

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN FARMERS' MARKETS Association

## WAFMA AGM Report

### March 2022

The last 18 months to 2 years has proven to be extremely challenging for WA Farmers Markets and in fact all Farmers Markets nationally.

Farmers Markets at a recent Australian Farmers Markets Association meeting reported on their status which varied from state to state. Victoria markets were quieter, traffic down slightly, but a per shopper spend up. NSW markets were managing the relaxation of restrictions and trading stably, Tasmania noted less local shoppers and fewer inbound visitors yet turnover was stable and South Australia reported stable trading.

For WA we are expecting some fluctuations with the border opening, but as we await the likely impact it is being reported that recent supply chain shortages have increased market demand for fresh food and our Farmers Markets are seeing an increase in heightened shopper awareness of availability of fresh local produce that can be sourced from Farmers Markets.

Just recently fresh produce prices have risen dramatically for several reasons and the take home message is sustainability at a local level; either grow your own or support local. Our farmers markets and producers can only serve to gain from this and all effort to promote this message will help. WAFMA invites all farmers markets to carry this key message through their social media platforms. We are officially deemed an essential service so this is one way we can capitalise on the value of our service to our communities.

Unfortunately, there have been some casualties in all of this where some new start WA markets were either cancelled or postponed due to untenable rules for stallholder producers, which deemed them unable to commence. It is hoped that as WA moves through this critical phase WAFMA can support these start up farmers markets to reconsider. On a positive note, there have been a number of first generation farmers that have joined farmers markets around the state – this is encouraging and the WAFMA can support these up and coming farmers to grow and develop. And, two new markets have managed to emerge in these uncertain times – The Mundaring Garden and Farmers Market and The Peel Produce Market. Also a challenge that's facing farmers markets during Covid is the resurgence of more home delivery services – fruit & vege boxes, meat & dairy boxes by local companies as well as stallholders, this can take away from patronage at farmers' markets.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kat Lombardo of the Margaret Rivers Farmers Markets for keeping the WA Farmers Market network abreast of all the COVID requirements and how they apply to farmers markets operations. As we know these rules changed frequently and Kat's time and effort is appreciated.

Most of the WAFMA activity this last year has consisted of responding to queries regarding new Farmers Market potential and operations. This is an area of great need and can be time consuming but is valuable. If the foundations are not well laid in the establishment of a new farmers market it can pave the way for challenges down the track.

The AFMA has responded to this need and is in the process of, for example developing a Code of Conduct fact sheet as a ready reference tool. It will be a nationally applicable document, not a prescriptive grassroots tool. It should serve as a guideline under which individual markets create their specific codes.

The AFMA has also reviewed the Local Government Farmers Market toolkit (Regional Development Association/Northern Rivers) which has specificity to Farmers Markets start up in NSW only. It is hoped this can be adapted to a national document and attract some Commonwealth funding so that it can be released as an AFMA led document.

Thank you to all the participating farmers markets that supported the 2021 World Bee Day: a partnership between the 'When Bee' Foundation and AFMA. AFMA have agreed to support this worthwhile initiative in 2022 with a simplified and functional tool kit and an extended lead time so we encourage the WA farmers markets to take up this opportunity and support our bee population and healthy honey consumption

At this point I invite all of the WA Network to keep themselves informed by checking in on the AFMA website which has useful resources and information that is regularly updated. I would also like to thank you for supporting AFMA with your annual web listing fees which contributes towards the upkeep of the AFMA web page but also promotes your markets nationally and can provide spin offs to new innovative activity that AFMA undertakes of which there are a few being anticipated for 2022.

The WAFMA association also seeks a small annual fee to support our operating costs to ensure accurate web content is kept up to date, membership registers are maintained and self-assessment criteria for new farmers markets are responded to as well as facilitating WAFMA network meetings, committee meetings and annual general meetings. Thankyou to all farmers markets who have supported this annual fee.

On behalf of the outgoing WAFMA committee:

Katrina Lombardo/Treasurer, (Margaret River) Jenny Payet (AFMA Rep) Beth Shorthouse/Secretary (Manjimup Farmers Market) Wilfred Hendricks (Victoria Pk FM), David Vincent/Chair (Manning Farmers Market) Andrea White (Kalamunda Farmers Market), Yvonne Marsden (Geraldton/Greenough Farmers Market) Carol Metcalf (Geraldton/Greenough Farmers Market), Lorna Bunney (Mt Claremont FM).

I would like to thank you for your support over the last 12 months and we look forward to the coming 12 months in a relatively covid free world full of new growth and regeneration.

David Vincent

Chairperson WAFMA