

Local Food Connect and Bundoora Secondary College partner to establish Urban Agriculture Education Centre.

Local Food Connect is thrilled to announce its collaboration with Bundoora Secondary College to pioneer the development of an innovative Urban Agriculture Education Centre, set on the school's Bundoora campus.

Bundoora Secondary College is dedicated to expanding its Urban Agriculture and Conservation program which engages middle years students in STEM and food/fibre careers education, and specifically focuses on increasing secondary student access to vocational education and training (VET). The college currently offers four VET certificates from the Agriculture & Environment Flexible Pathway to the North Melbourne VET cluster, and in 2025 even greater access to training will be made possible through this partnership with Local Food Connect.

Drawing on its extensive network and expertise, Local Food Connect will play an important role in ensuring the centre delivers authentic learning experiences for students while also creating avenues for the broader community to engage with and benefit from the resource. Designed to provide practical and highly applied learning experiences, the Urban Agriculture Education Centre will promote and enable food production within urban environments.

Significant investment into the college has been enabled by The Department of Education through the provision of a Secondary Schools Agriculture Fund grant, and the first stage of the school upgrade which is currently under construction and expected to be completed by November 2024. Additionally, Local Food Connect will contribute \$250,000 towards the development of demonstration gardens and related essential infrastructure, leveraging \$200,000 from the Victorian State Government's Living Local grant program. This funding, originally earmarked for an urban farm in Eltham, will now be redirected to bolster the Urban Agriculture Education Centre initiative.

Local Food Connect is committed to fostering community involvement in shaping the centre's direction. Working closely with stakeholders, including residents and local organisations, the aim is to transform the centre into a vibrant community hub catering to diverse age groups and interests.

We value the support of Banyule City Council. The establishment of the Urban Agriculture Education Centre is closely aligned with Banyule City Council's vision outlined in its Urban Food Strategy (2023-2027), which emphasises the promotion of local food sustainability and food security.

"We are excited to engage with interested parties to ensure that the Urban Agriculture Education Centre becomes a beacon for promoting the significance of local food and its impact on community well-being," remarked LFC President, Chris Chapple.

For more information or to share your ideas, please contact:

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The Urban Agriculture Education Centre project is being delivered by Local Food Connect in partnership with the Victorian Government and Bundoora Secondary College.