



FMA

FRESH MARKETS AUSTRALIA

EDITION 14

YEAR BOOK



THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF FRUIT & VEGETABLE INDUSTRIES LIMITED



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Message from the Chair

Shane Schnitzler, Chair, Fresh Markets Australia



What a year for FMA!

Australian agriculture is scaling new heights in value across the board, with production forecast to rise by 6% to \$85 billion in 2024–25. These figures highlight the resilience and dedication of the horticulture sector as the third largest agricultural industry, and our partners in business. This growth comes despite challenges faced by farmers who continue to contend with upwards pressure on input costs and extreme weather events nationally. Recent years of unimaginable disruption have proven to us all that we are able to adapt. This has been further proven by the decline in overall economic growth as a result of higher interest rates forcing changes in consumer behaviour.

Each day in this role as Chair I continue to be impressed by our members, and energised by my colleagues who collectively contribute to the total annual turnover of businesses in the Central Markets exceeding \$7 billion.

I'd like to acknowledge our collective wins, which have come not without many challenges, while using this message to outline the plan for the following year as FMA continues with its key strategic commitment to promoting and representing the Central Markets System.

Year in Review: The Fruits of Our Labour

As many would recall, FMA had ambitious targets when it was first established as the national organisation representing each of the five Market Chambers to provide a national position on industry and government issues. This visionary approach is now proving fruitful for us all, particularly in the areas of governmental relations and access. Under the leadership of our General Manager Gail Woods we have made significant headway in growing these relationships to give our members a voice in some of the most critical conversations for our sector. The Food and Grocery Code Review is but one example, with FMA invited to the table before formal review submissions opened. This speaks to the professionalism and trust FMA has earned.

FMA has been on the front foot in providing submissions and critical information to this any other related inquiries and reviews, including case studies of poor behaviour by the major supermarkets which have pushed independent grocers out.

FMA intends to use this rare opportunity to continue promoting the benefits of purchasing from our Central Markets and influence consumer behaviour because we know we have a great story to tell, particularly when highlighting the fact that we sell all of crops, unlike the major supermarkets under scrutiny for practices.

Programs and Partnerships Flourish

For the first time in 2024, FMA held its inaugural Board Meeting in Canberra which saw board members travel to our nation's capital for a rare chance to meet in person before having the opportunity to hold one on one meetings with departmental officials and key horticulture groups. This was a resounding success and an opportunity to not only build rapport within FMA but also to create wider awareness of the organisation's work. We're very much looking forward to the next one.

When reflecting on partnerships there has been no bigger achievement than what we have been able to achieve with Hort Connections and AUSVEG which now positions us all as collaborators as opposed to competition. This has resulted in extraordinary benefits for members across the organisations in achieving a louder voice to government, and faster circulation of information to our members. We look forward to continuing these meaningful relationships.

Our growing industry positioning earned FMA a Federal Government grant to assist our ongoing work on the FreshData Project, which is aimed at delivering a Verifiable Market Price Reporting scheme. This project is important to demonstrate how deeply committed we are to ensuring transparency and fairness in the trading of fresh produce. A key part of the project's success continues to be consultation, and so we say thanks to the wholesalers and state industry bodies who continue to assist us. Furthermore I'd like to stress the importance of participation from all stakeholders across the supply chain who will be critical to promoting trust and confidence during the implementation of a new standard of price reporting which will benefit us all.





Supporting industry compliance with the regulatory framework of the Horticulture Code of Conduct is a top priority for FMA as demonstrated by the significant effort to communicate the trading environment of the central markets supply chain to the ACCC. We have continued to further strengthen this engagement.

Engagement Strategy

The 2024 vision is to strengthen FMA's national consumer magazine 'A Better Choice' is more important now than ever before as it's pulling \$8.3 billion dollars worth of fruit and vegetables under one banner to educate consumers about the quality, service and freshness of produce at their local fruit and vegetable shop. I've been truly blown away by the success of this free publication, which continues to grow in distribution and demand. 'A Better Choice' is playing a far bigger role than we could have envisioned. The publication has provided purchasing promotional opportunities and created brand awareness for the growers, grocers, companies and commodities featured. So, my key message to the contributors is to remain strong and believe in the brand as we continue to grow.

In Conclusion: Reflections and Future Optimism

The past year has been a transformative time for the fruit and vegetable industry in Australia. As we continue to respond to climatic challenges, regulatory changes and emerging business considerations the FMA board remains steadfast in the advocacy of members.

For the first time, food and agriculture was discussed at a U.N. climate summit in 2023 and while this acknowledgement should be seen as progress, it's unclear what regulatory changes may flow as a result of the implementation of things such as ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance).

Having a clear strategic plan and our focus on strong relationships will place FMA in the best position to confidently respond for the sector. The promotion of compliance remains a pillar of FMA and I thank our members for being proactive and committed to upholding the professionalism of our sector. I acknowledge the discomfort and resilience needed at times but it is a testament to the quality of people who make up our community.

As we continue to be an integral part of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry, we must remain focused on rising as a collective through the promotion of the good work we do, promotion of transparency and willingness to continually adapt, as we always do.

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 by the strength of our people and industry.



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.



Our Values

Our values are those things that are important to us; 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 foster accountability.
- We encourage teamwork.
- We are open in our communications.



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



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 and the Company Secretary, who also serves as 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 31 March 2024)



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 eighteen 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. He is Managing Director of Samson's Fruit and Vegetable Supply and is Chair of both Freshmark and the 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.



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.



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.



Trish Skinner
Non-Executive Director

General Manager of Australian Produce Brokers in the Perth Markets, a leading fruit and vegetable wholesaler since 1996. President of The Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries in Western Australia, Director of FPAA Credit Service Pty Ltd, Chair of Perth Markets Group Limited and a director of FMA.



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.



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.



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.



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.



Gail Woods
General Manager / Company Secretary

Gail has dedicated over a decade of her career to championing the interests of wholesalers. Her role as General Manager for Brismark and her current position as General Manager of Fresh Markets Australia exemplify her deep-rooted involvement in the sector. As a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with over 30 years of experience in executive management teams, Gail possesses a multifaceted skill set encompassing financial and management accounting, human resources, facilities and asset management, information technology, operations, risk, and project management. In addition to her corporate responsibilities, Gail serves as Freshcare Deputy Chair, Chair of the Freshcare Finance Risk Audit & Compliance Committee, company secretary for various entities, and actively participates in key horticulture industry committees. Her unwavering dedication to industry advocacy and representation further amplifies her contributions to the wholesalers' community.





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.

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.





Pushing for Fairness: The Fight for Equitable Practices in Supermarkets

Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) has positioned itself as a key advocate for equitable trading practices within the supermarket sector, engaging with significant regulatory bodies through insightful and well-documented submissions.

FMA's involvement spans from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to the Senate Select Committee on Supermarket Prices, and notably, in the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct Review. Each submission is crafted to voice the concerns and suggestions of wholesalers and suppliers, particularly from the fresh produce sector. Here's an in-depth look at these initiatives:

ACCC 2024 Supermarkets Inquiry Submission

FMA's participation in the ACCC's inquiry into pricing and competition was strategic and insightful. The submission stressed the need to scrutinise the competitive dynamics within both the retail and supply chain levels, particularly highlighting the disproportionate bargaining power held by large supermarkets. FMA outlined how this power disparity affects pricing, market access for smaller suppliers, and overall market health. We argued for stronger regulatory oversight to ensure price transparency and foster fair competition, suggesting that such measures would benefit consumers through improved pricing structures and greater product diversity.

Senate Select Committee on Supermarket Prices Submission

Addressing the Senate, FMA pointed out the severe market power imbalance favouring major supermarket chains, emphasising the adverse effects on Australia's central markets. The submission brought to light how suppliers endure unilateral contract changes, delayed payments, and other unfair trading terms enforced by dominant players. FMA advocated for legislative reforms that would shield suppliers from these predatory practices and promote a more balanced economic environment where fair trade principles are upheld.

Food and Grocery Code of Conduct Review Submission

Perhaps the most critical, this submission argued for transforming the Food and Grocery Code from a voluntary to a mandatory framework, tailored specifically for the fresh produce sector. FMA criticised the existing voluntary code for not adequately addressing the power imbalances between large retailers and their suppliers. They proposed a mandatory code with strict enforcement mechanisms to establish a fair trading environment.

FMA will provide a response to the Interim Report of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct Review addressing many of the questions posed by the Interim Report, with a focus on the protection for wholesalers on any remade code.

Engagement at the Producers Roundtable

Further solidifying its advocacy role, FMA participated in the Producers Roundtable as part of the Food and Grocery Code Review. This important discussion included consultation with notable figures such as the Honourable Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and the Independent Reviewer, Dr. Craig Emerson. These engagements provided FMA an opportunity to directly influence policy discussions and highlight the specific needs and challenges faced by the sector.

Industry Impact and Prospects for Change

FMA's submissions outline a clear need for reforms that better regulate supermarket-supplier relationships. Their advocacy for a mandatory Food and Grocery Code exemplifies a proactive approach to safeguarding smaller market participants. As these regulatory reviews proceed, the anticipated changes could significantly alter market practices, promoting fair competition and economic security for suppliers.

Ongoing Advocacy and Sector Response

The outcomes from FMA's advocacy efforts and subsequent policy responses are eagerly awaited. FMA remains committed to representing the interests of wholesalers and suppliers, ensuring that their challenges are addressed effectively. The ongoing development of these inquiries and reviews will be crucial in shaping a more equitable and competitive future for grocery retailing in Australia, nurturing an environment where all market participants can prosper.

Fresh Markets Australia: Championing the Wholesale Sector

This past year, FMA has diligently advanced the interests and operational integrity of the wholesale sector within the Australian fruit and vegetable industry. Our focus has remained steadfast on enhancing market conditions, regulatory compliance, and industry standards for wholesalers across the nation.

Year in Highlights: Regulatory Engagement and Advocacy

Food & Grocery Code and Unfair Trading Terms: Actively participated in the review processes to advocate for improvements that benefit wholesalers in dispute resolution and trading terms.

Senate and ACCC Inquiries: Contributed to critical discussions on supermarket pricing and competitive practices that directly affect the wholesale market, ensuring our voice is heard in shaping policies that influence market dynamics.

Strategic Industry Collaboration

Country Recognition Agreement Renewal: Supported Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment for renewal of Australia's Plant and Plant Product CRA with Indonesia, essential for wholesalers relying on international trade.

Regular Industry Meetings: Engaged with Hort Innovation and the ACCC's Agriculture Unit to synchronise efforts and represent wholesale interests in broader agricultural policy discussions.

Support for Fair Farms Initiative: Endorsed programs that certify fair labour practices, crucial for maintaining a reputable and ethical supply chain in the wholesale sector.

Dedicated Representation

Influential Committee Positions: Held significant roles on committees like Freshcare Reg Tech Committee and the ACCC's Agriculture Consultative Committee, providing a platform to influence food safety and trade practices directly impacting wholesalers.

Advocacy in Food Safety and Standards: Participated in forums and advisory groups that define and implement regulations critical to the wholesale operations, ensuring compliance and advocacy for practical and beneficial standards.

Innovative Initiatives for Wholesalers

FreshTest® - produce testing scheme developed and administered by FMA for verification of food safety systems and good agricultural practice in food safety.

FreshSpecs® - produce specifications developed and administered by FMA to provide a set of specifications for industry – (identified in the Horticulture Code of Conduct)

FreshCode® - provides essential support related to the Horticulture Code of Conduct, helping wholesalers navigate compliance and resolve disputes effectively.

FreshData – produce market price reporting project (2022-2025)

As we conclude another successful year, FMA remains committed to bolstering the wholesale sector within Australia's fruit and vegetable market. Through proactive advocacy, strategic collaborations, and targeted initiatives, we have strengthened the foundations that allow wholesalers to operate efficiently and profitably. Looking forward, FMA will continue to advocate for and support the wholesale sector, ensuring it not only meets but exceeds the evolving demands of the industry and regulatory landscape.

Uniting for Food Safety: FMA's Role in the Food Incident Forum

FMA plays a crucial yet complementary role within the FSANZ Food Incident Forum, emphasising the importance of collaborative efforts in managing food safety across Australia and New Zealand. The Food Incident Forum is central to the food safety ecosystem, involving a broad network of stakeholders from both Australian states and New Zealand's food enforcement agencies. FMA's General Manager, Gail Woods participated in the 2023 Stakeholders forum in Sydney.

This network manages food safety incidents that pose potential public health risks. The Forum's comprehensive strategy includes incident detection, rapid information sharing, coordinated response planning, and effective public communication. These coordinated efforts are designed to mitigate risks swiftly, ensuring consumer well-being and maintaining the integrity of the food supply chain.

FMA contributes within this framework by sharing industry insights that bolster collective response capabilities. Its proactive stance on food safety and readiness to collaborate with regulatory bodies enhances the Forum's effectiveness. FMA's engagement in sharing data, participating in strategic planning, and aiding communication during food safety crises exemplifies its commitment to food safety.

However, it's essential to recognise that while FMA's participation is vital, the Forum's success largely depends on the collective expertise and coordination of all its members, which includes various industry players and regulatory agencies. This collaborative approach ensures robust, comprehensive food safety systems that effectively address complex challenges, thereby safeguarding public health and ensuring the integrity of regional food supplies.



Hort Innovation

Collaborating towards a fruitful future

In the ever-evolving landscape of Australian horticulture, challenges often arise alongside opportunities - it is a dynamic arena where adaptability and innovation are essential for survival. Amid this backdrop, the nation's grower-owned research and development corporation, Hort Innovation, is a steadfast partner, working with the industry to navigate challenges and capitalise on opportunities for growth and sustainability.

At its core, Hort Innovation believes in the power of collaboration. By working hand in hand with organisations like Fresh Markets Australia and other stakeholders, it leverages collective knowledge and resources to tackle complex challenges. This collaborative approach fosters innovation and resilience across the entire supply chain.

Currently, Hort Innovation is delivering more than \$120M each year of investment into initiatives that drive the sustainability and profitability of Australian horticulture. These investments span the development of new disease resistant or nutritionally dense produce varieties and technology including autonomous mango harvester and microdrone pollination in protected cropping environments to bring down labour costs.

Unlocking opportunities: Horticulture industry trends and investments

There are six current environmental factors Hort Innovation is considering when making investment decisions – each one of them presents opportunities or challenges for industry:

1

Export trade remains critical to the viability of the domestic scene. For example, fruit export value increased 6.3 per cent on the previous year (to reach \$1.308 billion), while volume remained relatively stable.

2

Australia is dependent on China, comprising 33 per cent of all exports by value in the year ending June 2023 (or 27 per cent in November 2023).

3

Horticulture has a positive story to tell and leverage with 90 per cent of Australians seeing horticulture as a trusted and responsible sector of our economy.

4

Over the course of a year, 98 per cent of Australian households purchase fresh fruit and 99 per cent of Australian households purchase fresh vegetables. With cost of living pressure increasing, consumers intend to spend more over the next 12 months on utilities, rent/ mortgage and groceries (with fresh produce topping the grocery list).

5

Research and development (R&D) continues to be a good investment, with our latest estimates indicating that \$1 of R&D investment generates a return of approximately \$8 in agricultural gross value added.

6

Automation and artificial intelligence (AI) have the potential to weed out inefficient parts of the food supply chain. A recent report from KPMG states that, over the next 10 years, 41 per cent of jobs in Australia's agricultural sector will be transformed through both automating and augmenting technologies.

Providing data and insights on the horticulture supply chain

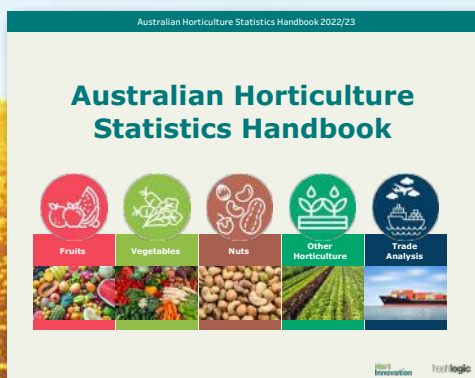
Each year Hort Innovation releases the Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook that captures the previous financial year's data. The user-friendly guide includes figures on national and state-level production values and volumes, exports and imports, processing volumes, fresh supply, retail and food service distribution.

The 2022/23 data showed mixed fortunes for an Australian horticulture sector facing numerous challenges; however, the long-term outlook remains strong with total production value increasing by 2.8 per cent to \$16.3B. The rising value was driven by significant value increases in the fruit and vegetable categories – which increased 12.6 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively.

More data and insights from the 2022/23 Handbook:

- It was a strong year for fruit value (increasing \$708.1M) with volume increasing marginally. Growing farmgate production value for fruit value was driven by large increases in production values for avocados (increasing \$196.9M), table grapes (increasing \$196.4M), bananas (increasing \$81.7M), apples (increasing \$78.4M) and cherries (increasing \$36.1M).
- Solid values for the vegetable industries have been achieved for another year. Overall vegetable production values reached a high of \$5.83 billion, increasing 5.4 per cent on 2021/22.
- While value increased, vegetable production volume dropped again in 2022/23 by 3.2 per cent, making 2022/23 the lowest year for production volume in six years.
- Overall nuts ended the 2022/23 year considerably weaker – decreasing by 42 per cent, or down \$527 million on 2021/22, to reach \$721.1 million. Volume also softened but at a lesser rate (23.7 per cent).

The full Handbook is available online at www.horticulture.com.au/hort-stats-handbook.





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PRODUCE

Market Momentum: Brisbane Markets poised for further expansion

Brisbane Markets Limited (BML) has been at the forefront of ensuring the continued growth and resilience of the Brisbane Markets, with significant developments over the past 12 months reflecting a commitment to future-proofing this vital hub for fruit and vegetable growers across Australia.

The ongoing expansion of the South Gate Precinct, notably with the recent completion of the purpose-built Building H1 development, underscores a positive trajectory and support for the industry.

As BML charts a course for the future, it's worth reflecting on the rich history that has shaped this iconic market hub. In 2024, Brisbane Markets commemorates its 60th anniversary at the Rocklea site, a testament to six decades of growth, resilience, and industry leadership.

Back in 1964, the site boasted just six buildings, serving as a modest yet promising foundation for what would become an icon in Australia's fresh produce industry. Fast forward to today, and Brisbane Markets stands as a bustling complex with over 40 buildings, symbolizing not just physical expansion but also the evolution of industry practices, technologies, and market dynamics.

In recent years, the South Gate Precinct has been a focal point of growth, with negotiations underway for additional purpose-built warehouse developments, signalling a strategic push towards accommodating the growing demands of Markets-based businesses. This expansion aligns with the opening of a new 300-space car park in May 2024, and upgrades to critical services capacity, addressing accessibility needs and preparing for further developments within this precinct. These initiatives reflect BML's proactive approach to meeting the demands of the wholesaling sector in Queensland and facilitating smoother operations.

Currently under construction, the redevelopment of the aging Building H is due for completion in October 2024. This new development is designed to support BML's site infrastructure team and will serve as a cornerstone of efficiency and functionality within the Brisbane Markets.

The new storage facility will feature a high-level loading dock for equipment receives; secure, racked storerooms for critical spare parts and staff work areas on the upper level, and connect to the Multi-level Car Park to allow for access during flooding events, contributing significantly to the operational resilience of the Brisbane Markets site.

The upgrading of existing facilities continues to be a priority, with a site-wide project to upgrade and install dry fire detection and fire indicator panels in all buildings well advanced, and upgrades to electrical infrastructure ongoing. These initiatives aim to improve Market operations and safety, ultimately benefiting growers, wholesalers, and retailers across the country.



Brisbane Markets main entry, 1964



Brisbane Markets main entry, 2024



The new Building H1 development,
South Gate Precinct, Brisbane Markets

BML continues to work collaboratively with Brismark in relation to matters of operational significance, which include initiatives such as random drug and alcohol testing on site, other WHS initiatives and in promoting compliance with the Brisbane Markets Regulations.

As Brisbane Markets continues to expand and innovate, partnerships and collaborations remain integral to its success. By fostering strong relationships with growers through partnerships with Bowen Gumlu Growers Association and Bundaberg Fruit and Vegetable Growers, embracing technological advancements, and adapting to industry trends, Brisbane Markets is poised to remain a cornerstone of Australia's fresh produce sector for years to come.



Roll of Honour

COL JOHNSON YOUNG ACHIEVER 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 Pisciueneri	(NSW)
2023	M Russo	(SA)

Cultivating Futures: The 2023 Young Achievers' Award in Horticulture

In June 2023, Fresh Markets Australia shone a spotlight on a notable individual from the horticultural community. Mark Russo, a dedicated grower and entrepreneur from Adelaide Hydro Fresh, was honoured with the prestigious Col Johnson Young Achievers Award. This accolade was presented by FMA Chair, Shane Schnitzler, at the Hort Connections Gala Dinner which celebrated those who significantly contribute to the horticulture sector.

Mark's journey in horticulture is a testament to his passion and dedication. Having been involved with Adelaide Hydro Fresh since his teenage years, Mark has grown with the business, stepping into a management role nine years ago which marked the beginning of a transformative period for both him and the company. Under his leadership, the company has not only expanded its operations but has also embraced innovative agricultural practices, leading to significant business growth.

A major milestone in Mark's career was the opening of a wholesale store in the South Australian Produce Market. This strategic move enabled Adelaide Hydro Fresh to enhance its commitment to supplying premium produce to local fruit and veg shops, fostering stronger community ties and ensuring the delivery of fresh, quality products.

Mark's role extends beyond business management. He is an active committee member of the SA Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries and the South Australian Produce Market Young Leaders. Through these roles, he champions the growth and active participation of young members in the horticulture industry. His efforts support Market Fresh SA, utilising their services to promote his exceptional produce effectively. Mark's consistent presence at Hort Connections, where he has showcased his products, underscores his dedication to the industry and its broader success.

The criteria for the Col Johnson Young Achievers Award highlight the qualities essential for recognition: support for the Chamber's initiatives, a strong commitment to the horticulture industry, active participation in marketing and wholesaling within the Central Markets system, and ethical leadership. Mark exemplifies these traits through his professional activities and personal ethics, showcasing potential for future leadership within the industry.

Nominees for this award are recognised not only for fulfilling specific criteria but also for possessing unique attributes that contribute to their eligibility. Mark's entrepreneurial spirit, evident in the expansion of his business and his strategic initiatives like securing government grants for infrastructure improvements, demonstrates an exceptional level of acumen and innovation.

As we acknowledge Mark Russo's contributions, his efforts underscore the steady progress of horticulture, guided by committed individuals like him. His dedication to innovation and community support within the industry offers a valuable model for his peers and future leaders in the field.

FMA Chair Shane Schnitzler presents Col Johnson Award to Mark Russo from Adelaide Hyro Fresh



Horticulture Advocate Earns Prestigious FMA Meritorious Service Award

In a significant acknowledgment of her exceptional contributions to the Australian horticulture sector, Gail Woods was honoured with the Fresh Markets Australia Meritorious Service Award in June 2023.

Gail has been a prominent figure in the industry, serving as the General Manager of Fresh Markets Australia (FMA), the former General Manager of Brismark and Deputy Chair of Freshcare. Her leadership has been instrumental in advancing the industry's standards and promoting sustainable growth.

Gail has been instrumental in developing training programs for the Horticulture Code of Conduct, ensuring thorough understanding and compliance across the sector. She has actively contributed to the preparation of guidance notes in collaboration with the ACCC, facilitating the rollout of these programs to members, thereby enhancing the Code's implementation and adherence.

One of Gail's significant achievements includes the modernisation of FreshTest, transitioning the initiative to a digital platform. This transformation has enhanced its effectiveness and accessibility, allowing for more streamlined and timely testing processes. By ensuring that FreshTest remains a robust tool for quality and food safety verification, Gail has directly contributed to the industry's ability to maintain high standards for fresh produce.

Gail's role also extends to her position as Deputy Chair of Freshcare, where she has been pivotal in setting internationally recognised assurance standards for the fresh produce and wine grape industries. Her involvement ensures that Australian produce adheres to global food safety and quality benchmarks, enhancing the marketability of Australian fruit and vegetables on the world stage.

Shane Schnitzler, Chair of FMA, lauds Gail's extensive impact, stating, "Gail's comprehensive approach to the Horticulture Code of Conduct compliance, her leadership in the digital transformation of FreshTest®, and her proactive involvement in numerous other initiatives are indicative of her forward-thinking. These efforts have not only solidified the foundation of trust and quality in our markets but have also positioned Australian horticulture as a leader in global best practices."

Gail's career reflects a relentless pursuit of excellence and a commitment to nurturing the industry's growth. Her leadership has fostered significant improvements in industry standards and operational transparency, making the Australian horticulture sector more competitive and respected globally.

The FMA Meritorious Service Award is a fitting tribute to Gail Woods' outstanding leadership and her tireless efforts in promoting the success and sustainability of the Central Markets and the broader Australian horticulture industry. Her visionary approach and unwavering dedication continue to inspire and shape the industry, ensuring its vibrant future.



Pictured Above: FMA Chair Shane Schnitzler presents Meritorious Service Award to Gail Woods, General Manager, Fresh Markets Australia (FMA)

Roll of Honour

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

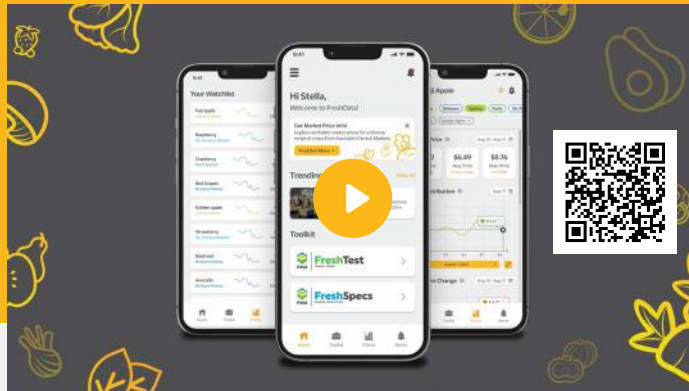
1974	JH Leavy	(QLD)
1975	W Musgrove	(NSW)
1976	EJ Milne	(NSW)
1977	G Bloomfield	(WA)
1978	DA Mercer	(WA)
1979	J Hyman	(VIC)
1980	P Joseph	(SA)
1981	WH Norman	(SA)
1982	HV Lovett	(Ncle)
1983	B Berlazzo	(VIC)
1984	R Murray (Senior)	(QLD)
1985	A Martin	(QLD)
1987	RA Hollett	(QLD)
1987	RM Livingstone	(QLD)
1987	RD Mercer	(WA)
1988	DB DiMattina	(VIC)
1989	DL Crombie	(VIC)
1990	CW Johnson	(NSW)
1992	AG Russell	(NSW)
1993	KJ Robson	(Ncle)
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	(Ncle)
2006	R Barker	(VIC)
2007	WF Chalk	(NSW)
2008	S Schnitzler	(VIC)
2009	C Smith	(WA)
2010	R Schirripa	(SA)
2011	J Garrett	(Ncle)
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)





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What you'll get...	What you'll get...	What you'll get...	Can't find what you're looking for?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instant access to Daily Prices for 1 market Market Price and trends for past week View Minimum, Maximum and Average Price and quantity movement indicators Add 1 crop to your Watchlist Receive notifications from your watchlist afety, Supply Region and Pack Size filtering Intuitive graphs for easy Market Price visualisation Verifiable source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything in the Bronze Plan Instant access to Daily Prices for 3 Markets Market Prices and trends over the past 2 weeks Add up to 10 crops to your Watchlist Comparison of Market Prices up to 3 Markets at a time Insights to "Price Movers" across all Markets Weather for your location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything in the Silver Plan + Instant access to Daily Prices for all 5 Markets Market Prices and trends over the past month Add UNLIMITED number of crops to the watchlist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's discuss your individual requirements. Options for multiple users Data lake access subscriptions available

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FreshData Project: Leading the Charge in Market Transparency

As FreshData transitions into the critical 'build' phase in its third year, the project stands as a testament to the power of strategic partnership and foresight within the wholesale sector.

Guided by the vision and leadership of Fresh Markets Australia and fortified by federal funding, FreshData is poised to make a substantial leap in market transparency for fruit and vegetables markets through the central markets supply chain. Now, with a comprehensive scope and meticulously crafted specification in hand, the initiative is moving from meticulous planning to action, ready to transform an innovative market data application from concept to reality. This application is set to offer daily data on fresh fruits and vegetables, ensuring precision and easy access for stakeholders across the industry.

"Wholesalers are the cornerstone of the FreshData ecosystem, furnishing it with detailed transactional data that is integral to constructing a robust and trusted database," states Shane Schnitzler, Chair of FMA. The information they supply, ranging from the variety of crops to the dates of sale, fortifies the integrity of the database. With strong data governance and privacy measures in place, FreshData prioritises data security while safeguarding user privacy, thus enabling users to confidently monitor market trends, receive pivotal updates, and make informed decisions that significantly improve supply chain efficiency and provide insightful business intelligence.

The engagement of wholesalers with FreshData reflects a collective commitment to fostering a modern, ethical, and professional industry. The platform delivers multiple benefits, empowering wholesalers to demonstrate innovation, strengthen their reputations through ethical practices, and exhibit a level of self-regulation that could mitigate the need for external controls. Additionally, it advocates for price transparency, offering measurable gains for growers, wholesalers, and the sector as a whole.

This concerted effort ushers in an era defined by transparency and operational excellence. As the industry eagerly anticipates the pilot set for early 2025, FreshData emerges as a paragon of innovation, heralding an era where informed, data-driven decision-making becomes the norm. This commitment to empowerment spans the entire supply chain, promoting a marketplace underpinned by trust and guided by efficiency.

In essence, FreshData is evolving to be more than a mere technological advance; it signifies a progressive shift towards an open and innovative wholesale sector, championing transformation and establishing a new paradigm for market dynamics. As the initiative progresses from design to deployment, it showcases the sector's potential for evolution and progress, heralding the advent of a dynamic, transparent marketplace for all involved in the horticulture supply chain.



Future Leasing Opportunities



The Perth Markets, set on a landmark 51ha corner site in Canning Vale, is home to Western Australia's only wholesale fresh produce market and plays a pivotal role in supporting a diverse array of businesses involved in the fresh produce value chain.

Being located at the Perth Markets puts your business in a central competitive location offering consolidation opportunities, integration to extensive wholesale supply chains and easy access to key arterial road networks.

Opportunities now exist to secure purpose-built areas in new cold chain warehouses being developed at the Perth Markets.

400m south of the Perth CBD
16km south of the Perth CBD
51ha of land situated in Canning Vale
20km to Perth Airport



THE SITE

perthmarket.com.au

KEY WAREHOUSE FEATURES*

- Steel structure with insulated PIR panels to walls and ceilings of all temperature controlled areas
- Up to 9.1m ceiling heights enabling significant storage and racking configurations
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Lettable areas from 1,000m² - 4,900m²

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Shaun Atkins, Chief Property Officer
MP 1, 280 Bannister Road, Canning Vale WA
6155 08 9456 9200
satkins@perthmarket.com.au

* Subject to final design and leasing pre-commitments



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Ph: 08 8349 4493



South Australian Produce Market

Located in Pooraka, South Australia

More than 250,000 tonne of fresh produce valued at \$590M traded annually

Home to 40 wholesale traders - 70% being local growers

2,500 card holders accessing the site daily

Access to supply more than 1,000 retail and food service customers

On Site Micro Grid providing low cost, low emission, power generation and supply

Upgraded Fire Sprinkler System providing increased safety and decreased insurance costs

Home to SA Farmers Market - Public Sunday Market with more than 5,000 visitors and 160 stallholders

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A better choice!’, promoting the benefits of shopping at Local Fruit & Veg Shops

Nick Hotchin, National Marketing Manager

Building on last year’s resounding success, the national retailer program ‘A better choice!’ has once again partnered with Australia’s beloved home cook, Julie Goodwin, for its FY23-24 marketing initiatives. Focused on enhancing visibility and promoting the benefits of shopping locally, this year’s campaign combined robust digital strategies with engaging physical displays across various member stores nationwide.

This year’s digital campaign made strategic use of platforms like Meta, YouTube, and Google, ensuring comprehensive coverage and maximizing reach. Julie Goodwin, reprising her role as the face of the campaign, helped forge a personal connection with the audience, her presence a reassuring emblem of quality and trust.

In addition to the digital efforts, physical displays were set up in participating stores across Australia. These installations not only caught the eye of shoppers but also enriched the shopping experience, blending the digital with the tangible in a celebration of local produce.

The results were impressive: the campaign touched over 5.3 million Australians and generated more than 16 million impressions, testament to its pervasive appeal and effective messaging.

Looking ahead, ‘A better choice!’ is excited to launch the fan-favourite ‘Shop and Win’ campaign, now in its third year. Popular among both retailers and customers, this upcoming campaign promises to continue the tradition of engaging and incentivizing consumers to support local businesses. This initiative not only drives sales but also fosters community spirit, reinforcing the benefits of local shopping through exciting rewards and engaging experiences.

As we move forward, ‘A better choice!’ remains committed to its mission of supporting Australian growers, wholesalers, and retailers, enhancing the vitality of local economies through creative and effective campaigns.



Aldo & Rosanne Virgona from Emerald Fruit Barn welcome Julie to the team



Julie Goodwin - her presence a reassuring emblem of quality and trust

Spotlight on Australia's Fresh Produce Markets at Hort Connections 2023

Hort Connections 2023 kicked off with an early morning tour of the South Australian Produce Markets, providing attendees a firsthand look at the bustling activity and the intricate operations behind the scenes, with a briefing on Australia's first microgrid energy system.

Delegates were able to walk the market square interacting with wholesalers that had set up displays. This engaging start set the stage for the highly anticipated event held at the Adelaide Convention Centre, where Australia's Fresh Produce Markets dazzled with an expansive 350 square meter display.

The exhibit showcased an extensive variety of fresh produce including fruits, vegetables, and herbs sourced from across the country. This display not only highlighted the diversity and quality of Australian horticulture but also emphasised the vital role wholesalers play in bridging the gap between growers and consumers.

The fresh produce display became a central hub for networking, drawing over 3,200 delegates who were eager to learn, share, and connect. The vibrant setup facilitated rich discussions about market trends, supply chain efficiencies, and future directions for the horticultural sector.

Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting the educational value and the extensive networking opportunities provided by the showcase. The success of the display at Hort Connections 2023 not only celebrated the excellence of Australia's horticultural industry but also set a high standard for future exhibitions. With such a dynamic presentation, the Australia's Fresh Produce Markets' display was a memorable highlight of this year's conference, leaving participants looking forward to what the next year will bring.







Enhancing Food Safety: The FreshTest® Impact on Fresh Produce in Australia

Gail Woods, General Manager, Fresh Markets Australia

In the constantly evolving landscape of food safety, Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) has positioned itself as a pivotal entity with its FreshTest® program, launched in 2001. This initiative has significantly influenced fresh produce safety verification across the nation, providing comprehensive testing services that cover microbial, chemical, and heavy metal contaminants.



FreshTest
PRODUCE TESTING



The Necessity of Thorough Testing

Food safety is a paramount concern that directly impacts public health. Fresh produce, while a cornerstone of a healthy diet, can also be a conduit for contaminants if not properly managed. Microbial dangers such as E. coli and other bacteria can lead to severe health issues, while the misuse of chemicals like pesticides poses risks of toxicity. Furthermore, heavy metals such as lead and mercury, which can accumulate in produce from contaminated soils, pose long-term health risks.

Fresh Markets Australia | FreshTest® At the Forefront of Agricultural Innovation and Food Safety

Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) has long been a champion of enhancing food safety and sustainable agricultural practices. This commitment was prominently displayed at the recent Freshcare Summit, where FMA took on a pivotal role.



FreshTest®: A Multifaceted Approach

FreshTest® addresses these concerns through a robust testing regime. The program is unique in that it provides a third-party verification of the food safety practices of production and packing businesses. This promotes self-regulation within the industry and helps maintain high standards of food safety. The program is not only a reactive measure but a proactive one, offering corrective actions and continuous retesting to ensure any identified issues are resolved swiftly.

The FSANZ Food Incident Forum plays a critical role in managing food safety incidents across Australia and New Zealand. When a food safety incident occurs — defined as any situation in the food supply chain that poses a risk or potential risk of illness from food consumption — it involves a coordinated response through the Bi-National Food Safety Network. This network includes the Australian state and territory and New Zealand food enforcement agencies along with FSANZ.

FSANZ's specific responsibilities within this framework include coordinating meetings, sharing crucial information, and communicating effectively about the incident. This may involve developing public statements to inform and guide the public and stakeholders. The overall aim is to manage these incidents effectively to minimize risk to consumers and ensure the integrity of the food supply chain.

Key features of the FreshTest® system include:

Traffic Light System and QR Codes: Introduced in March 2022, this system allows users to visually and quickly understand test results. QR codes add a layer of security and real-time data verification, crucial for preventing fraud and ensuring the authenticity of the testing data.

Comprehensive Testing: FreshTest® conducts detailed chemical testing for now over 470 substances, including pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, along with microbial contaminants and heavy metals. This extensive testing verifies that products meet the stringent standards set by Australian food safety regulations.

Industry Collaboration: FreshTest® is actively involved with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Food Incident Forum.

Results and Impact

The effectiveness of the FreshTest® program is evident in its widespread adoption and the positive feedback from users. The introduction of the FreshTest® business portal has further enhanced the user experience by centralising data and results, making them easily accessible and fostering better engagement among stakeholders. The portal has been crucial in increasing the timeliness and security of data dissemination.

Conclusion

As FreshTest® continues to evolve and adapt to the needs of the fresh produce industry, its role in ensuring the safety and quality of food cannot be overstated. With its comprehensive testing and verification processes, FreshTest® stands as a testament to the industry's commitment to maintaining the highest standards of food safety. This program not only supports the health of consumers but also enhances the operational standards of the industry, making it a crucial component of Australia's food safety ecosystem.

Fresh Markets Australia's dedication to improving food safety through innovative solutions like FreshTest® demonstrates a forward-thinking approach that likely will continue to influence food safety practices nationally and internationally.

Sponsorship and Leadership at Freshcare Summit

As a Silver Summit Partner of the Freshcare Summit, FMA under the FreshTest® brand not only supported this crucial industry event but also facilitated one of its key sessions: "Protecting Crops and Safeguarding Consumers: Discussion with the APVMA & FSANZ". This session underscored FMA's active role in shaping national agricultural policies and practices.

The Critical Discussion with APVMA & FSANZ

During the session, FMA brought together experts from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) and Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). The dialogue focused on the latest regulatory developments and innovative practices in the use of pesticides and food safety standards. This discussion highlighted how regulatory bodies and industry leaders can collaborate to ensure that the pesticides used are safe, effective, and environmentally sustainable.

Implications for Industry Practices

The outcomes of this session are significant. They provide FMA members and the wider industry with insights into:

Regulatory Changes: Understanding new and upcoming regulations that will affect how pesticides are used and monitored in Australia.

Best Practices: Adopting best practices in pesticide application to ensure both crop protection and consumer safety.

Innovation in Safety Measures: Innovations such as the development of more precise application technologies that reduce waste and increase safety.

Engaging with Industry Stakeholders

FMA's role in facilitating this session also demonstrated their commitment to engaging with various stakeholders to foster a holistic approach to food safety. By including voices from regulatory authorities, FMA ensured that growers are not only compliant with current regulations but are also ahead in adopting practices that will define the future of food safety in agriculture.





Supporting Our Industry

Jane Siebum, Freshcare CEO

As the leading provider of certification programs in Australia, Freshcare is in a unique position to bring together the broad-reaching sectors of our industries to collaborate on initiatives, projects and events, and this past year has been no exception.

The Freshcare team has created some great opportunities to connect with industry, business and participants to collaborate on important challenges and opportunities, in an effort to continue the evolution of assurance and certification for our producers, businesses and supply chain.

Freshcare's Vision 2030 strategic plan outlined a roadmap to delivering a sustainable future for Australian producers and supply chain businesses, expanding access to existing and emerging markets.

The Freshcare Team, together with the Boards directive have largely achieved this goal through several initiatives, supported participants in recognition for the incredible work they already do in assuring our industry. Additionally, Freshcare projects provided opportunity for industry collaboration and supported growers and businesses to achieve certification.

The inaugural Australian Assurance Summit, held at Warwick Farm in Sydney during November, encapsulated what Freshcare hopes to achieve in supporting our vast industry. The event created the opportunity to share ideas, collaborate and create solutions which enables Freshcare's support of the fresh produce, supply chain and wine industry.

Another major achievement for industry was the release of our Supply Chain 2 standard and successfully achieving recognition against GFSI Benchmarking Requirements v2020. The recognition of this standard is an important accomplishment for Australia's horticulture supply chain network. The benchmarking of our Supply Chain standard highlights our domestic fresh produce industry already operates at a global standard. It was a great achievement for our domestic supply chain businesses, providing the opportunity to expand into export markets and international trade.

As Freshcare moves forward with strategic direction in 2024 we will continue to assist with challenges facing industry, by advocating for our participants to businesses, customers and government including the recognition for work they already do by bringing safe, sustainable and high-quality food to consumers.

Supply Chain Standard Factsheets

With support from Fresh Markets Australia (FMA), Freshcare has recently developed user-friendly factsheet resources for our Supply Chain 2 businesses and participants who are part of the Freshcare program.

The Supply Chain factsheets are available on Freshcare Online to program participants and are also now available as a printable booklet for participants who prefer to work offline.

The benchmarking of Freshcare's Supply Chain Standard Edition 2 (SCS2) by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) gave recognition to our participants for the incredible work they already do in maintaining high standards of food safety and quality. The updated factsheets are a great example of industry collaboration and support of Freshcare programs and participants achievements in certification.

Freshcare CEO, Jane Siebum says Freshcare is continually seeking ways to improve the accessibility of certification programs for participants.



Data Driven Decisions

In the coming months Freshcare is furthering a new project which consolidates over 20 years of gathered data, across multiple sectors, throughout our horticulture and supply chain networks and participants.

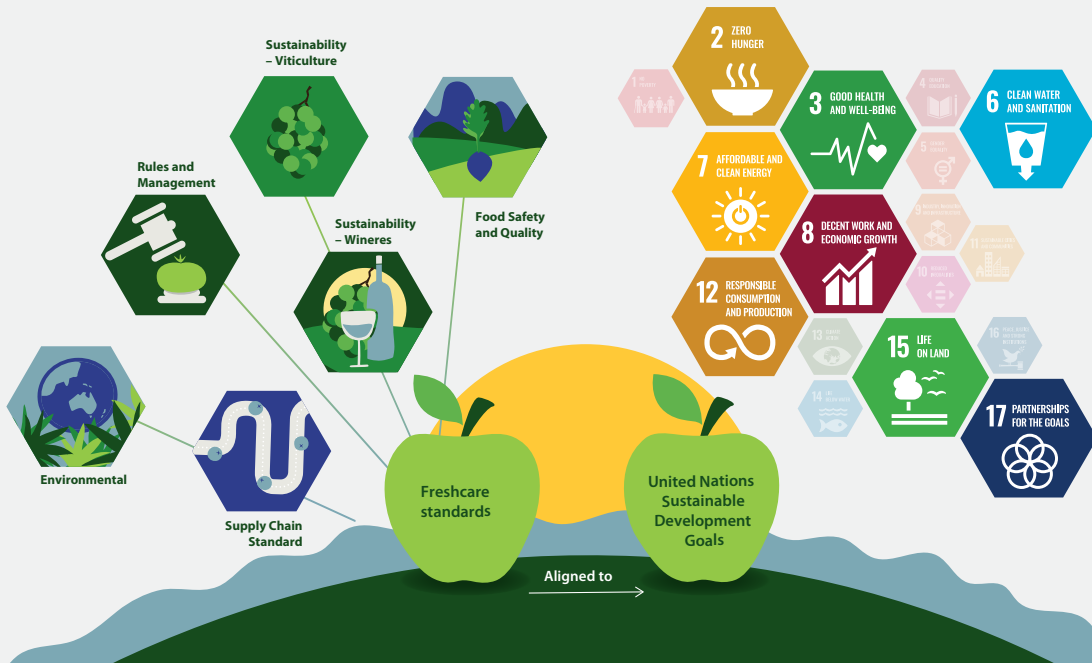
Freshcare's Data Lake initiative will bring together existing and historically siloed datasets, to support collaborative and informed decision making for participants, industry and governments on the future of assurance and market access.

Leveraging the power of Amazon Web Services Data Analytics and Microsoft PowerBI, the Freshcare Board has driven this strategic focus to assist industry with making information informed decisions, to shape the future of certification.

Many participants in the Freshcare Programs have invested in recording on-farm, packing and warehouse data for over 20 years, which has helped to support successful, thriving and resilient horticulture and supply chain businesses.

Freshcare is in a unique position, working with a wide range of industry stakeholder groups. Each group has specific requirements relating to business management, operational systems, environmental and sustainability improvements and efficiencies. The data collected through businesses management and audits will play a critical role in shaping the focus of certification and assurance programs for Australian producers and supply chain both domestically and for export.

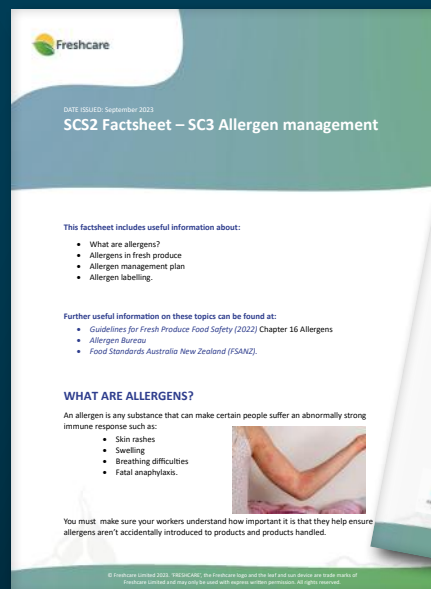
The goal of this project is to bring industry groups together to identify where assurance is working, what the opportunities are and how we provide solutions to challenges growers, supply chain and businesses to support out domestic and export markets.



"The updating of Supply Chain factsheets is an important part of keeping resources current, to support participants in their certification journey.

"The benchmarking of our Supply Chain standard acknowledges that a critical component of our domestic fresh produce industry already operates at a global standard.

"The investment of FMA in Freshcare's resources further supports the rigorous process of Supply Chain businesses undertake in gaining certification from paddock to pallet, to plate," says Ms. Siebum.



DOES YOUR PRODUCE PASS THE TEST?

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FreshTest
PRODUCE TESTING

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DEDICATED AND EXPERIENCED TEAM

- personalised service
- we know the industry and we know you

COMPETITIVE PRICING

- substantial savings due to volume testing
- savings are passed on to you

CONVENIENT, SIMPLE AND QUICK

- we are at the Markets
- one phone call for all your testing
- we do all the hard work
- an easy process to follow
- easy to read results
- quick turn-around
- wholesalers can access results online (including historical data)



The Australian Assurance Summit: Creating a Voice for Industry

Following the success of The Australian Assurance Summit last year, Freshcare will be holding our next event in October 2025 in Sydney.

The Australian Assurance Summit is only domestic event of its kind, marking the evolution of Freshcare's role in industry leadership across the domestic fresh produce and wine industries.

The Australian Assurance Summit 2025: Creating A Voice for Industry will provide a collaborative forum for all industry and Freshcare stakeholders to engage in two days of thought-provoking keynote speakers, panel discussions and facilitated workshop and of course The Summit Dinner!

Our 2023 Summit was an overwhelming success, receiving positive feedback from delegates and speakers who attended.

Freshcare CEO Jane Siebum hailed the success of the event, which featured informative thought-provoking presentations from subject matter experts across broad ranging industry stakeholders.

“Being our first Summit, we were extremely pleased with the positive feedback from participants and how much they valued the opportunity.

“Our fantastic speaker line-up covered a wide range of topics, but the overarching theme was being solutions focused and getting the narrative correct for all the sectors we work with,” Ms Siebum said.

While there were many highlights from The Summit, the most pertinent to supply chain and wholesalers was a presentation from Chair of the Australian Horticultural Exporters' and Importers' Association Joseph Saina.

Joseph's extensive experience throughout industry brought some interesting insights and challenges facing the Australian import and export markets. He discussed Technical Market Access and “Shed Door” costs of production as the two largest factors inhibiting export trade. However, he highlighted Australian producers market advantage due to our security and supply of safe, high-quality produce.

We are excited to be hosting the next Australian Assurance Summit next year in Sydney and look forward to many more Freshcare Supply Chain participants and industry representatives take part in the event.

Go to www.summit.freshcare.com.au to look at last year's media gallery, program and speaker line up. Or SCAN the QR code to catch our Summit video highlights.

If you'd like to become a Summit Sponsorship Partner please email: events@freshcare.com.au



The Summit - Allan Dall, Jane Siebum & Craig Rueccassell



Joe Saina - Chair of Australian Horticulture Trade



Costa Georgiardi speaks at The Summit



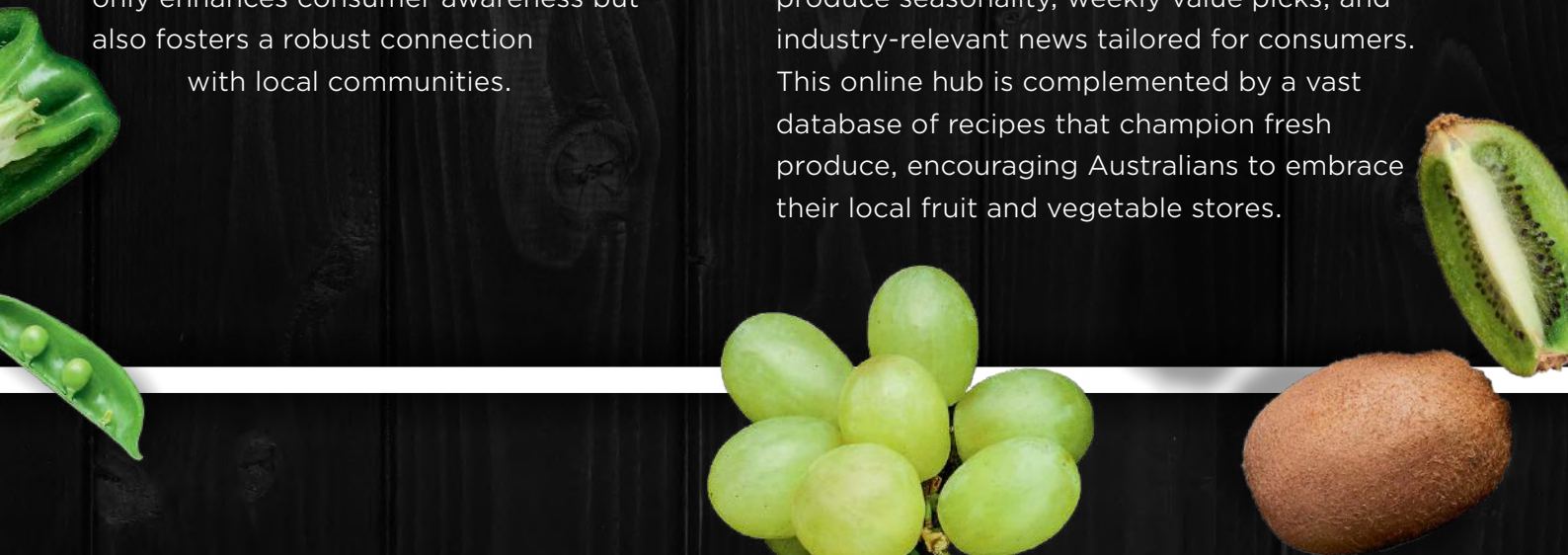
A better choice![®]

Quality **FRESHNESS** *Service*

The 'A better choice!' Program, a collaborative effort between Fresh Markets Australia (FMA) and the Central Markets Association of Australia (CMAA), continues to make significant strides in promoting independent fruit and vegetable retailers across the nation.

With a mission to support these retailers who receive their supply through the central markets chain supply, the program plays a pivotal role in supplying around 15% of fresh produce throughout Australia. By engaging consumers and accentuating the merits of patronizing local shops, the initiative not only enhances consumer awareness but also fosters a robust connection with local communities.

Enhancing its digital footprint, 'A better choice!' has consistently expanded its online community across multiple platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and through its informative newsletter, 'Fruit and Veg Weekly.' The program's dedicated website remains a vital resource, offering insights into produce seasonality, weekly value picks, and industry-relevant news tailored for consumers. This online hub is complemented by a vast database of recipes that champion fresh produce, encouraging Australians to embrace their local fruit and vegetable stores.





In 2023-2024, the program embarked on several dynamic campaigns featuring Australia's favourite home chef, Julie Goodwin, alongside the third iteration of the successful 'Shop and Win' campaign. These initiatives have not only reinforced the program's commitment to community engagement but have also underscored the culinary delights that can be created from locally-sourced ingredients.

This year also marked the publication of the fifth edition of the 'A better choice! Magazine.' Available for free in participating local stores, this magazine has become a tangible token of the program's dedication to its retail partners, offering an added layer of engagement for consumers who visit their local fruit and veg shops.

The partnership program has seen remarkable growth over the past year, with notable collaborations featuring Perfection Fresh, which introduced beloved Sesame Street characters to promote healthy eating among children, and Zespri, known for their quality kiwifruit. Additional partnerships with the Australian Mushroom Growers Association (AMGA) and activities celebrating National Banana Day have further enhanced the program's impact, offering unique opportunities for consumer interaction and retailer benefit.

Building on the current momentum, the program aims to explore new avenues for collaboration, enhancing the support for independent retailers and enriching the local shopping experience across Australia. With a continued focus on innovation and community engagement, 'A better choice!' is poised for another year of success and meaningful impact.



**Since the program
launched in 2018
it has achieved
the following stats**

3.4m

Website views



391m

Impressions Served

58m

People Reached

310k

Online Community





Sydney Markets: Where History, Sustainability, and Fresh Produce Collide

Since the landing of the first fleet, Sydney Markets has been a vital part of the Australian food industry. Today, the modern markets comprise two locations, Flemington and Haymarket, which is the location of our iconic Paddy's Markets.

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.

Sydney Markets' environmental sustainability program is recognised as a global leader in waste recycling, water conservation and green energy production. Sydney Markets is a recipient of a number of Environmental Achievement Awards including: - Green Globe Business Leadership Award in recognition of outstanding integrated sustainable practices, Banksia Sustainability Awards, NSW EPA Blue Star Award for Waste Less Recycling and Food Waste Management Award WUWM.

Sydney Markets' annual Fresh Awards program champions greengrocers, florists, wholesalers, produce growers, flower growers, providores, fresh content creators and Paddy's retailers through a rigorous mystery shopping and industry awards program.

Quick Facts:

- Sydney Markets is one of the largest food distribution centres in the Southern Hemisphere and is home to over 6,000 workers.
- Each year Sydney Markets trades around 2.5 million tonnes of fresh produce with a value in excess of \$3 billion.
- Produce is received from approximately 6,000 growers Australia-wide with wholesale operations supplying fresh fruit and vegetables to over two-thirds of the Australian population.
- Approximately 100 Wholesalers, 299 Produce Growers, 130 Flower Growers/Sellers and over 168 supporting businesses are located on-site at Flemington.
- Over 1,500 operators trade at Paddy's Markets attracting over 180,000 customers each week.
- Since its inception in 2005 Sydney Markets Green Point facility has increased the total waste recycling on-site to over 72%, saving the company more than \$1 million a year.
- 8,950 solar panels are currently installed on-site. This equates to removing approx. 2,500 cars from our roads.
- Sydney Markets is now running on 11% renewable energy

Contact:

Ned Tesic

Public Relations & Branding Manager
PO Box 2, Sydney Markets, NSW 2129
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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, 2,750 businesses use the Market as a base, buying and selling fresh produce in the early hours of the morning for distribution across Victoria and Australia. Its success is due to leveraging the market's modern state-of-the-art design and facilities to ensure it is 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 95,000 square metres of warehousing space, with plans to build additional warehousing in the future. his significant warehousing capacity provides opportunities for businesses to integrate supply chain logistics within the market itself and we are now the largest warehousing precinct of any central market in Australia.

The Market's Epping location is in close proximity to Melbourne's freeways, and allows 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 located on the site, and partnerships with food recovery programs and a waste-to-energy plant, contributes to an impressive 98% recycling rate. The Melbourne Market invests in sustainability projects, such as large-scale roof-top solar systems and rainwater harvesting systems, reducing the site's environmental impact. These sustainability initiatives not only align with the site's environmental objectives but have the potential to provide real commercial value to the businesses that use the market.

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. With the site's unique location, which provides plenty of room to grow, the Melbourne Market is equipped to respond to the rapidly changing role that central markets play 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





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 around 50 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, 11 km 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 Markets 4106

Phone: 07 3915 4200 Fax: 07 3915 4291

Email: 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 250,000 tonnes of fresh produce with a wholesale value of over \$590M is traded between our wholesalers, growers and retail operators every year. Home to more than 100 businesses, 70% of those are local growers.

2023 was a successful year for the market with many opportunities along with key initiatives and projects including:

1. Extension of our unloading service hours.
2. Installation of an unmanned gate system using bluetooth technology.
3. 45% 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.
4. Continued strategic alliance with Foodbank SA onsite warehouse facilities and introduction of Puddle Jumpers Incorporated working with our SA Farmers Market
5. Final layout of the Biosecurity facility finalised, tenders issued for building works.
6. \$60,000 raised for Variety the Children's Charity through the annual Cherry Auction.
7. \$215,000 raised through the annual Rural Business Support charity soccer match played on the home ground of Adelaide United Football Club in Jan 2023 and April 2024.
8. The SA Farmers Market opened March 2023 and is now the largest undercover market in SA attracting more than 6000 public visitors and 160 stallholders every Sunday.
9. Continued reduction on CO2 emissions achieved with our state of the art microgrid.

Contact:

South Australian Produce Market Limited

Administration Building

Burma Road, Pooraka SA 5095

Phone: 08 8349 4493

Email: enquiry@saproducemarket.com.au



PERTH MARKETS

Perth Markets Group Limited (PMGL) owns and operates the Perth fresh produce markets site, Western Australia's only wholesale fruit and vegetable central trading market where over 225,000 tonnes of fresh produce is traded annually.

Known as Perth Markets, the 51-ha site is situated just 16km from the Perth CBD with central access to the major Perth arterial freeways North, South and East which facilitates quick access to the intermodal rail hub of Kewdale, Perth Airport and Fremantle Port.

Perth Markets is home to 25 primary and 30 secondary wholesalers servicing over 330 active buyer groups with produce supplied from over 430 registered Western Australian growers stretching 3600km from Ord River to Albany. It is also the central hub for the interstate trade of fresh produce sourced from the growing regions of QLD, NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

The operations at the site are crucial for both fresh produce supply and the state's economy. Tenants provide employment to 1,782 people, benefiting local communities. Additionally, the Site hosts a Saturday Wholesale Clearance Market and the longstanding Sunday Canning Vale Community Market, which has been running for over 30 years.

Perth Markets has an industrial occupancy rate of 100% reflecting the high demand for space within the markets. This is driven not only by Western Australia's continued strong population growth (3% YOY) and the associated demand for fresh produce, but also by the recognised efficiencies that fresh produce wholesalers and cold chain service providers gain from proximity to the State's fresh produce Central Trading Area and Perth's intermodal transportation hubs.

PMGL now enters an exciting new construction phase aimed at catering for this industry expansion with several new cold storage warehouses scheduled for construction over the next 4 years the first of which, a new 3,500m² cold storage facility, is currently under construction for completion in January 2025.

To find out more about new leasing opportunities, and be part of Perth Markets' exciting growth and development plan, contact our Chief Property Officer Shaun Atkins on (08) 9456 9239 or email property@perthmarket.com.au





Brismark in Brief

Andrew Young, CEO Brismark & Managing Director and CEO Brisbane Markets Limited

The Queensland Chamber of Fruit and Vegetable Industries Co-operative Limited, proudly represents and serves the wholesaling sector of Queensland's fresh produce industry. Providing Members with a broad range of services to support them, their growers, and buyers, Brismark continues to go from strength to strength.

Brismark's Credit Service, which is a financial clearinghouse for Market transactions, experienced another year of record throughput for the 2022/23 financial year, which stands as a testament to the value this service brings to our Members and their buyers, as well as the volume of fresh produce passing through the Brisbane Markets.

In late 2023, Brismark upgraded its online Credit Service platform to include Multi-Factor Authentication to further increase the platform's security. As a Member of Fresh Markets Australia, Brismark has also been progressing a major initiative using its Credit Service data to create a verifiable guide to fresh produce prices, designed to help address ongoing calls for increased market price transparency.

We continued our industry representation and advocacy services this past year. Promoting the important role our Members play in the fresh produce supply chain and communicating the benefits of the Central Market to industry, government, and consumers remained an important part of our activities.

Our range of business services including human resources, industrial relations, work health and safety, quality assurance, food safety, recruitment, debt recovery, bookkeeping, training, and discounted fuel cards and phone plans, have continued to support our Members and their associated businesses throughout the year.



Working collaboratively with Brisbane Markets Limited (BML) on site-based initiatives that ensure effective operation of the Brisbane Markets site has been ongoing. These initiatives have included facilitating National Work Safe Month, maintaining the operation of a Dispute Resolution Grower Hotline, random drug and alcohol testing as part of the Site Safety Program, and joint events and promotions.

Our sponsorship of the 2023 Brisbane Markets Mango Auction saw two worthy charities, Redkite and The Lady Musgrave Trust, share the funds raised from the charity event auctioning off the first symbolic tray of mangoes. Brismark and BML's support of the A better choice! Retailer Program saw Queensland retailer members participate in two national campaigns, and a range of partnership promotions designed to support our Members and their retail buyers.

We look forward to continuing our service to the wholesaling sector of the fresh produce industry throughout the coming year.

Growing Market Relationships

It's important to find the right Wholesaler and grower relationship — one that is long-term and built on trust. There are 47 fruit and vegetable Wholesalers who operate in the Brisbane Markets, and who make up the membership base of Brismark.

Each Wholesaler is an independent business competing for the same trade to ensure prices are based on supply and demand. They provide the opportunity for growers to sell their entire crop, not just the sizes and quality selected by the major supermarket chains.

Brisbane Markets is one of Australia's largest Central Markets, with our Wholesalers trading more than 700,000 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables worth over \$2 billion each year.

Brismark's Members transact through the Brismark Credit Service, a clearing house for Brisbane Markets businesses. The Credit Service tracks and processes transactions, providing buyers with consolidated statements for electronic payment, which the Credit Service follows up on to ensure on-time payment. There is even a Bad Debt Reserve in place to protect Wholesalers. The Credit Service provides dedicated and professional credit management supporting Wholesalers in making timely payments to their growers.

Further support is available to Wholesalers from Brismark through advice on established quality assurance procedures and manuals, customised work health and safety manuals, and specialised human resources and industrial relations services. FreshTest® microbial produce testing is also available. These services ensure Wholesalers are delivering produce to the highest standard, protecting their and their grower's future business and reputation.

All Brismark Members are regulated through the mandatory Horticulture Code of Conduct, which requires them to have a Terms of Trade document, standardising the indicative terms on which they intend to trade with a grower. They are also required to have an individual Horticulture Produce Agreement (HPA) in place with all their growers which clearly explains how prices will be calculated, allowing for clarity and transparency in all trade, along with fair and equitable dispute resolution procedures.

Growers have access to Brismark's Dispute Resolution Grower Hotline on 1800 631 002 which has an established, confidential, dispute resolution process that growers can access when they are experiencing difficulties with their trade dealings or wish to discuss operational issues, or Market-related grievances.

Through our support of Brisbane Market Wholesalers, Brismark continues to help them grow relationships to strengthen Queensland's fresh produce supply chain and the horticulture industry.





**South Australian
Chamber of Fruit
& Vegetables**

SA Chamber in Brief

**George Giameos, General Manager,
SA Chamber of Fruit & Vegetable Industries Inc**

The roles within the Chamber changed with Mark Brougham continuing on as President and Peter Koukos becoming Vice President. Long standing committee members Greg James and Andrew Christophides resigned from their positions. The committee wishes to thank both for their commitment.

Membership increased to 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, Mobil, Freshtest, and various other suppliers. These deals give members savings along with some of them providing income for the 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, Michaela, Deb and Nicolette for their efforts in relation to Pick a Local – Pick SA (A Better Choice) program. The Pick a Local – Pick SA (A Better Choice) campaign has been successful with 104 stores having signed up to the program. Of these, 37 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 2023 and look forward to improving the services offered to our members in 2024.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Committee (Mark Brougham, Peter Koukos, Andrew Sinnott, George Antonas, Mark Russo, Walter Gallarelo & Joseph Ceravolo) 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 2023, 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.

The national sales promotion awarding a Retailer of the Year was won in SA for the third year in a row by Adelaide Fresh Morphett Vale who were also voted 2nd nationally and Metro fresh Findon voted 3rd nationally.

A paid retailer participation program continues to operate with 40% of the 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. And a 30-second television commercial was produced and aired for the first time in 2023.

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.

Local campaigns were activated for brands including SA Citrus Growers Association, Kalette's, Nutri Kiwi, SA Stone fruits, Rubi Gold apples and HI Fresh salads providing in store demonstrations and retailer incentives for the brands.

A number of community programs continued to be supported with donations of fruit and activations held with the Adelaide Community Basketball Association, SA Districts Netball Association, 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.

And for the first time the local program supported Carols by Candlelight held at Elder Park in December and aired across the Seven Network nationally.

The team handed out 20,000 bananas and 20,000 Lenswood Missile apples at the Royal Adelaide Show and once again entered our crunch bunch mascots into the annual mascot games.

The SA Strawberry season was celebrated at an event held at the Adelaide Central Markets in November which featured former AFL legends Tony Modra and Chris McDermott who accepted a \$5,000 donation from the SA growers towards their charity Little Heroes Foundation. In December, \$60,000 was raised for Variety the Children's Charity at the annual Cherry Auction.

On air radio commercials continued to air on SAFM, the TVC aired in September/October and again in December, regular market updates continued on Radio Italiana and ABC Country Hour and the PR campaign remained active providing opportunities for share of voice in the media.

In December, 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.





Fresh State in Brief

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

It's hard to believe that we're now in our ninth year since relocating to Epping from the old Footscray market site, with the tenth-year anniversary just around the corner.

Probably like market life around the rest of the country, there's never a dull moment, and the last year has been no exception. This year has proven to be a busy one for Fresh State and our market community.

With the press release and statement from the Victorian State Government last May that they will support a change in market ownership, we are looking forward to a formal process being announced in the near future.

With thoughts of the pandemic well and truly behind us, the Fresh State Gala Ball was held again in March, this year at the Melbourne Town Hall, another iconic Melbourne venue. There is a more in-depth review on the Gala Ball on the following page, including the well-deserved award winners. Since re-commencing our Gala Ball event, every year has grown from strength to strength, and next year will again be very special.

Fresh State continues to focus on our commitment to members, ensuring we effectively represent all of them and to promote their interests, both within the Melbourne Market and the broader industry.

The Fresh State LPG Gas Station, the Melbourne Market Credit Service (MMCS), Fresh Test, and Data Fresh are some of the many quality services that Fresh State provides to its members and the Melbourne Market community.

mmcs
melbourne markets
credit service

**fresh
state**



Established in 1992, the MMCS continues to improve the cash flow of Fresh State members and regular MMCS users. We are constantly looking for ways to improve this service and make it even easier for users to conduct their businesses more efficiently and effectively.

Data Fresh (price reporting) underwent a major change in the last year, with pricing now being submitted using an app. It has been a big change, and I would like to thank everyone for their enthusiasm, and sometimes patience, while we made changes to constantly improve the process.

As 2024 continues to fly by, soon we'll be talking about Christmas. There's still a lot to be done in the coming months however, particularly as we take the steps towards privatisation of the Melbourne Market. We are optimistic about the future and will continue to deliver value to all of our members.

Fresh State Gala Ball

On Saturday 2nd March 2024, the Fresh State Gala Ball was held at one of the city's most historical treasures, the Melbourne Town Hall. Located on the corner of Swanston and Collins Street, guests ascended a red-carpet staircase where they were greeted with drinks and canapes before entering the grand ballroom.

The Gala ball offers the opportunity for members of the Melbourne Market Community to be recognised and celebrated for their hard work and dedication to the industry. The evening was celebrated by 450 guests that were treated to an evening of delicious food, entertainment and dancing.

The event officially started with the Fresh State CEO, Jason Cooper's welcoming speech, which was followed by Fresh State President, Shane Schnitzler, to the stage who announced the much-anticipated awards and winners, as follows:

- **Wholesale Personality of the Year to Frank Buggee.**
- **Wholesale Company of the Year to Produce Time.**
- **Young Marketeer of the Year awarded to Thanh Truong.**
- **Buyer of the Year to Just Fresh Wholesalers who were also recognised as National Fresh Produce Supplier of the Year at the recent Australian United Retailers (AUR) Awards Ceremony.**
- **Fresh State "This is Your Life" Award which was presented to Ross Barker.**

Matt Hetherington and his energetic party band had guests up and out of seats to dance the rest of the night away. The evening concluded on a high note and plans for the next annual Gala Ball have commenced.



Melbourne Market Charity Golf Day 2023

Since 2013, the Melbourne Market has consistently been honoured to have the opportunity to raise funds for a very worthy cause with a Golf Day.

Last year's successful Charity Golf Day involved over 100 golfers coming out and helping raise awareness and funds for DEBRA Australia. With 27 teams braving the chilly Melbourne weather, last year's golf day was a roaring success with a total of \$90,470 raised.

It was an event well enjoyed by all who attended and the efforts to raise donations for Debra were extremely impactful for the cause.

Gratitude to Joe Amalfi Fresh State Vice President, sponsors and helpers for organising another successful golf day event





MARKETWEST

Market West in Brief

Rod McPherson, CEO, Market West

Our Members, as the key tenants of the Perth Markets, continued to operate in 2024 with a changing dynamic. It is evident, post COVID, that buyers have changed their strategies by using technology for their ordering and communications with our Members, the Central Market Traders.

No longer do we see daily vast foot traffic within the central trading area. Buyers are choosing to attend the markets less regularly, relying on trusted relationships with our Members, to maintain their supply standards allowing them more time to devote to their business or making subtle lifestyle changes. While the number of registered 'active' buyers has reduced marginally, the use of buying services and technology, i.e. phones, tablets and on-line ordering systems have changed how many of them do business.

Management Committee

At our AGM in November 2023 Market West Members re-elected Paul Neale (Mercer Mooney) as Vice President. Will Connor (Fresh Express) and Frankie Galati (Galati Group) were re-elected to our Management Committee for a second term. As a result, our President Trish Skinner (Aust Produce Brokers) and Paul are the approved 'industry directors' on the Perth Markets Group Ltd Board.

Market West Credit Service

For the 2022/23 financial year the credit service member turnover was again a record \$617m (+3.4%) on an average 328 active buyers. The increase is predominantly price driven and through the central market process, produce supply and prices remained above those of the previous year due to a range of issues in labour availability, weather events and on farm supply capability. 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.

Market Operations

While our CEO has stepped down as the Chairman of the Market Operations Safety Committee (MOSC), he remains an active Committee Member which comprises other market-based tenant representatives and market management. During his tenure as Chair there was increased focus on Workplace Health and Safety resulting from legislated change in March 2022. Most importantly there was the introduction of the newly developed site Alcohol & Drug Management Plan and the second phase of the plan has recently been implemented.

Fresh Markets Australia Board Meeting in Perth

In November 2023, Market West welcomed the FMA Board to Perth for the first time since 2018, for a Board meeting and AGM. The traditional early morning market tour was followed by a robust meeting across a broad agenda. A separate meeting with Market West Members allowed them to receive valuable information on industry issues, projects and initiatives that FMA is working on.



A better choice! – Independent Retailer Support Program

'A better choice!' remains a key strategic focus recognising independent fresh produce retailers as a key stakeholder in the central market supply chain.

The program is run internally with the support of Fresh Markets Australia and with additional financial support from the market operator, Perth Markets Group Ltd. The program has grown in stature with 74 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 – 5 Seasons Fresh - Harrisdale



MARKET
WEST

Biosecurity

In November 2023 the WA industry became subject to increased biosecurity restrictions imposed by DPIRD on produce from other states.

This meant that certain produce lines such as mangoes and citrus, considered potential Qfly hosts, could no longer be treated on arrival in WA but required pre-treatment prior to reaching our borders. This caused some significant reduction in availability and seasonal shortages which in turn resulted in price increases in a time when consumers are facing ongoing cost of living pressures.

Proactively, Market West and representative wholesalers formed a sub-committee to work with DPIRD to educate and navigate through this change. Obviously, we do not want biosecurity compromised and continue to work closely with the regulatory bodies to ensure that consumers have safe, consistent access to quality fresh produce.

Market Pricing and Statistics

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.

Emerging produce lines were included and existing lines are reviewed for relevance. Data collection is supported in real time by 98% of the central traders. The quality of reporting has received high level acceptance by the wider industry creating confidence in of the data. We are excited about the national FreshData initiative and our contributions to the enhanced data capabilities for the 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, WH&S Safety Legislation changes and risk, 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 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.



DO YOU NEED CONFIDENTIAL HELP TO SORT OUT A TRADING ISSUE?

FMA facilitates a National Dispute Resolution **HOTLINE** Service.

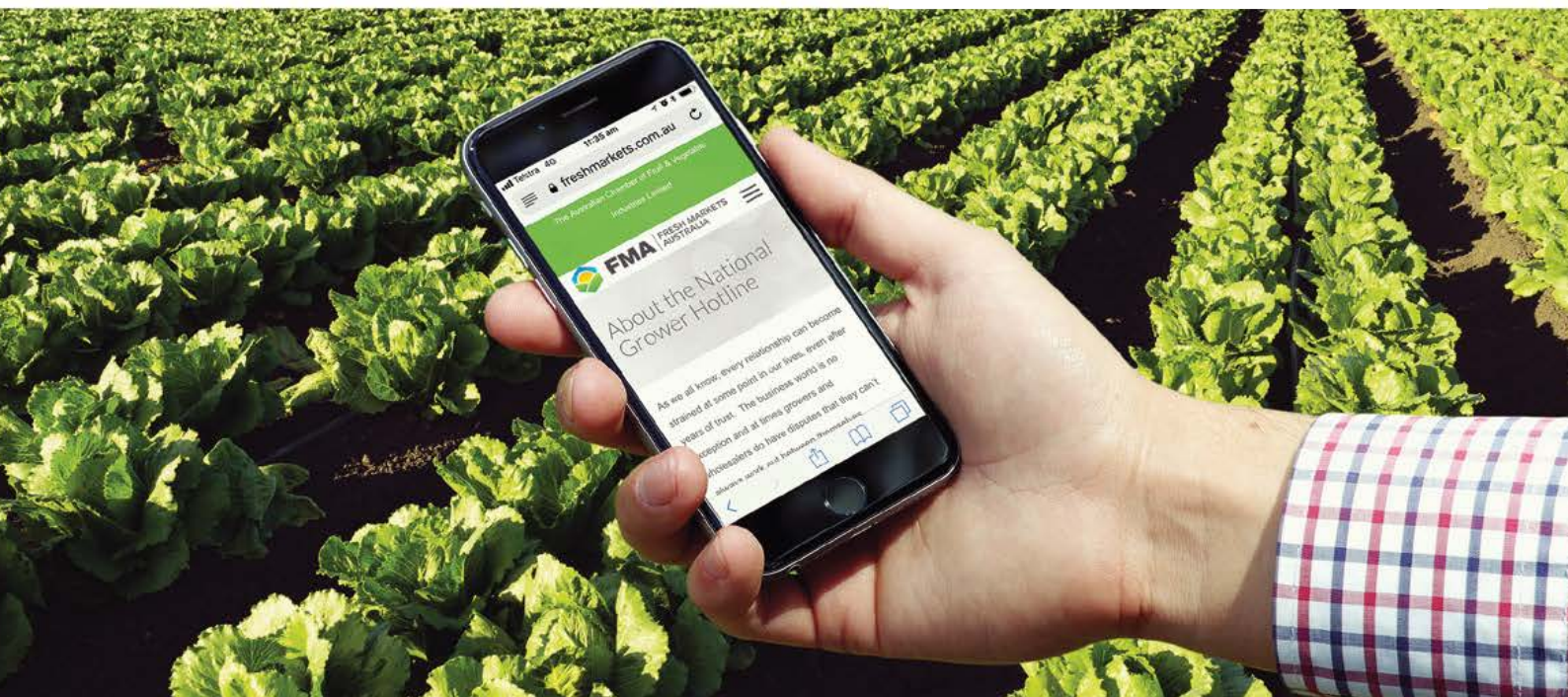


FreshCode
HORTICULTURE PRODUCE AGREEMENT

Contact your *local* Dispute Resolution Service.

- operates in each Central Market
- specially designed to investigate issues raised by growers
- it's confidential
- experienced Dispute Resolution Officers
- successful outcomes

Brisbane	1800 631 002
Sydney	02 9764 3244
Melbourne	03 9408 6627
Adelaide	08 8262 1122
Perth	08 9455 2742



Perth Markets Ball & Retailer of the Year

The annual social highlight for the WA industry was held at Crown Ballroom in October. A glamorous Hollywood theme set the scene for the evening and was an unprecedented success. The industry's premier event attracted over 600 guests who dressed to impress, engaging with the theme.

Guests were greeted by the paparazzi, Marilyn Monroe & Indiana Jones for a photo opportunity before being entertained by a 'Fred & Ginger' style floorshow before Samantha Jade had the dance floor jumping.

The Retailer of the Year nominations were narrowed down to 51 finalists across 8 categories.



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

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 was Tony Ale Fruit & Veg Market. A Better Choice Retailer of the Year was 5 Seasons Fresh Harrisdale and A Better Choice Peoples Choice Award winner was A Healthy Bunch. We thank the Perth Markets Group as the naming rights sponsor and a key supporter of A Better Choice.

Wholesaler of the Year - Etherington

For the first time, the Wholesaler of the Year was awarded at the Perth Markets Ball. The inaugural winner was Etherington, a long established market family business, in a close result measured against relevant broad criteria marginally ahead of a quality field.



The team at Etherington - Inaugural Wholesaler of the Year

Charity Cherry Auction

Now in its 31st 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 2023 Cherry Auction raised a massive \$120,000, mainly through a powerhouse joint bid between Tony Galati from Spudshed, Ned Erceg from Erceg Holdings, Linh Truong from Allstates, Luch Monte from Monte Farms and Mario Casotti from



Our first ever Cherry Queen, Linh Truong from Allstates, after the winning group bid of \$75,000 for the 5kg box of cherries.

Karragullen Cool Storage. The 5kg prize box of cherries from Sweet Cherry Valley crafted by the Donnybrook Men's Shed sold for a whopping \$75,000, with the winning bid placed by Linh Truong from Allstates. Linh was crowned our first ever Cherry Queen. The fresh produce community has donated a staggering \$1.7 million to the Foundation over the past 3 decades.



Freshmark in Brief

Megan George, CEO Freshmark



The past 12 months have been a period of great momentum for Freshmark.

Our key achievements have included the delivery of a new strategic direction, the development and adoption of a five key policy positions, and a major step up in our advocacy work to support the ongoing viability and success of the fresh produce sector.

Our strategy underpins everything we do and in 2023 we invested in an intensive strategy review that brought together our board, select advisers and a professional facilitator to challenge us to think creatively about what our sector needs, where Freshmark fits in and how we can best support our stakeholders. The result was a three year strategy based on three fundamental principles:

1. Freshmark is for all of industry.

The best way for us to help industry to thrive is to ensure we can support the entire fresh produce industry with programs, products and services that contribute to big-picture success for all of us.

2. We make it simpler to work in fresh produce.

We thought long and hard about our purpose, and we realised this is what it comes down to. We must make it simpler to work in fresh produce by supporting businesses in the sector to find staff and navigate legislation, by advocating for our sector, and finding ways to deliver cost savings to business.

3. We will be the trusted voice in a thriving fresh produce sector.

Our vision is to be the go-to voice on fresh produce, with seats at the right tables.

Other highlights of the year included welcoming three new skills-based directors to our board, working towards labour solutions including the creation of career pathways in our industry, and continuing to guide our members and industry through the full implementation of the Hort Code. I am proud to say we have had very good feedback from industry and regulators around our program of support, which has resulted in an excellent level of compliance with the complex regulation.

Overall, it has been a very active year and we are starting to see real traction in many important areas. As always, the true high point has been the opportunity to be part of this incredible community which is simply unlike any other industry.



Sydney Markets Foundation

In 2022 Sydney's famous Cherry Auction was offsite from the markets for the very first time, and it was such a resounding success that the gala event format was brought back in 2023. We were excited to bring together the fresh produce industry and corporate donors, to raise as much money as possible. The charity gala night is the perfect way to welcome the start of the stone fruit season, whilst raising funds for a very worthy cause.

This year, the auction again supported the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation with proceeds helping to develop treatment facilities in the suburbs and regions where they are most needed, so sick kids can get their treatment close to home, in the arms of their communities.

In addition to the cherry auction, Sydney Markets Foundation also ran a number of fundraisers during the gala as well as throughout the year.

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



FRESHMARK

The cherries for this year's auction were chosen prior to the Gala by Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation chief executive Kristina Keneally, who awarded the honour to Wandin Valley Farms cherries. The title of 'Cherry King' for 2023 went to Narinder Singh Badhan from QE Food Stores who came in with a winning bid of A\$50,000. This was topped up with an additional A\$20,000 from Sydney Markets Credit Services to raise a grand total of A\$70,000 for the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation.

Ms Keneally said the Sydney Markets Foundation's generous donation will help ensure that children across New South Wales can access world-class cancer care in a safe and welcoming environment, regardless of their location.

Freshmark's Advocacy Program

Over the past 12 months Freshmark formalised its approach to advocacy through the creation of an Industry Advocacy Committee and the development and adoption of five key policy areas.

We recognise that while supporting businesses in their day to day operations is critical, we also have a significant role to play in ensuring regulators, consumers and supply chain partners see the value and importance of the fresh produce sector.

Our advocacy program is all about pushing for changes that will help make the sector sustainable over the longer term. Our five key policy positions reflect months of consultation to determine the areas that will be our priorities over the short to medium term.

Those policy areas are labour, food security, environment, regulation & governance, and consumer education.

Over the past 12 months we have contributed to a number of key inquiries and reviews, including the Independent Toll Review, the Unfair Trading Practices Review, the Inquiry into Food Security in Australia, the Food and Grocery Code Review and the ACCC Supermarkets Inquiry.

Pleasingly, the concerns of our stakeholders have been heard and acknowledged by most of these reviews, and we have been able to play our part in securing a number of recommendations that will support the future of our industry. Importantly, our expanded advocacy program has also led to an increase in the profile of Freshmark and the fresh produce sector, as evidenced through a number of connections and conversations which indicate regulators and others are sitting up and taking notice of what we have to say.

We look forward to further engaging in advocacy, including in collaboration with our state peers and the national body.



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