



## PRESS RELEASE

1 August 2013

### Bendigo Bank teams up with organic schools

It's not every day your child comes home from school holding out a loaf of bread and says, "Look what I made!"

At Sophia Mundi Steiner School in Abbotsford, students planted wheat, rye, barley and oats. Afterwards they harvest, thresh and grind the grains into bread flour.

This school is just one of 1400 around the country involved in the Australian Organic Schools initiative – a free program that provides teachers with lessons about gardening, soil health, cropping, harvesting, cooking, and nutrition.

The Clifton Hill/North Fitzroy Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank teamed up with Australian Organic Schools to help schools buy equipment such as sheds, greenhouses, seeds and class resources.

Sophia Mundi Steiner School, Fitzroy Community School and Merri Creek Primary School in North Fitzroy received funds to help them be part of the program. The funding is part of the program's school sponsorship initiative which links schools with local businesses and community organisations.

Clifton Hill/ North Fitzroy Bank Branch Manager Rod May says, "We saw we had an opportunity to be involved for a longer period and it's great that the students can learn about growing vegetables from seeds, from an environmental perspective and from a dietary perspective.

"One of the challenges our Community Bank faces is working out how to engage with younger people and schools.

"Australian Organic Schools is a different approach and we found it quite refreshing. It's not a sponsorship agreement whereby we expect to see any major increase in our customer base, but sometimes we have to look at the bigger picture."

Fitzroy Community School teacher Claire Collings says, "Having the grant has allowed our school to realise the edible garden project on a larger, more sustainable scale.

"The students can now take part in gardening activities as part of the school curriculum and many parents have become involved in the project."

Australian Organic Schools recently welcomed My Kitchen Rules' host and judge Pete Evans as an ambassador.

Program Manager Jane Burns says, "Support from local businesses like Bendigo Bank enables schools to do so much more. With an already crowded curriculum, a food growing program is often the last project that schools can fund.

"A grant provides schools with the support they need to establish a garden and integrate lessons on growing food, cooking and nutrition into the curriculum. Students benefit from the direct connection to where their food comes from and they have a great time getting their hands dirty along the way."

**Extra information:** Australian Organic Schools is available to all schools [organicschools.com.au](http://organicschools.com.au). It is an initiative of the country's largest organic industry group, Australian Organic which owns the logo that appears on the majority of organic products on our shelves, Australian Certified Organic.

Australian Organic media Kathy Cogo 07 4771 3714 | 0466 015 183. Images available.



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