



Strategic Plan 2016-2020

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About the Centre

Who we are

Creeds Farm Living and Learning Centre (Creeds Farm) is a purpose built neighborhood house in Epping North.

We provide a gathering place with a community focus and opportunities for life-long learning, skills development, information sharing, social and recreational activities and community development.

We support local community groups with low cost meeting and function space.

We are governed by a voluntary committee of management and supported by local and state government. We use environmentally sustainable practices in all our operations.

Our History

Creeds Farm was developed by a consortium of government and community partners and was a key feature of the award-winning sustainable development in which we are located - the Aurora Estate.

The Centre was completed in 2011 when there were still less than 8,000 residents in the area, to provide a gathering and learning space to help build and strengthen this early community.

The Centre was built under the Greener Houses initiatives. It showcased many sustainable residential design concepts in an effort to demonstrate how new arrivals can build a more sustainable home and how residents in the area can live more sustainably.

Now in operation for five years, Creeds Farm has become a well-established part of the Epping North community. It hosts a range of community-led activities, is financially sustainable, and has continued its role as a gathering place to strengthen relationships with and between community groups.

Our Community

In the past few years, Epping North has expanded greatly, and it has developed into a unique community.

When the Centre opened in 2011 the Epping North precinct had a population of 7,596. Since then the number of residents has nearly tripled, with the estimated population in 2015 being 20,217 residents. With the new housing approved to be built nearby it is expected that the number of people living in Epping North will double again in less than 10 years.

According to a survey conducted by the City of Whittlesea in 2015, our residents are young, diverse, and well educated. Compared to other parts of Melbourne, Epping North residents are younger (median age of 29), more likely to have children (52.3% of households), and are more likely to have been born overseas in a non-English speaking country (38.4%).

People living in Epping North are more likely to be well educated than elsewhere in the City of Whittlesea. They are also more likely to work in clerical or administrative jobs, and while they often have a higher combined household income than greater Melbourne, few individuals are on a high income and mortgage repayments are higher in Epping North than other nearby suburbs.

Epping North is still poorly serviced by public transport, and there are few local employment opportunities. As a result, our local residents spend a lot of time commuting.

Our Programs

Our current programs were reviewed and short user survey conducted in preparation for this Strategic Plan.

Regular hirers of spaces within Creeds in 2015 comprised largely of ethnic and culture-based groups, religious gatherings, and early childhood activities. Art, Craft, and Yoga classes are also regular activities.

The original design focus for the Centre was to demonstrate sustainable housing principles to fit with the values of Place Victoria's Aurora estate, a flagship sustainable development for its time. However activities centered on this theme, such as the Sustainability Festival Market held in 2014 have had little uptake compared to similar events centered on family and cultural themes. This may indicate a shift in focus for the community, or a need to deliver this in a different way.

Governance and Operations

Creeds Farm is an incorporated community managed organisation.

Day to day management of our centre is done by our Manager, an employee, who reports to our voluntary Committee of Management (Committee). Our Committee is elected from and reports to our members at our Annual General Meeting. Anyone who supports our purposes can become a member.

Centre operations are further supported by regular and local volunteer workers, who are recruited and managed by the Centre Manager.

Decision Making

Decision making at Creeds Farm is done inclusively with our community members who are affected by the issues to be decided about. For example, decisions impacting on our community garden are done in consultation with our community garden group.

Whilst the Manager technically reports to the Committee, the Manager also puts proposals to the Committee. Likewise, the Committee reports to our Members and the Committee also puts proposals to our members for approval.

Rules and Regulations

Creeds Farm exists within and must abide by any relevant government legislation and regulations. This includes tax law, WorkCover and Working with Children Checks.

Creeds Farm is incorporated in Victoria under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and we report annually to Consumer Affairs as part of this. We also follow the guidelines and obligations agreed with our two primary funding bodies.

We are a not-for-profit organisation. This means that any income that we have cannot be paid to our Committee or members, except as a genuine fee-for-service. Instead, all money raised goes directly back into programs for our community.

We are registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission.

A copy of our Rules can be found on our website.

Funding

We are audited every year and report to our funders who require us to meet service agreements for the money that they provide us. Our main funding is the Neighbourhood Houses Co-ordination Program of the Department of Health and Human Services. Whittlesea City Council provides annual neighbourhood house funding too. We also receive one off grants for specific projects from a range of funding bodies.

Committee of Management

Our Committee of Management is elected each year at our Annual General Meeting. The Committee is made up of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and up to four General Members.

Any member of Creeds Farm may be nominated to sit on the Committee, and are appointed based on acceptance of the standing Committee members or by vote at the Annual General Meeting. All Creeds Farm members are invited to the Annual General Meeting, and all may cast votes at this meeting.

Our Philosophy, Values and Objectives

Our Philosophy

Creeds Farm believes in the strength of community participation and the power of community led activities to making our neighbourhood a better place for all.

Our Values

The Centre's values underpin its strategic direction and are central to the philosophy and activities of our organisation. These values are:



Our Objectives

Our *objectives* are to:



- Provide opportunities for lifelong learning



- Foster environmental stewardship and practices



- Enhance community connection and social inclusion

Key Directions

Our key directions set out the ways we will meet our objectives, and will guide Creed Farm’s activities for the next 3 years.

Objective	Key Directions
<p data-bbox="204 645 464 763">To provide opportunities for lifelong learning</p> 	<ul data-bbox="528 645 1385 846" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate learning opportunities for the community • Provide meeting spaces and facilities for informal learning gatherings (e.g. arts & crafts etc.) • Promote partnerships and engagements with other organisations to deliver learning opportunities
<p data-bbox="204 969 464 1126">To foster environmental stewardship and practices</p> 	<ul data-bbox="528 1021 1385 1223" style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice and promote energy and water efficiency at the Centre • Work toward becoming a zero waste organisation and promote this to the community • Enable the community to promote sustainable gardening, local food production and healthy eating
<p data-bbox="204 1350 464 1507">To enhance community connections and social inclusion</p> 	<ul data-bbox="528 1402 1385 1626" style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable people in our community to develop programs, to shape the nature of the Centre and its activities • Make the center a welcoming place for everyone • Run low cost community events • Promote the activities and facilities to the community