

Grow Free Cart Toolkit for Frankston and Mornington Peninsula



A simple guide for getting started



JULY 2026

Acknowledgements

"The Community Plate acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where our local food system action is located. We acknowledge the Bunurong and Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present & emerging"



This toolkit was developed through a collaborative process, bringing together the knowledge, experience and commitment of a range of contributors.

We would like to acknowledge and thank everyone involved in the development of the Grow Free Cart Toolkit for their input, feedback and support throughout the process.

Of course you wouldn't be reading this toolkit if it wasn't for **Andrew Barker** founder of **Grow Free Carts**, so a big thank you to Andrew for openly sharing his project to increase access to fresh food in communities! We would also like to thank:

The **Urban Agriculture Action Groups** for their enthusiasm to run this movement and **Henri Muniz** for putting together the blueprint for a prototype cart.

The following existing Grow Free Carts and their people:

- **St Kilda Grow Free Cart, SA**
- **The Giving Garden, SA**
- **Capel Sound Grow Free Cart, VIC**
- **Gumeracha Grow Free Cart, SA**
- **Mt Pleasant Environment Centre Grow Free Cart**
- **Vic, Cowell Community Centre SA**

...and a thank you to **everyone** joining this movement!



Snapshot

Here's a snapshot to joining the Community Plate's Grow Free Cart movement to create a welcoming space for neighbours to exchange homegrown fruits, vegetables, and other goods, fostering community spirit and sustainability.

1. CREATE

Design, build and equip the cart

2. JOIN

Register the Cart

3. APPOINT

Celebrate a community member to oversee the cart

4. SHARE

Spread the word and start sharing produce!



What is a Grow Free Cart?

A Grow Free Cart is a produce sharing cart designed for sharing surplus fresh garden produce, homegrown fruit and seedlings.

Think Street Library - but for fresh food that have been grown by your community.



*"You give what you can, and take what you need.
There are no prices, no bartering, no trading, no value.
Like you would to family and loved ones"*

Andrew Barker - Founder of Grow Free Carts



Grow Free Cart Movement

Started by Andrew Barker in 2013 in South Australia. Andrew had a thriving home garden and an oversupply of kale – he was motivated to reduce food waste and build community connection. Andrew started with one Grow Free Cart and eventually that expanded into a network a carts!



Grow Free Cart is a community-led initiative, and it's our turn in the Mornington Peninsula and Frankston area. Our aim is to amplify local gardeners and encourage the sharing of home-grown produce within the community.

This fun, inclusive initiative creates opportunities to share food where we can.

Are you a high-foot-traffic location and would like to join the movement with us?



Who can have a cart? (anyone!)

Here are some examples of where
Grow Free Carts are currently
operating:

Community Centres

Health food stores

Long Day Care Centre's

Craft shops

Post Offices

Schools

Community Gardens

Op Shops

A bakery

Cafe's



Anyone can start a **Grow Free Cart**.

In South Australia **182 suburbs have registered carts**, with some having more than 1 registered within that suburb.



What can I put in the carts?

It's recommended that home grown/ school grown or homemade produce: fruit, vegetables, herbs, go into the carts.



Suggested items:

Grown with Love

Fresh Fruit & Veg

Seeds & Seedlings

Paperbags and jars

Worm Tea

Strong NO:

Asking to swap

Mushrooms

Meat

Compost scrap

Alcohol

Selling Anything

Disclaimer

All items are unregulated and come at consumers own risk



Building

When choosing details for your Grow Free Cart these are our suggestions

Blackboard

Adding a writing board is a fun way for community to share more about what they're sharing!

Shelving

Extra shelves or mini crates to help keep it neat, organised and separating various produce

Shade

Consider a shade cloth or cover for extra protection from weather or birds

Wheels

Wheels allow you to move it indoors and out and away from sunny or rainy spaces



- **You have permission for full creative control**



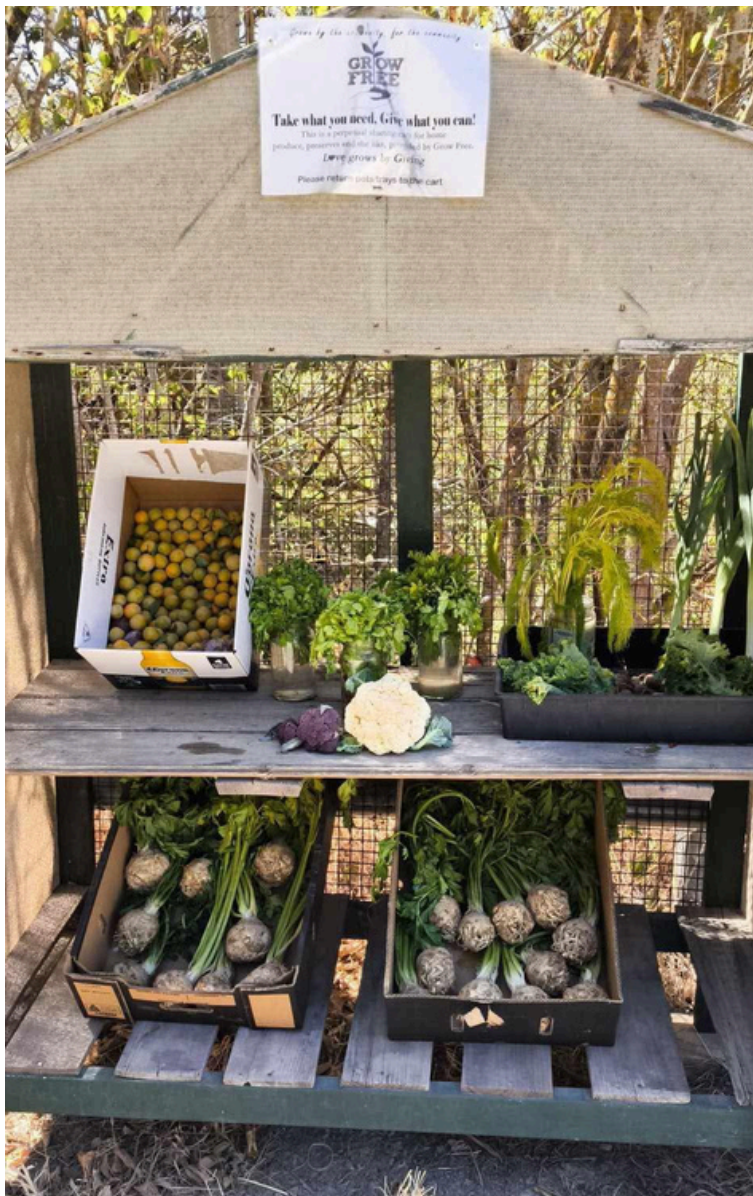
Building Inspo

From Recycled Goods

Here are some of our favourite upcycled & recycled Grow Free Carts

Gumeracha Grow Free Old Wooden Door

knock knock – who's there? You wouldn't believe this cart was once a door – and these GFC owners got creative and turned it into this Growfreecart-erpiece



The Giving Tree Baby Change Table

Aww look at those baby potatoes...Don't worry Kerry from the Giving Tree assures us this once upon a time nappy change table was cleaned and painted before being used! Now it's briefly holding a bunch of young fresh produce!



Building Inspo

From Recycled Goods

Here are some of our favourite upcycled & recycled Grow Free Carts cont.



Adelaide Hills Grow Free Cart (Environmental Centre)

I once was a baby change table and now, I'm a beautiful Grow Free Cart, painted by one of the volunteers.

This cart proves, creating a cart can be as easy as a new layer of paint to help make an old wooden table a bit more weather proof and FUN!

"Our free seedlings are the most popular product on our cart!" - Hailey

The Cowell Community Trolley, Cowell SA

This funky cart was a team effort made from an old cupboard by Cowell Wellbeing group and painted and mosaiced by kids from the local art studio. Fresh produce comes from the Community Garden



Building Costs

From Scratch

Check out our [step by step guide](#) for a cart with all the goodies attached

Tall Community Produce Cart with Roof

Max Height: 2000mm
Width: 1000mm
Depth: 600mm
Roof Pitch: 10° rear slope
Use: Outdoor produce share (non-commercial)

Finished Dimensions

Component Size

Overall Height: 2000mm
Bench Height: 900mm
Roof Peak Height: 2000mm
Width: 1000mm
Depth: 600mm
Roof Overhang: 100mm front & sides

Estimated Budget (AUD)

Item Approx

Timber: \$300
Ply: \$120
Wheels: \$120
Roof: \$80
Hardware: \$100

Total

\$720

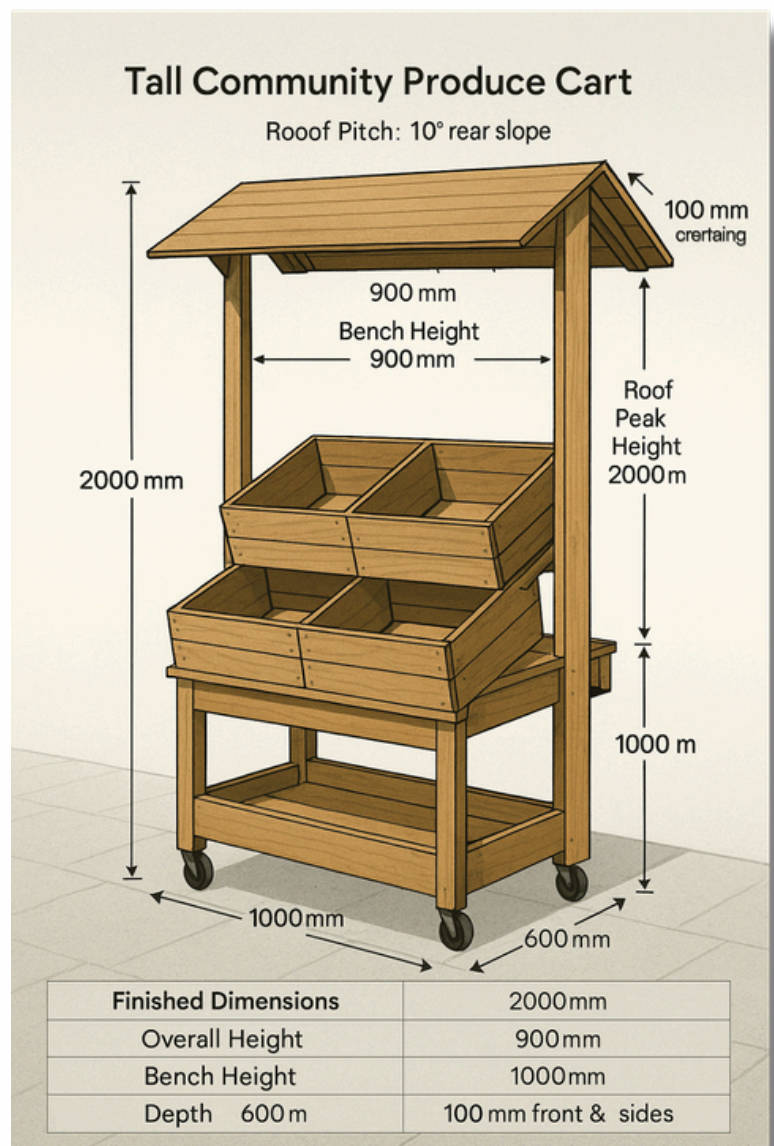


Image generated by AI

This cart is only an example of what can be done - not what has to be done



Building Friends

**Connect with someone
to help you build**

We don't all have the skills and tools to build a cart, so if you want to create something new and work with a team, you could consider reaching out to a few local organisations that have the skills and tools and may be able to lend a helping a hand.

Here are our suggestions:

Wo/Mens Sheds

Check out your local womens & [mens sheds](#) and see if they would like to collaborate

TAFE/High Schools

Think about connecting in with your local high school? Most high schools have a woodwork department or an alternative school in your area.

Service Clubs

Think your local Community Service Clubs, Scouts, Community Orgs & Houses



Please note the organisations listed here may require a fee and /or cost of supplies to build a cart



Cart Stewards

Every cart needs a Cart Steward. Someone who checks in regularly to keep the cart clean, remove old produce, refill water for leafy greens, and restock pamphlets. This could be one person, the host location, or a small group sharing the care.

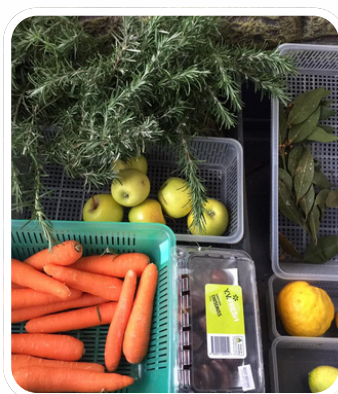
Extra points if they can post cart updates on a local facebook noticeboard!

Who could the steward be?

- Librarian or community centre worker
- Student groups and teachers
- Community volunteer
- Community Garden representatives
- Business/Cafe owner
- Childcare staff/director
- Kinder Teacher

Roles of a Cart Steward

- Build connections with community
- Share produce ideas
- Update produce to community groups via social media & chat groups
- Keep cart looking organised and neat
- Offer a catch up or tea time for people to come and chat about the cart/produce and just to say "Hello"



Ready to go!

Head to the Grow Free Cart Website

- **SIGN UP:** Scan the QR Code or go to <https://communityplate.org.au/grow-free-cart-movement/> to sign your cart up to the movement!
- **PRINT:** your [Grow Free Cart Sign](https://www.growfree.au) from <https://www.growfree.au>
- **START SHARING:** Add a few baskets or containers to the cart and stock them with produce. Leafy greens love a splash of water, so keeping them in waterproof containers are a great idea.
- **ADD PLAQUE:** If you register your cart with The Community Plate you will receive a free "The Community Plate" Plaque to add to your Cart



Grown by the community, for the community



Take what you need, Give what you can!

This is a perpetual sharing cart for home produce, preserves and the like, provided by Grow Free.

L♥ve grows by Giving

Please return pots/trays to the cart



Tips for success



Start small and build confidence



Create a roster and share the load and love of the cart



Make your cart welcoming and tidy to attract community to share and take



Celebrate little wins such as the first donated harvest



Take photos to track your progress and share stories on community pages



Student Leadership Opportunities

Grow Free Carts work best when students are actively involved.



- Planting and harvesting teams



- Weekly updates on what's in the cart



- Student cart monitors or sustainability leaders



- Designing signage, recipes, labels, or harvest journals



Tips for Schools



Student voice and leadership opportunities

Student Health Ambassadors

- Consultation
- Planning
- Construction
- Maintenance / harvest
- Promotion
- Engaging parents and families
- Events



Tips for Schools



Linking Carts to curriculum

Carts can support learning across many areas:

Design

Health and Wellbeing

Maths

English

Civics and Citizenship

- Needs of living things
- Seasonal changes
- Sustainability and ecosystems
- Where food comes from
- Trying new foods
- Building positive relationships with food
- Sensory learning (taste, smell, touch)
- Counting plants and harvests
- Timelines and recording data
- Observation writing
- Shared responsibility
- Student voice
- Caring for shared spaces



Grow Free Carts strongly align with student-led learning and hands-on engagement, supporting a positive food culture across the school and community connections



Tips for Schools



School Calendar

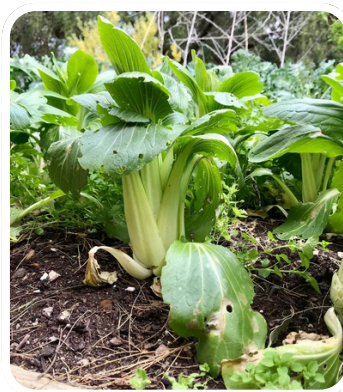
You don't need to have a garden to have a cart, but if you do here's a seasonal planting guide

Term 2 and 3

- Silverbeet
- Spinach
- Lettuce
- Kale
- Spring onions
- Broad beans
- Peas

Term 1 and 4

- Cherry tomatoes
- Cucumbers
- Zucchini
- Capsicum
- Beans
- Basil and other herbs



Tips for Schools



Engaging families and the community

Ideas Include:

- Sharing harvests with families
- Displaying the cart near school, library and community centre entrances
- Including updates in newsletters & facebook groups
- Inviting families to donate seeds, produce or seedlings
- Linking with local gardens, nurseries, or community groups



Tips for Schools

