

Good afternoon, all

I will start as president of Merri-bek Community Gardening, acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the unceded land on which the garden resides, and pay respects to all First Nations elders, past, present and emerging.

Thank you very much for coming to this year's Annual General Meeting. This year is MCG 14th year and I'm very honored and proud to say that the organization and garden have remained a welcoming, productive, space for growing food and the community.

This is my first AGM as president and will keep my remarks brief. I would like to say a massive thank you to the MCG board. All members who have been with us for years and are new like me have been extremely welcoming and supportive. To Stasia, our incredible treasurer and vice president, and Suzi, our secretary, I say thank you for all your incredible work throughout the year, at meetings and in-between, keeping on top of our finances and reporting requirements. To Brendan, McRae, and Sarah. Thank you very much for your support and work over the year, especially the expert advice provided on our ongoing work of updating the policies and procedures. I would also like to thank Libby Harper for her ongoing support and guidance.

The board does so much incredible work in the background that it allows the garden to operate and flourish in the way it does. I would like to thank and congratulate the board on what we have achieved in our new schedule and with so many fresh new board members.

Richard will go through all the incredible work and events of the last 12 months in the garden report; I will just add my thanks to all the members of the West Brunswick Community garden organizing committee, especially Richard for his tireless dedication to the garden.

MCG is a strong self-sustaining organization because of the efforts of so many volunteers, while we will continue to see change and challenges, I am confident that MCG will remain a green space for local food and local community for many more years to come.