



AUSTRALIAN FARMERS MARKETS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2010

During the financial year 2018 to 2019 farmers' markets Australia-wide continue to develop, grow and receive increased recognition. Incorporated State farmers' markets associations operate in Western Australia (WAFMA), Victoria (VFMA) and New South Wales (FMANSW). Tasmania and South Australia continue successfully as unincorporated alliances. Renewed efforts to facilitate an active Queensland Association have to date been unsuccessful. There are currently 190 farmers' markets listed on the AFMA website.

AFMA Resources

1. Farmers' Markets DVD

This resource continues to serve as a resource for start-up farmers' markets with limited sales over the last 12 months. Unfortunately it is outdated and whilst still outlining key principles it has potential to be improved upon as an invaluable resource for farmers' markets nationally.

2. Transition to Authenticity Fact Sheet

This resource was created in response to existing markets wishing to transition to authentic farmers' markets and for existing farmers' markets that had strayed from true authenticity and wanted to revert back. It also identified the critical success factors farmers' markets need to consider in the establishment phase in order to avoid compromising authenticity. This is available on the AFMA website for free download.

3. COOL (Country of Origin labelling)

The promotion of the COOL fact sheet on the AFMA website triggered an ABC radio interview providing opportunity for AFMA to outline the relevance and importance of food labelling to farmers' market operations.

Delicious Produce Awards

For eight years AFMA has partnered with the Delicious Produce Awards, which again attracted many authentic farmers' market nominees. This year the three finalists were Margaret River (WA), Willunga (SA) and Mullumbimby (NSW). Congratulations to the winning market – Willunga Farmers' Market. These awards are highly valued by AFMA as they serve to showcase the integrity and value of farmers' markets nationally. AFMA continues to liaise with Delicious around award innovation and the enhancement of this profiling annual event.

Australian Farmers' Markets 20th Anniversary

This year 2019 marks the advent and 20th anniversary of farmers' markets in Australia. AFMA facilitated *ABC Landline* national coverage on farmers' markets, screened in October 2019. AFMA also issued a media release across all States highlighting the emergence of 20 years of farmers' markets across Australia. This coverage generated additional interest from publications, including *Organic Gardener* and *Country Style*.

Advocacy

1. Support

AFMA continues to advocate for sound governance, integrity and authenticity and has responded to numerous requests nationally for guidance and assistance in this area. Some have included advocating for the correct branding and use of the term 'farmers' market', informing on governance matters and advising start-ups around best practice farmers' markets. AFMA with the support of the State Associations and alliances, has been able to appropriately intervene and influence best practice where it may otherwise not have occurred.

2. Government Liaison

In July 2019 on invitation from the Department of Agriculture, AFMA participated in two consultations with the NSW Government and Federal Government Departments of Agriculture on two Showgrounds Research projects, which aimed to identify strategies to enhance showground activity and development.

AFMA participated in an interview and provided background documentation, attended a round-table and submitted a written position statement to the NSW Department. AFMA representation was also undertaken on the Federal \$20mil Agricultural Shows Development grant program. The AFMA pitch highlighted the number (20) of and multiple benefits of farmers' markets to both producer and host community, and the high suitability of showgrounds as market sites. Unfortunately the \$20 million dollars was allocated to infrastructure development alone.

AFMA conducts considerable advocacy activity at local, regional, state and national levels and any attempt to articulate in this report the full extent and reach of that work does not do AFMA advocacy full justice.

4. Representation

AFMA delegates attended the 2019 Deep Winter Agrarian gathering in Willunga SA to support the interface between successful farmers' markets and sound farming practices, including a presentation; '*Successful strategies for selling at farmers' markets.*'

National AFMA Conference

AFMA has reinstated discussion around a 2020 National Conference. Willunga Farmers' Market has expressed an interest in hosting a conference in SA. A series of meetings have ascertained that such a conference would be best suited as a winter event and would require considerable support from national and local level, accompanied by adequate expertise, funding and sponsorship. The last AFMA conference was held in Albury in 2005.

AFMA Web Listing Fee

The annual web listing fee call out of \$100 attracted 44 farmers' markets subscribing to AFMA, supporting the ongoing AFMA operational costs. This was a 25% increase on the 2017/2018 year.

Social Media

AFMA's main communication platforms are via the website and Facebook.

The website provides stakeholders with updated news items, helpful resources including fact sheets, links to state contacts and associations. It also assists users locate farmers' markets nationally. Eligible external stakeholders also have the option to leverage off the AFMA website for a fee. The most recent monthly reports chart approx. 3000 - 4000 users per month.

Facebook posts are regular, usually daily, including shared posts from subscribed farmers' markets Australia-wide. AFMA has 950+ followers and shared posts can routinely reach over 5000. Messenger is also used to reach stakeholders.

Research

AFMA aims to be proactive in leveraging research that can enhance the farmers' market movement. AFMA has received requests for assistance from tertiary sector researchers and has also recognised projects worthy of collaboration and/ or assistance. AFMA has developed a 'Research Support Policy', which guides considerations for providing support (in-kind or financial) to facilitate research activity supporting increased awareness of the social, economic and environmental benefits of farmers' markets.

One such example was attendance and presentation to the 2018 Food Futures Forum, Brisbane where the WAFMA provided 'in kind' support to a University of WA student in their research implementation and presentation: *Farmers' markets, producer and community insights into an alternative food supply model*.

Into the future

At the last AGM AFMA determined that the Regional Development Australia (RDA) - Local Government Tool kit required revision. Whilst RDA have agreed that AFMA could take a lead role in developing an up to date and relevant version, grant funds

will need to be sourced to support this. This is a much-needed resource for start-up and existing farmers' markets and a resource AFMA should aim to service in 2019/2020.

There is no doubt that farmers' markets continue to be a critical link in the food production and supply chain and the increasing number of farmers' markets nationally is testimony to this. However, one of the significant risks is the erosion of integrity and authenticity and AFMA is the best placed entity to ensure and support best practice farmers' markets.

Farmers' markets feature in many local, state and national initiatives both government and non-government, industry and not-for-profit sector. They bring a multitude of benefits to producers, consumers and community. AFMA is governed by a voluntary committee comprising market managers, primary producers and state representatives. Without paid executive support its sustainability is constantly challenged.

Funding opportunities for AFMA are limited and not necessarily aligned to the need for executive support, which is necessary for its ongoing and vital role in supporting the sector. This will continue to be a key priority into the future.

Jenny Payet

AFMA CHAIR

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