



OUTER SUBURBAN/INTERFACE SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO FARMERS' MARKETS

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Inquiry into Farmers' Markets

The Committee records its appreciation to everyone who contributed to the inquiry through the submission process and at the Committee's roundtable forum; they are listed in the Appendices. The report was prepared by the Committee's Research Officer, Mr Keir Delaney and the Committee's Executive Officer, Mr Sean Coley. Administrative support and research assistance was provided by Ms Natalie-Mai Holmes, with the research program under the direction of Mr Coley.

Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee (2010)

Inquiry into Farmers' Markets

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COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

| Position | Member |
|--------------|---|
| Chair | Mr George Seitz, MLA |
| Deputy Chair | Hon Ken Smith, MLA |
| Member | Mr Nazih Elasmar, MLC |
| Member | Mr Matthew Guy, MLC |
| Member | Ms Colleen Hartland, MLC |
| Member | Mr David Hodgett, MLA |
| Member | Mr Craig Langdon, MLA until 25 August 2010 |
| Member | Mr Don Nardella, MLA |

For this inquiry, the Committee was supported by a secretariat comprising:

| Position | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Executive Officer | Mr Sean Coley |
| Research Officer | Mr Keir Delaney |
| Committee Administrative Officer | Ms Natalie-Mai Holmes |

Functions of the Committee

The Committee consists of eight Members of Parliament, three drawn from the Legislative Council and five from the Legislative Assembly. It is chaired by Mr George Seitz, MLA.

The functions of the Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee are to inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with –

- a) The provision of services to new urban regions; and
- b) The development or expansion of new urban regions.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Received from the Legislative Assembly on 13 August 2009:

To inquire into, consider and report no later than 31 August 2010 into farmers' markets, and the Committee should:

- 1) Identify the types of farmers' markets operating in interface municipalities and peri-urban areas;
- 2) Investigate the history and growth potential of this form of retail/agricultural activity and the demand created for products sourced from interface and peri-urban areas;
- 3) Examine the structure, codes of practice, strategic planning and economic viability of farmers' markets and any barriers or impediments to their development and long term growth;
- 4) Examine how farmers' markets can contribute to increasing the viability of small scale farming enterprises located in the interface and peri-urban municipalities, especially in the designated 'Green Wedge' zoned land; and
- 5) Identify any barriers to access farmers' markets for producers to supply or retail at these markets.

The Parliament subsequently amended the inquiry reporting date to 7 October 2010.

ACRONYMS

| Acronym | Definition |
|---------|---|
| ASFM | Adelaide Showground Farmers Market |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| CFA | Country Fire Authority |
| CSA | Community Supported Agriculture |
| DIIRD | Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NFDP | New Farmer Development Project |
| OSISDC | Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee |
| RDV | Regional Development Victoria |
| RFM | Regional Farmers Markets Pty Ltd |
| SA | South Australia |
| VFMA | Victorian Farmers' Markets Association |

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the final report of the Outer Suburban/Interface Services & Development Committee's (OSISDC) *Inquiry into Farmers' Markets*.

Farmers' markets – where consumers buy fresh food and value-added produce direct from growers or producers – have seen a remarkable worldwide resurgence over the last decade or so. Here in Victoria, there are now over 90 regular farmers' markets throughout the state, with around 20 located in Melbourne's interface and peri-urban areas. Victoria's farmers' markets are estimated to contribute at least \$227 million per annum to the state economy.

I have a long standing personal interest in this topic. In my early years I worked on the family stall at our local farmers' market. I believe there are two main reasons why the markets are currently so successful and popular: the quality of the produce and the attractiveness and authenticity of the retail experience. Victorians are more conscious of the food they consume, its quality and freshness, how it is produced and where it comes from. Farmers' markets offer the chance to interact with genuine producers in a festive community atmosphere. For their part, producers find that the markets are a more rewarding way to sell, both personally and financially.

As the Committee travelled to different farmers' markets and spoke to people involved we were particularly impressed by the stories of successful small businesses that started at a farmers' market, with all the employment and economic gains that flow from this. We also saw that some market vendors are making substantial investments in land or capital and others are radically altering their farming methods to better cater for farmers' market shoppers. These are signs of confidence in the future of the industry.

The Committee has made 12 recommendations in this report. Our focus has been on ways to grow the markets and expand the benefits they offer to communities at Melbourne's fringe. As this has been a relatively short inquiry, we have concentrated on the most important issues identified in submissions and the evidence received at a roundtable forum held at Parliament House. Further discussion of several topics closely related to farmers' markets and agriculture in peri-urban Melbourne can be found in the Committee's *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness* report (May 2010).

Finally, I note that this is the sixth inquiry report delivered by OSISDC since 2003. Each report has been about building stronger communities on Melbourne's urban-rural fringe. The Committee has been a consistent advocate for governments (at all levels) to pay specific attention to the well-being of this critical but often overlooked part of our city. I thank past and present members and staff for their contribution.

Mr George Seitz MP

Chair

TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Two:

Recommendation 1:

That the Victorian Government continue to fund the Farmers' Markets Program beyond 2011.

Recommendation 2:

That Regional Development Victoria, in conjunction with Tourism Victoria, provide funding for interface local governments to develop agritourism websites promoting food-related tourist destinations, including farmers' markets, farm gate sales, cellar doors, 'pick-your-own' farms and festivals and events.

Recommendation 3:

That the Victorian Government work with the Australian Government, the Victorian Council of Social Service, Victorian Farmers' Markets Association and farmers' market operators to examine innovative options (such as linking in with Centrelink concession cards or seniors cards) to ensure that the cost of produce at farmers' markets is accessible for people on low incomes.

Chapter Three:

Recommendation 4:

That the Victorian Farmers' Markets Association review its policies concerning local producers selling on behalf of other local producers, in order to:

- introduce greater flexibility for farmers and markets; and
- ensure maximum transparency and disclosure of the origins of products sold at farmers' markets.

Recommendation 5:

That the Victorian Government continue to encourage and support high standards for vendors trading at Victoria's farmers' markets.

Recommendation 6:

That the Victorian Government establish a program to identify vacant rural land suitable for agriculture in peri-urban Melbourne and encourage its lease to farmers and community organisations seeking land.

Recommendation 7:

That Victorian local governments seek opportunities to support farmers' market organisers and reduce regulatory barriers for farmers' markets.

Recommendation 8:

That the Victorian Government work with the Interface Group of Councils to develop a streamlined and standardised planning approval process for all new farmers' markets.

Recommendation 9:

That the Victorian Government, through the Department of Planning and Community Development, work with local government to:

- ensure that farmers' markets are sited in high visibility locations (such as public transport hubs, activity centres or retail precincts) which are accessible and likely to provide maximum benefits for nearby businesses; and
- facilitate and assist with access to services, such as power, public amenities, water and traffic management.

Recommendation 10:

That the Victorian Government, through its Farmers' Markets Program, ensure that a specific number of grants are dedicated to the establishment and operations of farmers' markets in lower income outer suburban areas or areas with limited access to fresh food. Ideally, the Committee believes all Victorian local government areas should have at least one farmers' market.

Recommendation 11:

That the Victorian Government include a clause in the State Planning Policy Framework specifically noting the importance of ensuring access to food and encouraging a diversity of local food outlets, such as farmers' markets.

Recommendation 12:

That the Victorian Government assist local governments to implement the single registration system for vendors selling at farmers' markets.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the Outer Suburban/Interface Services & Development Committee (hereafter 'the Committee') from its inquiry into specific matters concerning the operation and sustainability of farmers' markets in the interface and peri-urban areas of Melbourne.¹

On 13 August 2009 the Committee received from the Legislative Assembly a terms of reference requiring the Committee to inquire into farmers' markets.

On 3 March 2010 the Committee met and resolved to commence the inquiry.

1.1 Terms of reference

That pursuant to the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003, Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee is required to inquire into, consider and report no later than 31 August 2010 into farmers' markets, and the Committee should:

- 1) Identify the types of farmers' markets operating in interface municipalities and peri-urban areas;
- 2) Investigate the history and growth potential of this form of retail/agricultural activity and the demand created for products sourced from interface and peri-urban areas;
- 3) Examine the structure, codes of practice, strategic planning and economic viability of farmers' markets and any barriers or impediments to their development and long term growth;
- 4) Examine how farmers' markets can contribute to increasing the viability of small scale farming enterprises located in the interface and peri-urban municipalities, especially in the designated 'green wedge' zoned land; and
- 5) Identify any barriers to access farmers' markets for producers to supply or retail at these markets.

The Parliament subsequently extended the inquiry reporting date to 7 October 2010.

1.2 Conduct of the inquiry

The Committee's process for conducting the inquiry consisted of the following steps:

- advertising the inquiry and calling for submissions;
- written invitations to key stakeholders to submit and/or present;
- a roundtable forum;
- background research; and
- visits to farmers' markets.

1.2.1 Submissions

The terms of reference were advertised in *The Age*, *Herald Sun*, the *Weekly Times* and on the Committee's website. The closing date for submissions was 17 May 2010. Extensions were granted in a number of cases.

The Committee received 15 submissions. Copies can be found on the Committee's website and a list of submitters is at Appendix A.² The Committee sincerely thanks those individuals and organisations who made submissions.

All submissions expressed support for Victoria's farmers' markets. At the same time, there were different interpretations of the essential role or purpose of the markets. For some submitters, farmers' markets are about farmers' livelihoods first and foremost. For others, they are about access to fresh food and contributing to food security. Still others see farmers' markets as local economic development opportunities, or akin to 'community infrastructure', providing a place for communities to gather and social capital to form. It is apparent from these varied responses that farmers' markets are particularly 'rich' social and economic activities, providing a blend of different benefits to the community.

The Committee received a small number of submissions suggesting it investigate broader issues which impact upon farmers' markets and producers. These included government policy and support for Melbourne's green wedges, metropolitan land use planning policy (particularly with regard to Melbourne's urban growth boundary) and 'right to farm' disputes between farmers and their neighbours.

The Committee investigated these and related topics in its final report for the *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne*, tabled in the Parliament in May 2010. That report provides the essential background for this inquiry, as it examined a broad range of food, farming and land use issues and put forward 84 recommendations to government. Smaller-scale farm businesses – who are more likely to be interested in selling at farmers' markets – were afforded particular attention by the Committee. In light of the overlap between that report and the Committee's new inquiry

into farmers' markets, the Committee directs interested readers to the Committee's website where a copy of the *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne* report can be obtained.³

1.2.2 Written invitations to stakeholders

The Committee wrote to 59 individuals and organisations with an expressed or likely interest in the inquiry.

1.2.3 Roundtable forum

The Committee held a public roundtable forum at Parliament House with invited representative stakeholders on 7 July 2010. Proceedings from the roundtable were recorded by Hansard and the transcripts are also available on the Committee's website. A list of participants is at Appendix B.

This is the first time the Committee has held a roundtable as part of an inquiry and it proved to be an effective format to hear from several witnesses in a short space of time. Discussion ranged across all parts of the terms of reference, led by the Chair, Mr George Seitz MP. Witnesses were able to raise issues and direct questions to one another. The Committee thanks all involved for their contributions to the discussion, which greatly assisted the Committee's deliberations.

1.2.4 Background research

The secretariat conducted background research on matters raised within the terms of reference. This included a literature review and analysis of recent press articles. Compared with other countries, Australia has a limited body of academic literature on the topic of farmers' markets.

The secretariat also reviewed market research reports prepared for individual farmers' markets. Stephenson, Lev and Brewer (2006) have noted that market research – typically involving surveys of the public to identify attitudes and spending behaviours – is a useful tool for market managers seeking to understand their customer-base and make informed strategic planning decisions. Such research can also provide the industry more broadly with information necessary to impact public policy.⁴

Towards the conclusion of this inquiry the Committee received the results of a major market research report conducted by the Victorian Farmers' Markets Association (VFMA). The Committee expresses its appreciation to the VFMA for making this available, along with other information from surveys and data collections.

1.2.5 Market visits

To gather further information about outer suburban farmers' markets, members and staff of the Committee visited the Lilydale Farmers' Market on 4 July 2010 and the Sunbury Farmers' Market on 10 July 2010. The Committee appreciates the assistance of market operators Rotary (Lilydale) and Inseason Markets (Sunbury) in facilitating the Committee's visits.

On 6-8 August 2010, Committee Chair Mr George Seitz MP and Committee member Mr Don Nardella MP, along with the Committee's Research Officer and Executive Officer, travelled to South Australia to visit the following farmers' markets in that state: Willunga Farmers Market (7 August), Victor Harbor Farmers Market (7 August) and Adelaide Showground Farmers Market (ASFM) (8 August).

The Committee would like to thank the following individuals for generously sharing their time and knowledge with us: Mr Brenton Tamblyn (Victor Harbor), Ms Jude McBain (Willunga) and Ms Zannie Flanagan AM (ASFM).

In addition, on 6 August 2010 the group received a comprehensive presentation from Mr Mike Redmond, CEO of Grow SA, at the Virginia Horticulture Centre, located north of Adelaide. Virginia is a major horticultural area producing goods worth more than \$100m per year (farm gate value). It shares many of the challenges experienced by horticultural areas of peri-urban Melbourne, including nearby urban growth and uncertainty over future development, rising land values, labour shortages and competition for water. Grow SA has established the 'SA Grown' label to certify producers meeting certain standards. Grow SA is also supportive of South Australia's farmers' markets and is working with the ASFM on authentication procedures.

1.3 What is a farmers' market?

Farmers' markets are not defined in Victorian legislation.⁵ The question of what distinguishes a farmers' market from other markets – such as 'produce markets', 'growers' markets' and 'fresh food markets' – and other retailers who sell fresh food, has become more relevant as the popularity of the farmers' market 'brand' has risen. Some participants in the inquiry expressed concern that the farmers' market brand can be appropriated by any kind of market, or even other enterprises such as supermarkets and food manufacturers.⁶ Currently, this does not appear to be a major issue in Victoria, although overseas experience shows the attractiveness of the brand and the potential for misrepresentation or confusion.⁷

The VFMA defines an 'authentic farmers' market' as:

a predominantly local fresh food and produce market that operates regularly at a public location which provides a suitable environment for farmers and food

producers to sell their farm origin product and their associated value added primary products directly to customers.⁸

The Committee considers that this definition reasonably reflects the views of the general public with regard to the ethos and practice of farmers' markets. Notwithstanding this, the Committee has also considered evidence from or about markets which meet this definition but are not affiliated with the VFMA.

1.4 The farmers' market 'industry'

While farmers have sold produce direct to the customer for centuries (including at Melbourne's historic city markets), the modern farmers' markets movement is said to have emerged in Australia only in the late 1990's and early 2000's. According to some accounts, Victoria's first farmers' market was established in the Yarra Valley in 1998.⁹

The industry has grown rapidly since 1998. While exact numbers are not kept, there are industry estimates of around 150 markets Australia-wide and more than 90 in Victoria.¹⁰ New markets appear regularly and a small number are beginning to operate weekly. There are frequent features in the press profiling the 'rise of farmers' markets'¹¹ and innovations in the way markets advertise and promote themselves (including the development of an iPhone application to locate nearby markets).¹²

Similar trends are observable in the United States, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The number of farmers' markets in the United States has more than tripled since the mid-1990's (from 1,755 in 1994 to 6,132 markets in 2010).¹³ In the UK, the first farmers' market was established in 1997 and the industry has since grown to around 950 markets across the country, with annual sales of (AU) \$363 million.¹⁴

There is general agreement as to the multiple forces driving the enthusiasm for farmers' markets and the willingness of farmers to be involved. People are increasingly interested in knowing where their food comes from and how it was produced. There is a perception that local food is more sustainable, has less environmental impact and is of a higher quality (or 'freshness'). There is also a strong desire among Victorian consumers to support their local businesses and farmers. By providing a direct link to the people who produce the food, farmers' markets offer an authentic retail experience sought by many consumers.¹⁵

For farmers and producers themselves, selling direct to the customer offers several benefits but most importantly, it has the potential for increased financial returns, mainly by 'cutting out the middleman' – shortening the conventional supply chain involving packers, distributors, transportation, supermarkets and other retailers.

Several participants in the inquiry emphasised that farmers' markets are more than simply retail spaces. They offer a shopping experience very different to that of supermarkets. Renowned American food activist and writer Michael Pollan has written:

Farmers' markets are thriving, more than five thousand strong, and there is a lot more going on in them than the exchange of money for food. Someone is collecting signatures on a petition. Someone else is playing music. Children are everywhere, sampling fresh produce, talking to farmers. Friends and acquaintances stop to chat. One sociologist calculated that people have ten times as many conversations at the farmers' market than they do in the supermarket. Socially as well as sensually, the farmers' market offers a remarkably rich and appealing environment. Someone buying food here may be acting not just as a consumer but also as a neighbour, a citizen, a parent, a cook. In many cities and towns, farmers' markets have taken on (and not for the first time) the function of a lively new public square.¹⁶

1.5 'Interface' and 'peri-urban'

The terms of reference refer to 'interface' and 'peri-urban' areas. As in past inquiries, the Committee considers the following to be the interface municipalities: Cardinia (plus rural parts of the adjoining City of Casey), Hume, Melton, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham and Yarra Ranges. These interface municipalities are predominantly rural, contain the majority of Melbourne's green wedge (non-urban) zoned land and (in most cases) host the city's urban growth corridors.

As in past inquiries, the report uses the term 'peri-urban Melbourne' to describe a wider geography, taking in not only the interface municipalities but also the next ring of municipalities which make up Melbourne's hinterland: Greater Geelong, Moorabool, Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Mitchell, Murrindindi and Macedon Ranges.

1.6 Outline of the report

The remainder of this report addresses the terms of reference in two chapters.

Chapter Two provides an introduction to farmers' markets in Victoria and is centred on several key questions. The chapter sets out where the markets are located, when they are held and who is involved in running them. Evidence on the economic impact of the markets is then considered, along with who shops at them and why, why farmers choose to sell at the markets, and lastly, the wider benefits of farmers' markets to the community.

Chapter Three is focused on matters of specific concern to participants in the inquiry. The Committee received a range of evidence on different issues which affect the

sustainability of farmers' markets, particularly those located at Melbourne's fringes. The discussion begins by examining concerns around the 'authenticity' of goods sold at farmers' markets, the supply of stallholders at farmers' markets and the evidence on why some markets fail and others succeed. The chapter then considers matters relevant to land use planning (planning permits, market siting and the connection between farmers' markets and food security) and the issuing of food permits to market vendors.

Chapter One Endnotes:

¹ In this report, the apostrophe is used with the term ‘farmers’ markets’ in keeping with common practice in Victoria. However, where individual markets or sources have chosen otherwise (e.g. Adelaide Showground Farmers Market), the apostrophe is used.

² <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/osisdc>.

³ <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/osisdc>.

⁴ Garry Stephenson, Larry Lev & Linda Brewer, *Enhancing the Success of Northwest Farmers' Markets: An Executive Summary*, Oregon Small Farm Technical Report No. 22, Oregon State University Extension Service, 2006, 12.

⁵ Several US states have enacted legal definitions of farmers’ markets, including Vermont, Washington and Maine.

⁶ For example, food manufacturer Heinz UK recently launched its range of “Farmers’ Market Soup” with the statement: “we believe that the simple things in life are often the best, which is why we crafted a range of soups, inspired by Farmers’ Markets, using quality ingredients from the UK and other countries.” See <http://bit.ly/cUZ7FZ>.

⁷ For example, see Amy Radil, “Farmers’ Markets Protest Safeway Look-Alikes”, *kuow.org*, 1 July 2010, <http://bit.ly/a8aiNQ>.

⁸ Victorian Farmers’ Markets Association, “Our Charter.”

⁹ Victorian Farmers’ Markets Association, “What is the VFMA?”, <http://bit.ly/d8N6uL>.

¹⁰ Australian Farmers’ Markets Association, “Find a market”, <http://www.farmersmarkets.org.au/markets>. A (preliminary) list of Victorian markets was also provided to the Committee by the VFMA. It should be noted that markets are starting and closing frequently and therefore obtaining exact numbers is difficult.

¹¹ For example, Jane Willson, “Market Power”, *The Age*, 29 June 2010.

¹² See <http://www.mymarketsvic.com.au/>.

¹³ “Agricultural Marketing Service - Farmers Market Growth”, <http://bit.ly/1b0vew>;

¹⁴ FARMA, “Sector briefing on farmers’ markets”, June 2006, <http://bit.ly/9yeYre>.

¹⁵ Strategy Unit, UK Cabinet Office, *Food Matters: Towards a Strategy for the 21st Century*, Cabinet Office, July 2008.

¹⁶ Michael Pollan, “The Food Movement, Rising”, *The New York Review of Books*, 10 June 2010.

CHAPTER TWO: VICTORIA'S FARMERS' MARKETS

Farmers' markets are wise investments for municipalities seeking to increase foot traffic, revitalise neighbourhoods, expand commerce and build healthy communities.¹

This chapter presents a brief introduction to the operation of farmers' markets in Victoria. The discussion is focused on several questions: where the farmers' markets are located, when they are held, who runs them, who shops at them and why, who sells at them and why, their economic impact and their wider benefits to the community.

2.1 Farmers' markets in Victoria

Information provided by the VFMA to the Committee in August 2010 identified more than 90 farmers' markets held regularly throughout the state, although it is impossible to be exact as markets open and close all the time. Some markets also change their focus and move away from the authentic farmers' market model (as defined in Chapter One) but retain their farmers' market name.

There are currently around 20 farmers' markets operating regularly in the interface and peri-urban local government areas of Melbourne. These are:

- Casey-Berwick Farmers' Market;
- Central Geelong Farmers Market;
- Churchill Island Farmers' Market;
- Drouin Farmers' Market;
- Healesville Organic Farmers Market;
- Hurstbridge Farmers' Market;
- Inverloch Farmers Market;
- Kinglake Produce Market;
- Lancefield District Farmers' Market;
- Lilydale Farmers' Market;
- Mornington Farmers' Market;

- Mount Eliza Farmers' Market;
- Newtown Farmers Market;
- Pakenham Rotary Farmers' Market;
- Pearcedale Farmers' Market;
- Riddells Creek Farmers' Market;
- Sunbury Farmers' Market;
- Tallarook Farmers' Market;
- University Hill Farmers' Market; and
- Yarra Valley Regional Farmers' Market.

2.2 When are the markets held?

Almost all of Melbourne's farmers' markets trade once a month on a Saturday or Sunday morning. Two exceptions are Mulgrave Farmers' Market and the recently established Melbourne Showgrounds Farmers' Market – both open on a weekly basis.

A roundtable forum held on 7 July 2010 at Parliament House heard discussion on whether Victoria's farmers' markets could operate more frequently. Mr Nigel Flannigan urged Victorian market organisers to work towards the goal of holding markets "at least weekly:"

If you are saying to me, 'Come this week but there is nothing near you for the next three or four weeks' — and we are not talking about people who are able to travel great distances; some people just totter down to the local farmers' market — we are denying them that opportunity, particularly in the heavy urban area.

In my submission, I invite everyone to look at the website of the New York market. Some of their farmers' markets are four days a week. You are talking serious retail. That is an alternative supply outlet when you are getting that.²

The Committee notes that some of Australia's most successful farmers' markets are held weekly. Examples include the Albany Farmers' Market (voted "Outstanding Farmers' Market" by Vogue Entertaining + Travel in 2008), held every Saturday and drawing producers from across Western Australia's Great Southern region, and the Willunga Farmers Market in South Australia, which is credited with providing a major economic boost to the town of Willunga.

However, several witnesses with experience running farmers' markets (in Victoria and New South Wales), while agreeing that weekly markets were desirable for many reasons, considered that they were impractical at the current time. Mr Alan Eagle of Hawkesbury Harvest commented:

We believe in weekly markets, though, as the driver to get there [...] I do not know about the mechanism. Because [...] you will get one stallholder who goes there but he has already committed for a second Saturday somewhere else. If you want to run your market on the second week, the customers get a different veggie guy and sometimes that relationship takes a long time to build. I believe weekly markets are the best way to go but it is tough getting there, it is really tough.³

The barriers to weekly (or more frequent) markets include difficulties for producers in finding time to attend the market, increased management commitment (often by volunteers) and concern about the possible effects of increased competition on existing markets and nearby retail outlets selling fresh fruit and vegetables.⁴

Nevertheless, evidence submitted to the Committee indicates there is demand from consumers and stallholders for farmers' markets to be held more frequently.⁵ This is confirmed by recent survey data from the VFMA showing that 71 percent of farmers' market customers would like to shop at the markets more often. Importantly, the survey also indicated that many customers at interface markets travel some distance to shop at a farmers' market on the weekends when their nearest market is not operating.⁶

The Committee strongly believes that weekly farmers' markets held in the same location have the potential to become part of a regular shopping routine for consumers and are therefore far more likely to make an impact on food security and improved access to healthy food in outer suburban areas. Based on the successful and high quality markets seen by the Committee in South Australia and on the experience in other places, the Committee is keen to see a greater number of Melbourne farmers' markets operating weekly.

2.3 Who is involved in farmers' markets?

The following section describes the involvement of market operators, the VFMA and the Victorian Government in the farmers' market industry.

2.3.1 Market operators

A wide variety of organisations operate Victoria's farmers' markets, including charities (such as Rotary), private market management businesses (such as Regional Farmers Markets Pty

Ltd), property developers (MAB Corporation), local governments and the VFMA (the Melbourne Showgrounds Farmers' Market).

The Committee notes there are strengths and weaknesses of the different management arrangements. For example, Cardinia Shire Council recently transferred the running of one farmers' market to a community organisation to capitalise on the advantages gained from community ownership, including the access to volunteers and the ability to build networks with other groups in the local community.⁷ These other groups (such as the Country Fire Authority [CFA]) can benefit financially (through gold coin entry donations, parking fees etc) and can also have their own stalls to promote their own activities.⁸

Many community-run markets – such as those seen by the Committee in South Australia – are highly professional, dynamic and well supported and they return profits back to the community in a variety of ways. However, the Committee also heard that some community-run markets may be more dependent on grant funding to finance their ongoing operations. To counter this, community-run markets may consider seeking private sector support or sponsorship.

Regardless of the type of market operator, the market manager role is critically important. Managing a farmers' market has become more time-consuming and more competitive as the industry has grown. One study commented: “being a successful market manager requires long hours, difficult decisions and a flair for encouraging all who come into contact with the market.”⁹ For both community-based and private sector organisations, the employment of a paid market manager to promote the market and recruit an appropriate mix of stallholders substantially improves the likelihood of the market becoming a financial success.

The roundtable heard from Mr Peter Arnold, director of Regional Farmers Markets Pty Ltd, on this issue:

The markets that are falling over are the ones that do not have a full management structure, because to run a farmers' market is like watching Greg Norman play golf: it looks really easy on Saturday morning but it takes from Sunday through to the next Friday to actually keep those markets going. It is almost a full time job. I notice from some of the submissions that some managers are not even paid. That is just ridiculous. I think it has taken community to another level. These people have been very noble, but every market manager, whether they are in a community, whether they are in a Rotary club or whether they are part of RFM [Regional Farmers Markets], need to be paid and they need to be paid well. Then you can start to get some quality back into these markets.¹⁰

2.3.2 Victorian Farmers' Markets Association (VFMA)

The VFMA is a membership association formed in 2002 under the umbrella of the Australian Farmers' Markets Association. An Association charter was developed in 2006,

setting out the definition of “an authentic farmers’ market” and rules with regard to other matters such as authenticity, vendor mix, produce quality, pricing and labelling. The charter is provided at Appendix C.

On 1 September 2010 a new VFMA membership structure came into effect. Market managers (of member markets) will now forward a market day levy to the VFMA after each market day. The fee structure is \$5 per stallholder in metropolitan markets, \$4 interface and \$3 regional. There are several different membership categories, including (but not limited to) stallholders, industry professionals, market management committee members and market volunteers.

Since 2006, the VFMA has received funding from the Victorian Government, through Regional Development Victoria, for the establishment of an office, the appointment of an executive officer, website development and the instigation of a farmers’ market accreditation scheme.¹¹

2.3.3 Regional Development Victoria (RDV)

RDV administers the government’s \$2 million Farmers’ Markets Program, an initiative developed in partnership with the VFMA and running from 2007 until June 2011. The program aims to develop markets that can grow and operate as economically sustainable community events to bring local produce direct from producers to consumers. The program is available to all farmers’ markets in rural, regional and interface council areas. Markets do not have to be members of the VFMA. Local government acts as an auspicing body in the application process.¹²

The program has three streams:

- *Market Plan:* grants of up to \$10,000 for development of a professional market plan, including a feasibility study for a new or existing farmers’ market covering community consultation, economic sustainability and a produce audit.
- *Start-up Markets:* grants of up to \$20,000 to assist new markets to get underway. Recipient markets must show evidence of a comprehensive market plan. Funds can be used for training/skills development for market managers and stallholders, publicity and marketing campaigns, sourcing of stallholders and small-scale infrastructure.
- *Expanding Markets:* grants of up to \$20,000 to assist existing markets to expand. Applicants must show the economic benefits of the proposed expansion and demonstrate how it will become economically sustainable. Funding may go towards activities including training/skills development, publicity, small-scale infrastructure, sourcing of stallholders, compliance with VFMA accreditation and a VFMA ‘market check.’¹³

At the roundtable, Mr Anthony Sherry, Executive Director, Food and Beverage, representing the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD), gave the Committee further details of the program and its objectives:

The program has another 12 months to run and the aim and the intention is for farmers' markets and the VFMA to become economically sustainable in the long term. There is a range of reasons that the program was established and many of those reasons have been discussed today in terms of the benefits of farmers' markets. One of the interesting points that has been highlighted today is that there are many types of markets, and they all have a place, or they do not have a place if they are not successful and they are not able to be maintained. There is a different mix in terms of markets — whether it is produce, craft markets, farmers' markets or different versions — and it is a market driven activity in terms of whether they will survive and whether they are in the right location.

The engagement to date with the Victorian Farmers' Markets Association is around the thrust that is in the charter of the VFMA in terms of the establishment of those, but the program does not exclude other types of markets in accessing the program.

The thrust of the farmers' markets programs out of state government is regional Victoria but with the opportunity for interface council areas to access the program, thus the submission from us to this inquiry through Regional Development Victoria.

I believe the program was \$2 million over four years...and with three main areas of focus: the market plan, start up markets and expanding markets. Expanding markets is where that mix is available for the markets to have other activities but with a requirement to be identified with the farmers' market, which is around providing local produce — and there are descriptions of local produce — to consumers. There is another avenue of selling product for those producers or for people who value add to products such as with jams, conserves, bakery items et cetera, so it is not purely fresh food from the soil; and also around the opportunity to develop those businesses and enterprises as part of that progression along the value chain. It might be those smaller producers testing out products, which has been mentioned, or even just entering that market into the retail space and looking at other avenues of being able to develop their business. It is very broad. The health aspects are definitely part of it and it is a growing aspect.¹⁴

Based on the evidence presented to the Committee and discussions carried out at farmers' markets themselves, the Committee is convinced that government support for markets through the program has been a positive factor for the development of the industry in Victoria. In particular, assistance with seed funding and feasibility studies for new farmers' markets, as well as skills development for managers and stallholders, are valuable measures to support markets to become self-sustainable in the longer term. The Committee therefore

believes funding should be extended beyond the program's current scheduled closing date of June 2011.

Recommendation 1:

That the Victorian Government continue to fund the Farmers' Markets Program beyond 2011.

2.4 Economic impact

The VFMA estimates that Victoria's 90 farmers' markets contribute at least \$227 million per year to the Victorian economy.¹⁵ This significant economic impact is derived by applying a multiplier of 2.0 to a calculation of direct annual sales at the markets. The multiplier means that for every dollar spent at a market another dollar is spent elsewhere in the state economy.¹⁶ This follows an earlier study by Coster & Kennon (2005) in which the net annual benefit to communities across Australia from (what was then) 70 farmers' markets was estimated at approximately \$80 million.¹⁷

The economic impact on nearby retailers also needs to be considered. Farmers' markets can generate additional foot traffic in shopping precincts and increased turnover for existing retailers.¹⁸ For example, a market held adjacent to the Caroline Springs Square shopping centre generated increased turnover for most existing retailers of between 30-80 percent on market days and between 3-15 percent overall. While the market eventually closed for commercial reasons, it did have the effect of increasing resident awareness of retailers within the shopping centre and reducing the leakage of spending to other suburban retail centres.¹⁹

According to the recent VFMA survey, around a third of market shoppers make local purchases at nearby businesses as part of the same shopping trip, with an average spend of \$40.50. Furthermore, around 43 percent of these customers would not have shopped at those nearby businesses were it not for their visit to the farmers' market.²⁰

Across the 10 markets included in the VFMA survey, the percentage of customers who shopped locally before or after visiting the farmers' market varied from a low of 20 percent at Casey-Berwick Farmers' Market up to 56 percent at Lancefield Farmers' Market and 61 percent at Daylesford Farmers' Market.²¹ It is notable that both the Lancefield and Daylesford markets are centrally positioned within their respective towns, making it simple for customers to continue their shopping nearby, whereas the Casey-Berwick market is sited away from a retail precinct. Further discussion on the topic of siting farmers' markets is in Chapter Three of this report.

Other impact studies of farmers' markets have found similar benefits for retailers.²² A 2002 US study found that 60 percent of market shoppers also visited nearby stores on the same day and of those, 60 percent said that they visited those additional stores only on days that they visited the market.²³ Another study from Canada reported that 50 percent of customers at a farmers' market visited nearby businesses on the same trip, spending an average of (AU) \$39 at these businesses.²⁴ Research by Hawkesbury Harvest in NSW found that for every dollar customers spent at the farmers' market "they spent another 20 cents somewhere around the community — buying petrol, newspapers, those types of things."²⁵

Notwithstanding the additional foot traffic and turnover a market can generate for nearby retailers, it is highly likely that some small retailers (especially greengrocers) will be concerned about a loss of sales due to the competition provided by a new farmers' market, particularly if the market is to be held weekly. However, the research shows there are a range of potential solutions to this, including offering local retailers a stall at the market, distributing retail maps to market customers, and limiting or preventing the sale of certain goods at the market that 'clash' with those offered by nearby small retailers.

Moreover, market organisers and local government should be proactive in explaining the positive economic impacts to retailers in order to build support for farmers' markets. The research demonstrates that once markets are established the majority of local retailers report a favourable impact on their business and the local area.²⁶

On this issue, Hansard recorded the following exchange between Committee member Mr Don Nardella MP and Mr Peter Arnold of Regional Farmers Markets Pty Ltd:

Mr NARDELLA — The other thing that I think a lot of shopkeepers have problems with is the idea of competition. For example, in Melton we have the High Street strip shopping centre and they compete with not only the rest of the regional shopping centres but also with Woodgrove by QIC, which is a big shopping centre...

The strip shopping centres do really well. There is the Djerrinarrh Festival, for example. It is an annual festival. They set up stalls at the front of the place and they get lots of people coming in, but to get through to those shopkeepers that, 'Yes, it would be a good idea to once a month have people come in from within the town, essentially, or from Bacchus Marsh or from around the district and they might be competing with you, because you're fruit and veg' — although in fact there is no fruit and veg there — 'but you've got a stall out the front so you're actually getting more through traffic', that mindset, is really difficult.

Mr ARNOLD — It is difficult, Don, I agree, but as I think someone mentioned first off, the market may be 2 kilometres or 1 kilometre away, but when the family goes out, as soon as they start putting their hands in their wallets, they will even drive back into town and continue to spend. When they started the Djerrinarrh market, the big independent supermarket manager across the road came across and abused me and said, 'You're going to take my business away', and I said, 'No, we won't'. Three

months later he came to see me and said, 'Peter, you were absolutely right because when you have a farmers' market here, my takings go up by between 16 and 18 per cent'. What we used to do was talk to the local stakeholders and say, 'Yes, there are the jams and chutneys and eggs and so on but they're only there once a month. If someone goes up to the egg person and says, 'Where can I get your eggs next week?', they can say, 'Look, you can go to Fred Nurk down the road there; he's got a shop, and he'll carry my eggs''. It is cross fertilisation. It is a matter of getting the local retailers to work with the market and vice versa because it does stimulate.²⁷

2.4.1 Tourism

Farmers' markets are popular weekend tourist attractions, generating additional flow-on economic benefits for local communities.²⁸ Macedon Ranges Shire Council informed the Committee that "promotion of the markets as tourist destinations can increase the viability and economic base of the wider town. Tourism and out of town visitors enhance overall economic activity and provide additional consumers for businesses town-wide."²⁹

There are several examples of farmers' markets rejuvenating small rural communities through tourism. The Talbot Farmers' Market (165 kilometres from Melbourne) attracts over 100 stallholders and up to 4,000 people to the town (population 900) each month. Local traders report significant flow on benefits and the market has been credited with bringing "new life to a region that had struggled through drought and the drain of people moving away from the country."³⁰ A similar effect is attributed to the successful Willunga Farmers Market (see case study below).³¹

At the same time, market managers in Victoria and South Australia made the point to the Committee that they cannot rely on tourists to be the mainstay of their trade; as one witness commented: "tourists are fickle."³² To be successful year-round, markets will need to offer products and a shopping experience that meet the needs of locals.

There is scope for interface and peri-urban communities to capitalise on the growing interest in food and wine tourism and further integrate farmers' markets into the local tourist industry. The Shire of Nillumbik submitted that the markets might be used to inform tourists of other local attractions:

...to enhance visitor knowledge and generate awareness of a region's attractions, it is recommended that an increased amount of local tourism information be provided at the markets.

Recent research identified data gaps in relation to the farmers' market visitor profile, as well as their travel behaviour and intentions, around the region before or after the initial farmers' market experience. It has been recommended that further research into the farmers' market visitor profile and their regional tourism behaviour is conducted.³³

The Shire of Yarra Ranges also sees farmers' markets as part of the tourism offer for the region. Mr Ian Ada, agribusiness officer at the Shire of Yarra Ranges, discussed the approach the shire was taking:

We get 1.5 million tourists a year, most of whom are day visitors, so they can easily buy food and take it away again. That is 30,000 a week. One of our motivations was that we were trying to get increased "product" available for tourists to be able to use to encourage them to stay longer and overnight, and farmers' markets will be just one extra product that is available for people to do something when they are out in the Yarra Valley and to encourage them to stay an extra day. So we see it as quite a valuable part of our product.³⁴

The Committee believes that targeted assistance to promote farmers' markets as tourist destinations would be beneficial for the industry.

Recommendation 2:

That Regional Development Victoria, in conjunction with Tourism Victoria, provide funding for interface local governments to develop agritourism websites promoting food-related tourist destinations, including farmers' markets, farm gate sales, cellar doors, 'pick-your-own' farms and festivals and events.

Case study: Willunga and Victor Harbor farmers markets

On 7 August 2010, members and staff of the Committee travelled to the Willunga Farmers Market and the Victor Harbor Farmers Market in South Australia. Despite the wintry conditions, there was a strong turnout of customers and stallholders at both of these community-run markets.

Willunga is a small town located an hour south of Adelaide in the City of Onkaparinga local government area. Established in 2002, the market is now a major tourist drawcard for the region, leading to increased trade for tourist-related businesses in the town, such as bed and breakfasts and local retailers. In a briefing to the Committee, market organisers Ms Jude McBain (Chair) and Mr Steve Ashley (market manager) discussed the origins and growth of the market, explaining how the market, with council support, has expanded from operating in the hotel carpark into a prominent position in the centre of town. The Committee met with several of the 50-plus stallholders who described the transformative impact of the

market on their businesses, in particular moving from supplying supermarkets to supplying farmers' markets and other retailers on a full-time basis.



Market day at Willunga, South Australia, 2010. Photograph courtesy of Sean Coley.

At Victor Harbor, the Committee met with market manager Mr Brenton Tamblyn. Victor Harbor is located on the southern coast of the Fleurieu Peninsula, 80 kms south of Adelaide. Mr Tamblyn discussed the development of the weekly farmers' market and the challenges it has faced.

The Victor Harbor Farmers Market hosts an average of 26 stallholders on a small park close to the central retailing precinct in the town. The market is funded through a combination of stallholder fees, membership fees (there are almost 650 members) and sponsorship from local companies. Innovative features of the market include cooking demonstrations for kids, guest chefs who use ingredients from the market, and special twilight markets prior to Christmas (the 2009 twilight market was so successful that many stalls sold out by 7 pm). It also endeavours to take a wider role in the community and Mr Tamblyn is involved in establishing a children's food garden at a local school to educate students about agriculture and healthy eating.

According to a number of stallholders, the success of the market is due to its provision of staple products – dairy, meat, vegetables, fruit and bread. By ensuring these staples are covered, customers are more inclined to adjust their shopping patterns away from

supermarkets and use the farmers' market for their weekly shopping. As a related issue, the Committee was informed that the nearby major supermarket has begun offering incentives for customers to purchase fruit and vegetables on Saturday mornings – the same hours that the farmers' market trades.

The Committee also heard that other challenges to the market over its 18 months of trading have been around difficult weather conditions, sourcing a reliable power supply and building community support to sustain the market outside of the summer tourist high season.

2.5 Visitation

According to the VFMA survey, the typical Victorian farmers' market shopper is female (80 percent of customers); 50 years of age (compared to the average age of supermarket shoppers at high-30s); with no dependent children, or children who have left home (62 percent).³⁵ Of the ten markets surveyed, the highest representation of customers with families was at the interface markets of Hurstbridge (54 percent) and Casey-Berwick (45 percent).

Evidence from two submissions suggested that to be successful/viable, a market will need to attract around 2,000 customers per month, although clearly markets in some areas are considered viable with lower numbers of customers.³⁶ The Tallarook Farmers' Market attracts "upwards of 300 people" and according to the local council (Mitchell Shire) makes a valuable economic and social contribution to the community.³⁷

Examples of visitation figures submitted to the inquiry include: over 3,000 people per month at Central Geelong Farmers' Market;³⁸ 1,800-2,000 per month at Casey-Berwick Farmers' Market;³⁹ over 1,000 customers per month at University Hill Farmers' Market;⁴⁰ and an average of 2,500-3,000 per month at Hurstbridge Farmers' Market.⁴¹

Clearly, the number of customers who attend a market is critical to its success. The more customers, the more profitable the market and the easier it is to attract and retain stallholders.

2.5.1 Membership

The three South Australian markets visited by the Committee (Willunga, Victor Harbor and ASFM) offer membership programs for regular shoppers and all consider members to be important to the success of the market.

For a fee of between \$35 (Willunga) and \$60 (ASFM), members receive a 10 percent discount on purchases, reduced parking fees, newsletters, voting rights and other benefits. At each market, the Committee witnessed many shoppers wearing their membership badges. The Committee was informed that the income from memberships helps to sustain the markets' ongoing operations (for example, ASFM has around 2,000 members), but more

importantly, the membership program ensures repeat visits and builds community acceptance and support. The constitution of ASFM makes it clear that the market is to be run not just for the benefit of stallholders but for the benefit of the members as a whole. The Committee urges Victorian farmers' markets to examine these membership models and consider adopting similar programs.

2.6 Why do people shop at farmers' markets?

From the evidence received by the Committee, the main reasons why consumers choose to shop at a farmers' market can be summarised as follows:

- Access to food that is likely to be fresher than that obtained from other sources. In the VFMA's survey of market customers, 'freshness/quality of produce' was the leading reason given;⁴²
- Commitment to buying products with fewer resources used in packaging, storage and transport.⁴³ While environmental reasons motivate some shoppers at farmers' markets, it is worth noting that the associated concept of 'food miles' is increasingly contested as a measure of environmental sustainability and, in any case, does not appear to resonate strongly with farmers' market customers.⁴⁴ Instead of food miles, farmers' markets are advised to focus promotion on the message that the markets provide locally produced food and other benefits;⁴⁵
- Access to food that is organic or produced with fewer pesticides/chemicals;
- A desire to know more about where their food comes from; and
- A desire to support local farmers and buy food grown in the local area. In the VFMA survey, an average of 20 percent of market customers stated that they shopped at the markets to directly support farmers or help farmers maximise their returns. This figure was higher at the two interface markets surveyed (23 percent at Hurstbridge and 24 percent at Casey-Berwick).⁴⁶

Inquiry participants also emphasised that the shopping 'experience' is particularly critical in attracting customers who might otherwise shop at supermarkets. In answer to a question from the Committee on why people choose to shop at farmers' markets, Mr Peter Arnold stated:

Most of it is relationships. It is the relationship between the people who grow it with the people who buy it....You see them physically, as you would in the Queen Vic market or farmers' markets. They actually talk to the person and say, 'What do you suggest I get this week?'. I suggest you don't get the lamb, it's not good this week but the beef is

lovely.' It is the relationships that are created which is the enormous difference between us and the supermarkets. There is a relationship between the seller — it may not be the grower but it is the person who absolutely knows their product behind the counter — and the person buying. How is that cheese made? They can be told how that cheese is made. That is what I think makes the difference.⁴⁷

Following from this, Mr Alan Eagle identified the attractiveness of the market environment as another critical element:

...it is about the place. After the market kicks off and starts to establish itself, people love to go to a place. If you go to a vegie shop, you will see people not talking to each other, not talking to the person next to them in the queue. They buy, they go to the checkout, they get rung up and they move. You will hear them at the farmers' market chatting with each other. They buy hamburgers or whatever the food is and they sit down and talk for hours and hours at farmers' markets.⁴⁸

2.6.1 Are farmers' markets more expensive?

The Committee heard discussion on the question of the relative cost of goods sold at farmers' markets compared to supermarkets. On the one hand, a more direct supply chain with fewer intermediaries to be paid and reduced transportation costs should lead to the consumer paying cheaper prices at farmers' markets.⁴⁹ At the same time, there is a common perception that farmers' markets offer boutique or gourmet products and are more expensive than other retailers, particularly supermarkets.⁵⁰

The Committee did not identify any Australian research comparing prices at farmers' markets with other retailers. Overseas studies on this topic have drawn varying conclusions although in most cases, market prices have been found to be broadly competitive against supermarkets for fruit and vegetables (both conventional and organic) when adjusted for weight.⁵¹

The Committee also acknowledges that price comparisons can be beside the point. People generally do not shop at farmers' markets for inexpensive food. Freshness and quality of produce are consistently rated by markets shoppers as their main concerns, which may indicate that they factor into the value equation attributes like organic or chemical-free production, or the longer lifespan of fruit and vegetables.⁵² Further, it is often argued that direct price comparisons with supermarkets are misleading because they overlook hidden costs and benefits.

Food Connect Adelaide, a social enterprise which sells organic local food through a community supported agriculture-type model, asks consumers to look beyond price:

How is value measured? What yardstick can we use to measure value against?

If the yardstick of 'value' is solely price, then carrots at 50c a kilo produced anyhow in Tassie on a broad acre farm using petroleum based chemicals and synthetic fertilisers or NSW potatoes at 60c per kilo which have broad-spectrum synthetic desiccators sprayed to inhibit tuber growth and ensure uniformity and by a 'bonded' contracted chain supermarket farmer, then our answer would most definitely be 'no, it's probably not 'value for money'.

...Comparing costs weight by weight 'our' zucchini, apples, onions etc. against 'conventional' ones from Woolworths doesn't really answer the question. Nearly every time you measure, the conventional Woolworths/Coles/Foodland will come out 'cheaper'. If however, you widen your idea of value to include not just price per unit of item but also factor in other measures of value; farmer wage, farmer mental health, environmental health, your own health, taste, nutrition, community development and support, building local food security, etc then we believe that Food Connect provides very good 'value for money', value that you know goes direct to the farmer, your community, your family.

Cheap food has hidden costs, costs which most consumers remain completely unaware [of].⁵³

Does it matter if farmers' markets are more expensive than other retailers? Price is one of the major determinants of food choice, particularly among those on lower incomes, pensioners and the unemployed, and has an impact on the health of local communities. For example, there is evidence that obesity rates in children are lower in areas where the cost of fresh fruit and vegetables are lowest (although it is noted that a range of factors contribute to obesity).⁵⁴ Access to affordable healthy food must be an important consideration in efforts to reduce food insecurity and address diet-related illness.

This is a complex area and the Committee would support additional research being conducted on the social impact that farmers' markets can and do make in different urban locations. Further discussion on this point is in Chapter Three. Notwithstanding this, the Committee also notes that many farmers' markets in the US accept vouchers or "food stamps" which subsidise the cost of fresh food for people on low incomes. In 2007, farmers' markets redeemed more than \$20 million in vouchers to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to more than 2.3 million low income families. The Committee considers it is worth exploring whether a similar system is feasible in Victoria, perhaps linking in with the Centrelink concession card system. There may also be scope for farmers' markets who adopt market membership schemes (see 2.5.1 above) to offer reduced fees for concession card holders.

Recommendation 3:

That the Victorian Government work with the Australian Government, the Victorian Council of Social Service, Victorian Farmers' Markets Association and farmers' market operators to examine innovative options (such as linking in with Centrelink concession cards or seniors cards) to ensure that the cost of produce at farmers' markets is accessible for people on low incomes.

2.7 Why do producers sell at farmers' markets?

Evidence received by the Committee shows that farmers' markets can be lucrative for producers, particularly those on small properties, and preferable to selling through supermarkets.⁵⁵ Farmers who participate can generally achieve a 40-80 percent return on their product.⁵⁶ The farmers' market offers a producer the opportunity to "take control of their business destiny."⁵⁷

Smaller producers can also struggle to deal with the exacting specifications around produce size, shape and appearance that are demanded by wholesalers and supermarkets.⁵⁸ Submissions received by the Committee, in addition to other research undertaken, discussed the dominance of the major supermarket chains in Australia and the effects this has on small producers:

The reality is that prices paid to farmers and processors for their products are not competitive because of the 'take it or leave it' option that accrues to the major supermarket chains because of their dominance and ability to control the food chain. Farmers' markets...create a countervailing force to the dominance of the corporate chains.⁵⁹

It appears to be relatively uncommon for a producer to be wholly dependent on farmers' markets for their income. A recent sample of 67 stallholders at Victorian farmers' markets found that, on average, stallholders sold nearly 50 percent of what they produced through the farmers' markets, with the other 50 percent sold through other avenues.⁶⁰ These other outlets would include their own farm gate, online sales, or directly supplying restaurants, butchers, greengrocers or supermarkets. It is important to note that these alternatives to farmers' markets can retain the benefit of returning profit margins that are higher than traditional retail.⁶¹

Taking a different view, a submission from the Shire of Yarra Ranges considered it unlikely that farmers' markets contributed in a significant way to the viability of small-scale farming enterprises. The submission noted that a major factor in determining viability is the value of

product sales net of marketing costs. A business therefore needs to have a large enough quantity of produce to sell at a number of farmers' markets each month during the production season.⁶² However, the Committee noted in South Australia that some small primary producers (for example, egg sellers) were able to make a living selling at farmers' markets every weekend. The submission from the Shire of Yarra Ranges suggested that permitting reselling at farmers' markets (under certain conditions and with maximum transparency) would be beneficial for smaller farming enterprises. This issue is discussed further in Chapter Three.

The Committee finds that farmers' markets are playing an important but often overlooked function as small business incubators for farmers and food processors. They allow new businesses to become established and entrepreneurial skills to be developed at low cost and little risk.⁶³ At the South Australian markets, the Committee heard several anecdotes concerning large businesses (examples were eggs, coffee and bread) which began as small ventures at the farmers' markets. The markets offer a way in to the food industry, as Mr Flannigan further explained:

*Those rags to riches success stories of migrants who became major producers or major retailers are becoming increasingly difficult, because they are coming up from day one against a major national — or increasingly international — corporation which basically will block their path. The farmers' markets are incubators for people who want to test their products, and who basically say, 'I think I will try organic chickens, but I am not sure. Safeway and Coles are not going to put their hands up and say, "Yes, come and try it through us"; they are just not going to do that. You are going to have to find somewhere else, and a farmers' market is one of those areas where it can be done.'*⁶⁴

Equally, the farmers' markets provide a safety net for producers who have been squeezed out of the supply chain and a support for small businesses on the declining or downsizing period of the business lifecycle.⁶⁵

Producers of all sizes use the markets to test products and ideas and receive direct customer feedback – this is a highly valued form of consumer based research.⁶⁶ As one peri-urban producer commented:

*The farmers' market allows good old fashioned face to face contact with your customer and the consumer's appreciation is evident at every farmers' market we have attended. Apart from direct selling to your loyal market shopper, the farmers' market gives the producer the opportunity to trial new products and get immediate feedback. All the while, the consumer has the honour of being the first to taste the farmers' wares, something not even the biggest producers can boast!*⁶⁷

Customer feedback at farmers' markets is driving changes in farming practices. Over 70 percent of farmers who sell at markets report having altered their farming systems in some way as a result of their participation. These changes include growing different types of crops and using different husbandry techniques.⁶⁸ In discussions with the CEO of the ASFM, Ms Zannie Flanagan AM, the Committee was informed of several examples of primary producers who have planted different crops or used different farming methods in order to cater specifically for farmers' markets.

2.8 Other benefits

Several other benefits of Victorian farmers' markets were identified in submissions and other evidence, including the following examples:

- Bushfire recovery: the Hurstbridge Farmers' Market (in Nillumbik) has played an important role in assisting the community to recover from the Black Saturday bushfires of 2009. Affected stallholders have been able to continue to grow and diversify their business.⁶⁹
- Meeting place: farming communities on Melbourne's fringe are often dispersed; the Tallarook Farmers' Market (Mitchell) provides a valuable regular meeting place for the local community.⁷⁰ As one witness commented:

We always talk about the community of farmers' markets but the farmers' market creates the community; we do not take the farmers' market to a community. You can go to any farmers' market, especially the ones out in the country — Phillip Island, Inverloch, South Gippsland — and you will see people who have not seen each other from one month to the next. They will just sit around, they will have a coffee and they may not buy anything until right at the last minute but they all meet up.⁷¹

- Education: young people attending farmers' markets learn about primary production in their local region and the health benefits of eating fresh food.⁷² The ASFM runs a Kids' Club where chefs work with kids to explain fresh food and cooking in an enjoyable way. The market also works with a nearby primary school in the development of an edible garden.
- Farmers' markets promote an understanding of seasonality, which has environmental benefits as seasonal produce needs less energy to produce.⁷³
- Generate income for local charities and organisations: markets often charge a gold coin donation as an entry fee. Tallarook Farmers' Market raises about \$300 each market for the local CFA, the local school runs a sausage sizzle and other funds are raised for Red Cross and Riding for the Disabled.⁷⁴

2.9 Summary of findings

- Victorian farmers' markets are estimated to contribute at least \$227 million per year to the Victorian economy.
- Market operators should continue to work towards establishing weekly – rather than monthly – markets wherever possible.
- The industry supports a range of different market ownership and operating arrangements, however the employment of paid market managers is an important success factor.
- Start-up grants and other forms of assistance to farmers' markets are valuable and help to ensure longer term sustainability.
- Farmers' markets have significant beneficial impacts for nearby local retailers and can make important contributions to local economies in peri-urban Melbourne.
- Market operators should consider adopting the membership model used by South Australian farmers' markets.
- The industry should monitor whether the price of goods presents a barrier for people on low incomes and investigate appropriate solutions.
- Farmers' markets are proving to be effective business incubators for food producers while also promoting changes in farming practices.

Chapter Two Endnotes:

¹ Farmers Market Coalition, *Strengthening farmers markets for the benefit of farmers, consumers and communities: Position paper from the Farmers Market Coalition*, 2009.

² Mr N. Flannigan, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 22.

³ Mr. A. Eagle, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 21.

⁴ Community Planning and Development Program, La Trobe University, *Submission*, Number 9, 17 May 2010, 8.

⁵ Shire of Bass Coast, *Submission*, Number 5, 14 May 2010; Community Planning and Development Program, La Trobe University – Bendigo Campus, *Submission*, Number 9, 17 May 2010, 8.

⁶ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010, 25.

⁷ City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010, 9.

⁸ City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010, 9.

⁹ Max Coster & Nicole Kennon, *New generation farmers' markets in rural communities*, report for the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, RIRDC pub. 05/109, August 2005, 29.

¹⁰ Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 4.

¹¹ Victorian Government, *Submission*, Number 11, 17 May 2010, 2.

¹² Victorian Government, *Submission*, Number 11, 17 May 2010, 8.

¹³ Victorian Government, *Submission*, Number 11, 17 May 2010.

¹⁴ Mr A. Sherry, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 12.

¹⁵ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010.

¹⁶ This is a commonly used method to quantify the wider economic impact of farmers' markets. For a detailed discussion of estimating economic impacts see: Project for Public Spaces, *Estimating the economic impact of public markets*, report submitted to Project for Public Spaces, February 2007. For discussion of the benefits of doing an impact study of an individual market, as well as tools to undertake a study, see: SEED, “Economic Impact Studies: The What & Why”, <http://bit.ly/aM0uRG>.

¹⁷ Coster & Kennon, 13.

¹⁸ New Economics Foundation, *Trading Places: The local economic impacts of street produce and farmers' markets*, London Development Agency, November 2005, 38.

¹⁹ Melton Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 10, 20 May 2010.

²⁰ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010.

²¹ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010.

²² See Cheryl Brown & Stacy Miller, “The impacts of local markets: a review of research on farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)”, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 90, 5, 2008, 1298-1302; also see New Economics Foundation, *Trading Places*.

²³ PPS, “Measuring the Impact of Public Markets and Farmers Markets on Local Economies”, <http://bit.ly/aVOpAE>.

²⁴ Government of Nova Scotia, "Farmers' Markets and their Economic Impact in Nova Scotia: Customer and Vendor Survey Analysis", <http://bit.ly/b5etft>.

²⁵ Mr A. Eagle, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 26.

²⁶ New Economics Foundation, *Trading Places*.

²⁷ Mr D. Nardella MP and Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 25.

²⁸ Shire of Bass Coast, *Submission*, Number 5, 14 May 2010.

²⁹ Macedon Ranges Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 12, 21 May 2010.

³⁰ ABC Rural Radio, Broadcast from Talbot Farmers' Market, available at <http://bit.ly/cyGY6n>.

³¹ South Australian Tourism Commission, *Willunga Farmers Market Survey: Summary of Findings*, February 2005.

³² Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 23.

³³ Nillumbik Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 2, 11 May 2010.

³⁴ Mr I. Ada, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 24.

³⁵ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010.

³⁶ Peter Arnold, *Submission*, Number 4, 13 May 2010; City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010.

³⁷ Mitchell Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 6, 14 May 2010.

³⁸ City of Greater Geelong, *Submission*, Number 14, 31 May 2010.

³⁹ City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010.

⁴⁰ City of Whittlesea, *Submission*, Number 3, 12 May 2010.

⁴¹ Nillumbik Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 2, 11 May 2010.

⁴² VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010, 34.

⁴³ Yarra Ranges Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 15, 17 June 2010, 4.

⁴⁴ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010, 34. 'Food miles' refers to the distance travelled between the production and purchase of food.

⁴⁵ Further discussion of food miles can be found in the Committee's previous inquiry report, OSISDC, *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne*, Parliament of Victoria, May 2010, 269-270.

⁴⁶ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010, 35.

⁴⁷ Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 10.

⁴⁸ Mr A. Eagle, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 10.

⁴⁹ Nigel Flannigan, *Submission*, Number 13, 27 May 2010, 7.

⁵⁰ Jane Willson, "Market power", *The Age*, 29 June 2010.

⁵¹ New Economics Foundation, 45; Carole Triem, "The Truth About Farmers Markets," Seattle University, 2008, <http://bit.ly/92RgK7>; E. Oakley & M. Appel, "Are supermarkets cheaper than farmers' markets?", *Growing for Market*, 12, 9, 2005, <http://bit.ly/bEI8ud>; Neighbourhood Farmers Market Alliance, "Are the farmers markets really more expensive?", <http://bit.ly/Zw62t>; Local Harvest, "Survey says," <http://bit.ly/bLi7oN>; Oily Rag, "Farmers' Markets", 23 April 2010, <http://bit.ly/azMPmp>.

⁵² See also *Report of the ACCC inquiry into the competitiveness of retail prices for standard groceries*, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Canberra, 2008, 175. Food quality was overwhelmingly the most important reason given for buying fruit and vegetables at a speciality store (a category which includes farmers' markets). Similarly, a survey of customers at Canberra's Capital Region Farmers Market found that more than 70 percent of respondents rated quality and shelf life of the produce as the most important reason for attending the market, see Capital Region Farmers Market, *Customer survey*, August 2009, 4, <http://bit.ly/ah0Bxo>.

⁵³ Food Connect Adelaide, "What does 'value for money' really mean when it comes to fruit and veg?", <http://www.foodconnectadelaide.com.au/?p=874>.

⁵⁴ For discussion of food prices and obesity, see Dr Cate Burns, "What is the role of the price of food in the obesity epidemic?", speech at the Victorian Obesity Consortium, Obesity Forum 2009, 4 September 2009, http://obesityconsortium.unimelb.edu.au/news_events/voc.html.

⁵⁵ Victorian Government, *Submission*, Number 11, 17 May 2010.

⁵⁶ Cited in Wendy Umberger, Randy Stringer & Emily Scott, *Key Findings: The 2007 Adelaide Showground Farmers Market Consumer Study*, University of Adelaide, November 2007, 6; also see Friends of the Earth, *The economic benefits of farmers' markets*, London, August 2000, 10.

⁵⁷ City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010, 6.

⁵⁸ Friends of the Earth, 10.

⁵⁹ Nigel Flannigan, *Submission*, Number 13, 27 May 2010, 4.

⁶⁰ VFMA, *VFMA Stall Holder Survey*, March 2010, 17.

⁶¹ Victorian Government, *Submission*, Number 11, 17 May 2010, 3.

⁶² Shire of Yarra Ranges, *Submission*, Number 15, 17 June 2010, 7.

⁶³ Alan Cameron & Herb de Vries, *The Role of Farmers' Markets in Stimulating Rural Entrepreneurship: a Case Study of Feilding Farmers' Market, New Zealand*, Paper presented at International Council for Small Business 51st World Conference, June 2006, 4.

⁶⁴ Mr N. Flannigan, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 5.

⁶⁵ Alan Cameron, *Farmers' markets as small business incubators and 'reverse' incubators – evidence from New Zealand*, Paper presented at the Rural Entrepreneurship Conference, Aviemore, Scotland, 2005.

⁶⁶ Community Planning & Development Program, La Trobe University – Bendigo Campus, *Submission*, Number 9, 17 May 2010; Macedon Ranges Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 12, 21 May 2010, 3.

⁶⁷ Whittlesea Council, *Submission*, Number 3, 12 May 2010, 3.

⁶⁸ Coster & Kennon, 30.

⁶⁹ Nillumbik Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 2, 11 May 2010.

⁷⁰ Mitchell Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 6, 14 May 2010.

⁷¹ Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 10.

⁷² City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010.

⁷³ Food Policy Coalition, *Submission*, Number 8, 17 May 2010, 2.

⁷⁴ Mitchell Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 6, 14 May 2010.

CHAPTER THREE: KEY ISSUES RAISED WITH THE COMMITTEE

This chapter examines key issues and matters of specific concern to participants in the inquiry, as identified in submissions and at the public roundtable hosted by the Committee at Parliament House in Melbourne on 7 July 2010. The chapter begins by examining debates around the ‘authenticity’ of produce sold at farmers’ markets. Discussion then turns to the supply of farmers/vendors, why some markets fail, land use planning (planning permits, market siting and food security) and temporary food permits.

3.1 The ‘authentic’ farmers’ market

Customers at farmers’ markets value the fact that they are able to buy direct from the grower or producer. In recent research by the VFMA, around 90 percent of market shoppers rated this as ‘important’ or ‘very important.’¹ The integrity of the farmers’ market ‘brand’ therefore depends on maintaining consumer trust in the authenticity of the products on offer.

The Committee noted that from time to time there are suggestions of deceptive practices at farmers’ markets. In 2009, a newspaper article in Victoria’s *Weekly Times* stated that “much of the popular farmers’ market movement has been exposed as a sham” and “a large number of bogus stall operators appear to sell farmers’ produce, but instead buy from supermarkets.”²

During the inquiry, the Committee endeavoured to gauge the strength of these claims. The Committee found that participants in the inquiry did not support the view that misleading or deceptive practices are common at farmers’ markets. The Committee considers that the VFMA, market operators and other industry leaders are committed to maintaining trust in the markets and are increasingly vigilant in ensuring that stallholders are not misrepresenting themselves or their products to consumers.

There was general discussion during the inquiry on whether governments should take a more active role in policing or setting standards with regards to the authenticity of produce sold (or other matters). Intervention of this kind was generally not supported, bearing in mind that government agencies (such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission) can already take action against misleading or deceptive conduct at farmers’ markets.

The Committee also heard differing opinions regarding ‘strict’ accreditation systems for farmers’ markets, including the system established by the VFMA. Some markets (such as the Barossa Farmers Market in South Australia) contend that accreditation systems run the risk of creating uniformity among farmers’ markets. Coupled with this is the view that accreditation systems reduce the ability of local communities to make decisions about the

operation of their own markets.³ A submission to the Committee from Macedon Ranges Shire Council emphasised that markets are fundamentally 'local' enterprises:

Markets need to be able to develop locally and allow market forces to drive them. [...] Barriers to the farmers' market growth would be over regulation and central control. While ideas and guidelines should be provided and made available, it is very important that local people retain control and are free from the compulsion to comply within a regulated and prescriptive set of rules imposed externally.

The supermarket sector in Victoria may see the growth and popularity of farmers' markets as a threat to their profits. As such farmers' markets may come under pressure through multi-nationals lobbying government to more tightly control farmers' markets. The philosophy of farmers' markets is not to compete with supermarkets on price but to offer true value to consumers and a fair price to the farmers who grow the food.⁴

On the other hand, the Committee heard many more arguments in favour of standards being set for farmers' markets. For example, Bass Coast Shire Council submitted that markets should operate under codes of practice which preserve the integrity of the farmers' market brand:

... being unregulated may see the demise of the markets in the future as they tend towards 'variety' markets rather than genuine farmers' markets. Consumers have high expectations of the farmers' market brand and if these are not met then they will not continue to support these ventures.⁵

The VFMA has initiated a (voluntary) accreditation scheme for stallholders and markets. This is the first of its kind in Australia. The VFMA advised the Committee that the scheme is well underway with in excess of 400 stallholders and 12 markets having received accreditation.⁶ To achieve accreditation, a market in an interface or regional area must have 75 percent of their stallholders accredited (or 90 percent for Melbourne metropolitan markets).⁷

At the public roundtable, Ms Sam Edmonds, Executive Officer of the VFMA, explained that the accreditation system was developed to protect vendors, as well as customers:

The VFMA accreditation system was developed in consultation with the industry. Our research shows that the stallholders really want the accreditation system. When a

genuine grower is at a market, they have trouble competing with someone who is reselling; the reseller can often do it at a cheaper price. The genuine growers feel that the farmers' markets should be primarily for them and that is a big part of the reason why the accreditation program was developed the way it was.⁸

At the same public roundtable, Hansard recorded the following exchange on the topic of authenticity between Committee member Mr David Hodgett MP, Mr Peter Arnold (Regional Farmers Markets Pty Ltd), Mr Vin Morris (Agribusiness Officer, City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council) and Mr Phillip Jackson (Business Development Officer, Cardinia Shire Council):

Mr HODGETT — That brings us back to the question of authenticity, though. Again some people will go along — and I have seen them — and they are genuinely interested in where that product comes from and that will govern their purchasing decision. But other people I have witnessed will go along and they do not necessarily care where that apple has come from but they will get to sample a couple and they will buy a bag of apples.

The question is: in your view, how hard and fast should rules be around farmers' markets in terms of authenticity or should that just be left to the local farmers' markets to decide?

Mr ARNOLD — I agree with you. There does need to be a level of authenticity so that either the market organiser and/or the stallholder is accountable for what is sold on the stall. Our managers are always walking around and if we see products that are not on the list that people have given us, then we say, 'Where has this come from?', and we need to know where it has come from. I know all my stallholders now and I will question them vigorously. I have been to a farm at Bacchus Marsh because I did not trust the farmer, but he was right. I have been to a bakery, and I have been to visit someone making biscuits because I just did not feel it was right. I think it is right that we have some level of authenticity. Absolutely.

Mr HODGETT — Do you need support for that?

Mr ARNOLD — No, I do not believe so.

Mr MORRIS — I definitely think we need support for that and that could be a role for some organisation to play because as has been mentioned, some of the farmers' market coordinators are not even paid. It takes two weeks of extra work within that month to actually go and do audits on the producers. It is about the integrity and the trust that what the markets are delivering is what they should be delivering. One of the values that people place on these markets is trust.

Mr ARNOLD — I have the best police force in the business — the other stallholders. The other stallholders will always tell me when there is something that they think is not quite right. They are around in a flash.

Mr JACKSON — I think it just highlights the complexity of these sorts of things. One of the stated objectives and the reasons that the Cardinia shire established a farmers' market was the concept of a business incubator, so that it would provide an additional outlet for local farmers and producers and provide the opportunity to trial new products or the opportunity perhaps to specialise in less commercial products or less commercial crops[...]

With that sort of philosophy, it is difficult then to have the regimentation that you can only sell what you are accredited to sell because you might only have been there for a very short period of time. I think that the market organisers have to have a philosophical commitment but have some flexibility within that to cope with the once a year market stallholder as opposed to the people who are going to be there every week.⁹

A small number of participants in the inquiry suggested that the VFMA's rules on reselling (where a stallholder does not grow or produce the goods him or herself but purchases it from another source) were overly restrictive. These rules were seen to disadvantage farmers who are located at a distance from a farmers' market or those unable to attend due to the additional labour and time commitment.

A submission from the Shire of Yarra Ranges suggested that allowing a reseller to sell produce on behalf of local farmers – while maintaining transparency for the customer as to the source of the produce – could make the markets more viable, particularly in outer suburban locations:

One solution to the problem of some producers having insufficient scale to sell at markets is to relax one of the criteria in the definition of farmers' markets – that is, that farmers (or members of their family or employees) sell their farm origin product direct to customers. A more flexible criteria would allow a reseller to buy fresh produce from a number of local producers but have a letter of authenticity signed and dated by each local grower to show that the reseller had bought product from him/her for sale at nominated markets. This could still give confidence to customers that they were buying local, fresh produce, which is believed to be the main objective of customers.¹⁰

The Committee examined the operating rules and policies regarding reselling at a small number of farmers' markets in other states.

Willunga Farmers Market in South Australia, which the Committee visited in August 2010, has a strict policy against reselling. Similarly, the Committee visited the ASFM which also

does not allow reselling of produce (except with express permission of the market chief executive). At ASFM, the Committee observed one stall displaying a sign that the vendor was selling produce (in addition to their own) from a neighbour's property, with the name of the neighbour also displayed.

The ASFM has also developed a comprehensive guide for stallholders detailing rules, regulations and obligations (see Appendix E).

The Hawkesbury Harvest organisation in NSW has a 'produce point-of-origin policy' for its farmers' markets which aims to provide flexibility for the grower/producer, while at the same time providing an authentic and honest farmers' market for the consumer. At Hawkesbury Harvest markets, signs identify stallholders as either Genuine Producers, Resellers or Genuine Growers. Further details on this policy are in Appendix D. At the public roundtable, Mr Alan Eagle from Hawkesbury Harvest discussed the policy:

Hawkesbury Harvest has introduced a genuine grower policy which is pretty rigorous. You do not have to be a genuine grower all the time. We allow 25 per cent of the produce on your stall to come from some other farm — not from the central market system but from some other farm — because there are farmers who do not want to go to farmers' markets; they just do not want to do that.¹¹

Another flexible approach with a similar emphasis on transparency is taken by the Capital Region Farmers Market (located in Canberra). This market physically separates producers and 'agents' (producers who sell products on behalf of others, such as neighbours) in two sheds, as well as insisting on separately coloured price labels:

The smaller shed houses producers who are also representatives of products from market-approved sources. Each of these stallholders has a thorough understanding and knowledge of the sources of products and growing techniques. In permitting these arrangements, the market fosters collaboration between neighbouring producers and also widens the diversity of the market by bringing in a wider selection of produce. In every case, the source, nature of products and quantities has to be pre-approved by the market.¹²

The Committee agrees with the VFMA's emphasis on authenticity and does not support a watering down of standards which would undermine consumer trust in the markets. The Committee also considers there may be scope for the VFMA to consider whether its current policies on reselling present a disadvantage for outer suburban farmers' markets.

Recommendation 4:

That the Victorian Farmers' Markets Association review its policies concerning local producers selling on behalf of other local producers, in order to:

- introduce greater flexibility for farmers and markets; and
- ensure maximum transparency and disclosure of the origins of products sold at farmers' markets.

Recommendation 5:

That the Victorian Government continue to encourage and support high standards for vendors trading at Victoria's farmers' markets.

3.2 Supply of stallholders

The Committee received evidence from one market operator stating that a farmers' market requires a minimum of 30 stallholders to be viable and to offer a satisfying experience for patrons.¹³ The Committee also received the following information on stallholder numbers at individual markets:

- Three farmers' markets in the Casey/Cardinia region have an average of 20-40 stallholders, depending on the season (compared to an average of 50-70 stallholders at inner urban markets).¹⁴
- Of the three markets in the Shire of Yarra Ranges which specifically identify themselves as farmers' markets, stallholder numbers range from nine at the smallest market to 31 at the largest.¹⁵
- Central Geelong Farmers' Market has 25 stallholders per market, with a target of attracting 30 stallholders. The organisers note that although there is strong demand for regional produce and the market is well supported by the community, consistent effort is required to maintain stallholder numbers.¹⁶
- Newtown Farmers' Market in Geelong has around 38 stallholders (as at October 2009).¹⁷

The Committee heard evidence suggesting that outer suburban markets are at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining stallholders. Increasingly, stallholders pick and choose the markets that will offer the best potential for sales. It was suggested in two submissions that

the socio-economic profile of the customers attending inner Melbourne markets made those markets more attractive for stallholders. “This causes a constant attrition from the interface markets and continually threatens their viability.”¹⁸ On this point, Casey/Cardinia’s Mr Vin Morris informed the Committee at the roundtable:

Quite importantly in our region, and certainly in these outer Melbourne green wedge zones and around the outskirts of Melbourne, the viability for that one sole producer to come in is not as great as coming in to the city markets, so we lose a lot of our stallholders to the city markets where the concentration is bigger — where they can move a whole ute load rather than just a few cases. Because of that, starting off in this tourist sense of trying to just be there just for the farmer and keep it pure and keep to the guidelines, we find more and more the only way for our markets to remain viable is to move into this quasi-produce market/community market and that is the way they seem to have moved, certainly in the outer areas. There has to be some consideration of the location and the demographic. The range of factors is quite complex.¹⁹

On a related issue, the Committee received evidence from two interface local governments that while their farmers’ markets considered it important to support producers from the local area as much as possible, inner city markets felt no such compulsion and drew stallholders from all over the state. On this, the joint City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council submission argued:

As the interface farmers’ markets try to retain the authenticity of supporting local/regional farmers and food producers, the city based markets are able to source produce from a broader base, without the need to identify with producers from their specific location. This variety enables stallholders to attract customers who are willing to pay premium prices.²⁰

The Committee sought information from stakeholders on the issue of whether market operators do or should set geographic boundaries for allowing stallholders to attend a market. For instance, in New Zealand most markets have a requirement or strong preference for a high proportion of market produce to be from the local region. However, the Committee notes that the VFMA allows markets that receive its accreditation to set their own ‘catchment’ boundaries to determine the eligibility of potential stallholders.

At the discretion of individual markets, perimeters may be applied to facilitate vendor eligibility. The applicable perimeters can be defined with reference to local government boundaries, geographic features or existing food marketing and/or economic

development organisations. Value-adders and producers who grow and manufacture products within their local area should be given priority.

Markets can draw from multiple regions, however market managers must encourage vendors to participate in their regional farmers' market before participating in a city market to ensure the sustainability of farmers' markets in regional centres.²¹

At its roundtable forum, the Committee heard a general view from participants that difficulties in sourcing producers (and achieving a wide mix of products) in certain parts of Victoria meant it was impractical to set hard and fast rules around catchment boundaries for markets. Ms Sam Edmonds from the VFMA informed the Committee:

Looking at New Zealand, each of the farmers there had to be within 3 hours of the market or within a certain geographical boundary. Similarly in the UK and the United States obviously the boundaries were vastly different. I think in the States they had a 9 hour drive or something like that and you can imagine that the UK is probably 15 minutes. I think Victoria is so different in terms of the intensity of food production in different areas that it would be very hard for any one rule to apply across the board in that regard.²²

3.2.1 Are there enough farmers?

With the rapid growth in the number of Victorian markets, competition is increasing in the industry and some markets are consistently seeking new stallholders. Looking ahead, the Committee agrees with the VFMA in seeing the availability of “genuine potential stallholders” – farmers – as a factor likely to limit the growth of the industry.²³ Recent reports from interstate and overseas suggest the boom in farmers’ markets is slowing in some locations due, in part, to an inability to attract enough farmers to take part.²⁴

The Committee heard that the problem may be better defined as not enough producers of the right size rather than an absolute shortage: many potential producers are either too big/commercial or too small to consider farmers’ markets as a viable option, as Mr Ian Ada from Cardinia Shire Council explained:

...there are insufficient farmers of the right size. They are not big enough to sell by more labour efficient means — it is very labour intensive to sell at farmers' markets — or they are too small to not have sufficient produce to get a return on their labour. We have recommended that individuals be allowed to sell other people's produce as long as they have these letters of authenticity that are dated — I give permission for this person to sell my named produce at this market on these dates'.

It is quite interesting in fact that one of the reasons Mont De Lancey in our area changed its name from a farmers' market to a country market is that it could not get sufficient farmers to have a sufficient range of produce stalls to meet their self imposed definition, which was roughly in line with the farmers' markets association.²⁵

In the Shire of Melton, a lack of locally based primary producers has hampered attempts to start a farmers' market in the shire. Urban expansion will further reduce available horticultural land and the scope for new farm enterprises.²⁶

Turning to possible solutions, the Committee received evidence from Mr Nigel Flannigan who urged the industry and the government to consider creative ways of sourcing and developing new stallholders. In particular, Mr Flannigan discussed the idea of making land available for groups such as migrants or at-risk young people to farm, with a view to then selling at farmers' markets:

...I think we can actually grow this. We can actually stand up and say, 'We don't have enough producers'. First of all, let us invite people who want to produce to make submissions, let us encourage those who have got an entrepreneurial bent and basically say, 'We want farm fresh eggs, we want organic eggs and we want free range eggs' and so forth 'and we would welcome people coming to sell them'. You will get them. And if you want to go one step further, you can start to look at perhaps some of the kids who have problems. In my submission I mentioned New York, which is a major city. There, they actually purchased land and then put migrants on it because the migrants do not have any work, except the sweat labour, so called; they know how to work. They were basically given an opportunity to be the bottom rung of this rags to riches in the new nation, as it were.

I cannot say often enough that without engineering it — and I agree entirely with you that it is horses for courses — wherever you are, you sit down and say, 'Okay, you don't have enough work. How do we go about that?'. You basically start the rung on that ladder to allow people to come and test the market. Then you can say to them, 'Look, we're only going to allow you to be here two years, and then you'll have to go and get a shop up on the high street. But you can come and test it, by all means'.²⁷

The New York 'New Farmer Development Project' (NFDP), mentioned by Mr Flannigan above, is funded by a variety of philanthropic organisations. The NFDP identifies, educates and supports immigrants with agricultural experience to become local producers and establish small farms in the region. The project purchases unused or underused small parcels of land that are suitable to grow crops within 2-3 hours of New York City. It then finds interested people to restore the land and trains them to farm it and sell the produce through the network of farmers' markets.²⁸

In the recent report, *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne* (May 2010), the Committee discussed how access to land is a significant barrier to entry for new farmers near Melbourne. The report also outlines examples of programs in operation overseas which endeavour to assist prospective farmers to access land.²⁹ These new small-scale farmers are potential stallholders at farmers' markets. Therefore, the Committee urges the Victorian Government to adopt its recommendation 12 contained within the *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne* report.

Recommendation 6:

That the Victorian Government establish a program to identify vacant rural land suitable for agriculture in peri-urban Melbourne and encourage its lease to farmers and community organisations seeking land.

The Committee notes that backyard growers and community gardens are also potential sources of new stallholders at farmers' markets. Many market managers have allocated a table for community members to sell their produce on an occasional basis.³⁰ In relation to this, the Committee was informed of a social enterprise in New Zealand called Ooooby (Out of our own backyards), which sells backyard produce on behalf of the grower at farmers' markets on a commission basis.³¹

On this issue, Mr Alan Eagle from Hawkesbury Harvest stated:

We are encouraging backyard growers. We are always trying to get these small growers who have a bunch of carrots or who may have 30 packets of carrots left to come to the market and put them on the one stall, promote them from community. We get those local people, charge them less rent and do those types of things and it is all about that food chain type of stuff that you were talking about — education.³²

Case study: New York City's Greenmarkets

GrowNYC is a not-for-profit organisation based in New York City. In 1976, the organisation established its first Greenmarket – a farmers' market situated in a Manhattan carpark. There are now Greenmarkets in 50 New York locations, most operating weekly and a number operating multiple times per week. In peak season, over 250,000 customers visit the markets every week and 182 farmers and food producers are in attendance.

Greenmarkets are ‘producer only’ markets – only farmers can sell what they grow or produce. The Greenmarket catchment area for producers is defined as extending roughly 190 kilometres to the south of the city, 270 kilometres east and west and 400 kilometres north.

One of the co-founders of the Greenmarket concept, Mr Barry Benepe, has spoken of the goals underpinning the markets:

I would like to keep a distinct boundary between rural and city, which over the last 30 years has been eroded by the automobile, the highway system, and the real estate speculation system by people like Robert Moses, the automobile industry, and a very complacent, agreeable public. Now we’re reaping the problems associated with that. These urban tentacles spread out and get lots of farmland and now we’ve got to have our produce shipped 3,000 miles. In order to counteract that—to keep farmland in production, to keep clean water, to protect the environment—we need to keep this medieval boundary between tight knit cities and the open countryside. I always said that if all the supermarkets in New York would carry local produce, they could put the Greenmarket out of business. That would be fine. The supermarkets could buy from farmers, but they don’t. It would be great if all the stores would all go buy local.³³

The success of the Greenmarket concept offers lessons for policymakers in considering the possible role and future development of Victoria’s farmers’ markets. Firstly, evaluations show that the markets have functioned as a de facto planning tool to maintain land in agricultural production in peri-urban regions of New York. The farmers who participate own or lease over 12,000 hectares of land. Eighty percent of those farmers report they would be out of business without the farmers’ markets.³⁴ This correlates with studies which show the contribution that direct marketing techniques (such as farmers’ markets) make to sustaining agriculture in urbanising regions and it suggests to the Committee that where it is an objective of government policy to maintain agriculture as a land use in peri-urban areas, farmers’ markets (and other direct marketing techniques) should be considered and supported as part of achieving this.³⁵

Secondly, the Greenmarket farmers’ markets have also been important in revitalising depressed urban neighbourhoods and failing retail districts. The Union Square location was transformed from a neglected and unsafe urban park surrounded by abandoned buildings into an “economic powerhouse in New York.”³⁶ Storefront vacancies are lower than in other parts of the city and retail rental prices have increased. Foot traffic has risen 59 percent in the last five years. The presence of the market has made the Square safer and more active, sparking private development, residential conversions of loft buildings and improvements to the park.³⁷ This experience suggests a possible role for farmers’ markets in urban renewal or similar projects throughout Melbourne.

3.3 Why do farmers' markets fail?

Studies of farmers' markets have found that about 25-30 percent of new markets close, mostly within their first year.³⁸ Other markets, rather than close, change their focus and stay open by moving away from a 'purist' farmers' market model and permitting the sale of crafts, clothes, bric-a-brac or other non-food goods.

Witnesses in the inquiry confirmed that the first year of a new farmers' market is often the most difficult. Mr Peter Arnold told the Committee at the roundtable:

It takes six to nine months to bed a market down, to find out the regulars who are going to come. At the first market everybody will always come in, 30 per cent of whom are tyre kickers and they will not come back because the prices or something else will knock them out. Then it will drop right down and then it will take another four or five months or six months. We do not really say we can set a market in stone until it has done 12 months...³⁹

A study from the US state of Oregon examined 32 markets that had closed and identified five factors typically associated with failure:

- Small size: markets with fewer vendors are vulnerable to a 'viability spiral', whereby a drop in vendor numbers leads to fewer products, fewer customers and less administrative revenue. With fewer vendors, the (often volunteer) market manager must dedicate more working hours to recruiting new vendors and attracting customers.⁴⁰
- Need for farm products: markets that failed generally lacked adequate amounts of fruit and vegetables for sale (products considered staples for farmers' markets).
- Lack of administrative revenue: markets that failed typically raised less of the money needed to cover administrative needs. Often, this was because they were smaller markets, raised less money and also charged lower stallholder fees than larger markets. The Committee received estimates that a farmers' market in Australia is likely to cost around \$70,000 per year to run, taking into account site rental, insurance, publicity fees, etc.⁴¹
- Manager was volunteer or low-paid: markets that failed were often dependent on a volunteer or low-paid market manager.
- Manager turnover: markets that failed typically experienced higher rates of market manager turnover.⁴²

The Committee notes there are several useful resources to assist organisations intending to set up a successful farmers' market. Examples include: *A Guide for the Establishment of Farmers' Markets in Victoria* (2003), published by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, and *The Farmers' Market Toolkit* (2006), published by the South Australian Food Centre.⁴³

3.4 Land use planning

A key theme throughout the inquiry was the role of the planning system in encouraging – or presenting barriers to – the establishment of farmers' markets in outer suburban locations. The following section examines three related issues: planning permits, market siting and the potential role of farmers' markets in addressing food insecurity.

3.4.1 Planning permits

In most cases, a new farmers' market requires a planning permit from the local council. A submission from Bass Coast Shire Council outlined some of the issues that councils will look at in considering an application for a planning permit for a farmers' market, such as traffic and parking, amenity, objections from surrounding land owners, the frequency and duration of a market, cleanup, and possible damage to public spaces (such as grassed areas in winter).⁴⁴

At the public roundtable, Mr Arnold, whose company manages several markets, criticised the planning permit process as expensive, slow and overly bureaucratic:

I think local councils do need to be brought up to speed. I think there needs to be a separate section for planning for farmers' markets. At the moment, I have to pay my \$742 — the same as for someone who is doing a 10 storey development — to actually put in my initial application, which is crazy. Then we are asked do a scale drawing down to the last inch. It is just impossible. And then they want a traffic management plan.

We are trying to set one up in Tyabb at the moment but the traffic management people have given me a bill of \$7,500 to do a traffic management plan. A lot of the councils are not up to speed. I would recommend that, at some stage, there is some way whereby we can explain to them what a farmers' market is and the benefits to the local community and how local councils can be seen to good corporate citizens. If they come in and look as though they are supporting it, it would be nothing but good PR for the council.⁴⁵

The Committee heard that there are additional restrictions placed on farmers' markets located in the green wedge zones. Mr Vin Morris from Casey/Cardinia informed the Committee:

We have an example where we have farmers' markets inside our urban growth boundary in a residential zone and outside the urban growth boundary in the green wedge zone. The guys in the green wedge zone have to go through the whole expense...of the many different regimes of reporting and feedback to the planners just to achieve the establishment of their farmers' market. Then just over the fence, on the other side of the urban growth boundary, they do not require any permits at all.⁴⁶

The Committee heard the view expressed that the Victorian planning system treats farmers' markets as broadly equivalent to other kinds of retail ventures, without recognition of the "social, economic and cultural value" they add to the local community.⁴⁷ A submission from the Community Planning and Development Program (La Trobe University Bendigo Campus) observed that state planning schemes currently lack provisions dealing with access to food, and that this limits the ability of local councils to support and encourage farmers' markets.⁴⁸

Notwithstanding the barriers presented by the planning framework, the Committee notes there are many positive steps local governments could take to assist farmers' markets. These include:

- waiving site fees and securing permanent market sites;
- organisational support;
- working with local retailers to gain their support;
- streamlining the permit application process;
- guidance with health regulations;
- providing community transport for the disabled and elderly;
- incorporating farmers' markets into broader food access policies; and
- assisting with market promotion and mediating impacts such as parking.⁴⁹

Another step taken by some municipalities is to appoint a designated liaison officer who can assist market managers with any problems that arise.⁵⁰ Similarly, a recent United Kingdom House of Commons inquiry into markets strongly supported the practice of municipalities

appointing an officer to be a ‘market champion’ with the role of advocating for local markets.⁵¹

Recommendation 7:

That Victorian local governments seek opportunities to support farmers’ market organisers and reduce regulatory barriers for farmers’ markets.

Recommendation 8:

That the Victorian Government work with the Interface Group of Councils to develop a streamlined and standardised planning approval process for all new farmers’ markets.

3.4.2 Market siting

The Committee heard evidence concerning the siting of Melbourne’s farmer’s markets within their communities. There was particular criticism of the tendency to set up markets in ‘out of centre’ locations, that is, away from activity centres and public transport, usually in a park or sports oval setting.⁵² Noting that many farmers’ markets in Melbourne lack integration with surrounding retail precincts, Mr Nigel Flannigan stated:

This means that any potential synergy between the farmers’ market and the nearest activity centre is almost certainly irrelevant because it takes a car trip to move from one to the other. In this, farmers’ markets lose their potential to be very effective anchors for independent retailers that locate in traditional strip shopping centres.⁵³

Mr Flannigan elaborated on this point at the roundtable:

People start out in the morning and say, ‘We are going to the farmers’ market’. If it happens to be in a paddock somewhere out the back of beyond, they are going to then have to make another decision, like ‘Where am I going to go for the other things I cannot get at the farmers’ market?’, whereas, if it is closer in, I would put them right up the high street. I would close off the high street. Obviously, I would pick a road that

was not going to cause problems. I would put them right in there and every Saturday morning you would know there is going to be an event.⁵⁴

In a submission, Mr Flannigan advocated for markets to be established in closed-off streets, town squares or similarly prominent positions wherever possible, as is often the practice overseas. The historic Gleadell Street Market (in Richmond) was nominated as a potential model for the future development of Melbourne's farmers' markets. The Gleadell Street Market operates Saturday mornings from 7.00 am to 1.00 pm on a side-street closed to traffic but adjacent to a busy shopping precinct. The market is a retail market (rather than a strict farmers' market) selling fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers, bread, nuts and other foodstuffs.

The evidence clearly indicates that an accessible location is critical to a market's success.⁵⁵ In the planning of new urban centres or the re-design of existing areas, the strategic siting of a farmers' market and the provision of its necessary infrastructure (power, shelter, water, parking etc) should be considered at an early stage.

Evidence to the Committee also stressed the advantages of locating farmers' markets in close proximity to public transport.⁵⁶ Inaccessible market sites present a barrier to diverse groups of people sharing in the benefits of farmers' markets. Locating farmers' markets in or near transport hubs (and connecting bike and pedestrian paths to markets) has the potential to reduce the environmental footprint of the food distribution system. Researcher Andrew Campbell (2008) proposes that farmers' markets be closely linked to the rail system to also facilitate the rail transportation of goods to the markets.⁵⁷

The Committee notes that there are other possible locations for farmers' markets that have yet to be fully explored in Victoria. For example, the US health insurer and hospital management organisation Kaiser Permanente has established 37 farmers' markets at its healthcare facilities, with the philosophy that on-site farmers' markets model the healthy eating advice that doctors give to their patients, as well as simply providing a shopping alternative for patients and staff.⁵⁸

Recommendation 9:

That the Victorian Government, through the Department of Planning and Community Development, work with local government to:

- ensure that farmers' markets are sited in high visibility locations (such as public transport hubs, activity centres or retail precincts) which are accessible and likely to provide maximum benefits for nearby businesses; and
- facilitate and assist with access to services, such as power, public amenities, water and traffic management.

Case Study: Lilydale Farmers' Market

Committee members Mr George Seitz MP (Chair), Mr Don Nardella MP and Mr David Hodgett MP, along with staff of the Committee, visited the Lilydale Farmers' Market on 4 July 2010 to observe the market in operation and meet with market managers, stallholders and customers.

Lilydale Farmers' Market, located in the Shire of Yarra Ranges, has been running since February 2009 and is held on the first Sunday of every month in Bellbird Park, Lilydale. There are 30 to 50 stallholders, many of whom also attend other markets. The market is operated and managed as a combined project of three Rotary clubs. It is not currently accredited with the VFMA, although on the day the Committee visited several of the stallholders had individual VFMA accreditation.



Scene at Lilydale Farmers' Market. Photograph courtesy of www.dotheyarravalley.com.au, 2010.

The Committee was informed by the market managers that the sustainability of the market depends on a 'healthy number' of stallholders and a diverse produce range. Stallholder fees (\$55) and gold coin entry donations help pay for the hire of a generator and portable toilets. Promoting the market is an ongoing challenge, with advertising a constant expense and limited support for the market in the local media. Obtaining approval to put up signage for the market along the main approach road has also proved difficult. The carpark is unsealed and heavily pot-holed, making it muddy in winter and a dust bowl in summer.

3.4.3 Farmers' markets and food security

Several witnesses put the view that farmers' markets can play a role in addressing food insecurity, 'food deserts' (communities, generally low income, where access to fresh, healthy produce is extremely limited) and diet-related health problems in Melbourne. There is some evidence that shopping at Victorian farmers' markets can increase household consumption of fresh food and reduce consumption of processed food. In a recent VFMA survey of market customers, 58 percent agreed that shopping at farmers' markets had changed their household's eating habits for the better.⁵⁹

Various projects have mapped access to fresh food in different parts of Melbourne: for example, in a study of the City of Maribyrnong, 59 percent of the population were found to live further than 500 metres from a fruit and vegetable outlet.⁶⁰ During the Committee's site visits, a number of market managers explained that the markets also functioned as a vehicle for educating people about healthy eating and cooking.⁶¹

While the number of farmers' markets has increased, the Committee observes that fewer have been established in lower income outer suburban areas where alternative food options are more limited. Evidence from market managers relating the difficulties in establishing markets in such locations is supported by research from the US and Canada showing that farmers' markets have tended to set up in middle to higher income urban areas and markets in lower socio-economic areas were more likely to fail.⁶²

On the topic of establishing a farmers' market in new outer suburban housing estates, Mr Peter Arnold advised the Committee:

...You cannot just go into a new housing estate and expect people to go to a farmers' market; they will not. Demographically, they will not because they are usually on a budget; they are usually watching their pennies. We all know that farmers' markets are not based on price; they are based on quality and energy and where the food comes from.

We [had] three markets in the city of Knox and they all fell over. It was the same market; we moved it to three different areas. It just died after four years, so we moved it across the road to this side of the Eastern Freeway — it was literally 1 kilometre — to Wheelers Hill and it has gone absolutely crazy. It is probably the strongest market we have. You cannot pick it. Now when we open a market, we do far more research than we did in the past but a lot of it is catch-as-catch-can as to where you site a market.⁶³

Several participants in the inquiry argued that access to healthy food should be a consideration for urban planners. According to a survey of the planning profession by researchers Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000), food is routinely absent from most planning practice, research and education.⁶⁴ Typically, the food system has not been of interest to planners (nor has it been considered within metropolitan strategies, such as *Melbourne 2030*).

However, in its previous report, *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne*, the Committee discussed a number of initiatives emerging or underway in this area and the Committee made recommendations concerning ‘food sensitive urban design’ and urban agriculture in an outer suburban context.⁶⁵

In evidence to the Committee, Mr Nigel Flannigan argued that planning policy should seek to achieve a better distribution of farmers’ markets in Melbourne, particularly in identified ‘urban food deserts’:

*...I am concerned by the fact that there may be some areas within metropolitan Melbourne, for example — and that is my main focus, not the only focus — that may not be well served. We are kind of waiting on individual groups, who are doing a good job I might add, but they are being selective as to where they go. Whereas the town planner in me says we should be looking at having a distribution of these within an appropriate reaching distance of just about every citizen across Melbourne, so that is available just as a competitor to the supermarkets in that sense. So I am worried about that.*⁶⁶

Mr Flannigan went on to state:

*I think Parliament should put the finger on the state government planning department to actually have a plan for food distribution and it can deal with the agricultural people on that. One of those would be the distribution of farmers’ markets. In fact, I think they should be told, ‘Go do it, guys’, because to date — and we have talked about that — they have shown no interest.*⁶⁷

In further discussion, Mr Flannigan also drew attention to the potential role of public markets to provide alternative food outlets:

[The farmers’ market] is just one model of getting food to people. I am an equal supporter of the public market — the Prahran Market, the South Melbourne Market, the Dandenong market and so forth. If you do a survey of areas around there, they love it. They are all retailers — and the Gleadell Street Market is also a retail market, I might add. They are retailers. But the customers just love them. They basically come out and say, ‘Don’t you destroy my market; definitely don’t do that’.

We made a representation to Frankston...and suggested they should have a produce market, not a farmers’ market; that was one of the alternatives we were looking at. We

said, 'You should build yourself a market because you're right on the apex of the Mornington Peninsula where there are producers who can provide to that market and it can be done through retailers'. They basically said that, no, that was a step too far. The conventional culture now is that the public sector will not get involved in those sorts of things; they will leave that to the market, whatever this thing 'the market' is, and it is not providing it. In some regards I would be telling local government — I would be making it an instruction from the centre, as part of state government policy — 'Your responsibility is to show us a plan of how you are going to get food to your people'.⁶⁸

The Committee acknowledges (as stated by the Food Policy Coalition and others) that farmers' markets are just one option for food access in urban areas and that other options may be better suited to certain locations. These other options may also require funding and support from government.⁶⁹ The Food Policy Coalition submission to this inquiry identified the following alternative food provision options: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), community gardens, box schemes, food co-operatives, independent greengrocers and other retailers.⁷⁰

On this issue, the Committee draws attention to the work of Melton Shire Council in developing strategies to increase the availability of fresh food locally. Melton has one of the highest rates of Type 1, 2 and gestational diabetes in the western region of Melbourne.⁷¹ Among various programs, the Council has established a new mobile fruit and vegetable project – a van that travels around to different communities selling fresh produce. This is improving access to fresh food in parts of the shire with limited public transport options.⁷²

Recommendation 10:

That the Victorian Government, through its Farmers' Markets Program, ensure that a specific number of grants are dedicated to the establishment and operations of farmers' markets in lower income outer suburban areas or areas with limited access to fresh food. Ideally, the Committee believes all Victorian local government areas should have at least one farmers' market.

Recommendation 11:

That the Victorian Government include a clause in the State Planning Policy Framework specifically noting the importance of ensuring access to food and encouraging a diversity of local food outlets, such as farmers' markets.

3.5 Food permits

The Committee received evidence from several inquiry participants suggesting that the need for markets and vendors to obtain various permits and authorisations presented a barrier to the growth of the industry.

A central point of concern was temporary food permits. To date, vendors at farmers' markets have been required to apply for a permit in each local government area in which they trade. This is seen as burdensome and expensive for those vendors who attend several markets across Victoria each month.

The Victorian Government advised the Committee that amendments to the *Food Act (1984)* mean that from July 2011, mobile and temporary vendors (which included market stalls) will no longer have to register in each municipality they operate in. A new registration system will allow registration in one council area to be recognised state-wide. The government advised that Councils are currently participating on a voluntary basis, although the registration system will become mandatory on 1 July 2011.⁷³

The Committee welcomes the Victorian Government's action on this and believes it will remove a regulatory burden and unnecessary expense for farmers who sell produce at these markets.

Recommendation 12:

That the Victorian Government assist local governments to implement the single registration system for vendors selling at farmers' markets.

3.6 Summary of findings

- Greater flexibility could be introduced into the VFMA's accreditation criteria to allow more producers/vendors to sell at the markets.
- There appears to be a shortage of stallholders at some of Victoria's farmers' markets, particularly those located outside the inner city. This is likely to limit the growth of the industry in the future.
- Local governments can take a more active role in supporting farmers' markets. Equally, the Victorian Government can encourage local governments in this role by ensuring that food access is included within the state planning policy framework.

- Ideally, farmers' markets should be located close to retail precincts, transport hubs or in other central locations which allow other retailers to benefit from the increased foot traffic.
- Recent changes to the food permit registration system will, once implemented, reduce costs for farmers' market vendors.

Adopted by the Outer Suburban/Interface Services & Development Committee

Parliament House

East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

1st September 2010

Chapter Three Endnotes:

¹ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010.

² Leslie White, “Farmers’ market stall con job”, *Weekly Times*, 24 June 2009.

³ Sarah Slee, “Barossa staying authentic”, *smartfarmer*, July 2010, 14.

⁴ Macedon Ranges Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 2, 21 May 2010.

⁵ Bass Coast Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 5, 14 May 2010.

⁶ VFMA, *Submission*, Number 7, 14 May 2010.

⁷ VFMA, “VFMA Accreditation Program: Key Points”, <http://www.vicfarmersmarkets.org.au/>.

⁸ Ms S. Edmonds, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 11.

⁹ OSISDC, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 10-11.

¹⁰ Yarra Ranges Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 15, 17 June 2010, 7.

¹¹ Mr A. Eagle, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 5.

¹² The Capital Region Farmers Market is held weekly with more than 100 stalls and attracts around 5000 customers. See <http://www.capitalregionfarmersmarket.com.au/>.

¹³ Peter Arnold, *Submission*, Number 4, 13 May 2010.

¹⁴ City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010, 10.

¹⁵ Yarra Ranges Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 15, 17 June 2010.

¹⁶ City of Greater Geelong, *Submission*, Number 14, 27 May 2010, 1.

¹⁷ City of Greater Geelong, *Submission*, Number 14, 27 May 2010, 1.

¹⁸ Yarra Ranges Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 15, 17 June 2010.

¹⁹ Mr V. Morris, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 7.

²⁰ City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010, 10.

²¹ VFMA, “our charter”, <http://www.vicfarmersmarkets.org.au/content/our-charter>.

²² Ms S. Edmonds, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 14-15.

²³ VFMA, *Submission*, Number 7, 14 May 2010.

²⁴ For example, Ben Worthen, “Farmers Markets See Risks From Growth”, *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 February 2010; Vanessa Ho, “Does Seattle have too many farmers markets?”, *Seattlepi.com*, 23 August 2010, <http://bit.ly/as50qS>; Oliver Moore, *Farmers’ Markets Conference: Food Fad or Food Future?*, report of the all Ireland farmers’ markets conference, Athlone, July 2007.

²⁵ Mr I. Ada, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 7.

²⁶ Shire of Melton, *Submission*, Number 10, 17 May 2010, 10.

²⁷ Mr N. Flannigan, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 9.

²⁸ Nigel Flannigan, *Submission*, Number 13, 27 May 2010, 11.

²⁹ See OSISDC, *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne*, Parliament of Victoria, May 2010, 123.

³⁰ Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 21.

³¹ See <http://ooooby.ning.com/>.

³² Mr A. Eagle, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 18.

³³ <http://www.good.is/post/talking-with-new-york-city-greenmarket-co-founder-barry-benepe/>

³⁴ <http://www.cenyc.org/greenmarket/whygreenmarket>.

³⁵ Dick Esseks et al, *Sustaining Agriculture in Urbanizing Counties: Insights from 15 Coordinated Case Studies*, University of Nebraska Lincoln, version 16 January 2009.

³⁶ Project for Public Spaces, "Making the Case for Public Markets as Job Generators", <http://bit.ly/aWwJum>.

³⁷ Jane McGroarty, "Greenmarket: Farmers' Markets of New York Make Modern Day Agora", *New Village Journal*, Issue 2, nd.

³⁸ Garry Stephenson, Larry Lev & Linda Brewer, *When Things Don't Work: Some Insights into Why Farmers' Markets Close*, Oregon State University Extension Service, Special report 1073-E, July 2008; Project for Public Spaces, *Public Markets as a Vehicle for Social Integration and Upward Mobility*, Phase 1 report: An overview of existing programs and assessment of opportunities, Ford Foundation, 2003.

³⁹ Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 16.

⁴⁰ An example of this was given in Melton Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 10, 17 May 2010, 6.

⁴¹ This is based on two estimates – both \$70,000 – of the cost of running a market, submitted to the Committee by the City of Greater Geelong (Submission 14) and the Victor Harbor Farmers Market (briefing to the Committee).

⁴² Stephenson, Lev & Brewer.

⁴³ These two guides are available at: <http://bit.ly/9BlyOh> and <http://bit.ly/cPXF8n>.

⁴⁴ Bass Coast Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 5, 14 May 2010.

⁴⁵ Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 19.

⁴⁶ Mr V. Morris, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 19.

⁴⁷ Mr V. Morris, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 20.

⁴⁸ Community Planning & Development Program, La Trobe University - Bendigo Campus, *Submission*, Number 9, 17 May 2010.

⁴⁹ Isabelle Groc, "Growers' gamble: Are cities missing a bet by giving short shrift to farmers markets?", *Planning*, March 2008, 37. Also see New Economics Foundation, *Trading Places: The local economic impacts of street produce and farmers' markets*, London Development Agency, November 2005, 57-58.

⁵⁰ An example is the Davis Farmers Market in the City of Davis, California, which has a designated liaison officer within the City government.

⁵¹ Communities and Local Government Committee, *Market Failure: Can the traditional market survive?*, Ninth report of session 2008-09, House of Commons, July 2009, 41.

⁵² City of Whittlesea, *Submission*, Number 3, 12 May 2010.

⁵³ Nigel Flannigan, *Submission*, Number 13, 27 May 2010, 8.

⁵⁴ Mr N. Flannigan, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 5-6.

⁵⁵ Communities and Local Government Committee, 36.

⁵⁶ Whittlesea City Council, *Submission*, Number 3, 12 May 2010.

⁵⁷ Andrew Campbell, *Paddock to Plate: Food, Farming and Victoria's Progress to Sustainability*, Background Paper, Australian Conservation Foundation, May 2008.

⁵⁸ See <http://bit.ly/d6hEmK>.

⁵⁹ VFMA, *Market Research Project Report*, August 2010, 39.

⁶⁰ See http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/page/page.asp?page_id=2113. For further on mapping food deserts in Melbourne, see VicHealth, *Healthy Eating – Food Security Investment Plan 2005-2010*, VicHealth, 2005.

⁶¹ City of Casey & Cardinia Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 1, 10 May 2010, 5; Melton Shire Council, *Submission*, Number 10, 17 May 2010.

⁶² Community Food Security Coalition, *Hot peppers and parking lot peaches: Evaluating farmers' markets in low income communities*, 1999, <https://we.riseup.net/assets/5078/HotPeppersPeaches.pdf>; Project for Public Spaces, “Markets for all”, <http://www.pps.org/marketsforall/>.

⁶³ Mr P. Arnold, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 4.

⁶⁴ Kameshwari Pothukuchi & Jerome L. Kaufman, “The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field”, *Journal of the American Planning Association*, v. 66, 2, Spring 2000.

⁶⁵ See OSISDC, *Inquiry into Sustainable Development of Agribusiness in Outer Suburban Melbourne*, Parliament of Victoria, May 2010, Chapter 6.

⁶⁶ Mr N. Flannigan, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 18.

⁶⁷ Mr N. Flannigan, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 29.

⁶⁸ Mr N. Flannigan, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 July 2010, 8.

⁶⁹ Food Policy Coalition, *Submission*, Number 8, 17 May 2010, 3.

⁷⁰ Food Policy Coalition, *Submission*, Number 8, 17 May 2010, 3.

⁷¹ Grant Reynolds, “Diabetes special: ‘Food deserts’ to be conquered”, *Melton Express*, 2 March 2010.

⁷² Kate Hagan, “Fresh start for good eating thanks to van with a plan”, *The Age*, 25 June 2010.

⁷³ Victorian Government, *Submission*, Number 11, 17 May 2010, 6.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF SUBMISSIONS

| No. | Submission Received | Name | Affiliation |
|-----|---------------------|--|---|
| 1 | 10.05.2010 | Mr Gary McQuillan Chief Executive Officer | <i>Cardinia Shire Council</i> |
| 2 | 11.05.2010 | Ms Margaret Abbey Group Manager Environment & Planning Services | <i>Nillumbik Shire Council</i> |
| 3 | 12.05.2010 | Mr David Turnbull Chief Executive Officer | <i>Whittlesea City Council</i> |
| 4 | 13.05.2010 | Mr Peter Arnold Director | <i>Regional Farmers Markets P/L</i> |
| 5 | 14.05.2010 | Ms Roslyn Jenzen Economic Coordinator | <i>Bass Coast Shire Council</i> |
| 6 | 14.05.2010 | Mr Chris Guthrie Manager, Economic Development | <i>Mitchell Shire Council</i> |
| 7 | 14.05.2010 | Ms Sam Edmonds Executive Officer | <i>Victorian Farmers' Markets Association</i> |
| 8 | 17.05.2010 | Ms Kena Duignan Public Health Research, Evaluation & Policy | <i>Food Policy Coalition, Deakin University</i> |
| 9 | 17.05.2010 | Mr Trevor Budge Community Planning and Development Program Senior Lecturer-Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences | <i>La Trobe University</i> |
| 10 | 17.05.2010 | Mr Brett Luxford Manager Business Growth & Sustainability | <i>Melton Shire Council</i> |
| 11 | 17.05.2010 | Hon. Jacinta Allan MP Minister for Regional & Rural Development | <i>Victorian Government</i> |
| 12 | 21.05.2010 | Dr Lorraine Beyer Social Planner | <i>Macedon Ranges Shire Council</i> |
| 13 | 27.05.2010 | Mr Nigel Flannigan | |
| 14 | 31.05.2010 | Mr Dean Frost General Manager | <i>City of Greater Geelong</i> |
| 15 | 17.07.2010 | Mr Glenn Patterson Chief Executive Officer | <i>Yarra Ranges Shire Council</i> |

APPENDIX B: LIST OF WITNESSES

| No. | Date | Witness Name | Affiliation |
|-----|--------------------|--|--|
| | <i>4 July 2010</i> | <i>Site Visit</i> | <i>Lilydale</i> |
| 1 | | Mr Geoff Welsh | <i>Lilydale Farmers' Market</i> |
| 2 | | Mr Paul Martin | <i>Lilydale Farmers' Market</i> |
| | <i>7 July 2010</i> | <i>Public Forum</i> | <i>Melbourne</i> |
| 3 | | Mr Ian Ada Agribusiness Officer | <i>Yarra Ranges Shire Council</i> |
| 4 | | Mr Peter Arnold Director | <i>Regional Farmers Markets P/L</i> |
| 5 | | Mr Alan Eagle Secretary | <i>Hawkesbury Harvest</i> |
| 6 | | Ms Sam Edmonds Executive Officer | <i>Victorian Farmers' Markets Association</i> |
| 7 | | Mr Nigel Flannigan | |
| 8 | | Mr Philip Jackson Business Development Officer | <i>Cardinia Shire Council</i> |
| 9 | | Mr Vin Morris Agribusiness Officer | <i>Cardinia Shire Council & Casey City Council</i> |
| 10 | | Mr Anthony Sherry Executive Director Food & Beverage Group | <i>Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development</i> |
| | <i>6 Aug 2010</i> | <i>Site Visit</i> | <i>Adelaide</i> |
| 11 | | Mr Mike Redmond Chief Executive Officer | <i>Grow SA</i> |
| | <i>7 Aug 2010</i> | <i>Site Visit</i> | <i>Adelaide</i> |
| 12 | | Ms Jude McBain Chairperson | <i>Willunga Farmers Market</i> |
| 13 | | Mr Steve Ashley Market Manager | <i>Willunga Farmers Market</i> |
| 14 | | Ms Rachel McMillan Chair | <i>Victor Harbor Farmers Market</i> |
| 15 | | Mr Brenton Tamblyn Market Manager | <i>Victor Harbor Farmers Market</i> |
| | <i>8 Aug 2010</i> | <i>Site Visit</i> | <i>Adelaide</i> |
| 16 | | Ms Zannie Flanagan AM Chief Executive Officer | <i>Adelaide Showground Farmers Market</i> |
| 17 | | Ms Aerlie Wildy Market Manager | <i>Adelaide Showground Farmers Market</i> |
| 18 | | Ms Anne Duncan Senior Project Officer & Market Volunteer | <i>Government of South Australia Primary Industries & Resources SA</i> |

APPENDIX C: VICTORIAN FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION CHARTER

1. Definition

An authentic Farmers Market is a predominantly local fresh food and produce market that operates regularly at a public location which provides a suitable environment for farmers and food producers to sell their farm origin product and their associated value added primary products directly to customers.

2. Community Ownership

Farmers Markets should ideally be community based and run on not for profit principles. The recommended structure is a management group that represents managers, stallholders and community stakeholders.

3. Produce for Sale

Farmers Markets should operate with the key objective of promoting local fresh food and farmer's products and their origins.

Vendors at the market should sell primary produce (including small livestock); fresh food and value added and processed edible produce. See above re competition of own –grown and bought ingredients i.e. jam...

Exceptions such as self propagated plants, compost or cut flowers may be included depending upon the individual farmers' market requirements, however the products must be sold by the person who is directly responsible for growing them.

No craft or 'bric a brac' will be accepted at a Farmers' Market.

4. Authenticity

4.1 Operations of Farmers Markets

Farmers' Market management groups are expected to endorse and operate under the principles of an authentic Farmers' Market (as defined in the VFMA's Charter). As members of the VFMA they will be independently accredited as a Farmers Market.

4.2 Criteria of Sales at a Farmers Market

All produce must be sold by the person, family member or farm based employee directly involved with growing, rearing, catching, or making the product.

Resellers are not permitted to be vendors at a Farmers' Market.

Pricing must be clearly displayed, weights and measures accurate and scales compliant with regulation.

The origins of the produce are to be clearly communicated, distinguishing the identity of farmer, farm, region, processor or food manufacturing business.

In exceptional circumstances (i.e. remote, regional areas where there are no alternative growers) growers and producers are allowed to sell another grower's product from their local region. Produce must be clearly marked as supplementary and its grower and origin identified. This arrangement is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and NOT on a regular, ongoing basis. Supplementation is NOT allowed when it is in conflict with another grower. Under no circumstances may supplementary supply may be sourced from wholesale markets or through distributors.

5. Geographical Boundaries

At the discretion of individual markets, perimeters may be applied to facilitate vendor eligibility. The applicable perimeters can be defined with reference to local government boundaries, geographic features, or existing food marketing and / or economic development organisations.

Value adders and producers who grow and manufacture products within their local area should be given priority.

Markets can draw from multiple regions, however market managers must encourage vendors to participate in their regional Farmers' Market before participating in a city market to ensure the sustainability of Farmers' Markets in regional centres.

6. Vendor Mix

VFMA promotes the predominance of fresh, local produce at a farmers' market.

Farmers' Markets should offer a broadly diverse and seasonal range of fresh produce and value added products. The specific vendor mix is the responsibility of the market management.

Regional farmers' markets should aim for more than 75% of stallholders selling local produce.

Regional producers and value adders who grow and manufacture products within their local area should be given priority at their local Farmers Market.

7. Produce Quality

Farmers' Market stallholders are committed to offer for sale fresh, high quality, seasonal and regional produce, and artisan or high standard value-added food products.

The manufacture of all value-added products must comply with regulations applicable to food processing, packaging and food labelling.

Food cooked on the site at the market (including tasting samples) must be of high quality and wherever possible utilise the market vendor produce. Its preparation must comply with food safety requirements.

8. Pricing

Farmers' Markets aim to educate consumers on the true value of the cost of production of food.

Vendors will offer all produce at fair, market driven prices that reflect the quality and/or speciality nature of the goods sold.

Price structure to be established that achieve profitable trading outcomes for participant vendors.

The total product price is to be clearly marked, which includes GST where applicable.

9. Labelling

All produce to be clearly identified. All value added produce is to be labelled in accordance with prevailing food safety regulations.

Quality levels to be clearly designated.

Only certified organic produce should be labelled organic. Sellers who claim organic status should display proof of certification.

10. Policy and Information

Farmers' Market operators are to establish operational procedures and make them publicly available.

11. Regulation

Farmers' Markets are to operate in accordance with prevailing community and government regulations including food, health and safety, weights and measures, public and product liability, and applicable local government requirements.

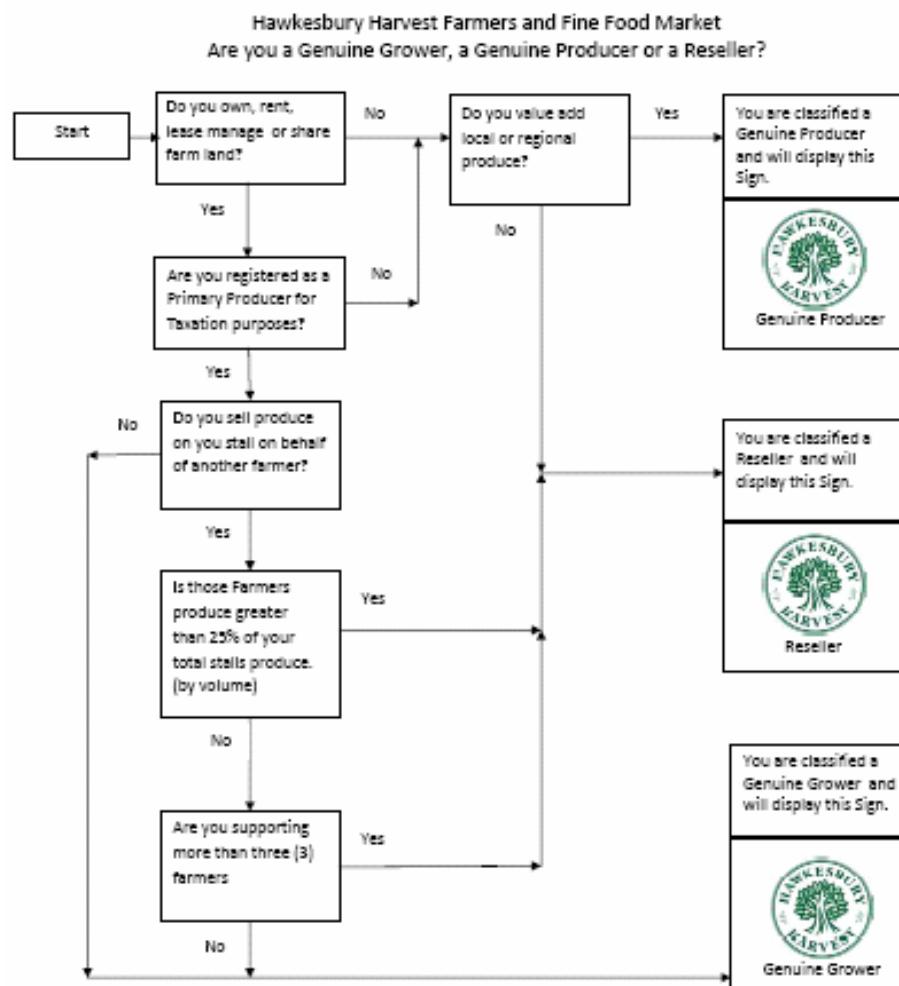
12. Insurance

Stallholders and Farmers' Market management are expected to be covered by appropriate product and public liability insurance.

It is the Farmers' Market manager's responsibility to ensure stallholders have appropriate product and public liability insurance.

Source: <http://www.vicfarmersmarkets.org.au/content/our-charter>

APPENDIX D: HAWKESBURY HARVEST GENUINE GROWER POLICY



Source: Genuine Grower Policy, Hawkesbury Harvest

APPENDIX E: ADELAIDE SHOWGROUND FARMERS MARKET RULES, REGULATIONS & OBLIGATIONS



Stallholder

Rules, Regulations and Obligations

for participation in the

Adelaide Showground Farmers Market

2008



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10. STALLHOLDER COMMITMENT

11. APPENDICES 1) ON SITE CATERING POLICY



1 HOW TO BECOME A STALLHOLDER

1.1 Fill in a Stallholder Expression of Interest Form (phone ASFM Office on 82318155 or download from the ASFM website www.asfm.org.au

1.2 Forward your Expression of Interest Form to the Market Office admin@asfm.org.au or Fax to 08 8231 8518 or post to PO Box 38, Goodwood, SA 5034

1.3 If the Expression of Interest is accepted the ASFM, the applicant will be notified. Following notification the applicant will be sent an

ASFM Stallholder Information Pack.

The Stallholder Information Pack will include:

- 1) Membership Form
- 2) ASFM Rules, Regulations and Obligations (with Stallholder Agreement Form on last page to be signed and sent back to the ASFM)
- 3) Stallholder Site Licence Agreement
- 4) Food Business Notification Form
- 5) Insurance Form
- 6) Showground Site Plan
- 7) Food Safety Brochure

Fill out all forms and send by post, to the ASFM Office PO Box 38 Goodwood, SA 5034

1.4 The ASFM will send confirmation of the stall booking and an invoice for Membership Fees and Stall Fees.

1.5 Check that all details on the invoice are correct and arrange payment to ASFM Inc.

1.6 On receipt of payment, the stallholder applicant will be sent a:

- a. Receipt
- b. ASFM Membership Card
- c. Stallholder Parking Permit
- d. Site Map showing stall site number and site entrance details
- e. Parking Map
- f. A Direct Sales Vehicle Parking Permit if required

2. STALL FEES AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

2.1 STALL SITE FEES

- Site Fees - Available to all Stallholders

\$66.00 (GST Inc) per week or \$264 (GST Inc) per calendar month. Payable in advance. Storage lockers are available for \$200 per calendar month.

2.2 PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment of site fees must be made before Market Day by one of the following options:

- direct debit
- money order
- cheque (allow 3 working days for clearance)
- Visa

2.3 PAYMENT DETAILS

- Monthly by Direct Debit (see forms provided in Stallholder's Pack).
- Monthly by bank cheque or money order payable to ASFM, PO Box 38, Goodwood, SA 5034. Cheque must be received 4 days prior to Market Day.
- Weekly by VISA up to 10am on the Friday prior to Market day.
- Weekly by cash at the Market ONLY by prior arrangement with the Market Manager.

2.4 PAYMENT ENTITLES YOU TO:

- 1 x stall site (3 x 3 meters)
- 1 x free on-site parking space
- Publicity/promotion in general, ASFM promotions where appropriate
- Entry on the ASFM website stallholder list
- Access to basic kitchen facilities

Plus if required:

- Cool room facilities use @ \$5.00 per market
- Power facilities use @ \$5.00 per market
- Storage locker facility @ \$10 per week or \$200 per annum

3. STALLHOLDER RULES, RESPONSIBILITIES and OBLIGATIONS

3.1 MEMBERSHIP

- All stallholders must be members of the ASFM.
- All stallholders are entitled to ask any ASFM Member to produce their membership card before receiving the 10% membership discount.

3.2 STALL HOLDER ELIGIBILITY

All stallholders will be farmers, gardeners, bakers, fishermen or cooks and must produce what they offer for sale and be resident in South Australia.

Exceptions to the above may be made if the stallholder grows or produces within a 100 km of the SA border and is offering produce that is not currently available at the Market with the understanding that if at a future date the produce does become available in SA, the new stallholder producer will be given preference.

3.3 INSURANCE

- All stallholders must provide the Market Manager with an Insurance Certificate of Currency before a stall site is confirmed. The Certificate of Currency must clearly state that the stallholder is covered for Product Liability of retail sale of their products.
- It is the responsibility of the stallholder to ensure a renewal copy of their Certificate of Currency is forwarded to the Market Manager annually.

If insurance is not current, stallholders will not be allowed to trade.

3.4 THE STALLHOLDER

Must:

- Be a member of the Market
- Only sell those products itemized and approved by the committee in their stall application
- Sell items produced within South Australia
- Provide the Market Manager with an Insurance Certificate of Currency prior to the day to trading.

- 1) Priority will be given to producers supplying certified biodynamic, organic and minimal spray produce.
- 2) Stallholders can only call their produce organic or biodynamic if they are certified growers and must display their Certification Certificate clearly at the stall site.
- 3) Stallholders, may however describe their growing practices as for example “We use IPM on our farm” or “ Grown using organic methods” if that is the case.
- 4) Hot food and pre-packed meals can only be sold at the discretion of the Market Manager. See the ASFM Inc On Site Catering Policy, appendix 1.

- 5) Variations to these rules are at the discretion of the Market Manager and will be made in the best interests of the ASFM.

3.5 STALL BOOKINGS

- Bookings must be confirmed with the Market Manager no later than 10am on the Friday prior to Market Day.
- All stall fees must be paid on confirmation of site allocation and prior to Market Day unless other arrangements have been confirmed with the Market Manager.

3.6 CANCELLATIONS

Site bookings can be cancelled up to 10.00am on the Friday prior to the Market. Late cancellations or non-appearance (without cancellation) will not be eligible for a refund of stall fees.

3.7 SITE ALLOCATION

- 1) Stall sites will be allocated according to stallholder needs and requests and in the best interests of the Market at the discretion of the Market Management.
- 2) The ASFM reserves the right at any time to alter the size, shape and position of Market Sites when necessary to meet the best interests of the Market's general overall weekly layout plan or for any legal requirement.
- 3) Site maps showing stall site allocation will be displayed at various locations on Market day and on the website from 5pm on the Friday before each market.
- 4) The Market Manager will endeavour to keep regular stallholders in the same position each week.
- 5) Stallholders who have been allocated a stall site and who abide by the Market Procedures have a priority to continue to sell at the Market.
- 6) Market sites cannot be transferred, assigned or sold as part of a business sale or change of business ownership.
- 7) The Market Manager reserves the right to move the entire Market inside the shed in severe weather conditions at no extra charge to outside stallholders.

3.8 ALLOWABLE PRODUCTS

Vegetables – must be grown in South Australia

Fruit – must be grown in South Australia

Meat – animals must be reared and processed in South Australia

Dairy – must be produced from South Australian milk

Seafood – must be caught or farmed in South Australia or off the coast of South Australia

Poultry – must be reared and processed in South Australia

Eggs – must be produced in South Australia

Preserves – must be made from fruit and vegetables grown in South Australia wherever possible

Honey – must be produced in South Australia

Herbs – must be grown in South Australia

Cut flowers – must be grown in South Australia

Nursery Stock – must be grown in South Australia

Food plants – must be grown in South Australia

Juices – must be made in SA from South Australian grown fruit and vegetables

Coffee – free trade and organic preferred, roasted in South Australia

Cakes, biscuits, pies and pastries – must be made using South Australian grown fruit and vegetables, meat and fish and with flour produced in South Australia

Bread – made from grain grown and milled in South Australia

Organic Compost – must be produced in South Australia

Worm Farms and worms

Seeds

Wine and other beverages made in South Australia from fruit and grain produced in South Australia

Nuts, grains and pulses grown in South Australia

3.9 ON SITE CATERING POLICY

ASFM Inc On Site Catering Policy as of 28th December 2006

The ASFM Inc Committee has approved the implementation of the following

On-Site Catering Policy as of the 28th December, 2006.

Reasons for the Policy are:

- 1) Possible infringement of contractual arrangements between Adelaide Showground Caterer Michael O'Brien Catering and the RA&HS.
- 2) Contractual arrangements with ASFM Inc and ASFM Inc contract caterers Kuhl Kooking.
- 3) Maintaining consistency and equity for all stallholders at the ASFM.

On-site Catering Definition

On-site Catering is defined as:

- Any food that undergoes a process whilst on site that alters the state in which the food/produce was brought to the Market for sale.
- This includes food that is heated, cooked, juiced, mixed or made on site at the stallholder's retail site stall.

Current Status

One on-site catering contractor (Kuhl Kooking) and three coffee outlets have been approved to provide on site catering at the ASFM.

Under this policy other stall holders are not allowed to provide on site catering as described above. However the following is allowed and encouraged:

- 1) Small samples size portions, prepared on equipment such as an electric grill or hot plate that can be accommodated within the confines of the producer's stall site and prepared within the guidelines of the Environmental Health Regulations.
- 2) Stallholders are able to utilise the Market Kitchen for product promotion and to demonstrate how to prepare their product.
- 3) Stallholders with a product suitable for sale at the Market's breakfast stall run by on-site contract caterers Kuhl Kooking, can approach TFB to offer their product for possible inclusion on the Breakfast Menu.

3.10 ACCESS TO MARKET SITE

- 1) The Market will operate every Sunday except during the weeks of the Royal Show. The Market may be relocated to a carpark during the week leading up to and after the Royal Show.
- 2) Access to the site for stallholders is from 6am on Sunday.
- 3) Stallholders are required to have their site ready, with all exhibits displayed for sale from 9.00am. Stalls must be open to view and properly staffed at all times from 9am till 1pm.
- 4) Stalls can be dismantled from 1pm at the close of the Market.
- 5) All vehicles not used for direct selling must be off the Market site no later than 8.50am. The gates cannot open to the public until the site is cleared of vehicles.
- 6) Any vehicles or trailers used for direct Vehicle Sales must display a valid Vehicle Sales Parking Permit allocated by the Market Management.
- 7) Vehicles with generators must also be able to use 2 or 3-phase power, as no generators will be allowed to run during Market hours.

3.11 RESELLING

- 1) Stalls must be operated EITHER by the producer, a family member, or a competent employee with a sound knowledge of the products offered for sale.
- 2) Only goods produced or grown by the stallholder will be permitted for sale and NO reselling or carrying of products other than those of the stallholder applicant will be permitted.
- 3) Stallholders who wish to sell produce on behalf of another ASFM member, must seek the permission of the Market Manager to present their case before sale of those products will be considered.

4. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES & REQUIREMENTS

4.1 GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES

- 1) All stallholders must present a Product and Public Liability Insurance Certificate of Currency to the Management before trading can commence.
- 2) All stallholders must comply with the South Australian Food Act and Food Safety Standards.

- 3) All stallholders are responsible for obtaining licenses and/or permits required to sell their goods. All food businesses must complete and submit a Food Business Notification form to their Local Council pursuant to the Food Act. Contact your local council for information.
- 4) All baked or value added goods must be made in a kitchen/food premise that has been Notified with the relevant local council. Check with your local council for details. Evidence of Notification must be supplied to the Market Manager before trading commences.

4.2 AT THE MARKET

- 1) All food must be kept off the ground and covered when on display. Use tongs and other utensils when handling food and avoid hand contact.
- 2) Tastings of product must be accompanied with individual disposable tasting spoons or sticks and a container provided for their disposal.
- 3) All stallholders' vehicles must be parked off the Market Site unless the Market Management has given prior approval and a Vehicle Sales Parking Permit is displayed on the vehicle.
- 4) All tents, overhead shades and poles must be securely fixed and not be positioned to cause obstruction or danger to stallholders, customers or pedestrian flow. Tents must be secured with weighted objects – not ropes.
- 5) All stallholders' produce and belongings must be kept within the boundaries of the allocated site.
- 6) Stallholders must maintain their individual site space in a clean and sanitary manner.
- 7) All stalls selling food must have access to hand washing facilities utilizing warm running water and provide single use towel facilities. These facilities must not be used for washing utensils.
- 8) Stallholders are responsible for any refuse left at their site and all refuse must be deposited in the designated bins provided.
- 9) Wastewater must only be poured into sewage /sullage points as specified and NOT into gutters or storm water drains. Please ask at the information stall if you are unsure which drain to use.

4.3 ELECTRICAL TESTING AND TAGGING REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) All electrical fittings, equipment and materials are subject to inspection by the Market Management, the Showground staff.
- 2) The outward sign of compliance with the Act will be that the equipment bears an electrical test tag to AS2760.
- 3) If any such equipment, fittings or materials are deemed not to comply with OHS&W regulations, nor to be safe for any reason, they shall be removed from the site at the expense of the participant.

4.4 GAS EQUIPMENT AND SAFETY:

- 1) All gas bottles and equipment attached to gas bottles must be regularly checked to ensure gas hoses and attachments are not faulty and be date compliant.
- 2) A fire extinguisher must be provided and be available for use at any stall where gas burners are used. It is the responsibility of the stallholder to ensure they know how the extinguisher is operated.

NB All stallholders must familiarise themselves with the location and use of the nearest fire extinguisher on the site.

4.5 SIGNAGE

All stallholders must have signs that display their name and address in a prominent manner whilst trading at the Market. They must also provide a sign above the entrance to their stall so that customers can identify stall positions from a distance. All signage must be kept within allocated site boundaries. The Management reserves the right to disallow inappropriate signage.

4.6 LABELING

All stallholders must comply with appropriate labeling regulations.

4.7 WEIGHTS & MEASURES

Stallholders must weigh goods sold bagged on site on approved scales as required under regulation by Weights and Measurements Act and provide opportunity for customers to check weight of bagged goods should they ask to do so.

4.8 PRODUCTS & PACKAGING

- 1) Products must be grown and packed in South Australia
- 2) Wherever possible packaging should be biodegradable or able to be recycled. (See your local FIDO for packaging information).
- 3) Plastic bags will not be permitted unless they are biodegradable or are provided by the customer. Market bags will be for sale by stallholders on behalf of the Market Management.
- 4) All products must display the sale price as well as the member's discount price.

4.9 SMOKING

The ASFM is a non-smoking event.

4.10 Liquor Licensing & PERMITS

- 1) Stallholders must acquire any licenses (e.g. for wine sales) or permits required for selling or producing their products to the public.
- 2) Copies of licenses must be given to the Market Manager prior to trading at the Market. (Fax: 08 8231 8155 Email: admin@asfm.org.au)

5. THE ROLE OF THE MARKET MANAGEMENT TEAM

- 1) The Market Management Team is employed by the ASFM Committee to coordinate all the activities of the weekly market and to implement the rules and regulations to ensure the smooth operation of the ASFM.
- 2) These Operational Rules and Obligations have been developed to assist Management in this role.
- 3) The Rules, as outlined in this document, have been developed to offer clarification and certainty to stallholders and to reassure customers of the Market's quality control measures.
- 4) The Management Team retains the right to refuse a stallholder trading rights on Market Day for any infringement of the Market Rules and Regulations.

6. STALLHOLDER COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Customers and Stallholders are encouraged to report any infringement of these Rules and Obligations to the Market Manager in the first instance.

The Grievance Procedure is as follows:

- 1) All grievances must be made in the first instance to the Market Manager
- 2) If the grievance or complaint is not resolved satisfactorily at the time of the complaint, the complainant should make a formal complaint in writing and submit the complaint to:

Chairperson, ASFM INC,

PO Box 38, Goodwood, SA 5034

- 3) After receipt of a formal complaint the Management Committee will investigate the issue and respond in writing to the complainant.
- 4) If a stallholder is found to have acted in a way that is seen as detrimental to the reputation or the interests of the Market, or not in accordance with these rules, the Management Committee retains the right to refuse the Stallholder the right to trade at the Market.
- 5) The Management Committee's decision will be final.

7. CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- 1) All complaints and grievances must be made in the first instance to the Acting Market Manager.
- 2) If the grievance or complaint is not resolved satisfactorily, the complainant should make a formal complaint in writing and submit the complaint to:

Chairperson, ASFM INC,

PO Box 38, Goodwood, SA 5034

- 3) After receipt of a formal complaint the Management Committee will investigate the issue and respond in writing to the complainant.
- 4) If a Stallholder is found to have acted in a way that is seen as detrimental to the reputation or the interests of the Market, or not in accordance with these rules, the Management Committee retains the right to refuse the Stallholder the right to trade at the Market.
- 5) The Management Committee's decision will be final.

8. FARM AND PREMISES VISITS

- 1) The Market Management reserves the right to visit any premises, facility or property listed in the Stallholder's stall site application at the convenience of the Stallholder.
- 2) These visits underpin the authenticity of the Market as a whole and serve as an opportunity for the Stallholders to discuss any issues concerning the Management of the Market in privacy and without prejudice.
- 3) The Management will contact Stallholders prior to the visit to confirm a mutually convenient appointment time.

9. DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

- 1) Stall holders will indemnify the organiser from any damage, expenses or liability arising from any injury or damages to any person, including the general public, the stallholder or others, occurring either in the space occupied by the participant or elsewhere arising out of its occupancy or any thing connected with occupancy.
- 2) The ASFM Inc will not be liable for any loss or damage to the property of the participants due to fire, robbery, accidents or any cause whatsoever that may arise from use and occupancy of the site.
- 3) The ASFM Inc assumes no liability for any damages or losses resulting from or relating to the failure or the participant to comply with the provision of this agreement.
- 4) The ASFM Inc will not be responsible if a Stallholder does not provide insurance "Certificate of Currency" to the ASFM management.

10. STALLHOLDER COMMITMENT

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD MY RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS AS A STALL HOLDER AT THE ASFM Inc.

I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE RULES AND REGULATIONS AS THEY ARE WRITTEN. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT I FORFEIT MY RIGHT TO TRADE IF I CHOOSE NOT TO ABIDE BY THEM.

Signed.....

Name.....

Date.....

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