Week Event.

Courses at ECOSS:

Yarra Valley Permaculture- Permaculture Design Certificate Course

Cire Services: Cert 2 Horticulture

Cire Services: Gatherings of …..
Industry Taster Courses

Co-locators and Partners:

ECOSS opened up to new co-locators and made some new partnerships this year, expanding our site values and creating a wonderful site vibe. Co-locaters joined in our events.

Our co-locators include:

Warburton Environment,

Upper Yarra Landcare

ReLab

Silvertyne Bio-Dynamic Farm

Tiny Houses to Go

Community Pottery Studio Yarra Valley

Gustavo's drumming classes

Tonantzin Sweat Lodges and Cacao Ceremonies

Healthy Mates

Beans and Bananas Food Co-op

And more . . .

CHELSEA MCNAB

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Since our beginning, the byline at ECOSS has been about demonstrating sustainable living solutions. This has proved to be a multi-focused task and our evolution has been a process of discovering all the connections, relationships and partnerships needed to make the byline start to sing by itself. While our resources remain small, what has been achieved has been made possible by harnessing the creative energy of the Yarra Valley community and by the generosity of funding bodies, particularly the Hugh Williamson Foundation, Upper Yarra Coummunity Enterprise and FRRR, volunteers and support from the Yarra Ranges Council and others.

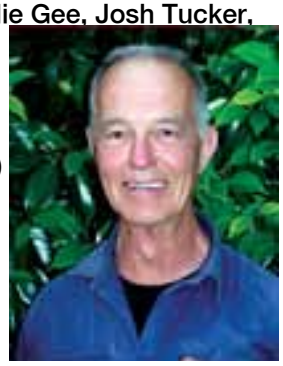
This year has seen a steady increase in activities demonstrating the various aspects of sustainability. There are many areas that I could highlight, but three stand out as building for a sustainable future.

The first is the work that has been done to educate ourselves and the coming generation in areas that make a difference to the way we think about the environment. As well as our adult education courses, we offer various programs where young students learn building and other skills and are immersed in a rural setting as part of their school curriculums.

The second is the establishment of a market garden where Tobias and Josh are demonstrating small scale vegetable growing and a successful retail business using farmers markets and food box schemes.

Finally, ECOSS has been able to gain funding from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and has entered into a partnership with Powershop to mount a substantial number of solar panels on the roof of our house. This will reduce our electricity bills and creates a site where we can demonstrate the virtues of solar generated electricity and, hopefully, batteries for storage. In this project, we have been given invaluable support by Julian Guess, who is the Shire's Sustainability Officer and member of our Board.

None of the above could have been achieved without the tireless and voluntary work from the Committee of Management, and my thanks go to them. Our membership has been increased by five - Karina Doughty, Phoebe Lines, Josh Tucker, Julian Guess and Sam Watson. Much of the load is shouldered by Chelsea McNab, who is supported by a team of volunteers including Joe and Ric Butler, Tom Neil, Bernie Lobert, Peter Longbon, Kellie Gee, Josh Tucker, Rod Neason and Andrew Olive



Thanks go to all others from the ECOSS community whose contribution (however big or small) gives us the energy to go on.

IAN CUMING

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Right

President	**Ian Cuming**

Left to right:

Bernie Lobert	**Treasurer/ Chair Admin Sub Committee**
Kellie Gee	**Vice President / Upper Yarra Landcare Representative**
Tom Neil	**Natural Building Centre Representative and Site Sub Committee**
Joe Butler	**Secretary, Admin Sub Committee and Chair Community Engagement Sub Committee**
Julian Guess	**Yarra Ranges Council ex-officio representative**
Ric Butler	**Site Sub Committee**
Karina Doughty	**Warburton Environment Representative**
Sam Watson	**Events Sub Committee**
Phoebe Lines	**Events Sub Committee**
Joshua Tucker	**Site Sub-committee and Silvertyne Market Garden Representative**

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Staff Members

Chelsea McNab:
Executive Officer

Andrew Olive:
Youth Program Officer/Hands on Learning Facilitator

Casual Staff

Kylie Barnes:
Earth Educator

Karina Doughty:
Earth Educator and Volunteer Co-ordinator

Leanne Arvanitakis-Hall:
Events Co-ordinator

Melanie Daymond:
All Abilities Program Facilitator

Supporters and Consultants

Catherine Aulich of Upper Yarra Valley Bookkeeping, Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited, Cire Services, Gauri Ma Grace, Nirvana Nirvana, Judd Zekas of Yarra Valley Hosting, Peter Lorback, Peter Longbon–Business Consultant, Graeme George of Yarra Valley Permaculture

Volunteers

Our Volunteers are the backbone of ECOSS and we are deeply grateful to all those who have given generously of their time and skills throughout 2017/18. Including all of our Ecotopia, Fashion Parade, econciliation Day, Bush Dance, Trivia Nights, Earth Kids Play Day and Spring Festival Volunteers

Our particular gratitude to our very reliable volunteers: Dave Lilbourne, Lisa Marksby and Leon for rounds work, Derry Talvainn of Artema Design for all the graphic design, Rod Neason for bottle walling and facilitating school groups, Simon Oats for MC extraordinaire, Kofi Kunkpe for generous drumming performances, Fernando and Antonia of Tonantzin Chocolate for all your on-going support and willingness to help out with whatever is needed and Leanne Arvanitakis–Hall for everything festive,

Special Thanks

Karen Meulemann Festivals Support,
Yarra Ranges Council,

Little Yarra Steiner School for advertising support,

Brad Charman-Yarra Valley Signs for incredible generosity in signage support,

Santha Press for grant and multicultural support,

Yarra Junction Opp Shop for grant support of our projects,

Ben's Shed and Upper Yarra Museum for Ecotopia support,

Mountain Views Mail particularly Kath Gannaway who has now retired

3VYV FM particularly Loretta

Yarra Ranges Life TV, Patrick and Mitch

Renee Nowad- for Artistic intelligence and inspiration,

Julian Guess YRC- for generous support.

Healeville Indigenous Community Services Association- for community lunches and creating opportunities to connect with our Indigenous community.

Aunty Kim Wandin for advice and care

Michelle Atwell for Wayapa Wuurrk and cultural inclusivity advice

Catherine Aulich

Andrew Olive

ECOSS COMMUNITY

THE LAST 12 MONTHS HAVE SEEN CONSIDERABLE DEVELOPMENTS ON SITE AT ECOSS AS NEW PROJECTS ARE STARTED AND OLD ONES ARE COMPLETED. THE EFFECT OF THIS ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT HAS BEEN MARKED. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE VISITING ECOSS HAS GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY AND THERE HAVE BEEN MANY COMMENTS ABOUT THE AMAZING RATE OF DEVELOPMENT OCCURRING .

Staff and Committee

The end of 2017 saw ECOSS' staff numbers reduced to one Executive Officer 3 days a week and a casual Schools Program Assistant 8 hours a week. With the end of the available funding we had to farewell our Youth Officer, Geoff Lawrence, and our Work for the Dole Coordinator, Bernie Murray. As a consequence an enormous amount of work has fallen on our executive Officer, Chelsea McNab's, shoulders. She has risen to the challenge outstandingly and has managed to achieve the workload of several people! Naturally ECOSS is trying very hard to obtain funding for more staff especially a Site Manager to maintain and improve the site and an Administrative and Events organiser to assist Chelsea. Of course our aim in the long run is to be financially independent, not relying on grants but bringing in an income from our own enterprises. We also hope to be open 7 days a week in the future!

The Committee of Management now has 10 members and a very active and helpful Yarra Ranges Council ex-officio representative, Julian Guess. We gained Phoebe Lines, Sam Watson, Karina Doughty and Josh Tucker as new members and farewelled Simon Woodland as our YRC representative. It has been a busy year for the Committee of Management who all put in a lot of voluntary time. In the first half of the year Peter Longbon, a Business Coach Mentor, generously donated his time to facilitate a thorough and very professional Strategic Planning process which is being developed into the next ECOSS Strategic Plan

Volunteers

ECOSS is fortunate to have a small band of very loyal volunteers who regularly go about their chosen tasks. Recently some new volunteers have joined the group and are working in the community vegetable garden. Naturally ECOSS would warmly welcome new volunteers – even just for a few hours now and again. There is a wide variety of tasks requiring assistance. Please note that all volunteers must have a Working with Children Check.

Use of Facilities

As the ECOSS facilities have grown so have the numbers of groups participating at ECOSS – with frequent new enquiries. The Coop has been used by a wide variety of individuals and organisations in the last 12 months. Nearly every weekend has seen an activity based in The Coop. There have been regulars like the Yarra Valley Bee Group and the Open Mic Sessions and occasionals like the drumming group, Wildlife Rescue, the craft workshops, the Lantern-making workshops even the odd birthday party. During the week the school groups and Wesley Mission use The Coop as their base. Yarra Valley Permaculture has run a Permaculture Design Certificate course there every Wednesday evening for 6 months. It is no understatement to say The Coop is a true community asset.

Likewise the Community Pottery Studio has started to reach its potential after all the hard work of establishment. There are now regular classes being held as well as children's clay play at many events.

Two new facilities are being developed – the Playground and the Music Cubby – and they are already proving popular with children especially at the major ECOSS events. Generous funding

The New Playground

has been from the Hugh Williamson Foundation to establish stage one of our car park as well as giving financial support to our admin team.

The Reconciliation Conversation Fire Pit has also had more use this year. The ECOSS Reconciliation Day event was held around the firepit and several tipi ceremonies have been held there as well as some informal gatherings.

Participating organisations and co-locating groups

School participation is an important part of ECOSS' purpose. Currently the major partner in this vision is Cire Community School which attends 2 days a week. There are also a number of schools which attend on a more casual basis and these include Mt Lilydale Mercy College and Mt Scopus. There are 2 organisations, Wesley Mission and Interchange, working with people with an intellectual disability which attend every week. They bring a sense of friendly anticipation with them.

Co-locating groups – NFP local sustainable organisations – include Warburton Environment, Upper Yarra Landcare, Beans and Bananas Food Cooperative, Yarra Valley Bee Group, Plastic Bag Free Warburton, Silvertyne Biodynamic Market Garden as well as music groups and personal development groups. An Open Mic session has attracted a monthly following in The Coop. Tiny Houses 2 Go is a local business based at ECOSS. It has plans for a social housing model using tiny houses.

In summary the ECOSS community is a broad and growing entity and the ECOSS profile has gained significant momentum over the last 12 months. There are now few local people who ask "What is ECOSS?".

JOE BUTLER

A new sign with a map of ECOSS

Vegie Patch

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

WE HAVE EXPANDED OUR KEY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS AT ECOSS AGAIN THIS YEAR REACHING MORE PEOPLE BOTH IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND BEYOND. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO INCLUDE MORE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY BY REACHING OUT TO OUR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES, AND MULTICULTURAL MEMBERS AND GROUPS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

ECOTOPIA

Unfortunately due to extremely damaging winds the night before Ecotopia, all our infrastructure that was set up in Yarra Junction was destroyed. It cost us many thousands of dollars to fix the damage to the borrowed marquees. This was a devastating situation for the event coordinators, performers and all the stallholders and volunteers that had poured countless hours into creating the festival.

It was also a great learning opportunity in how to manage these unforeseen weather events, and we are quite proud of how we managed the whole situation. We paid all of the artists that were booked to perform, honoring our commitments. We in turn asked them to perform at another time in 'good will', and this benefitted our Spring Fest and other events greatly.

We offered all the stallholders a stall fee transfer to our Spring Fest, and offered reimbursements to those who preferred.

During the planning of Ecotopia we connected with the Australian Chin Community Dancers, Fernando – Aztec Dancer, Aunty Kim Wandin-Wurundjeri Elder, and Tuvaluan Dancers. We did some special photo shoots, that enlivened our connections with these multicultural groups and set a foundation for our drive in Multicultural Arts.

RECYCLED FASHION PARADE

We didn't want to waste the efforts of all the incredible Recycled Fashion Parade outfits so we ran the Recycled Fashion Parade as a solo event at ECOSS, and made it into a fundraiser to support the repair of the marquees. This was so successful that we have decided to keep it as a solo fundraising event, and add another event into Ecotopia in its place.

RECONCILIATION DAY

Reconciliation Day at ECOSS was the best we have ever hosted. Despite cool weather Michelle Atwell facilitated a beautiful Wayapa Wuurrk session in the Reconciliation Fire Pit, with a very insightful session with Aunty Kim Wandin. It was engaging, and meaningful. There was live music, a bush tucker display, native food BBQ, ochre body painting and more. We received lovely feedback from all the participants, and it sprouted a separate Reconciliation Group forming that have been meeting at the Home Hotel regularly.

CHILDREN'S WEEK

Our Children's Week event was able to benefit from the opening of the Community Pottery Studio. It was a rainy day, but we popped up some marquees over the Indigenous Reconciliation Fire Pit and Michelle Atwell facilitated Wayapa Wuurkk, there was Clay Play in the Pottery Studio and a BBQ.

EARTH KIDS PLAY DAY

This event was fantastic, it was hammering with rain, yet attracted a great turn out. We ran all the activities in The Coop including 'Worm Spaghetti' activity, propagating vegetable seedlings, story telling and clay play, and we were very lucky to have Yarra Valley Water send along the fantastic Will Tait with his Choose Tap show. We offered a BBQ and ECOSS soup.

BUSH DANCE

ECOSS is becoming famous for our Bush Dances! We are lucky to have the famous Bush Whazee on our side to provide professional music and calling. We value

family dancing and the opportunities it brings for kids to have fun with their parents. We have been receiving many requests for the Bush Dance from the public.

FUNDRAISING FOR LOCAL NFPS

We have also been able to support some essential and valuable fundraising for other local Not For Profit groups, including the Art Auction for Upper Yarra Wildlife Rescue, who raised $5000 at their Auction in the Coop.

Phoebe Like the Moon
Spring Festival

was Nature Art and the Environment, and attracted more than 20 entrants. Peter Preuss won first prize in the Adult Section with his painting of Healesville life.

There were approx. 40 stallholders with a variety of earth friendly products, healthy local food, Not for Profit local groups represented and a colorful array of performances on the stage all day.

OTHER EVENTS

The annual heritage fruit tree grafting day was held again in winter and about 50 people attended and learnt the art of grafting.

The annual '80's Trivia Night' was a hilarious fundraiser for the Community Pottery Studio, hosted by the 'Almost Famous- MCG'. Many local businesses came along as team building exercises, and were generous with donating essential prizes. It stood out as a highlight event.

ECOSS SPRING FEST

Although a wild and windy day, we were surprised at the turn out with approximately 1500 people present, including Mayor Len Cox and many councilors.

We were lucky to have strong marquees with walls that made cozy spaces for the beautiful kids activity tent hosting garland making, face painting, seedling planting and more. There was a fantastic inaugural Art Exhibition with a cash prize in The Coop. The theme

Spring Festival

KEY PROGRAMS

THE NUMBER OF KEY PROGRAMS AT ECOSS HAVE INCREASED AGAIN THIS YEAR REACHING MORE PEOPLE BOTH IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND BEYOND. THE VARIETY OF INITIATIVES HAVE ATTRACTED DIVERSE AUDIENCES VIA EVENTS, WORKSHOPS, SCHOOLS PROJECTS AND CELEBRATIONS.

Earth Education Program by Kylie Barnes

The Earth Education Program continued this year with a number of new schools visiting Yarra Valley ECOSS and participating in the growing array of activities that the program has on offer. The Earth Education Program caters to the age group of the participating children or teenagers, and usually begins with a tour of the site to provide an overview of ECOSS and the issues being addressed. After this, the class is split into smaller groups to participate in some hands on activities, such as composting and seed propagation, while often finishing with some earth building. The students enjoy the range of activities throughout the day, particularly contributing in a very real and physical way to the ongoing projects that are open to the community to use and visit in the future.

The following schools participated in programs at ECOSS:

Cire Services:

The Cire Services Community School came throughout the year and worked very hard on ongoing projects around ECOSS including earth building of the earthship and earth wall demonstration walls.

The **Year 7** class worked on the Frog Bog and living tunnel in Term 3 every Thursday for 10 weeks. They made great progress planting, making a bottle wall seat and training the plants on the living tunnel for children to run through. They returned in Term 4 for 9 weeks of weekly sessions.

The **Year 9** students worked on a number of Earth Wall demonstrations in Term 3 for 10 weeks every Tuesday. They learnt about various types of earth building including recycled bottle walls, hempcrete and mud bricks. They returned in Term 4 for 9 weeks of weekly sessions.

The **Year 11** class came for 9 weeks and worked half days on a number of different earth building projects including the beginning of the playground.

The **Year 12** class did a great job working on the ECOSS Sign Project and Earthship seats for 10 weeks once a week.

A number of facilitated groups from Cire Community School came regularly participating in helping on the sustainable biodynamic farm, various earth building projects and the commu nity garden.

Mt Lilydale Mercy College:

Year 11 VCAL students came to do their Community component at ECOSS over 5 days in Term 3. The class was divided into 5 groups of about 5-7 students according to their area of interest and worked on different projects including catering (in the Wood-fired pizza oven), earthship building, sustainable agriculture at the Biodynamic farm, dry stone rock wall building of the Koori cubby and earth wall building.

Billanook College:

A student came and did work experience at ECOSS for 2 weeks helping Chelsea in the office and assisting in preparations for Ecotopia.

Upper Yarra Secondary College:

Work experience students came and assisted Chelsea in setting up other school programs and site maintenance.

| Annual Report 2018 11

Cire Services Holiday Program:

Primary aged children participated in the school holiday program for a fun day of gardening, visiting the farm, composting, learning about Tall Trees and bees and having a tour. They come every school holidays.

Narre Learning Centre:

15 VCAL students came to volunteer for a day. This included working in Silvertine farm and our Community Garden.

Yarra Ranges Kindergarten:

3-4 year old kinder and 4-5 year olds came a couple of times throughout the year for a great time in the community garden, learning about the plants and herbs, worm spaghetti composting and seed propagating. They thoroughly enjoyed the playground, earth cubbies and sandpit, as well as learning about the creatures who live in the tall trees and the bees.

Gladesville Primary School Holiday Program:

Students also enjoyed a great day - having a tour and joining in with some hands-on learning, taking home a seed they had planted, learning how to compost and new skills in the garden.

Mt Scopus Memorial College:

Year 8 students came for two days of eye-opening learning beginning with a site tour and traversing down to the farm to see sustainable agriculture in action. They each planted a vegetable to take home to grow, learnt about bees, composting, the water catchment trees and much more.

Below are some quotes from students who have participated in the Earth Education program at ECOSS:

“In the future, thanks to this excursion, I will be more aware of the daily tasks I take part in and just how much I contribute to problems like global warming and greenhouse gases.”

“I find that what I learnt today will impact me further in a few ways. By learning what a small number of trees there are and having prior knowledge about how important they are I will be able to figure out small things I can do to help the environment! “

“What I learnt today will impact my future as the knowledge I acquired will assist me in being able to save at least a little bit of the environment and I will also be able to share the knowledge with others so that they can also act upon it.”

All Abilities Report -By Melanie Daymond

I have again been delighted to facilitate groups of clients from Wesley Uniting at Yarra Valley ECOSS this year.

They have continued to come and participate in gardening, craft and cooking projects on Mondays and Fridays during the school terms.

The environment at ECOSS is very accommodating for the clients, the warmth, comfort and protection of the large indoor space at the Coop, the fresh air and bird song, the open space, and all the gardens provide a unique and comforting experience for the clients and I can confidently say they have all really enjoyed the time they spend here.

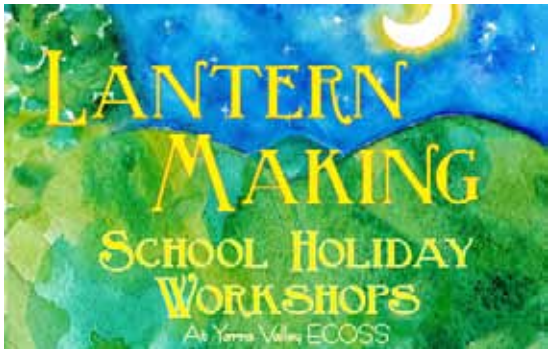
This year we have participated in working on creating and decorating the Gondwala fernery, planting out the succulent wall in the play space, helping out with the chickens and some planting and weeding in the vege garden.

We are fortunate to have a disabled toilet and wheelchair accessible paths.

I'd like to thank Karina Doherty for doing such a great job at working with the Friday group for part of the year. I'd also like to thank all of the site users, Chelsea and the committee members who positively interact with the clients when they are around the site, especially thanks to Josh and Tobias for being so accommodating when clients insist on going down to visit them at the farm! It really does enhance their experience when they run into friendly faces around the place!

ECOSS EVENTS

EVENTS HOSTED AT ECOSS



WITH APPRECIATION TO OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

The Yarra Valley Op Shop

Beans and Bananas

FRRR–Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal

Yarra Ranges Council

Permaculture Yarra Valley

Victorian Multicultural Commission

Cire Services

The Hugh Williamson Foundation

Warburton Yarra Junction Community Bank

Warburton Environment

Powershop

Nature Play Week by Kids in Nature Network

Yarra Valley Bee Group

Landcare Upper Yarra

Melbourne Water

Rutledgeav Engineering

Plastic Bag Free Warburton

Yarra Valley Signs

THE HUGH WILLIAMSON FOUNDATION

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Our on-going environmental and sustainable projects are our priority. All activities and training on site must have a sustainable element as we attempt to engage the community and all ECOSS visitors in working towards a greener future.

The site

Over the last 12 months there has been further significant development of the paths, gardens and facilities to create an environment which people love to occupy. We have heard from volunteers, groups and visitors alike that it is simply a beautiful and relaxing place to be, beyond the activity or purpose that brought them to the site in the first place. The Ecoss environment is providing a place which increases people's sense of well-being, both mentally and physically.

The Community Garden

The Community garden is the heart of informal connection and environmental participation. A few groups and up to 10 volunteers a week contribute to the upkeep of the garden. At times they also harvest from the garden for on site cooking activities which develops hands on skills and promotes food security, learning about seasonal food growing, better nutrition and so on.

Participation growing

Volunteers have been managing the compost system which is a crucial hands on component of our Earth education program with school groups.

Regular weekly groups and volunteers also manage the feeding of the chickens in the heritage chook shed and garden and the weeding of the neighbouring heritage orchard. There is a growing sense of responsibility and duty of care for the animals and gardens from all the participants.

Biodynamic Garden and the Food Co-op

The Silvertyne Biodynamic Market Garden located at the back on the property, is in its 2nd year of running and has expanded in the last twelve months to have a greater supply and new facilities. They now provide produce to local food markets and Beans and Bananas Food Co-op which is run on site, fortnightly. This cycle of food production to sale on site is a closed loop system, therefore reducing carbon emissions and increasing nutritional value.

Up date on the Solar System

We were lucky enough to obtain $10,000 from FRRR to put in an educational solar system on site. During the year we were offered $10,000 from Powershop to boost this system and after many quotes and consultations we decided upon a grid interactive system from the house, as the desired shed roofs are too far from the main power at the gate. After Council inspections we will implement the system soon.

Warburton Environment

Warburton Environment has been one of the co-locators on site, their vision is to see the creation of The Great Forest National Park established in the Central Highlands, which includes protecting the State Forests visible and almost adjoining Ecoss.

They have assisted in running tours into the local forests and offered these as prizes at Ecoss events. They have been running part of the Earth Education offered to school groups, sharing stories and activities about our majestic Mountain Ash trees, endemic endangered species like the Leadbeater's Possum, and ecosystem services. Warburton Environment will continue to work with Ecoss to advocate for the re-opening of the Warburton to Walhalla bushwalking trail and will represent Ecoss with ongoing discussions about the proposed Warburton downhill Mountain Bike Hub.

Earth Education

After meeting with Bill Coutts and YRC, we have been exploring running an official Earthkeepers program as part of growing our Earth Education. We value the opportunity to share Earth Education in inspiring and beautiful ways that increase connection with the elements. We use composting, gardening, propagating, earth building, water harvesting and upcycling to demonstrate how to practically live more harmoniously with the earth.

Growing Environmental Partnerships

Permaculture Yarra Valley is an example of a local group who have been regularly hiring Ecoss to run their design course training programs this year. We hope to work in collaboration developing projects like the "Native Food Forest" together over the next period.

Their principles are aligned to Ecoss and their knowledge, values and energy are needed to keep realising our environmental vision.

Zero Waste!!

Yarra Valley ECOSS has been in possession and management of the Wash against Waste kit this year and it has been used for all our events. Our landfill record for all our onsite events is Zero!!

Our kit has been used all over the Yarra Ranges Council at School events, Chelodina Festival, Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival, Healesville Music Festival, River Folk Festival, Little Yarra Steiner School Fairs, Weddings, Landcare supported planting days, and many more. It is used almost every weekend by some group or another.

It consists of about 20 60cm boxes of cutlery and crockery made with melamine.

We are in the process of developing a Wash against Waste portable storage facility for people to hire, this will make usability of the kit more sustainable.

This kit is one of the many examples of how Ecoss is reducing the Yarra Valley's ecological footprint.

Recycling and locally sourcing

This year we have used recycled building materials to create the musical cubby and combined bottles used on site with clay found on the property to make several bottle walls with participants from the local Cire school. Ferns have been sourced from the site to start the creation of a Gondwana Rainforest sensory space. Wesley United have co-created this space with Ecoss through their participation in the planting and decoration. The vision is to keep adding to this space with Cool Temperate Rainforest species,as a living example of this locally significant ancient forest type and to create a calming experiential space.

Education trail with Signage

This year we were able to develop an Education trail which follows all the paths throughout the site to all the ecological demonstrations, with signage. This is a significant part of our site tours and is part of our commitment to creating an educational facility.

Musical Cubby

Bottle Wall

Gondwana Rainforest Sensory Space

A NOTE FROM OUR CO-LOCATORS

Silvertine Farm by Josh Tucker.

The garden has expanded in the last year with green manure crops covering the fields over winter. We are learning about the soils and the seasons of our farm plot. The season was the biggest so far with markets at the Warburton Summer Produce Market and Eltham Farmers Market, as well as supplying Beans and Bananas Food Co-op distributed here at ECOSS.

We have extended our processing and packing area with the help of Mount Lilydale Mercy College Students, and have built our own coolroom. Our greenhouse was destroyed in the wind, and we are working to rebuild it, we intend to build it on skids so it is portable.

Summer is fast approaching and the crops are young but full of hope. We are anticipating a very busy season ahead.

Community Pottery Studio Yarra Valley by Chelsea McNab

2017-2018 Financial year has seen the reality of this Community Pottery Studio blossom. Lucy Pierce, Melanie Daymond and Chelsea McNab have been the drivers of the project, with Dakini stepping in later in the year. We are now running 5 classes per week and the word is spreading in the valley with increasing attendance. We held our Annual 80's Trivia Night Fundraiser which enabled us to repay some of our debts to ECOSS, and install some purpose-built shelving. We are continuing to upgrade the space and have grant applications in to purchase a new gas kiln that will fire to stoneware.

We have participated in hosting Clay Play activities at Children's Week- Earth Kids Play Day, ECOSS Spring Fest, and VACCA Wellbeing Day. We look forward to continuing to upgrade this wonderful community space, and thank all the volunteers that have contributed thus far.

Tiny House 2 Go by Ric Butler

Tiny house 2 go started designing and manufacturing tiny houses in the lower chook shed at ECOSS as co-tenants in 2016.

The business was started by Ric Butler, Tom Neil, Nick Killey and Stephan Klemm as a result of helping to manufacture 2 tiny houses through the Natural Building workshop at ECOSS. Since then there has been a considerable amount of community interest in Tiny Houses both in Australia and worldwide as a solution to housing pressures.

The tiny house 2 go business has catered for both bespoke tiny houses allowing for individual needs as well as trying to create a model for affordable social housing in partnership with not-for-profit like-minded organisations. A dream of the group is to see a tiny house village providing social housing in the Yarra Valley.

In the meantime the group is currently manufacturing a range of tiny house models employing local tradesman and unemployed youth where possible. Funding is also being sought for the social projects. In the future they hope to be able to provide traineeships and offer related workshops for interested people. They feel there is a lot of scope for development in terms of social housing, private affordable housing and skills development for the public and young people in the area and they plan to maintain their association with ECOSS. See www.tinyhouse2go.com.au for more information.

Yarra Valley Bee Group by Greg Huggins

The year has had its highs and lows. Fortunately, more highs than lows. Using the marvelous facilities at ECOSS, membership has grown because of the wonderful meeting space in the COOP. We have maintained monthly meetings that are well attended and received both by members and visitors. We have participated in the ECOSS School programs and events including ECOSS Spring Fest which was very successful.

The down side was the loss of our bees due to disease, but they've since been replaced and we are looking forward to the bees enjoying the environment and us bee keepers enjoying the fruits of their labor.

TREASURER'S REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2018

The Treasurer and Committee of Management members submit the financial report of Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc. for the financial year ended 30 June 2018.

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the association during the financial year have not altered.

Significant Changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operating Result

The profit/(loss) for 2017-18 amounted to ($-9,644.28). In 2016-17: $36,792.

Income from Grants, Partnerships, Sponsorships & Donations

In 2017-18, Yarra Valley ECOSS obtained a total of $60,836 in grants and $20,507 in donations and sponsorships from various sources. We continue to receive generous ongoing support from our partner organisations, including Yarra Ranges Council, who supported us with the annual partnership agreement funding and funding support for our 2018 Ecotopia Junction Festival. Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited (Bendigo Community Bank branches at Warburton and Yarra Junction), along with Cire Services Inc. also provided sponsorship for our 2018 Ecotopia Junction Festival. We were fortunate to receive $10,000 from FRRR (Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal) to help put solar panels on the roof of the chicken sheds in the near future. We received a number of other small to medium sized grants, which allowed us to undertake various valuable projects, activities and infrastructure.

Highlights:

August 2017: Yarra Ranges Council – Partnership agreement funding 2017-18 ($15,759)

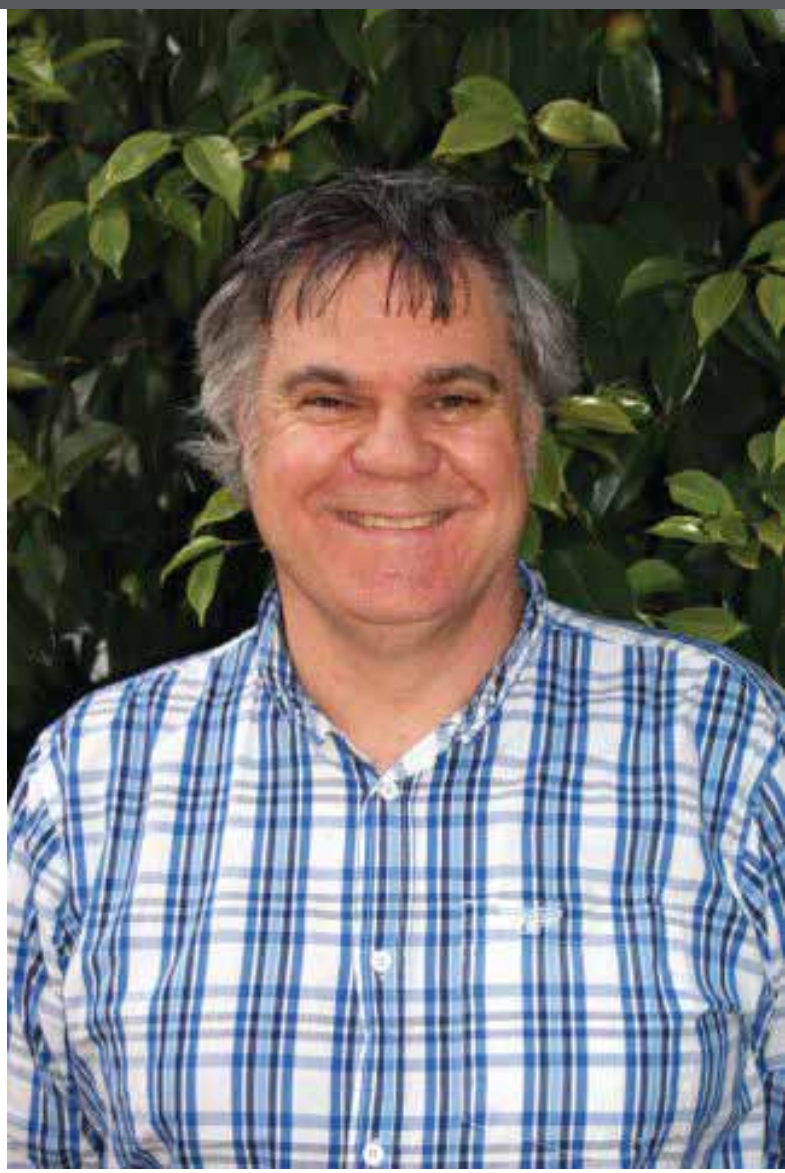
September 2017: Department of Education and Training – 2017 Children's Week @ ECOSS Wayapa Wuurrk, Bush Tucker and Clay Play day ($1,300)

October 2017: Yarra Ranges Council – Sponsorship 2017 Spring Fair ($1,000)

October 2017: Cire Services Inc/FRRR. – Funding for Cert II Horticulture @ ECOSS ($6,234)

November 2017: Yarra Junction Op Shop – Donation ($2,000)

December 2017: Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited – Sponsorship of Ecotopia 2018 ($3,000)



January 2018: Department of Premier and Cabinet – Multicultural Festivals and Events 2017-18 for Ecotopia Junction Festival ($2,150)

February 2018: FRRR – Catching the Sun project ($10,000)

February 2018: Melbourne Water – Sponsorship for the 2018 Ecotopia Junction Festival ($1,000)

March 2018: Yarra Ranges Council – Festival & Events sponsorship for the 2018 Ecotopia Junction Festival ($10,000)

March 2018: Cire Services Inc. – Sponsorship of the Bush Survival School activity @ 2018 Ecotopia Junction Festival ($400)

April 2018: Cire Services Inc. – Sponsorship of Earth Kids Clay Play Day ($100)

May 2018: Yarra Ranges Council – Great Ecological Race ($1,640)

May 2018: Yarra Ranges Council – Healthy Mates/Mens Health Forum ($500)

June 2018: Hugh Williamson Foundation – Administration and Building a Car Park ($30,000)

Rental income

The Warburton Environment Group, Yarra Ranges Landcare Network, and Upper Yarra Landcare continued as tenants. We entered into an agreement with Silvertine Farm to lease an area to establish a market garden farm. The Community Pottery Studio Yarra Valley set up and now occupies a space and paid a nominal rental fee, which will increase once they are fully established. Tiny House 2 Go continue to share space at our site and they will pay rent in the near future.

Regular users of our site were the Yarra Valley Bee Group, Permaculture Yarra Valley, Beans & Bananas Co-Op, Gustavo Drumming, Tipi Ceremony, Sweat Lodge, Open Mic, and Uniting Wesley (Wesley Mission). Many other one off users, both groups and individuals, used The Coop, our large multi-purpose space. School groups continued to use our site and take part in the schools program, from Cire Services, Mt Lilydale Mercy College, Wesburn Primary School, Mt Scopus Memorial College, Little Yarra Steiner School, Gladesville Primary School, and Healesville High School. Our rental and school program activities brought in a combined income of $25,150, which was an increase from $14,755 the 2016-17 financial year.

Nursery & Shop income

In the 2017-18 financial year, our Nursery & Shop sales were $2,363, which came mainly from our Native Nursery, and recycled toilet paper sales, although lack of resources has seen our shop ceased to exist. Our focus has changed to community engagement activities such as our schools program and running small and specifically directed activities and projects.

Work for the Dole income

Unfortunately Work for the Dole ceased in February 2018 due to Sarina Russo Job Access no longer running this program in the Yarra Valley. This was a great pity as this was such a valuable program for both, the participants and Yarra Valley ECOSS. The benefits for participants were that they gained valuable skills development and social interaction and allowed ECOSS to do site and maintenance work. We achieved excellent results with this program with many of the participants going on to obtain employment. We received $6283 from Sarina Russo Job Access in FY17-18.

Member income

Income from membership fees generated $91 in 2017-18.

Auspicing

We were able to auspice the following grants. This helped community organisations and individual community members, so they could run various activities and events.

August 2017: Yarra Ranges Council – River of Light Winter Festival delivered by Bear & Moon Productions ($1,000)

June 2018: Upper Yarra Community Enterprise Limited – Pottery equipment delivered by Community Pottery Studio Yarra Valley ($3,000)

Future income

The ongoing financial aim of Yarra Valley ECOSS is to become financially sustainable. We hope to generate sufficient income from all our various activities to be able to pay our ongoing wages and operational expenses and undertake further projects and activities for the benefit of our community. We were unfortunately unsuccessful in receiving DGR (Deductible Gift Recipient) status. However we aim to apply next financial year under a different category. We will explore partnering with local organisations that have DGR status, which will give us greater access to funding opportunities.

Thank you again as always, to Catherine Aulich our bookkeeper, who has worked tirelessly and provided invaluable support throughout the year.

Bernie Lobert
Treasurer

Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc.

BALANCE SHEET

As of June 30, 2018

	TOTAL	
	AS OF JUN 30, 2018	AS OF JUN 30, 2017 (PY)
Assets		
Current Assets		
Accounts receivable		
Accounts Receivable	2,408.02	10,823.81
Total Accounts receivable	**A$2,408.02**	**A$10,823.81**
BBL #0913 Chq Account	45,057.11	13,990.81
BBL #2784 Debit Card	608.90	1,219.19
BBL #3244 Indigenous Arts	9.34	250.00
BBL #3269 Auspiced Grants	402.39	1,519.59
BBL #3277 Hugh Williamson	972.22	19,099.03
BBL #3327 FRRR Catch Sun	8,519.81	12,290.51
BBL #3386 Small Grants	3,620.37	1,011.92
BBL #5329 GST Account	1,480.50	2,568.00
BBL #8879 DGR	1.00	
BBL#3335 Events	2,066.75	235.74
Cash Float - Cash Sales	200.00	100.00
Petty Cash	171.70	155.05
Inventory	9,406.80	9,406.80
Total Current Assets	**A$74,924.91**	**A$72,670.45**
Long-term assets		
Leasehold Improvements	48,170.86	50,706.17
Nursery Plant/Equip	1,808.58	2,260.73
Office Equipment / Furniture	494.36	659.15
Tractor / Farm Equipment	3,120.02	3,900.02
Total long-term assets	**53,593.82**	**57,526.07**
Total Assets	**A$128,518.73**	**A$130,196.52**
Liabilities and shareholder's equity		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable		
Accounts Payable	4,670.67	4,009.13
Total Accounts payable	**A$4,670.67**	**A$4,009.13**
ATO Liabilities	1,506.28	2,024.81
Payroll Liabilities	2,668.86	2,992.49
Total current liabilities	**A$8,845.81**	**A$9,026.43**
Non-current liabilities:		
Grants in advance	42,574.61	34,427.60
Total non-current liabilities	**A$42,574.61**	**A$34,427.60**
Shareholders' equity:		
Net Income	-9,644.28	36,793.12
Equity	7,684.87	7,684.87
Historical Balancing	0.00	-0.10
Retained Earnings	79,057.72	42,264.60
Total shareholders' equity	**A$77,098.31**	**A$86,742.49**
Total liabilities and equity	**A$128,518.73**	**A$130,196.52**

Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc.

PROFIT AND LOSS

July 2017 - June 2018

	TOTAL	
	JUL 2017 - JUN 2018	JUL 2016 - JUN 2017 (PY)
Income		
ECOSS Shop	2,363.65	8,752.29
Total Income	**A$2,363.65**	**A$8,752.29**
Cost of Sales		
Edible Plant Expenses		15,988.20
less Stock on hand at 30 June	0.00	-9,406.80
Native Plant Expenses	43.36	830.37
Shop Expenses	427.27	538.90
Volunteer Expenses		2,850.00
Total Cost of Sales	**A$470.63**	**A$10,800.67**
GROSS PROFIT	**A$1,893.02**	**A$ -2,048.38**
Other Income(Loss)		
Bank Interest Income	208.54	337.54
Event Income	5,536.72	6,389.85
Grants / Sponsorships	81,343.54	107,493.61
Membership Income	90.91	140.92
Misc. Income	3,811.07	7,304.97
Rental Income	8,432.18	2,889.95
Schools Income	16,718.73	11,864.99
Work For the Dole Incentive	6,283.35	16,166.66
Workshop Income	346.59	
Total Other Income(Loss)	**A$122,771.63**	**A$152,588.49**
Expenses		
Amenities	1,397.31	937.21
Audit Expenses	950.00	925.00
Bank Fees	63.60	57.60
Bank Fees Merchant	228.00	236.28
Bookkeeping	10,740.00	9,232.25
Communications	1,430.61	2,276.29
Community Engagement Expenses	600.52	1,008.10
Compliance & Registrations	234.70	141.80
Depreciation	3,932.25	4,428.68
Electricity	3,196.50	2,528.72
Employment Expenses	63,039.73	36,538.86
Event - Coordination	1,815.00	2,450.00
Event - General Expenses	2,985.21	2,501.73
Event - Performers	5,198.00	4,854.55
Event - Signage/Marketing	1,762.87	378.43
Gas	243.89	237.21
Insurance	1,591.63	1,484.09
Marketing	136.52	456.80
Miscellaneous	12.36	14.33
Office/Stationery Supplies	263.80	871.41
Other Employer Expenses		639.00
Other Project Support Expenses	825.00	
Postage	115.45	120.73

Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc Audit 2018

The following is a summary of findings on a test examnination of the financial records submitted by Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc for audit of transactions for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

Bank Statements

Opening balances of Bank Statements agree with Quickbooks Balance	All accounts yes
Closing Balances agree with with Quickbooks Balance	All accounts yes

BAS & SBSCH

BAS paid on time and up to date	Yes
Superannuation (SBSCH) paid on time and up to date	Yes

Revenue

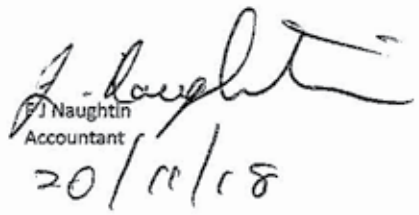
All revenue banked	Almost all transactions are electronic banking or cheque
Cash receipts eg "Gate Takings"	No records available for this deposit. Recommend that in future records be kept that sunstantiate these types of cash receipts Cash nature of this part of operations makes it impossible to verify all revenue received.

Expenses

Sample of payments made from bank account	Invoice to Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc identified for each payment with the exception of: 1. "Bear & Moon $1000 27/7/17" invoice. Bookkeeper to provide copy of invoice 2. payments to suppliers without an ABN eg payment to Kathleen Snowball - "Skylarks". "Statement by a supplier" completed and on record Recommend Supplier in future provide invoice/description of service provided Almost all transactions are electronic requiring two "signatories" for approval to pay
Petty Cash	Petty cash is controlled by Office Manager and expenditure reviewed by Treasurer for appropriateness of expense

Summary

In my view the attached Quickbooks Reports of Profit and Loss for the year ending 30 June 2018 and Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2018 provide a true and fair refelection of the operations, state of bank accounts and liabilities of Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc.



FJ Naughtin
Accountant
20/11/18

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20 November 2018

AUDITORS REPORT
YARRA VALLEY ECOSS INC

To the Members

Scope
We have audited the attached special purpose financial reports in respect of the Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc for the year ended 30 June 2018 consisting of statement of receipts and payments. The Committee is responsible for the information contained therein and have determined that the basis of accounting used is appropriate to the needs of the members. We have conducted an independent audit on the financial reports in order to express an opinion on them to the members. No opinion is expressed as to whether the basis of accounting is used is appropriate to the needs of the members.

The special purpose financial reports have been prepared for the distribution to the members of the entity for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee's accountability requirements. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial reports to which it relates, to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial reports, and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether in all material respects, the financial reports are presented fairly.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

AUDIT OPINION

In my opinion the financial reports of the Yarra Valley ECOSS Inc presents fairly the receipts and payments of the entity for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Yours faithfully

T Shortis

TROY SHORTIS BBus FIPA
SVS MANAGEMENT GROUP PTY LTD

Yarra Valley ECOSS would like to acknowledge that we reside on Wurundjeri Land, of the Kulin Nation. We pay respects to elders past and present and emerging, We acknowledge and respect Torres Straight Island relations and all first nations. We encourage inclusivity and welcome people of all genders and cultural diversity at ECOSS. We embrace opportunities to learn from all cultures and hope that you find ECOSS a peaceful and beautiful space to learn.

Annual Report Produced by
Leanne Arvanitakis-Hall

Designed by
Derry Talvainn of Artema Design