

# Planting the Seed

Developing a collaborative regenerative farming and Indigenous farming and plant use project in the Millewa-Mallee region.

March 2022



Report prepared by Regenerative Communities for  
First People of the Millewa-Mallee and Food Next Door Cooperative



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# Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee, The Ngintait and Latji Latji as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country on which we are. We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging of First Peoples of Millewa-Mallee and the ancient connection they hold with their Country.

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This evaluation project and report was funded by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning as part of the Caring for Country in a changing climate program.

Image previous page: FPMMAC, FND & Regenerative Communities at the FND Community Demonstration Farm, April 2021. Photo credit: Food Next Door

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# Executive Summary

First People of the Millewa-Mallee, through its *Food-Fibre-Medicine* program has secured access to land to begin farming native plants and foods, established a large native seed bank and trained their Indigenous Cultural Rangers in seed collection and plant use.

Food Next Door, through its *Building community and sustainable local economies through food* program has supported the regeneration of unused land by supporting new migrant farmers to grow food including traditional crops.

During 2021 research was conducted by Regenerative Communities in partnership with First People of the Millewa-Mallee and Food Next Door including a series of farm exchange events, consultation with local consumers and conversations with relevant local and national organisations.

Desktop research combined with a strong knowledge of place held by all involved included a history of farming in the Millewa-Mallee, regenerative farming, cultural & intellectual property, and potential native foods to be farmed in the Millewa-Mallee.

Given the progress made by First People of the Millewa-Mallee and Food Next Door within their individual sectors, as well as the partnership developed between them over the last twelve months, there exists opportunity for further project development and collaboration, combining the resources and knowledge held within these organisations as well as drawing on the future support base outlined in this report.

If we work with what is unique about the people and place of the Millewa-Mallee, there is an abundance of inspiration and potential to manifest into new farms that regenerate land, new business enterprises with a community impact, and new products and ingredients that share the story of our region.

By respecting cultural & intellectual property we can create an Indigenous-led native foods industry in the Mallee to deliver social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits to the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee.

For this to happen, First People of the Millewa-Mallee and Food Next Door require continued support to create the conditions in our community for this success. Funding is required for a minimum of three years to support the preparation of land, train farmers and allow the farm to reach enough financial return to allow sustainability and independence from reliance on funding.

For the Millewa-Mallee to move forward and continue to be known as a place which nourishes the Australian and international community of eaters, we must acknowledge and elevate First Peoples knowledge and culture. Embracing regenerative farming practices and principles in the Millewa-Mallee presents us with the potential to demonstrate how the agriculture industry can lead the country in climate adaptation.

# Introduction

First People of the Millewa-Mallee Aboriginal Corporation (FPMMAC) and Food Next Door Co-op (FND) have developed a relationship through their aligned values and community work in the Mildura and Millewa-Mallee region. The organisations are eager to explore how they can work together to address co-evolving goals related to Indigenous food sovereignty, a strong local food system and advancing regenerative farming in the Millewa-Mallee.

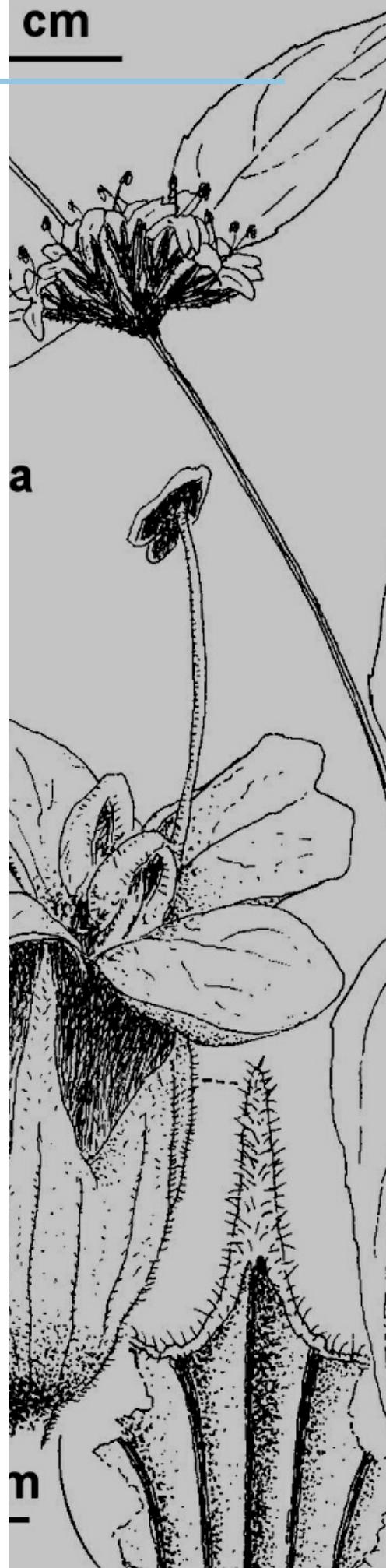
*Caring for Country in a changing climate* is an ADAPT Loddon Mallee micro-funding program supported by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

In January 2021, FPMMAC and FND collaborated on an application to the fund for the development of Planting the Seed, a business case for a collaborative regenerative farming and plant use project in the Millewa-Mallee region. The preparation of this resulting report was facilitated by local community development service Regenerative Communities, using the regenerative practice approach of place-based solutions.

FPMMAC through its *Food-Fibre-Medicine* program has secured access to land to begin farming native plants and foods, established a large native seed bank and trained their Indigenous Cultural Rangers in seed collection and plant use.

FND through its *Building community and sustainable local economies through food* program has supported the regeneration of unused land by supporting new migrant farmers to grow food including traditional crops. FPMMAC and FND are exploring how to bring together their respective knowledge bases to build a healthy and thriving native foods economy in our region.

Illustration A - River Mint



# Partners

## First People of the Millewa-Mallee Corporation (FPMMAC)

### **“Country - Culture - People”**

FPMMAC is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for the north-west of Victoria, and a Traditional Owner Corporation advancing Indigenous interests in Country, Culture and People. It is actively involved in land and water management. The *Custodians of Country: Cultural Ranger* program operates in land management, fish and aquatic systems, cultural heritage, native animal sanctuary, native plant nursery, native seed bank and seed production area, building and construction.

The FPMMAC people have maintained continuous connection to their Traditional Country from the initial period of colonisation up to the present time.

One initiative of the Cultural Ranger program has been the development of the Belar Nursery - Biocultural Resource Centre, a commercial native nursery based at Irymple, Victoria. FPMMAC has also completed business and architectural planning for the development of a Native Fish Hatchery, whose refuse water can be used for agricultural purposes.

To expand cultural activity FPMMAC aims to:

- Develop opportunities for Indigenous employment on-Country
- Develop business and economic opportunities
- Expand traditional culture and languages knowledge and use
- Seek land and water justice

FPMMAC is an active member of *Djikitjuk Djanga Community of Practice*, which is a native foods and fibre program supported by the Victorian Federation of Traditional Owner Corporation and Agriculture Victoria. This forum meets monthly and includes over a dozen Indigenous agriculturalists, including Black Duck Foods.

FPMMAC has purchased thirty acres of farmland in the rural outskirts of Mildura (Figure 1), as a base for its regenerative farm modelling. It will be integrated with the FPMMAC native nursery that will propagate native food, fibre and medicine plant seedlings to supply the farm.

[fpmmac.com](http://fpmmac.com)

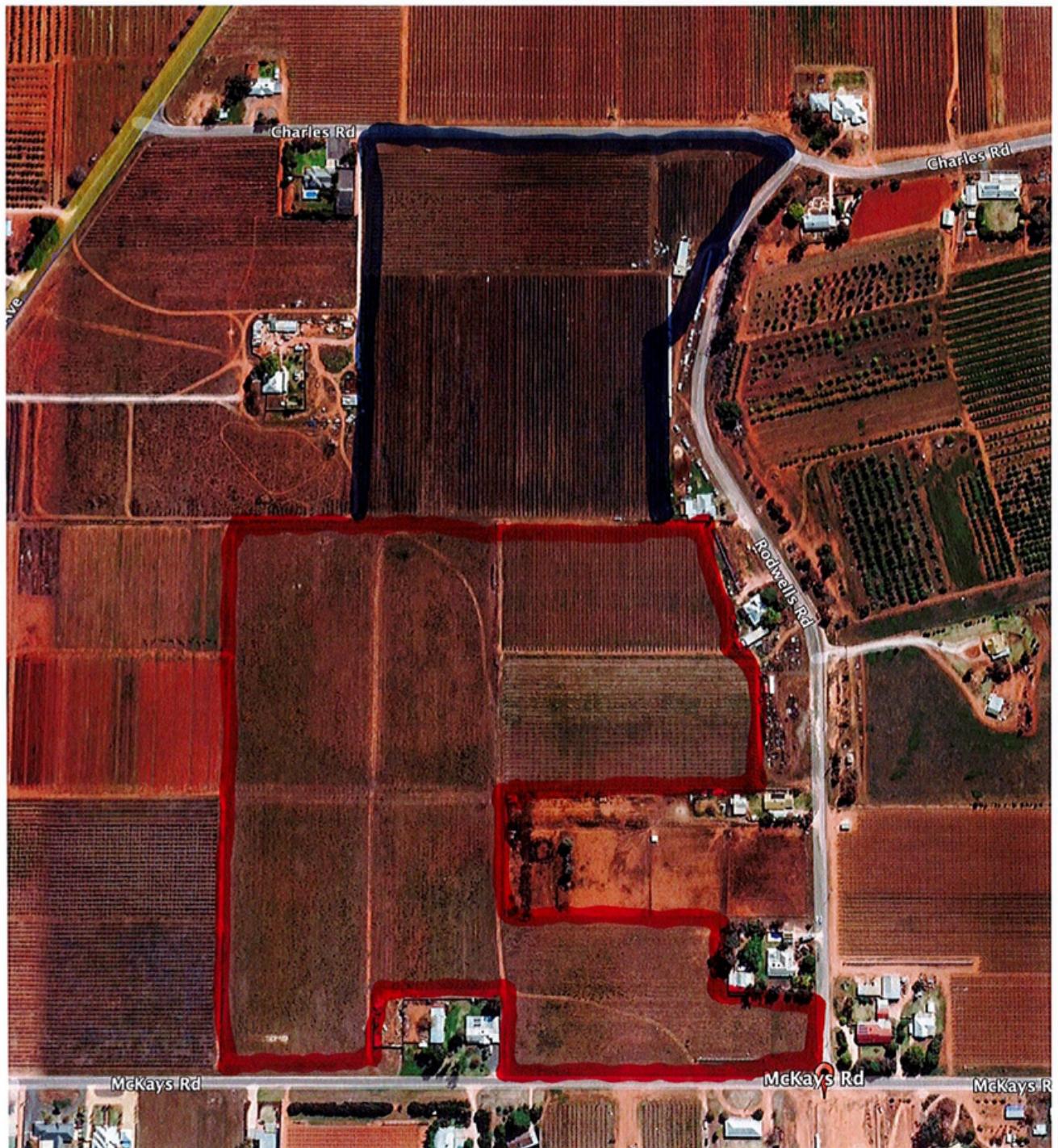


Figure 1. First People of the Mallee Mallee site for regenerative farm  
Red section- thirty acres purchased  
Blue section- targeted for further purchase

## FPMMAC Accomplishments

FPMMAC has extensive experience in developing a range of projects, and over the last twelve months has achieved the following towards its Food-Fibre-Medicine program.

1. Sourced development funding for First People of the Millewa-Mallee's Food-Fibre-Medicine program.
2. FPMMAC participated in the Victorian Government's Djikitjuk Djanga Native Botanicals Program and Community of Practice.
3. Employed professional native plant and seed expertise.
4. Secured approvals for seed collection from the wild from Parks Victoria, and seeking additional approval from Dept. of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Mildura Rural City Council and private property owners.
5. Employed Indigenous 'Custodians of Country: Cultural Ranger' team for seed production and native plant nursery.
6. Trained Indigenous staff in native plant names (both common and Latin), locations, and Aboriginal plant use and history.
7. GPS all seed collection locations and times for future reference.
8. Developed extensive Native Seed Bank from the wild, consisting of plants from local provenance.
9. Developed appropriate drying and cool room storage for the Native Seed Bank.
10. Developed initial client base for both native seed sales and Healing of Country: Land Rejuvenation programs.
11. Expanded Native Plant Nursery and staffing for at scale native plant production.
12. Employed consultant expertise to find and evaluate farmland with appropriate soil types and location for development of a Seed Production Area and commercial native plant regenerative farm.
13. Planning of 'Nature Farm' model of regenerative native plant farming.
14. Provided appropriate training for employees as required, assisted by Agriculture Victoria, Parks Victoria, Mallee Catchment Management Authority, Mildura Rural City Council, SuniTafe, Food Next Door and others.
15. Purchased 30 acres of suitable farmland within the Mildura region; close enough for servicing and distant enough for rural activities. Additional lands under negotiation.
16. Identified sources for appropriate processing equipment for seed processing and Food-Fibre-Medicine product manufacture.
17. Instructed architects and builders to design purpose-built Food-Fibre-Medicine facility.
18. Purchased adequate supply of 'Permanent' water for seed and plant production.
19. Prepared foundations for meaningful participation in the Victorian Government's 'Biodiversity 2037 Strategy' and 'Bushbank' programs, to revegetate 400,000 hectares of threatened Victorian lands, of which FPMMAC could accommodate over 10% of targets.
20. Established native seed bank and nursery plants for revegetation of Neds Corner Station, in collaboration with the 'Safe Havens' native endangered animal sanctuary.
21. Provided native seeds and human resource for supply and planting contracts on lands managed by Parks Victoria, Dept. of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Mildura Rural City Council.
22. Undertook Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Protection activities as required on country.

23. Participated in the Victorian Federation of Traditional Owner Corporation's 'Traditional Owner Native Food and Botanicals Strategy: Traditional Knowledge Group', framing the Victorian governments Aboriginal botanicals support framework for the next five years.

24. Developing, in conjunction with Victorian Traditional Owner groups and Registered Aboriginal Parties, the intellectual property, copyright, supply, distribution and sales networks for Aboriginal native Foods, Fibres and Medicines.

25. Employed as many Aboriginal people into the agricultural, land and water management industries as funding and business opportunities have permitted.

26. Provided a local solution to the much vaunted, long awaited but failed Federal Government 'Closing the Gap' Strategy, through the direct employment and training of Indigenous people.



Images: FPMMAC Seed Bank, March 2022  
Photo credit: Regenerative Communities

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## Food Next Door Cooperative (FND)

### **"Nurturing Land - Nourishing people"**

FND is a cooperative community farming organisation that matches under-utilised farmland with landless farmers to support small-scale regenerative farming. It supports growing diverse crops and engaging people from diverse backgrounds to supply food to local households in the Mildura region.

The primary aim of FND is to relieve the suffering or distress experienced by newly arrived migrants and refugee groups, particularly those without access to land and living in rural and regional areas, by supporting these groups to re-engage in farming and grow food, including their traditional foods.

FND established Out of the Box in 2017 which is a weekly local produce box subscription. All produce is sourced from small scale farms within a 150km radius of Sunraysia. Produce is grown using organic and regenerative practices. In addition, FND initiated the establishment of the Mildura Community Water Bank in 2019, which is a not-for-profit venture that seeks to cultivate - through the use of donations - a portfolio of water rights to assist active sustainable farming, direct-to-consumer food consumption and the health of river systems.

FND's mission is Nurturing Land, Nourishing People. One of its organisational values is RESPECT- we respect and acknowledge the Traditional Owners on whose land we work. We recognise their knowledge and skills in actively managing our land and waters for millennia. As the leading organisation in the Mallee in actively creating a strong local food system, it will be a key partner in delivering supporting FPMMAC to build a native foods economy in the region. FND is a part of a wider national network of local food system activators. It has an existing customer base via its online store and weekly subscription sale of Out of the Box local fresh food products.

[foodnextdoor.org.au](http://foodnextdoor.org.au)



## FND Accomplishments

FND has extensive experience in regenerative farming, intercultural programs, skills development and local food system activation. Over the last 12 months it has achieved the following towards its Building community and sustainable local economies through food program:

1. Supported regenerative farming practices on 12 acres of previously unused land
2. Expanded community demonstration farm via landshare agreement with private landholder to approximately 5.5 acres.
3. Facilitated access to the community demonstration farm for 22 farmers and their families to grow culturally important crops.
4. Initiated the project Food Moves Skills into Migrant Women funded by Ecstra Foundation and supported by Macquarie University's Business School and Co-op Federation, to mentor three women from refugee backgrounds to develop business models for food and farming-related businesses and to co-design a financial literacy program appropriate for women from refugee backgrounds with the women participants.
5. Secured funding from ADAPT Loddon Mallee to pilot the 2-week training program for young people at the community demonstration farm, An Introduction to Food Systems and Climate Change for Young People, with nine participants aged between 7 and 27 years.
6. Supplied weekly fresh produce from the community demonstration farm to Out of the Box weekly local produce box scheme.
7. Weekly distribution of local organic produce to 60 households in Sunraysia via subscriptions to Out of the Box.
8. Employed nine staff, five from refugee backgrounds, across two sites.
9. Featured in The Changing Face of Farming magazine inaugural edition published by Young Farmers Connect.
10. Featured in the End Game podcast Digging in on Mallee country.
11. Secured funding support from Sustainable Table to co-design our training course Small-scale farming using regenerative practices: Growing vegetables in an arid climate to be accessible for farmers from non-English speaking backgrounds and with low levels of literacy.
12. Secured funding through FRRR from the Future Drought Fund for delivering the youth training course and strengthening the young farmer network in our region, connecting with Young Farmers Connect border region chapter.
13. Collaborated with Regenerative Communities to secure support from ADAPT Loddon Mallee for a re-activation of the local food movement and formalising the network through the Sunraysia Local Food Alliance.
14. Engaged Regenerative Communities to prepare and produce the I am Home report, a wellbeing evaluation of our work.
15. Worked with Mildura Community Water Bank to secure irrigation water for the community demonstration farm.

Image previous page: Maize and vegetable crops at the Food Next Door Community Demonstration Farm, 2021.  
Photo credit: Food Next Door

## Farm Exchange 2021

In April 2021 farm exchange events were hosted between FPMMAC and FND. The purpose of these events was to create a safe, informal space for FPMMAC Cultural Rangers and FND migrant farmers to share their knowledge.

A group of young Indigenous rangers from FPMMAC, including nursery staff and horticulture students visited the Food Next Door Community Demonstration Farm in Nichols Point. Farming mentors Peter Webb and Joel Sindayigaya gave a tour of the farm and attendees discussed the importance of farming in a way that is regenerative, that cares for Country and cares for people. Participants tasted some of the African traditional foods growing at the farm, whilst yarning about the potential that bringing together the knowledge of the First Peoples and new migrants could have for influencing farming methods in the Mallee.



African migrant farmers involved in FND visited the FPMMAC Belar Nursery in Irymple. They had a tour with Nursery staff and discovered many of the water plants growing there, a small vegie patch, a growing collection of native food plants from across Australia and a native fish hatchery. FPMMAC staff discussed the planned business model for the Nursery, and what the place means to the Indigenous community. There was a strong connection and exchange between the African and Aboriginal people, with shared values in relating to land and approaches to farming.



Images: Food Next Door staff & farmers visit the FPMMAC Belar Nursery, April 2022  
Photo credit: Regenerative Communities

Images previous page: FPMMAC Cultural Rangers visit the Food Next Community Farm, April 2022.  
Photo credit: Regenerative Communities

# Background research

## Place- the Millewa-Mallee

The Millewa-Mallee region covers the North-West corner of Victoria, beginning from the southern side of the Murray River, stretching along the South Australian border, down to the 'Mallee Track' (Mallee Highway) and along the Calder Highway in the East (Figure 2).

Mildura is the major regional town situated in the area, surrounded by small townships such as Merbein and Werrimull in the West, a large dry land farming area including Neds Corner Station. Red Cliffs, Cardross and Nangiloc follow the River south and form the horticultural region. The Murray Sunset National Park creates a large buffer with the Mallee Track the most southerly area including Ouyen, Walpeup, Underbool and Murrayville, also a dry land farming area.

*The Millewa/Tolonga (Murray) River once had many swamps and billabongs that would flood in spring. There was always plenty of seasonal food along the River, in the billabongs and on the floodplains and desert land nearby. Fishing nets and dams were built to catch fish and yabbies.*

*Women dug for bulrush roots and rushes and collected pigface and saltbush berries. They caught crayfish and yabbies and spent much of their time diving for mussels.*

*Men hunted emus, kangaroos and water birds. Grass seeds and dried tubers were ground by stone into flour to make bread and cakes. Meals were cooked in clay ovens as families gathered to share song and story, craft, play and sleep by the fire. There was a deep ecological knowledge of the landscape that was woven into the everyday flow of life. This knowledge of and relationship to Country provided the Aboriginal people with a diverse and healthy diet. These foods sustained and were maintained by Aboriginal people for tens of thousands of years prior to European invasion. (1)*



Illustration B- Ruby Saltbush

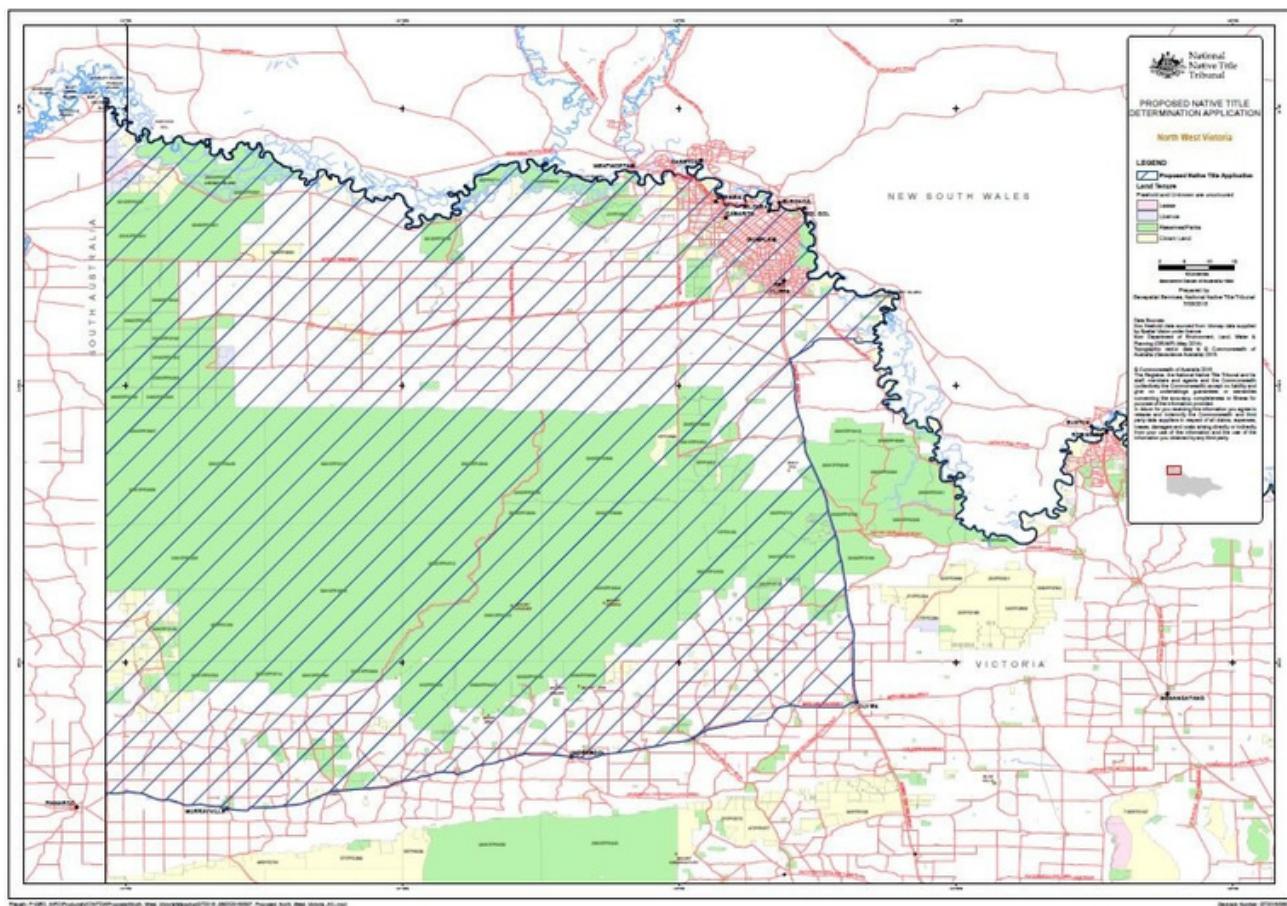


Figure 2. Area included within the First People of the Millewa-Mallee - Native Title determination

## Farming in the Mallee

The Mallee is a complex and sensitive ecological system which contains a great diversity of plants, animals and water systems. Accounts from early settlers demonstrate that there was little knowledge about the rich food sources and thriving ecological systems of the Mallee:

*“... a more worthless sand-desert country, in its natural state, cannot be imagined. There is plenty of vegetation, but it is useless.” William Lockhart Morton, Explorer 1861*

Since European settlement more than a dozen plant species in the Mallee are now considered threatened or rare as a result of clearing and grazing.<sup>2</sup> Early European arrivals brought their own crops to plant and stock to run across the new land they found themselves in. In the late 1800s large scale clearing of the Mallee began. Ploughing was extremely difficult as the ploughs were continually being broken by the large, solid Mallee roots. The stump-jump plough invented in 1876 changed this. As its name implies this device jumped over the Mallee roots which remained in the ground. This allowed farmers to prepare large areas of Mallee for crop growing. Today at least 60 – 65% of the original Mallee vegetation in Victoria has been cleared and developed for farming. Soil salinisation is a serious problem in parts of the Mallee – clearing deep-rooted Mallee trees and replacing them with crops has resulted in rising groundwater levels, mobilising salts in the soil. (2)

Mildura was settled as Australia’s first irrigation colony (3), relying heavily on the water of the Murray River to support a booming farming industry which has now become known as Australia’s Food Bowl. Many layers of immigration since have had an impact on the way we farm in the region. The community is made up of diverse and vibrant cultures, the agriculture and horticulture industries servicing Australia and the world. These industries have negatively impacted the ecological health of the Murray River through on-farm storage and floodplain harvesting throughout the Murray-Darling Basin. (4)



Image 1: Jackie & Robbie Knight (EMU/FPMMAC) and Deb Bogenhuber (FND) visiting the EMU community land site, July 2021.

Image 2: Robbie Knight (EMU/FPMMAC) Ian Arney (Landholder) and Deb Bogenhuber (FND), July 2021

Photo credit: Regenerative Communities

## Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agriculture describes farming and grazing practices that rebuild soil organic matter and soil biodiversity – resulting in carbon drawdown and improvements to the water cycle (5). Examples include pasture cropping (using cover crops and perennials to protect the soil), no tilling, no pesticides or synthetic fertilisers, multiple crop rotations and bringing grazing animals back on the land in ways that mimic natural cattle migration

Regenerative agriculture, has at its core the intention to improve the health of soil or to restore highly degraded soil, which symbiotically enhances the quality of water, vegetation and land-productivity. By using methods of regenerative agriculture, it is possible not only to increase the amount of soil organic carbon (SOC) in existing soils, but to build new soil. This has the effect of drawing down carbon from the atmosphere, while simultaneously improving soil structure and soil health, soil fertility and crop yields, water retention and aquifer recharge – thus ameliorating both flooding and drought, and also the erosion of further soil, since runoff is reduced. Since food production on a more local scale is found to preserve the soil and its quality, urban food production should be seen as a significant potential contributor to regenerative agriculture in the future, so long as the methods employed are themselves 'regenerative'. (6)

Regenerative agriculture moves beyond the concept of sustainable agriculture. Dr Charles Massy, a Research Associate at the Australian National University (ANU), large-scale (1,820 ha) sheep and cattle farmer for the past 40 years, and one of Australia's emerging prominent proponents of regenerative agriculture explains how this type of agriculture is 'more than just sustaining something, but rather an active rebuilding or regeneration of existing systems towards full health'. Massy emphasises

*"[T]he social-ecological element is a key aspect of regenerative agriculture. In addition to improved physical and mental human health, what this aspect also entails is the promotion of vital, coherent rural cultures and the encouragement of values of stewardship, self-reliance, humility and holism, particularly within the context of family farming."* (7)

## Land research

Throughout the process of preparing the Planting the Seed report, representatives from FND, FPMMAC and Regenerative Communities explored options for land use in the region to support potential future farming projects.

Every Mob United (EMU) is an independent group who have purchased land for cultural uses including art, gathering, making and potentially farming. Additionally, there is 80 hectares of private land in the Werrimull region which has been set aside for revegetation or a community project involving FPMMAC.

FND's model of using donated private land to allow local farmers who are interested in regenerative principles could potentially be expanded to include FPMMAC people who wish to grow foods. Large scale land in dryland farming areas present opportunities to trial growing of native grasses for pasture cropping or native grain production.

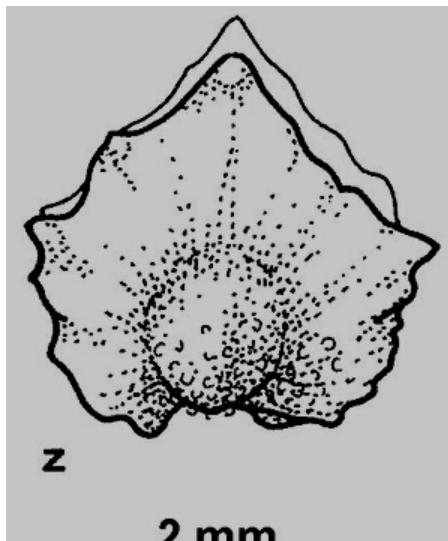
## Cultural and Intellectual Property

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property refers to the rights of Australian First Nations People to their cultural heritage. Heritage comprises all objects, sites, languages, expressions and knowledge, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation and pertains to a particular Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander group or its territory. (8)

Traditional Owners have cultivated and managed Country for millennia – developing processes for sustainable food and medicinal plant production, as well as holistic cultural and ecological land management. These approaches to cultivation and management have been successful and sustainable because they are holistic-reflecting an enduring, deep connection to Country. (9)

There is a need for a fair and sustainable, Indigenous-led native foods industry in the Mallee to deliver social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits to the First Peoples of the Millewa-Mallee. There is potential for the creation of jobs and new businesses, training opportunities, sharing knowledge and culture and caring for Country. To ensure success the growth of the market desire and food production must run in parallel.

Australians embrace new and authentic flavours that are brought to our country by many immigrant cultures. Food allows us to learn about and embrace different cultures. Native foods also need to be shared as a way to enjoy tasting the flavours of the Mallee, whilst engaging in and learning about Indigenous culture.



*"FOOD SOVEREIGNTY asserts the right of peoples to nourishing and culturally appropriate food produced and distributed in ecologically sound and ethical ways, and their right to collectively determine their own food and agriculture systems."*

*- Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (10)*

Illustration C- Old Man Saltbush

## Native Foods of the Millewa-Mallee

Following is a list of potential edible native foods to farm or wild harvest in the Millewa-Mallee to produce products. (11)

### TUBERS:

*Scirpoides holoschoenus* Bulrush  
*Microseris lanceolata* Yam Daisy

### FRUITS:

*Dianella revoluta* Native Flax Lily  
*Santalum acuminatum* Sweet Quandongs  
*Kunzea pomifera* Muntries  
*Exocarpos sparteus* Broom (Cherry) Ballart  
*Enchylaena tomentosa* Ruby Saltbush

### SUCCULENTS:

*Carpobrotus modestus* Inland Pigface  
*Halosarcia* Samphire

### GRAINS AND SEEDS:

*Themeda triandra* Kangaroo Grass  
*Panicum decompositum* Native Millet  
*Acacia* varieties Wattle Seeds

### SWEETENERS:

*Grevillea pterosperma* Desert Grevillea  
*Banksia ornata* Desert Banksia

### HERBS AND GREENS:

*Mentha australis* Native River Mint  
*Prostanthera incisa* Native Thyme  
*Atriplex nummularia* Old Man Saltbush  
*Tetragonia tetragonoides* Warrigul Greens



Illustration D- Desert Grevillea

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## Consumer consultation

Regenerative Communities consulted with a range of local food consumers in Mildura in order to gain a sense of the current level of engagement with native foods, and ideas for potential further engagement. The aim was to understand the market potential for foods grown at the FPMMAC property.

Those consulted with include:

- Out of the Box customers
- Out of the Box volunteers
- Distillery
- Café owners
- Local cook & food advocate
- Apiarist
- Chocolate company

The findings from the local consumer consultation included that current customers of Out of the Box have a variety of experience with the sourcing and use of native foods. Common native foods that have been used included quandongs, saltbush, samphire, warrigal greens, pepper berry, Murray cod, finger limes, wattle seed and lemon myrtle. Pre-made seasonings or condiments such as dukkha, tea, dried saltbush and wattle seeds were popular.

Customers sourced these ingredients in a variety of ways including self- grown, wild foraged or ordering online from stores outside of the region. Every person interviewed agreed they would like to be using more native ingredients and would be happy to see them included in Out of the Box. They indicated an interest in ingredients that are native to Australia in general, but have a particular interest in ingredients that are specifically native to the Mallee.

Feedback from local food businesses indicated they had a range of experience working with native foods, from extensive experience to none. Some of the foods currently being used include Murray cod, yabbies, desert lime, pepper berry, lemon myrtle, cassia bark and Murray river salt. Most are sourced from outside of the region, not necessarily from Indigenous owned businesses. There is interest in accessing locally grown native foods as long as there is consistent supply, value for money, good quality and they feel a connection to the story behind the food.

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Ideas from the community consultation include:

- Trialling new native foods in Out of the Box
- Selling new native food products on the Food Next Door online store
- Hosting workshops such as cooking demonstrations and foraging
- Community cookbook
- To see local restaurants also using the ingredients to solidify the story in our community
- Videos or written stories about the food and people
- Create tourism opportunities
- Selling products outside the region to help promote the Mallee
- Menu and product sales combinations in food businesses
- Displays at the Visitor Information Centre that share the story of the food
- Country and farm tours for the public and food business staff

Product and menu ideas included:

- Native grain whiskey
- A 5-course meal each featuring a different ingredient
- Lemon myrtle or wattle seed chocolate
- River mussels
- Native micro-herbs
- Mallee root or redgum charcoal for cooking meat
- Pre-dried saltbush or herb/salt mixes ready to use
- Desert grevillea flavoured drinks
- Developing a bread product with a percentage of native grains
- Honey from bees on traditional country
- Freezing quandongs and other native fruits

*“I am passionate about exploring what’s native to this place because it helps build on the story of who we are.”*

*- Out of the Box customer*

*“When you’re making place, every story that comes through the food is important. You only need a few good things to define a place, and make a niche that speaks highly of our region.”*

*- local food business*

# Future Potential

## Planting the Seed values

Currently in the Millewa-Mallee there is a minimal local native foods industry including within product development, farming enterprises or hospitality businesses. This creates the opportunity for FPMMAC and FND to combine their knowledges and resources, demonstrating their leadership in this space. The potential exists to establish a positive ground for a local industry to emerge, which is based on:

- Placing Indigenous people at the forefront of the local native foods industry which protects Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.
- Demonstrating regenerative farming practices appropriate to the Millewa-Mallee.
- Involving the community in education and engagement activities that protect and promote Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property.
- Building relationships across local industries (hospitality, farming and distribution).
- Providing opportunities to share Traditional Owner practices especially for young people.
- Becoming a national example of how to foster Indigenous food sovereignty in a regional community.
- Contributing to a strong and healthy local food system.
- Providing informed growing choices for FPMMAC.

*An example:*

*A local café or restaurant wants to use more native produce, or a food business wants to develop a product using native ingredients.*

*They know how to seek the right permission, who to work with, how to promote the produce and to ensure they are supporting Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property*

*The First peoples are able to grow and/or harvest the foods with a guaranteed market, whilst their knowledge and cultural practices are shared.*

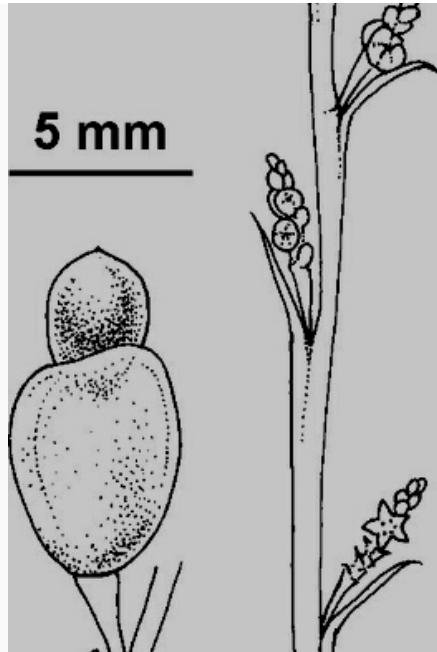
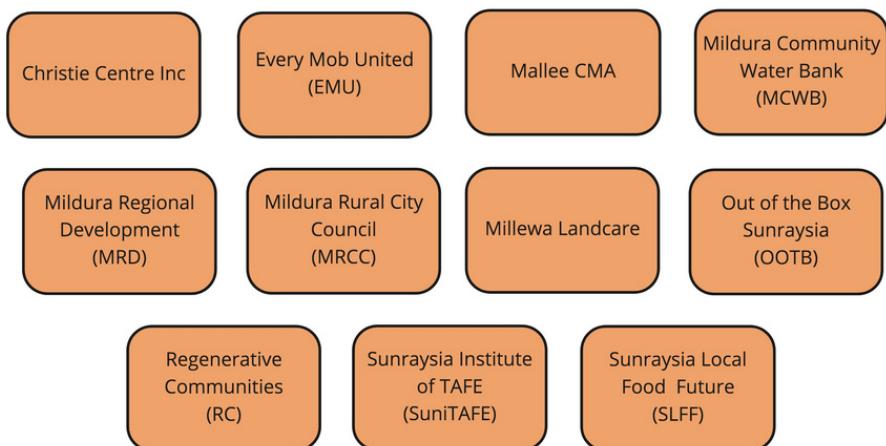


Illustration E- Cherry Ballart

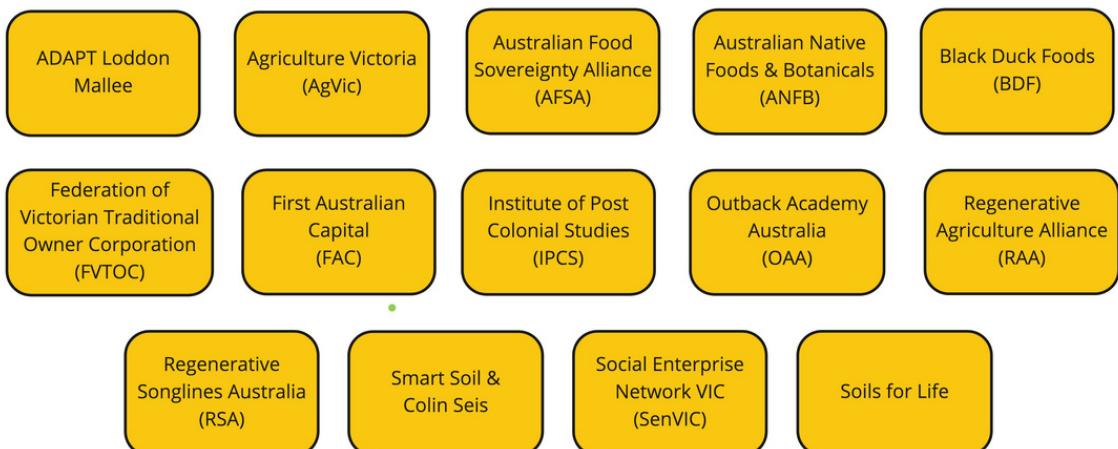
## Future Support Base

Regenerative Communities conducted research and held conversations with relevant local and national organisations, to gather a sense of the future support base for the project partners to achieve their desired outcomes. The support on a local, state and national level for this work is vast. Tapping into the resources available from these stakeholders will strengthen the sustainability of the project. For more information on each stakeholder see Appendix D.

### LOCAL ORGANISATIONS



### NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS



## Future Initiatives

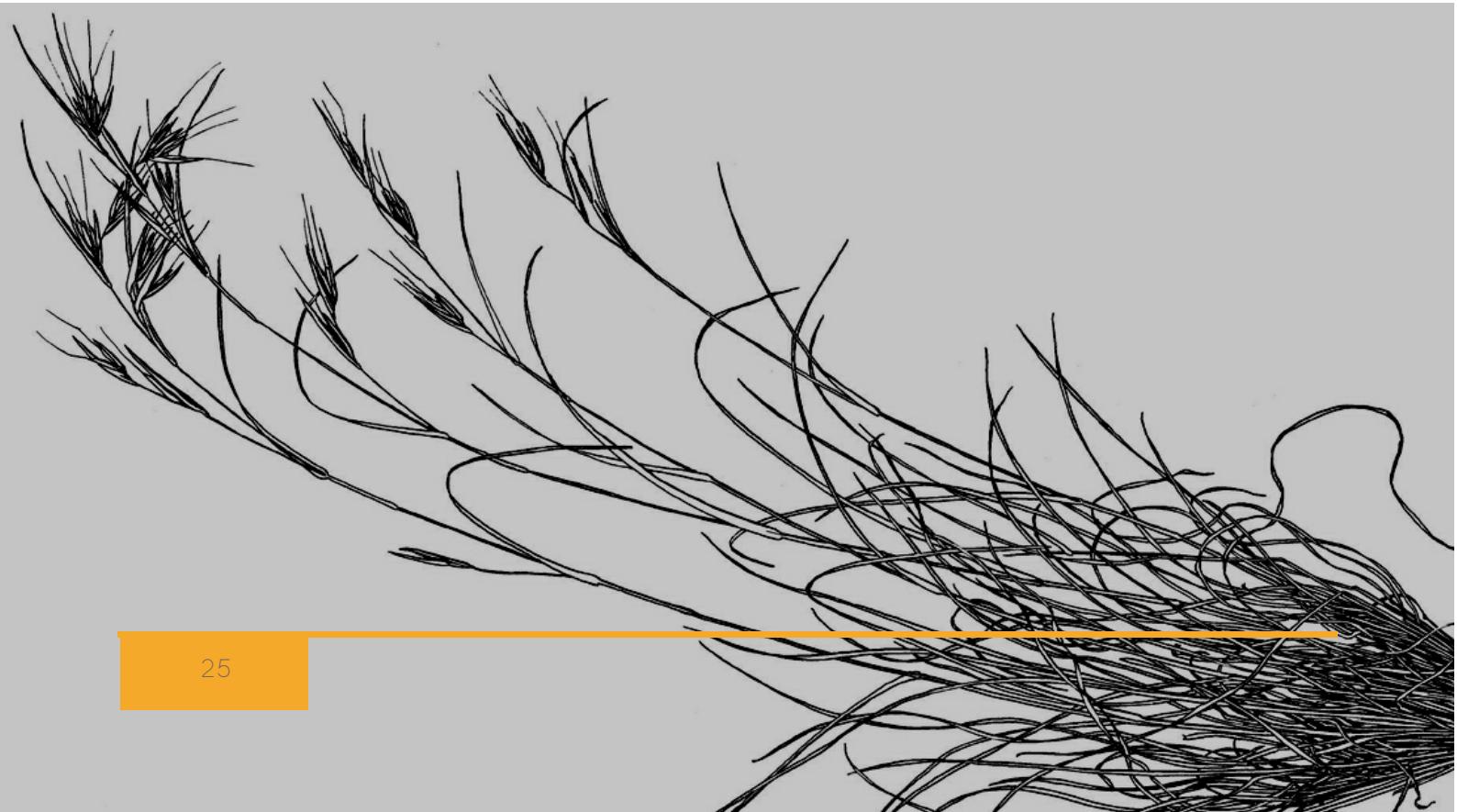
Given the progress made by FPMMAC and FND in their individual spaces as well as the partnership developed over the last 12 months, there exists opportunity for further project development and collaboration, with the resources provided by FPMMAC and FND as well as the future support base. Funding is required for a minimum of three years to support the preparation of land, train farmers and allow the farm to reach enough financial return to allow sustainability and independence from reliance on funding. Following is a list of initiatives that can support progress towards building a strong native foods economy in the region:

Initiative	Stakeholders
Establish a working group for continuation of collaboration	FPMMAC FND
Contribute to Indigenous & Cultural Intellectual Property progress	FPMMAC Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporation
Stay connected to national networks that support regenerative practices in farming and community	Regenerative Songlines Australia Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance Regenerative Agriculture Alliance Agriculture Victoria Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporation
Link to national and state policies, strategies and funding opportunities regarding biodiversity, revegetation, regenerative farming and native foods industry.	DELWP Agriculture Victoria Mildura Rural City Council Mildura Regional Development Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporation Australian Native Food and Botanicals
Link to climate change adaptation goals at a local and state government level	ADAPT Loddon Mallee
Start-up capital or loans for new Indigenous led small businesses and product development	First Australian Capital

Support for the development of new Indigenous led social enterprises	Social Enterprise Network Victoria DJPR
Explore potential funding streams for Planting the Seed initiatives	DEWLP DJPR Agriculture Victoria Mildura Rural City Council
Engage in research and sharing of research	FPMMAC Agriculture Victoria Institute of Post-Colonial Studies Regenerative Agriculture Alliance Black Duck Foods
Provide resources, workshops and research regarding regenerative farming practices. Collaborate on potential farm trial projects.	Soils for Life Smart Soil Regenerative Agriculture Alliance Mallee Landcare Black Duck Foods
Mentoring, training, education and employment opportunities for Indigenous rangers and farmers	FPMMAC Outback Academy Australia SuniTAFE Mallee CMA Parks Victoria
Landshare agreements and donation of land to Indigenous and migrant farmers	FND Every Mob United Mallee Landcare
Engage Belar Nursery Provide stock for farms and revegetation	FPMMAC
Access to donated community water	Mildura Community Water Bank FPMMAC
Produce and products distributed to consumers	FND Out of the Box FPMMAC
Run pilot projects in partnership with local food businesses	FPMMAC FND Regenerative Communities

Co-hosting events, conversations, workshops and cultural activities	Institute of Post-Colonial Studies Regenerative Communities Sunraysia Local Food Future FPMMAC FND
Develop and distribute community education resources	FPMMAC FND Regenerative Communities
Incorporate a module on native food production in the FND farmer training course	FPMMAC FND
Welcome to Country sessions for new arrivals/Food Next Door farmers and their families	FPMMAC

Illustration F- Kangaroo Grass



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# Conclusion

As FND has shown us, nurturing the land goes hand in hand with nourishing people. The waves of immigration in our region and changes in farming methods that have come with immigration have created a layered story of place. FPMMAC hold the ecological knowledge and cultural richness of the deep past, to take this farming story forward into a better future. Potential exists to develop a process that explores how our community can work together with First Peoples' knowledge, settler descendant knowledge and new migrant knowledge to create a food industry moving forward that is regenerating ecological and community health.

There are many examples of success stories from across Australia that demonstrate there is a way forward that ensures the preservation of cultural knowledge and a strong Indigenous economy, within Indigenous farming and plant use. There are a wide range of supporters at a local, state and national level that together form a future support base in which the continuation of the Planting the Seed project can produce reciprocal beneficial outcomes for all involved.

From the environmental perspective, there is a need for change in Australia's agricultural practices to reduce detrimental farming practices. The successful cultivation of native food plants may be part of this change, with a focus on growing foods appropriate to local climates. For the Mallee to move forward and continue to be known as a place which nourishes the Australian and international community of eaters, we must acknowledge and elevate First Peoples knowledge and culture. Embracing regenerative farming practices and principles in the Mallee presents us with the potential to demonstrate how the agriculture industry can lead the country in climate adaptation.

If we work with what is unique about the people and place of the Mallee there is an abundance of inspiration and potential to manifest into new farms that regenerate land, new business enterprises with a community impact, and new products and ingredients that share the story of our region.

For this to happen, FPMMAC and FND require continued support to create the conditions in our community for this success.

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11. Linder, Jocelyn (2015) Flora & Fauna of the Victorian and South Australian Mallee, Jocelyn Linder.

## Botanical illustrations

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- Illustration A- River Mint (pg 04)  
*Mentha australis*. flowering branch; flower; detail of inner surface of calyx. Illustration: Brosch, T., National Herbarium of Victoria, © 2022 Royal Botanic Gardens Board, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.
- Illustration B- Ruby Saltbush (pg 13)  
*Enchytraea tomentosa* var. *tomentosa*. a. fruiting branch; b. fruit. Source: Walsh, N.G.; Entwistle, T.J. (eds) (1996). *Flora of Victoria* Vol. 3, Dicotyledons Winteraceae to Myrtaceae. Inkata Press, Melbourne. Illustration: Moir, M., National Herbarium of Victoria, © 2022 Royal Botanic Gardens Board, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.
- Illustration C- Desert Grivillea (pg 18)  
*Grevillea pterosperma*. a. flowering branchlet. Source: Walsh, N.G.; Entwistle, T.J. (eds) (1996). *Flora of Victoria* Vol. 3, Dicotyledons Winteraceae to Myrtaceae. Inkata Press, Melbourne. Illustration: Thomlinson, G., National Herbarium of Victoria, © 2022 Royal Botanic Gardens Board, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.
- Illustration D- Old Man Saltbush (pg 17)  
*Atriplex nummularia* subsp. *nummularia*. z. fruiting bracteole. Source: Walsh, N.G.; Entwistle, T.J. (eds) (1996). *Flora of Victoria* Vol. 3, Dicotyledons Winteraceae to Myrtaceae. Inkata Press, Melbourne. Illustration: Moir, M., National Herbarium of Victoria, © 2022 Royal Botanic Gardens Board, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.
- Illustration E- Cherry Ballart (pg 21)  
*Exocarpos sparteus*. flowering branch; fruit. Illustration: Moir, M., National Herbarium of Victoria, © 2022 Royal Botanic Gardens Board, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.
- Illustration F- Kangaroo Grass (pg 25)  
*Themeda triandra*. Illustration: Clarke, Ian, © 2022 Ian Clarke, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

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# **Appendix A - Relevant Strategies and research**

ADAPT Loddon Mallee Climate Change Plan  
<https://climatereadyplan.adaptloddonmallee.com.au/>

Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance First Peoples First Strategy 20-21  
[https://www.dropbox.com/s/zk9n2ycgj5pehmv/211016\\_AFSA%20First%20Peoples%20First%20Strategy\\_20-21.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/zk9n2ycgj5pehmv/211016_AFSA%20First%20Peoples%20First%20Strategy_20-21.pdf?dl=0)

Australian Native Foods & Botanical 2019/20 Market Study  
[https://anfab.org.au/edit/research\\_projects/ANFAB\\_2020\\_Market%20Study.pdf](https://anfab.org.au/edit/research_projects/ANFAB_2020_Market%20Study.pdf)

The University of Sydney- Native Grains from Paddock to Plate  
<https://www.sydney.edu.au/content/dam/corporate/documents/faculty-of-science/research/life-and-environmental-sciences/sia-native-grains-paddock-to-plate.pdf>

Victorian Government's Biodiversity 2037 Strategy  
<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/biodiversity-plan>

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# Appendix B - Case Studies

## Regenerative and Indigenous Farming

Following are some examples of land management practices and projects from across Australia. These case studies provide examples of working with native plants and Indigenous land management principles to regenerate land.

### **Black Duck Foods**

Black Duck Foods has a vision to redevelop traditional food growing and country management processes for the economic benefit of Indigenous people and country. Their work includes integrating native grasses into farming systems, and using traditional knowledge to respond to climate change. In 2020 they enabled the first Dancing Grass harvest in 200 years. They have participated in extensive research in partnership with the University of Sydney for the Native grains from paddock to plate research paper. The paper includes research into sowing, harvesting, processing and marketing native grains in Australia.

[blackduckfoods.org](http://blackduckfoods.org)

### **Djandak Dja Kunditja - Kangaroo Grass Project**

From 2021-2024 Djandak will lead the Kangaroo Grass project to research and develop methods to grow large scale Kangaroo Grass crops on Dja Dja Wurrung Country. Kangaroo Grass seed was once harvested and ground into flour by traditional owners and used as a staple food. The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation received \$1.82 million through Smart Farming Partnerships program. The project involves La Trobe University, Goulburn Murray Water and Federation University. Recently La Trobe University appointed a PhD student with the support of Djandak who is helping to build knowledge around the science of reintroducing the culturally significant plant to Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

### **Yambulla Farm**

Yambulla Farm sits at the heart of Bidhawal country – about 700,000 hectares of tough, sclerophyll woodlands and rainforest straddling the border of NSW and Victoria from the section of coast between Green Cape (NSW) and Cape Hicks (Vic). Yambulla explore new and ancient ways to develop the inherent value of this piece of Country and make it the best it can be through their collaborative land management practices. They are motivated by three sustainability goals: conservation of native ecology, ethical revenue generation and inclusive relationships in the community.

They partner with experts across a range of disciplines to create long-term programs for developing best practices in land management, native species protection and the understanding and appreciation of Indigenous culture and history. Restoring former grazing land such as Yambulla — returning the land to a ‘natural’ state — is not a passive process. It’s a constant collaboration between humans and nature. The purpose of Yambulla is to invite people into this process: to contribute, to collaborate, to learn, to experience. And to help develop a better, more long-term vision for the future of Australian land management.

[yambulla.com.au/about-yambulla](http://yambulla.com.au/about-yambulla)

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### **Winona Farm - Pasture Cropping**

In developing 'Pasture Cropping' Colin Seis found a way to work his pastures, crops and sheep together and healed his land. Commercial grain crops which are harvested in summer generally leave bare ground for 6 months of the year. In pasture cropping, native seeds are planted for ground cover, with the grain crops direct drilled into the pasture. By applying regenerative forms of cropping and grazing, Colin has achieved a 203% increase in soil carbon in just ten years. Pasture cropping enables extra grazing of up to six months on Winona's mixed farm enterprise. No longer having to re-sow pastures saves \$100 - \$150 a hectare per year. Winona now produces and sells about one tonne of native grass seed annually to farmers and for landscape rehabilitation. Colin is also investigating the economics of harvesting and marketing of two native grass seeds for human food consumption. Colin has recently partnered with SmartSoil to deliver 9 module online pasture cropping course.

[soilsforlife.org.au/winona-pasture-cropping-the-way-to-health](http://soilsforlife.org.au/winona-pasture-cropping-the-way-to-health)

## **Social Enterprise**

Social enterprises are businesses that trade to intentionally tackle social problems, improve communities, provide people access to employment and training, or help the environment.

Social enterprise can be challenging to define because the concept has been evolving rapidly in recent years and increasingly blurs the lines of the traditional business, government and non-profit sectors.

In Australia, the definition adopted by our national certifying body, Social Traders, and adopted by many including SENVIC has three criteria:

- has a defined primary social purpose, environmental or other public benefit
- derives a substantial portion of its income from trade and
- reinvests 50% or more of annual profits towards achieving the social purpose

SENVIC was established in early 2018 to build a connected community of social enterprises, to facilitate access to learning and development opportunities, and to give practitioners an independent and collective voice.

There are many opportunities for support of emerging social enterprises in the Mallee. The Christie Centre Mildura is the Loddon Mallee Local Lead for SENVIC and Deb Bogenhuber, Food Next Door EO is a 2021 SENVIC Social Enterprise Leader Fellow.

[sevinc.org.au/what-is-social-enterprise](http://sevinc.org.au/what-is-social-enterprise)

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### **Yaru Water**

Yaru is a social enterprise that tells an important cultural story, whilst creating better health outcomes for Indigenous communities via the Yaru Foundation. The foundation supports providing safe, clean drinking water and improving eye health in remote Indigenous communities. Yaru is Australia's first Indigenous water company and was established in 2011 through a partnership between the Martin family and Bundjalung descendants of Northern NSW. Yaru Water is sourced and bottled from water that flows deep below the foothills of the ancient volcano Mount Warning-Wollumbin. The mountain rises out of the rainforest in the heart of Bundjalung country in Northern New South Wales.

Yaru is a proud leader and change-maker. Its ambition is to inspire the procurement landscape and encourage similar business models that create positive social change, and bring indigenous culture to the forefront of Australia.

[www.yarewater.com](http://www.yarewater.com)

### **IndigiGrow**

IndigiGrow is a social enterprise from First Hand Solutions Aboriginal Corporation. It sustains people, land and culture through the propagation of native plants, including bush foods and the critically endangered Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS).

IndigiGrow is 100% Aboriginal owned and operated and employs 7 Aboriginal apprentices. It seeks to deliver positive cultural and environmental projects by growing and reviving local endangered native plants and native edibles. Through the passing down of traditional knowledge to young Indigenous staff and providing opportunities for the wider community to engage and learn, IndigiGrow educates and introduces people about the wide ranging benefits of native plants.

IndigiGrow is a working model that shows not only urban communities how to live sustainably, but also a scalable model for regional and remote communities.

[www.indigigrow.com.au](http://www.indigigrow.com.au)

### **Native Foodways**

Native Foodways is a First Nations owned and led social enterprise collaborating with people from all communities across Australia. They work alongside a range of collaborators to strengthen the native food system in a way that is regenerative, culturally respectful, and benefits First Peoples. It is a collaboration of people working to sow seeds, cultivate plants, and ethically harvest and share native foods. Drawing on Indigenous knowledge and collective wisdom it is driving an increase in the regenerative and meaningful cultivation and distribution of native foods in Australia. Native Foodways works in collaboration with First Nations communities, native food growers, landowners, philanthropists, restauranteurs, and volunteers. Its focus is on the Native Foodways Collaborator Program, working with First Nations-led native food enterprises to support them to grow.

[nativefoodways.com.au/pages/about](http://nativefoodways.com.au/pages/about)

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# Appendix C - Seed Bank

Seeds currently being collected by FPMMAC seed bank:

<i>Acacia oswaldii</i>	Umbrella Wattle
<i>Acacia halliana</i>	
<i>Acacia montana</i>	Mallee Wattle
<i>Acacia rigens</i>	Nealie
<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	
<i>Acacia hakeoides</i>	
<i>Acacia acanthoclada</i>	Harrow Wattle
<i>Acacia ligulata</i>	
<i>Acacia collectiodes</i>	
<i>Microseris lanceolata</i>	Yam Daisy
<i>Plilotus semilanatus</i>	
<i>Polycalymma stuartii</i>	Poached Egg Daisy
<i>Ptilotus exaltatus</i>	Pink Mulla - Mulla
<i>Pycnosorus pleiocephalus</i>	Soft Billy Buttons
<i>Rutidosis helichrysoides</i>	Grey Wrinklewort
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Common Everlasting
<i>Pimelea trichostachra</i>	Spiked rice flower
<i>Atecyron otedolus</i>	Bush Banana
<i>Maireana turbinata</i>	Inland Rosewood
<i>Maireana georgei</i>	Shiny Fruit Bluebush
<i>Maireana trichoptera</i>	Slit wing Bluebush
<i>Maireana pentatropis</i>	Hairy fruit Bluebush
<i>Eriochiton sclerolaenoides</i>	Erect Mallee Bluebush
<i>Einadia nutans</i>	Wooly fruit Bluebush
<i>Enchytraea tomentosa</i>	Nodding Saltbush
<i>Grevillea pterosperma</i>	Ruby Saltbush
<i>Lomandra leucophala subsp robusta</i>	Desert Grevillea
<i>Templetonia egena</i>	Wooly Mat Rush
<i>Melaleuca uncinata</i>	
<i>Roepera eremaea</i>	Broombush
<i>Roepera crenata</i>	Climbing Twinleaf
<i>Roepera apiculata</i>	Lobed Twinleaf
<i>Dodonaea viscosa subsp angustissima</i>	Pointed twinleaf
<i>Dodonaea stenozyga</i>	Narrow leaf hop bush
<i>Babingtonia behrii</i>	Desert Hopbush
<i>Exocarpos sparteus</i>	Broom Baeckea
<i>Themeda triandra</i>	Broom Ballart
	Kangaroo Grass

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<i>Triodia scariosa</i>	Spinifex grass
<i>Rytidosperma caespitosum</i>	Common wallaby grass
<i>Austrostipa mollis</i>	Tall speargrass
<i>Austrostipa elegantissima</i>	
<i>Allocasuarina luehmannii</i>	Buloke
<i>Casuarina cristata</i>	Belah
<i>Allocasuarina muelleriana</i>	Slaty Sheoak
<i>Pittosporum angustifolium</i>	Weeping Piitosporum (Gumbi Gumbi)
<i>Myoporum platycarpum</i>	Sugar Wood
<i>Callitris verrucosa</i>	
<i>Codonocarpus confinifolius</i>	Bell fruit tree
<i>Eucalyptus leptophylla</i>	
<i>Cassinia aculeata</i>	
<i>Minuria leptophylla</i>	Golden Pennants
<i>Glischrocaryon behrii</i>	Pink Velvet Bush
<i>Lasiopetalum behrii</i>	
<i>Styphelia cordifolia</i>	
<i>Orianthera nuda</i>	Bare Logania
<i>Haloragis odontocarpa</i>	Toothed Raspwort
<i>Waitzia acuminata</i>	Orange Immortelle

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# Appendix D - Future Support Base

## Local Organisations

**ChristieCentre Inc.** has led the way for over 65 years in the Mallee region to meet individual needs through flexibility, innovation and place-based solutions. The Christie Centre achieves this through its portfolio of social enterprises. They are the local lead for the Social Enterprise Network Victoria. As the network lead they convene regular meetings between social enterprises in the Mallee and can provide support for start-up social enterprises in our region.

[servic.org.au/about-servic/christie-centre](http://servic.org.au/about-servic/christie-centre)

**Every Mob United (EMU)** was established by Robbie Knight, Every Mob United is a safe place for Aboriginal people from all mobs across the country to come together and yarn, create, eat and share culture. EMU has recently acquired land in the Mallee, which they plan to create an arts centre, gathering space and small-scale farm.

**Mallee CMA**'s primary responsibility is to ensure that natural resources in the region are managed in an integrated and ecologically sustainable way. They are the peak body for the delivery of natural resource programs in the Mallee. Their work is based on science and delivered through meaningful partnerships with government agencies, local organisations and community groups in the Victorian Mallee.

[www.malleecma.com.au](http://www.malleecma.com.au)

**Mildura Community Water Bank (MCWB)** was initiated by Food Next Door in 2019 and is a non-for-profit venture that seeks to cultivate - through the use of donations - a portfolio of water rights to assist active sustainable farming, direct-to-consumer food consumption and the health of river systems.

[www.mcwb.org.au](http://www.mcwb.org.au)

**Mildura Regional Development (MRD)** is the peak economic and tourism organisation for the Mildura region. MRD work collaboratively to build on our region's strengths and opportunities in the tourism, agribusiness, horticultural and related education and technology spaces. Key industries include dryland farming, irrigated horticulture, tourism, food and beverage manufacturing, transport and logistics, retail, health and community services.

[www.milduraregion.com.au](http://www.milduraregion.com.au)

**Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC)** is the local government organisation that represents and serves approximately 53,000 people who reside in or own land within the Mildura region. Located in north west Victoria, the municipality covers an area of 22,330 square kilometres. Council's Aboriginal Action Committee (AAC) was established in late 2011 as a way of strengthening Council's relationships and engagement with the local Aboriginal community.

[www.mildura.vic.gov.au](http://www.mildura.vic.gov.au)

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**Millewa-Carwarp Landcare Group** is the oldest Landcare group in the Mallee region. It was formed in 1989 after the community recognised the need for land managers to start working together to manage their limited natural resources. The group is located in the North West corner of the Mallee region and consists of 65 farming enterprises and covers an area of over 500,000 hectares.

[www.landcarevic.org.au/groups/mallee/millewa-carwarp/](http://www.landcarevic.org.au/groups/mallee/millewa-carwarp/)

**Out of the Box Sunraysia (OOTB)** is a local vegie box subscription established by Food Next Door Co-op. All produced is sourced with 100km of Mildura, and the growers are small scale, organic and regenerative farmers. Out of the Box is a unique model because growers are price makers not price takers- instead of the value of their produce being determined by the national market, they have the right to choose their own value. Vegie boxes are packed and distributed by volunteers each week. Out of the Box offers small scale local growers a guaranteed weekly produce order, feedback on what to grow and a fair return. Out of the Box also has an online store for customers to order additional local produce such as bread, oil, honey and dried fruits.

[www.foodnextdoor.org.au/outofthebox](http://www.foodnextdoor.org.au/outofthebox)

**Regenerative Communities** are an independent community development service based in Mildura. They draw on regenerative development and holistic decision-making practices to inform their approach to research, planning and project development. The team are passionate about working in collaboration with others to help the Mallee region realise its unique potential and thrive. Regenerative Communities' work has included a focus on community farming, new migrants, local economies, creative arts and social research.

[www.regenerativecommunities.com.au](http://www.regenerativecommunities.com.au)

**Sunraysia Institute of TAFE** provides a range of trades, business, arts and other educational programs, plus the largest academic library in the region offering specific courses to meet the needs of our regions diverse student body. They have provided training for FPMMAC employees. Located on the Mildura Campus, the Dulka Yuppata ('Place of Learning') Training Centre provides support and assistance to all Koories enrolled at SuniTAFE Mildura.

[www.sunitafe.edu.au](http://www.sunitafe.edu.au)

**Sunraysia Local Food Future (SLFF)** 2022 will see the revival of the local food movement by bringing back the Sunraysia Local Food Future gatherings established in 2016. Those gatherings saw 100 locals- farmers, growers, distributors, eaters and community workers- come together for rigorous and inclusive conversations about what we can do together to improve the local food system. Regenerative Communities will be forming a Sunraysia Local Food Alliance and hosting a series of gatherings in 2022, holding space for us to come together and talk about what we want to change, and how we can make that change together.

[regenerativecommunities.com.au/sunraysia-local-food-future/](http://regenerativecommunities.com.au/sunraysia-local-food-future/)

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## National Organisations

**ADAPT Loddon Mallee** brings together people from all walks of life across the region to learn, share knowledge, and build networks to support communities in our region to become climate ready. ADAPT Loddon Mallee was funded by the Victorian Government's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). To complement the Victoria's Climate Change Strategy each DELWP region has been tasked with developing a Regional Adaptation Strategy. Caring for Country in a Changing climate is an ADAPT Loddon Mallee micro-funding program supported by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

[www.adaptloddonmallee.com.au/projects/caring-for-country-in-a-changing-climate/](http://www.adaptloddonmallee.com.au/projects/caring-for-country-in-a-changing-climate/)

**Agriculture Victoria** works in partnership with farmers, industries, communities and other government agencies to grow and secure agriculture in Victoria. They are committed to Aboriginal economic development through self-employment opportunities, supporting self determination through traditional foods, the Aboriginal Landholder Information Service and Djikitjuk Djanga program.

[agriculture.vic.gov.au/about/strengthening-aboriginal-communities](http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/about/strengthening-aboriginal-communities)

**Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance (AFSA)** is a farmer-led civil society organisation of people working together towards socially-just and ecologically-sound food and agriculture systems that foster the democratic participation of Indigenous Peoples, smallholders, and local communities in decision making processes. Their 'First Peoples First' strategy reflects AFSA's position that a full return of Indigenous sovereignty must be the highest priority of all Australians. To do this, AFSA actively support First Peoples' food sovereignty through promotion of enterprises and programs supporting Indigenous sovereignty.

[afsa.org.au/blog/2021/07/03/first-peoples-first/](http://afsa.org.au/blog/2021/07/03/first-peoples-first/)

**Australian Native Food and Botanicals (ANFAB)** is the peak national body which represents all interests in the rapidly growing Australian native food and botanical industry. ANFAB is a not-for-profit organisation, with broad involvement in the development of the native foods industry on a national scale. Encompassing national advocacy and lobbying on behalf of the industry, ANFAB has taken the lead in working with industry, federal and state governments and other organisations to determine and prioritise research and development and market development strategies required to progress the industry into the future.

[anfab.org.au](http://anfab.org.au)

**Black Duck Foods (BDF)** was set up to reintroduce native agriculture farming practices with a view to shifting the way people view and approach the management of agriculture across Australia. Their mission is to care for Country by ensuring cultural values are part of everything they do, to reinvigorate traditional cultural agricultural practices that produce value for all Australians. Part of Black Duck Foods' work is to support partnerships and networks of people committed to healing Country and empowering Indigenous economic development. They are committed to sharing knowledge of traditional food system models and delivering support across the landscape.

[blackduckfoods.org](http://blackduckfoods.org)

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**Federation of Victorian Traditional Owner Corporation (FVTOC)** have partnered with Agriculture Victoria to support Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal Victorians to lead the development of Victoria's native food and botanicals industry.

Djakitjuk Djanga (Country's food) is a new Community of Practice established to help progress Aboriginal leadership of Victoria's native food and botanicals industry. Strategies developed include the Native Food & Botanicals Strategy.

[www.fvtoc.com.au](http://www.fvtoc.com.au)

**First Australian Capital** provides the support that Indigenous Australian businesses need to thrive. They believe that a vibrant and sustainable Indigenous business sector will drive positive social and economic benefits for all Australians. First Australians Capital provides a range of resources to Indigenous businesses, including professional business support and services, networking and access to financial capital. First Australians Capital is funded through philanthropic donations, grants and investment from partners who are committed to building the capacity of First Australians to create and drive their own economic prosperity, and in turn, contribute to the nation's economic growth.

[firstaustralianscapital.org](http://firstaustralianscapital.org)

**Institute of Post-Colonial Studies (IPCS)** is an independent public educational project that interrogates colonial relations and their consequences in the past, present and future in Australia and globally. IPCS build collaborations, projects, and knowledge in support of new forms of sustainable coexistence. The Future of Food project will make visible fault lines in the processes that enable and constrain the way we produce, market, consume, and dispose of food in Australia today. These include the unfinished business of Indigenous recognition, land ownership, management and harvesting of natural resources.

[ipcs.org.au/about](http://ipcs.org.au/about)

**Outback Academy Australia (OAA)** is an Aboriginal-led, not-for-profit organisation whose purpose is to drive game-changing approaches to Aboriginal business, employment, education, health and wellbeing. They work with communities to build cooperative, ethical businesses using under-utilised lands and assets. Their aim is to build business and business relationships that are values based. OAA is building the East West Alliance (EWA), as a first step towards a national alliance for ethical and sustainable business in bush foods, botanicals, nutraceuticals and other land-based business. EWA leaders are collaborating to foster the development of Australia's next Aboriginal led cooperative, Murray Corridor Enterprises. EWA will provide advice to the industry for authentic, ethical and sustainable commercialisation, and protection of cultural knowledge and product in business.

[outbackacademy.org.au](http://outbackacademy.org.au)

**The Regenerative Agriculture Alliance (RAA)** is a collaboration of Australia's leading researchers and practitioners in regenerative agriculture, whose aim is to improve the holistic health and wellbeing of Australian landscapes, farmers and communities through regenerative agricultural research, education and practice. Founded by Southern Cross University and led by Lorraine Gordon, Director of Strategic Projects, the Alliance includes leading researchers and agricultural practitioners in environmental science, soil and plant science, marine and forestry science worldwide

[www.scu.edu.au/regenerativeag](http://www.scu.edu.au/regenerativeag)

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**Regenerative Songlines Australia (RSA)** is working to create a continent-wide network, that connects regenerative projects and practitioners, led by First Nations peoples and inclusive of all Australians. It is focused on amplifying local and bioregional initiatives, with a view to maintaining diverse approaches, while strengthening interconnections, mutual learning, and real project collaboration and outcomes. The network is multidisciplinary and includes regenerative economies, societies, ecological stewardship and design practices.

[www.regenerative-songlines.net.au](http://www.regenerative-songlines.net.au)

**Smart Soil (with Colin Seis)** is an online education ecosystem providing peer-peer online courses, farmer resources, and other support services to encourage the adoption of farming practices that enhance the natural capital within ecosystems. Colin Seis is an expert in the pasture cropping method which is to sow temperate cereals (wheat, barley, triticale and oats) into summer active native pastures to ensure year round ground coverage.

[www.smartsolil.com.au](http://www.smartsolil.com.au)

**Social Enterprise Network of Victoria (SENVIC)** was established in early 2018 to build a connected community of social enterprises, to facilitate access to learning and development opportunities, and to give practitioners an independent and collective voice. In recognition of the potential of SENVIC to deliver significant benefits to the sector, the Victorian Government has provided financial support towards coordination of state-wide network activities and an online presence to enable information sharing and connection.

[senvic.org.au](http://senvic.org.au)

**Soils for Life** is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works across Australia supporting Australian farmers in regenerating soil and landscapes, to build natural and social capital, and transform food and fibre systems. For almost a decade, Soils for Life has worked tirelessly to uncover and promote the stories of farmer innovators across the country.

[soilsforlife.org.au](http://soilsforlife.org.au)

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