



EDITION 15



FMA

FRESH MARKETS
AUSTRALIA

YEARBOOK

THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF FRUIT & VEGETABLE INDUSTRIES LIMITED

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 **FreshData**
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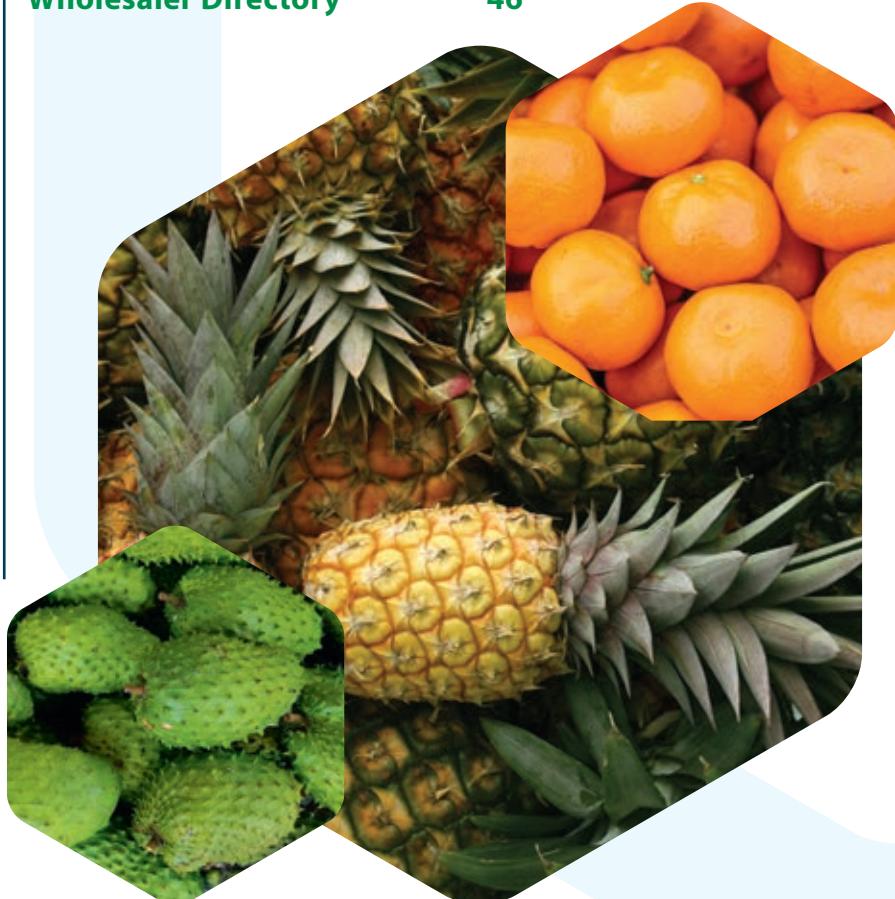
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Message From The Chair

Shane Schnitzler, Chair, Fresh Markets Australia

Whether we like it or not, at the moment we live in uncertain times. If it's not Federal or State elections, tariffs imposed by the US, or conflicts in other parts of the world, unfortunately all of these events are having a dramatic impact on not only our national economy but the world economy. It's never been more important to have a strong national body that represents the interests of our industry and to influence the issues where we can to advocate for our members to ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry and the Central Markets System.

Over the past twelve months we have had to navigate many of the national issues while maintaining our commitment to supporting market wholesalers. Our success is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of our industry stakeholders and the entire supply chain working together in collaboration to deliver reliable quality fresh produce via the central markets system.

Year in Review

Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) has made significant progress in all of its priority focus areas this year. We have continued to advocate for policies that support our members, expand industry collaborations, and provide innovative programs to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fresh produce sector.

Industry leadership - Policy and Advocacy

I am very glad to acknowledge FMA's reputation as a well regarded practical and trusted industry influencer. The team have been heavily involved in this area during the year to ensure our stakeholders views are properly considered. We have continued to further strengthen this engagement with submissions to and active involvement in:

- ACCC Supermarkets Enquiry,
- Food & Grocery Code Review,
- Hort Code Review, and
- Food safety and the new FSANZ Primary Producer and Processing Standards (berries, melons and leafy vegetables).

Due to the number of ongoing policy and regulatory initiatives, FMA's significant involvement must continue. Supporting industry compliance with the regulatory framework of the Horticulture Code of Conduct will remain a top priority for FMA and our key involvement in this will continue. To this end, we remain actively engaged with both the ACCC (the regulator) and the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)

(the policy setter) on Horticulture Code of Conduct matters. FMA has delivered Hort Code overview sessions for grower groups, ensuring broader understanding of obligations.

With ongoing regulatory scrutiny, FMA has continued its policy of offering Hort Code training through the respective state chambers and has also commenced to offer a bespoke fee-for-service compliance support program, including induction programs and tailored compliance audit and documentation review. These services help businesses navigate compliance complexities and reduce risk.

FMA also remains engaged with state regulators to advocate for a practical, risk-based, and nationally consistent approach to the FSANZ Primary Production and Processing Standards for leafy vegetables, berries, and melons. Our priority is ensuring food safety without imposing unnecessary compliance burdens on wholesalers and the broader supply chain.

FMA Industry Programs

Our food safety testing program **FreshTest**, continues to set industry benchmarks, ensuring quality assurance for fresh produce. I am amazed by the continued growth of this simple and effective service which is well supported across the country by each of our state chamber members. This is a testament to the ongoing commitment of growers and wholesalers to ensuring the sector provides healthy and safe fresh produce to consumers.

FMA's **FreshCode** service is a well-regarded national initiative which supports industry compliance and best practice standards across the fresh produce sector. We continue to update this program and develop industry expertise by rolling out regular well attended topical training sessions, precedent updates and business reviews. I encourage industry participants to utilise this dynamic and practical service.



Collaborations and Partnerships

Our partnerships and collaborations have been instrumental in driving industry success. This year, we continued our relationship with key industry events, including with AUSVEG and the International Fresh Produce Association for **Hort Connections**. Our collaborative **Australia's Fresh Produce Markets** exhibit is iconic to the exhibition and provides a platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and business growth opportunities for our members and industry. The exhibit also provides an opportunity for some of our wholesaler members, producers and industry partners to showcase their produce. FMA partners with the Central Markets Association of Australia at the event.

Thanks to **Toyota Material Handling** for their ongoing support and longstanding commitment to FMA and the sector overall. I also acknowledge our other ongoing partnerships with Hort Innovation and other partners via the 'A better choice!' Program including its more than 800 Independent fresh produce retailers across the country.

FMA Director and Management Changes

We have seen changes within our leadership team, with new appointments to the Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) Board and management team. These changes bring fresh perspectives and renewed energy to our mission, ensuring we continue to deliver strong leadership for the sector.

I wish to acknowledge the departure of long serving Director **Trish Skinner** from the Board of FMA. Trish has been a long serving member of the FMA Board and relinquished her position at the last Annual General Meeting. Representing the Chamber of Fruit & Vegetables in WA, Market West, Trish joined the FMA Board in 2002. Since then, Trish has worked with enthusiasm, loyalty and commitment to support the objectives and initiatives of FMA and the broader fresh produce industry.

Grow. Connect. Thrive.



Trish has been succeeded on the Board by new Market West Chair **Claudia Cunningham**. I am very excited to welcome Claudia to the Board. A fifth-generation family member of Etherington, a quality fruit and vegetable wholesaler in the Perth Markets, Claudia's passion and energy for the fresh produce sector and experience as a wholesaler within the Perth Markets will be invaluable as we continue FMA's role to collectively promote and advocate for the sector.

I also welcome a number of key management and staffing changes to the team at FMA. The experienced **Stephen Barnard** succeeds Gail Woods in the role of FMA General Manager although Gail continues to be involved with us as we tap into her significant experience and knowledge of the sector.

We also welcome **Nina Torkman** as the new National Program Manager for our National Retail Program – **'A better choice!'** Nina and the new National Retail Program team have brought a new level of enthusiasm and dynamic approach to the program. The **'A better choice!'** program continues to promote independent fresh produce retailers and educate consumers about the benefits of buying fresh and local. The program has gained momentum, driving consumer awareness and engagement in markets across Australia. A joint initiative by Fresh Markets Australia and the Central

Markets Association of Australia, the program supports more than 800 retailers across Australia who supply almost half of the fresh produce sold each year.

Watch this space for some significant new and innovative **'A better choice!'** program initiatives in the coming year.

The Year Ahead

Looking ahead, Fresh Markets Australia remains committed to driving positive change for the fresh produce industry. We will continue to strengthen advocacy efforts, expand industry services, and invest in sustainability initiatives that benefit our members and the broader fresh produce community.

There continues to be a number of significant policy and regulatory impacts in progress or about to influence the sector of which we need to be aware and keenly involved to ensure they support the industry aspirations going forward. This is likely to include the ***Horticulture Code of Conduct*** review later in 2025. I encourage all members and industry stakeholders to stay aware and up-to-date on these initiatives. Your feedback and involvement will assist us to continue to influence positive and practical outcomes as they are implemented by regulators.

FreshData – The future of Market Price Transparency

FMA's new transparent Verifiable Market Price Reporting System and mobile APP is about to go live nationally. It provides verifiable price insights based on actual trading floor activity in Australia's central markets. Unlike opinion-based pricing, FreshData delivers data-driven insights, ensuring greater accuracy and transparency across the supply chain. FreshData supports price discovery by giving growers, traders, wholesalers, and industry groups access to real transaction data, helping them navigate market fluctuations and negotiate with confidence. I encourage all relevant industry participants to not only contribute but also subscribe to make use of this very practical mobile application.

I extend my sincere thanks to our many supportive industry partners, the Fresh Markets Australia Board, our state chamber members, our dedicated team, and our valued wholesaler supporters for their continued support and contributions. Your hard work and passion are the foundation of our success.

Here's to another year of collaboration, resilience, and innovation!

Shane Schnitzler
Chair, Fresh Markets Australia

About Fresh Markets Australia

FMA is the national industry body representing each of the five central market state industry bodies (Market Chambers), which themselves are organisations which represent fruit and vegetable wholesalers and supporting businesses in each of Australia's six central fresh fruit and vegetable wholesale Markets (Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Newcastle).

In confirming the role that Central Markets have in the horticulture industry in Australia, it is highlighted that they:

- are supplied by some 10,000 fruit and vegetable growers;
- have an annual throughput volume of over 4 million tonnes, with a wholesale value now over \$8 billion annually on-sold by over 400 fruit and vegetable wholesalers;
- supply more than 21,000 food service businesses, and independent fruit and vegetable retailers which rely on the Central Markets; and
- collectively employ over 17,000 people.

Mission

Our Mission

To be a highly effective and professional national industry organisation supporting the marketing and distribution of fresh produce in the best interests of Member Chambers as a group and the Wholesaling sector of the fruit and vegetable industry.

We will exhibit excellence in representation and service, the facilitation of networking between representatives from Member Chambers and Market Wholesalers from around Australia with a commitment to the Central Markets System and the fruit and vegetable industry.

Values

Our Values

Our values are those things that are important to us and what we stand for. They are the principles, the standards, the actions that people in our organisation represent and which they consider inherently worthwhile and of the utmost importance.

- We will exhibit behaviours which reflect our values.
- We encourage teamwork.
- We foster accountability.
- We are open in our communications.

Purpose

Our Purpose

We strive to further the interests of our members and to represent and promote the Central Market System. We support the Central Market System to be the preferred choice of all customers seeking the best means of marketing, distributing or acquiring fruit and vegetables in Australia.

Strategic Imperatives and Plans

- Provide support services to our Members and central markets supply chain stakeholders.
- Provide Advocacy and Representation on industry and government issues.
- Provide industry statistics and information.
- Promote FMA, our Members and the Central Market System.
- Develop a strong national industry body supported by the strength of our people and industry.

FMA Members

Brisbane



Melbourne



Sydney



Adelaide



Perth



Board Structure

The five State industry bodies located in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and Perth Central Markets are part of Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) as its members. Each of these bodies represents their respective wholesaler Members. The operations of FMA are managed by the Board, the Company Secretary and the General Manager.

The Board comprises five Non-Executive Directors and five Executive Directors. During the Annual General Meeting, the Members appoint the Chair, while the directors from the non-executive directors appoint the Deputy Chair.

Our Board (as at 1 March 2025)



Shane Schnitzler
Chairperson

Shane is dedicated to advancing the longevity and sustainability of Australia's fruit and vegetable industry, particularly the independent sector. With a profound commitment spanning over 35 years, including 13 years in retail, Shane brings a rich expertise to his leadership roles. He holds a Bachelor of Business and has presided over Fresh State Limited for more than nineteen years. Since 2006, Shane has chaired the FMA, where he is recognised as a strategic leader. He played a pivotal role in the launch of the 'A better choice!' program, designed to support independent retailers and sustain the central market system. Shane also co-owns Produce Time P/L, a wholesaling business at the Melbourne Market, further demonstrating his active involvement in the industry since 2014.



Carlo Trimboli
Deputy
Chairperson

Carlo has been involved in the wholesale fruit and vegetable industry for over 35 years, and his experience and knowledge have earned him a reputation for excellence. Carlo is Managing Director of Samson's Fruit and Vegetable Supply, Director of Sydney Markets Limited, and Chairperson of Freshmark and Sydney Markets Foundation. He takes pride in supporting local growers and believes in the importance of promoting fresh and healthy food to the community. Carlo continues to be a driving force in the Sydney Markets, and is leading Freshmark's transition to a skills-based board structure designed to position the organisation and the industry for the future.



Mark Brougham
Non-Executive
Director

Mark operates a provedore business in SA Produce Markets as Managing Director, M & C Brougham Pty Ltd since November 1992. Over the course of the last decade he has been involved with the SA Chamber as Committee member of SA Chamber since 2009; Director Credit Service (SAPC) since February 2012; Vice President of SA Chamber 2013 – 2017 and President of SA Chamber 2017.



Matthew Spencer
Non-Executive
Director

Matthew has been an integral part of the fresh produce sector since 2008, offering a breadth of experience across various facets of the industry. His expertise spans wholesale and supermarket trade, logistics, as well as import and export operations, further complemented by his hands-on experience in overseeing growing operations. This diverse exposure has equipped Matthew with a deep understanding of the industry's complexities. As a fourth-generation family member of the Carter & Spencer Group, established in 1936, Matthew currently serves as the Director of Group Operations, demonstrating his commitment and leadership within the family legacy. Additionally, since 2023, he has extended his leadership skills and industry insights as a director of Brismark, further cementing his role as a key player in the fresh produce arena.



Claudia Cunningham
Non-Executive
Director

Claudia joined the Board in November 2024. She is a fifth-generation family member of Etherington, a quality fruit and vegetable wholesaler in the Perth Markets, responsible for its technology practices and strategic planning oversight. Claudia is President of The Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries in Western Australia, Director of Perth Markets Group Limited and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Andrew Young
Executive Director

Andrew has a history of employment at a senior management level with extensive experience in policy and strategy formulation, service development, Market operations and development and industry representation. He is currently CEO of Brismark, and Managing Director and CEO of Brisbane Markets Limited. Andrew is also a Director of Perth Markets Group Limited. His experience in the fresh produce industry includes engaging with relevant stakeholders at a State and Federal level and addressing national issues through both FMA and CMAA. He has had an active involvement in addressing issues impacting on the wholesaling sector of the horticultural industry and has conducted extensive research on Central Markets in Australia and parts of Asia, Europe and the USA. He played a leading role as part of the project team responsible for what became the successful bid to purchase the Brisbane Markets and as Managing Director and CEO, coordinated the seamless transition of ownership of the Brisbane Markets site to BML.



Rod McPherson
Executive Director

Rod joined Market West as CEO in 2015. Initially, he played a leading role in the successful industry bid to buy the Perth central markets from the State Government. Prior to that he spent 5 years at the Perth Market Authority as Manager Finance and Administration. Rod works closely with Perth Markets Group Ltd and Market West Members on site and industry matters including as Chair of the Market Operations Sub-Committee. Rod has a strong background within community sport including a role with the WA Football Commission. Rod also spent a number of years in senior management within thoroughbred horse racing and was Acting CEO for the WA Turf Club.



George Giameos
Executive Director

George has over 30 years employment in the fruit and vegetable wholesaler industry. He is the General Manager of the SA Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries Inc, SA Produce Credit Pty Ltd and a director of Market Fresh SA Pty Ltd.



Meegan George
Executive Director

Meegan has more than 25 years' experience in organisational leadership. As a fierce member advocate, she creates value through an understanding of end-to-end operations and a deep appreciation for customer/market engagement and listening to stakeholder needs. As CEO of the NSW Chamber of Fresh Produce Ltd (trading as Freshmark), Meegan has led a suite of transformational initiatives including the delivery of a new strategic direction supported by clear policy positions and strong advocacy focus. Meegan is also a director of Sydney Markets Limited, CEO of the Sydney Markets Foundation and sits on a number of other relevant boards and committees.



Jason Cooper
Executive Director

Jason Cooper, Managing Director and CEO of Fresh State Limited, brings a wealth of expertise in relationship management and stakeholder engagement to his role. With a remarkable background encompassing over 30 years in senior positions within various industry sectors, such as Telecommunications and Leisure and Entertainment, Jason possesses extensive knowledge and skills vital for driving organisational success. Jason also serves as an Executive Director on the Board of Fresh Start Holdings. His multifaceted leadership roles across different sectors further enhance his ability to guide Fresh State Limited towards sustained growth and excellence.



Stephen Barnard
General Manager

Stephen commenced as General Manager at FMA in July 2024. He is an experienced senior executive with over 20 years in senior leadership roles in the services and agricultural sectors.

Stephen's specialist experience includes senior leadership roles in the agricultural sector, financial services and industrial services sectors along with consulting roles specializing in organizational turnarounds and customer focused business change programs.

Stephen holds a Bachelor of Business degree, is a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Company Secretary. Stephen is also a member of the Governance Institute of Australia and Institute of Company Directors.

FMA Policy Position

Fresh Markets Australia has established various foundational policies to uphold the functioning of the organisation and has also created additional policies to address emerging issues as they arise.

Industry Self Regulation

Fresh Markets Australia opposes any form of specific Government intervention and/or regulation of Markets Wholesalers on the basis that it is anti-competitive and discriminates against one sector in the fruit and vegetable industry.

However, Fresh Markets Australia strongly supports industry self-regulation, including codes of practice.

Terms Of Trade

Fresh Markets Australia supports the use of documented terms of trade, which include the method of doing business, price determination, supplier obligations, transfer of title and risk, payment terms, non-complying produce and dispute resolution.

Dispute Resolution

Fresh Markets Australia encourages all Wholesalers to have an internal disputes resolution procedure, which they publish in writing.

Suppliers and other industry participants are encouraged to attempt to resolve the dispute directly with the Wholesaler in the first instance.

In the event that the dispute cannot be resolved, either party is encouraged to contact the Chamber in the Markets where the Wholesaler is located.

If the relevant Chamber cannot resolve the dispute to the parties' satisfaction the parties are advised to seek resolution of the dispute under The Horticulture Code of Conduct.

Food Safety And FreshTest®

FMA as an owner member of Freshcare recommends that the GFSI benchmarked Freshcare Supply Chain Standard as the industry standard for all wholesalers to improve food safety in the fruit and vegetable industry.

FMA as an owner member of Freshcare recommends this as the industry standard for all growers of fresh produce and supports wholesalers in encouraging their suppliers to be Freshcare certified.

FMA encourages all Members, wholesalers, suppliers, and buyers to support FreshTest®, the industry standard and most cost effective and comprehensive testing program in the fresh produce industry.

Product Specifications and FreshSpecs®

Fresh Markets Australia supports the use of uniform product standards for fresh produce and recommends that Members and Wholesalers support FreshSpecs® as the industry standard for class one (or equivalent) produce.

Quarantine Requirements

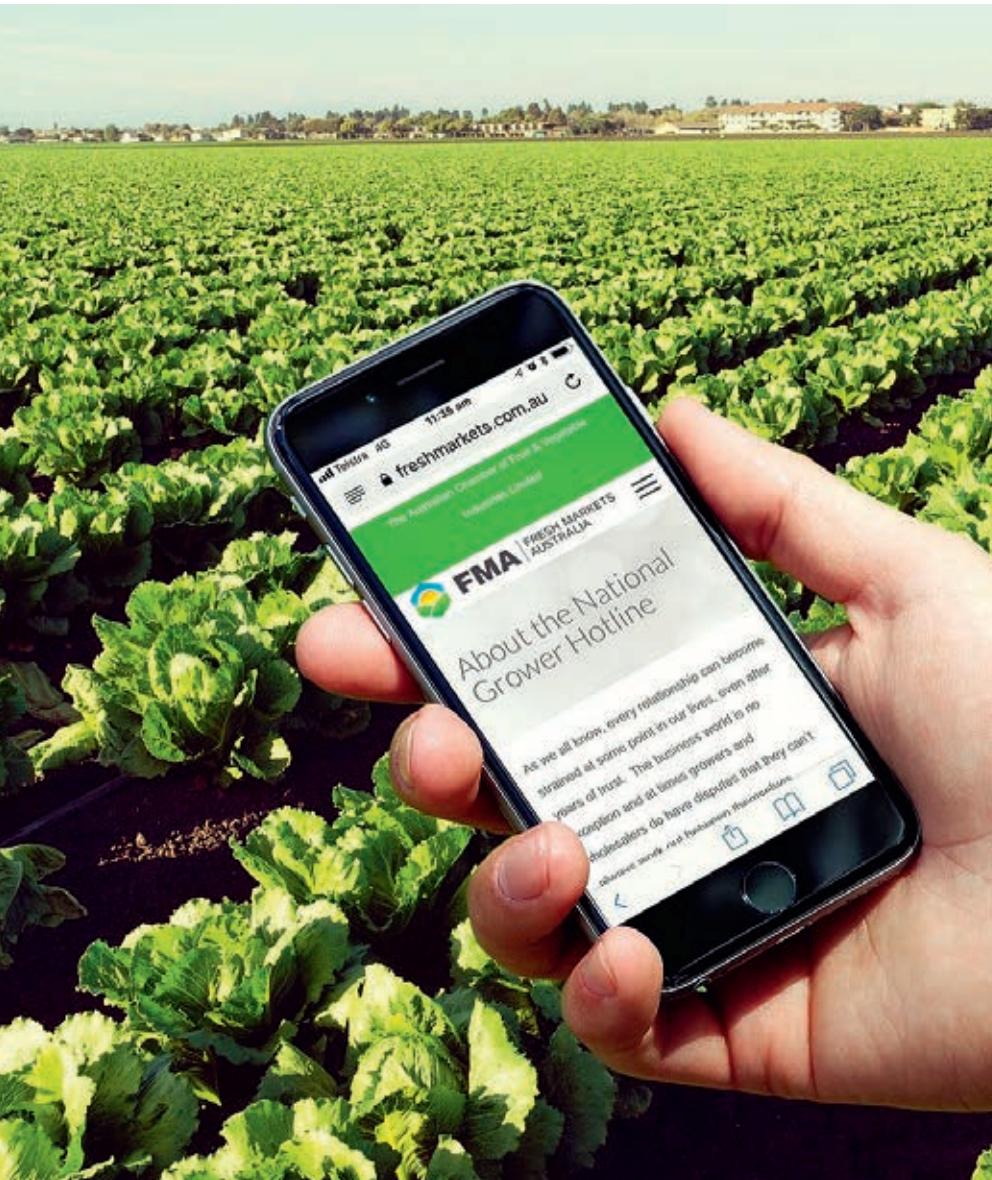
Fresh Markets Australia supports quarantine restrictions imposed by a government regulatory authority, which have been adopted to prevent or control any pest or disease outbreak, and which limit the movement and sale of fresh fruit and vegetable products.

Promotion

Fresh Markets Australia is supportive of promotion of the Central Market system and the benefits of fresh fruit and vegetables for a healthy lifestyle. Member Chambers are encouraged to participate in promotions at local and national level, particularly where this includes supplier and buyer involvement. Cooperation between Members of Member Chambers on national promotions is encouraged.

Where Wholesalers contribute financially to promotions, their contributions should be matched by contributions from suppliers and/or buyers and the Wholesalers should have meaningful representation on relevant committees that direct campaigns and the expenditure of promotion funds.

Cooperation with contributing suppliers and supplier groups on individual product promotion is encouraged.



Levies

Fresh Markets Australia is supportive of Wholesalers receiving a fee for the deduction, accounting and remittance of compulsory levies.

Fees For Services

Fresh Markets Australia is generally supportive of Wholesalers deducting fees in respect of services provided to third parties.

Goods and Services Tax

Fresh Markets Australia opposes the broadening of the GST which would result in the removal of the exemption from fresh fruit and vegetables on the basis that there is no demonstrated benefit to the fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain or the community generally. The consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables by Australians must be increased for community health and economic sustainability reasons.

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Modern Slavery

Fresh Markets Australia encourages all fruit and vegetable stakeholders to meet the moral and ethical obligation to combat modern slavery and make sure it does not occur in their business and their supply chains.

Slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking (modern slavery) are issues of increasing global concern, affecting all sectors, regions and economies. Modern slavery is fundamentally unacceptable within our industry.

HARPS

FMA supports:

- Australia's globally benchmarked GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative) Food Safety Standards (e.g. Freshcare, BRC, SQF and GlobalG.A. P) which enable a simplified 'once certified, recognised everywhere' approach to food safety and business efficiency.
- The removal of duplication of requirements in HARPS that are included in Australia's GFSI Food Safety Standards.
- The reduction of cost and human resource time spent from the horticulture supply chain.
- That HARPS be a 'bolt on' to Australia's GFSI Food Safety Standards with the 'bolt on' having no duplicated requirements.
- That one Food Safety Audit be required that includes the certification to the relevant GFSI Food Safety Standard and certification to the HARPS requirements (a HARPS bolt on) for businesses requiring a HARPS certification in the HARPS Decision Graphic.
- A transparent governance framework for the management of HARPS.
- That HARPS should not be monetised (i.e. not managed by a for-profit entity).
- That HARPS should rely on the globally benchmarked GFSI (Global Food Safety Initiative) Food Safety Standards which enable a simplified 'once certified, recognised everywhere' approach to food safety and business efficiency.



Making the Horticulture Code Work for Everyone

Fresh Markets Australia strengthens its national role in lifting awareness, providing representation, and supporting practical compliance across the wholesale sector.

Understanding the Stakes

Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) continues to lead national efforts to improve awareness and application of the Horticulture Code of Conduct (the Code). The Code remains a key safeguard for commercial dealings in the sector, and in FMA's view, its current structure is largely sound. The real challenge lies in its operational application—particularly when growers do not meet the administrative requirements set out in the Code, placing compliance pressure on wholesalers.

Following the release of the ACCC's 2024 Supermarkets Inquiry report, Recommendation 16—which targets merchant arrangements under the Horticulture Code—has raised concern. The report appears to position merchant pricing structures as inherently unfair and calls for increased reporting obligations that, if adopted, would place significant and unsustainable burdens on wholesalers.

FMA's view is that the existing framework under the Horticulture Code is lawful, long-standing, and commercially practical. Any proposal to remove merchant flexibility or impose agency-style requirements must not be subject to regulatory reinterpretation. The potential cost and complexity to the central market supply chain must not be underestimated.

FMA's position remains that the Code provides a workable foundation. What's needed is not a structural overhaul, but improved understanding and consistent application across all parts of the supply chain.

What the Review Must Deliver

With a formal review due soon ahead of the Code's 2027 sunset, FMA is preparing to ensure central markets wholesalers are properly represented when that process begins.

It will be important to assess how the Code is being applied and ensure it continues to support fair, practical, and commercially viable trading arrangements. Any future changes must be grounded in commercial reality, supported by clear evidence, and shaped through meaningful engagement with all parts of the supply chain. It will also be important to fine-tune the Code to add

transparency without imposing a significant additional cost burden.

For the Code to serve its purpose, it must function in practice—not just exist on paper.

FMA is ready to contribute and will bring forward the experiences of wholesalers who are navigating the Code every day.

Our Role in Regulation

FMA continues its membership of the ACCC Agriculture Consultative Committee and maintains a constructive relationship with the ACCC Small Business and Agriculture and Consumer Fair Trading Division. These forums remain important to improve understanding of how the Code applies within wholesale trading.

FMA has supported the ACCC's updated Horticulture Code guidance materials, which have been shared across wholesaler and market networks.

In parallel, FMA has engaged with DAFF and the NFF Horticulture Council to promote shared understanding of the Code's structure and application in practice. This work remains critical in maintaining consistency at the national level.

From Guidance to Application

Education remains a core part of FMA's work. Over the past year, FMA has delivered updated Code training tailored to central markets wholesalers, offering a practical refresher on key compliance areas and reinforcing how the Code should be applied in day-to-day trading. These sessions have helped promote consistency and renewed focus on obligations.

Under the Code, central markets wholesalers are required to meet strict obligations to operate lawfully—yet those obligations often depend on timely action from growers, who may not themselves be in breach if they fail to respond.

Awareness and education efforts to date have not reached all growers, particularly those supplying through central markets. As a result, wholesalers are often left to carry the compliance burden alone.



To address this, FMA is launching a national initiative:

Hort Code: Awareness for Growers Supplying Central Markets Wholesalers.

The program is designed to close a longstanding gap—ensuring growers understand their obligations under the Code and how lawful, fair trading should work in practice.

FMA also remains concerned that there is limited evidence of Code understanding or compliance among traders operating outside the central markets. This only reinforces the need for a level playing field and a more coordinated national approach.

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This review of the Horticulture Code is too important to get wrong. The stakes are high, and FMA will not stand by while a narrow set of views tries to shape outcomes for the entire supply chain. This needs to be practical, balanced, and grounded in commercial reality.

- Shane Schnitzler, Chair, Fresh Markets Australia.

The Road Ahead

FMA will continue to advocate for a Code that is clear, fair and commercially viable—one that reflects the realities of the fresh produce supply chain. Central markets wholesalers play a key role in this system, and their voice must remain central to the review and reform process.

Advancing Wholesaler Advocacy and Innovation

Over the past year, FMA has focused on fair trading, regulatory engagement and strengthening the wholesale sector through collaboration and targeted industry initiatives.

FMA continued its work on behalf of the wholesale sector in 2024–25, with a strong focus on advocacy, regulation and industry standards. From regulatory submissions to national committees and market transparency tools, FMA's efforts were directed at strengthening the position of wholesalers in Australia's central markets.

Progress on National Regulation

One of the most significant developments was the commencement of the mandatory Food and Grocery Code of Conduct in April 2025. This outcome reflects recommendations made in FMA's October 2024 submission and addresses long-standing concerns about trading practices and power imbalances in the supply chain. The new Code includes clear obligations for the majors, good faith provisions, and a proportionate penalty framework—changes that FMA has supported for many years.

FMA also contributed to the ACCC Supermarkets Inquiry. While many of the final recommendations were supported, Recommendation 16—which suggested changes to the Horticulture Code of Conduct—was unexpected and, in FMA's view, misplaced. It was made without consultation with wholesalers and

referred to evidence that, in our view, did not demonstrate what was claimed. This raised serious questions about how the recommendation was formed and whether the broader implications were fully understood.

The Primary Production and Processing Standards have also remained a persistent challenge. Inconsistent state approaches continue to place unnecessary compliance burdens on wholesalers. FMA has continued to advocate for a nationally consistent, risk-based approach that properly reflects the role of central markets within the broader food safety system.

Working with Industry and Government

FMA continued its engagement across key industry and regulatory bodies, including:

- Active representation on the ACCC Agriculture Consultative Committee.
- Ongoing support for the Country Recognition Agreement with Indonesia, vital to export continuity.
- Continued backing of the Fair Farms Initiative, promoting fair and ethical labour practices in the fresh produce supply chain.

These relationships are central to FMA's role and its ability to represent the wholesale sector in national conversations.

Supporting Wholesalers on the Ground

FMA continues to deliver practical initiatives to support wholesale businesses:

- **FreshTest®, FreshSpecs® and FreshCode®** provide tools for food safety, product quality and compliance.
- **FreshData** is delivering verified market pricing to wholesalers, buyers and industry, helping lift transparency across central markets.

Preparing for What Comes Next

With the Horticulture Code of Conduct due for review before its 2027 sunset, FMA will focus its efforts on ensuring any changes are based on evidence and reflect the realities of the whole supply chain. A small subset of the grower sector must not dictate outcomes for an industry that depends on workable and balanced arrangements.

FMA also supports the implementation of the mandatory Food and Grocery Code, which delivers long-awaited protections for suppliers—including our members. Wholesalers are now covered under the Code and finally have access to the same protections as other suppliers.

Collaborating for Market Access: FreshTest® and CRA Indonesia

Rigorous residue testing by FreshTest® supports the crucial renewal of Australia's Country Recognition Arrangement (CRA) with Indonesia, safeguarding vital export markets.

Ensuring the quality and safety of Australian produce exported to Indonesia is essential to sustaining one of Australia's most significant trade relationships. FreshTest®, provided by Fresh Markets Australia, delivers a national chemical and microbial residue report to support Australia's Country Recognition Arrangement (CRA) with Indonesia.

Indonesia is the 5th largest market for Australia horticulture by value (\$173M AUD Year Ending Feb 2025). The market grew by 20% from the previous year.

The CRA acknowledges Australia's stringent food safety protocols, specifically for fresh, plant-origin products. This bilateral agreement simplifies the export process,

directly benefiting Australian growers and exporters. Effective from 27 April 2024 for three years, strict compliance with Indonesia's food safety standards remains crucial.

Funded by Hort Innovation through industry levies from potatoes, avocados, cherries, citrus, onions, strawberries, summerfruit, table grapes, vegetables, and blueberries, FreshTest® compiles extensive national chemical and microbial residue testing data. This robust reporting is provided directly to the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), giving Indonesian authorities confidence in Australia's produce safety systems.

The FreshTest® service, established in 2001 as an industry initiative, plays a central role in third-party verification of good agricultural practices. Operating from Australia's central wholesale markets, FreshTest® offers broad

participation and coordination of chemical, microbial, and heavy metal testing. Its structured methodology, NATA-accredited laboratory partners, and strict data handling protocols reinforce its credibility for use in government submissions.

Fresh Markets Australia coordinates this strategic effort, reinforcing Australia's reliability as an exporter. Through thorough residue data collection and transparent reporting, FreshTest® not only meets regulatory demands but also fosters trust among Indonesian buyers, securing market access.

In an international market increasingly prioritising food safety, FreshTest® plays an essential role in protecting Australia's competitive position. Reliable residue testing safeguards Australia's reputation and ensures continued export success for growers nationwide.

Hort Innovation

Your connection to innovation and industry insight

Hort Innovation is a not-for-profit, grower-owned research and development corporation (RDC) for Australia's \$17 billion horticulture industry.

It invests around \$154 million in research and development and marketing programs annually to provide benefit to the 37 industry levies we support and the wider horticulture community.

Focused on innovation and insight, Hort Innovation connects growers to industry changing technology, services, and discoveries and understands the needs of the community.

With a finger on the pulse of the industry Hort Innovation can offer the Fresh Markets Australia community a peak into the trends impacting the industry before the produce even hits your shelves.

Unlocking insight into the horticulture industry

The Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook

The Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook is an annual publication that offers the most comprehensive available data on Australia's horticulture industry.

It covers 75 horticultural products including fruit, nuts, vegetables, nursery, turf and cut flowers.

Drawing on data from multiple supply chain sources, including international trade statistics and peak industry bodies, the Handbook contains information on retail and foodservice use, exports and imports, share of production by state and territory, wholesale value, and volume.

This year marks the 11th edition of the report and covers the 2023/24 financial year.

Key highlights from this year included:

Production volume and value continue to climb:

Australian horticultural production grew by 6.6% to 6.89 million tonnes, with the total production value reaching \$17 billion, a 4.3% rise from the previous year.

Exports reach record highs:

Export volumes increased by 8.7%, while export values reached a record high of near \$3 billion, led by almonds, citrus, macadamias, avocados, and summerfruit.

Record year for fruit production value:

Fruit saw huge growth with berries, bananas and citrus all climbing substantially in value, citrus in particular breaking a new record and reaching more than \$1 billion in value for the first time.

Domestic supply expands to keep up with demand:

Fresh market supply expanded by 4.3%, supported by strong production in watermelons, avocados, strawberries, and potatoes.

Nuts make a comeback:

Almond production value rose by 63.3%, and macadamias increased by 94.1%.



Hort IQ

Hort IQ provides consumer and customer data and insights on Australian horticulture. It is Hort Innovation's one-stop shop for powerful consumer insights designed to fuel growth and offers access to comprehensive data about:

- The market landscape: Gain a clear picture of the Australian retail landscape
- Consumer needs: Understand what drives fruit and vegetable choices in Australia
- Buying trends: Stay ahead of the curve with insights into purchasing habits
- Consumer perceptions: Discover how Australians view your products

Become a member today to get access to insights

Did you know that growers and those across the horticulture value chain are eligible to become a Hort Innovation Member?

Members gain access to insights from the Hort IQ platform and so much more. You will also gain access to:

- Alerts: Receive these alerts to news, information and opportunities from Hort Innovation, including investment updates regarding new, ongoing and completed investments and the resources they have produced
- Horticulture news: Hort Innovation's Growing Innovation newsletter brings you news and articles from across Australian horticulture
- Invites and networking opportunities: Look out for events where you can meet fellow growers and the team behind Hort Innovation, and hear about the latest investments in R&D and marketing from experts

Become a member today – visit: www.horticulture.com.au/membership



Become a member of Hort Innovation

Membership is free and provides you access to:

- Member-only webinars
- Education and training programs, and trials/research collaboration opportunities
- Access to Hort IQ

Sign up for
membership
here:



Additionally for levy payers:

- Event ticket offers
- Social media opportunities to highlight your involvement with research
- Voting rights at the Hort Innovation Annual General Meeting.

Join us to support a prosperous and sustainable Australian horticulture industry built on innovation.

**Hort
Innovation**



BRISBANE
MARKETS
LIMITED®

QUEENSLAND'S
HEART
OF
Fresh
PRODUCE



Brisbane Markets: year in review

It has been another eventful year for the Brisbane Markets, celebrating significant milestones and ongoing investment in the Brisbane Markets site.



The opening ceremony of the new Brisbane Markets site in 1964.



The Brisbane Markets today has more than 4,500 people doing business on-site every day, and distributes more than \$2 billion of fresh produce annually.



The new two-story Building H significantly increases office and storage capacity for BML and its tenants.

The Brisbane Markets celebrated a landmark anniversary – 60 years of operation at the current Rocklea site. The history of the Brisbane Markets dates back to 1868, originally established in the Brisbane central business district. As Brisbane grew and traffic increased, so did congestion in the city. A move was inevitable, and in 1964 the Brisbane Markets opened for trading at the current location – Sherwood Road, Rocklea.

The 60th anniversary was marked with a spectacular Las Vegas-themed Gala Dinner. More than 500 attendees celebrated in style which also celebrated 40-year service award recipients.

Over the past 60 years there has been tremendous growth, particularly since the acquisition of the site in 2002 by Landacq Limited, now Brisbane Markets Limited (BML).

Today, the Brisbane Markets covers 77 hectares of land and distributes more than \$2 billion of fresh produce annually. With industrial tenancies consistently at 100% occupancy levels, BML continues to focus on upgrading and increasing facilities to meet demand.

This has included the recent re-development of a major storage facility Building H, which reached practical completion in October 2024. It involved demolition of the old single storey building and construction of a new, larger, two-level storage facility with direct access to Level 1 of the multi-level car park (CP1). This new facility significantly increases BML's storage of critical spare parts and requirements to support the operation and maintenance of the site.

As part of its focus on site upgrades, BML has successfully completed multiple projects to elevate critical power and technology infrastructure. BML has also progressed the upgrade of dry fire detection across the site, directly connected to the Queensland Fire Department. That project will be completed in late 2025.

The BML Portal App received some major upgrades during the year, including the addition of online functionality to streamline processes for tenants. Tenants can use the app to make enquiries and log maintenance requests. There is also a flood watch functionality, utilising three cameras around site that provide real-time data on water levels during heavy rain and weather events. The app also provides registered users with access to a comprehensive list of site-approved service providers, which is of great help to tenants. There are currently over 380 active service providers on the list, who have been approved as meeting all relevant site access requirements.

Other highlights during the year included the annual Mango Auction, a much-anticipated event in the Brisbane Markets calendar. The Mango Auction is a fund-raising event that celebrates the beginning of mango season and will typically raise over \$50,000 annually for our charity partners.

The Forklift Operator of the Year Award is another annual event that very pleasingly, had its highest number of entrants ever. This event rewards safe forklift practices in the workplace, allocating points to the entrants over a period of several months. With over 80 entrants taking part in the first

round of assessments, ultimately, 10 finalists competed in the grand final on a specially designed course. The driver must complete all challenges with the competitor earnings the highest number of points declared the winner, receiving a \$3,000 prize. Victory points are allocated (or deducted) based on safety and accuracy, while also taking into account a timely completion.

Looking forward, BML has several more building developments planned to meet the growing demand from wholesalers and other industry stakeholders, as well as improve operational efficiency of the Brisbane Markets site.

One of the more significant projects is raising of the Curzon Street roadway and bridge. Detailed design is nearly complete and approval from Brisbane City Council has been received. The Queensland Government has approved a \$2.5 million government grant to assist in raising this critical piece of infrastructure.



Queensland Premier, David Crisafulli, attended the Brisbane Markets in October 2024 to announce their financial pledge to raising Curzon Street Bridge, as part of the LNP's pre-election campaign.

Roll of Honour

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

1974	JH Leavy	(QLD)
1975	W Musgrove	(NSW)
1976	EJ Milne	(NSW)
1977	G Bloomfield	(WA)
1978	DA Mercer	(WA)
1979	J Hyman	(VIC)
1980	P Joseph	(SA)
1981	WH Norman	(SA)
1982	HV Lovett	(N'cle)
1983	B Berlazzo	(VIC)
1984	R Murray (Senior)	(QLD)
1985	A Martin	(QLD)
1987	RA Hollett	(QLD)
1987	RM Livingstone	(QLD)
1987	RD Mercer	(WA)
1988	DB DiMattina	(VIC)
1989	DL Crombie	(VIC)
1990	CW Johnson	(NSW)
1992	AG Russell	(NSW)
1993	KJ Robson	(N'cle)
1994	J McNish	(VIC)
1995	S Hunt	(NSW)
1996	D Alroe	(QLD)
1998	J Maley	(WA)
1999	A Joseph	(QLD)
2000	K Andrews	(QLD)
2001	D Schirripa	(SA)
2002	R Millis	(VIC)
2003	D Whiteman	(NSW)
2004	J Mercer	(WA)
2005	W Lovett	(N'cle)
2006	R Barker	(VIC)
2007	WF Chalk	(NSW)
2008	S Schnitzler	(VIC)
2009	C Smith	(WA)
2010	R Schirripa	(SA)
2011	J Garrett	(N'cle)
2012	A Young	(QLD)
2013	J Antico	(NSW)
2014	S Edwards	(QLD)
2015	R Kelly	(NSW)
2016	G Lower	(QLD)
2017	T Skinner	(WA)
2018	P Pogas	(SA)
2019	B Collins	(VIC)
2021	P Tighe	(QLD)
2022	N Greenhalgh	(QLD)
2023	G Woods	(National)
2024	G Giameos	(SA)

FMA Award Winners

FMA Award winners celebrated at Hort Connections 2024 – George Giameos and Susan Lewis

First awarded in 1974, the FMA Meritorious Service Award recognises an individual who promotes and supports FMA and their State Chamber initiatives, demonstrate a strong and loyal commitment to the horticultural industry and the wholesaling sector, strive to enhance the status and standing of the industry and Central Markets, and exhibit proven business success and ethical standards.

The Col Johnson Young Achievers' Award, established in 2002, celebrates an individual who supports their Chamber's initiatives, shows dedication to the horticultural industry and wholesaling sector, encourages young members' participation, and demonstrates potential for leadership within their Chamber and the industry, all while maintaining high professional and ethical standards.

Meritorious Service Award - George Giameos

George Giameos has dedicated over 35 years to the fresh produce industry, currently serving as the General Manager of the SA Chamber of Fruit & Veg and SA Produce Credit. As a director of Market Fresh SA and a board member of Fresh Markets Australia, he actively promotes and supports industry initiatives.

George was instrumental in liaising with government officials, including meeting with over 20 Federal politicians for the review of the Hort Code of Conduct. His business acumen is reflected in the significant financial growth of the SA Chamber and the success of SA Produce Credit, with only one bad debt in the past 14 years.

A regular attendee and contributor at industry conferences, George is committed to improving the status and standing of the horticultural industry, making him a deserving recipient of the Meritorious Service Award.

Col Johnson Young Achievers Award - Susan Lewis

Susan Lewis has dedicated 26 years to the fresh produce industry in Queensland, starting at Murray Bros as a junior cashier and rising to become its first female CEO in 2023. Under her leadership, Murray Bros, founded in 1921, has grown to one of Australia's largest supply bases of growers and packing sheds. Susan oversees over 100 staff and manages marketing, trading, grower liaison, logistics, and quality assurance.

A respected industry advocate, Susan supports other women in the sector and has served on Bismark's Junior Executive Committee for 10 years. She is a graduate of the IFPA Produce Executive Program and a regular at industry conferences. Susan's dedication, leadership, and contributions to Murray Bros and the fresh produce community make her a deserving recipient of the 2024 Col Johnson Young Achievers' Award.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

2002	R Lagudi	(NSW)
2003	V Brancatisano	(VIC)
2004	R Schirripa	(SA)
2005	S Schnitzler	(VIC)
2006	D Keates	(QLD)
2007	J Mercer	(WA)
2008	G Pratley	(NSW)
2009	M Lorenzetto	(VIC)
2010	J Zappia	(NSW)
2011	D Yip	(NSW)
2012	C Cormack	(VIC)
2013	C Natale	(VIC)
2014	H Montague	(Qld)
2017	P Koukos	(SA)
2019	M Granieri	(VIC)
2021	C Etherington	(WA)
2022	C Pisciuneri	(NSW)
2023	M Russo	(SA)
2024	S Lewis	(QLD)





The Future of Market Price Reporting – Discover More...

FreshData is transforming how market prices are reported in Australia's horticulture sector. Created by and for industry, this platform delivers insights from central markets—strengthening transparency, trust, and decision-making across the supply chain.



A Response to Industry Need

In response to the ACCC's 2020 Perishable Agricultural Goods Inquiry, the Australian Government recognised the need to improve price and market transparency—committing targeted funding to support industry-led solutions like FreshData.

Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) led the development of FreshData, a platform designed to reflect how central markets already operate—not to replace long-standing relationships, but to support them with verified data. The result is a tool that helps users navigate the market with greater clarity and confidence.

Platform That Reflects the Market

FreshData has been co-designed with input from supply chain professionals. It connects directly with central markets, providing access to verified daily pricing movements based on real transactions.

FreshData's filtering tools allow users to:

- Focus on specific markets, product lines, and pack sizes
- Compare price trends across up to three central markets at a time
- Choose from rolling views over 7, 14, or 30 days

“

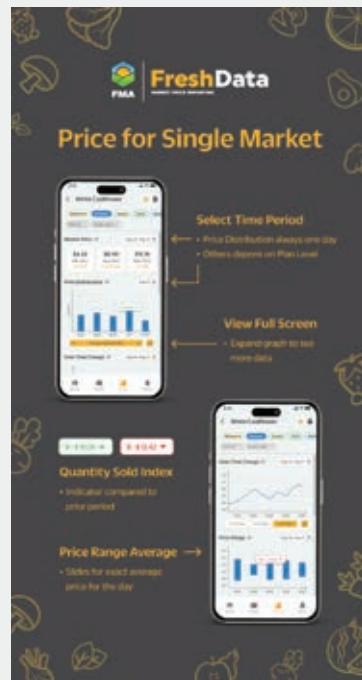
**It's not about changing how the market works—
FreshData reflects what already happens every day.**

- Shane Schnitzler, Chair, Fresh Markets Australia.

Visualising the Market

FreshData's graph-based tools let users track pricing movements in the markets, in the paddock, or in the office. Interactive displays bring together daily highs and lows, pricing spreads, and volume indicators to show both immediate changes and movement over time.

The display shown here highlights pricing insights across Melbourne, Brisbane, and Sydney—enabling users to clearly see market shifts and behaviour from day to day and across weeks.



FreshData's mobile interface can compare markets and reveals insights across days and weeks with real-time sliders and visual indicators.

Always On, Always Available

FreshData works seamlessly across desktop and mobile. Users can check insights in the markets, in the paddock, or in the office. The platform supports both quick checks and deeper analysis, making it adaptable to the pace of a trader or grower's day.

Features like the personalised watchlist let users track specific product lines and pack sizes, while user added mobile alerts notify them of key price changes the following morning. Time filters allow toggling between single-day data and rolling trends, giving both short-term and long-term views at a glance.

For traders, FreshData offers an edge in staying updated—without relying on word-of-mouth. For growers and buyers, it provides a more complete picture of the market, helping them stay connected even from afar.

FreshData also makes it easier for users to stay focused on what matters most to their business. By setting preferences and narrowing product views, users can create a more targeted and relevant experience. This practical approach saves time, reduces noise, and helps users act with greater certainty.



Whether you're in the paddock, on the market floor, or in the office—FreshData delivers trusted insights wherever you are.

- Gail Woods, Project Manager, FreshData

More Than Just Price Data

FreshData subscriptions come with a range of support tools developed with the industry in mind. These features go beyond pricing to help strengthen everyday operations:

- **FreshSpecs®:** A digital product standards tool to support product consistency and communication
- **Market news and updates:** Relevant alerts for traders and supply chain stakeholders
- **FreshTest® integration:** Access verified test results with QR code or links to the business portal to manage testing

These added functions mean users can rely on one platform for market trends, product expectations and assurance, all in one place. It helps build consistency across different parts of the supply chain, from the floor to the paddock.

Built on Trust, Backed by Governance

FreshData is governed by principles of transparency, integrity and responsible information use. All insights available on the platform are derived from verified transactions and shared through a framework that prioritises the integrity of market behaviour.

The platform's Terms of Use and Privacy Policy outline how insights are accessed, managed and presented, providing end users with confidence in the system's purpose and protections.



The governance approach behind FreshData has been developed to support a strong foundation for long-term use. It provides clarity on what the platform offers, who it is for, and how it aligns with industry expectations—without overcomplicating access.

FMA makes governance information publicly available to support trust and sector-wide understanding of how FreshData operates.

Lifting Professionalism Across the Sector

The introduction of FreshData helps raise the bar across the supply chain. It supports informed engagement and builds transparency between trading partners.



FreshData supports the professionalism already in the market—it's not about disruption, but elevation.

- Gail Woods, Project Manager, FreshData

Get Started with FreshData

To learn more about FreshData, including how to register and explore platform features, visit www.freshdata.com.au.

FreshData is available on both desktop and mobile platforms. Updates and improvements will continue to be made based on industry feedback to make sure it evolves with users' needs. Those interested in seeing it in action or discussing how to get involved can reach out via the contact page on the website.

Conclusion

FreshData is not a replacement for how markets work—it's a clearer window into them. In a fast-moving environment, this tool gives industry the visibility and confidence it needs to keep up, compete and grow.

Fresh Markets Australia at Hort Connections 2024 – Australia's Fresh Produce Markets

Hort Connections travelled to Melbourne in June 2024. Fresh Markets Australia again sponsored the Trade Show and took centre stage with its iconic **Australia's Fresh Produce Markets** trade display at the Melbourne Convention Centre. This sponsorship and trade display is a long-standing successful arrangement between Fresh Markets Australia's 5 member chambers representing wholesalers and CMAA representing the 5 central fresh produce markets across Australia. Toyota Material Handling again were involved showing their unwavering continued support for the fresh produce sector and were a fundamental part of the display.

The display was again a standout, showcasing a wide range of quality dynamic fresh produce with the involvement of over 30 wholesalers and '**A better choice!**' exhibiting partners. The fresh produce display was again a central hub for much networking and the trade show centre piece drawing over 4,200 delegates to view the colourful and expansive 350 square meter display over the 3 days.

Thanks to both **Leap Exhibits** and Dino Alessi of **Rainfresh** for their expert assistance in the set-up of the stand and display respectively. Their contribution along with that of our many produce suppliers and partners was instrumental in its appeal and success.

The optional early morning tour of the Melbourne Markets at Epping had a large attendance and provided many attendees with an informative and firsthand look at the bustling activity and day-to-day operations behind the scenes at one of Australia's largest central fresh produce markets. The opportunity to meet some of its wholesalers and to appreciate the vital role they play in bridging the gap between growers and consumers was well acknowledged.

Fresh Markets Australia's national retail program, '**A better choice!**' was again well represented at the event both via its partner exhibitors at the trade display, as a finalist in the Seeka Marketer of the Year Award and in being acknowledged by the other finalists as a key facilitator of the success of their successful marketing campaigns.

FMA's Chair **Shane Snitzler** presented to a packed Cultivation Corner on Day 2 on "Australia's Fresh Produce Markets – The Vital Link". The large audience left with a better appreciation of the key role the central fresh produce markets play in the fresh produce supply chain, delivering value to growers and providing quality fresh produce to consumers.





FreshTest® at a Glance

By Gail Woods.



Now in its third decade, FreshTest® an initiative of Fresh Markets Australia (FMA), continues to provide practical, affordable testing for industry — backed by science, managed centrally, and evolving to meet the needs of fresh produce supply chains.

FreshTest® began in 2001 in direct response to requests from the fresh produce industry. More than 20 years on, the initiative has grown into one of the most trusted testing services in the sector — providing affordable, third-party verification for chemical residues, microbial contaminants and heavy metals. Developed and operated by FMA, FreshTest® continues to deliver on its core aims: to provide independent verification of food safety systems, to coordinate national testing activity, and to support the integrity of Australia's fresh produce markets through a strong, centralised system.

From its early beginnings, FreshTest® has been designed for industry, by industry — with oversight, engagement and daily support provided by a national FreshTest® Coordinator. Thousands of tests are conducted annually across a range of commodities and environments, with data provided not only to businesses but also to government, grower bodies and research facilities.

Importantly, FreshTest® also plays a role in industry advocacy, participating in the FSANZ Food Incident Forum and maintaining connections with regulatory agencies including the APVMA and state-based standards officers. This enables real-time engagement when food safety matters arise.

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The strength of FreshTest® lies not just in the number of tests conducted — but in how that data is used to support compliance, improve transparency, and protect market access.

In 2024, FreshTest® expanded its Mega Screen testing capability, with the initiative now screening for over 480 substances. This broader detection now includes additional herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, and environmental contaminants — with no extra cost to businesses using the service. It strengthens FreshTest®'s role as Australia's most comprehensive residue testing service, supporting compliance, confidence, and spray drift monitoring.

With reporting underway as part of a multi-year Hort Innovation project, FreshTest® continues to evolve in line with the sector's needs. The year ahead will see continued investment in advocacy, innovation and insights — backed by data, grounded in science, and led by industry.



A user accesses the FreshTest® business portal at market — part of a nationally coordinated initiative supporting affordable, independent testing and real-time results.

FreshTest® A Modern Approach to Food Safety

FreshTest® remains one of the most accessible and practical testing services available to the fresh produce industry. Developed by FMA, it combines scientific integrity with real-time digital tools, providing an independent testing solution for chemical residues and microbial contaminants.

In 2021, FreshTest® introduced a digital Business Portal and streamlined reporting systems. Since then, uptake has steadily grown, with over 25% of users now choosing to engage with their testing online. This shift reflects a broader move towards more efficient, self-managed compliance tools.

Practical Tools, Trusted Methods:

- Each Results Certificate is issued via email in real-time
- QR codes allow instant verification of Results Certificate authenticity
- A traffic light layout gives immediate clarity on test outcomes

- The C6M Mega Fruit and Vegetable Residue Screen covers over 480 compounds using GCMS and LCMSMS methods
- Testing is conducted through NATA-accredited laboratories, with results reported in accordance with FSANZ and APVMA standards
- Support is available through FreshTest® teams based in Australia's central wholesale markets

FreshTest® Business Portal:

Designed to simplify testing administration and access, the Business Portal enables users to:

- Lodge test requests and paperwork online, anytime
- Access test results, lab certifications and historical data
- Track test progress
- Manage Corrective Action Requests (CARs) where applicable
- Securely share results with auditors, QA teams and customers

FreshTest® continues to focus on practical delivery, science-backed testing, and user-led improvements. It's a system built for the fresh produce supply chain—providing the tools needed to meet today's compliance and reporting demands.

Important note:

The C3, C5, C6 and C6M test screens were developed by FreshTest® specifically for the Australian fresh produce industry. These screens are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect emerging issues and current chemical registrations. While similar test names may be offered by others, only FreshTest® screens are part of this nationally coordinated program.



Gail Woods (right) speaks with a delegate at IFPSS 2024 in front of the FreshTest® display — a visual reminder that food safety is a shared, practical commitment across the supply chain.

FreshTest® on the Global Stage: Sharing Australia's Practical Approach to Food Safety

Fresh Markets Australia's initiative, FreshTest® featured at the 2024 International Fresh Produce Safety Symposium, highlighting the value of industry-led verification in an evolving global food safety landscape.

FreshTest® was on display at the 2024 International Fresh Produce Safety Symposium (IFPSS), held in Sydney. The event brought together regulators, researchers, industry leaders and growers from across Australia, New Zealand and a number of international markets. As an exhibitor, FreshTest® demonstrated its role as a practical tool supporting food safety across the fresh produce supply chain.

The two-day event created space for conversations about the future of food safety — not just in terms of emerging risks, but also the systems and partnerships needed to manage them. FreshTest®'s presence highlighted the importance of accessible, industry-driven testing and verification to support growers, packers, and wholesalers in meeting both regulatory obligations and customer expectations.

FreshTest® also featured in a visual sense — positioned alongside other exhibitors in the exhibition space. Delegates sought out more information about how FreshTest® operates, what it tests for, and how it fits into Australia's broader food safety system. Its presence prompted meaningful exchanges about the practical realities of food safety in fresh produce, from on-farm practices to supply chain reporting.

I attended the Symposium as a delegate and found the content directly relevant to FreshTest® and its work. Sessions on traceability, risk management and regulatory shifts reinforced the value of consistent, science-based practices. Frank Yiannas' keynote address was a standout — a strong reminder that food safety relies on leadership, collaboration, and a clear view of the risks and responsibilities involved. These discussions affirmed that FreshTest® remains well-placed to support the industry's next steps.

“

These international forums reinforce FreshTest®'s place in the food safety landscape — grounded in science, driven by industry, and focussed on real outcomes.

The Symposium returns in 2025, and FMA welcomes opportunities like this to remain actively engaged in national and international discussions. FreshTest® continues to evolve with the needs of the industry, and its involvement in events such as IFPSS helps shape its direction and relevance.



Shaping The Future with Freshcare – Innovation | Initiatives | Advocacy

Message from Freshcare CEO, Jane Siebum

2025 marks five years since I became CEO of Freshcare. During this time, I have had the privilege of leading an organisation which has grown and strengthened its position as a trusted partner for the Australian horticulture, wine and supply chain industries.

The Freshcare team and I are thrilled to celebrate a significant milestone during 2025

- Freshcare: 25 Years of Trusted Assurance. This momentous occasion marks a quarter-century of engagement and leadership with our community, and the remarkable journey of our industry. Freshcare has evolved into Australia's leading domestically owned and operated assurance standard, a testament to the collective and collaborative efforts of stakeholders across the entire horticulture, wine, and supply chain sectors.

The development and success of **Freshcare's Standards** have been made possible by the invaluable contributions of our community, including Hort Innovation, Certification Bodies, Freshcare Trainers, Growers, Program Participants, Peak Industry Bodies, and Retailers. Some of these **dedicated stakeholders have been part Freshcare since its inception, and we are grateful for their unwavering support and commitment.**

Freshcare remains committed to continuous improvement and innovation. The **Regulatory Technology Project** team, in partnership with Hort Innovation, will share its findings at Hort Connections in June. This project marks a significant step towards developing digital capabilities of assurance providers, while streamlining compliance for our participants.

Freshcare's Standards Review will continue in 2025, to ensure our programs remain relevant, practical and adaptable to evolving needs of our industry. With a strong focus on emerging issues and improving practices, the review is conducted in collaboration with the Technical Steering Committee (TSC) – a group of highly skilled, industry experts committed to developing and future-proofing our Standards for industry and participants.

As we celebrate 25 years of Freshcare, I look forward to commemorating this achievement with our community, reflecting on our collective successes, and

envisioning a future of continued growth and collaboration. Together, I hope to continue building Freshcare's reputation as a trusted assurance partner for Australian industries.

Supply Chain Champions

Freshcare was thrilled to receive the **Supply Chain Champions Award at Berry Quest** 2025. The team were recognised for advocating and collaborating with industry stakeholders and regulators, to shape the new mandatory food safety standards for melons, leafy greens and berries processing and production participants.



Freshcare's tireless dedication has been game-changing in shaping the new mandatory food safety standards for melons, leafy greens, and berries.

"Without their relentless efforts, Australian berry growers would have faced duplicative licensing and costly audits, running into thousands of dollars nationwide.

"Working hand-in-hand with government regulators, the Freshcare team proved that their certified growers already meet world-class safety standards, ensuring the industry remains efficient, competitive, and sustainable—all without additional funding.

"This incredible achievement highlights why Freshcare truly deserves the title of Supply Chain Champions, standing strong for growers, by growers," Berries Australia.

Freshcare CEO, Jane Siebum accepted the award following her presentation at Berry Quest, on the organisation's 25 years of developing trusted assurance for industry and growers. Here's to another 25 years ahead in supporting our participants and industry to achieve great outcomes.



Freshcare First-Hand: Showcasing Certified Participants

Bite Riot – Apple & Cherry Operations Mt Canobolas, NSW Central Tablelands



"We put a lot of care, time and effort, a lot of love into growing our fruit because it is a passion. It's not just all about the dollar signs. It's all about a livelihood" – Bernard Hall, Bite Riot Operations.

Situated at Mount Canobolas on the edge of NSW regional town of Orange, there are rows of apple and cherry orchard varieties with a large packing shed at the centre of Bite Riot's operations.

The Freshcare Certified family owned and operated business began in the early 1970s when Bernard Hall's father started the farm, growing a diverse range of fruit across the property.

These days owners Bernard and Fiona Hall, joined by their son Charlie and a skilled and hard-working operations team, run the farm and packing shed, growing a large variety of apples and cherries which are sold to supermarkets across Australia and exported globally.

Both Bernard and Fiona say Freshcare Certification has benefited not only their business but industry, through their reputation of producing safe, high-quality food.

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Cherries and apples are consumed by most Australians, so it's important that not just us as a grower, but the industry as a whole is compliant, says Fiona.

As Bite Riot's General Manager, Fiona says it's awesome that Freshcare Food Safety & Quality 4.2 & Supply Chain 2 Standards are globally recognised by the Global Food Safety Initiative - as 40 per cent of their cherry crop is exported.

“

Being globally recognised means that growers aren't burdened with extra compliance, she says.

"It's also really important for our market access and ensuring the safety of our product, not only domestically but in our overseas markets," says Fiona.

Barden Farms - Specialist herbs, Vegetables and Salads

Nine farms across QLD, NSW & TAS

Barden Farms National Sales Director Steve Mounsey has worked in the industry for over 30 years and understands the critical role food safety plays in horticulture. Barden Farms operates across Queensland, NSW and Tasmania with the Peats Ridge (NSW) facility focused on growing herbs and Asian vegetables under plastic and shade cloth, ensuring high-quality production. Supplying major retailers such as Woolworths, Coles, and Aldi daily, Barden Farms prioritises Freshcare certification as a key component of its operations.

"Freshcare certification is important to Barden Farms because we care about the consumer, we care about food safety," says Steve.

"It has enabled us to implement the right food safety standards every day in the fields and our packing sheds—essentially in everything we do."

Freshcare certified leafy bunch growers meet internationally recognised food safety benchmarks. Steve highlights that while maintaining strict standards is necessary for the reputation of industry and consumer safety, it's equally important not to overregulate.

"If we have good, sound practices in place that provide safe food for families every night, why do we need to introduce more?" says Steve.

Looking ahead Steve says the horticulture industry is evolving, and Freshcare certification plays a significant role in supporting businesses to remain competitive while ensuring food safety and sustainability.

"The industry, as it stands, is well-supported and that helps us evolve and grow," says Steve.

By maintaining Freshcare certification, Barden Farms ensures that Australian consumers have access to safe, fresh, and sustainably grown produce every day. Their commitment to high standards and industry best practices keeps them at the forefront of food safety and quality.





'A better choice!'

- Driving Loyalty, Visibility and Value for the Independent Fresh Produce Sector

Putting Local First: How 'A better choice!' Champions Fresh Produce and Independent Retail

In today's competitive retail landscape, connecting consumers with fresh, locally grown produce is more important than ever. That's where 'A better choice!' steps in — a national initiative by Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) and the Central Markets Association of Australia (CMAA), supporting over 800 local independent fresh fruit and veg shops across the country. With a mission to inspire fresh produce consumption and sustain the central market system for future generations, 'A better choice!' is more than a program — it's a movement.

Through a unique combination of in-store activations, seasonal campaigns, magazine features, sampling sessions, and an engaged online presence, 'A better choice!' offers brand partners unmatched reach and authentic engagement. The program delivers measurable results with trusted brands, such as Zespri, Australian Bananas, and Kanzi Apples, and has grown into a vital channel for connecting growers and marketers with everyday Australians who value fresh food and community-driven retail experiences.

At its heart, 'A better choice!' is a support system for local retailers. From ready-to-use campaign materials and promotional content to national marketing exposure they wouldn't otherwise have access to, the program gives retailers the tools and confidence to stand out in a competitive space.

For wholesalers, the program plays a critical role in sustaining demand for quality Australian produce through independent channels. By keeping the independent retailers front and centre in consumer messaging and promotional activity, 'A better choice!' strengthens the flow of premium fresh fruit and vegetables from market floors to retailers nationwide — reinforcing the role of wholesalers as essential connectors between growers and the local shops Australians trust.

Testimonials from across the country speak to the value of the initiative in helping drive foot traffic, boost sales, and build lasting community connections.

What retailers & wholesalers say about us...

"A better choice! by being part of 'A better choice!' The backbone of what they are doing in the industry which is supporting local green grocers showcase what they can provide there respective communities in fresh produce supporting local growers is amazing. Encouraging farmers and wholesalers to bridge the gap with there customers and educate them on what is happening in the fresh fruit produce industry"

— **Luke Kelly**, All seasons, NSW

"We have been fighting as independent retailers against massive multinational marketing campaigns for years. Finally, it's our time to be a part of a national brand that gives us the ability to compete."

— **Robby Guardala**, Indooroopilly Fruit, QLD



The campaigns and advertising that the 'A better choice!' program offers has helped promote the store and bring customers in the door. Especially the giveaways, which we have seen lots of engagement with.

— **Domenic Biviano**, Biviano and Sons, VIC

"With their social media presence, seasonal magazines and community competitions, shopping at your local greengrocer has become more of a go-to. How lucky are we to have 'A better choice!' advocating and supporting our industry."

— **Arnold's**, Wodonga, VIC

"The program helps educate customers on the benefits of shopping local—supporting farmers, ensuring product freshness, and keeping independent businesses alive."

— **Shawn Offer**, Fresh Provisions, WA

"A better choice! makes a difference in stores, great for marketing also sampling and getting new product in stores! Get on to them now and don't forget the big giveaways"

— **Talal K**, Trims Merrylands, NSW

"As a small business, we often don't have the time or marketing resources to constantly create campaigns, so to be part of a program that helps us reach a wider audience is beneficial."

— **Justin**, Coltivare, Camberwell, VIC

"Have been a member of 'A better choice!' for many years. ABC is about bringing independent grocers together. As a marketing group, they're amazing. If you're not part of it, get your act together and subscribe"

— **Max Fillip**, Fruitezy, NSW

"A better choice! has been an amazing initiative for the entire Fresh Produce Industry. It has not only been a great vehicle for independent green grocers to showcase fresh produce, but it has encouraged wholesalers to further support the independent green grocers who are the backbone of our industry "

— **Tony Campisi**, T&F Marketing, NSW

"Partnering with 'A better choice!' on our Sesame Street collaboration was a fantastic experience that brought real impact to our campaign. Their team understood the importance of making fresh produce fun and engaging for families, and they delivered a seamless integration that brought our message to life in stores and online. The program's ability to connect with local independent fruit and veg shops gave our campaign authentic reach into communities across Australia, and the results spoke for themselves with 1 in 10 shoppers noticing the Sesame Street activation."

— **Kiran Afza**, Perfection Fresh Australia, NSW



Strengthening Local Retail Through Reward: Inside 'A better choice!' Shop & Win 2025



In an increasingly competitive fresh food retail landscape, where major chains dominate the market and consumers are flooded with promotions, loyalty points, and short-term incentives, the independent fruit and vegetable sector needs innovative ways to stand out.

Enter *Shop & Win 2025*—a flagship campaign from 'A better choice!', Australia's national program supporting local fruit and veg shops, backed by Chamber Wholesalers and Central Markets around the country.

This 10-week national consumer competition—running from 1 May to 10 July 2025—is designed to directly drive foot traffic to participating local fruit and veg shops, reward loyal shoppers, and elevate the value of independent retail in the eyes of the consumer.

The Campaign at a Glance

Shop & Win 2025 invites customers to support their local fruit and veg shop and go into the draw to win weekly prizes. The mechanics are simple: customers shop at a

participating store, scan a QR code in-store, upload a photo of their receipt, and go in the draw to win one of five \$200 vouchers, every week for ten weeks.

All vouchers are redeemable at the same local fruit and veg shop where the purchase was made—ensuring that prize money goes straight back into the independent retail channel.

This year's campaign builds on the success of previous Shop & Win initiatives, with even more integrated digital functionality, expanded retailer support, and a strong promotional push across media, social, and in-store touchpoints. The goal? Exceed previous years' entries and create a minimum 15% increase in store foot traffic—while driving lasting consumer loyalty to local, independent outlets.

Purpose-Driven Retail Activation

While Shop & Win is fun and engaging for consumers, its strategic purpose is much broader: to champion the role of independent retailers within the fresh produce supply chain and to help level the playing field in a highly consolidated industry.

Through a national, coordinated campaign, 'A better choice!' is able to deliver shared value to:

- Retailers, by driving customer traffic and offering tools for store engagement;
- Growers and wholesalers, by increasing the volume of fresh produce sold through independent channels;
- Consumers, by connecting them to fresh, healthy, and locally sourced options;
- The wider industry, by demonstrating that collaboration across states and supply chain segments can deliver real results.

The Power of Local Loyalty

In addition to weekly prize draws, Shop & Win also powers one of the program's most effective retailer advocacy tools: the '**Retailer of the Year – People's Choice Awards**'.

In the final four weeks of the campaign, consumers are invited to nominate their favourite participating store and explain what makes them stand out. These nominations serve as community testimonials, feeding into state and national recognition for retailers doing exceptional work. The award winners often receive high-profile media coverage, giving further exposure to the independent sector and its role in Australia's food landscape.



Multi-Channel Marketing Campaign

Shop & Win 2025 is underpinned by a fully integrated marketing strategy that spans:

- Paid social media ads (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok)
- YouTube shorts
- In-store POS materials (QR pads, posters, entry forms)
- Local press and PR campaigns
- Influencer partnerships
- National and state central markets & chamber-led amplification

The campaign is projected to generate over 50,000 QR code scans, 30% uplift in web traffic, and \$200,000 worth of media value through earned media and brand exposure.

Retailers are supported with fully branded toolkits to ensure maximum campaign uptake. Participation is free for retailers in the 'A better choice!' program, with low barrier to entry and measurable return.

Why It Matters for the Horticulture Industry

At its core, *Shop & Win* 2025 addresses a fundamental need within the Australian horticulture sector: to preserve and grow a thriving, sustainable independent retail channel.

While supermarkets remain dominant, independent fruit and veg shops continue

to offer something unique—deep product knowledge, seasonal buying flexibility, direct connections to wholesalers and growers, and a personal experience that fosters long-term loyalty.

By supporting independent retailers through marketing and national campaigns, the program strengthens the entire ecosystem, from farm to market to table.

Moreover, the campaign delivers valuable insights into consumer behaviour, brand engagement, and purchasing motivations. It creates a platform for storytelling—from the grower to the greengrocer—and it champions Australian produce by connecting it to real people and real communities.

Looking Ahead

The campaign will be profiled at Hort Connections 2025 in Brisbane this June, with early engagement metrics and retailer stories shared with attendees across the fresh produce supply chain.

A final campaign report will be released in August, detailing consumer entries, marketing reach, retailer participation, and PR outcomes. This transparency and data-driven evaluation ensures stakeholders across the country can understand the campaign's impact and potential for future involvement.

Shop & Win 2025 is more than a competition—it's a movement to put independent fresh produce retail back on the map. It's about rewarding consumers, celebrating retailers, and supporting the farmers and wholesalers who make it all possible.

When we make 'A better choice!'—everyone wins.

'A better choice!' Magazine: Telling the Story Behind the Produce

Now in its **seventh issue**, 'A better choice!' magazine is the only consumer-facing print publication in Australia dedicated to promoting **local independent fresh fruit and veg shops**. Distributed to independent retailer stores nationwide and promoted online, the magazine brings the stories of growers, wholesalers, and retailers directly into the homes of shoppers, for free.

The **Winter 2025 edition** includes:

- 30+ original seasonal recipes
- 5 regional grower interviews (NSW, VIC, QLD, SA, WA)
- Family-friendly lunchbox ideas
- Winter wellness features
- Brand partner spotlights

It's more than just a lifestyle read—it's an industry tool that drives consumer awareness promoting shopping local. By aligning with seasonal trends and providing retailers with high-quality editorial content, the magazine builds trust, encourages fresh produce consumption, and reinforces the value of independent fresh food retailing.

Developed with input from Australia's central markets and chambers, the magazine also acts as a unifying platform—showcasing the shared priorities of the horticulture community and connecting all players in the supply chain to the end consumer.

ABC Magazine Contact us:
magazine@freshmarkets.com.au



The 'A better choice!' Magazine - Issue 7

'A better choice!' Case Study: Hort Innovation - Australian Bananas

Brief

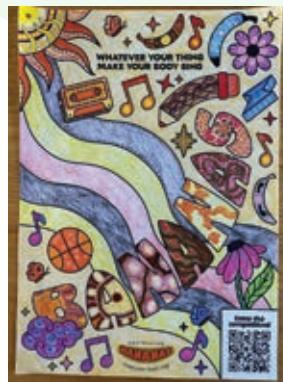
To promote the "Back to School" Campaign in the independent grocery channel. Activation of promotional material, colouring competition, brand collateral, and including a consumer digital campaign.

Deliverables

Leveraging our relationship with retailers, we ran a series of activations around the country and a total of 138 stores were activated. Print was left on display and continues to be displayed in stores nationally, post campaign activation.



Colouring Competition



Western Australia -
Minnie (16)



South Australia - Aurora (10)



New South Wales - Indi (11)

'A better choice!' Case Study: Nutrafruit - Queen Garnet

Brief

A wholly curated package representing and promoting the Queen Garnet plum in the independent fruit and vegetable sector. The promotion must hero the plum, bring awareness to the community, and leave a digital footprint that can be positively shared when the campaign concludes.

Deliverables

A cooking demonstration event at the South Melbourne Markets personalised social media and EDM campaign.





Why It All Matters

With major retailers dominating the landscape and economic pressures reshaping consumer behaviour, now more than ever the **independent fresh produce sector needs a strong, visible voice**. 'A better choice!' delivers that voice—backed by national scale, community relevance, and real-world results.

From magazine storytelling and sampling events to reward-based campaigns and daily digital content, the program supports fresh produce from the ground up—amplifying growers, empowering retailers, and educating shoppers.

As we look ahead, 'A better choice!' will continue to evolve with the industry, offering new ways to connect, collaborate, and celebrate the best of Australian fresh produce.

Partner with 'A better choice!'

Ready to grow your brand and connect with a passionate audience? 'A better choice!' offers a direct pathway to fresh produce enthusiasts across Australia.

Contact Us

For partnership enquiries, campaign collaborations or future magazine involvement, contact:

- www.abetterchoice.com.au
- **Partnerships:** partnerships@freshmarkets.com.au
- **Magazine:** magazine@freshmarkets.com.au

Let's make a difference together!

Key Statistics 2024

In-Store

- 1,500+ Store Activations
- 400+ Samplings (boosting immediate sales)
- 1,600+ Colouring Competition Entries

Social Media

- 250k Followers
- 428 Posts

EDM

- 45k Contacts in our database
- 14% Open Rate
- 11% Click Through Rate

Website

- 175k Total website views
- 145k First time visitors
- 30k Website views just in December with 27k being first-time visitors

'A better choice!' - Tailored Solutions for Your Brand

- Seasonal Magazine
- Sampling
- Activations
- Social Media
- Advertising Opportunities



Sydney Markets: Respecting our past while paving the way for the future.

For over 200 years, Sydney Markets has been a vital part of the Australian food industry. Today, the markets comprise two locations, Flemington and Haymarket. Flemington is home to wholesale markets; Sydney Produce Market, Sydney Growers Market, Sydney Flower Market and community market, Paddy's. The reinvented location at Haymarket is home to Paddy's and the new foodie hot spot, Hay St Market at Paddy's which opened in March 2025.

Every day 6,000 workers and 2,000 traders work to bring fresh produce, flowers, and great community bargains to over 7 million people all over NSW and ACT.

This year, Sydney Markets celebrates 50 years trading at the iconic 40-hectare site at Flemington. An ecosystem of its own, Flemington is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Multi-generational families have been operating at the markets since its beginnings in the city. Sydney Markets Limited congratulates these families, and thanks all wholesalers, growers, providores and traders for their ongoing commitment to Sydney Markets.

Quick facts:

- Sydney Markets is one of the largest food distribution centres in the Southern Hemisphere and is home to over 5,000 workers.
- Each year Sydney Markets trades around 2.5 million tonnes of fresh produce with a value more than \$3 billion.
- Produce is received from 6,000 growers across Australia with wholesale operations supplying fresh fruit and vegetables to over two-thirds of the Australian population.
- There are approximately 108 produce wholesalers, more than 50 providores, 318 fresh produce growers, 125 flower growers/sellers, 6 exporters and over 150 supporting businesses located onsite at Flemington.
- More than 1,500 operators trade at Paddy's attracting over 140,000 customers each week.
- We provided 784 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables to food rescue charities including Foodbank, Second Bite, St Merkorous and Oz Harvest.
- Sydney Markets onsite waste management facility, Green Point, has increased total waste recycling at Flemington to 70%.

Contact:

Sydney Markets Limited
 PO Box 2, Sydney Markets, NSW 2129
P: 02 9325 6200
E: info@sydneymarkets.com.au



Set on a 67-hectare site in Epping in Melbourne's North, the **Melbourne Market** provides the critical link between growers, wholesalers, retailers and distributors in the fresh produce and flower supply chain.

The traditional role of Melbourne's wholesale market is to enable the people of Victoria to have daily access to the best in fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers from across Australia and around the world, but the Melbourne Market has grown into much more.

Approximately 3,000 businesses use the Market as a base, buying and selling fresh produce in the early morning hours for distribution across Victoria and Australia. The market's success is due to leveraging its modern, state-of-the-art design and facilities to ensure a safe, clean, and modern work environment while delivering a range of services to meet the needs of the fresh produce industry.

The site currently boasts 93,000 square metres of warehousing space, and there is the opportunity to build additional warehousing in the future. This significant warehousing capacity provides businesses with opportunities to integrate supply chain logistics within the site, and we are now the largest warehousing precinct of any central market in Australia.

The Market's Epping location is close to Melbourne's freeways, allowing for easy inbound delivery from farm to market and outbound delivery locally, interstate, or overseas. This location gives the market significant food handling and logistical advantages and provides traders with greater opportunities to export.

The Melbourne Market prides itself on its environmental credentials. A large recycling and waste sorting facility is located on the site, and partnerships with food recovery programs and a waste-to-energy plant contribute to strong recycling rates. The Melbourne Market invests in sustainability projects, such as large-scale roof-top solar and rainwater harvesting systems, reducing the site's environmental impact. These initiatives not only align with the site's environmental objectives but also provide real commercial value to the businesses that use the market in the form of electricity rebates.

The Melbourne Market Authority continues to look for innovative ways to invest back into the site to enhance logistical efficiencies and add value for market users. The site's unique location provides plenty of room to grow, which means the Melbourne Market is equipped to respond to central markets' rapidly changing role as logistics and service hubs.

With the vast range of services and facilities in one location, businesses operating at the Melbourne Market can consolidate operations, reducing handling, transport and labour costs. The Melbourne Market's world-class design, along with warehousing, exporting and processing capabilities, make it an ideal facility for any business in the food industry.

Contact:

Melbourne Market Authority
 1/55 Produce Drive Epping 3076
P: 03 9258 6100
E: info@melbournemarket.com.au
W: www.melbournemarket.com.au



Brisbane Markets is Queensland's most important marketing and distribution hub for the supply of fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers.

More than 700 million kilograms of fresh fruit and vegetables pass through the Brisbane Markets each year, valued at more than \$2 billion. It is the third largest Central Market in Australia with 46 wholesalers of fruit, vegetables, flowers, nuts and eggs operating at the site. There are also over 150 other tenant businesses within the site including transportation, retail shops, professional services, secondary wholesalers and providores.

Over 4,500 people work or do business at the Brisbane Markets on a daily basis. More than 5,000 growers supply produce for sale.

Brisbane Markets Limited is the owner of the Brisbane Markets and is responsible for its ongoing management and development.

The Markets is situated on 77 hectares, 11km south-west of the Brisbane CBD, and incorporates the Brisbane Produce Market (Selling Floors), South Gate East (commercial offices and warehousing) and South Gate West, Brisbane MarketPlace (Saturday Fresh Market), Brisbane Flower Market, Commercial Precinct and the Northern Industrial Precinct.

Contact:

Brisbane Markets Limited
Level 2, Fresh Centre
385 Sherwood Road, Rocklea
PO Box 80, Brisbane Market 4106
P: 07 3915 4200 **Fax:** 07 3915 4291
E: admin@brisbanemarkets.com.au



THINKING *fresh*.

South Australian Produce Market Limited is the distribution and marketing hub for fresh produce in South Australia.

More than 265,000 tonnes of fresh produce with a wholesale value of over \$600M is traded between our wholesalers, growers and retail operators every year. Home to more than 42 wholesale traders, 70% of those are local growers.

2024 was a successful year for the market with many opportunities along with key initiatives and projects including:

1. The construction of our \$10M state of the art Biosecurity postharvest and logistics precinct.
2. Stage one \$4M of fruit fly resilience grant funding received
3. 85% completion of the largest and most complex sprinkler installation in South Australia with the highest standard of equipment being used and to FM Global requirements. Reducing Insurance cost in 2024 by 42.9%.
4. Final installation of LED lighting with all common area lighting now LED on site.
5. Five EV charging stations now available for cars and vans on site.
6. Continued reduction on CO2 emissions achieved with a 53% reduction in electricity related emissions achieved across the site.
7. Achieved 10,430 Tonnes of Carbon emissions reduction in 2024
8. Scope one ESG completed in establishing a base line for the Market Company
9. Celebrated our 1-year anniversary of establishing what has become the largest Farmers Market in SA attracting more than 7000 public visitors and 160 stallholders every Sunday.
10. Continued strategic alliance with Foodbank SA onsite warehouse facilities and Puddle Jumpers incorporated working with our SA Farmers Market
11. \$100,000 raised for Brain Tumour Research Foundation through the annual Cherry Auction.
12. \$163,000 raised through the annual Rural Business Support charity soccer match played on the home ground of Adelaide United Football Club

Contact:

South Australian Produce Market Limited
Administration Building
Burma Road, Pooraka SA 5095
P: 08 8349 4493
E: enquiry@saproducemarket.com.au



Perth Markets Group Limited (PMGL) is Western Australia's only wholesale fresh food central trading market, providing the critical link between growers, wholesalers, retailers and the fresh food supply chain.

Perth Markets plays a vital role in the horticultural industry and the State's economy, with over 250,000 tonnes of fresh produce traded annually.

Strategically located in Canning Vale, just 16km from Perth CBD, the 51-hectare site offers seamless access to the city's major arterial road networks, ensuring efficient connectivity to the intermodal rail hub at Kewdale, Perth Airport, and Fremantle Port.

As the central hub for fresh produce trade, Perth Markets supports a thriving ecosystem of 24 primary and 30 secondary wholesalers, serving more than 330 active buyer groups and over 890 registered growers. It facilitates the distribution of fresh produce sourced from key growing regions across Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

Perth Markets is a bustling hub of activity, welcoming over 13,000 visitors each week. With more than 100 tenants on-site, the market provides employment for over 1,782 people, contributing significantly to the local economy.

Adding to its vibrant atmosphere, Perth Markets hosts the popular Canning Vale Weekend Markets. The Saturday Clearance Market offers the public the opportunity to purchase fresh produce directly from five major wholesale tenants, while the Sunday Community Market features over 100 stallholders and attracts more than 5,000 patrons each weekend.

Perth Markets boasts a 100% industrial occupancy rate, highlighting the strong demand for space within the precinct. This demand is fuelled by Western Australia's high population growth of 3% year-over-year, driving increased need for fresh produce. Additionally, wholesalers and cold-chain service providers benefit from the market's strategic location, gaining operational efficiencies through close proximity to the State's fresh produce Central Trading Area and Perth's key intermodal transport hubs.

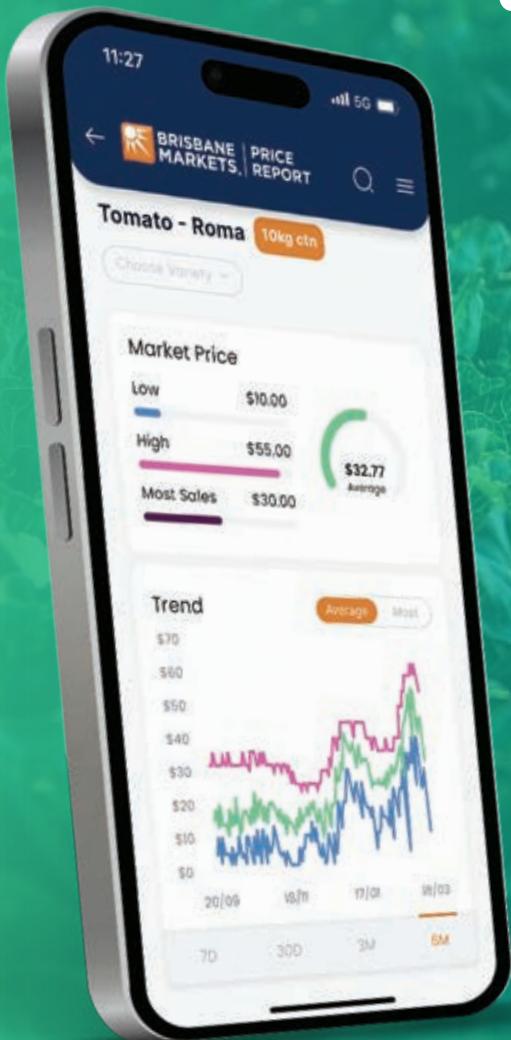
Perth Markets also recently completed the development of its latest multi-tenant cold-chain warehouse in December 2024, marking a significant milestone in its ongoing site expansion. As the industry continues to grow, Perth Markets is poised to meet increasing demand with several new cold storage warehouses planned for construction in the coming years.

Contact:

Perth Markets Group Limited (PMGL) MP 1, 280 Bannister Road, Canning Vale, WA 6155
P: (08) 9456 9200
E: pmgl@perthmarket.com.au

SALES INSIGHTS

at your fingertips



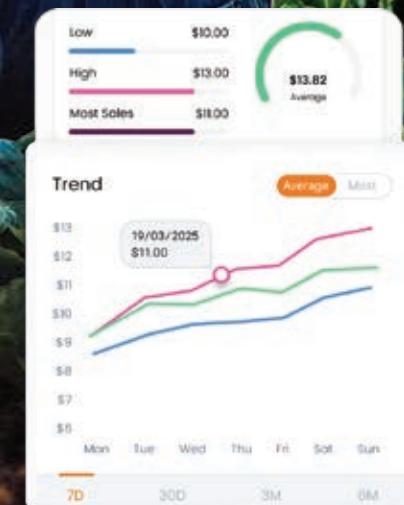
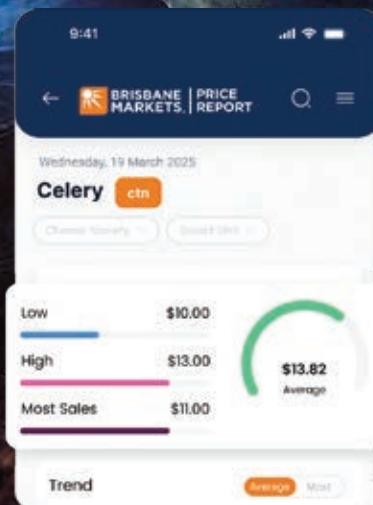
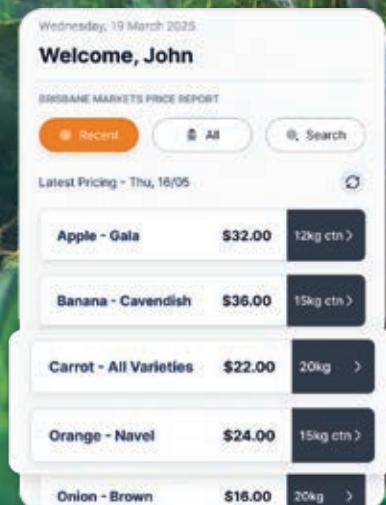
**Access real
wholesale pricing
on fresh produce with
the Brisbane Markets
Price Report app.**



brisbanemarketspricereport.com.au



Register now
for a **FREE**
30-day trial!



Easy access to actual daily prices on produce sold at Brisbane Markets.

See low, high, average, and most sales prices for produce sold.

Track historical data and trends.



BRISBANE | **PRICE**
MARKETS | **REPORT**

Brismark is a Member of Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) and supports FMA's pricing transparency initiatives currently being realised through its FreshData Project.

A service provided by





Brismark in Brief

By Andrew Young, CEO



With a purpose to represent and serve the marketing sector of Queensland's fresh produce industry, Brismark provides cost-effective support to our members, their growers, and buyers, empowering them to thrive in an ever-changing marketplace. As Brismark continues to enhance its service offerings, we remain dedicated to strengthening the Central Markets system and promoting the role and importance of the Brisbane Markets and the wholesalers who operate within it.

The Brismark Credit Service, with a throughput of approximately \$760 million per year, acts as the financial clearinghouse for the Brisbane Markets and streamlines transactions for our wholesalers and other billing entities in the Markets. This process makes it easier for businesses to conduct transactions in a financially manageable way. With built-in protections including a Bad Debt Reserve Fund, the Credit Service proves invaluable not only to Brismark members but to the entire Markets community.

The recent launch of a Brisbane Markets Price Report app has helped Brismark to address the ongoing call for greater price transparency at the Central Markets. Using de-identified sales data from over 80% of Brisbane Markets wholesalers through the Brismark Credit Service, the app updates at the end of each trading day and provides both a mobile and web-based platform to keep growers, buyers, industry stakeholders and other subscribers informed. The Brisbane Markets Price Report is the latest addition to Brismark's suite of services, and its data is planned to inform the FreshData platform currently in development by Fresh Markets Australia.

Brismark continues to offer a diverse range of business services, providing support in areas such as human resources, industrial relations, work health and safety, quality assurance, food safety, recruitment, debt recovery, bookkeeping, training, and access to discounted fuel cards and phone plans. These services have provided value in helping our members and their associated businesses to navigate the complexities of running successful operations.



Our ongoing collaboration with Brisbane Markets Limited (BML) remains a key part of our success. Together, we have implemented many on-site initiatives to ensure the smooth operation of the Brisbane Markets. These initiatives include organising National Work Safe Month, maintaining the Dispute Resolution Grower Hotline, and conducting random drug and alcohol testing as part of the Site Safety Program. The hosting of joint events and promotional activities and the sponsorship of Brisbane Markets events, such as the 2024 Brisbane Markets Mango Auction, which raised funds for charity, the 2024 Brisbane Markets Gala Dinner, and the Forklift Operator of the Year formed part of this collaboration.

Brismark, in partnership with BML, continued to support the 'A better choice!' retailer program, enabling Queensland retailers to participate in two national campaigns and various promotional activities and partnerships, all designed to benefit our members, their suppliers, and their retail buyers.

Looking forward, Brismark remains committed to supporting our wholesaler members and is committed to enhancing our services to further support them and their associated businesses while helping to strengthen the broader industry.



Brisbane Markets

Wholesalers Central to Queensland's Fresh Produce Supply

Brisbane Markets wholesalers play a central role in Queensland's fresh produce supply chain, with robust relationships between wholesalers, growers and buyers built on trust, being essential to success. As Queensland's heart of fresh produce and one of Australia's largest Central Markets, the Brisbane Markets sees a total annual throughput of more than 700 million kilograms of fresh fruit and vegetables annually, valued at over \$2 billion.

Brismark CEO and Brisbane Markets Managing Director and CEO Andrew Young said that the Brisbane Markets is home to 46 wholesalers who help open doors to connect produce from Australian farms with a range of consumers through numerous businesses and industries.

Brisbane Markets wholesalers have access to buyers from the retailing, secondary wholesaling, food services and exporting sectors of the industry.

Brisbane Markets wholesalers operate as independent businesses, competing for the same customers, ensuring that prices reflect the supply and demand the market environment generates. This dynamic allows growers to sell their entire crop, including sizes and qualities that major supermarket chains may not select.

"Our wholesalers also operate under the mandatory Horticulture Code of Conduct and have support and added protections in place, including a credit management facility, bad debt protection, and a range of business support services through their representative organisation, Brismark," Mr Young said.

“

Brismark also provides a Market Price Report service and a Dispute Resolution Grower Hotline to further assist with supporting wholesalers in their business dealings.

In supporting the independent retailing sector, Brismark administers the 'A better choice!' program with 111 participating retailers across Southeast Queensland. This program, which is conducted nationally through Fresh Markets Australia, has the objective of supporting independent retailers to engage with consumers.

Brisbane Markets wholesalers, with the support of their representative organisation, Brismark, are strengthening Queensland's fresh produce supply chain and horticulture industry.



“

With over 4,500 people working or doing business on the site each day, the Brisbane Markets really is an important part of Queensland's economy, Mr Young said.



SA Chamber in Brief

**By George Giameos,
General Manager**

The roles within the Chamber changed with Mark Brougham continuing on as President and George Antonas becoming Vice President. Long standing committee member Peter Koukos resigned from his position. The committee wishes to thank Peter for his commitment.

Membership remained the same at 35 members. The total number of wholesalers is now 37, down from the original 58 that started in 1988. Wholesalers believe the reduction in numbers is beneficial and will assist with the longevity of the remaining members.

The Chamber continues to provide member benefits with savings through our group deals with Telstra, BP, Freshtest, and various other suppliers. These deals give members savings along with some of them providing income for the SA Chamber.



Membership of the Credit Service (SA Produce Credit) remains strong with approximately 80% of the Secondary Wholesaler/Retail customer base utilizing the service. We have 100% Wholesaler participation as well as a number of Growers in the Growers pavilion utilizing the service.

I would like to thank Penny for her efforts in relation to Pick a Local – Pick SA ('A better choice!'). The Pick a Local – Pick SA ('A better choice!') campaign has been successful with 104 stores having signed up to the program. Of these, 42 pay additional funds to promote their businesses and receive additional benefits. Promotional activities are important to ensure the long-term viability of the industry.

I would like to thank the members for their support throughout 2024 and look forward to improving the services offered to our members in 2025.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Committee (Mark Brougham, George Antonas, Andrew Sinnott, Mark Russo, Walter Gallarello, Joseph Ceravolo & Sage Mondello) for their tireless effort and support. Their voluntary contribution to the organization will help guide the market to a better future for the upcoming young leaders.





'A better choice!'

During 2024, the Pick a Local, Pick SA! marketing campaign continued in South Australia as a cobranded marketing activity with the National Brand, 'A better choice!'.



As well as participating in the two national retail campaigns, the local team followed a seasonal calendar of activities to raise brand awareness across the horticultural supply chain from grower, wholesaler and retailer through to the consumer.

A paid retailer participation program continues to operate with 42 SA independent stores taking up the membership that provides personalised marketing services and access to the seasonal and national marketing campaigns.

Callum Hann continued as brand ambassador for Pick a Local, Pick SA! supporting the brand through radio commercials, video content produced for social media channels, in-store collateral and supporting public relations activities.

The team continued to share grower stories through video and photography content creation featuring in-season producers. The content has contributed to the growth in reach of the social media channels now having a combined fan base of 30k+ reaching a primarily South Australian audience of some 100k+ each month.

South Australian retailers were taken on farm visits to see where the produce on their shelves comes from with visits to Nicol Carrots, SA Mushrooms and Thorndon Park Produce.

A number of community programs continued to be supported with donations of fruit and activations held with the Adelaide Community Basketball Association, Mother's Day Classic, Salisbury Run, Walk for a Veteran as well as participation in breakfast radio outdoor broadcasts with both SAFM and Mix 102.3 at a number of primary schools.

In June 2024 the national retail program awarded Retailer of the Year to SA for the third time in four years with Adelaide Fresh Morphett Vale taking first place. National media coverage was obtained for the announcement providing significant value to the winning store. And the national program delivered issues of the National magazine that were distributed to stores across SA.

In conjunction with Citrus SA, the 2024 season was launched at an event held in the Adelaide Central Markets followed by a radio activation with Fresh FM that saw three listeners partake in a lemon squeeze off for a \$1,000 prize.

20,000 bananas and 20,000 Lenswood Missile apples were distributed through the Royal Adelaide Show's Yellow Brick Road program and once again our Crunch Bunch mascots featured on the main arena's annual mascot games.

In October 1,000 banana splits were given away along with a \$1,000 prize to a lucky shopper who participated in the activation on National Banana Day. The event held at Banana Boys Mitcham was supported by D&G Fresh Produce.

In December \$100,000 was raised for Brain Tumour Research Foundation at the annual Cherry Auction and achieved significant media coverage nationally. And Nicol carrots once again provided 15,000 carrots that were distributed to South Australian children through the Santa's Wonderland interactive family event held at the showgrounds where visitors took home a piece of SA grown reindeer food.

“

On air radio commercials continued to air on SAFM, the TVC aired throughout the year, regular market updates continued on Radio Italiana, 5AA and ABC Country Hour and the PR campaign remained active providing opportunities for share of voice in the media.



Fresh State in Brief

**Jason Cooper,
Managing Director and CEO,
Fresh State Limited**



As we enter our tenth year since relocating to Epping from the old Footscray market site, we reflect on a decade in which Fresh State and our Market community have had to show significant resilience. This milestone comes at a time of significant challenges. One of the most pressing issues this year has been the ongoing dispute with the Melbourne Market Authority (MMA) over rent increases.

The MMA has announced plans to increase rent for its tenants by more than 100% over the next ten years, a move that threatens the sustainability of the tenants within the Market. Fresh State has been actively advocating on behalf of our members, ensuring their voices are heard through the 'Take the Pressure Off' campaign, pushing for a fair and sustainable resolution.

Wholesalers cannot continue to absorb the cost of these rental increases, which means the cost will inevitably be passed onto retailers who will then have no choice but to pass it onto consumers, passed onto growers, or taken from their already diminishing profits. This fight is far from over, and we remain committed to protecting the future of our industry.

Despite these challenges, Fresh State continues to focus on delivering value to its members. The transition toward market privatisation remains a key issue, and we are engaged in discussions to ensure that any future changes benefit wholesalers, growers, and the broader Market community.

Our annual Fresh State Gala Ball continues to be a highlight, bringing the industry together to celebrate its achievements. This year's event at The Forum Melbourne was another fantastic evening. A full recap, including our award winners, can be found on the following page.

Fresh State remains committed to essential services that support the operations of our members. The Melbourne Market Credit Service (MMCS) continues to provide crucial cash flow support, helping businesses manage their financial needs. Our newly upgraded, fully automated Fresh State LPG Gas Station offers a reliable and cost-effective energy solution for businesses, while FreshTest ensures the highest standards of quality control for fresh produce. Additionally, Data Fresh provides up-to-date price reporting, helping members stay informed and competitive in the market.

We look forward to continuing to offer our services to Fresh State members throughout the coming year.



Health Check

On October 29th and 30th, 2024, Fresh State members received free health checks at Melbourne Market. Conducted by nurses from Health Corporations Australia. The screenings tested vital health indicators, including blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels, while also highlighting the health risks associated with night shift work. There are concerns that prolonged night shift work may disrupt the body's natural 24-hour rhythm, which can potentially lead to increased stress, fatigue, and cardiovascular risks.

Nurses advised participants on the importance of regular health checkups, maintaining a heart-healthy diet, staying hydrated, exercising, and ensuring quality sleep.

The initiative reinforced proactive health management, with the market community expressing gratitude to Fresh State and the nurses for guidance on leading healthier, more balanced lives. This is part of our ongoing plan to provide regular health checkups and promote health and wellbeing within the market.



2025 Fresh State Gala Ball

On Saturday, March 1, 2025, the Fresh State Gala Ball commenced in grand style with a spectacular masquerade theme. Held at the Forum Melbourne in the heart of the CBD, the event brought together over 300 guests from the Melbourne Market community to celebrate its members and achievements.

The evening began with an exclusive VIP event, where guests enjoyed drinks and canapés before the official proceedings, led by Fresh State CEO Jason Cooper and President Shane Schnitzler.

A local comedian kept the crowd entertained with his humour, while the band brought the dance floor to life. The night featured a three-course dinner and a lively dance floor while capturing pictures at the photobooth.

Every year at the Gala Ball Fresh State recognises a long-serving and integral member of the Melbourne Market community with the prestigious 'This Is Your Life' award. This year, Fresh State celebrated not just one individual but an entire family whose dedication and legacy have shaped the market for many generations, Granieri's Fresh Produce. The Granieri Family were welcomed to the stage with a special slideshow presentation and a book showcasing their life.

Fresh State 2025 Gala Ball Awards:

- **This Is Your Life Award** – The Granieri Family, Granieri's Fresh Produce
- **Wholesale Personality of the Year** – Thanh Truong, Aus Asia Produce
- **Young Marketer of the Year** – Tom Davidson, G Ferlazzo & Co
- **Wholesale Company of the Year** – Big Valley Produce
- **Buyer of the Year** – Ritchies Stores
- **Supporter of the Year** – Origin Energy

Congratulations to all recipients on their well-deserved awards. It was a fantastic evening of celebration, bringing the Melbourne Market community together.



Market West in Brief

By Rod McPherson, CEO

Chamber of Fruit & Vegetable Industries in WA (Inc)

The Perth Fresh Produce Markets situated in Canning Vale continues to provide the key wholesale link in the supply chain for fresh produce in Western Australia. It is clear that buyers have modified their operational buying strategies, using technology for their ordering and communications with our Members, the Central Market Traders. While the vibrancy of the market escalates on the seasonal changes when the 'sexy' produce arrives e.g. Mangoes, Stonefruit etc, we no longer do we see daily vast foot traffic within the central trading area. While active average buyer numbers remain strong, buying services and other alternatives have given the independent sector other options.

Management Committee

Our Management Committee underwent significant change at our AGM in November. Long serving President Trish Skinner (Australian Produce Brokers) was succeeded by Committee Member Claudia Cunningham (Etherington) as elected by the Members. Trish has worked tirelessly for the Chamber for over 20 years sacrificing a great deal of time, despite a number of personal challenges, to forge changes in the operation and strategy of the Chamber business. In particular, the unprecedented efficiency and effectiveness of the Credit Service and the leading role in the Chamber's industry consortium bid to purchase the market site from the State Government, a watershed moment. Trish was also a Perth Markets Board Member as an 'Industry Director' and Deputy Chair, as well as an extended period as Acting Chair.

The Members acknowledge the significant contribution that Trish has made, not only to the Chamber and Perth Markets Group but also through Fresh Markets Australia and the wider horticulture industry in matters of state and national industry significance.

Additionally, our Vice President Paul Neale (Mercer Mooney), stepped aside and we thank Paul for his efforts as well as being the other 'Industry Director' on the Perth Markets Board. As a result, James Ryan (Perfection Fresh) was elected Vice President and along with Claudia will now be the nominated



Industry Directors on the Perth Markets Board. Two new Members were also elected to the Management Committee. They are Paul Harvey (4 Ways Fresh) and Chris Tracy (Produce Brokers WA). Both will bring new perspectives to the Committee but have been in the industry for some time as well.



Vale Dana Chorley

Sadly, on 31st March we lost one of our own, Dana Chorley. Dana had been with the Chamber for over 21 years and had witnessed a number of industry and operational changes. Dana had created strong working relationships and lifelong friendships while working diligently and efficiently on behalf of our Members, buyers, Perth Markets and other industry stakeholders with the objective of always trying to help and achieve the desired outcomes for all. Dana was part of the fabric of our success.

While Dana's passing was sudden, she had been putting up a brave battle against a serious cancer related, lung condition for some time prior. Nonetheless, Dana kept up a courageous front publicly, we know privately she was suffering. We miss her dedication to task, mischievous giggle, her wicked sense of humour and her friendly face. Our thoughts remain with her partner Tony and her family.

Market West Credit Service

We are well advanced in the development of new credit service software – 'Market Pay'. The new software will provide buyers and Members greater flexibility, real time

information and streamlined processes that should create time savings and data reliability enhancing current credit arrangements.

For the 2023/24 financial year the credit service member turnover was again a record \$645m (+4.5%) on an average 323 active buyers. The increase is predominantly price driven and through the central market process. Our continued efficient turnaround of weekly payments prioritises consistent cash flow to our Members, which in turn, allows them to maintain the supply chain funding back to the grower.

Biosecurity

The markets again became subject to a QFly Quarantine Area Notice (QAN) in December 24 issued by the Dept of Primary Industries & Regional Development (Biosecurity) - DPIRD. This was as a result of detections in a residential area within 15km of the markets which then places the market within the affected quarantine zone. This is the 4th metro detection in the last 5 years and the second time the markets have fallen in to the 15km quarantine zone.

While produce supply continues, the risk mitigation and compliance requirements on site are significant. The logistical challenges of ensuring produce arriving from growers is compliant and maintained compliant until delivered to buyers in a compliant state is huge. The additional costs of risk mitigation includes additional staff or labour hours, bagging, netting, pallet covers and sheets, wrapping and storage amount to hundreds of thousands collectively. There is no mechanism for recovering these costs despite these incidents occurring through no fault of the members and beyond their control. These are costs incurred straight off the bottom line.

Market West has again worked closely with DPIRD staff, including on-site compliance inspectors and the Incident Controllers. The QAN will only be lifted after the 'eradication' is complete and was extended multiple times from the original 12 weeks.



Quality Produce International claim their first Wholesaler of the Year

'A better choice!' – Independent Retailer Support Program

'A Better Choice!' maintained its membership profile as a key strategic focus recognising independent fresh produce retailers who support the Perth Markets in the central market supply chain. Using available, limited internal resources, the program has the support of Fresh Markets Australia and with some additional financial support from the market operator, Perth Markets Group Ltd. The program has grown in stature with 76 independent retail stores as beneficiaries of the program endorsing the value of shopping locally for quality and freshness.



'A better choice!' Retailer of the Year – Hills Fresh

Market Pricing and Statistics

We are excited about the national FreshData initiative and our contributions to the enhanced data capabilities for the industry. We continue to work with our Members and industry to enhance the integrity of the data collected and made available to industry stakeholders including growers, regulatory agencies and media contributors. Data collection, including new lines, is supported in real time by 98% of the central traders. The quality and integrity of the data and reporting has high level acceptance by the wider industry.

Member Services

We have continued to provide our Members with value added services including regular first aid training sessions, Horticulture Code updates, Biosecurity & Qfly information sessions, Food Safety legislation changes, risk management including WH&S Safety Legislation changes, Drug & Alcohol Management Plans and Cybersecurity as well as coordinating personalised market tours for industry groups, City of Canning business network, DPIRD & Ministerial staff, potential importers and exporters.

Perth Markets Ball & Retailer of the Year

The annual social highlight for the WA industry was held at Crown Ballroom in September. With an '*En Francais*' theme, guests were greeted by Marie Antoinette on stilts, a mime and a roaming accordion player. The industry's premier event attracted almost 600 guests, 'glammed up' and ready to celebrate the winners of the prestigious awards. Soul Mystique provided the main entertainment with an electrifying and vibrant illusion floorshow.

The Retailer of the Year nominations were narrowed down to 49 finalists across 8 categories. The increasing number of nominations demonstrates their commitment to excellence in customer service, with the awards increased desirability creating keen competition and prestige. The Fresh Produce Retailer of the Year, going back to back, was Tony Ale Fruit & Veg Market Cockburn. 'A better choice!' Retailer of the Year was Hills Fresh for the first time.



Fresh Produce Retailer of the Year – Tony Ale Fruit & Veg Market

Wholesaler of the Year – Quality Produce International

For the second time, the Wholesaler of the Year was awarded at the Perth Markets Ball. The winner this year was Quality Produce International. QP are well established quality wholesalers with high volume and a solid industry reputation. They emerged narrow winners measured against relevant broad criteria marginally ahead of a quality field. The City of Canning were again the sponsor of the award, presented by Mayor Patrick Hall.





Luciano Monte is crowned Cherry King surrounded by key Charity Cherry Auction supporters after the winning group bid of \$85,000 for the 5kg box of cherries.

Charity Cherry Auction

Now in its 32st year, the Cherry Auction took place at Perth Markets in December, with 100% of proceeds benefitting Perth Children's Hospital Foundation Rare Care Centre. The 2024 Cherry Auction raised a massive \$150,000 which saw Luciano Monte of Monte Farms launch a winning bid made possible through a collective effort from a nine-way partnership, including Tony Galati from Galati Group, EPT Produce, Grower Connect, Bogdanich Farms, Supafresh, Bullfrog International & Homestyle.

The 5kg prize box of cherries from Sweet Cherry Valley crafted by the Donnybrook Men's Shed sold for a whopping \$85,000 and Luciano was Crowned Cherry King for the first time and pushed the total donated the Foundation by the fresh produce industry beyond a staggering \$2 million over the past 3 decades.

Perth Markets Golf Day

The golf day was held at the Vines Resort – Lakes Course in the picturesque Swan Valley. 23 teams battled it out before a

looming electrical storm. The overall winner was Quality Produce. Our valued sponsors Maddington & Canning Vale Toyota again provided a \$46,000 Toyota HiLux SR5 Hi Rider utility for a hole in one on the 4th hole but unfortunately despite best efforts, no one quite took out the prize.



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Freshmark in Brief

By Meegan George, CEO



The past 12 months have been a period of great momentum for Freshmark. We are committed to delivering value by helping to build successful, profitable businesses while ensuring the voices and interests of our members remain central to the conversations shaping our industry's future.

This year, we took an important step forward by introducing governance changes allowing us to appoint up to three non-member directors - a first for any state chamber in Australia.

These changes bring fresh perspectives from outside the industry and essential expertise in areas such as finance, risk, marketing, legal, and governance. At the same time, member representation remains at the heart of our Board's structure.

By combining the insights of our member-directors from the fresh produce industry with new perspectives from our independent directors we have been able to achieve a sharper focus on generating customer and member value and a continued commitment to representing the interests of the sector to regulators, legislators and policymakers.

We continue to focus on delivering real value to members through cost reduction initiatives, strategic partnerships, and new services that support profitability. Over the next year, we plan to launch new initiatives

that help members stay competitive by leveraging collective purchasing power to secure targeted benefits in key operational areas.

To support these efforts, we have invested in building team capacity and upgrading technology platforms to enhance our operational efficiency.

We have also retained and enhanced our focus on advocacy to make an even stronger case for the independent sector with industry and regulators.

This has amplified members' voices on critical issues, including the Independent Toll Review, Unfair Trading Practices Review, Inquiry into Food Security, Food and Grocery Code of Conduct Review, the ACCC Supermarkets Inquiry and the review of the proposed Food Regulation 2025. You can read more about our advocacy program in the article following.

Our vision is clear: to be the trusted partner in a thriving independent fresh produce sector, through delivering solutions that enable member success and champion the sector's needs.



Sydney Markets Foundation

The Sydney Markets Foundation Cherry Ball continues to be a highlight on the NSW Fresh produce industry calendar. The 2024 auction raised a record-breaking \$165,000 with a single box of cherries!

In preparation for the annual Ball, a team of judges gathered at Sydney Markets to select the finest cherries of the season for the charity auction. Joining the panel was former NRL star Josh Reynolds, who helped choose the winning box from Smith's Fruit in Wangaratta. With nearly 150 years of experience, Smith's Fruit impressed with their exceptional produce, setting the stage for this year's record-breaking event.

The winning bid of \$60,000 was matched by a consortium of businesses and individuals, and there were additional contributions of \$25,000 from Sydney Markets Limited and \$20,000 from Sydney Markets Credit Services.

This incredible event not only put a huge amount of money into the budget of Little Wings, who fly seriously ill country kids to the city for free for lifesaving treatments, it also showcased the fresh produce community's generosity and commitment to making a difference.

Sydney Markets Foundation raised an additional \$50,000 on the night through other fundraising activities, to programs throughout the year.



Little Wings Ambassador Ava Cannon joined the cherry tasting panel

Over the past decade, the Sydney Markets Foundation has raised over one million dollars for individuals, families, hospitals, schools, and communities and we are proud of the fact that almost 100% of the funds raised by Sydney Markets Foundation are directly passed on, thanks in no small part to our staff who all volunteer their time.

Voice of industry

Freshmark is proud to be the united voice of the independent fresh produce sector in New South Wales. We have made a strong investment in advocacy on behalf of industry to ensure our members' perspectives are heard and understood by those who set policy and enact regulations.

The compliance framework in NSW is complex and continually changing, and maintaining compliance is a major logistical and financial burden for businesses in the sector. We are working hard to ensure that regulation is fair, reasonable and fit for purpose.

Our Industry Advocacy Committee brings together operational, regulatory, policy and governance perspectives to assess and guide advocacy opportunities and provide detailed and compelling responses to a range of reviews and inquiries.

There have been numerous significant reviews and inquiries over the past year,

and we have taken every opportunity to outline the way the markets work, what our members and industry need to be successful, and the impacts of ever changing.

We have achieved considerable success, including ensuring that the recent ACCC supermarkets inquiry and the Emerson Inquiry each took a specific lens to fresh produce.

We also worked very closely with industry to make a compelling submission in response to the Draft Food Regulation 2025, which could have put our NSW industry at a huge disadvantage, with severe consequences not only for businesses but for food security. We are still awaiting the outcome of this review but our determined work on this front has resulted in commitments from the regulator to collaborate more closely with us through the second phase of the review.

We are proud of the positive outcomes that our advocacy work has achieved and the connections and conversations which indicate regulators and others are sitting up and taking notice of what we have to say.

With a review of the Horticulture Code of Conduct likely in the near future, we continue to focus on how we can direct our advocacy focus to deliver the best possible outcomes for industry.

Freshmark NSW Chamber of Fresh Produce Limited

Suite B24, 1st Floor,
Market Plaza Building,
Sydney Markets NSW 2129

PO Box 6,
Sydney Markets NSW 2129

nswchamber@freshmark.com.au
P: 02 9764 3244

Board Members

Chairman
Carlo Trimboli
Samson's Fruit & Vegetable
Supply (NSW)
Member-elected Director

Deputy Chairman
Carolyn Miller
Independent Director

Directors
Matt Palise
Red Rich Fruit NSW
Member-elected Director

Steve Barnes
JE Tipper
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Justin Hogg
Chief Financial Officer

Ben Hammond
Marketing Manager

Lindi Shull
Customer Service and Marketing Coordinator

Larisa Vesse
Business Development Specialist

Paddy Fox
Digital Marketing Specialist

Wholesaler Directory

Brismark

Alfred E Chave Pty Ltd

Paul Joseph
07 3379 1071 / 0419 745 719
paulj@alfredechave.com.au

Arcella Banana Company

Patrick Arcella
02 9746 7857 / 0408 133 233
dom.arcella@tropicabanana.com.au

Armstrong Bros Fruit & Veg Merchants

Lachlan Armstrong
07 3379 5344 / 0447 787 094
lachlan@armbros.net.au

Australian Ethical Growers

Claire Crocker
0428 851 699
claire@australianethicalgrowers.com.au

BG Brisbane

Vince Mailli
07 3278 2877 / 0423 780 529
vince@bgbrisbane.com.au

Carter and Spencer

Matthew Spencer
07 3361 5555 / 0438 138 017
matthew.spencer@carter-spencer.com.au

Central Park Produce

Jonathan Goody
07 3193 5240 / 0417 713 235
jon@centralparkproduce.com.au

Costa Group

Allan DeLacey
07 3379 0300 / 0478 477 775
allan.delacey@costagroup.com.au

Cumming Produce Centre

Nick Marentis
07 3379 3409 / 0438 270 672
sales@cummingproduce.com.au

Don Alroe & Sons

Paul Alroe
07 3379 3554 / 0412 755 665
paul@donalroe.com.au

Favco Queensland Pty Ltd

Mark Clarke
07 3717 1500 / 0407 781 792
markc@favcoqld.com.au

Franklin Bros

Robert Hinrichsen
07 3379 5944 / 0412 700 570
robert@kalfresh.com.au

Gibb Bros

Nicholas Gibb
07 3379 9999 / 0419 175 878
nick@gibbbros.com.au

GNL Produce

Jason Lower
07 3278 1275 / 0439 163 267
jason040gnl@gmail.com

Gollagher Bros

Andrew Drummond
0418 116 994
andrew@bardenfarms.com.au

H E Heather & Co Pty Ltd

Troy Beaton
07 3278 2666 / 0419 662 293
troybeaton@heheather.com.au

Ireland 53

Gary Vedelago
07 3379 1131 / 0418 743 028
grantsouthen@yahoo.com

J Allen Pty Ltd

Gary Lower
07 3379 8644 / 0418 709 291
gary@jallen.com.au

J E Tipper Pty Ltd

Steve Barnes
07 3379 1041 / 0435 054 528
steve@jetipper.com.au

J H Leavy & Co

Jacob Darling
07 3379 4659 / 0428 454 979
jacob@jhleavy.com.au

John Potter Pty Ltd

Mark Murphy
0418 798 462
vanessa@jpbrisbane.com

King Pak Australia

Jack George
07 3717 1400 / 0408 459 867
jack@simongeorge.com.au

KLS Farm Produce

Steven Wright
0477 887 401
admin@klsproduce.com.au

Lavender & Sons

Gary Lavender
07 3278 5082 / 0456 701 189
gwl2@bigpond.com

Lind & Sons Pty Ltd

Fraser Lind
07 3379 7999 / 0418 714 528
lindandsons@lindandsons.com.au

M & D Vegetable Specialists Pty Ltd

Mark Moore
07 3379 5500 / 0418 784 249
markmoore072@hotmail.com

Marendy & Sons Produce

Mary Marendy
07 3379 1384
marendyandsons@bigpond.com

Market Egg Supplies

Peter Marinos
0413 639 171
peter@bigmichaels.com.au

Marland Mushrooms

Troy Marland
07 3278 1112 / 0439 968 878
admin@marlandmushrooms.com.au

Murray Bros

Stephen Edwards
07 3875 8100 / 0438 949 911
sedwards@murraybros.com.au

O'Toole Produce

Paul O'Toole
07 3278 1700 / 0429 100 500
paul@otoole.net.au

Perfection Fresh Australia Pty Ltd

Jane Rowles
07 3310 3900 / 0400 877 020
jane.rowles@perfection.com.au

Pershause Produce

Peter Kedwell
07 3379 3034 / 0419 673 344
pk@asbarr.com

Priority Produce

Steven Rosten
07 3915 4140 / 0413 199 904
Steve@priorityproduce.com.au

R W Pascoe

Noel Greenhalgh
07 3379 2686 / 0417 744 935
noel@rwpascoe.com.au

Rising Sun Produce

Christian Hoath
07 3278 0555 / 0427 747 464
info@risingsun.net.au

Romeo's Marketing (QLD)

Debbie Trimboli
07 3278 5455 / 0412 967 107
debbie@rmqld.com.au

Shamrock Marketing

Bob Koning
07 3915 5010 / 0408 727 027
Bobkoning67@gmail.com

So Crisp

Craig Chard
07 3278 2133 / 0419 734 587
craig@socrisp.com.au

Stanton & Son

Marc Stanton
07 3294 8029 / 0418 872 905
stantoninvestments@bigpond.com

Sutton Fresh Direct

Richard Sutton
0434 157 900
admin@suttonfreshdirect.com.au

Top Class Fruit Supply

John Mastroianni
07 3278 6188 / 0419 930 830
john@topclassfruit.com.au

United Lettuce

Daniel Spoto
07 3379 9288 / 0402 273 090
dan_spoto@hotmail.com

United Organics

Martin Meek
07 3278 5997 / 0418 982 625
martin@unitedorganics.com.au

Viva Produce

Paul Veivers
07 3379 7309 / 0418 452 594
paul@bananaripeners.com.au

Wholesale Produce Australia
 Douglas Rylance
 07 3278 1724 / 0418 748 096
 doug@fruitlink.com.au

Fresh State

AMV Fresh
 Vince Natoli
 0408 996 200 / 03 9401 5640
 admin@amvfresh.com.au

Antonello Produce Pty Ltd
 Adrian Antonello
 0423 415 213 / 03 9069 9264
 admin@antonelloproduce.com.au

Arcella Banana Company Pty Ltd
 Patrick Arcella
 0418 471 114
 abcbananas@bigpond.com

Aus Asia Produce
 Al-Quoc Truong
 0422 778 838
 thanh@ausasiaproduce.com.au

Ausberry Farmers Group Pty Ltd
 Emanuele
 0413 189 870
 emanuele@ausberryfarmers.com.au

Australian Strawberry Company Pty Limited
 Joe Ripepi
 0419 598 535 / 03 5964 4371
 asdvc@bigpond.net.au

Barkers Fresh Produce
 Alan (Ross) Barker
 0418 867 860 / 03 9408 4860
 ross@btfc.com.au

Big Valley Produce Pty Ltd
 Vince Scarso
 0414 695 423 / 03 9401 5874
 Office.Admin@bigvalleyproduce.com.au

Biodynamic Marketing Co. Ltd
 Peter De Podolinsky
 0408 390 751 / 03 9212 0000
 peter@biodynamic.com.au

Brescia Wholesalers
 Gerard Amalfi
 0418 861 011 / 03 9401 9600
 accounts@brescia-ws.com.au

BRP Wholesalers Pty Ltd
 Garry Pasini
 0411 517 999 / 03 9689 1212
 brpwholesalers@bigpond.com

C & S Ponte Produce Pty Ltd
 Lou Ponte
 0417 053 870 / 03 9408 8777
 pts@ponte.com.au

Coolibah Herbs Pty Ltd
 Jenny Bogicevic
 0409 302 043 / 03 5998 2217
 jenny@coolibah.com.au

D & J Fruits
 Domenic Piccolo
 0417 014 642 / 03 9401 2479
 dandjfruits@gmail.com

Dykes Bros Pty Ltd
 Mark Dykes
 0417 545 456 / 03 9401 2479
 mark@dykesbros.com

Emilio's Finest Pty Ltd
 Mark Lorenzetto
 0408 386 751
 mark@emiliosfinest.com.au

F Legudi Pty Ltd
 Dominic Legudi
 0438 395 283 / 03 9645 6543
 legudi@ozemail.com.au

Ferrinda Fresh Pty Ltd
 Ross Ferrinda
 0419 549 594 / 03 9408 5555
 ross@ferrindafresh.com.au

Flavorite Marketing Pty Ltd
 Michael Nichol
 0418 542 176 / 03 8372 5610
 mike.nichol@flavorite.com.au

Flowerdale Sprout Farm Pty Ltd
 Charles Rattray
 0409 937 992 / 03 5780 2347
 charles@flowerdalefarm.com.au

Fresh Berry Co Pty Ltd
 Tony Pettinella
 0418 551 394 / 03 9739 1305
 accounts@freshberryco.com.au

Fresh Cut Processors Australia Pty Ltd
 Ken Alush
 0410 729 921 / 03 8405 3262
 ken@freshcutprocessors.com.au

Fresh Exchange Pty Ltd (Costa Farms Pty Ltd)
 Wayne Johnston
 03 8363 9000
 wayne.johnston@costagroup.com.au

Fresh Growers Pty Ltd
 Allan Favero
 0418 300 022 / 03 5997 1343
 freshgrowers@internode.on.net

Fresh Point Pty Ltd
 David Bacchin
 0408 014 147
 davidbacchin@outlook.com

Freshmax Australia Pty Ltd
 David Smith
 03 9688 5558
 accounts@freshmax.com.au

G Ferlazzo & Co Pty Ltd
 Shane Clay
 0438 796 933
 info@gferlazzo.com.au

Gab and Nick Dellios Pty Ltd
 Nick Dellios
 0418 503 991
 sales@delliosapples.com.au

Gazzola Farms Pty Ltd
 Paul Gazzola
 0418 556 366 / 03 5977 8921
 paul@gazzolafarms.com.au

Geelong Citrus Packers Pty Ltd
 Andrew Thierry
 0418 506 619
 office@geelongcitrus.com.au

Granieri's Fresh Produce Pty Ltd
 Joseph Granieri
 0414 695 424 / 03 9401 5050
 gfpmelbourne@outlook.com

H & C Produce
 Elliot Cucinotta
 0498 998 814
 hcproduce@bigpond.com

Hygiene Packers Pty Ltd
 Joe Coniglione
 0406 581 907
 accounts@hygienepackers.com

Independent Fresh Produce Pty Ltd
 David De Vincentis
 0413 240 635 / 03 9401 5495
 admin@independenfp.com

Just Onions Pty Ltd
 Alan Thierry
 0419 297 499 / 03 5229 7499
 alanthierry@bigpond.com

Kapiris Bros (Vic) Pty Ltd
 Harry Kapiris
 0407 536 733 / 03 8401 1000
 info@kapirisbros.com.au

L A Produce Pty Ltd
 Angelo Usai
 0413 528 655 / 03 9401 4603
 laproduce@westnet.com.au

Latorres Fruit & Vegetable Wholesalers Pty Ltd
 Rocco Grillo
 0419 520 578 / 03 9408 9856
 latorres@bigpond.com

Loc Bros Produce
 Paul Ngyugen
 0412 171 454
 locbrosproduce@gmail.com

Louis Melbourne Pty Ltd
 Con Karanicolos
 0414 399 114 / 03 9689 9033
 con@louismelbourne.com.au

Lowe Farms Pty Ltd
 Andrew Lowe
 0402 839 592 / 03 9772 1082
 office@lowefarms.com.au

M & N Fresh Produce
 Nick Conidi
 0411 635 094 / 03 9408 0596
 admin@mnfresh.com

Market City Fruits Pty Ltd
 Robert Thompson
 0427 870 723 / 03 9408 0451
 marketcf@bigpond.com

Mazcorp5 Pty Ltd Ricky Mazaris 0408 444 518 admin@mazcorp5.com.au	Produce Time Pty Ltd Shane Schnitzler 0498 110 014 shane@prodtime.com.au	Fresh State Associate Member Achieve Temperature Pty Ltd Leigh Cummin 0412 353 372 / 03 9708 2544 cool@achievetemperature.com.au
Medici Wholesalers Pty Ltd Matt Medici 0438 385 619 / 03 9744 4488 mediciwholesalers@hotmail.com	Rosengal Wholesale Pty Ltd Cristian Misiti 0421 356 083 cristian@rosengal.com.au	Alpha Produce Group Ilia Voulgaris 0418 562 801 accounts@alphaproducegroup.com.au
Melba Fresh Organics Pty Ltd Lou Ponte 0418 343 536 / 03 9401 1188 lou.ponte@melbafresh.com.au	RTJV Holdings Trust Vince Barca 0425 822 826 vince@stateaccountinggroup.com.au	Approach Refrigeration Philip Dodds 0417 742 728 phil@approachgrp.com.au
Melba Fresh Pty Ltd. Lou Ponte 0418 343 536 / 03 9401 1188 lou.ponte@melbafresh.com.au	S H Chin Bros Pty Ltd Albie and Nick Chin 0419 991 975 / 03 9408 8333 nickc@comcen.com.au	Bigfield Fruit Veg Basam Hilsaca 0412 676 344 / 03 9390 1904 big.fields.fruit.veg@hotmail.com
Morco Fresh Steven Grillo 0417 383 302 steven.grillo@morcofresh.com.au	Sculli & Co Melbourne Phillip Basile 0418 391 610 admin@sculli.com.au	City Fresh Wholesalers Pty Ltd Anthony Mutton 0412 051 159 / 03 9354 7377 anthony@cityfreshwholesalers.com.au
Mountain Fresh Wholesale Domenic Pompei 0430 991 890 accounts@mountainfreshwholesale.com	Stilo Fresh Pty Ltd Joseph Stilo 0418 344 037 / 03 9401 5771 admin@stilofresh.com.au	Commercial & General Coolrooms Cyril Saltmarsh 0412 335 866 / 03 9587 1830 accounts@commgen.com.au
Mumford Wholesalers Pty Ltd Frank Maiuto 0418 500 318 / 03 9401 9888 frank@mumfords.com.au	Ten Farms Pty Ltd Anthony Holman 0458 162 833 / 03 9508 5683 bananas@tenfarms.com.au	Damoli Forklifts Daniel Bykersma 0429 927 883 daniel@damoli.com.au
Mushroom Mania James Loe 0403 253 689 jloe02@yahoo.com	The Fruit Specialists Joe Amalfi 0418 869 011 / 03 9687 6011 joe@fruitspec.com.au	Direct Harvest Carl Ponte 0418 995 080 accounts@directharvest.com.au
Old Oak Orchard Andrew Corbett 0418 551 193 andrewcorbett.acc@gmail.com	The Grape House Group Pty Ltd Charlie Costa 0418 502 424 charlie@grapehouse.com.au	Freni & Doria Pty Ltd Vince Doria 0418 374 168 / 03 5998 1233 admin@frenidoria.com.au
Opaljade Pty Ltd Charles Chan 0411 387 124 / 03 9401 5593 office@opaljade.net	The Great Australian Mushroom Co Pty Ltd Wes Arnott 0433 889 929 / 03 9401 1988 gramcoadmin@bigpond.com	Fresh Mix Produce Pty Ltd Tai Nguyen 0432 808 827 admin@freshmixproduce.com.au
Perfection Fresh Australia Pty Ltd Michael Simonetta 0400 822 222 / 02 9763 1877 michael@perfection.com.au	The Melbourne Pear Co Pty Ltd Robert Apted 0419 005 588 / 03 9401 3137 sue@melbournepear.com.au	Glynn Harvey Pty Ltd Glynn Harvey 0484 766 861 / 03 5278 6135 glynnndharvey@bigpond.com
Premier Fresh Australia Anthony Di Pietro 0487 888 249 / 03 9687 7725 jennie.cannistra@lpgroup.com.au	Tripod Farmers Joe Ruffo 0401 774 171 / 03 5367 4861 joe@tripodfarmers.com.au	Greenlands Wholesale Ross Pezzano 019 356 445 ross@greenlandsfruit.com.au
Prestige Produce Vince Brancatisano 0419 582 039 / 03 8401 3144 admin@prestigeproduce.com.au	Velisha Wholesalers (Melbourne) Pty Ltd Vince Brancatisano 0419 582 039 / 03 9408 4651 vince@prestigeproduce.com.au	JB Unloading P/L John Bartalotta 0418 345 598 jbunloading@gmail.com
Priest Bros Marketing Pty Ltd Jeanine Priest 0400 516 322 / 03 5941 2416 admin@priestorchards.com	VFS Produce Pty Ltd Antonio Siciliano 0418 170 489 / 03 9401 5454 vfspro@bigpond.net.au	JP Fruit Peter Cheesewright 0419 408 209 p.cheesewright@bigpond.com
Produce of Virginia Peter Tran 0421 152 048 / 03 9408 7567 office@produceofvirginia.com.au	Young Sang & Co (Aust) Pty Ltd Joe Palumbo 0418 102 117 / 03 9401 1266 accounts@youngsang.com.au	Meadow Hills Marketing Pty Ltdx David Shaw 0419 892 684 / 03 8787 5077 accounts@meadowhills.com.au

Mega Produce Pty Ltd

Tran Thi Ngoc Minh
0428 414 923
megaproduce@icloud.com

NU Fruit Pty Ltd

Dean Campagna
0418 800 409 / 03 5723 7200
bellt@nufruit.com.au

NWA Mushroom

Stephen Lee
0477 141 162 / 03 9408 9990
nwamushroom@gmail.com

Organic Growers Group

Jen Osborne
0448 051 142 / 03 8401 3212
Info@organicgrowersgroup.com.au

Paul Phillips Transport Pty Ltd

Paul Phillips
0428 359 375 / 03 5996 7343
pptransport@bigpond.com

Piedimonte's

Joe Piedimonte
0418 896 066 / 03 9481 1600
info@piedimonte.com.au

Rainfresh Vic Pty Ltd

Dean Campagna
03 8379 9300
accounts@rainfresh.com.au

Ray Gregory & Sons Pty Ltd

Raymond Gregory
0438 508 610
office@rgregory.com.au

Road Fresh Transport Pty Ltd

Nina Manariti
0417 372 684
musicoandmanariti@bigpond.com

Robinson's Fresh Solutions

Mark Robinson
0437 833 522 / 03 9408 5679
operations@robinsonsunloading.com.au

Rudge Produce Systems Pty Ltd

Terence Rudge
0419 335 802 / 03 9408 4645
hrudge@rudge.com.au

Sheren Electrics

Glenn Williams
0418 311 908 / 03 9457 6199
shelley@sheren.com.au

SHV Wholesalers

Peter Behrakis
0418 120 686 / 03 6234 3754
peter@behrakisgroup.com

Simon George & Sons Pty Ltd

Jackson George
0408 459 867 / 07 3717 1400
jgeorge@simongeorge.com.au

Tasmanian Freight Services Pty Ltd

Robert Watts
0419 117 816 / 03 6426 1201
tfsmkt@tasfreight.com.au

Toyota Material Handling (TMH)

Brad White
0437 102 090 / 0411 721 112
Brad.white@tmha.com.au

Freshmark

A & M KAZZI & SONS PTY LIMITED
Fred Kazzi
02 9746 3284 / 0418 292959
fred@kazzifresh.com.au

AKROPOL FRUIT & VEGETABLE SUPPLIES PTY LTD

Harry Emmanoilidis
02 9764 3266 / 0411 655 510
harry@akropol.com.au

ALL SEASONS PRODUCE PTY LTD

Dominic Pisciuneri
02 9746 5145 / 0417 375 279
sales@allseasonsproduce.com.au

ALVARO BROTHERS PTY LIMITED

Tony Alvaro
02 9746 8485 / 0417 264 088
admin@alvarob.com.au

ANTICO INTERNATIONAL PTY LTD

John Antico
02 9764 3833 / 0418 647 070
john@antico.com.au

APOLLO FRUIT SUPPLIES

John Murray
02 9746 8613 / 0418 648 942
john@apollofruit.com.au

ARCELLA BANANAS

Rosa Arcella-Downie
02 9746 7857 / 0413 114 933
rosa@tropicabanana.com.au

ARTHUR YEE PTY LTD

Rebecca Couani
02 9746 7204 / 0414 338 324
arthur.yee333@gmail.com

AUSTRALIAN GLOBAL MARKETING

Ray Khoury-Harb
02 9764 1600 / 0414 440 550
ray@australianglobal.com

BOUSTANI BROS

Charlie Boustani
02 9764 2782 / 0414 337 799
boustanibros@bigpond.com.au

CAMPBELL FARMS

Mark Kay
02 9764 3674 / 0414 483 943
office@campbellfarms.net.au

COL JOHNSON & CO. PTY LTD

Joe Barbara
02 9764 3899 / 0418 614 821
joeb@coljohnson.com.au

CRINITI BROS

Frank Criniti
02 9764 1023 / 0418 168 362
frank@crinitibros.biz

D & V VARACALLI PTY LTD

Dean Varacalli
02 9764 2764 / 0415 417 088
dvvaracalli@telstra.com

DAVID RUSSO PTY LIMITED

David Healey
02 9746 7626
david.healey@davidrusso.com.au

E.A. SMALL & CO PTY LTD

Neville Hession
02 9764 2469 / 0411 746 295
Neville.hession@yahoo.com.au

EXOTIC FRUIT TRADERS

Alf Costa
02 9746 8311 / 0419 686 662
tina@exotic.com.au

EXPRESS FRUIT SERVICE

Greg McConnell
02 9764 3268 / 0412 858 995
gregm@expressfruit.com.au

FRESH PRODUCE GROUP OF AUSTRALIA PTY LIMITED

Robert Nugan
02 9704 8380 / 0418 673 486
enquiries@freshproduce.net.au

G & T SERGI

John Sergi
02 9631 9022 / 0408 223 830
michael.sergi@bigpond.com

GOLDEN FRUIT SUPPLY

Jason Hendriks
02 9764 3799 / 0409 971 975
jason@goldenfruit.com.au

GRECH & BORG PTY LTD

Joanne Stone
02 9746 6499 / 0418 453 386
mail@grechborg.com.au

HARRY SUN PTY LTD

Michael Murone
02 9764 2617 / 0417 669 481
michaelmurone@me.com

J E TIPPER PTY LTD

Steve Barnes
02 9763 1323 / 0435 054 528
steve@jetipper.com.au

J.H. GOTTS TRUST

Warren Scanlon
02 9764 3599 / 0407 777 719
warren@jhgotts.net.au

LEMDELL

Frank Capobianco
02 9764 4888 / 0418 644 888
admin@lemdell.com.au

MACRI FRUIT

George Macri
02 9325 6647 / 0419 401 695
macrifruitdistributors@gmail.com

MINITOONS PTY LTD

Michael Gigliotti
02 46477255 / 0419 227 244
mick@towngrocer.com.au

MINT PRODUCE

Mick Mintoff
02 9746 7236 / 0418 211 277
mick@mintproduce.com.au

MORCO FRESH WHOLESALE

Stephen Moraitis
02 9574 5999 / 0408 641 160
wholesale@morcofresh.com.au

MURPHY'S PRODUCE

Murphy Moses
02 9746 3799 / 0414 224 831
murphy@murphysproduce.com.au

NEW FRESH AUSTRALIA

Ross Lagudi
02 9764 4322 / 0419 633 850
ross@newfresh.com.au

PERFECTION FRESH AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

Michael Simonetta
02 9763 1877 / 0400 822 222
michael@perfection.com.au

PHIL'S PREFERRED FRUIT PTY LTD

Phillip Bugeja
02 9763 2399 / 0416 229 505
info@preferredfruit.com.au

PREMIER FRESH AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

John Giuffre
02 8754 9002 / 0417 683 070
jgiuffre@lpgroup.com.au

RALPH JOHNS PTY LTD

Ralph Johns
02 9764 4566 / 0418 977 571
sales@ralphjohns.com

RAW FRESH PTY LTD

James Kohler
02 9325 6299 / 0414 186 612
sales@rawfresh.com.au

RAY K GHALLOUB & SONS PTY LIMITED

Joe Ghalloub
02 9764 2693 / 0419 258 630
joe@raykghalloub.com.au

REARDON BROS

Mark Reardon
02 9746 6175 / 0408 771 781
admin@reardonbros.com.au

RED RICH FRUIT

Matthew Palise
02 9675 7395 / 0488 197 837
matt@redrichfruitsnsw.com.au

ROCTOM PRODUCE GROUP PTY LTD

Rocco Tomarchio
02 9764 3810 / 0418 404 870
roy@roctomproduce.com.au

SAMSONS FRUIT & VEGETABLE SUPPLY

Carlo Trimboli
02 9746 9505 / 0400 247 571
carlo@samsonsfruit.com.au

SINCLAIR & ANTICO (AUST) PTY LTD

Joe Antico
02 9746 5504 / 0418 960 696
joe@antico.net.au

SYNERGY BANANAS

Tristan Harris
02 9764 5511 / 0413 022 190
tharris@harrisfarm.com.au

T & F MARKETING

Tony Campisi
02 9746 0442 / 0418 204 501
tcampisi2@gmail.com

T RAINSFORD

Rocky Lagudi
02 9746 6703 / 0408 289 255
accounts@trainsford.com.au

THE N & A FRUIT DISTRIBUTORS

Robert Cathels
02 9764 3622 / 0418 263 690
rob@nagroup.com.au

THOMSON'S FRESH PRODUCE

Scott Thompson
02 9746 8883 / 0423 624 239
scott@thompsonfresh.com.au

VALLEY VIEW PRODUCE

Joe Muscatello
02 9746 5660 / 0418 480 356
joe@valleyviewproduce.com.au

WHITE PRINCE MARKETS PTY LTD

Matthew Fensom
0438 556 890
info@whiteprincemarkets.com.au

WING CHONG & CO

William Yip Yee
02 9746 6094 / 0409 530 338
wyee70@bigpond.com

ZAPPIA BROTHERS/ZAPPIA PRODUCE GROUP

PTY LTD
Joseph Zappia
02 9746 1600 / 0412 419 059
joseph@zappiaproducegroup.com.au

PARISI AUSTRALIA

Julian Parisi
0416 319 158
julian@parisisydney.com

Freshmark Associate Member**BAGNATO**

Domenic Camera

0418 863 763

accounts@bagnato.net.au

FLEMINGTON UNLOADING

Daniel Ter Wisscher
02 9325 6011 / 0401 885 585
daniel@flemingtonunloading.com.au

MARINUCCI PACKAGING

Charles Marinucci
0413 201 542
charlesm@marinucci.com.au

THE FRESH FRUIT TEAM (T/A UNCLE TONY'S)

Fadel Afionni
02 9325 6733 / 0400 642 471
fadel.afionni@tfft.com.au

TRIMS UNLOADING SERVICES

Glen Trimboli
0407 027 997
accounts@trimsunloading.com

VELUTTIS (SAWGRASS)

John Velutti
0407 402 038
john@vellutis.com.au

Freshmark Retailer Member**FRANKS FRUIT MARKET**

John Velutti
02 9798 6388 / 0407 402 038
bree@velutti.au

FRUIT FOR ALL BERKELEY VALE

Tony Hagistefanis
02 4388 4450 / 0418 428 254
fruit4all@bigpond.com

FRUITEZY MAROUBRA

Rosa Filipe
02 9188 3688
maroubra@fruitezy.com.au

FRUITEZY MIRANDA

Max Filipe
02 9524 4161 / 0418 972 170
miranda@fruitezy.com.au

FRUIT WORLD PENRITH

Felicia DeFrancesco
0404 822 619
info@fruitworldpenrith.com.au

GRIMA BROTHERS

Peter Grima
0402 623 258
grima.bros@outlook.com

HARBORD GROWERS MARKET

Anthony Gerace
02 9949 4355 / 0430 036 956
harbordgrowers1@bigpond.com.au

KING ANANAS

Bill Moussa
0419 276 970
kingananascasula@bigpond.com

MINCHINBURY FRUIT MARKET

Craig Gauci
02 9625 8021 / 0419 485 463
craig@minchinburyfruitmarket.com.au

PARISI'S FOOD HALL

Peter Morelli
02 9371 2411 / 0416 047 551
peterm@parisisfoodhall.com.au

PRESIDENT AVENUE FRUIT WORLD

Avtar Singh
02 9587 9840 / 0413 196 714
avtarsingh267@gmail.com

ROSSI'S FRESH

Stephen Rossi
02 9871 6455 / 0405 387 181
stephen@rossisfresh.com.au

THE GLENBROOK GROCER

Karl Rogge
02 4739 6735 / 0401 540 959
heinrich.rogge@hotmail.com

TOWN GROCER

Michael Gigliotti
02 4647 7255 / 0419 227 244
mick@towngrocer.com.au

TRIMS FRESH MERRYLANDS

Talal Khanifer
02 9637 4007 / 0434 432 639
accounts@trimsmerrylands.com.au

WESTPOINT GROWERS

Cindy Wehbe
0414 893 822
westpointgrowers@live.com.au

WILLOUGHBY FRESH

Ray Scala
02 9958 3541
willoughbyfresh@bigpond.com

PLUMPTON FRUIT WORLD

Vince Mazzafro
02 9625 2908 / 0416 251 733
veeman01@live.com.au

South Australian Chamber

R & B Rotolo
Domenic Cusenza
0414 133 205 / (08) 8349 4166
info@rotolo.com.au

Jammal Produce

Mukhtar Mohammadi
0424 472 998 / (08) 8349 4793
accounts@jammalproduce.com

Hi Tech Fresh

Rick Musolino
0413 493 263 / (08) 8380 9255
hitechfresh@musogroup.com.au

Bache Bros

Peter Mercurio
0407 836 386 / (08) 8349 4311
peter@bache.com.au

Hillview Fresh

Bill Filsell
0413 488 663 / (08) 8349 9993
hillviewfresh@bigpond.com

Adelaide Hydro Fresh

Mark Russo
0411 423 214 / (08) 8380 9104
mark@hydrofresh.net.au

George Polverino Pty Ltd

George Polverino
0418 814 100 / (08) 8349 4559
polverino@internode.on.net

AF Parker & Sons

Brian Parker
0417 171 954 / (08) 8349 5579
afparker@bigpond.com

Mercurio Bros

Nick Mercurio
0418 819 188 / (08) 8349 5168
nick@mecuriobros.com.au

Mondello Produce Plus

Sage Mondello
0404 651 566 / (08) 8380 9855
sagem@mondelloproduceplus.com.au

D & G Fresh Fruit Distributors

Peter Koukos
0415 993 355 / (08) 8349 6249
peter@dgfresh.com.au

SA Mushrooms

Nat Femia
0416 198 787
samushrooms@samushrooms.com.au

Rainbow Fresh Direct

Juliet Tripodi
0417 831 929 / (08) 8262 5510
sales@rainbowfresh.com.au

Farmhouse Fresh SA

Tony Manno
0411 146 393 / (08) 8359 6123
farmhouseSA@freshgroup.com.au

Fresh Pick

Nick Scopelitis
0419 776 767 / (08) 8349 5540
viviens@adam.com.au

Deandy Packaging

Dean Maddock
0418 829 173
dean@marketbagsupply.com.au

GT Produce

Sonny Vu Pham
0427 499 661 / (08) 8349 6911
gtproduce@senet.com.au

4 Ways Fresh Produce

Darren Tan
0467 858 661 / (08) 8380 8317
D.T@4waysfresh.com.au

Costa Farms

Sam Mingoia
0466 742 420 / (08) 8349 5044
Sam.Mingoia@costagroup.com.au

Zerella Fresh

Bill Thomolaris
0417 872 227 / (08) 8380 9096
billthomolaris@zerella.com.au

Merchant Street Wholesalers Pty Ltd

Nick Pesa
0431 759 018 / (08) 8300 2706
nick@merchantstreet.com.au

Fruitorama

Vincent Raschella
0433 072 621 / (08) 8349 6055
admin@fruitorama.com.au

Premier Fresh

Joe Trimboli
0412 132 785 / (08) 8162 2400
joe.trimboli@lpgroup.com.au

Russo Produce

Nathan Russo
0421 337 177 / (08) 8349 6611
nathan@russoproduce.com.au

BD & MD Nicol & Son

Doug Nicol
0418 825 716 / (08) 8349 7008
market@nicolcarrots.com.au

Lenswood Produce Company

Steve Tripodi
0418 823 020 / (08) 8389 8300
lpcsales@lenswoodcoop.com.au

Zizzo Fresh

Joe Priolo
0408 255 010
admin@zizzofresh.com.au

Country Crisp Fresh Produce

Xen Nikitopoulos
0418 806 719 / (08) 8349 4234
countrycrisp@optusnet.com.au

Belperio Brothers

George Belperio
0408 828 620 / (08) 8337 8138
vabelperio@internode.on.net

AC Gibson Pty Ltd

Brent Gibson
0417 863 060
brentg@internode.on.net

Pogas Produce

Ben Pogas
0439 847 218 / (08) 8349 5909
pogasproduce@gmail.com

Scalzi Produce

Fab Scalzi
0419 820 644 / (08) 8349 6899
fab@scalzi.com.au

Flavell's Fruit Sales

Glyndon Flavell
0419 804 541 / (08) 8349 4238
sales@flavells.com.au

The Fresh Fruit for You Produce Co

Walter Gallarello
0400 834 243 / (08) 8349 6642
admin@freshfruitforyou.com.au

Ceravolo Orchards

Tony Ceravolo
0417 825 578 / (08) 8349 5124
tony@rceravolo.com

TC Luong

Charlie Luong
0418 808 118 / (08) 8262 8779
bichle72@icloud.com

United Fresh

Nat Fazzari
0401 555 573 / (08) 8349 8933
unitedfresh@bigpond.com

Merenda Wholesalers Adelaide

Joe Merenda
0417 873 071 / (08) 8349 5056
admin@merenda.com.au

Market West

4 Ways Fresh
Paul Harvey
0431 309 122
p.harvey@4waysfresh.com.au

5 A Day Fresh Produce

Loi Tan Nguyen
0402 840 179
pnhfreshproduce@gmail.com

Allstates Fruit and Veg Merchants

Linh Truong
0423 388 215
linh@allstatesmerchants.com.au

Australian Produce Brokers

Trish Skinner
0417 029 607
trish@apbperth.com.au

Brian Fresh Produce

Trung Quang Lam
0405 423 666
bfp@tlglobalfoods.com.au

Bullfrog International

Graham Morgan
0419 914 455
frog@bull.com.au

Cream of the Crop

Frankie Galati
0450 030 925
frankie@galatibros.com.au

Cream of the Crop Centrepoint

Frankie Galati
0450 030 925
frankie@galatibros.com.au

Direct Produce Distributors

Karmelo Vlahov
0433 154 638
karmelo@dpd.com.au

Eliash Produce

Michael Tairy
0411 696 088
accounts@edenpower.net.au

EPT Produce

Barry Barone
0406 537 696
barone96@bigpond.com

Etherington

Grant Etherington
0418 952 139
grant@etherington.org

Fresh Express Produce Pty Ltd

Bruce Bergmans
0419 046 437
bruce@fresh-express.com.au

Key Produce

Richard Bloomfield
0419 747 201
richard@keyproduce.com.au

La Manna Premier Group

Ty Hudson
0403 466 413
ty.hudson@lpgroup.com.au

Lantzke & Sons

Troy Lantzke
0438 945 520
admin@lantzke.com.au

Mercer Mooney

Paul Neale
0423 591 368
pneale@mercernooney.com.au

Organic Fresh Australia

Mathew Jay
0410 551 714
jez@organicfreshaustralia.com

Patane Produce / Carbarns

Pennie Patane
0407 993 580
pennie@pataneproduce.com.au

Perfection Fresh Australia

James Ryan
0425 362 974
james@perfection.com.au

Quality Produce International

Chris Langley
0417 939 075
chris@qualityproduce.com.au

Summer Fruit Sales

Frankie Galati
0450 030 925
frankie@galatibros.com.au

WA Farm Direct

Brad Mercer
0418 924 865
admin@wafarmdirect.com.au

Produce Brokers WA Pty Ltd

Matthew Coccilone
0411 448 248
matthew@betaspuds.com.au

Market West Associate Member

Bullet Produce
John Aufdemkampe
0412 955 458
john@bulletproduce.com.au

Country Pak Wholesale

Ian Johnston
0488 664 241
admin@countrypak.com.au

Vision Produce

Thomas Lobban
0427 771 989
tom@visionproduce.com.au

Sunlong

Mark Sun
0402 106 688
admin@sunlong.com.au

Market West Affiliate Member

HPS Transport
Ivor Mofflin
9456 0779
ivor@hpstransport.com

Okey Dokey Produce

Jeff Grubisa
0418 222 975
jeff@keyproduce.com.au





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Homebush West, NSW 2142

Tel: 02 9325 6200 **Fax:** 02 9325 6288 **Email:** info@sydneymarkets.com

sydneymarkets.com.au



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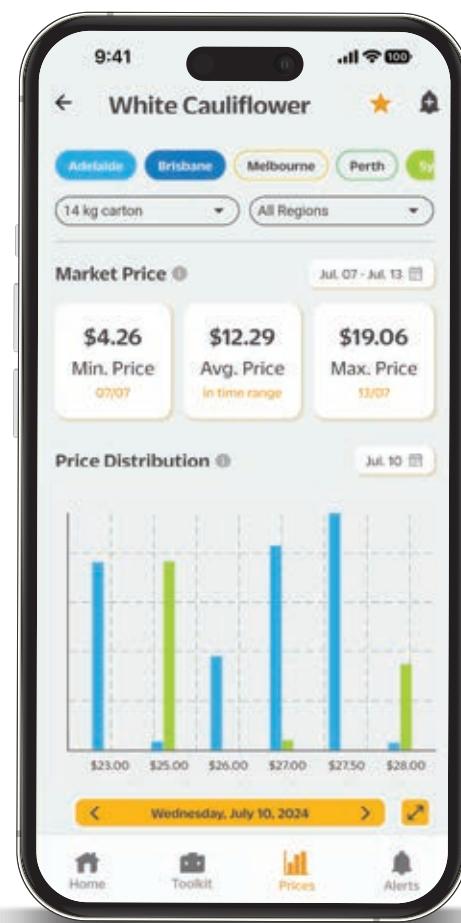
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