



AHFM Annual General Meeting ~ Market Manager Report

October 2024

Before I begin my report, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the passing of our beloved former Market Manager, Kara-Jane Bennett.

Kara-Jane dedicated her time, energy, and passion to the success of the Adelaide Hills Farmers Market, playing a vital role in shaping the market into what it is today. Her contributions to the market and our community have been invaluable, and she will be deeply missed by the entire market community.

We extend our deepest sympathies to her family and loved ones during this difficult time. It is in her honour that we continue striving to uphold the values and standards that she brought to our market.

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On behalf of Kara-Jane as Market Manager throughout the year of 2023-2024, and I as Acting Market Manager from May 2024, I present this Manager's Report for the Adelaide Hills Farmers Market AGM.

This has been a year of both excitement and challenges for the market. Throughout the year we have witnessed a significant increase in membership numbers (up 113 from this time last year) and an increase in market goer-attendees with the highest (excl. Twilight Market) being the Artisan market in October 2023 at 648 attendees. The market has also experienced an increase in the number of new faces attending the market who have either from further afield or have recently moved to the region; certainly a reflection of the current growth occurring throughout the Mount Barker region.

Regular market activities such as the Aboriginal Arts Workshop and Kids Cooking Tent have continued to be popular throughout the market community, as is the Thermofresh Demonstration tent which was brought onboard this year. We have also had an increase in the number of community vendors attending market such as the Spinners and Weavers Guild, Balhannah and Mount Barker Scout Groups, Moon Cheung from Unley High School, Mount Barker Family House Child Care, and Taoist Tai Chi, and we



are pleased to confirm the exciting return of a historic market sponsor, Mount Lofty Radio.

Other community engagement opportunities worked on throughout this will come to fruition towards the end of this 2024 calendar year, such as the AHFM being involved with the 2024 Mount Barker Christmas Pageant and reigniting the tremendous Producer in Residence initiative with the Mount Barker District Council. It is also expected the AHFM Twilight Market will be another hit this year, as was the case last year with large crowds gathering at 23 Mann Street for the cosy evening Christmas festivities.

The challenges the market has faced throughout the year included providing consistency of market management and operations whilst navigating the unknown of Kara-Jane's health journey. This also resulted in the cancellation additional markets at the Mount Barker pop-up site. Other challenges the market has faced this year include the continued lull in vendor attendance on the second and fourth Saturdays (also known as the Producer Markets) of each month, as well as another dip in market attendance of both members and vendors during the winter sessions at Cornerstone College. These remain to be an area of the market in need of significant improvement.

With the increase of internal resources such as the marketing sub-committee (consisting of Mat King, Lucy Davies, Shanti Wild and myself), the market manager role increasing to 4 days per week, and the continuation of employment of our Social Media Manager (Mat King), it is expected that initiatives aimed to awaken the winter sessions and Producer Market attendance will be successfully implemented during the upcoming year.

Customer feedback provided throughout the year has been overwhelmingly positive, particularly regarding the outdoor markets hosted throughout the Spring and Summer seasons at Mann Street, as well as the pop-up Fursday market held at the start of this year. Our online engagement has also seen tremendous growth and community support throughout the year, with many in-person comments made regarding the positive change on our social pages (Instagram and Facebook) since onboarding Mat. Facebook in particular has seen a staggering improvement of engagement, with one of our Community Appreciation posts reaching 31.5k, and one of the Stallholder Feature posts reaching 26.2k.





Looking forward, the AHFM aims to continue providing a weekly community event where local farmers and markers from the region can come together to showcase their incredible produce and products, and community members can have direct access to fresh, locally grown produce and handmade goods, while fostering a sense of community connection and promoting sustainable lifestyle practices. Additionally, significant focus will be place on continuing to nurture growth and expansion across all aspects of the market, as well as improving attendance consistency (both month-to-month and during the winter).

In conclusion, it has been both a challenging and rewarding year for the Adelaide Hills Farmers Market, marked by significant achievements and important lessons learned along the way. Although there have been many obstacles faced this year, the market's resilience and unwavering support from all of our community has resulted in the continued growth of market across the 2023-2024 financial year. By building on this year's experiences, I am confident we will overcome future challenges and achieve much success throughout the year to come.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated vendors, event hosts and volunteers, as well as our loyal customers, supportive market goers, our sponsors, and the greater local community. The unwavering support and commitment the community has demonstrated for the market throughout this challenging year has been sincerely appreciated by both Kara-Jane and myself, and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the years to come.

Thank you for your support ~ See you Saturday 🌻

Sara Barnes  
Acting AHFM Market Manager (2023-2024)