



In 2020, the Commonwealth Department of Health (DOH) brought on the Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA) and the Incus Group to do an evaluation – to find out how the EON Foundation’s Thriving Communities Program has been working. **The Thriving Communities Program builds edible school gardens in remote Aboriginal communities** and has been delivered in 39 communities across the Northern Territory and Western Australia. **The aim of the program is to increase the availability of affordable fresh fruit and vegetables in communities and deliver lessons to children about gardening, cooking, nutrition, and hygiene.**



You can learn more about the program here www.eon.org.au

Our evaluation aimed to understand how well the program is working, in four areas:

Process evaluation

- How is the program working?
- How does the community feel about it?
- How could it be improved?

Outcome evaluation

- Is the program achieving the main results it aims to achieve?

Economic evaluation

- Is the program good value for money?

Strategic evaluation

- Does the program align with the Government’s priorities for health?

We looked at a range of data and talked to different people to see how the program is working. We talked to:



Community members living in the places where the gardens are



Community Assistants working for the EON Foundation in the gardens



Children and adults involved in the gardens at schools



CIRCA also surveyed some staff at the schools, people who work at EON Foundation, and people who work with organisations that partner with EON. From this, we found that **some things are working well with the program, and other things need some improving.**

What's working?

The program is increasing the supply of fresh food

The program is creating short-term employment for community members

Intention to integrate cultural knowledge and native foods

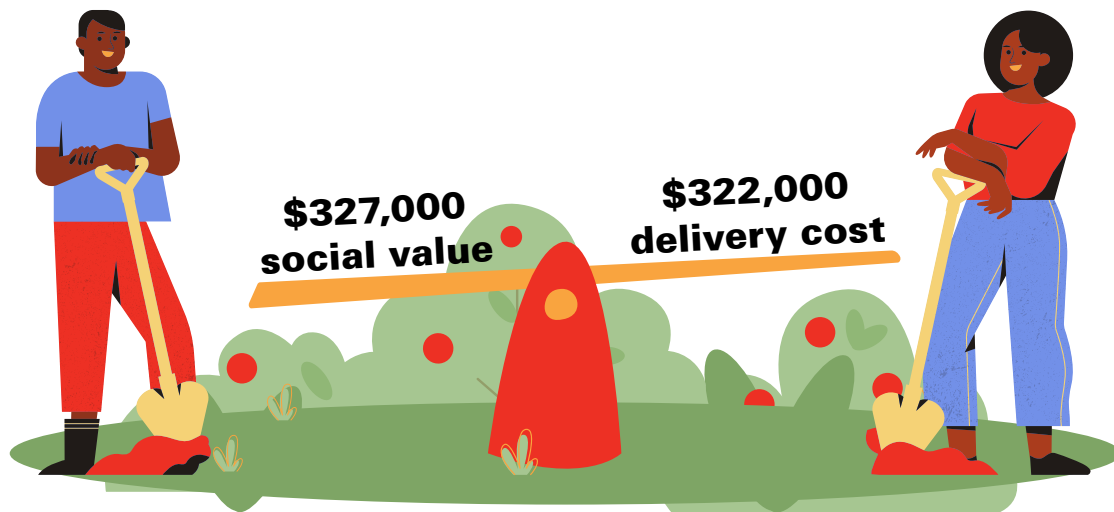
EON is building healthy relationships with communities

Children are getting involved in growing food and gaining knowledge

The program design is tailored to the community

Incorporating gardens into school lessons and engaging children

Good value for money (**\$327,000** in social value per community versus **\$322,000** average delivery cost) *.



What needs improving?

More inclusion of cultural knowledge needed

Community access to the garden

Data collection on long-term outcome

Involvement of broader community

Long-term sustainability

*This is calculated by applying a dollar value to the positive outcomes that the program creates and comparing this to how much it costs to deliver the program.