



## **AUSTRALIAN FARMERS' MARKETS ASSOCIATION INC. ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18**

During the financial year 2017-18, farmers' markets across Australia continue to develop and grow with Incorporated State farmers' markets associations existing in Western Australia (WAFMA), Victoria (VFMA) and New South Wales (FMANSW). Tasmania (TASFMA) deregistered from being an Incorporated Association while South Australia continues as an unincorporated alliance.

Despite AFMA efforts to facilitate there continues to be no active Queensland Association or Queensland representation on the AFMA committee.

There are currently 191 Farmers Markets listed on the AFMA website.

### **AFMA Resources**

AFMA continues to develop or review resources as the need arises and will respond to requests for resources where appropriate.

#### **1. RDA Local Government Toolkit**

AFMA have determined that the RDA Local Government Toolkit developed in 2014 needs revision.

As AFMA provided significant contribution to the toolkit it Northern Rivers RDA have agreed that AFMA could take a lead role in developing an updated version. This version will require relevance to local government with national recognition and include education material for start-up and existing farmers' markets. RDA is supportive of AFMA revising the toolkit and AFMA have identified committee members who could contribute to the revision for adequate remuneration. Grant funds will need to be sourced in 2019.

#### **2. Farmers Markets DVD**

Whilst this has proven to be a valuable resource it is partially outdated and AFMA still retains a stock pile of unsold DVD's experiencing slow sales. Unfortunately the DVD is unable to be uploaded to the website, which it was thought would expedite sales.

### 3. Country of Origin (COOL) labelling

AFMA have developed a COOL labelling Fact Sheet available as a free download to assist stallholders in their transition to labelling compliance. This has proven to be an invaluable resource and is uploaded on the AFMA website. The ACCC whilst supportive of AFMA's initiative but did not pay a web listing fee for this service.

### 4. Waste Management Fact Sheet

AFMA have developed a Waste Fact Sheet that identifies strategies to address the minimisation of waste in farmers' market settings and this is uploaded on the AFMA website for free download.

### **Invitations to partner**

AFMA's high profile continues to attract attention from community stakeholders nationally where numerous requests are made seeking AFMA support to add value to existing or planned for activity that is in keeping with the farmers' markets ethos. For example Mushroom Network, National Regenerative Agriculture Day.

On other occasions AFMA has initiated Calls for Action via Social Networking, for example support for the drought stricken farmers in NSW.

### **Grant / Funding Activity**

Primary activity focused on attempts to secure government funding and support during the year and AFMA representative visit to brief the offices of then Senator Anne Ruston and Senator Fiona Nash, regarding AFMA's critical role in the growth of farmers' markets and their benefits to farmers, regional development and local communities.

Although expressing in principle support for the work of AFMA, the ministerial advice at the time was that AFMA did not match any funding criteria available.

Jane Adams attended an FRRR Not for Profit conference during the year where it was hoped some funding opportunities may be identified. FRRR can serve as a clearing house for grant funds in the event a grant source is located and this is an area that AFMA will need to give attention to in 2019.

Considerable pro-bono work was undertaken on the feasibility of AFMA attaining charitable status as this would help future financial sustainability, however it is a complex process and further work needs to be done to progress this.

## **National Conference 2020**

AFMA have commenced investigations into the viability of a National Conference in 2020. The farmers' market movement has progressed significantly since the last National conference held in 2009 (VIC) and there is a growing appetite for stimulating debate, advocacy, action and sharing of knowledge across the sector. This will be a large impost on the committee and AFMA expertise, including sourcing sponsorship, convening, promoting, delivery and evaluation and it is hoped this can become a reality in 2020.

## **Delicious Produce Awards 2018**

AFMA partnered with the Delicious Produce Awards that successfully attracted many authentic farmers' markets to nominate and showcase their integrity nationally. The three well deserving finalists were Slow Food Melbourne (VIC), Willunga (SA) and Margaret River (WA). Congratulations to all finalists and to the winner Margaret River farmers markets.

## **Social Media**

AFMA's chief communication channels are the website and Facebook.

### Website

AFMA's primary communications platform provides stakeholders with news and helpful resources including the Food Safety Handbook and Fact Sheets eg: Labelling and Waste Management. It also operates as a 'Market Finder'.

The most recent monthly reports chart between 3000 - 4000 users/month and 84% new sessions/ monthly.

### Facebook

AFMA posts appear regularly, often daily. AFMA has over 750 followers and posts can routinely reach over 5000. The Messenger service is another channel to reach stakeholders.

## **Research Opportunities**

Farmers markets are attracting research sector interest with some exciting outcomes occurring in 2018 including a National Conference presentation at the Brisbane Food Futures conference for Public Health. These have included;

- Comparing the Cost and Origin of Food at Farmers' Markets, Supermarkets and Independent Greengrocers in the Lismore Local Government Area. Northern NSW Local Health District.
- Social and community development impacts of SAGE Farmers' Market. University of Canberra.

- Examining the motivations of food producers to sell at farmers' markets in an urban and regional context: Identifying the drivers and the constraints. University of Western Australia School of Earth and Environment.

In response to this interest AFMA have developed a 'Student Research Policy' that sets guidelines for AMFA to consider nominal financial support for research innovation in farmers' markets.

### **Forward Projection**

Several of the strategic aims of the AFMA Strategic Plan 2014-17 have been achieved, but the need for ongoing financial adequacy to sustain the farmers' market sector via its National Association continues to serve as a challenge. Business model scenario's need to be identified and the Strategic Plan reviewed.

Jane Moxon will be undertaking a National and State strategic alignment review in 2019 that can work alongside a reviewed strategic plan and better position AFMA in its bid for financial support into the future.

On many levels farmers' markets continue to be identified as an alternative and viable food source Australia-wide and an increased take-up of initiatives demonstrate this. Some examples of these are the National Heart Foundation in their 'Healthy Active by Design' concept and the Western Australian Department of Health's legislated requirement for Local Government to develop Public Health Plans to address 'Healthy Lifestyles.'

Simultaneously farmers' markets can provide an alternative income for food producers as highlighted by interested academic researchers. The key for AFMA will be to leverage off these and numerous other initiatives to demonstrate the value they bring to both producers, consumers and communities.

### **In closing...**

As acting AFMA Chair for Jane Moxon I would like to acknowledge the valuable time committee members have given to the AFMA meetings and associated tasks amidst their busy lives, as with out their grounded perspectives and opinions in discussions we would not be the representative organisation we are today. I would also like to acknowledge the tireless commitment and expertise of Jane Adams who offers continued sound guidance and mentorship at all levels.

**Jenny PAYET**  
**Acting Chair**

**FINANCIAL REPORT 2017 -18**  
Previously circulated