



## MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 13th January 2023

### **Large scale chemical agriculture untenable ROBERT SERVINE**

There are many benefits to being the General Manager of Green Connect, but the big one is that I get to work from our farm in Warrawong regularly and when I'm there I am surrounded by a vibrant natural environment.

Decades of research have proven that exposure to natural spaces is critical to our mental and physical health. It saddens me that not everyone experiences the rhythms of the land the way that my team and I do.

I found out recently that over 50 per cent of Australian students have never visited a farm. About 60 per cent have no idea where their food comes from, let alone how it is grown.

Only half can tell the difference between a beet and a leek.

Increasingly, most of us rely on labels like organic, cruelty-free and free range to tell us how our food was made and reassure us that it was grown with integrity using methods that are not harmful to animals, plants or planet.

This is where Green Connect makes such a difference.

Apart from supplying veg boxes, flowers, and fair farmed eggs and meat, we also give our visitors a chance to connect to the land.

At the Farm we run regular tours so people can see how we nurture and harvest our crops and we give every visitor a chance to meet the pigs, goats, sheep, alpacas and chickens that play such an important role in the circular economy of our 11 acres.

Many of our visitors tell us that Green Connect is the first farm they've ever visited. And it's such a special sort of farm.

All our vegetables are grown using organic farming practices. We don't spray chemical pesticides or herbicides and we don't use synthetic fertilisers because these farming techniques destroy the biodiversity in the soil.

Studies have shown that vegetables grown in the 1950s had 38 per cent more nutrients than the same vegetables mass produced today. This will have long-term repercussions for our children.

That's why our approach to urban agriculture, which was the norm for thousands of years, is making a comeback.

Around the world more and more people are demanding an alternative to large scale agriculture that is more sustainable and fairer.

Green Connect is also an oasis of natural therapy. When you walk onto the farm the city dies away. You feel immersed in the countryside. You hear the goats and the pigs playing. You listen to the symphony of birds calling from the trees and the chickens scratching in their coop.

Visiting Green Connect can help reduce stress and increase positive feelings. It can shift a bad mood. We see it in ourselves every day. That's why we offer so many opportunities for our visitors to enjoy the farm.

Besides joining one of our regular tours, volunteers can become part of our regular crew or attend one of our bi-monthly farm blitzes.

And bringing children to the farm has proved so popular our latest initiative, Farm Play Days for primary age children, has sold out. These have been structured so that children (and their parents) can get dirty and have fun.

Farm Play is a chance to rummage in the Children's Garden, make craft with natural and recycled materials, and enjoy "mini tours" to visit the animals. Don't worry, we are scheduling more Play Days!

Of course, it takes a lot of hard work to keep the farm productive. Organic farming techniques are not the easiest way to make a buck.

The weeds never stop growing, and we lost 75 chickens to foxes in one day last year.

Climate disruption has also presented a host of challenges. But we know that Green Connect is part of something much bigger than our small farm.

It's part of the change that has to happen for our children to grow up healthy and happy in the world. Large scale chemical agriculture is not sustainable.

While urban farms may not be the whole solution, they can make a critical contribution.

At Green Connect we are working hard to demonstrate the differences a small-scale local farm can achieve.

Supporting us is so easy. Visit the local farmers' markets where we sell our produce. Go online and order one of our Veg Boxes. Book a farm tour or bring the children to a Farm Play Day.

We're here all year round, sun-up to sun-down, producing fair food for you and your family. Food that comes from happy plants and animals. Food that's good for people and the planet.

## **FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES CONTACT**

**Ruth Hessey**

Communications and Marketing Advisor

m: 0425 253 293

[Ruth.Hessey@communityresources.org.au](mailto:Ruth.Hessey@communityresources.org.au)